The world of *The Faerie Queene* is no mere microcosm; it is a heterocosm of great complexity. "When scholars today attempt to describe the "notions" at play in the minds of Sidney, Spenser, and their peers," Quitslund writes, "the components of popular or middle-class culture, as codified in books such as *Shakespeare's England* and *The Elizabethan World Picture*, no longer seem so monolithic as they did in the 1940s and 1950s" (p. 121). Indeed, Still, Quitslund's excellent book reminds us that ideas have histories—as real, perhaps, as anything we can touch.

REBECA HELFER, *University of California, Irvine*

Jonathan Gil Harris. *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare's England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. Pp. 263.

Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare's England displays all the rigour, wit, and originality readers have come to expect from Jonathan Gil Harris's work. As Harris acknowledges, the book is a sequel of sorts to his first, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998). Both books undertake the valuable work of historicizing seemingly neutral modern conceptions of disease by charting their development in the early modern period and disentangling their complex imbrications with other early modern discourses. In *Sick Economies*, as in *Foreign Bodies*, Harris contends that early modern medical discourse, partly in response to such things as syphilis and the plague, underwent a shift from a Galenic, humoural conception of disease as an internal imbalance to conceptions of disease as an exogenous, foreign, and invasive body paradoxically both dangerous and potentially healthy (roughly the conception of disease with which we are familiar). If in *Foreign Bodies* Harris is concerned with the effects of this shift on the appropriations of pathology by early modern political discourse, however, in *Sick Economies* he focuses on the shift's relationship to an analogous shift in early modern English economic writing. In sixteenth-century discourse, economics was subsumed within the framework of the self-sustaining and internally regulated body politic of the commonwealth. In contrast, in the writing of such early seventeenth-century mercantilists as Gerard Malynes, Thomas Milles, Edward Misselden, and Thomas Mun, the national economy is conceived as necessarily connected to but potentially invaded by other, foreign economic bodies. In mercantilist discourse, this global economic interconnect-edness is both necessary—a natural law, even—and dangerous. Harris is not merely concerned to analyze the ways in which this reconceptualization of the economy is registered by a change in the medical metaphors used in early modern economic discourse, however. His thesis is rather more complex than that: "Pathology and economy, I shall argue, were interconstitutive domains of dis-

course. Each helped create the other's horizons of textual and conceptual possibility; changes in one helped produce the changes in the other. By attending to the work of mercantilist writers and their contemporaries, then, we can recover an important yet largely forgotten chapter in the shared prehistories of our modern notions of global commerce and disease" (p. 3).

Harris performs this work of recovery through a series of subtle and insightful readings that juxtapose early modern economic, medical, and dramatic texts in very interesting ways. The plays serve as points at which the discourses of pathology and economics intersect in particularly "interconstitutive" and fertile ways, and Harris uses them to bring to life the complex cultural work being done by the medical and economic treatises to which he links them. Each chapter following the opening introductory chapter examines how a play or set of plays registers the complex and contradictory meanings and rhetorical uses of a particular disease within economic and medical discourses. Chapter two reads syphilis in *The Comedy of Errors* as the vehicle through which the play negotiates competing understandings of global trade. Chapter three focuses on *The Merchant of Venice*'s staging of the anxieties created by early modern mercantilist conceptualizations of usury as an alien and alienating infection or contagion that destabilizes national identity. Canker and serpego are the signs under which chapter four proceeds: in both *Troilus and Cressida* and early mercantilist Gerard Malynes' *Canker of England's Commonwealth*, the two diseases figure the indeterminate origins of value in general and the value of money in particular. The remaining chapters move away from Shakespeare and, at least initially, from the largely unidirectional argument that changes in medical understandings of disease enabled a rethinking of key economic concepts. Chapter five, which places *Volpone* alongside the treatises of medical and economic protectionists, argues that Jonson's mercantilist understanding of international commerce as a form of metempsychosis or "matter in motion" (p. 134) serves as the foundation for Jonson's innovative understanding of the plague as "matter in motion," a foreign body whose movement, like the movement of foreign goods, must be policed. "The transmigratory goods and diseases that *Volpone* fantasizes," Harris concludes, "were mutually determining phenomena: each provided the other with one of its constitutive grounds of possibility" (p. 134). Chapter six examines the link between early modern understandings of hepatitis and changing early modern English attitudes towards piracy in Heywood's *Fair Maid of the West*, Massinger's *Renegado*, and a set of pamphlets on England's trade slump written at the end of James' reign by Misselden and Malynes. Chapter seven, focusing on Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*, discusses the ambivalence of "consumption" in early modern economic discourse, noting its shift from an unambiguously negative pathological metaphor to a term also indicating an economically necessary and healthy process.

The individual chapters present strong and illuminating readings of the plays and pamphlets they discuss, and together as a sequence they present a detailed demonstration of Harris's overall thesis that early modern economic thinkers'

attempts to reconceptualize the economy in response to such things as the global expansion of trade and the increasing significance of foreign exchange rates were at least in part enabled by changing medical conceptions of disease. If the book has a limit, however, it lies in the arguments Harris presents to support the contention that changes in economic thought influenced the development of medical thought about disease. Harris really only begins to develop this aspect of his argument in the second half of the book, and while the chapter on *Volpone* makes its case for the influence of economics on medical thought with some success, the following two chapters are less successful in this respect. The links Harris makes between the circulation of treasure and William Harvey's development of the theory of the circulation of blood (chapter six) and the between revised economic understandings of consumption and changing medical understandings of consumption (chapter seven) are suggestive but are not developed with the detail and precision of the rest of the argument. Nonetheless, students of early modern English drama and culture will find *Sick Economies* well worth reading. The book very productively brings together two of the most interesting areas of recent early modern scholarship, significantly furthering our understanding of both while opening up avenues for further investigation.

MATHEW R. MARTIN, *Brock University*

Derek Cohen. *Searching Shakespeare: Studies in Culture and Authority*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. Pp. 232.

In *Searching Shakespeare: Studies in Culture and Authority*, Derek Cohen considers several of Shakespeare's dramas with particular attention to the way in which they establish power relationships. He declares that "the theme that unites this book is the idea of the boundary, that literal, imagined, constructed, or figurative extreme of the Shakespeare experience, where life at its richest and most intense is made almost to seem normal" (p. xv). That theme is pursued through a three-part structure. In the first section of the book, Cohen presents essays about *Othello*, the *Henriad*, *The Tempest*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. In each his stated intention is "to address issues of history, historiography, and the politics that lie beneath the surface of the narrative drama that are always the first causes of plays" (p. xi). The book's second section examines *Othello* again, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, to locate a "different kind of history" in memories of the characters' personal past and "to engage more directly with the human elements of self and identity" (p. xi). Finally a third section considers "messengers of death," such as the killers in *Richard II*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, and "broken human bodies" in *King Lear*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. In this section, Cohen hopes "to explore the relationship between life as presented in the plays and the boundaries that contain them" (p. xii). Readers familiar with Derek Cohen's other books will recognize in this study concerns that he has dealt