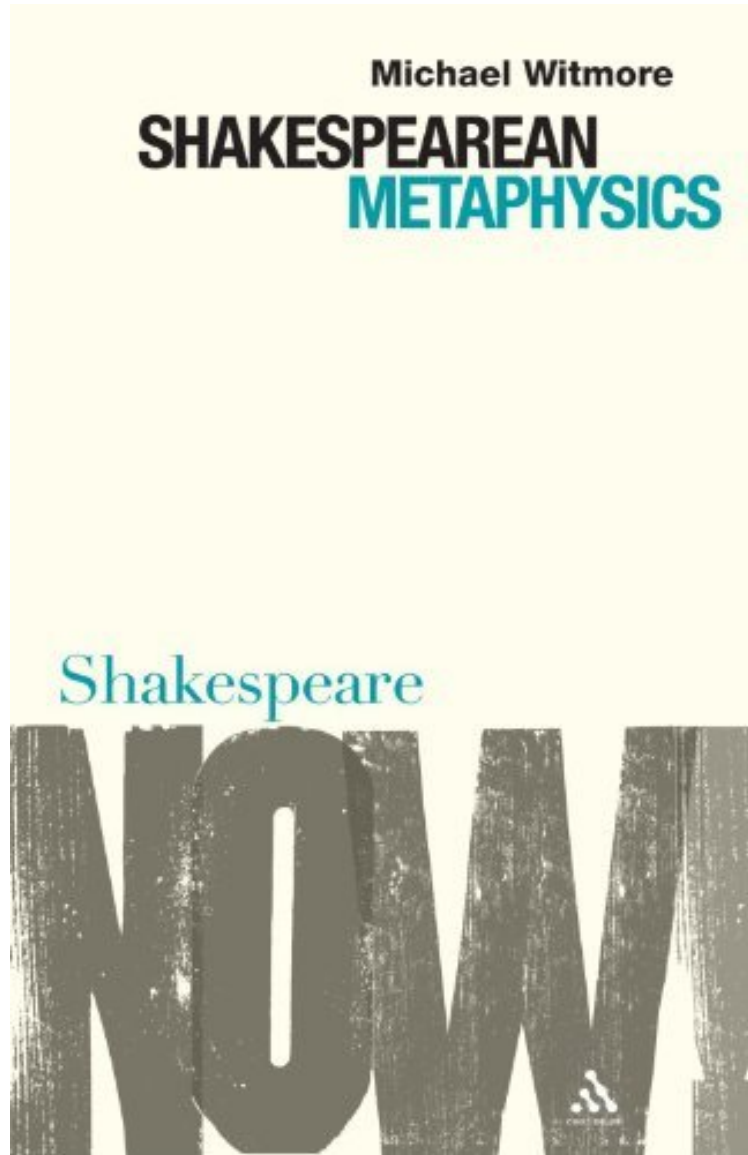


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## Shakespearean Metaphysics (Shakespeare Now!)

*Michael Witmore*

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**Michael Witmore : Shakespearean Metaphysics (Shakespeare Now!)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shakespearean Metaphysics (Shakespeare Now!):

Metaphysics is usually associated with that part of the philosophical tradition which asks about 'last things', questions such as: How many substances are there in the world? Which is more fundamental, quantity or quality? Are events prior to things, or do they happen to those things? While he wasn't a philosopher, Shakespeare was obviously

interested in 'ultimates' of this sort. Instead of probing these issues with argument, however, he did so with plays. Shakespearean Metaphysics argues for Shakespeare's inclusion within a metaphysical tradition that opposes empiricism and Cartesian dualism. Through close readings of three major plays - The Tempest, King Lear and Twelfth Night - Witmore proposes that Shakespeare's manner of depicting life on stage itself constitutes an 'answer' to metaphysical questions raised by later thinkers as Spinoza, Bergson, and Whitehead. Each of these readings shifts the interpretative frame around the plays in radical ways; taken together they show the limits of our understanding of theatrical play as an 'illusion' generated by the physical circumstances of production.

'Foregrounding dramaturgy (the staging of bodies, audience, the materiality of performance) in Twelfth Night, King Lear, and The Tempest rather than ideas voiced in speeches, and deploying a different philosopher mdash; Whitehead, Bergson, Spinoza mdash; for each play, Witmore builds a compelling vision of Shakespeare as a metaphysician of immanence...Lucid and original.' - Brian Rotman, Professor, Department of Comparative Studies, Ohio State University, USAMention mdash;Book News, February 2009'Witmore's literary analyses of the plays' dramatic details are generally excellent...and his prose in most explications is supple, lucid, and often nicely poetic.' (English Studies, Vol 91, No 6)'Foregrounding dramaturgy (the staging of bodies, audience, the materiality of performance) in Twelfth Night, King Lear, and The Tempest rather than ideas voiced in speeches, and deploying a different philosopher mdash; Whitehead, Bergson, Spinoza mdash; for each play, Witmore builds a compelling vision of Shakespeare as a metaphysician of immanencehellip;Lucid and original.' - Brian Rotman, Professor, Department of Comparative Studies, Ohio State University, USAMention ndash;Book News, February 2009 ed in Routledge ABESAbout the AuthorMichael Witmore is Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA. His book, Culture of Accidents: Unexpected Knowledges in Early Modern England (Stanford, 2001) was the co-winner of the Perkins Prize for the Study of Narrative Literature in 2003. He is also the author of Pretty Creatures: Children and Fiction in the English Renaissance (Cornell, 2007)