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RYAN NETZLEY

A decade ago, Gordon Teskey's version of this review maintained that the profession was in "full flight" from art, "the only truly prophetic activity of the Renaissance," and that we should about-face and return to that thing worth writing criticism about, the thing that prompts a "mental fight" as opposed to the gradual, we're-all-in-this-together approach of the sciences. Art, in Teskey's estimation, "is about taking sides."¹ If literary criticism has not entirely heeded this call, rushing back to art or agonistic criticism with open arms and hearts, many of the volumes on offer this year have done so in part, seriously attending to literary art as form, as lesson for the present, as evidence of historical strangeness. Yet the methodological variety that Catherine Bates noted last year in her review is also still in evidence.² That's a salutary trend that bespeaks an active, even vibrant discipline. This year saw important methodological work in the digital humanities, and work with wide-ranging conceptual ramifications in pedagogy, religion, political economy, and science studies. There were also a surprising number—at least to this reviewer—of studies of reception and adaptation. Interdisciplinarity remains a pervasive influence, often utilizing another discipline to augment literary study's understanding of its own concepts, historical periodizations, and practices. When interdisciplinarity has a baleful influ-

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ence, it's less that it distracts us from art, as Teskey worried, than that it sometimes seems bent on promoting a complexity without conflict. The best interdisciplinary work this year returns us not just to literary art, but also poses valuable questions about the nature of the literary and its modern profession, that is, how the professional study of literature, and all that entails, shapes the concept of the literary and its position in a broader relational network. Finally, most of the works I reviewed make an at least implicit and often explicit case for the value of literature and literary study. Thus, the scolding assertion that literary study (or the humanities writ large) hasn't made a concerted or public enough case for its value, that staple of higher education journalism for the past decade, seems, at least to me, especially bankrupt. Whoever's been writing those articles hasn't been reading recent studies in the English Renaissance.³

SINGULARITY AND RELATION

The two most intriguing books on English Renaissance literature this year prompt a welcome rethinking of critical conceptions of publicness, connectedness, and relation in general. They show how one might ask interesting, capacious, expansive questions through literature, not only or primarily by thinking of literature as a moment within a broader and more important network. One of these takes solitude and speechlessness as its focus. The other tracks a single poem across its entire production, dissemination, editorial, and interpretive history.

Andrew Mattison's *Solitude and Speechlessness: Renaissance Writing and Reading in Isolation* crisply diagnoses the critical tendency to regard literature as a social phenomenon, to find social relation and the desire for it everywhere. Mattison organizes his study as an examination of the ways in which early modern literature expressly considers and rejects the presupposition that social context is king. Early on, he also hints at the ways in which this presupposition breeds an impoverished understanding of authors' motives: if all literature is social, then their motives can only be status or cash.

The clearest and most compelling test case for this thesis occurs in Mattison's reading of Andrew Marvell and the ways in which attempts to explain Marvell's lyrics founder on the presupposition of their primarily social aims. But there's also a nuance to individual chapters that makes this book more than variations on the introductory framing theme. The first chapter

on Aemilia Lanyer, Fulke Greville, Samuel Daniel, and the Philip Sidney circle asks readers to reconsider ambition as wandering, even grasping at straws, as opposed to our more modern notion of goal-oriented behavior, a reconsideration made even more pressing given early modern thinkers' suspicions that the pursuit of a general "excellence" risks obsessive specialization (p. 33). This chapter also deftly shows how print for Lanyer becomes a way of separating poetry from its immediate, often failed or pointless, social function. The chapter on Ben Jonson, John Donne, and George Chapman is equally successful, most notably in its reading of the *Anniversaries* as a self-immolating pedagogy of fear. For Mattison, these two poems bespeak a poet who's willing to take difficulty to its nihilistic conclusion: "thinking too complexly about poetry's relation to audience threatens to eliminate that relation altogether, and with it meaning and teaching" (p. 99). This book also points toward a welcome rethinking of some of the deeper structures of literary criticism, some of which likely have their roots in the professional realities of professing literature. Most notable, I think, is the implication that literary criticism's propensity to view itself as producing community blinds it to important features of early modern literary products, especially the ways in which they seek to escape the demand that they demonstrate their value within sociopolitical evaluative systems. The march toward accomplishment that such systems presuppose is fundamentally incompatible with what I think is Mattison's most provocative insight: "Reading has no moment" and lacks "a specific temporality" (p. 16).

Peter Murphy's *The Long Public Life of a Short Private Poem: Reading and Remembering Thomas Wyatt* doesn't come out, guns blazing, with an agonistic challenge to existing interpretive protocols, but its style—alternately breezy and languid—is just as confrontational as the most vitriolic declamation. Murphy's book tells the story of Wyatt's "They flee from me" in a familiar, even informal style that initially had me wondering whether it was primarily imagined as a pedagogical text. Murphy's style leaves some important political and conceptual issues underexplored (e.g., the paradox of a social privacy or the link between algebraic and poetic reasoning). Still, even in his brief attention to such issues, there's a deceptive and suggestive complexity to his analyses, as when he describes how both Cossicke numbers and poetry act as structural systems in which some of the thinking is accomplished in the very act of writing something down: "thinking becomes symbiotic with the representation of thinking: some of the thinking is done by the writing" (p. 59).

Murphy's study and style are subtly and pleasurably convincing in their discussion of fine prosodic and stylistic distinctions. He offers an exceptionally precise description of Wyatt's and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey's styles as well as a compelling account of the distinctiveness of the first edition of *Tottel's Miscellany* and its replication of manuscript culture. The most striking subject in this respect is Murphy's description of how Wyatt's poem becomes or is written so that it might be overheard. His is not just a repetition or confirmation of William Butler Yeats's or Helen Vendler's description of the lyric poem. Nor is it really a complication or critique. Murphy's work is more like a fleshing out that makes something that you think you already know new again (and, it must be noted, better said), a description of how singularity promotes or even programs a type of appropriation, but nonetheless retains its status as singularity.

Murphy's later chapters on the history of Wyatt's poem and its gradual appropriation by a professorial and pedagogical apparatus are equally compelling. His account of Cleanth Brooks's use of the poem, as both a teaching device and a generator of the self-replicating critical essay, provides a striking portrait of the relentless "hectoring" (pp. 186, 207) that is perhaps too often characteristic of professional literary criticism. Murphy also suggestively links Wyatt's own participation in a clandestine Court culture to the poem's deployment in a New Critical context of Cold War propaganda and espionage. That link is, of course, tenuous—apples likely fall farther from their trees than this—but it's a testament to Murphy's style that it doesn't come off as an overblown implausibility. We might balk at the notion that a poem so presciently orders its own affairs, or replicates its own culture and concerns in its readers, but the fact that Wyatt's somewhat bitter poem also animates Murphy's somewhat bitter complaint about modern literary pedagogy seems, in its own way, evidence of this thesis.

I should admit that I have difficulty synopsisizing what Murphy has done here, in part because the tone of the book replicates that of Wyatt's poem—personal and intimate, perhaps even meandering, but still leading somewhere, with quite a few possibilities for the taking up and repurposing. That's not the heavy-handedness of the meta, but rather a fascinating model for how we might re-think literary study's focus on the "how" of meaning. As opposed to writing the "how" into the declarative "that" in our criticism, we might take Murphy's tacit cue and let style do the work of argument. There are limitations to that approach, but it is still

one of the most interesting provocations in the English Renaissance this year.

RELIGION

The most interesting subfield this year is religion, but not just because quite a few monographs have been published on the subject. Rather, what's most exciting is the works' ability to open out onto broader and pressing questions about literature and literary study in the present and, in at least oblique ways, engage the same sorts of broad questions about the nature of the literary that animate Mattison's and Murphy's work. More specifically, this year's work saw several important studies on religious radicalism, all of which pose fundamental questions for literary scholarship: can you do justice to fanaticism or apocalypticism, not only in literature, but in criticism of literature? Or are scholars forced, by the very nature of their practice, to defang radicalism in the interests of explaining and accounting for it?

Ross Lerner's *Unknowing Fanaticism: Reformation Literatures of Self-Annihilation* pivots on the distinction between passivity and activity inherent to the religious fanatic—am I an instrument of God or a devoted actor on God's behalf?—but does so with an impressively sustained focus on how literary form enables or closes off such a position. Throughout, this study, which focuses on Spenser, Donne, Thomas Hobbes, and Milton, circles around two central literary questions: do poems contain zeal by representing it? And if they do, is that contained enthusiasm an imitable model? These are fascinating and compelling questions in a modern world obsessed with (and purportedly obsessed with averting) "radicalization." Lerner's book deftly takes modern criticism to task for too often reading fanatics' motives skeptically and, as a result, not taking violent zeal seriously, let alone its significance in the development of modern notions of individual conviction. This book is most interesting in its account of a singular, inimitable martyrdom in Donne's Holy Sonnets and prose works (especially *Pseudo-Martyr*): such "'unexemplary' martyrdom" is "utterly singular, free from labor, and impervious to the kind of mimetic transmission that can lead to individual or collective political antagonism" (p. 60). Donne is the figure who most clearly denies that one can learn to be a fanatic, but he's also the one who clearly stages the incompatibility of poetry and self-dissolution: "Batter my hart," in particular, shows that "poetic making itself may prepare for but ultimately marks the lack

of the self-annihilation required for martyrdom” (p. 69). After all, an imitable martyrdom is an institutionalized one, a following of orders and models incompatible with kenotic zeal.

Lerner makes a compelling case for the centrality of self-annihilation to the development and conceptualization of religious fanaticism, but that argument leads to two related limitations in his study: 1) the ruling out of nonviolent mysticism as an object of study, a decision that limits how far the book can go in locating the fanatic at the heart of modern subjectivity; and 2) an insistence on ambiguity that forecloses any careful examination of fanaticism as focused, selfless, zealous commitment. The latter limitation appears most prominently in Lerner’s reading of *Samson Agonistes*, which he maintains has a fundamentally ambiguous and “bifurcated structure”: “we cannot differentiate Samson’s passion from his action, or determine whether he is an organ or an agent” (p. 138). Yet there’s an alternative explanation to such indeterminacy: that Milton makes passion and action identical, not ambiguous, and, in so doing, performs a full-throated celebration of religious violence, leaving modern readers no redoubt for their moral squeamishness. In short, I think there’s more to be said about the role of ambiguity, as a tool of criticism and politics, in taming the very revolutionary fanaticism under examination.

Ryan Hackenbracht’s *National Reckonings: The Last Judgment and Literature in Milton’s England* opens with a welcome recognition of this critical problem and a convincing indictment of the recent turn to religion in Renaissance studies. Literary criticism often requires that religiosity appear as an eccentric oddity for its own analyses to function: “the premise of religion’s underlying strangeness becomes a precondition for its study, and belief in the God of Christianity is viewed as akin to a belief in pixies, aliens, bad luck, or fortune cookies” (p. 8). That recognition motivates this study’s attempt to treat eschatology (as distinct from apocalypticism) as a central component of imagining nationhood. Hackenbracht maintains that one of the central mechanisms for imagining the English nation in the seventeenth century is its vertical distinction from the one true church, not just its horizontal distinction from, say, France. Paradoxically, perhaps, the chapters on how eschatology dismantles the nation, those on the Diggers and the Ranters and the Vaughans, as well as the sections on Abdiel in the final chapter, seem the most convincing.

Hackenbracht argues that the Diggers and Ranters both attempt to imagine an eschatological future outside of financial concepts and metaphors. For Gerrard Winstanley, that attempt

ultimately fails and he falls back into a fundamentally capitalist metaphoric. Abiezer Coppe is more successful, replacing money with transactions based on physical touch. Hackenbracht's are interesting readings of these figures, but the chapter remains hazy on whether these are merely mercantile metaphors that Coppe and Winstanley seek to escape, or concepts of redeeming and saving within Christianity itself that they seek to transcend or modify. In other words, do they imagine the continued value of reckoning in the financial sense, or its completion and erasure? A similar question obtains in the chapter on the Vaughans: is the hermetic reckoning that Henry Vaughan envisions still a reckoning, given that it ensures a preservation and repurposing of all that is? Hackenbracht maintains that Vaughan politicizes the devotion present in *The Temple*, but also that he metaphorizes "The Church Militant," turning it into an allegory about the Last Judgment, instead of the more radical transplantation of the true church to America. Hackenbracht's book, like Lerner's, raises important questions about literature's moderating and radicalizing influence on its readers. I think they both have far-reaching implications for whether there is such a thing as "radical literature."

Vanita Neelakanta's *Retelling the Siege of Jerusalem in Early Modern England* doesn't fashion itself as discussion of apocalypticism per se, but it does hint at a potential answer to the aforementioned question: "no." Or rather, even the most politically charged literature tends toward pleasure. Neelakanta's study charts the various uses to which Flavius Josephus's account of the first-century siege and destruction of Jerusalem, and his medieval and early modern editors and translators, were put (in that sense, it's also part of this year's wave of work on reception and adaptation, which I discuss later in this review): from a parable about exile and restoration for the Court of Charles II in John Crowne's *The Destruction of Jerusalem* to a cautionary moral and political allegory in Peter Morwen's *A Compendious and Most Marueilous Histoire of the Latter Times of the Iewes Common Weale*. This book smartly and briskly shows how the Reformation leads to empathy for the suffering Jews in Josephus, not the Roman (and allegorically Catholic) victors. For example, Morwen follows John Foxe in arguing that God often punishes a sinful people (Jews or Protestants) with persecuting rulers (Vespasian or Mary Tudor). Yet Neelakanta also suggests that this is a study about the domestication of apocalyptic or catastrophic narratives into a leisure activity or an academic exercise. That's a fascinating contention that doesn't always receive the attention I think

it deserves in this otherwise fine and eminently readable book.

Barbara Brumbaugh's comprehensive account of the New Arcadia, *Apocalyptic History and the Protestant Cause in Sir Philip Sidney's Revised "Arcadia,"* argues that Sidney's revised version of the romance is a Protestant apocalyptic allegory. In the concluding chapter, Brumbaugh maintains both that the *Arcadia's* imitation of the *Aeneid* implies that it's a complete work and that, nonetheless, the *Arcadia* allegorizes a militant apocalypse requiring human action, or the Protestant cause of her title. I would have liked to have more on how these notions of completeness and incompleteness interact as they're certainly worthy of discussion. In this respect, I think the study's comprehensiveness means that it cannot focus adequate attention, even in a long book, on these matters. Brumbaugh acknowledges early on that the apocalyptic tenor of Sidney's letters is "suggestive rather than conclusive" (p. 19). That formulation applies to too much of the introduction, but isn't just confined to opening scene-setting. The tendency toward speculative suggestiveness appears in later chapters as well, sometimes during pivotal arguments about the apocalyptic resonances of Sidney's romance.

It's not all apocalyptic in the study of religion, as thoughtful attempts to reconceive charity, the soul, the afterlife, and conversion all attest. That's a welcome trend in the study of early modern religion, which, as Paul Stevens notes, often treats its object as an instrumental solution to a problem.⁴ It's also a testament to just how fruitful this area of research continues to be. Evan A. Gurney's *Love's Quarrels: Reading Charity in Early Modern England* is the best of these studies and takes as its object charity's role as a principle governing human affairs, as opposed to a set of optional nice things to do. That's a wide-ranging topic, but one that Gurney handles ably with chapters on Thomas More and William Tyndale, satire and moral reform, Spenser, Jonson, and Thomas Browne and Milton. He also nicely notes that the very notion of the deserving poor requires an elaborate administrative and interpretive apparatus. That's a compelling claim about the roots of interpreting people that I think deserves more attention. The chapter on Jonson shows that for multiple early modern writers—François Rabelais, Thomas Mun, and Samuel Purchas in particular—commerce is charity, that the very notion of "charitable use," a selfless trusteeship, ends up wedding markets and almsgiving (p. 155). Gurney's reading of *Volpone* in this chapter is especially interesting. In that play, gifts act as currency and it turns out that only the eponymous character exhibits any rec-

ognizable contempt for their exchange. In fact, Gurney furthers Craig Muldrew's argument about trust in early modern credit networks by suggesting that charity itself acts as currency in a debt economy. The section on Browne in the final chapter is equally interesting, showing how Browne's heresies stem from a propensity to joinerism, wishing to be part of a charitable community, as opposed to Milton's greater comfort with singularity.

James Jaehoon Lee's *The Two-Soul'd Animal: Early Modern Literatures of the Classical and Christian Souls* does something similar with the concept of the soul, showing how its double nature, a notion inherited from Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and Averroes, provokes early modern writers (Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, and John Davies) to experiment with varieties of Christian freedom. Lee fashions the book as a bridge between philosophy's and history's typical foci when it comes to the soul: Aquinas and Hobbes. The reading of Davies is especially compelling, attempting to harmonize his early verse, *Nosce Teipsum* and *Orchestra*, with his later work on the colonial administration of Ireland. Lee maintains that the first poem presents Adam and Eve's transgression not as a fall into individualized original sin, but rather as the creation of a corporate political state. That's an interesting brand of *felix culpa* that extends to *Orchestra* as well, where lyric beauty, not war or contract, becomes the binding force for human society. Lee acknowledges that these more optimistic moments have a dark side in Davies's political tracts, particularly those that insist on learning English as a civilizing force in Ireland. Yet for all of the interesting work in this chapter, it's not always clear how the book's broader focus on the Aristotelian organic soul and its Christian counterpart is necessary for the argument. That limitation is also apparent in the Donne chapter, where Lee describes the double soul as a problem that Donne seeks to solve. However, Lee's own analysis frequently shows that Donne treats the Aristotelian and Christian notions of the soul as useful rhetorical and poetic gambits. This chapter even concludes with the acknowledgment that, unlike Pietro Pomponazzi (the subject of the first chapter), Donne doesn't consider the two souls a "theological crisis" (p. 126). Given that recognition, it's not always clear that the broader framing of the study—the two-souled animal is a paradox and a problem—is a help and not a hindrance.

Abigail Shinn's *Conversion Narratives in Early Modern England: Tales of Turning* promises to reconceptualize conversion around metaphor and other rhetorical tropes. That's one of the distinguishing features of the study, its focus on rhetorical lit-

eracy, as is its focus on the 1580s, in contradistinction to other works on conversion narratives that begin later in the seventeenth century. That thesis leads to some interesting insights, most notably a discussion of how the celebration of a translator's mediating role amounts to siding with the priestly mediation characteristic of Roman Catholicism. However, despite that opening promise, the book focuses more on how to use and read tropes, how they appear in representations of conversion or persuasions thereto, not how metaphor or other figures are an essential feature of conversion. The chapter on tropes, in fact, surveys the various metaphors—e.g., the hunt—used to figure conversion, but does not offer an analysis of metaphor's role in conversion. The same limitation occurs in the second chapter on the role of books in conversion. By the chapter's end, Shinn can only restate that books and reading play an "instrumental role" in conversion (p. 66).

There are also two single-author monographs worthy of mention that address religious subjects. David V. Urban's *Milton and the Parables of Jesus: Self-Representation and the Bible in John Milton's Writings* is most compelling when it examines Milton's use of the parables (those of the talents, the laborers, the wise and foolish virgins, and the householder, to be precise) as a means of autobiographical self-fashioning. Thus, Urban's chapters on the sonnets (especially 7 and 19) and the early poems, as well as his discussion of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* and *De Doctrina Christiana*, make a persuasive case for Milton's reliance on Jesus's parables as means of ethical self-conception. When the book turns to analogical comparisons between characters in Milton's major poems and the parables, it's less successful, I think, in part because it assumes that parabolic speech has a moderating effect (in this respect, Urban's monograph echoes the concerns of Lerner's and Hackenbracht's volumes). I think that assumption requires more extensive argument and examination here.

John S. Garrison's *Shakespeare and the Afterlife* doesn't focus exclusively on Christian concepts of the afterlife, surveying Shakespeare's dalliance with and representation of pagan notions of what happens after death as well. There are interesting moments in this book, too: Claudio in *Measure for Measure* fantasizing about a privately eroticized death that would escape state control; Garrison's claim that the sonnets end up making the earthly future knowable. The strictures of the Oxford series of which the book is a part likely make this wish unworkable, but I was hoping for more extensive discussion of these compelling moments. Garrison's survey of the afterlife in Shakespeare

is certainly capacious and useful as a teaching text, and even its unfollowed leads will be useful for future interpretations of the plays and poems.

The Oxford Handbook of John Bunyan, edited by Michael Davies and W. R. Owens, contains, in addition to the expected informative work on Bunyan's historical and religious contexts and individual works, extensive sections on future critical directions and Bunyan's influence, adaptation, reception, and appropriation (as that list implies, like others in the Oxford handbook series, this one too is a "handbook" in name only). The most notable chapter in the critical directions section is Lori Branch's, which positions a decidedly untimely Bunyan as a prophet of postsecularity in response to modern rationality. Branch maintains that pivotal poststructuralist work on postsecularity illuminates Bunyan's own conceptual sophistication, in particular his abiding concern with whether faith is something one can ever own. Moreover, reading Bunyan through the lens of postsecularity helps to explain a curious feature of Christian literature: its turn to fantasy literature as a preferred mode. In the final section, on influence and adaptation, we find chapters on Bunyan's influence on the novel, his reception in America, and the role of *Pilgrim's Progress* in creating the genre of children's literature. I think the most intriguing chapter in this section, though, is Gary Day's on Bunyan, class, and national identity, which suggestively concludes that the exchange relationships entailed in Bunyan's allegorical form mirrors money's abstraction. Day's chapter reads both the first and second parts of *Pilgrim's Progress* as a typological history that anticipates its own centrality to the historical heritage and tourism industries in England: history "does indeed occur twice: the first time as struggle, the second time as tourism" (p. 618). What's most salutary about Davies and Owen's handbook is, then, the ways in which it's not just a handbook, but a collection bent on hinting at future avenues for work on Bunyan.

Joseph William Sterrett's collection of essays, *Prayer and Performance in Early Modern English Literature: Gesture, Word, and Devotion*, includes multiple interesting chapters as well as an extremely thoughtful account in the introduction's first pages of how difficult it is to observe dispassionately—anthropologically, sociologically, or just academically—prayer in action without, by that very observation, participating in it. The chief limitation of the collection is, unfortunately, its guiding conceptual light: performativity. That limitation is clearest in Brian Cummings's contribution to the volume, which adroitly shows how J. L. Austin's notion of

performative speech acts has its roots in Reformation debates about sacramental efficacy. Cummings also notes, though, that prayer, like desire, is constant and unending, a notion derived from Augustine but particularly prominent in Martin Bucer, one of the chapter's main foci. However, it's not quite clear how such an endless activity harmonizes with the purposive task-orientation of performativity. The same charge applies to Donald R. Dickson's contribution on Vaughan's prose: it's a compelling account of how his prose, both original compositions and translations, advocates a passive-aggressive "virtuous contempt" (p. 183). However, it's never clear how the retreat from the world that Vaughan counsels translates into a spectacular performativity. Likewise, for the volume's final chapter, an excellent reading of the invocations in *Paradise Lost* as a type of prayer by Noam Reisner. Reisner contends that only in the invocations do we get a sense of what Milton feels about prayer, as opposed to his representation or theoretical contemplation of it elsewhere in his work. That's in part because Milton's a poet of ideas, whereas prayer is an experience. The most provocative and sustained reading here is of the proem to book 1, which argues that, in asking for instruction, the speaker depicts a more humble, optative future than that of the prophetic vates. As a result, it's a prayer about humility, not poetic authority. That's a compelling and important rethinking of the epic's opening, but one that would only be accentuated by a volume that didn't make the brashness of performativity its central organizing thematic.

SCIENCE, AFFECT, AND THE BODY

The two principal works in early modern science studies, like the best work in religion, have implications for literary study beyond their specific subfield. In fact, that's one of the chief selling points of Sheila J. Nayar's *Renaissance Responses to Technological Change*. Nayar promises to focus on the comedic and satiric responses to technological change—specifically, Francis Bacon's three pivotal technologies: print, gunpowder, and the magnetic compass—as opposed to the stentorian seriousness that animates most other critical work on the subject. For example, Nayar's chapter on Rabelais and Miguel de Cervantes shows how, contra Elizabeth Eisenstein, print releases words from a strict regularity and allows for a play of sense. Her reading of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* shows how the lists in Rabelais's poem transmute from an oral copiousness on the Erasmian model to a "propaga-

tive rhetoric” and a taxonomic mania (p. 67). Nayar’s account of *Don Quixote* is equally astute, showing how Cervantes emphasizes print’s role in facilitating slow reading, cross-referencing, fact checking, and even nitpicking: detail means something different in manuscript than in print. These both serve as convincing support for the broader thesis about how technological phenomena fundamentally alter literary elements.

Catherine Gimelli Martin’s edited collection, *Milton and the New Scientific Age: Poetry, Science, Fiction*, promises to add to the already hefty corpus on Milton and early modern science a more thorough discussion of Bacon’s influence on the poet, as well as the importance of chemistry, alchemy, and medicine to his thought. It also includes interesting accounts of Milton’s relationship to Albert Einstein and chance, Isaac Newton, and Paracelsus. However, it’s the essays that use the new science as a challenge to modern criticism’s presuppositions about literature and metaphor that are actually the most striking here. For example, Pavneet Aulakh’s contribution maintains that Milton follows Bacon in treating accommodationist similitude as a scientific instrument, not just as a rhetorical device: comparisons “are not simply *like* scientific instruments ... Rather, they constitute instruments in their own right” (p. 56). That’s in contrast to the metaphorical abuses that Milton and Bacon, as well as Hobbes, find in most verse. The most consequential essay in the volume, though, is Rachel Trubowitz’s account of Galileo Galilei’s mathematical innovations and their impact on Milton. Her contention is that modern criticism has focused, to its detriment, on Galileo’s experimentalism, and thus ignored Milton’s fascination with mathematics as something other than a description of phenomena. In Trubowitz’s telling, modern histories that see a move from transcendent deduction to empirical induction have the story backwards: “If we consider Galileo in relationship to geometricization, however, he is the idealizer, while Aristotle is the empirical observer of natural phenomena” (p. 91). Milton celebrates this aspect of Galileo, then, at the expense of the experimentalist and empiricist. That’s a reading that lands a severe blow against not only materialist and monist readings, but some of criticism’s key normative terms: substance, significance, concrete.

Suparna Roychoudhury’s *Phantasmatic Shakespeare: Imagination in the Age of Early Modern Science* finds in five of Shakespeare’s plays and the sonnets the empirical and early scientific turn away from faculty psychology. However, to do so, this study asserts that a reconceptualization of the imagination was broadly

in the air, the “intellectual welter” and “discursive ripple” of the period (p. 16). Roychoudhury’s chapter on the sonnets outlines the ways in which Petrarchan love is a product of imaginative creation, but it’s not clear how the discussion of the imagined bodies of Andreas Vesalius factor into such a reading. That is, if the sonnets don’t mention imagination or fancy, then it’s not clear why imagination would be the focal explanation for their presentation of conflict between eye and heart. Conversely, if Roychoudhury wants to focus on the opportunistic possibilities entailed in imagination’s malleability, it’s not clear why Vesalius or empirical anatomy or early modern science is necessary at all. Bonnie Lander Johnson and Eleanor Decamp’s essay collection, *Blood Matters: Studies in European Literature and Thought, 1400–1700*, focuses on the variety of early modern conceptions of blood: as feature of circulatory exchange, as mark or symbol of vulnerability or wounding, as a corruption or taint requiring pedagogical removal, as proof or evidence, and as a type of sacramental presence. There are valuable contributions throughout this volume, several of them keyed to Shakespeare’s plays, but the most interesting is Lesel Dawson’s on “cruentation,” the process whereby a corpse bleeds in the presence of its murderer.

There is also one valuable book examining affect and imagination in early modernity. Giulio J. Pertile’s *Feeling Faint: Affect and Consciousness in the Renaissance* is part of the continuing critical attempt to work out the affective turn in literary studies. Pertile’s salutary addition to this working out is a rehabilitation (or just plain reading) of René Descartes, the *bête noire* of body studies for over two decades. Pertile shows early on how consciousness in early modernity is a sensing, not the superior power characteristic of Enlightenment faculty psychology and its infatuation with sovereignty. This study focuses on fainting and swooning in Michel de Montaigne, Spenser, and Shakespeare because they are both events that allow consciousness itself to be an object of analysis, as opposed to a thing always destroyed in the attempt to inspect it. Moreover, the swoon is no longer visionary or ecstatic, but a means of more firmly enmeshing individuals in life. Thus, Pertile reads Hermione’s resurrection in *A Winter’s Tale* as driven by an “organismal” life, not an allegorized theology (p. 126). In doing so, he maintains that Shakespeare’s play shows how feeling and consciousness are primordially public, before they get siloed into individuals, and that it’s this social order that Leontes fatally repudiates early in the play.

ECOCRITICISM AND ANIMAL STUDIES

A number of books this year use ecocriticism or animal studies to look at prior topics with new eyes. Benjamin Bertram's *Bestial Oblivion: War, Humanism, and Ecology in Early Modern England* asks readers to reconsider some of our cherished condemnatory epithets about war (e.g., that it's "dehumanizing" [p. 2]) in light of ecological consciousness. He also makes a solid case for focusing on early modernity as the period in which war not only becomes deadlier, but also perpetual, largely as a result of the increased resources available for its prosecution. I also think that Bertram is right to note how ecocriticism has been haunted by a pastoral focus that ignores warfare as an object of study. While the individual chapters on Desiderius Erasmus, Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Digges, Christopher Marlowe, *Hamlet*, Thomas Coryate, and Bacon provide interesting descriptions of each writer's understanding of war and its connection to the nonhuman, it's the nature of that "connection" that never gets clearly conceptualized. That is, Bertram writes often of nonhuman "assemblages," but sometimes uses Gilles Deleuze as his baseline, sometimes Bruno Latour, without a clear explanation of why the differences between these two thinkers wouldn't matter.

Peter Remien's *The Concept of Nature in Early Modern English Literature* explores the imbrication of early modern notions of economy and nature, seeking ultimately to examine ecological thinking before ecology proper. To do so, Remien turns to Kenelm Digby's notion of an "oeconomy of nature." The study reads Margaret Cavendish and Jonson as part of a natural economy tradition where humans form part of the natural world, in contrast to the strict separation present in Digby's concept and the work of Marvell and George Herbert. The chapter on Herbert is especially compelling, showing not only how *The Country Parson* presents humans as part of an efficient providential system, even when they don't recognize it, but also how salvation requires moving beyond mere household economy to a series of market exchanges. Remien also contends that *The Temple's* frequent turn to plant life as a model for selfless salvation (think I "wish I were a tree" from "Affliction [I]") is part of Herbert's general interest in "perpetual devotion machines" (p. 115). In his chapter on Milton, Remien smartly adds to the already established notion that Adam and Eve err in seeking to speed up progress, that their initial error is the sin of efficiency. However, the use of Digby as a conceptual frame leads to some less-convincing readings of individual passages; for

example, that natural fecundity in the garden “needs” (p. 146) or “requires” (p. 131) labor to organize it and that Eve’s attempt to improve food’s quality by storing it amounts to frugality.

Somewhat unexpectedly, confirmation of Remien’s thesis comes from another book: Erica Fudge’s *Quick Cattle and Dying Wishes: People and Their Animals in Early Modern England*. Fudge’s study examines a large set of wills and their disposition of animals (some named, some counted) and what they can recover for us about the lives of and human disposition toward animals as property, as food, as resource, and as coworkers. There’s interesting information throughout this book, like the disposition of poultry primarily to women and the relative personalization of cows at the expense of herds of sheep, teams of horses, and gaggles of pigs. The fact that the focus on animal studies often slips from view, as it must, in Fudge’s discussion of wills shows just how imbricated economy and ecology were and are.

These are all extremely interesting studies, but they all lack the general literary and literary critical purchase that’s so often present in the work on religion. That, to me, seems the most fruitful avenue for future research and writing in ecocriticism and animal studies, work that would take it beyond its topical and thematic subspecialty to alter the way that we imagine the literary as such and the profession of literature. That’s the focus, in fact, of Vin Nardizzi and Tiffany Jo Werth’s *Premodern Ecologies in the Modern Literary Imagination*, an essay collection that takes as its organizing principle a meditation on the present uses of the premodern for ecological and environmentalist thought. Nardizzi and Werth have asked their contributors to write more personal and presentist meditations, and then paired them with interlocutors and respondents. That makes for some extremely thoughtful and conceptually suggestive essays. Frances E. Dolan explores California wine-growers’ willy-nilly appropriation of the premodern as a mark of authenticity; David Matthews investigates the ways in which the use of a neogothic style for nineteenth-century railway architecture has shifted into a decidedly different signifying register in the twenty-first century (i.e., it’s now “heritage,” but one that won’t return us to a premodern, more authentic past [p. 262]). The most suggestive essays in the volume, I think, are those that tackle modern critical and professional practices head-on. Sharon O’Dair’s advocates an ascetic, slowed professionalism—one that is “barely competitive and not-quite professional” (p. 171)—that might retard the neoliberal fetishization of productivity and growth. Most compelling is David K. Coley’s

chapter on failure, which provocatively notes that catastrophe, as a downturn or waning of energy, is “the inescapable order of all things” (p. 185). That’s not a recipe for quietism in Coley’s estimation, but rather a prompt to rethink whether our failure to engage presentist environmental concerns has its own paradoxically beneficial rationale: “I want to believe that my work on the signal environmental and cultural catastrophe of the late Middle Ages remains a failure that, in its best moments, tacitly implicates the world of the past with the global ‘now,’ a failure that whispers the ecological and cultural traumas of history so as to quietly interrogate the ongoing traumas that shadow the present” (pp. 191–2). I take this suggestive conclusion to be asking us to rethink the value of the secure, positive analogy between premodern and modern for ecocriticism, but also for any politically inflected interpretive work.

POLITICAL ECONOMY AND POLITICAL CRISIS

The most interesting work on literature and politics this year focuses on matters economic. Foremost among these is Liam D. Haydon’s *Corporate Culture: National and Transnational Corporations in Seventeenth-Century Literature*, which seeks to chart literature’s response to the consolidation and spread of the joint-stock company and recapture the more expansive notion of the corporation present in the seventeenth century. This study looks not only at imaginative literature, but also the propaganda produced by corporations themselves. However, its readings of canonical texts are its strongest feature. For example, Haydon argues that Milton’s *A Maske* shows the Lady advocating a redistributive economy, as opposed to Comus’s more aristocratic (and “trickle-down”) largesse (p. 112). As a result, she doesn’t just condemn Comus on moral grounds, but economic ones, a point often missed by critical commentators. Haydon situates this reading in a forceful account of the complexity of the concept of “exchange” in early modernity, especially the corporation’s role in promoting “productive exchange” (p. 96). However, if there’s a limitation here, it’s that Haydon doesn’t lavish the same interpretive attention on other texts as he does on *A Maske*. There’s an example of this in the final chapter, on religion and corporations, where Haydon provocatively notes how John Maynard suggests that exchange itself produces truth (as opposed merely to transmitting it). That’s a fascinating claim that deserves much more extensive discussion.

Still this book should prompt quite a lot of future research, both within and in opposition to the New Economic Criticism.

Political economy also features prominently in easily one of the most bracing collections that I read for this review: Sharon O'Dair and Timothy Francisco's *Shakespeare and the 99%: Literary Studies, the Profession, and the Production of Inequality*. Francisco and O'Dair's introduction sets the stage for a challenging (intellectually, professionally, and even personally) group of essays by naming the unspoken in most accounts of humanities pedagogy at the graduate and undergraduate level: that we've all participated in a betrayal of students; that betrayal isn't a populist phantasm, but an economic fact. These essays aren't just screeds about professors' complicity and culpability, though. The two essays that open the volume, by Denise Albanese and Doug Eskew, stage a pivotal debate about alienation, that central concept both for literary criticism and for teaching literature. Eskew's essay takes aim at the prevailing mantra to "meet students where they are" (p. 54) and argues for the pedagogical and intellectual value of alienation—along the way showing how the deestranging annotation of *Richard II* substitutes progressive pieties for real defamiliarization. Albanese argues, in contrast, that the hermeneutics of suspicion, the skeptical approach to poems and plays that we instruct students to adopt, is an explicitly alienating strategy, and one that seems decidedly at odds with the Marxist aim of countering alienation. Moreover, Albanese insists that we too often assume Shakespeare's value in starting with the project of demystification and, in so doing, ignore the fact that our own historical situation is not the same as that motivating Bertolt Brecht's injunctions to estrangement or Theodor Adorno's distinction between high and mass cultures.

Sometimes, though, the bracing features of these essays don't pan out. Daniel Vitkus's contribution is clarion call for a return to *longue-durée* metanarratives as a way to resist capitalism, but one that's limited by its reliance on thematic analogies between Shakespeare's plays and current events: this manifesto never considers the possibility that such thematic analogies are themselves the motor force of a consumerist and exchange capitalist capitalism, one that wants to see similarity, relation, and, thus, commensurability everywhere (this problem haunts other work in the political vein as well). More successful in this respect is Mara I. Amster's chapter on the similarity between the education of Katherine in *Henry V* and Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew* and modern university diversity discourses. For Amster, university public rela-

tions materials mirror the instrumentalization of women's learning that we see in both of these plays, where a woman's learning demonstrates and burnishes the virtue of her husband-teacher. Just as insidious is the extent to which such marketing turns the enrollment of underrepresented students into a benefit for rich white students (p. 94). Amster's essay then highlights the evil at the heart of the win-win situation. Fayaz Kabani takes a similar tack, using *1 Henry IV* to show the sinister side of marketing pabulum about self-actualized, critical-thinking agency that characterizes many a university recruitment brochure. This reading suggests that Hal's good-natured joking, code switching, and chatting with lower-class tapsters in their own language is the portrait of a manipulative, Machiavellian tyrant, not the ethically sound output of higher education.

The political, as a sphere distinct from or superior to the economic, also gets a hefty amount of treatment. Matthew C. Augustine's *Aesthetics of Contingency: Writing, Politics, and Culture in England, 1639–89*, although it takes aim at political partisanship as an organizing principle of intellectual and literary history, is strongest in its account of the inability of revisionist historiography to alter conventional literary history. That's the rationale for Augustine's revised periodization, 1639–89, one that would reject the easy transition point of the interregnum. If there's a problem with this organizing frame, it's not the periodization itself, but that Augustine could spend more time on revisionism's political and polemical edge: the evacuation of class conflict from historiography and even history. That's an important omission in an otherwise gripping framing of literary study's immunity to historiography (despite decades of purported infection). Augustine's chapter on Milton is part of a wave of recent work, sparked by Thomas N. Corns and Gordon Campbell's biography, that seeks to correct the backward-looking inevitability of much Milton criticism. His chapter on Marvell shifts deftly between early modern controversy and the professional and political purchase of modern interpretation, arguing that when we read Marvell as or through Milton, we replicate the jabs of his polemical opponents. Just as importantly, we tend to ignore the real literary similarities between these two authors: an interest in personal satire and invective. A recognition of that link, Augustine rightly notes, would substantially alter not just how we Miltonize Marvell, but how we read Milton.

This sort of self-critical, self-reflexive account of literary studies is much more salutary than Stephen Greenblatt's eminently

readable narrative argument for Shakespeare's modern political salience: *Tyrant: Shakespeare on Politics*. That's not because the popular idiom of the literary historical yarn, which Greenblatt has pretty much mastered, is inadequately rigorous. For example, Greenblatt provides a reading of power's obliquity in the Exton scene of *Richard II* that's conceptually astute, compelling, and brisk, showing in a few pages how we misunderstand power and tyranny if we think of it as barking out deceptive orders and having people follow them. It's incongruous, then, that this is precisely the framing image for the book: "Why do large numbers of people knowingly accept being lied to?" (p. 1). That false-consciousness, rubes-over-the-hill thesis seems at odds with Greenblatt's reading of the Exton scene, in which power doesn't need to speak and, thus, doesn't need to lie. In addition, the political diagnosis in this book leads to less-than-convincing readings of some of the plays. Most notable in this respect is the chapter on *Coriolanus*, in which Greenblatt argues, against the run and structure of the play, that the tribunes are Rome's saviors. By the coda, though, this too seems mistaken, as the study concludes with the notion that sheer contingency is the best antidote to tyranny: "The incalculable number of factors constantly in play make it impossible for an idealist or a tyrant, a Brutus or a Macbeth, to remain securely in charge of the course of events" (p. 188). That's an exceedingly interesting claim about Shakespeare—that we shouldn't worry our head about it as the world will not go the better for our striving—but one that seems explicitly to contradict the book's *raison d'être*: that Shakespeare's plays focus on and have something to tell us about tyranny. This concluding notion seems to suggest that he wasn't too chuffed about it. I'd have much rather read the book that took this tack and showed Shakespeare to be an anarchist cynic, one who thought that Jack Cade's rebellion was worth playing for laughs. In fact, I think that Shakespeare would be a much more revolutionary and resistant figure than the liberal moralist that Greenblatt sometimes constructs.

Stephen B. Dobranski's wide-ranging collection on the transition to modernity, *Political Turmoil: Early Modern British Literature in Transition, 1623–1660*, and Kristen Poole and Lauren Shohet's equally capacious *Gathering Force: Early Modern British Literature in Transition, 1557–1623*, are part of a three-volume series. Each volume focuses not just on political transformations and crises, but attendant or concomitant local, cultural, and generic changes: in fact, those are the organizing sections across both volumes. Dobranski's volume contains essays on erotic and devotional

lyrics, Cromwellian portraiture, women and print culture, the transformation of georgic that attends modern agriculture, and international commerce; Poole and Shohet's chapters emphasize Bacon's notion of sacrality and religious texts, lyric and spiritualism, and the political-aesthetic imbrication of the masque form. Even when the essays included can only survey the subject under consideration, they often contain fascinating individual readings and insights. For example, Stephen Guy-Bray's discussion, in Dobranski's volume, of the severance of erotic and devotional verse of the period in question includes an especially astute reading of Robert Herrick's "To the Virgins," which he notes is not really a *carpe diem* poem at all, but a poem of disinterested moral advice. It's addressed to a collective, after all, and that collective's decision to follow its advice doesn't concern the speaker. The best of these essays do a superior, if subtle, job of connecting these historically specific analyses to modern political, economic, and educational concerns. Todd Butler's chapter on educational reform is perhaps the most striking in this respect. It outlines Bacon's complaints about overeducated impracticality, which results from a surfeit of grammar schools, as well as the Hartlib circle's radical project of a state-run comprehensive educational system. There are obvious echoes of modern debates here, but Butler has set up his account so deftly that they don't even need highlighting. The essays in Poole and Shohet's volume are, if anything, even more suggestive and expansive in their conclusions. Catherine Bates's chapter on the sonnet's transformation from element in a miscellany to part of a cycle or sequence points to the ways in which that transition enacts a concerted meditation on temporality. Just as interesting is her brief exposition of how Petrarch's adoption of the Ovidian Apollo's position authorizes later mutations of the Petrarchan tradition: *aemulatio* instead of mere *imitatio*. The essay concludes with a discussion of reciprocity and exchange as the root of the sonnet sequence that is a testament to the quality of the volume. Equally interesting is Liza Blake's reading of Donne's lyrics, "The Damp" in particular, as an epistemological method, one that perhaps forces readers to imagine or construct a connection between disconnected stanzas. Blake finds a similarity there with Bacon's aphoristic method, which asks readers to test whether analogies are really there, or mere projections. In that respect, this chapter boldly tackles, in a very small space, the problem of analogy that so bedevils ecocriticism and many studies of early modern globalization.

The premise of Paulina Kewes and Andrew McRae's *Stuart Succession Literature: Moments and Transformations* is that there's no Stuart succession that doesn't amount to a crisis and, as a result, produce a wide variety of literary engagements. The collection includes essays that address the individual transitions, including the Cromwellian succession during the interregnum, as well as how genres—sermons, royal entries, coins, prose panegyric—alter over the seventeenth century. For example, McRae's essay on panegyric verse shows how this genre, throughout the century, never merely amounts to a fawning compliance, but rather elevates the value of the poet's or subject's assent, valuation, and judgment in multiple ways. Most notable in this respect is McRae's contention that newsbooks fundamentally change panegyric, giving the sheer fact of witnessing a power that it didn't have before. Like Augustine's monograph, this volume, which is part of a larger project on Stuart succession literature, also poses important questions for traditional historical periodization.

Some of the essays in *Texts and Readers in the Age of Marvell*, edited by Christopher D'Addario and Augustine, have similar consequences for periodization: D'Addario notes as much in his introduction and such a rethinking is the focus of Steven N. Zwicker's afterword. The unifying theme of the volume is moving beyond not just binary thinking, but a primarily antagonistic binary thinking. The essays that do that best, by Michael McKeon and Joad Raymond, deal less with the political per se than the aesthetic as a haunting feature of historicist work. Raymond's chapter, on Marvell's adaptation of newsbook accounts of Charles's execution in "An Horatian Ode," is especially noteworthy in this respect. Raymond argues that what's strikingly novel about the poem, and what repays rereading, is not Marvell's "prosody or his weighing of political allegiance, but his commitment to the evidence, to the messy, non-literary material that he reworks" (p. 50). The recognition of that documentary feature of Marvell's verse not only differentiates it from other figurative enterprises, but also hints, for Raymond, at the "literary nature of political argument" (p. 33). Moments like these throughout the volume make the clearest case, if not for an age of Marvell, at least for his particular timeliness for modern readers.

Rory Loughnane's introduction to *Staged Normality in Shakespeare's England*, a collection that he and Edel Semple edited, acknowledges the paradoxical task of writing both about normality, the background hum of the everyday, and theatrical performance, purportedly the opposite of that. Some of the essays here square

this circle by insisting on the aggressively insistent nature of normality, even in an early *modernity*. However, that more fruitful approach is often less in evidence than the oscillatory framework whereby the theatrical effect works against the normal as a foil, for contrast and emphasis. The most interesting chapter here is Kristine Johanson's on the portrait of regulated and wasted time in Shakespeare. For Johanson, the notion of waste requires an understanding of the normal as efficient productive use. I think that's undoubtedly right, but "social norm" then seems too capacious a concept to get at the tacit and taut imperative to produce and not waste: that imperative seems the cause, not the effect, of the quest for statistical norms.

As with prior years, this one included several works on early modern cosmopolitanism, globalization, transnationalism, and, at least implicitly, their relationship to modernity. Chenxi Tang's *Imagining World Order: Literature and International Law in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1800* focuses on literature's role in developing the notion of international law. That is, before there is an International Criminal Court, there is the tragedy of extralegal royal action and the imagined connectedness of romance. There are compelling individual readings here—most notably Tang's contention that Racine's confessional confidante represents the gradual creation of a private individual separate from the public sphere implied by a dramatic chorus. However, there's a capaciousness to some of the conceptual categories in this study that results in hasty confluences. For example, the project opens with the contention that juridical and "poetic judgment" have a "close affinity" (p. 16), but Tang gives "poetic judgment" so expansive a sense that it's not clear whether it means represented evaluations within tragedy, a narrative mythos, or even critical evaluations of aesthetic works. Similarly, Tang maintains that Shakespeare's romances serve as a transition to the theatrical representation of international relations later in the seventeenth century. That's a fascinating claim, but it rests on the argument that tragedy conjures international law via its pronounced absence in plays. It's not clear to me how a "stubbornly unavailable" (p. 169) international order in these plays leads to international law. There's an argument to be made here, but the book often gives such literary arguments short shrift, preferring instead the different, but interesting, literature of peace treaty compendia.

Edward McLean Test's *Sacred Seeds: New World Plants and Early Modern English Literature* orients a discussion of transatlantic trade and colonization around four New World plants—prickly

pear cactus, tobacco, guaiac, and amaranth—and their literary appropriation. That leads to some fascinating insights, like Test's suggestion that Jonson's denigration of tobacco rests on a commercial relationship to the plant, one decidedly different than Spenser's more mythical and premarket conception. Similarly, Test's notion that Greco-Roman myths get "indigenized" in the period seems exceedingly fruitful. Yet the book sometimes reads like a survey of mentions (Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, several masques, and Donne's Elegy 19 also show up in the chapter on tobacco, for example) and, thus, can't always allot adequate attention to its most interesting insights. A similar problem occurs in Patricia Akhimie and Bernadette Andrea's edited collection, *Travel and Travail: Early Modern Women, English Drama, and the Wider World*. There are interesting essays here, most notably Suzanne Tartamella's chapter on the Book of Ruth as a source for *As You Like It*, and one expects an essay collection to be somewhat diffuse, but here, as with the other work on early modern globalization, I think that diffuseness tends to wash out some of the essays' interesting critical possibilities. For example, Dyani Johns Taff's essay on *Pericles* and *The Blazing World* promises to use these two texts to chart a "messy, contested relationship between travel and labor" (p. 273), but that chart leads mainly to a reaffirmation of that complexity. I don't have a ready-made solution to this problem of writing about a global totality, but I do think that it's the ready-made task for future research in this area.

RACE, SEXUALITY, DISABILITY

Important work in queer theory, disability studies, and critical race theory appeared this year, as did a retrospective introduction to postcolonial theory in Shakespeare.

The most interesting essays in David L. Orvis's edited collection, *Queer Milton*, are those that don't assume that the human is or should be the object of human desire and those that take temporality itself as a subject of investigation. Most notable among these is Lara Dodds's contribution on queer adaptations of Raphael's account of angelic desire. Dodds maintains that even queer criticism of this passage exhibits the sort of presumptive knowledge that Valerie Traub anatomizes: the presumption that "*we all know what sex is*" (p. 154). Modern criticism, in this case, takes Raphael's description of "pure desiring" to be a sex that's also conveniently the sign of presumptive antinormativity. Her essay concludes with the bracing suggestion that Raphael

Carter's *The Fortunate Fall* (1996), a cyberpunk adaptation of this episode in *Paradise Lost*, suggests the limitations of a monist materialism for any critical account of what the angels are doing in their pure desiring. Equally provocative is Steven Swarbrick's argument that biopolitics no longer makes sense as the dominant conceptual paradigm in a period (both our own and Milton's) where the management of nonliving resources is the key issue. Swarbrick contends that ecology's obsession with life and its sustainability amounts to another brand of reproductive—and heteronormative—futures. Ecocritical readings of *Paradise Lost* that valorize rootedness and condemn abstraction end up ignoring, in Swarbrick's reading, the epic's revolutionary break with presumed human duration, the idea that the earth is only as old as human history. Lee Edelman's account of reproductive futurity informs other essays in the volume as well, most notably Melissa E. Sanchez's reading of *A Maske*. Here, what's most striking about the Lady's paean to a reasonable chastity is the fact that she doesn't use reason to defeat Comus, but rather appeals to the enthusiastic and sympathetic brute force of nature. As a result, Milton's masque shows how reproductive futurism is itself imposed by force, not the efflorescence of reason. More interesting, I think, than this ultimate recognition is Sanchez's provocative suggestion that present pleasure alone isn't the draw of sex for Milton: rather, "multiplication" is (p. 187). That suggestion aligns her argument with Swarbrick's and gives this collection, with decidedly different understandings of queer criticism and theory, a welcome unity. Erin Murphy's framing introductory essay is a welcome critical history and methodological stock-taking. Her diagnosis of how and why Milton criticism evaded an engagement with queer theory and queer reading practices, through a turn to feminist historicism, seems both thoughtful and sound (p. 9). She also makes an exceedingly compelling case for the danger of a reparative reading that just skips critique so as to celebrate the positive.

Elizabeth B. Bearden's *Monstrous Kinds: Body, Space, and Narrative in Renaissance Representations of Disability* is a valuable survey of how monstrosity and disability get deployed in conduct manuals and travel narratives in early modern Europe. Although it acknowledges the complexity of "monstrosity" as a category in the early modern period, it does not grapple adequately with the ways that complexity might in turn complicate the political aims of disability studies: does the demonstrative, significant deviation implied by "monstrosity" work against attempts to destigmatize

disability and, moreover, undermine the normative logic at work within modern cultures? For example, I cannot follow how the particular monstrosity of conjoined twins resist “norms of time and space, enabling their humanity” (p. 203). In part, that difficulty stems from the breadth of Bearden’s argument: on the one hand, this book emphasizes that monsters are real people with disabilities; on the other, it applies a taxonomic system that metaphorizes “monstrosity.” I would have liked to read more on this conceptual issue, how a metaphorical monstrosity enables a focus on the lived experiences of disability in early modernity or today.

Early Modern Black Diaspora Studies: A Critical Anthology, edited by Cassander L. Smith, Nicholas R. Jones, and Miles P. Grier, promises to focus on African agency and activity in early modernity. As the editors note, that general approach courts charges of anachronism, but the best essays in the volume tackle this issue head-on. Lauren Shook’s chapter on Toni Morrison’s *A Mercy* explores how religious discourses, and the conflicts between confessional identities in particular, animate American racism. In Morrison’s novel, the unredeemable black body appears as the means for deflecting and even defusing conflicts within Christendom. Some of the other attempts at bridging this disciplinary divide are less successful. David Sterling Brown’s chapter on *Titus Andronicus* seeks to establish resonances between Shakespeare’s play and the Black Lives Matter movement, but too hastily transmutes Aaron’s revenge into an expression of a more acceptable “black pride” (p. 139). That transmutation is worthy of more examination than the essay offers, especially given Aaron’s explanation for blackness’s superiority: its refusal to transmute into another hue by blushing. Perhaps it’s asking too much for these essays to spend more time on these matters, but I do think the volume would benefit from more space for these sorts of examinations, as opposed to the concluding four essays that form a professional and disciplinary roundtable.

Jyotsna G. Singh’s *Shakespeare and Postcolonial Theory* is part of a lucid series from Arden on theory’s value for Shakespeare studies. Singh’s volume is at its best when it’s considering modern global adaptations (in part III) or examining plays typically not part of the postcolonial interpretation canon, such as *Antony and Cleopatra* (surprisingly) and *Cymbeline*. Her brief reading of the history of Cleopatra’s casting is fascinating and will certainly prompt further research by interested student readers (that seems part of the aim of the Arden series). Less convincing

are the opening sections on historical context, which seem more bent on making the case in general for postcolonial theory's historical grounding, rather than sketching the improved readings that such a theoretical apparatus produces.

DIGITAL HUMANITIES, BOOK HISTORY, AND FORM

The offerings in the digital humanities this year overlap interestingly with work on early modern manuscripts and material print culture, as well as more formalist work. Daniel Shore's *Cyberformalism: Histories of Linguistic Forms in the Digital Archive* is undoubtedly the most ambitious methodological statement this year. It seeks to drag digital humanities work and work on large corpuses away from proximity word-search and lexicography to focus instead on broader linguistic forms. It also seeks to provide a qualitative approach to "the many," as opposed to the quantifying gestures that have to this point dominated the digital humanities. Chapter 2 on search methodology is exceedingly helpful for guiding scholars who have only a passing facility with digital humanities work through various search functions (from parsing to POS). Even though Shore claims that he's not setting out to produce a reading of *Paradise Lost*, his chapter on depictive adjectives in Milton makes an arresting case for the centrality of overemphasis, repetition, and even wastefulness as a hallmark of Milton's style. However, it's his chapter on the modal shift from what Jesus did to what Jesus would do that's the most convincing evidence for the utility of his approach: "The conditional allows Christians to perform Christlike actions that Christ himself never performed even as it frees them from the obligation to perform all or even any of Christ's actions in order to be Christlike" (p. 137). Equally important is Shore's contention that we need to recalibrate our understanding of imagination prior to such a modal change: prior to the shift, one imagines in order to work out what Jesus did, as opposed to speculating on his actions in unfamiliar circumstances. Needless to say, but I'll say it anyway: that's an insight with extensive ramifications for how we imagine imaginative literature in early modernity. What seems less persuasive about this study is its broader diagnostic frame, particularly its contention that humanists don't yet consider words as "temporary and replaceable values of abstract variables" (p. xi). Shore admits that classical and early modern rhetoric has already begun some of this work, and I think one could make a compelling case that sophisticated accounts of metaphor already are doing this. That

doesn't decrease the value and importance of Shore's study, but does suggest that its broadest framing claim—that humanists must rethink the nature of the linguistic sign—is less convincing than the actual readings it produces.

David Currell and Islam Issa's *Digital Milton* is a collection that promises a long overdue foray into digital humanities work on Milton. Unfortunately, it doesn't exhibit the conceptual consequence of Shore's work and, instead, highlights some of the limitations of digital humanities work. Despite extremely interesting empirical discoveries and studies, most notably Currell's own essay on *OED*, *ODQ*, and Twitter citation practices and Anupam Basu's take on quantitative work and form, the essays do not always show how digital humanities tools themselves have a clear interpretive payoff. For example, Currell's essay smartly raises the question of contextualized versus decontextualized quotation, positing literary criticism as an example of the former, *OED* and *ODQ* as the latter. He also notes studies showing how highlighting in e-books tends toward the aphoristic. These are all valuable insights that deserve discussion and exploration, but it's not clear how digital humanistic approaches help him to accomplish that. There's a similar problem in Peter C. Herman's reading of debt in *Merchant of Venice* and *Paradise Lost*. It's never clear how the digital visualization techniques that he employs add substantially to our understanding of debt relationships. In fact, the visualization's schematism would seem, in my estimation, to do the opposite, substituting the mere fact of relationship for the much more interesting account, which Herman does provide, of the actual nature of that relationship. Basu's essay is critically aware of the difficulties of quantitative approaches, but still must equate "form" with material elements of the text—like woodcuts—so as to make the text mark-up a viable mechanism for running similarity indices. In other words, the literary problem doesn't seem to exist before the apparatus appears to solve it; rather, the literary problem conforms to the apparatus. Basu's essay then acknowledges but also performs some of the limitations of digital humanities: the risk of turning interpretation into a handmaiden for the admittedly useful and interesting digital tool.

As one might expect, despite the rise of digital humanities, there remains quite a bit of interesting work to do on material print culture in the English Renaissance. The two most compelling studies in this arena this year happen to be on Donne. Lara M. Crowley's *Manuscript Matters: Reading John Donne's Poetry and Prose in Early Modern England* proposes to recapture early modern

interpretations of Donne by reading the complete manuscripts in which his poems and prose are copied. Crowley maintains, I think rightly, that we can only glean so much from marginalia, preserved letters including early modern readings of early modern poets and the like, in part because of the sheer paucity of evidence. Crowley's book also has the benefit of returning readers to Donne's understudied works, *Metempsychosis* and *Paradoxes and Problems*. The reading of the latter in a manuscript compiled by Thomas Gell points to the multitude of ways Donne's paradoxes might have been used: as prompts for readerly counterargument, as witty ironies, etc. Crowley also makes a persuasive, if speculative, case that Donne's problem, "Why doth the Poxe so much affect to undermine the nose?," is a coded satire of Robert Cecil, on the basis of the problem's appearance in the Gell manuscript alongside other Court satire. If there's a problem with Crowley's approach, it's that it often seems to default to topical satire as the chief motivation for manuscript organization. That default poses another, broader question, not just for Crowley's study, but for how we imagine the time scale of commonplacings: if a scribe copies something down, is that because it's topical or more than topical?

Joshua Eckhardt's *Religion around John Donne* turns to the manuscripts and libraries in which Donne's verse and prose are collected for a window onto how early modern readers would have imagined his religious positions and affiliations. Eckhardt makes a persuasive case for the ways that Henry Constable's controversial sonnet of Mariolatry, often attributed to Donne until the late nineteenth century, changes how readers would interpret Donne's religious verse. In particular, he notes how its placement after "Upon the Annunciation and Passion Falling upon One Day. 1608" and before "Good Friday 1613, Riding Westward" in the Bridgewater manuscript fundamentally alters the references to Mary in those poems. His study also hints at our own scholarly blindness to the predominantly receptive, as opposed to productive, religiosity characteristic of most early modern believers, a phenomenon better examined through what they collected than what they wrote. Like Crowley's book, Eckhardt's presents itself as part of the scholarly turn to manuscripts and material print culture as a more empirical grounding for literary study. In fact, Eckhardt takes as his goal "to perceive it [religion] only as either Donne or one of his readers verifiably could have seen it" (p. 9). Yet that focus on verifiable, material ground paradoxically produces quite a bit of speculation. For example, Eckhardt's reading of Donne's fifth satire alongside actual reports from pursuivants

who reported to Egerton ends in the acknowledgment that we don't really know if Donne was being canny or uncanny in his condemnation of such religio-legal officers. All we do know is that his evocation of pursuivants in the satire seems to care little for the fate of sectarians persecuted by the same officers. Such speculation doesn't undermine Eckhardt's work, but I do think it interesting—or at least cause for further methodological self-reflection—that such quests for a material or historical bedrock lead to such imaginings.

Pauline Reid's *Reading By Design: The Visual Interfaces of the English Renaissance Book* promises to show how the visual rhetorics of almanacs and other vernacular texts are a cue for how to read the material elements of canonical works. This study also proposes to overcome the surface reading/depth reading debate by turning to phenomenological accounts of perception. However, this book does not always demonstrate the interpretive value of such material elements. For example, the chapter on the *Shepherd's Calendar* maintains that Spenser's poem adopts the format of popular almanacs. The chapter's description of almanacs and the sort of readerly interventions that they enjoin is excellent, but their similarity to the poem, let alone what such adaptation might mean, gets short shrift. Thus, Reid's claims for the radically transformative character of such attention do not always convince.

Gary Schneider's *Print Letters in Seventeenth-Century England: Politics, Religion, and News Culture* seeks to survey fictional, satirical, and intercepted letters and their uses during the Civil War and Restoration, as well as the function of printed familiar letter collections. The chapter on the latter subject makes an interesting case that printed familiar letters skewed royalist. But this claim also reveals the limitations of this study: there's not much in the way of conceptual, generic, or even historic explanation for this phenomenon. In part, that's a result of the scope of Schneider's chosen subject, tending as it does to comprehensive survey. But I think it also reveals a tendency to let empirical description do the work of meaning, to let the showing of these interesting phenomena take over from the broader organizing claims. That's also a risk with the digital humanities, one that Shore's volume deftly tackles.

There are multiple interesting and wide-ranging edited collections on material print culture: Marie-Alice Belle and Brenda M. Hosington's *Thresholds of Translation: Paratexts, Print, and Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Britain (1473–1660)*, whose

essays focus on the interaction between translation and paratext; and Jason Scott-Warren and Andrew Zurcher's *Text, Food, and the Early Modern Reader: Eating Words*, which focuses on reading's materiality and the physicality of the book. Three collections focus on women's writing, reading, and commenting practices and book ownership. Julie A. Eckerle and Naomi McAreavey describe *Women's Life Writing and Early Modern Ireland* as a recovery project, focusing on unexamined letters and other autobiographical material, including book ownership information and marginalia, from women living in Ireland. One of the major conceptual foci of the volume is women's complicity in the English colonialist project, a subject of attention that also promises to unseat the stale and unhelpful characterization of Ireland as the Other. *Katherine Philips: Form, Reception, and Literary Contexts*, a collection edited by Marie-Louise Coolahan and Gillian Wright, contains multiple essays on Philips's reception, but also addresses subjects outside of this orbit: Philips's time in Ireland and how it influenced her poetry (a subject in Eckerle and McAreavey's collection as well), the regenerative temporality of the elegies, and the value of digital humanities methods for her work.

The best of these collections, though, is *Women's Bookscapes in Early Modern Britain: Reading, Ownership, Circulation*, edited by Leah Knight, Micheline White, and Elizabeth Sauer, which focuses on women's reading, writing, responding, and collecting practices. The contributors offer not only compelling case studies (on Isabella Whitney and the use of books to develop a humanist identity, Anne Bradstreet and the transatlantic book trade, and Cavendish's reading habits, among others) on women's reading communities, but also a section on which methodological tools (including, but not limited to, digital humanities approaches) might enable the study of women's reading and collecting practices. Most notable and refreshing here is Sarah Lindenbaum's essay on digital Open Public Access Catalogs as an antidote to the minimal information provided on and required by the physical card catalog (and its 9.5 x 12.5 cm space). In addition to these space limitations, Lindenbaum notes that even when library catalogs sought to include copy-specific details about marginalia, they often limited themselves to "noted individuals" (p. 205), thus excluding ordinary readers, including women. Even with the most sophisticated digital algorithm or search engine, silence (about women's book ownership, or anything else) in, silence out.

The most recent volumes of *Spenser Studies* (volumes 31–3) contain a variety of essays not easily summarized, including

a guest-edited volume (32, by Thomas Herron) on place and Spenser's verse. Most notable, though, in these issues is a series of essays that converge around the subjects of temporality, reading practice, and the material form of Spenser's poems. George Moore (in vol. 31) reads the nonlinear temporality of the *Shepherd's Calendar* as a challenge to the linear timeline required by iconoclasm. Jessica C. Beckman's essay (vol. 33) shows how the second edition of the *Shepherd's Calendar* removes some of the arresting and recursive visual elements from the first edition and, in so doing, produces a text for continuous reading. Taylor Clement (vol. 33), conversely, tackles the continuous narrative reading that attends Spenser's use of images in the first edition of 1590. I find this sort of accidental echoing around similar themes a very exciting development. Even those essays not explicitly addressing this subject nonetheless speak to the problem of temporality. For example, Judith Anderson's reading (vol. 33) of "still movement" (p. 39) and parodic myth in Spenser and Shakespeare forces us to rethink parody as a species of reanimation, something definitely not reducible to a merely dismissive "take down" (p. 40).

What's striking about the only avowedly formalist work (other than Shore's hybrid) is how similar it is to the empirical structure of some of the book history studies. I would not maintain that that's the root of a hopeful rapprochement, but rather that there's quite a lot of interesting work to be done on form's transparency and empiricism's formal leanings. Richard Danson Brown's *The Art of "The Faerie Queene"* promises to focus on the stylistic difficulties in Spenser's epic through a Shklovskian lens. The return to Russian formalism is exciting—and not just because of its novelty—and the study's introduction makes a sound case that *The Faerie Queene* forces us to bridge the traditional formalist-historicist debate: Spenser's epic requires "historical sympathy" from readers, a perhaps eccentric interest in linguistic change over time (p. 13). Each of the chapters, on diction, meter, rhyme, stanza, and narrative structure, note interesting features of the poem. The middle chapter maintains that Spenser's rhyme flaunts ordinary usage, acts as a surface effect that subverts the poem's broader allegorical aims, and, in the process, thwarts the epic's teleological ambitions, in part because rhyme always entails a recursive turning back. Brown's discussion of loose ends in the narrative structure makes a similar point. However, all of these important recognitions feed into a somewhat amorphous concluding thesis about the complexity and multiplicity of *The Faerie Queene*. That's a fairly broad, even nonspecific, assertion that

seems somewhat at odds with the attention to fine detail that Brown's study embodies.

RECEPTION AND ADAPTATION

There are also a surprising number of studies focusing on the reception of literary works and individual figures, literary and religious, in early modern English culture. I do not know that this trend presages a concerted attempt to make a case for the modern utility of early modern literature (and literary study), but the amount and variety of work in this area does seem noteworthy. Megan L. Cook's *The Poet and the Antiquaries: Chaucerian Scholarship and the Rise of Literary History, 1532–1635* focuses on the role of antiquarians, who revered and edited Chaucer precisely because he didn't have an immediately present use, in positioning Chaucer as the founder of a recognizably—or almost recognizably—English literature. Cook shows how Thomas Speght's editions of Chaucer open the space for scholarly intervention—with their inclusion of a “hard word” list—but also notes that Speght models his commentary on E. K.'s glosses in the *Shepheardes Calender* (p. 101). As that similarity implies, such antiquarian appropriation might well preserve and transmit Chaucer, but it's often a decidedly nationalist and ideological gesture that makes “Chaucer” into a talisman whereby the “chief literary production of the Age of Chaucer, as Speght tautologically presents it, is the work of Geoffrey Chaucer” (p. 115). Jennifer N. Brown's *Fruit of the Orchard: Reading Catherine of Siena in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* focuses on several of the curious features of the reception of Catherine of Siena's work and the development of her cult in England. Perhaps most consequential of these is the translation of her work into the vernacular, making it accessible to a lay and female readership in a nation without the culture or institutional supports for lay and women's devotion that Catherine herself enjoyed on the Continent. Brown's study is equally compelling in its account of how Catherine appears in Reformed and Counter-Reformation contexts, noting the Protestant tendency to read her biography, not her visionary writing. Most conspicuous, in this respect, is Catherine's appearance in John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, which uses her life and work as a polemical trap: either Catherine is a false prophet and thus confirms the Reformation condemnation of Catholic saints, or she's a true prophet and one must support her calls for church reformation. Valerie Traub, Patricia Badir, and Peggy McCracken's edited collection,

Ovidian Transversions: "Iphis and Ianthe," 1300–1650, focuses on the translation and adaptation of this single, understudied story in the *Metamorphoses* and, in so doing, attains a unified focus despite the breadth of its material: moralized versions of Ovid, John Gower, Christine de Pizan, John Lyly, and the French playwright Isaac de Benserade. The general critical silence about the volume's focal tale of Iphis and Ianthe is also, as Traub's introduction maintains, interesting in its own right, especially insofar as the story challenges critical presuppositions about Ovid's erotics—that it's all hunt and chase—as well as the critical and anthropological tendency to read the *Metamorphoses* as a functionalist etiology.

The most pathbreaking work in reception and adaptation, though, is Judith Scherer Herz's edited collection, *John Donne and Contemporary Poetry: Essays and Poems*. The organizing principle seems simple enough—contemporary poets and critics examining Donne's adaptation, influence, and deployment in twentieth-first-century verse—but it issues in some surprisingly suggestive readings of Donne as well as some methodological innovations. Sean H. McDowell's essay, on Donne and Seamus Heaney, is a recipe for how modern appropriations of early modern verse crystalize and clarify something about the earlier poet. His argument is also, even if it doesn't intend to be, one of the most compelling rejoinders to a lock-step historicist accusation of anachronism. Joseph Campana's chapter on turning and conversion is equally striking and far-reaching in its implications. Campana notes that we've got plenty of intense passion in the current poetic, critical, and pedagogical scene—"Oddly enough, passion, at least to my ears, echoes persistently, almost cacophonously, in the annals of the now" (p. 198)—but very little in the way of arrest, reversal, or turning. The result of that passion without turning is, in Campana's estimation, a critical blindness to those features of conversion that are "undramatic and un-narrated" (p. 203) as well as to the tonal complexity of even the most purportedly earnest affirmations, like "Dearly I love you." Finally, although she doesn't put it in precisely these terms, Heather Dubrow's short history of the Donne and contemporary poetry project, of which this volume is an expression, nicely anatomizes the institutional and disciplinary divides—between creative writing and criticism, between early and contemporary literature—that make it difficult to explain the modern value of early modern literary study. This volume ably overcomes some of those obstacles by moving beyond mere relevance and simply getting on with the business of show-

ing Donne's continued influence, adaptability, and re-readability in contemporary verse.

Cook's and Brown's studies, as well as Herz's and Traub, Badir, and McCracken's collections, because they have narrower points to prove, can avoid some of the diffuseness that haunts other work in reception studies. A case in point is Gail Orgelfinger's *Joan of Arc in the English Imagination, 1429–1829*, which sets out to correct the traditional unilinear account of the Maid of Orléans's estimation in English, with Robert Southey's *Joan of Arc* the pivotal softening point in the late eighteenth century. To accomplish that, Orgelfinger amasses an impressive array of depictions of Joan of Arc, but the sheer encyclopedism of the project overtakes some of the book's claims, most notably the contention that Joan Puzel in *1 Henry VI* uses Joan of Arc as a stand-in for concerns about Mary Queen of Scots. That's an interesting claim, but one that can't really be tied down in a chapter that's also examining illustrations from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Shakespeare editions. Eduardo Olid Guerrero and Esther Fernández's edited collection, *The Image of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Spain*, surveys a variety of visual, narrative, and dramatic representations of the Virgin Queen. Like Orgelfinger's work, there are multiple interesting elements here that make the work valuable, but also a sometimes frustrating diffuseness. The contributors do, however, make a compelling case for the fundamentally transnational nature of the literary.

EDITIONS

There are multiple editions that warrant mention in this year's work: Jessica L. Malay's *Anne Clifford's Autobiographical Writing, 1590–1676*; David R. Carlson's *Thomas Elyot, "The Image of Governance," and Other Dialogues of Counsel (1533–1541)*; and Alasdair A. MacDonald's *George Lauder (1603–1670): Life and Writings*, a combination biography and edition of Lauder's poems and correspondence. The most notable, however, is Brandie R. Siegfried's edition of Cavendish's "*Poems and Fancies*" with "*The Animal Parliament*," a long-overdue edition of Cavendish's poems. Siegfried takes as her copytext the 1668 edition of *Poems and Fancies*, the last in which Cavendish had a hand, but also includes deleted poems from the 1653 edition, so that readers can trace the author's revision process and development (in this respect, I consider Siegfried's edition superior to Liza Blake's recently published online digital edition; Blake's edition has more

expansive footnotes charting edition changes, but the number and frequency of these, enabled by its digital functionality, actually makes the revision process more difficult to follow).⁵ Siegfried notes that Cavendish's second thoughts might tamp down some of the raw freshness of the 1653 poems, but they also show a writer who's much more comfortable as an author, without the fawning anxieties of the early poems. Siegfried's introduction includes a brisk account of the significance of mathematics (and mathematical jokes) to Cavendish's verse. The volume's judicious glosses, mercifully, are in footnotes, but do not overshadow or crowd out the verse.

PEDAGOGY

Anna Riehl Bertolet and Carole Levin's *Creating the Premodern in the Postmodern Classroom: Creativity in Early English Literature and History Courses* casts itself as a survey of individual creative assignments as well as creative assignments as a principle for course development. Many of the contributors acknowledge and engage, even if only briefly, the central problem of alternative creative assignments: do they teach better reading or just better riffing? In that sense, the pedagogical questions that these essays raise, more than the how-to examples, seem the most valuable portions of the book. For example, Regina Buccola's essay on alternative essay prompts notes that the point of the creative assignment, in this case asking students to imagine Benedict giving Beatrice Sonnet 130, is designed to "trick" (p. 14) students into doing the sort of thorough reading that they'd traditionally do: i.e., it's not changing the pedagogical aims so much as adding this extra step in the process. Perhaps that's a necessary adjunct to engaging student interest, but one might be forgiven for wondering whether creative assignments come off as so much extraneous busy-work in such a formulation. Karolyn Kinane's chapter, on affectively engaging assignments in courses on Arthurian legends and British literature, makes a strong case for the value of formalized evocative responses as a pedagogical building block. However, I wonder whether the injunction to "meet them where they are" overestimates where they are, whether some skills and content have an analogical doppelgänger in students' existing knowledge base. Similarly, I think that the attempt to model turning thought into action betrays some of the humanities' unique pedagogical value: literature is worth teaching precisely because how (and whether) students might use it remains unprogrammed.

I should also note that I think the general solutions on offer in the volume—more making and producing—seem an admirable response to the debilitating effects of the commodity form, but fail to acknowledge the ways in which the imperative to be a maker, producer, actor, etc., replicates the self-driving injunctions of late-capitalist precarious work. One need not be a partisan of *décroissance* to find this worthy of more extensive analysis and thought. As I hope my objections indicate, this volume is more conceptually provocative than its presentation as a handbook of pedagogical practices lets on.

Given the very strong works on method and the number of interdisciplinary studies on offer this year, I'm struck by one absence: the relative paucity of sustained examinations of the state of the twenty-first-century profession of literature. There's quite a lot of work this year that connects early modern literature to present concerns, but this pivotal connection seems to me understudied. Many volumes mention or allude to such professional concerns (Mattison and Murphy are strong in this respect, as are Nardizzi and Werth's and Bertolet and Levin's edited collections), but only one study this year—O'Dair and Francisco's edited collection on Shakespeare and class—enlists early modern literature (literature written during the development of mercantilism, the early stirrings of capitalism, the seeds of the modern bureaucratic state, and the first theorizations of the liberal order and social contract theory) as a way to think about or comment on the intellectual labor of the present. That seems a curious omission given the other presentist concerns that inform and motivate critical work this year.

Some might consider that a welcome silence, the avoidance of the sort of navel-gazing that gives the humanities a bad name. I tend to think otherwise: that for all our talk of networked complexity and nuance, one of the most immediate connections—literature and its modern profession—remains understudied. Perhaps that's because we all think we know what's going on: we're living it and working in it, after all. I think that's a conceptual and a professional mistake and, frankly, a missed opportunity. On the upside, I think the relative silence on this subject this year points the way toward quite a bit of future research, inter- and intradisciplinary, that would focus on what early modern literature might tell us about its modern profession. Yet I cannot help thinking that this silence also bespeaks a tacit acceptance that the liter-

ary has nothing to say about its own profession and that associate vice provosts everywhere are right: when the rubber hits the road, there is no field of expertise that cannot be managed more efficiently by those who know nothing about it. We might have to live and work in that world, for now, but my fondest wish is that criticism might begin to do its part in chiseling out an alternative future for literature, and its profession.

NOTES

¹ Gordon Teskey, "Recent Studies in the English Renaissance," *SEL* 50, 1 (Winter 2010): 205–58, 207 and 244.

² Catherine Bates, "Recent Studies in the English Renaissance," *SEL* 59, 1 (Winter 2019): 203–54, 241.

³For a recent example, see Laura L. Behling, "We Must Contemporize the Liberal Arts," *Inside Higher Ed*, 16 October 2019, <http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2019/10/16/importance-enhancing-relevance-liberal-arts-students-today-opinion>. Examples of this lazy, no-one-put-it-on-my-plate exhortation abound. Behling's contribution to this literature isn't especially egregious; it just happened to appear on the day that I was finalizing this review.

⁴Paul Stevens, "Literary Studies and the Turn to Religion: Milton Reading Badiou," *R&L* 45, 1 (Spring 2013): 136–47, 144.

⁵Liza Blake, ed., *Margaret Cavendish's "Poems and Fancies": A Digital Critical Edition*, May 2019, <http://library2.utm.utoronto.ca/poemsandfancies/>.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Akhimie, Patricia, and Bernadette Andrea, eds. *Travel and Travail: Early Modern Women, English Drama, and the Wider World*. Early Modern Cultural Studies. Series eds. Carole Levin and Marguerite A. Tassi. Lincoln and London: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2019 (paper only). Pp. x + 368. \$35.00 paper. ISBN 978-1-4962-0226-0.

Augustine, Matthew C. *Aesthetics of Contingency: Writing, Politics, and Culture in England, 1639–89*. Manchester UK: Manchester Univ. Press, 2018. Pp. xii + 269. £80.00. ISBN 978-1-5261-0076-4.

Bearden, Elizabeth B. *Monstrous Kinds: Body, Space, and Narrative in Renaissance Representations of Disability*. Corporealities: Discourses of Disability. Series eds. David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2019. Pp. xiv + 274. \$75.00. ISBN 978-0-472-13112-9.

Belle, Marie-Alice, and Brenda M. Hosington, eds. *Thresholds of Translation: Paratexts, Print, and Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Britain (1473–1660)*. Early Modern Literature in History. Gen. eds. Cedric C. Brown and Andrew Hadfield. London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. Pp. xviii + 330. \$109.00. ISBN 978-3-319-72771-4.

Bertolet, Anna Riehl, and Carole Levin, eds. *Creating the Premodern in the Postmodern Classroom: Creativity in Early English Literature and History Courses*. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 537. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2018 (paper only). Pp. xx + 236. \$40.00 paper. ISBN 978-0-86698-594-9.

Bertram, Benjamin. *Bestial Oblivion: War, Humanism, and Ecology in Early Modern England*. Perspectives on the Non-Human in Literature and Culture. Series ed. Karen Raber. New York and London: Routledge, 2018. Pp. xii + 288. \$140.00. ISBN 978-1-138-70885-3.

Brown, Jennifer N. *Fruit of the Orchard: Reading Catherine of Siena in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*. Toronto, Buffalo NY, and London: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2019. Pp. xvi + 312. \$75.00. ISBN 978-1-4875-0407-6.

Brown, Richard Danson. *The Art of “The Faerie Queene.”* Manchester Spenser. Gen. eds. Joshua Reid, Kathryn Walls, and Tamsin Badcoe. Manchester UK and New York: Manchester Univ. Press (distributed by Oxford Univ. Press), 2019. Pp. xiv + 316. \$120.00. ISBN 978-0-7190-8732-5.

Brumbaugh, Barbara. *Apocalyptic History and the Protestant Cause in Sir Philip Sidney's Revised "Arcadia."* Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 468. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2018. Pp. xii + 549. \$84.00. ISBN 978-0-86698-521-5.

Cavendish, Margaret. "Poems and Fancies" with "The Animal Parliament." Ed. Brandie R. Siegfried. *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: Toronto Series 64.* Series eds. Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Jr. English Texts ed. Elizabeth H. Hageman. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 536. Toronto: Iter; Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2018 (paper only). Pp. xxii + 462. \$59.95 paper. ISBN 978-0-86698-593-2.

Clifford, Anne. *Anne Clifford's Autobiographical Writing, 1590–1676.* Ed Jessica L. Malay. Manchester UK and New York: Manchester Univ. Press, 2018. Pp. x + 326. £75.00 cloth. ISBN 978-1-5261-1787-8. £19.99 paper. ISBN 978-1-5261-1788-5.

Cook, Megan L. *The Poet and the Antiquaries: Chaucerian Scholarship and the Rise of Literary History, 1532–1635.* Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press (in cooperation with Folger Shakespeare Library), 2019. Pp. x + 278. \$59.95. ISBN 978-0-8122-5082-4.

Coolahan, Marie-Louise, and Gillian Wright, eds. *Katherine Philips: Form, Reception, and Literary Contexts.* New York and London: Routledge, 2018. Pp. x + 266. \$140.00. ISBN 978-0-8153-6202-9.

Crowley, Lara M. *Manuscript Matters: Reading John Donne's Poetry and Prose in Early Modern England.* Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2018. Pp. xx + 268. \$74.00. ISBN 978-0-19-882186-1.

Currell, David, and Islam Issa, eds. *Digital Milton.* London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. Pp. xvi + 272. \$109.00. ISBN 978-3-319-72771-4.

D'Addario, Christopher, and Matthew C. Augustine, eds. *Texts and Readers in the Age of Marvell.* Manchester UK: Manchester Univ. Press, 2018. Pp. xiv + 255. \$125.00. ISBN 978-1-526-11389-4.

Davies, Michael, and W. R. Owens, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of John Bunyan.* Oxford Handbooks. Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2018. Pp. xxviii + 708. \$145.00. ISBN 978-0-19-958130-6.

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