

of the material in her loose “Cowleyan” imitation of Cowley. Both the translator and the translated benefit from this close scrutiny.

The coda to Wright’s book retroactively argues the overlap of her three discrete chapters, exploring connections between and among them and situating her study as a complement to more familiar accounts of Restoration literature that emphasize the period’s sexual license and its urban and English settings. Her justification after the fact of her project is altogether unnecessary: this is compelling and engaging scholarship of the first order that one hopes receives the wider audience it so richly deserves.

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*Spenser and Donne: Thinking Poets*. Yulia Ryzhik, ed.

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*Spenser and Donne: Thinking Poets* sets out to fill a gap in early modern English studies that might seem surprising. Despite the many scholars who work on, and teach, both authors, there is remarkably little criticism that engages in sustained comparison of their work. In her introduction to this collection of essays, Yulia Ryzhik proposes that this gap is largely the result of periodization—that even if the “convenient divide at the turn of the sixteenth century” (3) has to some extent been dismantled, Spenser and Donne are still associated with the assumptions that characterized each side of the divide, with Spenser attached to the medieval side while Donne is pulled forward to be made part of the forward-looking seventeenth century. But the two Elizabethan poets were contemporaries, Spenser a mere twenty years older than Donne.

In eleven essays plus an introduction, this volume aims to reassess the relationship between the two poets, though the question of how best to describe that relationship runs through the whole project. While some articles address examples of direct influence or parody (for example Ramie Targoff on sexual violence and sacrifice in both poets’ epithalamia), more often the comparison is based on “common preoccupations and continuities of thought” (5). As Ryzhik points out, the authors find different ways of characterizing the connection, speaking not so much of influence as of “overhearing” (Richard Danson Brown), “engagement” (Ryzhik), “encounter” (Ayesha Ramachandran), and “foreshadowing” (David Marno). The first three chapters approach the question formally, in detailed analyses of the two poets’ versification (Richard Danson Brown), use of tropes (Christopher D. Johnson), and of rhetoric (Niranjan Goswami). Other contributors compare themes (Ramachandran on philosophy in poetry), genres (Marno on devotional poetics), and common sources (Linda Gregerson on the influence of Ovid).

As Ryzhik promises in the introduction, the comparison between the two poets should not be unidirectional, and in some cases bringing them together illuminates one of the pair in particular. Thus, Patrick Cheney's discussion of both poets' *artes poeticae* is primarily an argument about Donne that reads him as a counter-Spenserian poet, while Anne Fogarty and Jane Grogan's reassessment of the presence of early modern texts in the works of Eliot, Yeats, and Joyce is more revealing about Spenser. (The latter is also valuable for situating Spenser politically in Ireland in a way that's largely missing from the other essays.) Both these chapters demonstrate how comparison of the two authors may provide a fresh perspective on one of them. By setting up a comparison between the two poets, though, the volume creates a certain expectation, and some of the articles that balance their argument more equally between the two poets offer excellent close readings of Spenser followed by excellent close readings of Donne (or vice versa) which nonetheless can feel somewhat disconnected from each other. A notable exception to this is Elizabeth Harvey's contribution, which moves backward and forward between Donne's "A Valediction: Of My Name in the Window" and Spenser's Busirane in the *Faerie Queene* to weave a fascinating reflection on writing and the body/the self, focused on both poets' play with the word *character*.

Anne Lake Prescott's comparison of the ways Spenser and Donne relate to the Continent also manages to place both poets on the same page, so to speak, establishing them as living through the same world events and reading the same writers, while acknowledging their differences. In the introduction, Ryzhik observes that when Spenser and Donne have been considered together, they have traditionally been treated in terms of "contrast rather than comparison" (1). Moving the discussion more in the direction of "comparison" is one of the aims of this volume, and the introduction repeatedly insists that it's only a "starting point" (8), a "nascent conversation" (5). The contrast is not totally done away with—we don't lose sight of the differences between Spenser and Donne as we work our way through these articles—but we're left with an impression of two poets ripe for further comparison, subject as they were to the same societal and literary influences.

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*Comic Spenser: Faith, Folly, and "The Faerie Queene."* Victoria Coldham-Fussell. The Manchester Spenser. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020. xvi + 236 pp. £80.

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The long-standing need for this book on Spenser and humor is attested by the neglect of comedy in *The Spenser Encyclopedia* (1990), in which the topic receives no separate article, just an entry in the index. There, one is referred to the articles on books 2 and 3,