

“to be upright, frank, candid, and . . . noble” (81), and perceiving that Falstaff possesses none of these qualities, Clegg illustrates that Shakespeare challenges the view that women require men in order to preserve their chastity, revealing instead that the men are more at fault in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Different observations are made about laws concerning fidelity in *Othello*, with recourse to the Books of Homilies’ statements on adultery, and Clegg delivers further perspective on *Henry V* concerning Catherine.

The next chapter, on *Macbeth*, offers an elaborate overview of Calvinism and engages with previous scholarship on religion in Shakespeare’s play. Having situated the play, Clegg offers insightful analysis of the ways in which the works of English Calvinist writers Perkins and Dent foster a complex reading experience for the members of *Macbeth*’s audience, who continually question whether Macbeth’s conscience concerning his actions indicates he is elect or reprobate. What Clegg adds to the critical conversation on Calvinism in the play is that, given English Calvinists’ tendency to believe God can allow or even use evil to bring about good, *Macbeth* reveals “the tragic implications of failing to understand the power and nature of evil” (119).

The last chapter of the book provides a masterful and extensive analysis of a reading cluster for *Richard II* that was preoccupied with the various tracts on Henry IV’s succession and Richard II’s deposition. Clegg proposes that earlier audiences would have been familiar with a historical tradition that offered a “multivocalic examination of right rule and the right to rule,” allowing for the development of competing sympathies and complex interpretive experiences that mirror the “contradictory political perspectives” offered in early modern histories (130, 152). This earlier public, however, differs from the reading public generated after the Essex rebellion, as “the government understood that a public existed, that it was vulnerable to the printed word, and that words could be dangerous” (166). In this final chapter, then, Clegg addresses the political power these clusters had in determining the public sphere.

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John Donne and Baroque Allegory: The Aesthetics of Fragmentation. Hugh Grady. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. viii + 228 pp. \$99.99.

Hugh Grady’s stimulating study argues that Walter Benjamin’s theories of Baroque aesthetics, in his *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1928), provide a lens through which to read and appreciate John Donne’s poetry afresh. The uncertain, chaotic, fragmented world that Donne represents, particularly in his two long *Anniversaries*, has undeniable parallels with the melancholy spirit and allegorical mode of representation in the German *Trauerspiel* of the first half of the seventeenth century. Benjamin never refers to Donne, although Shakespeare is mentioned in his work on the *Trauerspiel*,

but Grady argues that Benjamin's later study of Baudelaire demonstrates that his aesthetic theories can be extended to Donne's lyric poetry.

The two key chapters of the book establish the relevance of Benjamin's theories to Donne through close readings. The *Anniversaries*, elegies on the death of fifteen-year-old Elizabeth Drury, with their evocation of a world "in pieces, all coherence gone" ("First Anniversary: The Anatomy of the World," line 213), correspond extremely well to the melancholy and fragmented world Benjamin describes, and the anxiety they express about the modernizing "new philosophy" of emerging scientific thought aligns with the crisis of modernity that Benjamin identifies. Indeed, the *Anniversary* poems provide such a good "fit," as Grady puts it (1), with Benjamin's theory that there seems little to prove—Benjamin's vocabulary of mourning and fragmentation is already written into the poems, particularly "The Anatomy of the World." Many readers may find the following chapter, extending the analysis to Donne's *Songs and Sonnets*, more interesting, precisely because, as Grady acknowledges, the fit here with Benjamin's theories is not so perfect (207). Donne, Grady claims, is "facing the same crisis Benjamin defined, but approaching it in his own way" (97). While he pauses on certain of the *Songs and Sonnets*, notably "A Nocturnall upon St Lucie's Day," that are comparable to the *Anniversaries* in their melancholy, he devotes much of the chapter to arguing that Donne's "libertine" poems and his poems of mutual love can also be profitably read in the light of Benjamin's theory. If the libertine poems stage transitory sexual pleasure as compensation for an empty world (103), the mutual-love poems replace the hope of religious redemption in the *Anniversaries* with the prospect of utopian erotic love, albeit an erotic utopia that is exclusive to the lovers themselves, transforming the public world into an empty signifier (123), in a dialectic of melancholy and redemption that Grady identifies as profoundly Benjaminian.

Grady's approach does not radically overturn previous Donne criticism but, rather, demonstrates ways in which well-established readings of Donne's work can be articulated using terms drawn from Benjamin. His introductory chapter, while giving a concise account of Benjamin studies and the scholarly history of the term *Baroque* in literary criticism, situates his own approach within a generous and wide-ranging survey of the history and present state of Donne studies, acknowledging current major projects, such as the Variorum edition of the poems and the Oxford Sermons edition, and their place in the currents of theoretically informed criticism he covers.

For Grady, Benjamin's Baroque images—dialectical contradictions that emphasize extremes and resist mediation—provide a context and a vocabulary with which to theorize Donne's use of the "metaphysical conceit" throughout his poetry. This is explored at length in the fourth chapter. The final chapter extends the discussion to a broader consideration of seventeenth-century manuals of wit and Benjamin's theories of language. It is a pity that Grady devotes only five pages, at the end of the final chapter, to discussing Donne's religious poetry in light of Benjamin's theories. Although he disarmingly acknowledges that this is for "reasons of convenience and focus (and [his] own predilections)" (195), his over-

arching theory regarding the dialectical structure of melancholy and utopia could have been fruitfully developed with regard to the full range of the *Holy Sonnets*, as his treatment of his chosen two (“Batter my heart” and “At the round earth’s imagined corners”) amply demonstrates. But Grady expresses the hope in the opening chapter that readers will “make the connections of Benjamin’s theories with other segments of Donne’s creative productions” (51). I hope so too—this is a study that looks set to generate further discussion and interpretation.

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Milton’s Modernities: Poetry, Philosophy, and History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present. Feisal G. Mohamed and Patrick Fadely, eds.

Rethinking the Early Modern. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017. x + 364 pp. \$39.95.

Milton’s Modernities offers rigorous new thinking about Milton’s work and his status as an author, both in his historical moment and in the period that has followed. The collection’s eleven essays, as well as its introduction and afterword, explore how theories of modernity can bring new understanding to Milton’s texts and how the author’s work can help us interrogate the concept of modernity. This volume is diverse in style and intellectually demanding, and will be particularly useful for scholars working at the intersection of literature and philosophy.

In this fine collection, a range of expert scholars invite us to consider Milton’s relationship to modernity. James Nohrenberg considers how *Paradise Lost* can help us think about issues of periodization, while Ryan Netzley and Jennifer Tole explore Milton’s insights into temporality more broadly. Readers interested in classical and modern philosophers will find contributors offering rich material on Lucretius (Jessie Hock), Kant (Sanford Budick), Spinoza (Christopher Kendrick), and Hegel (Russ Leo). Feisal G. Mohamed contributes an insightful essay on Milton’s relationship to republicanism, and Lee Morrissey incisively asks what *Samson Agonistes* can tell us about the changing political valences of the tragic genre. Gordon Teskey’s standout essay reacts to ideas from Stanley Fish and Marshall McLuhan to argue for a reading of *Paradise Lost* as “a long, winding and warping surface of sound” (294). The final essay in the volume takes a different tack, as Wendy Fuhman-Adams examines twentieth-century illustrations of Milton’s work to discuss how visual art reinterprets the poet’s work for the era in which it is received.

The strength of this volume lies in the diverse lines of inquiry represented by the contributions. It is noteworthy that readers looking for engagement with Milton’s prose will find little of that here. However, as Sharon Achinstein notes in her afterword, “the emphasis on poetry is not a weakness of the volume but a right judgment of where Milton’s most sustained philosophical work is taking place” (350). As it ranges across the major