

Burger turns, in the excellent chapter 2, to secular conduct literature pointedly concerned in its narrative strategy about remaking the feminine as a good wife, such as in the “complexly hybrid” (89) and “innovative” (103) *Livre du chevalier de la Tour Landry*, which combines the discourses of *fin amor* and conduct, the courtly garden and the married household. In a work focusing on mirroring the woman as good, marriage becomes “the privileged space for female chastity and achievement” (100). The wife who takes the book to heart, then, achieves her place in the social sphere of the household, forging a model, self-created and ennobled through her careful interiorization and performance of the text’s injunctions to guard her behavior. The third chapter examines *Le Menagier de Paris* and its author’s narrative experimentation (although Burger sidesteps the discussion of an author). Here the bedchamber represents the “theater of marriage” (128), where monastic and mercantile values productively conjoin, and Burger provides salient insights into the compilation as a unit, a network designed to socialize the good wife, despite its “magpie incorporation” (107) of different kinds of narratives.

The final (and best) chapter surveys Griselda’s avatars in the late Middle Ages and the readings of her story, with its unstable meaning, by Boccaccio, Petrarch, Philippe de Mézières, and Chaucer’s Clerk. The problem of ethical action in the world, the sacramental context of consensual marriage, and the issue of self-restraint at the heart of conduct literature operate in the tale, and married female virtue acts as an agent for change. Burger’s evaluation of “The Clerk’s Tale” is particularly sharp, labeling the Clerk’s reading of Griselda “androgynous,” demonstrating that conduct literature evinces the “best way to articulate an ethical subject position in the world” (180).

The latitude of this review necessarily shortchanges such a strongly argued book, and cannot catalog Burger’s many aperçus and fine close readings, especially in the Griselda chapter. This book re-visualizes myriad conduct texts and allows them to gather richness and meaning from being discussed in each other’s company by someone who reads them with care to theorize, while showcasing telling details of each text. The works Burger examines may have had the agenda of producing, in their historical context, marriages of coherence and affection (194), and intended, by stifling female waywardness and corporality, to produce through reading the self-restraint and ethical behavior denoting the good wife for a new age.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2019.221

Das Grenzwesen Mensch, Vormoderne Naturphilosophie und Literatur im Dialog mit Postmoderner Gendertheorie. Marlen Bidwell-Steiner.
Mimesis 65. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017. x + 320 pp. \$114.99.

Das Grenzwesen Mensch is a pathbreaking book, unprecedented in its scope in examining sixteenth-century theories of the body by natural philosophers and writers in

tandem with recent feminist and gender theorists (Donna Haraway, Anne Fausto-Sterling, Judith Butler, Rosi Braidotti, and Karen Barad, among others). Bidwell-Steiner, a literary scholar specializing in Iberian literature, identifies three “transversals” (283)—“Affects, Emotions, Passions,” “Human and Animal,” and “Human and Artifact” (the book’s three main parts)—which poignantly illustrate the porous boundaries of the human body. For Bidwell-Steiner, the premodern and postmodern—periods framing the Scientific Revolution—are comparable in the way they conceptualize the body holistically. They are characterized by similar epistemological frameworks and rhetorically inflected “styles of thought” (1). Bidwell-Steiner contends that “the path from a speculative holistic materialism of the sixteenth century to modern natural sciences could be polemically described as one from living to dead matter” (100)—a path reversed only in the course of the twentieth century, with the “linguistic turn” (1), gender studies, and (materialist) feminist theories (3). *Das Grenzwesen Mensch*, then, recuperates the importance of philosophers and writers such as Girolamo Fracastoro, Ludovico Ariosto, Fernando de Rojas, Olivia Sabuco, Bernardino Telesio, Giovanni Battista della Porta, and Pedro Calderón de la Barca, for the conception of the holistic body prior to (and after) its systematization and fragmentation in the course of the Scientific Revolution.

The first part centers on the recent affective turn and its early modern counterpart, exemplified here by philosophical precursors to Descartes’s *Passions de l’âme* (1649). The question of emotions as movements of the soul is discussed and challenged by writers such as Girolamo Fracastoro, for whom the affect (*conatus*) is an “instinct of self-preservation” (80); Juan Luis Vives, who considered emotions “social fields of strength” (83); Olivia Sabuco’s *Nueva filosofía de la naturaleza del hombre* (1587), which offers a “radically naturalistic image of the human being” (90); and Juan Huarte de San Juan, who describes affects as a specifically male disposition for use in state affairs. For Bidwell-Steiner, affect is not prediscursive, but entangled with language. The metaphor as “the most corporeal element of our language” (57) expresses, then, the affect’s “liminal human experience” (67).

Starting with Cassirer’s reflection on the human being as an “animal symbolicum” (101), the second part asks about early modern criteria used to distinguish between the human and the animal. A magisterial tour de force, this part brings together Derrida’s critique of *carnophallogocentrisme* (139) and Bernardino Telesio’s discussion of *spiritus* as the matter of the soul (*anima*); Barbara Smuts’s exploration of the truthfulness of bodily language in animals and the “veracity” of bodily language as a means to legitimize torture in the early modern Inquisition (143); Francesco Patrizi’s and Girolamo Fabrizio’s insights into animal language (189), together with the Stoics’ rejection of the animal soul (180); and Ludovico Ariosto’s poetic rendering of the fine line that separates humans from animals alongside the topos of love melancholy (*amor hereos*).

The third part delves into the question of bodily manipulations. Following Walter Benjamin’s reflection on the difference between the magician and the surgeon in “The

Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Bidwell-Steiner discusses the fantasy of the self-appointed active and omnipotent male “surgical sculptor” (228) who models, transforms, and alters the female body. She finds significant parallels between the “physiognomic theater of illusion” (265), encapsulated in Vesalius’s *De Humani Corporis Fabrica Libri Septem* (1543), Juan Valverde de Amusco’s *Historia de la composición del cuerpo humano* (1556), Laura Mulvey’s feminist film theory, and films such as Almodovar’s *The Skin I Live In*. With Giovan Battista della Porta’s *Magia Naturalis* (1589), Bidwell-Steiner contends, new strategies of body engineering emerge: here, the surgeon acts like a magician seeking to control and use the female body against the backdrop of “heterosexual erotics” (264).

What drives *Das Grenzwesen Mensch* is a deep reflection not only on the human body, but also on the commonalities in the organization of knowledge in premodern and postmodern times. Pushing back against common assumptions, Bidwell-Steiner shows that holistic epistemologies, not only of the body but of knowledge itself, are largely incompatible with the systematic (and thus necessarily fragmented) methodologies of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment (100). I can only hope that this most timely and important book, written in German, will soon be translated and made available to English-speaking readers.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2019.222

Dramatic Geography: Romance, Intertheatricality, and Cultural Encounter in Early Modern Mediterranean Drama. Laurence Publicover.

Early Modern Literary Geographies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. xiv + 204 pp. \$65.

In *Dramatic Geography*, Laurence Publicover explores how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century plays in London engaged the genre of romance to depict geographic space—particularly, the Mediterranean—and how it was mutable, charged with symbolic values, and intertheatrical. Crediting theater historian Jacky Bratton with the term *intertheatricality*, Publicover briefly recapitulates Bratton’s argument that nineteenth-century British repertories formed networks of players, audiences, stage practices, languages, and genres and that playgoers interpreted performances through other contemporary performances (89). According to Publicover, the concept of intertheatricality may be even more useful for scholars of early modern drama: there were fewer theaters—and with much sparser scenery—in early modern London, so “we can make reasonably confident assumptions” about what avid playgoers would have seen (90). Distinguishing his perspective on intertheatricality from others, Publicover asserts that to comprehend fully how theatrical networks materialized, we must “acknowledge