

that came to be associated with the Royal Society. And much as he genuinely cared for men and women in their physical and spiritual ailments, Burton recognized that everything he knew about melancholy remained radically situational in its origins and provisional in its usefulness.

Wells takes an interdisciplinary approach of her own, largely by bringing together a fairly comprehensive range of Burton scholarship with contemporary studies in rhetoric and related fields. The method makes for a truly invigorating study of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, though it is not without certain shortcomings. Specialists in Burton and his period will pick up on oversimplified statements, doubtful claims, even the occasional mistake. Somewhat more troubling are the inconsistencies in argument, including several instances where Wells appears to make contradictory statements on a single page. Readers may find themselves at a loss over whether, according to Wells, Burton's writing methods did or did not constitute a meaningful precursor to the "scientific prose of the late seventeenth century" (123), or even whether or not Burton wanted to find a cure for melancholy. For all its richness as a study, Wells leans heavily on select recurring modifiers, such as "multiple" and "possible," as well as permutations of phrases, such as exchanges of knowledge, transfers of meaning, and possibilities of exchange.

With these concerns in mind, *Robert Burton's Rhetoric* is an engaging and inspiring study of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Readers of Burton should engage with it, not only for what Wells has to say about her subject, but for what she suggests about the directions that future research into her subject might take.

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John Donne in Context. Michael Schoenfeldt, ed.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. xxxvi + 360 pp. \$99.99.

As Michael Schoenfeldt's brief introduction indicates, this essay collection surveys John Donne's literary, historical, religious, and, to a lesser extent, philosophical context. Thus, by definition, it covers a broad and highly diverse oeuvre, detailing the poet's many influences and contributions to seventeenth-century culture and far beyond—from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries. Toward this end, Schoenfeldt assembles an unusually large number of short essays, thirty-one in all, concretely covering separate, if also overlapping, Donnean topics; useful but not exhaustive suggestions for further reading are also included.

His authors treat their subjects in an impressively timely, clear, and perspicuous manner, although their strong focus on specifics comes somewhat at the expense of a broader picture of Donne's relationship to his contemporaries and their shared

traditions and antecedents. That limitation stems partly from the essays' brevity but, generally speaking, the book is far less concerned with the poet-preacher's debts to major figures or movements or even the impact of recent developments in religion and politics than with his own highly individualistic employment of novel aesthetic devices and techniques. References to his contemporary engagements and closest friends and patrons are hardly lacking, although there is little information on his wife, marriage, children, or even the contemporary English Church. To be fair, existing evidence on these subjects is scant or highly debatable, and the book does include two very different accounts of the intellectual influence of the New Science or New Philosophy of his day and his own relation to nature, playful as well as serious. Unfortunately, however, the one essay most specifically concerned with the New Science—a knowledgeable piece by Margaret Healy—is at times misleading. Donne's work does not simply showcase his acute understanding of the changes wrought by Copernican theory, but, as in *The First Anniversary*, regularly uses it to document the imminent "decay of the world." *Ignatius His Conclave* locates the great astronomer in hell, although in this multileveled satire, hell is not a place of punishment but simply of illusion and deceit.

In any case, the volume does an outstanding job of covering what Donne's fame chiefly rests upon now—his wonderfully clever, often enticingly conflicting accounts of modern love. His other most notable invention, the metaphysical style, also receives excellent treatment, and thankfully it is not dismissed as a misnomer or mistake inherited from Ben Jonson or Samuel Johnson, but rather as Donne's serious and enduring departure from classical tradition. Richard Strier's delightful essay on the "Unity of the Songs and Sonnets" beautifully details how that departure produces cohesion within diversity in the love poems, while Gordon Teskey provides an eloquent, incisive account of precisely how transformative Donne's metaphysics actually is.

Other authors usefully buttress these essays by commenting not just on his remarkably anti-mythical, largely anti-Ovidian orientation but also on his deliberate difficulty and its end result, his own private mythology of love and loss. The divine poems are also competently covered, although they receive comparatively short shrift here. Fortunately, this gap is partly compensated for by generous and accurate treatments of Donne's controversial and theological prose, as in an unusually intriguing essay by Andrew Hadfield. Other authors provide somewhat more traditional accounts of the poet's educational, legal, and medical background; his portraits; and his manipulation of oral, manuscript, and print culture. Important additions to this material include new and insightful investigations of how money, prison culture, and the contemporary understanding of the passions affected Donne's world in ways that make it very different from our own. All these essays aptly reflect the volume's overall concern with material and bodily culture, while the concluding contribution by Linda Gregerson aptly illuminates Donne's influence on twenty-first-century religious poets, broadly understood.

As a whole, Schoenfeldt's volume offers a very strong sampling of newer voices and themes in Donne studies, which is surely welcome, although it seems more difficult to

say whether that feature comes at the expense of older ones. Personally, this reader would have appreciated more thorough coverage of Donne's large and well-established debts to the past, particularly the Neoplatonic and skeptical traditions he uses in such complex and fascinating ways, but no one could complain that this collection fails to offer a very broad view of "Donne in context."

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The Concept of Nature in Early Modern English Literature. Peter Remien.
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The rapidly expanding field of ecocriticism has, over the past two decades, postulated that the crisis of the Anthropocene is rooted in the early modern period. Peter Remien argues in this elegant and important study that prior studies have failed to "foreground the historicity of ecology itself" (2). While the fields of ecology and economy did not exist in the mid-seventeenth century, Remien posits that they are rooted in the concept of the "oeconomy of nature" developed by Sir Kenelm Digby, beginning in his *Two Treatises* (1644), and adopted by subsequent natural philosophers such as Robert Boyle, Carl Linneaus, and Charles Darwin. *Oeconomy* was used across the early modern period to indicate the management of a household or estate, but Digby enlisted the concept in his attempt to reconcile Aristotelian teleology with mechanistic physics, and in doing so (Remien writes), he "radically decouples humanity from the natural world, by suggesting that nature functions oeconomically without human input" (6).

Remien straddles literary and disciplinary approaches to ecocriticism by framing his study as, on the one hand, part of "an intellectual history of the science of ecology," but, on the other, as a "reevaluation of how we understand the relationship between literature and ecology in the early modern period" (1). Accordingly, Remien draws his analysis from the formulation of the oeconomy of nature by a group of natural philosophers—Digby, Samuel Gott, Walter Charleton, Robert Boyle, Samuel Collins, and Thomas Burnet—and the discourse of domestic economy and the rural estate in Ben Jonson, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Margaret Cavendish, and John Milton.

Admittedly, this is primarily a literary study, but Remien dedicates his first chapter to a broad and lucid overview of the tensions in early modern conceptions of the oeconomy of nature with discussions of Samuel Gott's arguments for a radical human polity; Robert Boyle's exploration of experimentalism and religious devotion; Walter Charleton's conceptualization of animal oeconomy; and an extended discussion of Margaret Cavendish's use of natural oeconomy to critique Digby and Charleton. Chapter 2 considers at length what is the fullest treatment of country house oeconomy,