

way from ideal utopia to an almost chaotic state—a metaphorical description of the decline of a patrimonial monarchy.

In the short afterword, Andrew Hadfield stresses the humans' long lasting desire for an ideal, perfectly happy place which is easy to observe through the centuries in the history. He shows how this urgent need had been shaped in the sixteenth and seventeenth century because of the possibility of finding new lands and *a rebours*—what happened when utopian ideas reached the boundaries of the known world. Finally Hadfield shows the importance of the *New Worlds* as a book, which examines this important link and interaction between Travel and Utopia. In my opinion the reader can find here really good summary of that work, with really important final statement that both topics had truly shaped each other.

The Bibliography is a great backup for further examination of the topic for those who want to learn more about the subject. The language of the book is professional and clear, its structure is very good, and it makes a valuable contribution to the ever growing area of utopian research writings.

Adam Smyth. *Autobiography in Early Modern England*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010. x + 222 pp. + 7 illus. \$85.00.
Review by WHITNEY ANNE TRETTEIN, DUKE UNIVERSITY.

Annotated almanacs, financial account records, commonplace books, parish registers: in these four ostensibly mundane sources, Adam Smyth uncovers a network of textual practices through which early modern individuals wrote their own lives. The term “practices” is key here, for Smyth’s book does not read *autobiographies*—an anachronistic term first introduced at the end of the eighteenth century—so much as *archival artifacts*. Although modern readers expect (and impose) narrative coherence in life-writing, as well as truthfulness in the historical record, Smyth challenges these assumptions by drawing attention to sites where early modern writers engaged with the materiality of texts—that is, where they used pen, paper, print and parchment to mark, doodle, cut, paste and port their life-writing across different media platforms. In the process, Smyth not only

expands our understanding of early modern subjectivity (a theme he returns to throughout the book) but contributes to a growing body of literature within book history on what Bradin Cormack, Carla Mazzio and William Sherman have described as “book use” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Autobiography and Early Modern England is divided into four chapters, each of which tackles one of the genres listed above. In the first, “Almanacs and annotators,” Smyth discusses printed almanacs, which were “staggeringly popular” in the early modern period (3). Far more than simple guidebooks, these “cheap, diminutive, eminently portable books” were often interleaved with blank pages inviting readers to chronicle their daily lives in relation to the calendars, timetables and other miscellanea included in the printed book. While Smyth draws on a number of surviving examples of annotated almanacs by both known and unknown figures, this chapter focuses on three in particular: the manuscript of John Wyndham, in which Wyndham pasted printed calendars beside his annotations, showing the “flow of influence” between the printed artifact and Wyndham’s life-writing (25); Lady Isabella Twysden’s Civil War almanacs; and a copy of Arthur Hopton’s *New Almanacke* (1613), perhaps annotated by Matthew Page, which shows how the non-narrative accumulation of records can become autobiographic. Smyth points to a self-reflexivity of thought evident in annotated almanacs that is multiple and collaborative but not (contra modern tropes) fragmented. “To term it a shattering,” he argues, “or to detect an unrealised straining for coherence, is to misconceive the direction of change” (54).

In chapter 2, Smyth turns to financial accounts, examining how early modern methods of bookkeeping produced notions of reliability and truthfulness. Although many historians have treated account books as depositories of brute historical fact, they are, Smyth points out, rich with intertextual connections, showing that “life-writing was rarely a direct transcription of lived experience but rather the product of a process of textual transmission and revision” (60). In many cases, this process tended to reinforce the idea—disseminated in both printed accounting manuals and, interestingly, religious guidebooks—that orderly financial accounts evinced orderly spiritual accounts, and that messy records implied vice. Although this chapter is peppered with

interesting examples, Smyth's reading of Lady Anne Clifford's financial accounts is perhaps its most original contribution, presenting a new picture of Clifford's authorship as a collaborative process literally written in the multiple hands of community members recording receipt of payment, as well as in the hand of her secretary, who performs a "calligraphic ventriloquising" of Lady Clifford's voice (79). While many kinds of life-writing "efface signs of the labour of collaborators," tidying up messy, multivocal notes into a unitary narrative, "Clifford's financial accounts make explicit these multiple textual agencies" (80).

Chapter 3 covers commonplace books and, more broadly, how early modern readers and writers recycled proverbs, verse and other sententious sayings to produce a sense of identity. Although the critical literature on commonplace books is large, especially compared to that on financial account books, Smyth argues they have been treated largely as "disembodied text[s], a set of ideals rather than enactments" (123)—an oversight his chapter aims to correct through close engagement with the actual practices of individuals. This chapter especially focuses on the common-placing of the Royalist Sir John Gibson during his imprisonment in Durham Castle in the 1650s. For Smyth, the broader "commonplace book culture" (defined through its sixteen major characteristics [127-9]) is highly appropriative and adaptive, drawing on what contemporary readers might consider "unoriginal" texts to situate a unique self within a broader social, political and spiritual context.

Smyth ends with a chapter on parish registers. Although the registers are not typically autobiographic (except in at least one interesting case, that kept by the Reverend John Wade of Hammersmith from 1665-1671, discussed by Smyth), their inclusivity "demonstrated to parishioners that (almost) every life might be registered in written form" (6). In fact, as Smyth points out, burial notices of women and placeless individuals—strangers, vagrants, the unemployed—tend to be *more* descriptive than that of men with a secure social position. These "thicker records for the marginal" both grant them a textual prominence and "mar[k] them out, as, precisely, marginal, troubling, unstable" (172). Smyth also considers how the plague encouraged more narrative record-keeping, with some burial notices sliding into mini-biographies.

Although Smyth situates his work primarily within debates of early modern subjectivity and, to a lesser extent, current work on manuscript and print in the seventeenth century, scholars of book history, media history and new media will find much worth mining in his nuanced readings of earlier textual practices. Indeed, by grounding his discussion in archival artifacts, Smyth corrects many assumptions about early modern textuality made by even the most careful early modern historians. In doing so, he helps historicize the culturally-relative nuances of terms like “text,” “writing,” “originality,” “materiality,” and even “book.” At the individual level, one cannot read about how early modern individuals cut, paste, copied and annotated books without becoming unusually aware of one’s own (potentially autobiographic) note-taking methods. This form of historical self-reflexivity can be personally and professionally productive, inspiring scholars to read early printed texts within the material contexts of their use and transmission. For instance, one imagines and Smyth himself argues, that literary historians would not have misread Pepys’s *Diary* as a transcription of bourgeois inner turmoil had they read it beside contemporary financial account books and almanacs. In this way, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* makes an original contribution to the study of self-writing in the seventeenth century; yet it is in the fields of book use and media history where Smyth’s careful archival readings may become most significant.

David Loewenstein and Paul Stevens, eds. *Early Modern Nationalism and Milton’s England*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008. xii + 470 pp. \$82.00. Review by BROOKE CONTI, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BROCKPORT.

To call Milton a nationalist is at once uncontroversial and problematic. While Milton’s lifelong fascination with the English national character and its destiny are on rich display in his works, his attitudes toward his country, his countrymen, and the very idea of the nation are not stable; they shift with the context and subject of a given work as well as with the political circumstances in which Milton found himself. *Early Modern Nationalism and Milton’s England*, edited by