

were written by men, presented in environments dominated by men, the plays presents primarily a male understanding of the body-soul dynamic. She counters by insisting that these plays, in particular Fletcher's *The Tamer Tamed* do "present female subject positions that push against conventional gender norms" (82). She also contends that a female presence in the audience would encourage playwrights to at least consider female attitudes in the construction and presentation of their plays. This may be so, but the discussion could benefit from a greater examination of this assumption. The inclusion of a female authored play, for example Elizabeth Cary's *Mariam* with its overt concerns for body and soul may have provided useful insights when examined alongside the plays and masques featured here.

Johnson makes clear her purpose in this study was to sample "how theatrical probing into the soul-body dynamic can translate into more positive representations of women and challenge oppressive gender ideology" (164). How far the book goes to accomplish this is unclear. However, its greater value is its often complex and nuanced examination of the contested relationship between gender and spirit inherent in discussion of the soul and body in early modern culture.

Michael Martin. *Literature and the Encounter with God in Post-Reformation England*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014. Viii + 221pp. + 4 illus. \$109.95. Review by LISSA BEAUCHAMP DESROCHES, ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY.

Michael Martin's book, *Literature and the Encounter with God in Post-Reformation England*, is a readable and critically engaged consideration of the complexities of religious feeling for everyday people during a period in which critics more commonly point to the newly emerging fields of science and politics over religion. Indeed, Martin's methodology introduces the importance of relinquishing a critical condescension toward religious conviction in order to consider it on its own terms. Using the phenomenology of Heidegger as a basis for his approach, Martin delivers a straightforward and comprehensive picture of an interesting variety of sources that trace a developing chronology of individual connections to the divine over the course

of the period. John Dee, John Donne, Sir Kenelm Digby, Henry and Thomas Vaughn, and Jane Lead provide the source material for a critical engagement of religious feeling from perspectives that range across the considerations of science and religion, centre and margin, and gender and class.

Beginning with Dr. Dee, Martin addresses the period's odd co-mingling of mysticism and technology. Referring to de Certeau's *Mystic Fable*, Martin defines mysticism as what "arises in the tension between religious experience and the attempt to render the revelation or insight garnered through religious experience into the common coinage of words without trivializing or cheapening the *mysterion* by means of the translation" (21). In defining mysticism this way, he recovers Dee's status as a kind of cultural interpreter: his explorations of the technological means of communication with the divine combine the rigours of what emerges as a scientific method later on in the period with the devotional desire for divine contact so familiar in Donne, Herbert, and Crashaw. The intensity of Dee's mysticism, however, results in a kind of wilful blindness which Martin identifies as a "fundamental tragedy": "Dee was . . . enthralled by his misperceived mystical object. He seems to have remained so, as he was still occupied with researches in scrying twenty years later" (46). Yet despite these problems, Martin's analysis brings out the surprising fitness of Dee's technological approach to the desired divine encounter: the attempt to rationalize the means of experience is his way of dignifying the translation of his visions, to render them in fully ecstatic detail.

Following in chronological order, John Donne's mysticism seems an unusual way to continue the discussion; in contrast to Dee, "Donne was extraordinarily sensitive to the ways he might hide his own motivations from himself" (50). Martin begins with this seeming dissimilarity, pointing out how "Donne is not a systematic theologian, but a poet and a preacher. His thought is not theologically dogmatic, but is inclined toward the intuitive" (47). Despite the acknowledged influences of Augustinian and Pauline conversions in Donne's work, Martin focusses on Donne's "religious aesthetic [which] is grounded in humility" (48) and the acceptance of ultimate divine union as deferred until physical death. Such an apocalyptic vision has as much to do with the visions of John of Patmos, though Martin does not address

the role of Revelation in Donne's work, perhaps because Donne is himself "skeptical" of mystical visions that attract sensational kinds of attention, and distract the faithful from being patient and humble. The essential paradox of Donne's religious experience is that "If there is to be an ecstasy, for Donne, there must also be a thorn in the flesh" (70). Martin's excellent analysis of Donne's final sermon is illuminating, as he shows how Donne employs himself as an "emblem" of a "living dead man" (80), a rhetorically readable illustration of divine/human union deferred: "for Donne the Vision of God recedes into the horizon, ever deferred, while simultaneously enfolding him in the mystery of God's presence" (84). In this way, not knowing God now reconstructs anxiety into a familiar, intimately protective mystery.

Like Dr. Dee, Sir Kenelm Digby's search for the means to contact the divine leads him in a direction we can identify as scientific: "particularly in his scientific work concerned with palingenesis, the attempt to raise a plant, phoenix-like, from its own ashes, Digby's ideas about science coalesce with ... his religion in a surprising form of religious experience" (87). Martin identifies Digby's work as *metalepsis*, "a rather complicated literary trope that the *OED* defines as 'the rhetorical figure consisting in the metonymical substitution of one word for another which is itself a metonym; (more generally) any metaphorical usage resulting from a series of succession of figurative substitutions'" (90). Martin then excavates the series of substitutions in Digby's scientific search for God, which involves the biographical figures of Digby's recusant, executed father as well as the loss of his beloved wife, to establish the clear line of connections that substantiate how "his real sphere of activity is grounded not in biology but in the soul ... [that] its energy derives as much from love as from anxiety as he strives to forge an epistemology of assurance" (107). The only disappointing aspect of this chapter is that Martin leaves as largely implicit the potentially interesting connections between Digby and Donne, and Digby and Dee—I would like to have seen a clearer comparative approach that draws out the suggestions regarding how these three figures considered their more worldly relationships with their wives, especially since these common bonds figured so strongly for each of them.

In Chapter Four, Martin does use a comparative structure to link the works of (possibly twin) brothers Henry and Thomas Vaughan. And again, we see that a shared mysticism (in this case, Rosicrucian) informs both scientific and religious methodologies: by “Rosicrucian mysticism,” Martin “propose[s] a variety of religious experience that is intuitive, and that the intuition in question is focused on the natural world and arises from a simultaneously scientific and religious contemplation of nature” (109). (And again there is missing an obvious comparison to other material within this study, as the intuitive nature of the Vaughans’ work and the similarly intuitive inclinations of Donne are never significantly addressed.) Henry Vaughan’s *Silex Scintillans*, the “sparking flint,” is a vivid emblem for the divine spark that enlivens us, as well as the fire of alchemical combustion; and “for Thomas Vaughn [too], there is more to nature than bodies and more to religion than the spirit” (132). Thomas’s use of the shell and kernel metaphor—in which the shell is the body of scientific investigation, and the kernel the substance of the interpretive soul—is one that Henry also employs, which Martin considers in a fascinating analysis that demonstrates how the two brothers meet, though beginning from different starting points: “Both Henry and Thomas uphold an understanding of Christ’s participation in nature and in nature’s processes that is crucial to an understanding of their respective religious and scientific visions. Christ’s regeneration, that is, is the key to both religion and science. For the Vaughans, as for Digby, the resurrection is not only an article of faith, but a scientific—and therefore discoverable—fact” (135). The divine coherence of nature then demonstrates Thomas’s synergistic “conception of world processes,” as opposed to a hierarchical one (139). And, in a fine reading of Henry’s “Ascension-Hymn,” Martin describes how, in between the “Dust” of the first word and the last word, “light,” “the reader tries to sort out the Christ-speaker from the human-speaker, [and] we witness the equivalent of a literary sublimation. Not only that, but the reciprocity figured in the poem is stunning, as it opens with Christ contemplating the earthly and culminates with the human speaker contemplating the celestial” (142). In the same way, the reciprocal dialogue of Thomas’s science and Henry’s religious verse construct their relationship as a model for world processes: the “resurrection, even of

nettles in an alembic, would be impossible had not the Resurrection of Christ first occurred. Christ's death and resurrection, according to this view, effected a chemical change on nature itself" (145). In this way, God is immanent, not transcendent as for Calvin, and there is no necessary division between theology and *scientia*. Indeed, "the notion of God being uninvolved with chemical processes—or any process in nature—is unimaginable. Indeed, Thomas's career as a scientist, I would suggest, was to him unimaginable apart from his career as a priest. These categories did not bear the mutual exclusivity that [we] tend to read into them for Thomas, nor for many in the early modern period" (146-147). Thus, seeing early modern religious conviction without smug dismissal of its relevance has the effect of revealing an interestingly mutual inclusivity between scientists and religious poets.

Finally, in the fifth chapter, Martin considers the religious leadership of Jane Lead, and he claims "that Jane Lead's religious imagination was heavily indebted to Paul in four distinct ways: (1) in her imagination of herself and those around her as a kind of Pauline community, (2) in her allegiance to the mystical event that initiated her evangelical mission, (3) in her evident flesh-spirit dualism, and (4) particularly in the way she abides in the tension between *chronos* and *kairos* in relationship to Parousia" (156). While the first two points are fairly interesting biographically and historically, it is the latter two points that compel attention. Unfortunately, Martin does not comment in any detail on the significance of Lead's cross-gender identification, apart from noting that she is female and that such a leadership role in evangelical terms is not unprecedented. I do find this absence somewhat disappointing, although it is perhaps justifiable in this context: "Lead, following Paul, entered into a religious consciousness that transcended categories of allegiance, class, and gender" (165). Instead, what is important to Lead—despite its widely heretical status—is "the theological context of apocatastasis, the resurrection and glorification of not only the just but of all: sinful humans as well as the fallen angels" (166). This vision delivers a sense of identity without the usual (world-bound) boundaries between different kinds, such as allegiance, class, and gender, and she insists that "the regenerated bodies of the resurrection will be androgynous" (169). Martin notes the usual critical consensus of Paul's misogyny as potentially problematic here, as Paul is a model

for Lead; but with a nice clarity, he also notes that “the situation is not nearly this simple. Paul, it is true, did not like the idea of women preachers or women speaking out in the church [fn. For example, 1 Cor 14:34-6.], but he also claimed that, in Christ, the distinctions ‘male’ and ‘female’ do not exist in eternity [fn. Erica Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 12.]” (169). In one of the few instances that Martin engages feminism or gender theory, he does so only to offer a possible explanation for the relative lack of critical work on Jane Lead: her “rejection of the body might help to explain why feminist critics have generally kept Lead at arm’s length since a significant emphasis in their discourse is the reclamation of the body. ... for Lead, [the body and the spirit] tend to work antithetically, with the body only being a tool, and a not altogether reliable one, for the spirit to use” (172-173). This diminishment of the body is also a diminishment of worldly experience, including the chronological time that we suffer through while here, and thus directly leads to the “tension between *chronos* and *kairos* in relationship to Parousia” (156): while “parousia is simply a word that means ‘presence,’ and *kairos* could be accurately described as Parousia’s point of access, a ‘rupture,’ through which this presence arrives” (182). Thus the diminishment of the body, and the world, and *chronos*, also elevates the significance of the spirit, and the afterlife, and *kairos*, as an alternative way of experiencing the divine: “Both Paul and Lead, though they avow the Second Coming will be an actual historical occurrence, nevertheless emphasize the inner Parousia in which believers might experience the truth event of Christ’s presence ... Lead did not let herself be bound by the attitudes of the religious establishment of her own time” (183). In this regard, if nothing else, Lead’s inclusion amongst the other poets and scientists of Martin’s study stands out and calls for further critical consideration.

Literature and the Encounter with God in Post-Reformation England marks a renewed scholarly attitude that tries to encounter the period on its own terms, and in many ways opens new views for critical consideration in the process. Martin’s thoughtful employment of phenomenology provides a strong sense of direction forward, unhampered by critical attitudes of condescension toward the sincere religious conviction that motivates so many early modern writers—indeed, that

authorizes them to write in the first place, marking them as testimonial witnesses to their own experience of the world and the time in which they live so vividly.

Ann Marie Plane. *Dreams and the Invisible World in Colonial New England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. xiii + 237. \$45.00. Review by WILLIAM J. SCHEICK, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN.

A striking insight introduces Ann Marie Plane's *Dreams and the Invisible World in Colonial New England*. Since an allusion to the disciple Paul's conversion vision is embedded in the official seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, this reference implicitly suggests "that the entire colonial enterprise in New England was based on a dream." Despite the prominence of this colonial seal, Plane observes, "the full significance of dream narratives in unlocking the religious, social, cultural, and emotional history of colonial societies has yet to be explored" by historians.

While recognizing some caveats by other historians who are wary of the scholarly use of dream/vision accounts, Plane persuasively argues that these accounts can be interpreted as reasonably reliable indices to various unconscious issues that were significant to their reporters. Dreams, after all, occur within and reflect cultural and social frameworks, Plane maintains. Moreover, "English dream practices served hidden 'selfobject' functions for the dreamer, allowing for the management and integration of potentially disruptive experiences, and for the maintenance of an idealized masculine restraint in the face of destabilizing feelings and awe-inspiring wonders." (My own sympathy for such a methodological approach, I should confess, is documented in *Authority and Female Authorship in Colonial America*, which likewise emphasizes unconscious impulses resulting in ambivalent resistances and negotiations that accidentally unsettle the surface of male-authorized narrative strategies.)

Mixed, even contradictory, attitudes toward dreams have a long history. Readers of *Paradise Lost*, for instance, witness how prelapsarian Adam benefits from divine instruction imparted benignly through