

For instance, she tells us that a 1667 copy of *Paradise Lost* contains marginalia precisely on her theme. Someone wrote the words “Horrors of Conscience” beside Sin’s description of her children. It is probably here, in the chapter on Milton, that her thesis that conscience was central to the idea of the nation is at its strongest and may, in fact, be its origin. This reader finds it hard to accept the case for much of the rest of the book. Again, this is because of her allergy to theology. This tendency becomes all the more apparent in her Afterward in which she turns to Matthew Arnold. There she notes his distinction between the French Revolution, which pressed the case of rationality, and the English, which relied on conscience. But she seems insensitive to a problem of which Arnold was well aware and, in fact, for which he is famous. His “long, withdrawing roar” on Dover Beach was faith slipping away. The French Revolution was the most obvious and violent expression of this. The English Revolution was not that. It might be considered the last (violent) gasp of the wars of religion. Thereafter we had wars of ideology, where conscience spoke not at all.

This is a fine work of scholarship. The criticisms noted here cannot take away from the accomplishment that it is. Lobo has not taken the argument in all the ways this reviewer might have wished, but it makes no less of a contribution for that. Instead, the materials here assembled and the insights provided will be a source of many future debates and disagreements, all of them better because of this work.

Carme Font. *Women’s Prophetic Writings in Seventeenth-Century Britain*. London and New York: Routledge, 2018. xii + 250 pp. \$149.95. Review by MELINDA ZOOK, PURDUE UNIVERSITY.

Carme Font’s new book on seventeenth-century female prophets demonstrates how women were able to use prophetic writings as a catalyst for change, both personal and political. She examines prophecy as a literary genre of social transformation that empowered women, making them activists. Through a series of case studies, Font’s work follows female prophetic voices from the era of the Civil Wars, when prophecy peaked, into the early eighteenth century when, as she argues, many women writers remained committed to social change and

continued to be inspired by the prophetic tradition. Font's emphasis throughout is on empowerment. Prophetic writing is text-based activism. Women used their prophetic authority to gain power, as individuals, as believers, and as citizens in a male-dominated world.

The scholarship on women and prophecy during the seventeenth century is rich, to say the least. Font knows she is entering a crowded field and her introduction gives credit to the ground-breaking work on women, dissent, and prophecy by Christine Berg and Philippa Berry, Phyllis Mack, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby, Elizabeth Bouldin, Esther Cope, Curtis Freeman, Diane Purkiss, Diane Willen, and Sarah Apetrei, among others. Considering the amount of scholarship produced on this subject, it is not surprising that we have seen many of the basic premises of this book before. This is true of Font's argument that women were both inspired by their religiosity and used it to challenge authority, along with her emphasis on the political content of women's prophetic writings, which is exactly where most scholars have placed their focus.

What is perhaps most fresh and exciting about this book is Font's analysis of prophecy as a literary discourse of social and personal transformation and empowerment. Thus, as Font points out in her Introduction, the Baptist writer, Anne Wentworth used prophecy to expose the abuse of her husband, using religious language to convey a secular message, one that her congregation had ignored. Empowered "by the might power of God," Wentworth demonstrated an awareness of her own ability to demand and affect change. The "religious tenor of the prophetic text and its 'lay' content," writes Font, "often appealed to political change, individual conscience, and a greater awareness of gender bias" (1-2).

Font's case studies are also lively and insightful. Her aim is to "explore the nature of women's political participation in seventeenth-century culture beyond their status as individuals whose private life (marriage, legal status, access to education) needed to be regulated by the state" (40). This is not exactly new territory either. But Font succeeds at embedding the relevant historiography, and she has an innovative approach as well. Her emphasis on prophecy as activism and as an intervention into state politics has women not just participating in the public sphere, but also seeking to create public opinion. In

December 1648, with the preparation for the trial of Charles I in progress, the Baptist Elizabeth Poole was invited to speak before the Army Council. Her “vision” of England’s future was warmly received and she was invited a second time, just days before the King’s execution. This time her visions, much to the Council’s dismay, recorded God’s command that the King’s life be preserved. As Font demonstrates, this anti-regicidal challenge to the Army was taken seriously and it “elicited a sustained negative response” (69). This time, unlike Poole’s first visit wherein she maintained common cause with the Council, her status as a prophet was questioned. What gave this woman the right to question the authority of men? Her visions garnered the Council’s respect just as long as she stayed within their accepted opinions.

The chapter on Poole is in Part I of this book on prophetic politics during the 1640s. In Part II, Font examines the prophetic content of devotional literature during the Interregnum, focusing on Anna Trapnel, Jane Turner and Sarah Wright, and An Turner. Part III concentrates on the language of prophecy and its ability to foster a personal, female authorial center through the writings of Eleanor Davies, Jane Lead, Ann Bathurst, Joan Vokins, Kathleen Cheever and Katherine Evans, most of whom (with the exception of Lady Davies) were active during the second half of the seventeenth century.

This is a book of many ideas and insights and not everyone will agree with all that Font puts forth. There are also times when the book’s arguments seem more suggestive than realized. Still, this is certainly a richly textured and complex study, written with sensitivity, clarity, and care, and it adds to our growing understanding of women’s understanding of themselves and their ability to affect change in the early modern era.

Bonnie Lander Johnson and Eleanor Decamp, eds. *Blood Matters: Studies in European Literature and Thought, 1400–1700*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. x + 354 pp. \$89.95. Review by CELESTE CHAMBERLAND, ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY.

Typically associated with barber-surgeons and leeches in late medieval and early modern Europe, the language of blood has long