

of celestial space in the cupolas of early modern churches, as well as with Milton's own dizzying shifts of perspective and conjuring of innumerability and limitlessness in Pandemonium. Less austere matters, but no less energy, attention, and originality characterize the final chapter of *The Curious Eye*: her persuasive reading of Behn's *Emperor of the Moon* presents the play not just as a critique of the soft target of the Virtuoso, but also as a careful reflection on the convenient fictions of the experimenter's innocent eye, his austere objectives, his neutral instrument, his disembodied self, and on the patriarchal system required to sustain such poses.

This study manages both crucial attention to detail and a carefully articulated historical arc, and Webster offers throughout generous and informative syntheses of others' critical arguments before going on to delineate her own and often more nuanced position. While the oversized contributions of the usual suspects from the Continent—Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, Pascal—punctuate the narrative, the focus is for the most part on the English ambit. The relevance of England's nascent empire to these natural philosophers is persuasively presented in the third chapter. But the curious reader wonders, especially as the notion of similitude as optical technology is elaborated, if aspects of Webster's argument apply more broadly to other European vernaculars, or if by contrast, something particular to that isolated Anglophone enclave encouraged such developments.

John C. Appleby. *Fur, Fashion and Transatlantic Trade during the Seventeenth Century: Chesapeake Bay Native Hunters, Colonial Rivalries, and London Merchants*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2021. x + 294 pp. + 2 illus. \$115. Review by JOSEPH P. WARD, UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY.

Fashion reflected status in early modern England. With the court at its heart, English culture during the sixteenth century fostered a competition for status that fueled conspicuous display among courtiers, with the ambitious deploying expensive, sometimes exotic, clothing as a badge of distinction. Although sumptuary laws half-heartedly restricted the use of certain materials into the early seventeenth century, such restrictions increased the appeal among the elite of rare fabrics

while they failed to prevent social climbers from emulating the styles of the elite. Fur was considered among the most desirable materials, and fur-trimmed attire appealed to men and women in the fashionable arena. For men, fur hats became a primary marker of status, and the resulting demand for pelts placed growing pressure on animal populations in Britain and the Continent, which in turn became one of the leading drivers of European exploration and colonization in North America during the seventeenth century.

John Appleby focuses his new book on the first century of English colonization in the Chesapeake Bay. Tobacco cultivation would eventually become the economic and social foundation for much of the mid-Atlantic, but Appleby reminds us that the development and control of new supplies of fur was, for several decades, an essential feature of colonial enterprise in the western Atlantic. The early years of English colonization in the Chesapeake were managed by the Virginia Company, which struggled both in its relations with indigenous peoples and in its efforts to secure a stable economic foundation for colonization. Upon the dissolution of the Company in 1624, individual traders began pushing the range of their activities further inland, which brought some into an alliance with the Susquehannock, whose trading networks extended from the northern reaches of the Bay to areas of the interior that had been inaccessible to the English.

A key development occurred during the 1630s, when a group of younger Virginia colonists with close ties to London merchants established a new joint stock company based on Kent Island, located near the eastern shore of the Bay. Building upon the extensive research of other scholars as well as his own archival work in English and colonial archives, Appleby reconstructs for his readers the emergence among these traders of an approach to the Chesapeake that tossed humanity aside for the sake of profit: "Confident of exploiting native divisions, such men were beginning to formulate a colonial strategy based on conflict with hostile neighbors and peaceful relations with less threatening distant groups" (92). Maryland was established through a colonial charter in 1632, and it soon asserted a claim over Kent Island, setting the stage for a prolonged period in which the English colonial efforts in the Chesapeake became noteworthy for their intense rivalries, dividing along religious as well as commercial lines.

Profound divisions in England during the 1640s and 1650s left colonial leaders largely on their own. Among the challenges they faced were increasing competition from Dutch and Swedish traders as well as the decline of the Susquehannock as reliable middlemen for English fur traders in the face of Iroquois aggression. These developments led English traders to seek new sources of pelts in the interior, which led to a new era of inter-ethnic commercial relations. While some English merchants successfully established trading partnerships with indigenous communities, Appleby notes that contemporaries were aware of the gradual decline of Indian communities in the face of colonial growth, which increasingly was based on the cultivation of tobacco: “An expanding plantation culture, boosted by the influx of a new wave of migrants, threatened the survival of native groups with a re-shaping of the land and its ecology” (147).

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the fur trade came under the control of the Hudson Bay Company. The new company’s royal charter in 1670 gave it authority over an extensive territory from which both Indian and English hunters harvested pelts. Its success in commanding the supply of pelts created challenges for the company because it led to the saturation of the domestic English market, which forced it to seek the re-exportation of both raw and finished furs and opened it up to fierce criticism. Ultimately the pursuit of short-term advantages in the market led the company to exploit the animal population in ways that undermined its long-term health.

Although most of Appleby’s book focuses on the English efforts to organize the supply of pelts in North America, he reminds his reader that London manufacturers were crucial players in the marketplace for finished hats. At the outset of the book, he describes in considerable detail the many steps that were required to turn a raw pelt into the fur trimming of a hat. Each step in the process required great skill in order to preserve the expensive and delicate materials. As London became the hub of domestic manufacturing for the luxury trades as a result of its proximity to both the court and the merchants who traded in pelts, it attracted immigrants from the Continent who brought their expertise with them, sometimes to the aggravation of domestic craftsmen. As the seventeenth century progressed, members of the London Feltmakers’ Company came to dominate the manufacturing

process, but differentiation within the company gave a small number of merchants disproportionate influence in the trade, which sparked significant resentment among the less well-capitalized producers and disrupted production during the 1690s.

Appleby has written a thoughtful, well-organized study of a complex trade network, shining probing light onto an important aspect of North Atlantic social and economic history. In his concluding chapter he invites his reader to reflect on how Thomas Tryon's *The Planter's Speech* (1684) "provided a voice for the complaints of mute animals against the oppression and violence they suffered at the hands of English colonists in North America" (241). Such an observation could seem a bit anachronistic, reflecting as it may our twenty-first-century concerns about the environment, but it is quite appropriate for the story that Appleby has told. From its outset in the early decades of the seventeenth century, the colonial English concern to send animal pelts to the metropolis reflected nothing more substantial than the whims of elite tastes in fashion, and yet it played a major role in the manipulation of the native societies and natural environments of Chesapeake Bay as the English had found them. From that point onwards, traders showed no regard for being stewards of the long-term health of the people and animals they fell upon, which had devastating consequences for both. Appleby is fully justified to conclude that "the self-destructive character of an enterprise exemplified by deep-seated tension between consumption and conservation lay unresolved" (252).

Patrick J. McGrath. *Early Modern Asceticism: Literature, Religion, and Austerity in the English Renaissance*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020. 236 pp. + 1 illus. \$52.50. Review by P.G. STANWOOD, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

This ambitious study opens with a statement of thesis, "that the tension between spiritual and physical asceticism became a major theme in the literature and religion of the [early modern] period" (8), thus causing authors the need to balance one side against the other. Patrick McGrath argues that asceticism does not disappear with the Reformation, "giving way to a modern world of increased