

Pepys used in his ballad collection tells us more about Samuel Pepys than about the nature of ballads. Rushworth's repudiation of a framing narrative for the documents he prints does not disguise his political bias, which, despite the repudiation, appears in his choices. Ultimately Somers shows us throughout this book that the "unique" identities that collectors and their collections forge tell us more about identify formation in early modern England than about ephemera itself.

Identity, then, is the common denominator between *Ephemeral Print Culture in Early Modern England* and *Gateways to the Book*, and it provides a valuable way of thinking about visual iconography in early modern print culture. Visual images' allusive quality enabled early modern printers, authors, and collectors to fashion their distinctive identities vis-à-vis their social stature, politics, religion, and position within the Republic of Letters in ways that extended beyond the seeming fixity of the printed word. These books make a significant contribution to the literature on early modern culture from the perspective of print.

Sean H. McDowell. *Metaphysical Shadows: The Persistence of Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, and Marvell in Contemporary Poetry*. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2022. x + 203 pp. Review by MARGARET J. OAKES, FURMAN UNIVERSITY.

John Donne, lover/husband/father/poet/apologist/sermonizer/priest, is having a moment right now because of the widely lauded 2022 publication of Katherine Rundell's *Super-Infinite: The Transformations of John Donne*. Rundell deeply embraces the notion that Donne loved to balance, join, and clash paradoxes, both in his life and his writing. In reviewing Rundell's book, Lara Feigel of *The Guardian* notes that "For Rundell, Donne is writing into being a new ideal: a 'completed meshing of body and imagination'" (28 Apr 2022). The most introductory of student readings on Donne include the infamous wild images of "Batter my heart, three-personed God," "And in this flea our two bloods mingled be," and "Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one." Commonplaces about the violent juxtapositioning of images and the sacred and profane in Donne's work are not trite,

as they describe every aspect of his subject matter, approach to form, figurative language, and attitude towards -- well, just about everything.

Despite the image of the axe on the cover, Rundell's term "meshing" might be a useful way to describe the project of Sean H. McDowell in his *Metaphysical Shadows: The Persistence of Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, and Marvell in Contemporary Poetry*. Familiarity of language, style, and form are some of the great pleasures of reading any literature, but especially poetry. Allusions, similar structures, subjects, and key words create a kaleidoscope of meaning in a later work that differs from reader to reader depending on their background knowledge. Part of the richness of poets such as Milton, Eliot, H.D., and Amanda Gorman is their obvious awareness of cultural heritage; the historical use of the English language and how it changes (and how they change it); and the way that images, figures of speech, and even the sounds of words can spark a memory and open up corridors into the past that lead to other writers. This is McDowell's goal: to explain how the style and substance of Donne and others insinuate themselves into the writing both of those poets who openly acknowledge influence and others who seem to be writing through a filter of sway that they may not recognize. McDowell argues for a multitude of "forms of intertextuality resulting from [the] engagements" of selected contemporary poets (8). And McDowell does not want to stop with Donne; in several ways in each section of the book he adds other seventeenth-century poets labeled "metaphysical" in an attempt to mesh their work with that of several poets writing in the twenty-first century.

McDowell endeavors to organize levels of influence in several ways. The first part of the book argues for "manifestations of poetic interactions" (9). The "shadows" cast by the older poets range from deep to faint, as he touches on the use of allusion to a particular poem, an "answer" to a poem, the use of similar topics, and finally somewhat elusive stylistic parallels based in the meditative qualities of some of Donne's poetry. Chapter One taps Seamus Heaney for the strongest connection between his "Chanson d'Aventure" and Donne's poetry. Heaney is writing about suffering a stroke in 2006 and his reaction to the love his soul felt for his wife even as he could not physically feel her touch as they rode in the ambulance. This may lead the reader to believe that one of the *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* may be

the selected allusion, or perhaps “The Canonization” or “The Relic.” Instead, the focus—and only of the first one of three sections of Heaney’s poem—is the imagining in “The Extasie” of the two “still, companionable lovers” (25) lying on a bank. McDowell then turns to one of Heaney’s Glanmore Sonnets, which also features a couple sleeping rough on a turf bank in the light rain. We must combine the two Heaney poems to get the fullness of the allusion. McDowell goes on to explain other “voiceprints” in the second and third parts of the poem which connect it to Keats’ “Ode to a Nightingale” and explicitly to an ancient Greek statue of a charioteer. This is not to say that the connection to Donne is not there, but the hesitation in the argument to commit to the influence makes it less compelling. Raising questions that need to be investigated is a hallmark of scholarly writing, but the discussions of the parallels between writers throughout the book tend to end with a group of questions that he seems not to want to address: in this instance, on page 30 a series of unanswerable questions that would require us to read Heaney’s mind, and questions that are only about Donne, not the two artistic inspirations for the other parts of the poem. Further, the reader is asked to ignore the quote in Heaney’s Sonnet X that comes directly from Sir Thomas Wyatt’s “They Flee from Me”: the second half of the first line is “how like you this?” If a reader is familiar enough with Donne to put together a faint allusion in two poems together, they will be knowledgeable enough to be slightly puzzled at the invocation of one of the most famous “kiss off” poems in English literary history in a poem that otherwise seems to endorse the profundity of soulful love.

The second chapter shows a clearer connection, both in form and substance. McDowell first elaborates on the relationship among Marlowe, Raleigh, and Donne in the famous nymph and bait poems, often read and taught together. He highlights deliberate modern “replies” in several poems by Mary Holtby, Karen Donnelly, and Katherine McAlpine in an anthology specifically dedicated to poetic responses by women to male poets. He notes that each of these “strike back” (43) at Donne, answering him in critique and sometimes even lampooning his own parody, as in Donnelly’s “The Dead Flea” to switch the political roles they assert Donne’s speakers create for their lovers. But the bulk of the chapter is spent on Ann[e] Donne, with Maureen

Boyle's *The Nunwell Letter*, a lengthy imagining of Ann's recovery on the Isle of Wight from a miscarriage. McDowell nicely explicates the poem and its fluid references to many of Donne's works through Ann's voice; perhaps this section should have been the first chapter as the influences in these poems are the most clear.

Four contemporary poets are crowded into Chapters Three and Four. The structure of the book becomes quite complex here, as Chapter Three focuses on Andrew Marvell and the next one flips back to Donne in an effort to maintain the thesis of that influence becoming more shadowy throughout the discussion. This does not seem necessary. Archibald MacLeish's "You, Andrew Marvell" and Brendan Kennelly's book *Cromwell: A Poem* overtly reflect or refract Marvell's work. McDowell's parsing of "To His Coy Mistress" and "The Garden" show how MacLeish reworks Marvell's fixation on the passage of time and its effects on human love. However, the same amount of page space is spent on Marvell's "Horatian Ode" and Kennelly's lengthy meditation on the larger picture of Cromwell's actions in Ireland and the long shadow that that cast on English and Irish history. McDowell argues correctly here that "Readers can triangulate between [a] subject and the poets who write about it" and that Kennelly adopts Marvell's "scenic rendering of episodes in real or nearly real time" (69). Kennelly's work deserves more space and analysis, and the argument to be more assertive; the statement "One could call his work a dramatic filling in from the postcolonial margins" (69), elicits the mental response "Of course!" and raises more questions about the influence of the Troubles that clearly accompanied the publication of this book in 1983. The tone of the next chapter is somewhat puzzling. It proposes that American poet Ronald Johnson "neither references a prior poet or poems nor dwells on a shared subject but . . . instead adopts [sic] mode or approach resembling how a metaphysical poet typically or famously proceeds," and that the three-part structure of the meditative mode of Loyola, Donne, and Yeats to "achieve a sense of unity or new understanding" (73, 86). McDowell actually cites George Herbert as the inspiration for the structure of Johnson's magnum opus *ARK*, which was written over the course of twenty years (1970–1990) and uses architectural features from all over the world in its 99 parts. Only a third of the chapter centers on Johnson, however, and while

McDowell certainly makes the point that Johnson uses sharp analogies and ideas from science in some of the sections of the poem, it seems to stretch the point to say that there is influence here, as a “meditative mode” is a not uncommon arena for poetic work.

Part II wishes to expand the notion of “poetic influence” in the work of five particular poets, male and female, black and white. These influences run the gamut, from Anne Cluysenaar, who wrote poetry about, created an annual colloquium organized around, and helped found a journal about Henry (and Thomas) Vaughan; and Alfred Corn and Kimberly Johnson, who openly declare their kinship to Herbert and Donne, respectively. Interspersing those poets are Heaney again, only because he and Donne write about the same subjects, and Jericho Brown, whose connection seems so tenuous as not to merit an entire chapter because they share an audacious relationship between sacred and secular notions or display “a verbal boldness” (12). Some of this analysis identifies or develops rich connections and others do not, but when the voices are singing in concert or response, they are valuable information for a scholar. The fact that Heaney and Donne use the same literary tools to speak about love is too generic an argument to make. On the other hand, Cluysenaar devoted much of her professional life and work to the Vaughans, with the result described by McDowell that “Cluysenaar does not just *see* Vaughan through imaginative recreation but comes to *see like* Vaughan and thereby understand her environment in new ways” (101). The explication of her “Vaughan Variations” is thorough and teaches as much about Vaughan as much as it does about Cluysenaar.

The most valuable chapters in the book are those focusing on the relationships between Alfred Corn and Herbert, and Kimberly Johnson and Donne. While McDowell asserts in the chapter about Corn that the later poet absorbs “those words or constructions that creep in beyond the poet’s conscious awareness” (131), Corn actually deeply engages, in both echoed images and individual words, many of Herbert’s themes and metaphors. This is a worthwhile book if for no other reason than the exposure to Ronald Johnson, Corn, and Kimberly Johnson. A died-in-the-wool devotee of early modern poetry, stubbornly clinging to Frost’s “tennis without a net” view of contemporary free verse poetry, may not be familiar with them but will

appreciate knowing that those poets are also devotees whose work was both consciously and unconsciously shaped by Donne and Herbert. The emphasis on determining whether the influences from any of the older poets were intentional or not seems not to serve the otherwise excellent analysis of the contemporary poetry.

Initially, McDowell adopts Judith Scherer Herz's idea of a "voiceprint," which he describes as "a profound, more substantial engagement of one poet with the 'psychology' and 'linguistic system' of another" (21, 129). He creates a useful distinction between this kind of generous relationship of voices in harmony or concert and Bloom's anxiety of influence, which stresses the prerogative of originality and the fear of being "weak" as opposed to "strong." McDowell wants to take the bad taste out of our mouths left by Bloom's politicization of style and what often is an oppressive worship of writers (male, in the distant past) whom he considers strong and unreachable. Seventeenth-century "metaphysical" poets are also in the distant past and McDowell only talks about male ones, but the relationships he wants to pose are those of gratitude, respect, and inspiration that use past work as a steppingstone, reflection, or reverberation to something new. McDowell only mentions it briefly until the chapter on Herbert and Kimberly Johnson, but the flexibility and generosity of the "voiceprint" when talking about influence might lend itself to create a more comprehensible framework for the entire book and the wide variety of past and present poets whom he discusses. In McDowell's correspondence with Corn, they discuss a parallel between Herbert's "Love and Corn's "Source" that was not intentional, but Corn admits "I have read Herbert so many times that I suppose he must now be part of the fabric of consciousness, the text of the composing self" (135). This may have been the best description in the book of the connections that McDowell wishes to reveal.

Victor Stater, *Hoax: The Popish Plot That Never Was*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022. xii + 313 pp. + 13 illus. \$35.00. Review by NATHAN MARTIN, CHARLESTON SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY.

In *Hoax: The Popish Plot That Never Was*, Victor Stater provides a brilliantly detailed and thoroughly examined account of the famous