handkerchief, he points to some joining or touching of disparates: "The task of thinking across and beyond the temporal partitions that subtly inform notions of racial and religious identity is thus a timely one," he closes (18).

Lest it seem this tripartite argument enacts a Hegelian synthesis, Harris appends "Dis-Orientations" as Coda: "Untimely matter … challenges the fantasy of the self-identical moment or period, of the sovereign moment-state divided from its temporal neighbors. It materializes instead a temporality which is not one" (189). Summing up, Harris brings his argument directly to our time. His argument helps "confound the fantasy that insists on treating the past as synonyms partitioned from the west. And in our war-addled time, such untimely dis-orientations couldn't be timelier" (194).

Judith Haber. *Desire and Dramatic Form in Early Modern England.* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. xi + 212 pp. $90.00. Review by ELISA OH, HOWARD UNIVERSITY.

Departing from New Historicist emphasis on early modern plays' social and political context, Judith Haber's study raises the provocative question of how sexuality and sexual difference affect formal aesthetics. She posits that the plays of Christopher Marlowe, John Webster, Thomas Middleton, John Ford, and Margaret Cavendish represent varying degrees of non-phallic sexuality. That is, Haber claims that these plays feature "pointless play" (1) or infinite foreplay and the absence of a one-directional trajectory. By drawing attention to these plays' alternatives to traditional forms that parallel the consummated and reproductive heterosexual act, Haber suggests "that narrative 'history' necessarily partakes of the same culturally created connections to patriarchal, heteroerotic masculinity as all narratives, and needs to be radically reconceived if it is really to represent other positions" (2). Therefore, Haber asserts that attention to the "subversive power of the aesthetic" (4) is a critical necessity, because looking beyond the historical embeddedness of a text allows us to perceive the dominant discourse's pretense of being the only norm, though in actuality it is phallic and patriarchal. She argues that analyzing the aesthetic, long

associated with the subordinated yet liberating viewpoints of the feminine and sodomitical, enables a critique of the ideology in which contemporary critical discourse is deeply implicated.

Part I concerns the plays of Christopher Marlowe and ends with a "Shakespearean interlude" in which Haber looks at key narratives, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, that are rewritten by the later plays, and Part II examines the desiring women in *The Revenger's Tragedy; The Duchess of Malfi; The Changeling; 'Tis Pity She's a Whore; The Convent of Pleasure; The Female Academy; The Unnatural Tragedy; Youths Glory, and Deaths Banquet;* and *Loves Adventures.* Each of her examples "enact a tension between the two opposed connotations of 'play'—between unified, teleological dramatic structure on the one hand and static lyric or improvisational performance on the other" (5).

Haber focuses on Marlowe's construction of sodomy and destabilization of social structures of masculinity. In a valuable reading of the homoeroticism in "The Passionate Shepherd," she posits that what is less important than the gender of the beloved is the alternation between movement and stasis, the lack of hierarchies or linear narrative, celebration of pure aestheticism, and the implication that desire is without need for conclusion. She demonstrates that this refusal of consummation also appears in Tamburlaine's blazon and later reification of an impenetrable Zenocrate and homoerotic negotiations with Theridamas.

While Marlowe's Edward II seems to be suspended in indeterminacy, Haber claims that his dramatic narrative must ultimately submit to linear history and its brutally "intelligible" closure of sexual consummation. Death in this play is at once a reliable consummation and an absent center that negates all meaning. "Playing the sodomite" allows Edward to resist heteronormative meaning, and this unfixed identity threatens the business of running a kingdom. However, finite socially determined meaning cannot be evaded forever, and Edward's death enacts a submission to it. In contrast, Haber argues that *Hero and Leander* effectively suspends and critiques "his society's dominant fiction" (39) of conventional coherence by disrupting linear narrative and phallic sexuality.

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* provides a disturbing "image of perfect union in orgasm / death … and helps define the erotics of

patriarchy and the form of romantic tragedy in the Renaissance" (50, 54). In a later play Haber shows that the obsessively repeated male consummations in *The Revenger's Tragedy* at once critique this patriarchal "self-defeating phallic orgasm and death" (61) but also never fully escape its misogyny and linear narrative. Vindice does not make progress toward revenge for much of the play, and characters' identities are shifting and unstable, but revenge itself is figured as a violent, phallic sexual penetration that reestablishes the dominant discourse's need for comprehensible order, reason, and stable truth. Since Castiza is ultimately impenetrable and is entangled in the same paradoxes as her brothers, who must be "'false' to be 'true'" (68), Haber asks whether women in this play "can be really said to exist *as a woman* at all" (69) and claims that the play does not engage with the problems of representing female subjectivity but treats the women as containers of male sexuality and subjectivity.

In contrast, Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* inverts the erotic structures of patriarchy and "engages in a self-consciously contradictory effort to construct a subjectivity that is specifically female, to reimagine speech, sexuality, and space—most particularly, the space of the female body—in 'feminine' terms" (72-73). He does this by exploiting contemporary ideas about pregnancy in order to disrupt dominant discourses. By reversing the traditional power relations between men and women, inverting verbal and physical logistics of penetration and agency, and rendering sexual pleasure more interested in foreplay than a specific conclusion, the Duchess suggests that her feminine subject position depends upon her own choice in deciding who 'enters' her heart and body rather than on remaining as chaste or passively penetrated as patriarchal ideology attempts to make her. Her words transform her threatening brothers into Antonio's "gossips" or female friends who would be invited into the exclusively female space of a woman's lying-in. Thus Webster opens up a genuinely different space of the feminine, "reclaiming the female body for women" (85).

Haber's reading of *The Changeling* focuses attention on the deeply disturbing lines De Flores speaks to Beatrice Joanna when he is about to rape her: as he claims she will soon love what she now fears, Middleton and Rowley present the "coincidence of fear and desire, of virgin and whore, of marriage and rape" (88). De Flores' lines also

reference Ben Jonson's masque *Hymenaei* and its occasion, Frances Howard's marriage to the Earl of Essex. Howard's contemporary reputation for being a woman who changed from virgin to scheming, murdering whore after sexual initiation haunts this play, and Haber shows how the play criticizes and yet participates in the misogynist fantasies of the epithalamion tradition.

Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* also enacts a linear narrative of tragedy and, by taking patriarchal desires and forms to improbable extremes, critiques those very assumptions. Haber considers this play in light of its predecessors, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, making the argument that Ford "undoes" Webster's replacement of ultimate erotic consummation in death with a female space of "pointless play" and pregnancy. *'Tis Pity* reinscribes heterosexual love within a patriarchal consummation that is effectively an exchange between men, Annabella's father and brother, then brother and husband. The play's obsession with fathering—producing children without a troublesome mother—is literalized in incest that destroys the purity of the parthenogenesis it desires.

Margaret Cavendish's self-conscious disruptions of traditional dramatic forms and rewriting of her predecessors make her work an appropriate place to end this study. According to Haber, Cavendish "views traditional, unified dramatic structure (which is productive of conventional meaning) as expressive of reproductive sexuality" (118), and she constantly revises this patriarchal literary genealogy. Cavendish's prefaces, for example, announce her awareness of and disregard for formal dramatic conventions and gender expectations. Similarly, *The Convent of Pleasure* resists closure by rendering the heterosexual union of the cross-dressed Prince and Lady Happy ambiguous and inconclusive. Moreover, in *The Unnatural Tragedy* Cavendish reworks her predecessors by "counter[ing] the narratives of patriarchy with the stories told by young virgins, which suggest different possibilities for the future" (125).

Critics who emphasize historical context in their own work will find Haber's work challenging and instructive, as it forces them to examine patriarchal and heterosexist ideologies embedded in conventional dramatic structures, particularly in tragedy. This study also enables the reader to see how feminist and queer theories' interests

can be applied in fruitful ways to formal analyses. The book will be valuable to scholars of early modern aesthetics, Christopher Marlowe, and women and sexuality in seventeenth-century tragedies.

Peter Hinds. *'The Horrid Popish Plot': Roger L'Estrange and the Circulation of Political Discourse in Late Seventeenth-Century London*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. xiv + 457 pp. + 37 illus. £60.00. Review by ADAM SWANN, UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

Roger L'Estrange was arguably one of the most prominent figures in the pamphlet wars of Restoration England through both his activities as press licenser and direct participation as a pamphleteer. Peter Hinds recognises that "reaction to L'Estrange has been characterised by a neglect that is out of all proportion to his importance and prolific writing output" (43), as Anne Dunan-Page and Beth Lynch's *Roger L'Estrange and the Making of Restoration Culture* (2008) was the first in-depth study since the publication of George Kitchin's *Sir Roger L'Estrange: A Contribution to the History of the Press in the Seventeenth Century* in 1913. Critical attention to The Popish Plot has also been scant until relatively recently, with the two foundational texts being John Pollock's *The Popish Plot* (1903) and John Kenyon's *The Popish Plot* (1972). These works, Hinds argues, exhibit a preoccupation with the development of the Plot at higher levels of Parliament and court. In this period, political discourse was conducted as much in the coffeehouse as the court, and Hinds' book therefore seeks to recover the reception of the Popish Plot on the streets. Roger L'Estrange provides an ideal prism through which to investigate these events, and Hinds uses him "as a narrative anchor to some degree … to help make sense of the morass of comment on the political events in the period covered" (15). L'Estrange is suited for this because he associated with royal and rude equally as a press licenser who was also willing to wade into the mire of Restoration pamphleteering.

Many of the details advanced as evidence of the Popish Plot seem implausible to modern readers, leaving it difficult to understand how contemporaries believed in its existence. There are two strands in