

shift the policing of the family unit onto the appropriate figure, relying on "the diffusion of disciplinary power throughout the community" (132).

Despite the title of the book and its emphasis on historical contextualizing, Cooley seems to feel compelled to turn to *The Temple* to reinforce his points about the prose professional manual. The fifth chapter examines in scrupulous detail connections between the poetry and historical issues in the court, the cloth trade, evolving agricultural techniques, and other areas. This chapter is not as connected to Cooley's overall thesis as it might be, and draws conclusions about extremely specific historical information being reflected in this spiritual poetry that sometime seem speculative. The information about "The Water-Course" is illuminating, but the arguments about the differences between the Williams and Bodleian manuscripts do not result in a point that seems useful to a greater understanding of *The Country Parson*.

In situating *The Country Parson* deeply in its social, political, and economic environments, Ronald Cooley takes seriously the title of the work: The country parson is truly a member of a religious professional cohort and is a fully participating member of his society, attendant to its larger problems and pressures from many quarters. *The Temple* is frequently studied in the context of the theological and ecclesiastical disputes of Herbert's day. The relationship between *The Country Parson* and the universe in which that parson operates deserves similar consideration, and Cooley has done significant work to that end.

Olav Lausund and Stein Haugom Olsen, eds. *Self-fashioning and Metamorphosis in Early Modern English Literature*. Oslo: Novus Press, 2003. xx + 260 pp. □32.80. Review by DAVID GRANT MOSS, VIRGINIA TECH UNIVERSITY.

*Self-fashioning and Metamorphosis in Early Modern English Literature* is a collection of articles gathered from the proceedings of a conference on early modern literature at the University of Oslo. The book's strengths and weaknesses are in many ways connected

to its origin. The subject of the conference was “metamorphosis, self-fashioning, and power” (v), and those topics, as one would expect, are found in the book.

However, the general and inclusive themes underlying an academic conference do not necessarily make the best foundation for a collection of essays. This work would have benefited greatly from a narrower focus. Self-fashioning and metamorphosis, although related, are discrete topics in early modern studies, and each could warrant a volume of its own. Some essays deal with self-fashioning, some with metamorphosis, and some with both; the resultant collection seems more patched together than edited, composed of essays which, although well-written and interesting on the whole, do not hold together as a unified work.

The term “self-fashioning,” of course, is derived from Stephen Greenblatt’s well-known work, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, first published in 1980. The editors contend in their introduction that “the importance of Greenblatt’s book was neither in its historicist nor in its postmodernist assumptions but in that it introduced and demonstrated the critical usefulness of a set of concepts,” concepts which are useful regardless of their “theoretical underpinnings” (x). This may be, but not all of the contributors to this collection use or react to Greenblatt’s idea of self-fashioning (metamorphosis, presumably, predates Greenblatt). The final product is a collection of worthy essays lacking a central focus to link them together.

Seven of the book’s thirteen essays deal with Shakespeare, and this creates something of a problem, as the essays on other authors feel somewhat out of place in comparison. After reading six essays on Shakespearean drama, followed by one on Webster’s *Duchess of Malfi*, by Roy Eriksen, the reader then encounters two essays on Milton’s *Paradise Lost* by Margaret Kean and Ann Torday Gulden. And although the research done in these essays is excellent, it is difficult to see—even through the filters of self-fashioning and metamorphosis—how they relate to the rest of the work. Even more problematic is H. Neville Davies’ study of the little-known poet Thomas St. Nicholas. Although well-written, this essay seems more

of an introduction to the life and work of St. Nicholas than it does a treatise on Renaissance self-fashioning or metamorphosis.

Despite these problems, the book contains a number of notable essays which shine new light on early modern texts. Robin Headlam Wells's "The Metamorphosis of Othello" is an intriguing look at the tragedy and its connection to contemporary beliefs about and attitudes toward the savage (noble or otherwise). After demonstrating that the plot of *Othello* does not conform to the typical revenge tragedy *topos* of a society with a corrupt or dysfunctional system of justice (as defined by Katherine Maus), Wells argues that Othello's transformation from noble soldier to brutal murderer is not due as much to revenge as it is to an obsession with personal honor "in the precivilized sense of personal prestige or reputation" (127).

Catherine R. Eskin's "The Rhetorical Double-Bind: Self-Representation and Self-Fashioning in Court(ier)Ship" is another example of this book's best efforts. Eskin begins by examining the paradoxical advice of works such as Vives' *The Instruction of a Christian Woman*, Wilson's *The Arte of Rhetorique*, and Catiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, all of which recommend the same seemingly impossible suggestion: that "in order to find favour, social and political aspirants must maintain a modest silence while still shamelessly portraying their worth" (45). She then goes on to use the character of Terentia from Robert Greene's *Cicero's Amor* as an example of just how someone might hope to perform what initially seems an impossibility.

Thus, *Self-fashioning and Metamorphosis in Early Modern English Literature* does indeed contain some interesting and even ground-breaking work. It is, however, unfortunate that the book's overall concept and organization could not be honed to present those works in a better, more focused light.