

Quixoticism stripped to its bare essentials; what remains is the desire to rise socially, produced as a ridiculous faith in fantastic narrative" (130). Of the grocer's boy the critic insists: "Time after time, Rafe is cut down to size" (122). Davis's reading is not so much wrong as overwhelmingly partial. No theatergoer who has seen a decent production of Beaumont's comedy will recognize the reading as close to accurate. Eroticism and the life of fantasy cannot be reduced to social climbing, or that to the two former. Beaumont knew that, and so should we.

So this learned study has much to offer students of the period, though its mono-causal account has to be taken with a sprinkling of the requisite sodium compound. The best things here are the rich background materials adduced, as on the nature of dueling and the social practice of asserting gentility, rather than the extended literary analyses.

William W. E. Slights. *Managing Readers: Printed Marginalia in English Renaissance Books*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001. xiii + 298 pp. \$70.00. Review by JESSE M. LANDER, UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME.

In sharply written prose that crackles with tart asides and vivid colloquialisms, Slights gives an undogmatic and lucid account of the printed marginalia in English books of a chronologically expansive Renaissance. Avoiding both vaporous theorizing and the magpie-like pursuit of granular facts, the book successfully connects the abstract theoretical issues raised by the marginal to a rich array of particular, and often fascinating, instances of margination. A fine contribution to the rapidly growing shelf of volumes devoted to book history, *Managing Readers* convincingly argues that the printed marginal note is an important key to understanding the textual practices of early modern England. Though the title trades on the ambiguous resonance of *managing*, this book is more concerned with the management of readers than with readers who manage. Slights tends to treat printed marginalia

as a disciplinary apparatus, a technology that seeks to shape, guide, and occasionally intimidate readers and yet ultimately and inevitably falls short of its ambitions. Admittedly, this is in part a result of his focus on printed marginalia rather than readers' marks. Unlike the scholars who have recently made a persuasive case for attending to the handwritten marginal notes left by readers, Slights focuses on the printed book and the various intentions that shaped it. Such an approach is a useful corrective to studies focused on the habits of individual readers who invariably appear, upon close scrutiny, to be exceptional and idiosyncratic. The printed margins at least promise to reveal the protocols of print, a set of collective practices that might say something important about the mentality of both book producers and, by extension, readers. Of course, book producers were themselves readers; and rather than see marginalia as primarily about the management of readers, one might as easily see such notes as evidence of the management of information.

The first chapter offers a general survey of marginalia and a tentative taxonomy listing fifteen different functional types of marginal notes. Slights acknowledges that his taxonomy is incomplete and that most examples are hybrids performing more than one function; nonetheless, his list valuably reveals the staggering variety of marginal notes and provides a useful tool for ordering and analyzing this cacophony. The second chapter details a local theory of margination applicable to the first 150 years of print in England. Here Slights draws on Derrida in order to apply pressure to his own taxonomy; but rather than construe all notes as Derridean supplements that advertise insufficiency and defer meaning, Slights distinguishes four different sorts of supplementarity: there are notes that add material or make judgements; those that organize and arrange the text; those that alter something in the main text; and those that exhort the reader. Unlike the other categories that operate on the text, hortatory notes operate directly and aggressively on the reader; they are the bluntest instruments in the manager's toolbox. While this taxonomy enables a

discriminating account of the distribution of notes of various sorts, the book's argument becomes increasingly dominated by binary pairs (e.g., center/margin, text/note, centripetal/centrifugal).

Of the chapters that follow three treat particular genres (bibles, histories, and religious polemics), one focuses on a single book, and another focuses on a single year. Each of these chapters offers a wealth of insight, careful readings, and wonderful detail, and yet they are somewhat uneven. The generic chapters are strongest; the account of bible marginalia is especially rich, and its claim for an interpretive anxiety generated by vernacular scripture fits nicely with the interpretive violence analyzed in the excellent chapter on polemics. The case study of Dee's *General and Rare Memorials*—a book that, like its author, appears to be *sui generis*—makes an argument for “textual alterity,” meaning not only that printed books fail to achieve the degree of fixity often attributed to them but also that they contain multiple voices. Dee's volume does present a particularly aggravated case of alterity, but the argument for instability and intertextuality is not greatly advanced by analyzing such an eccentric example. The chapter treating 1605 is intended as a broad, synchronic sample that will serve to counteract the tendency to focus on exceptional instances supporting a preconceived thesis. However, having introduced the rhetoric of numbers and evidence, Slights himself concludes: “I have not been able to produce a database amenable to statistical analysis” (160). Though such candor is admirable, it exposes a tension within Slights's project between his desire to survey, classify, and count the margins and his awareness that these slippery little texts always mean both too much and too little. The chapter does provide some rough and ready generalizations, but the final sentence raises difficult questions: “One thing we may conclude with some assurance is that the attractions of the marginal white space proved irresistible, and readers were seldom left alone to read in peace in 1605” (182). This sounds like nostalgia for the imagined moment when the individual, undistracted reader was able to commune in solitude with the integral text. One might reply that we never read in peace, and that we always read in pieces. Slights, however,

does not press the case for the harassed reader. After all, one of his central claims is that Renaissance readers were especially adept at moving back and forth from note to text and were not “usually disturbed or alienated by the procedure” (95). Indeed, after touring the dense, exotic terrain of the margin, one is left to conclude that, despite loud and insistent voices from the edge of the page, readers somehow managed.

Jennifer Anderson and Elizabeth Sauer, eds. Afterword by Stephen Orgel. *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002. 295 pp. + 22 illus. \$55.00. Review by GARY KUCHAR, MCMASTER UNIVERSITY.

This ambitious volume of original essays on early modern reading practices, interpretive communities, and printing histories begins with a meditation on the surprisingly slippery question, “What is a book?” The editorial introduction, “Current Trends in the History of Reading,” opens by distinguishing between two main ways in which books are configured as material objects existing primarily in space and as social systems existing at a specific time and geographical locale. While earlier forms of bibliographical studies have emphasized the former conception, more recent scholarship on the history of the book have tended to emphasize the latter. This particular volume of essays fruitfully demonstrates that there is no easy separation of physical evidence from social context: the significance of a text as a material object is intrinsically tied to the ideological envelope in and through which it is received, just as the envelope itself is formed in relation to the interpretive possibilities realized through material objects. Recognizing this volume’s contribution to book history, Stephen Orgel points out in his Afterword that in this work the print revolution “is presented as a reading revolution, a revolution not of technology but of dissemination and reception” (282). The strength of the essays collected by Anderson and Sauer thus lies not only in their demonstration of the ephemeral nature of many early modern