

the chronological range of his study derives from the publication dates of the rhetoric and travel texts he studies. The result is a somewhat uneven study. One learns much about rhetoric and its use in a handful of travel narratives, but the selection of texts limits the book's usefulness in understanding the English engagement with the New World or the East. The books' greatest value lies in what we can learn about the types and use of rhetoric and for an enterprising scholar, it provides a good model for an intensive study of a broader range of travel narratives.

Alison V. Scott. *Selfish Gifts: The Politics of Exchange and English Courty Literature, 1580–1628*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006. \$55.00.
Review by THOMAS P. ANDERSON, MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY.

Alison Scott's informative study of the paradoxical nature of gift exchange and the quest for patronage in early modern England emphasizes the complex economy involving emerging market forces, established conventions of court culture, and a universal understanding of gift giving as an integral component of a civil society. The extended introduction to *Selfish Gifts* points out the frequency with which early modern poets and playwrights commented on the gift in relation to their own literary production. Samuel Daniel, Ben Jonson, and William Shakespeare are among the many Renaissance authors who concerned themselves with the complex logic of gift-giving in exchange for support for their literary endeavors, and Scott is careful to point out in the introduction how several of these authors' works elucidate a number of "gift issues" (15) in the early modern period.

In addition to establishing gift giving as a preoccupation of various early modern authors, Scott's introduction clearly lays out the theoretical stakes of *Selfish Gifts*. In *The Gift of Death*, Jacques Derrida examines the paradox of exchanged gifts and discovers a contradiction between the two values—gift and exchange. Derrida's challenge to Marcel Mauss's seminal theory of gift exchange makes possible Scott's examination of the contradictions inherent in the gift in Renaissance England. Arguing that Derrida's paradox of the gift is anticipated by Renaissance patronage literature, Scott's book asks how an early modern gift can be both given and exchanged.

The years between 1580 and 1628 prove especially fertile in generating cultural debate on the subject of gift exchange. Scott observes that those years witnessed Elizabeth I's "sustained withholding of royal gifts" and James I's "extravagant giving, particularly to male favorites" (39). The pronounced shift in royal gift giving was in part responsible for what Scott describes as a "renegotiation of boundaries" (39) that governed gift giving, as was the "emergence of a market economy, the decline of stable aristocratic patronage, and the growth of the literary marketplace" (39). Reflecting the book's claim that Elizabeth and James participated in a gift economy in very different ways, *Selfish Gifts* is organized into two sections: the first concentrates on the performance of powerlessness of the donor of the gift and the demand for reciprocity that erotic or love gifts exercise on the recipient during the Elizabethan period; the second section shifts its focus from broad questions of gendered gifts registered in Elizabethan poetry and drama to the specific political contexts, practices, and problems of gift exchange at court during the Jacobean period.

The pleasure in reading *Selfish Gifts* emerges precisely from the logic behind this bifurcated structure. Simultaneously, Scott's book is both a lesson in astute close-reading of sonnets from Shakespeare, Sidney, and Barnabe Barnes (*Parthenophil and Parthenopbe*) and an historical account of the drama of the quest for patronage during specific historical moments. Chapter 4 on gifts for the Earl of Somerset's wedding is especially rewarding in the way it rereads John Donne's *Epithalamion* and amplifies current critical debates about the poem by reconstructing its historical moment. Scott demonstrates clearly how Donne was in an untenable position as the poet to praise the scandalous marriage between James I's favorite courtier Robert Carr, the Earl of Somerset, and the newly divorced Frances Howard. Using Donne's letters to friends that describe his discomfort over what he perceived to be his duty to bestow a gift at the marriage ceremony, Scott captures the poet's anxiety over his work—a gift that could be rejected by the powerful patrons or, if too successful, could bring mocking derision on the poet himself. For Scott, the eclogue to the *Epithalamium* "undermines the gift that is offered and detaches Donne somewhat from the subject he addresses" (161). Donne's ambiguous position in relation to the wedding makes him, according to Scott, a "passive rather than aggressive pursuer of Carr's sponsorship, guarding against anticipated criticism by emphasizing subjection to the king" (163).

Scott's close textual analysis in chapter 4 and the author's attention to establishing poetic occasion characterize the book's analysis of other literary gifts from Jonson, Chapman, Campion and Bacon. Earlier chapters, however, are noteworthy for their fresh interpretations of Elizabethan texts. Although chapters 1 and 2 in *Selfish Gifts* might appear to retrace some critical ground that by now may be familiar to students of early modern culture who have read Elizabethan poetry and drama through the lens of gender studies or male friendship, Scott extends the analysis of the desire for patronage and gift giving more generally to include the concept of nonreciprocity—in chapter 1 from a disinterested, powerful female and in chapter 2 from an ungrateful, male lover. Because Scott offers clear and sustained readings of canonical texts such as Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Astrophil and Stella*, the book provides one opportunity after another for teachers of these texts to reexamine their own pedagogical approaches to major works that they explore annually with their own students.

Scott concludes *Selfish Gifts* with an account of the wedding of James I's most controversial favorite, George Villiers—Duke of Buckingham. The story that Scott tells about their special relationship underscores the complexity of gift giving in the early modern period. Arguing that Buckingham was a perpetual gift for the king—an indulgence the king consistently granted to himself despite its tendency to bring his judgment into question—Scott points out that Buckingham too was a recipient of gifts as much as a donor: “a powerful patron and an enduring parasite” (42). Yet, Buckingham's threat to royal prerogative really emerges after Charles I becomes king and the erotic relationship with James is transformed into a friendship with the new king. Scott examines many negative representations of Buckingham as a usurper of the throne, culminating with a discussion of Philip Massinger's *The Duke of Milan*. For Scott, the play shows how James's relationship with his minion “made it impossible to exercise his prerogative without, in fact, damaging royal sovereignty” (214). The chapter makes the case that Buckingham's threat to power, though real during James's reign, increased after Charles assumed the throne because Buckingham was not part of a gift economy that made him indebted to or owned by his king. He effectively was “the king's equal” (224). This challenge to sovereign power sustained in part by the gift economy was untenable, according to Scott. Using *King Lear* as one illustrative text, Scott traces other voices during the period—some poetic and

some politica—that acknowledged the breakdown of a social order predicated on gift giving and Buckingham’s influence.

To Scott’s credit, *Selfish Gifts* speaks to several related audiences. The book is geared toward scholars interested in the ways that early modern social and political structures are sustained by what might seem an ancillary custom or tradition. It also offers teachers of the period’s most canonical texts interesting ways to frame many of its most significant poems and plays for their students. In its investigation of the paradoxical gift economy that influenced political and social relationships in early modern England, *Selfish Gifts* effectively weaves functional theoretical methodology with compelling historical context and astute literary analysis.

Julie Campbell. *Literary Circles and Gender in Early Modern Europe: A Cross-Cultural Approach*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006. viii + 221 pp. \$89.95. Review by LISSA BEAUCHAMP DESROCHES, UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK, FREDERICTON.

Julie Campbell’s study of how gender operates in the literary circles and salons of early modern Europe relies on a balance between genders as a matter of fact and gender as a matter for discourse. In other words, *querelle* discourse forms the basis for rhetorical and practical involvement in literary groups. Campbell’s method treats a complex and interdependent series of influences, from late medieval *Querelle des femmes* to early modern *Querelle des amyes*, from Italy through France to England, and between actresses and courtesans and court ladies. Yet her examinations of texts and textual influences, even when focused on relatively obscure material, are always lucid and held together coherently.

Divided into six chapters, the book considers Italian, French, and English literary circles in turn, with two chapters for each regional culture. The first two chapters pair male- and female-authored texts in order to demonstrate the collaborative basis of literary circle authorship: Sperone Speroni and Tullia d’Aragona, and Tasso and Andreini, each represent various angles of *querelle* rhetoric in their discourses. These pairings also demonstrate how literary interaction worked through the contemporary questions of gender roles and representation as employed in the *querelle* rhetoric. In the third and fourth