

ments between causes and effects into an almost vatic insight into the totality of their deeper, underlying connectedness" (236).

The editors of *Formal Matters* have brought together ten essays that in their several ways address cultural and "material" interests while engaged also in the formal analysis of texts. Some of the essays in this book are of outstanding importance, but others are of modest interest. Many of these essays might easily have appeared as journal articles, and should have done so. This book is an anthology that wants to display the best kind of current Renaissance literary criticism, which views the importance of close reading while making use of historical, cultural, and bibliographic analysis. This promise is a worthy endeavor, but somewhat illusory. Bringing together a group of essays that have little in common except a factitious obedience to a common critical direction (albeit confined to a literary era) is a brave enterprise. That *Formal Matters* is nevertheless so worthy a collection must be due in large measure to Allison K. Deutermann and András Kiséry, its conscientious editors.

David Coleman, ed. *Region, Religion and English Renaissance Literature*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. 1-200 pp. \$109.95. Review by GREG BENTLEY, MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY.

When Bosola and Ferdinand speculate about who the father of the Duchess's three children is, Bosola tells him that "we may go read [it] i'th' stars." In response, Ferdinand states: Why, some hold/ Opinion all things are written there," to which Bosola replies, "Yes, if we could find spectacles to read them" (5.1.59-62). On one level, Webster's characters may be more prophetic than even he imagined. Recently, scientists have provided us with "spectacles," the New Horizon space probe, for example, by means of which we have discovered significant data about Pluto, the farthest planet, or dwarf planet, in our solar system. Indeed, we have constructed spectacles that have enabled astronomers to read the stars beyond our galaxy. They have discovered several "exoplanets," worlds similar to earth that orbit a sun and are capable of sustaining life. These "spectacles" have provided scientists with data by means of which they can rethink the spaces that we oc-

cupy. They have provided them with information by means of which they can reimagine the elements, and the relationships among those elements, of our universe in dramatic new ways.

Just as *New Horizon* has provided us with data by means of which to reimagine our material cosmos, *Region, Religion, and English Renaissance Literature* provides us with a variety of lenses by means of which to rethink the material and ideological spaces that we occupy in this world. As David Coleman, editor of this fine volume, says: "The essays ... represent an attempt by established and emerging scholars of early modern literature and culture to explicate the ways in which both regional and religious contexts inform the production, circulation, and interpretation of Renaissance literary texts" (8). Rather than investigate stars, this book looks at a geographical body, the archipelago of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, Wales being the Pluto of this constellation. Rather than simply focus their lenses on individual bodies, however, these authors center on the regional and religious relationships among these nations. As Coleman states, his introduction to the volume presents the "intellectual rationale for combining the religious and archipelagic turn, arguing that not only does this combination of critical perspectives enable us more fully to understand the complexities of early modernity, but also suggesting that it might empower us to confront some of the pressing demands of our own politics of culture" (8). This text, then, also takes in two "exoplanets," one spacial and one temporal, for several of the essays tie archipelagic concerns with continental issues as well as connecting seventeenth-century politics with those of our own day.

For example, in her fascinating study entitled "The Aston-Thimelby Circle: Localism, Nationalism and Internationalism in the English Catholic Community," Helen Hackett shows how two families overcame difficult geographical spaces in order to define and maintain their Catholic English community. Hackett traces how the Astons and Thimelbys, by means of inter-marriages, the circulation of itinerant priests, the exchange of literary and sacred texts, and the circulation of "sacred objects such as images, relics, and items needed for the Mass" (124), maintained close ties between their families, their friends, and their supporters. As Hackett emphasizes, "It was by means of regional community, inter-regional communication

that the memory and identity of Catholic England were preserved, forming a kind of alternative England within England" (124). In addition, by forging connections with numerous Catholic institutions on the continent and by maintaining close political ties with Spain, the Aston-Thimelby circle managed to retain "a collective memory and vision of [their] homeland by which they defined their identity and their mission" (124).

The final essay of the book also serves as its conclusion. In "Reading Conversion Narratives as Literature of Trauma: Radical Religion, the Wars of the Three Kingdoms and the Cromwellian Re-conquest of Ireland," Naomi McAreavey focuses her lens on crossing spatial and temporal boundaries. As she says, "the conversion narratives of members of some of the Independent congregations that flourished during the 1650s may represent complexly nationalized post-traumatic responses to experiences during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms" (153). By applying contemporary trauma theory, especially the methodologies for processing post-traumatic-stress-disorder and even more particularly the process of abreaction, to the conversion narratives contained in John Roger's *Othel or Beth-shemesh* (1653), McAreavey illustrates how "what is distinctive about the trauma literature produced by the Independent communities of the 1650s is that ultimately the 'whole' that is formed at the end of the abreaction process is not constituted by the self but by the godly community of which one becomes a member" (164). McAreavey also demonstrates how, from a religious perspective, "The thrust of the conversion narrative from doubt to assurance thus provides a structure that supports a more hopeful response to trauma as the speaker positively reformulates their [sic] identity from war victim and reprobate to saintly survivor. By making trauma a precursor to assurance, converts are able to overcome the potentially pathogenic effects of trauma" (167). As important as the conversion narratives were as religious texts, they were equally important as political documents, and McAreavey emphasizes how the inseparable religio-political function of these works influences the relationship between England and Ireland, for she concludes: "The trauma of Protestant settlers undoubtedly helped to spur Cromwell's campaign in Ireland by giving them a reason to continue the fight. Moreover, the Independents who dominated his army and military

government were helped by their assurance of God's grace to come to terms with traumatic experiences and arm themselves for combat. Either way, for the Independent community it seems that wartime trauma actually supported Cromwell's re-conquest of Ireland" (170).

Like the literal archipelago they write about, the essays in this book form a metaphoric archipelago, independent but simultaneously interconnected, and even if we can't view all of them in detail, we must at least identify the other members of the group: "Paul Frazer, "Protestant Propaganda and Regional Paranoia: John Awdeley and Early Elizabethan Print Culture"; David Baker, "'Not Professed Therein': Spenserian Religion in Ireland"; Stephen Hamrick, "The 'Bardi Brytannorum': Lodowick Lloyd and Welsh Identities in the Atlantic Archipelago"; Seidre Serjeantson, "Richard Nugent's *Cythina* (1604): A Catholic Sonnet Sequence in London, Westmeath and Spanish Flanders"; David Coleman, "Purchasing Purgatory: Economic Theology, Archipelagic Colonialism and *Anything for a Quiet Life* (1621)"; Adrian Streete, "'Arminian is like a flying fish': Region, Religion and Polemics in the Montagu Controversy, 1623-1626"; Willy Maley and Adam Swann, "'Is This the Region ... That we must change for Heav'n?': Milton on the Margins." Undoubtedly, the images coming back from space are exciting and revealing, but the images produced by this book are equally stimulating and revelatory. Indeed, reading this excellent collection of essays has reaffirmed a long-held idea: Jean Luc Picard is wrong: space is not the final frontier. Humanity is. And I think Webster would agree.

Pierre-Esprit Radisson. *The Collected Writings Volume 2: The Port Nelson Relations*. Ed. Germaine Warkentin. Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014. xxx + 283 pp. + 7 illus. \$65.00. Review by M. G. AUNE, CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

The first volume of the writings of Frenchman Pierre-Esprit Radisson (1636/40–1710) appeared in 2012 and consisted of the four parts of his *Voyages*. Composed in 1688 at the behest of Charles II, it is an autobiographical account of Radisson's four journeys to what is now the upper Midwest and Ontario between 1652 and 1660. The second