

in the trammels of their belief, trying to reach beyond their mind's horizon. For those with patience and imagination, that can be fascinating.

Although some scholars prefer a "clean" text annotated by distanced endnotes, others of us will prefer more readily accessible footnotes. There are no descriptive running titles for the endnote pages, and some poems are without annotation. Readers are likely to find themselves turning pages to find elusive notes. Some of the notes seem beside the point, or excessively hortatory: compare this; cf. that. Some of the "parallels" seem weak, and others seem like mere commonplaces. On the other hand, Semler has clearly read obscure seventeenth-century tracts and treatises, and some of his points are quite germane. The footnote format would make assessment of the various parallels more straightforward. As it is, I had to "key" my edition with reciprocal notation indicating where I could find the appropriate endnote (or the noted poem) quickly, without using the index or ruffling through pages searching.

Pioneering work is difficult, and first draughts are rarely perfect. As might be expected, there is room for improvement. Still, this edition, and Semler's three articles should initiate an interesting discussion. Semler's edition of *Eliza's Babes* should be readily available, along with the works of other women poets—Sidney, Wroth, Lanier, Southwell, Bradstreet, Cavendish, Behn, Phillips, Barker, Chudleigh, Ephelia, and Finch—in any decent undergraduate library. Semler's diligent research facilitates the comprehension of a vanished era.

Sheila T. Cavanagh. *Cherished Torment: The Emotional Geography of Lady Mary Wroth's Urania*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001. ix + 287 pp. \$60.00. Review by JUDITH SCHERER HERZ, CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL.

Sheila Cavanagh certainly knows the highways and byways of romance, its forking paths and endless vistas, as her work on Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and now, in *Cherished Torment*, on Mary

Wroth's *Urania* attests. As a result of the extraordinary labors of Josephine Roberts (and after her tragic death, the devoted work of Janel Mueller and Suzanne Gossett who brought the second volume to completion), the two parts of Wroth's *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (the two volumes weighing in at slightly over five pounds) are now available for scholarly scrutiny. The first part, published by Roberts in 1995 for the first time since its original publication in 1621, has already received considerable critical attention, notably in the work of Barbara Lewalski, Naomi Miller, Gary Waller, Mary Ellen Lamb, Maureen Quilligan, Paul Salzman, Helen Hackett, and most recently, Christina Luckyj. Cavanagh's, however, is the first book to work with the entire text: the 1995 edition, the Newberry manuscript of the narrative's continuation and, toward the end of her project, mostly for citation purposes, the 1999 (in reality 2000) volume of the now edited and annotated manuscript. Her easy familiarity with the often bewildering array of characters and events is impressive. She tracks characters, motifs, themes, ideas with a quiet assurance.

The *Urania's* multiple story lines, their collisions, divergences, repetitions and contradictions, confusing enough in the 1621 text, are even more so in the manuscript, which, of course, was never prepared for publication. It seems simply to have been put aside, unfinished, unrevised, its last semi-sentence "Amphilanthus was extremely . . ." "pointing to an ocean of possibilities, the *in extremis* of the romance mode. How does one read such a text? What can we make of it? These are questions that are both simple and difficult to answer. Simple. Well, it's fun to read (at least in measured doses). There are charming scenes and funny scenes nor is the pathos to be sneered at. Despite the fancy dress and, to a degree, the play-acting of the cast of lovelorn, misguided, mistaken, misplaced players, there is a sense that something important is at stake here for the author. The object of the quest is not always clear, but the importance of the quest is. There is an urgency in the endlessly unspooling parataxis that keeps the reader going. But the questions are also difficult. What narrative of literary history do we write it into, what contexts do we invoke to frame it, to place it?

Her uncle's *Arcadia*, the "Sidney family romance" in Waller's phrase, the text's obvious *roman à clef* characteristics, even if determining who is who is an imperfect science, are typical approaches here. And what do we place it in relation to? Are we more interested in reading the text or reading through it to, say, questions of gender relations, to take the most frequent reading strategy as an example?

Although acknowledging the obvious relevance of biographical approaches and very aware of the "figurations of gender" (Miller's phrase) in Wroth's work and the place of that work in the still forming canon of early modern women's writing, Cavanagh wants to make a quite different argument. Her claim is that the *Urania* is an intellectually rich text that engages "with many of the vital political, philosophical, and literary issues" of Wroth's day (218). She argues that the text is structured on a complex cosmographical foundation that provides an intellectual pattern holding together what might otherwise seem disparate and repetitive.

Two chapters examine the importance of geography, the narrative implications of the relation of character to place. Pamphilia, Amphilanthus and Rodomandro are placed astrologically, geographically, and politically. Cavanagh constructs an intellectual context that includes, among others, Apollonius of Perga, the Acts of the Apostles, William Cunningham's *The Cosmographical Glasse*, John Maplet's *The Diall of Destiny*, and George Abbot's a *Briefe Description of the Whole World* as part of her larger argument concerning Wroth's interest in the unification of East and West, the "Christian conversion of the entire world" (41). Other characters—Nereana, Antissia—are examined for the perils associated with abandoning geographic responsibilities. There is a chapter on the role of the four elements and the stars, another on the intertwining of fate and faith, of destiny and destination, of travail and travel that creates "conduits between the physical world and the more elusive aspects of the *Urania's* cosmographic structure" (125). The last two chapters, one on death, the other on dynasty and destiny complete the argument that even though it may be unclear whether, for example, Rodomandro is dead or alive, or whether Pamphilia and Amphilanthus are moving toward marriage or not, there is still

“reasonable closure,” and that a “new era [will] follow . . . that destiny is preparing for a mystical, Christian world where love becomes certain, merit precedes heredity, and the Knight of the Faire Designe can triumph as leader of a renewed domain” (218).

Characters, episodes, and encounters—a vast number of them—are looked at in relation to this conclusion and the continuo refrain that “the *Urania*’s cosmological representations often mirror the broader indeterminacy of Wroth’s narrative” (163) and shape its contours (8). Some characters, Parselius for one, greatly benefit from this approach. Overall, however, there is too much of a gap between the cosmographic/cosmological refrain, which functions both as premise and conclusion, and the textual details that provide the putative evidence. Cavanagh makes a convincing case for the serious intellectual content in Wroth’s writing, although I would not go as far as calling it a “pansophic text” (14), and she has done important work here in making these affiliations and influences visible. Wroth certainly read widely and in a great variety of subjects and gave considerable thought to the structure and patterning of her work. A modern reader needs to be reminded of the multiple political and intellectual currents that inform the text. But I find Cavanagh’s method, although wide ranging, too end-determined. Characters are picked up and dropped as they fit into the scheme. We are asked to look at Antissia, for example (my favorite character), almost entirely as she illustrates the “perils associated with political usurpation and the consequences of personal usurpation” (70); her later contrition is used as evidence for another argument, which may in fact be contradicted by the earlier assertion that “a ‘cured’ Antissia may not equate with a forgiven one” (76). Procedurally Cavanagh seems boxed in by a critical model that is at once extrapolated from the materials of the *Urania* and then made the grid to control interpretive moves.

Sheila Cavanagh has written an ambitious and a very interesting even if frustrating book. It shares with its source text a highly detailed slipperiness that is perhaps inevitable. Nonetheless, one learns a great deal about the *Urania*, Mary Wroth, and the

debates and issues at the turn of the seventeenth century in its pages.

James Grantham Turner. *Libertines and Radicals in Early Modern London: Sexuality, Politics, and Literary Culture, 1630-1685*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. xxii + 343 pp. + 10 illus. \$65.00. Reviewed by MATTHEW J. KINSERVIK, UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE.

Libertines and Radicals in Early Modern London: Sexuality, Politics, and Literary Culture, 1630-1685 is an ambitious and innovative book. As the subtitle indicates, Turner aims to bridge periods normally kept apart by academic convention, and he does so by discussing the very things that seem to have been fundamentally changed by the Civil Wars and Interregnum: sexuality, politics, and literary culture. To be more precise, he reads sexual literature from 1630 to 1685 for what it says about the class and gender troubles that persist throughout this particularly troubled period. As a result, Turner challenges the liberationist claims about libertine literature of the Restoration era by linking them to very different earlier texts under the rubric of "pornographia." This faux-Renaissance term signifies "the sexually explicit discourse of prostitution and its application to social institutions and political events," including not just literary texts, but also church court records, obscure lampoons, and graphic prints (xii). The scope of "pornographia" goes beyond printed matter and includes other sexual signifying practices, such as charivari demonstrations and the infamous naked mountebank sermon performed by Sedley and Dorset.

Given so ambitious a scope, what is the precise goal of the book? Turner explains, "My goal throughout is to reveal common 'porno-political' preoccupations across widely different decades, and to embed illicit sexual discourse in the material life and rituals of the metropolis, relating them to the ambivalent mixture of festivity and violence expressed in charivari, carnival, and apprentice