

Among the many strengths of *Renaissance England's Chief Rabbi* is its ongoing attentiveness to the irony, contradiction, and double vision inherent in Christian Hebraism. The complex matter of whether Selden served as a proxy for the rabbis or appropriated rabbinic scholarship for his own parliamentary ends is addressed head-on. Eleven magisterially orchestrated chapters evince the assertion that, indeed, in "the midst of an age of prejudice, John Selden transmitted an uncommonly generous view of Judaism" (9). And so, while Selden, like many of his contemporaries, rejected the biblical Decalogue as being intended only for Jews, "he accepted the rabbinic Noachide laws as binding upon all humankind" (181). In doing so Selden jettisoned the myth of Jewish xenophobia and underscored the humaneness of rabbinic exegesis. Not only has Jason Rosenblatt provided a more complete picture of John Selden and his wide, often divergent, circle of friends, but also he has succeeded in redrawing the boundaries of Christian Hebraism, Protestant exegetical reasoning, and English legal history. Grounded in profound scholarship and a lifetime of Talmudic learning, this book sets a new high-water-mark for seventeenth-century literary, religious, and cultural studies.

Paul Cefalu. *Moral Identity in Early Modern English Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2004. x + 225 pp. \$75.00. Review by GARY KUCHAR, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA.

Paul Cefalu's *Moral Identity* makes the persuasive case that Reformation theologians were more or less incapable of developing a moral theory of practical ethics that would square with Protestant theories of salvation. Examining an impressive range of Conformist and Non-Conformist theologians from the late sixteenth century through to the Restoration, Cefalu demonstrates the conceptual deadlocks Reformation writers run into when they try to theorize a practical moral theory that is consistent with the Protestant order of salvation, specifically the relation between justification and sanctification. More interestingly, he maintains that the theological tensions between moral theory and soteriology are addressed in literary works by Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, John Donne, George Herbert, and John Milton. By doing so, he successfully argues that theology does not constitute a static context which literary works allegorize, as an earlier generation of scholars

often did, but rather literary works are critical of Reformation Protestant theory even when they participate in reshaping theology in relation to classical and scholastic traditions of thought.

Following a lucid introduction that situates the book's methodology between intellectual history and new historicism, Cefalu offers a reading of the role of shame in Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*. Complicating the predominate view that the Pauline legacy involves a marked shift from shame culture to guilt culture, from a social ethics to a private morality, Cefalu contends that Sidney enacts a tension within Reformation thought between "an ethics of humiliation, according to which the devout ought to despise shame, ... [and] an ethics of honor and reputation, which inevitably encourages a manifestation of one's spiritual favor to the community" (32). This does not mean, however, that Sidney uncritically embraces Aristotelian virtue according to Cefalu. On the contrary, for Cefalu, Sidney's *Arcadia* exposes not only the limitations of an early English Reformation ethics, which he argues did not emphasize the reflexive role of conscience, but also the impracticability of "a number of alternative classical and theological ethical options, including Aristotelian behaviorism, an ethical system of guilt and conscience, and a purely Christological ethics of grace" (8). Overall the chapter offers a richly layered reading of the multiple ethical systems co-existing in, but not determining, Sidney's *Arcadia*.

Chapter 2 offers a closely related reading of ethics in Book II of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. In this account, Spenser shares Sidney's desire to merge Reformation soteriology with a practical ethical system. More precisely, Spenser seeks to synthesize "sanctifying righteousness," or the outward expression of imputed grace, with "Aristotelian *hexis*," or the realization of virtue through habit. Recognizing the limitations of both Pauline and Aristotelian systems of virtue, Cefalu claims, Spenser supplements these two systems by emphasizing the importance of Mosaic Law. The thesis results in an informed and contextually nuanced reading of Spenser's ethics.

While the readings of Spenser and Sidney are informative, weaving together the various ethical contexts at work in *Arcadia* and *The Faerie Queene*, Cefalu is at his best when dealing with non-literary texts, especially the theological treatises analyzed in Chapter 3. Rather than simply describing the work of Richard Hooker, Lancelot Andrewes, William Perkins, and Richard Sibbes, and then applying this description to literary works, Cefalu subjects these theologic projects to intense critical scrutiny. His reading of the relations

between Hooker's soteriology, moral psychology, and natural law ethics is probably the most significant of the four sections in Chapter 3. Developing recent revisionist readings of Hooker, which claim that the English Divine's theology is more consistent with Luther and Calvin than an earlier generation of critics had thought, Cefalu argues that Hooker does not "develop a systematic program of ethical training" (82). Instead, Hooker asserts that "[p]ositive laws, which rely on temporal sanctions for enforcement, displace the need for a full understanding of the content and normative force of natural laws; and sanctifying righteousness occurs following an infusion of the theological virtues [charity, hope, love], rather than through a process of moral effort or practice" (82). The reading is amongst the most sensitive the book has to offer.

In Chapter 4, Cefalu turns to the interrelations between ethics and soteriology in Donne's *Holy Sonnets* and a selection of mature prose works. The most persuasive thesis offered in this chapter is that Donne's sensitivity to bodily suffering upsets the process of working through his salvation with fear and trembling, resulting in a constant threat of spiritual regression. While Cefalu's rigorous interpretation of early modern theology produces alert close readings of Hooker's project, such theological precision risks being overly reductive when applied to Donne's poetry. For instance, rather than arguing that Donne's anxiety about bodily suffering results in a range of possible forms of spiritual and psychological regression, Cefalu insists on making the theologically exact point that such bodily suffering leads him to recoil from the "filial fear" of acting against God's will to the "servile fear" of being punished. While this theologically precise claim certainly helps explain the phenomenology of faith expressed in some sonnets, the implicit assumption that Donne is assured of his election throughout the *Holy Sonnets* overlooks moments such as when Donne asks, "If lecherous goats, if serpents envious / Cannot be damn'd; Alas; why should I bee?" or when he feels the need to query if the tongue of Christ "can adjudge [his soul] unto hell." Although Chapter 4 offers an erudite and engaging reading of Donne, it did not persuade me that the *Holy Sonnets* are dogmatically Calvinist. Such a reading seems to drain the poems of their dramatic power, much of which derives, as Richard Strier and others have argued, from the way they oscillate among Calvinist and Erasmian, Reformation and Roman Catholic, soteriologies.

Just as Chapter 1 complicated earlier readings of the shame/guilt opposition often applied to Pauline cultures, so Chapter 5 complicates perceived ideas about the relationship between *caritas* (or the upward moving love a Christian has for God) and *agape* (the descending, unmerited, love of God for man) in Herbert's poetry. According to Cefalu, Herbert's speakers are incapable of living up to the Reformation disavowal of Augustinian *caritas*. As he puts it, "the speaker seems to realize the presumptuousness of *caritas*, embraces *agape*, but then can only imagine that the result of *agape* is *caritas*, as if his relationship with God is bound in a closed circuit of sacred love" (147). Situating Herbert's poetry within the broader English Reformation project of reconciling justification and sanctification, the chapter offers, among other things, an original and quite persuasive reading of "Love (III)."

The sixth and final chapter makes an intriguing case for reading Milton's ethics in relation to the moral pragmatism more often associated with Pascal. The chapter begins with a rewarding analysis of the ethical vision expressed in Richard Baxter's *Saint's Everlasting Rest* (1650). Though a Puritan, Baxter apparently warned against excessive self-analysis in a way that is similar to related warnings about self-anatomization in late seventeenth-century latitudinarians. In lieu of affective devotion, Baxter exhorted Christians to generate virtue through habit (160). Milton too, Cefalu, argues, presents an ethical vision in *Paradise Lost* that rests on the supposition that habits can inculcate virtue. Cefalu's reading attempts to reconcile the Irenaen school of interpreting *Paradise Lost*, which argues that Adam and Eve develop a sense of moral virtue over time with the Augustinian school which claims that Adam and Eve were created morally perfect. Whether one accepts Cefalu's conclusions or not, the idea that Milton may have valued habit as a way of achieving virtue is plausible and illuminating.

The intellectual rigor and historical erudition that Cefalu brings to early modern theology throughout the book is less evident when he turns to theorizing early modern moral selfhood in the Epilogue. While Cefalu makes the eminently reasonable claim that the psychoanalytic tradition of object-relations helps explain the conceptual limitations of Reformation moral theory, he unnecessarily and unpersuasively predicates this claim on a disavowal of what he refers to, with uncharacteristic amorphousness, as "Freudianism." Ignoring the exemplary work of William Kerigan and more recent Lacanian-inflected work on psychoanalysis and early modern religious thought by Julia

R. Lupton, Ronald Corthell, Graham Hamill, among many others, Cefalu takes Stephen Greenblatt as representative of psychoanalytic criticism despite the fact that Greenblatt argued against the applicability of psychoanalytic notions of self-hood after the publication of *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. The result is an inadequate discussion of hazily defined “Freudian” approaches to religious selfhood in the period.

Despite the shortcomings of the Epilogue, the book as a whole is quite remarkable. It displays a profound and illuminating knowledge of English theological traditions, especially for a book that is primarily intended as a work of literary criticism. It offers original and more often than not persuasive readings of major literary works in the period. As a result, I am certain it will come to shape our understanding of the complex relations between Reformation moral theory and soteriology.

Stephen A. McKnight. *The Religious Foundations of Francis Bacon's Thought*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006. xi + 193 pp + 2 illus. \$37.50. Review by STEVEN MATTHEWS, THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, DULUTH.

The title of Stephen McKnight's most recent book, *The Religious Foundations of Francis Bacon's Thought*, may seem odd to those acquainted with the many books and articles which insist that there are no genuine religious foundations to Bacon's philosophical writings. It is precisely this literature that McKnight has in his sights as he seeks to “offer a corrective to the persistent view of Bacon as a secular modern, who dismisses religion in order to promote the human advance of knowledge” (9). By contrast, McKnight argues “that Bacon's vision of reform or instauration is drawn from the Judeo-Christian scriptures, particularly the Genesis account of the Creation and the Fall; from apocalyptic expectation of renewal in the Old Testament; and from soteriological themes in the New Testament” (3). In addition, “Bacon's Christian ideas are augmented and transmuted by related themes and imagery found in the *prisca theologia*, a highly elastic collection of Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, alchemy, magic, and Jewish esoteric traditions” (3).