

In the main, *Paper-Contestations*' is a careful and convincing argument about the construction of authorship and readership in the messy mid-century. Sauer evidences a wide sampling of primary texts, makes careful and nuanced reference to secondary scholarship, and carefully and patiently builds her case with example after example. She also identifies several issues needing further study, such as how the rise of "extrajudicial popular writings" corresponded with Parliament's rise to power and its control of the press's output (15-16). Even her chapter titles argue wittily that mid-century texts were theatrical performances. For instance, rather than an Introduction, Sauer supplies a Prologue—as if to a play—with the further title, "Press Acts."

A few drawbacks to this study might be noted, one being that Sauer's study argues for a causality that it can hardly prove, i.e., that the closing of theaters led to the generation of textual communities. Nevertheless, the evidence she marshals certainly makes the causal link sound likely. Sauer also aligns herself with the current—and puzzling—critical orthodoxy that declares the rarefied stage to be the primary discursive organ of the age rather than the ubiquitous pulpit. Sauer's fine argument, however, is strong enough to succeed in either case, and well worth reading.

Jonathan P. A. Sell. *Rhetoric and Wonder in English Travel Writing, 1560-1613*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006. ii + 215 pp. + 1 illus. \$94.95. Review by M. G. AUNE, CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Jonathan P. A. Sell, lecturer at the University of Alcalá, Spain, who has published on Shakespeare, Chaucer and modern British literature, has revised his doctoral dissertation into a book that seeks to contribute to the rapidly growing scholarship on early modern travel writing. Taking up Stephen Greenblatt and Mary Campbell's (among others) work on wonder as a travel writing trope, Sell focuses on the other rhetorical devices used by travel writers (and neglected by modern scholars) to broaden our understanding of the production and reception of such texts. In the introductory chapter, Sell argues that early modern travel writers deployed a variety of rhetorical strategies intended to evoke wonder and that their readers recognized these strategies and responded in predictable ways. Modern readers, on the other hand, find the strategies unfamiliar, not recognizing their function or importance.

Sell's study sees early modern readers as an audience with particular "hermeneutic expectations" derived from an educational system that emphasized Latin and Greek, and classical rhetoric.

Sell's second chapter establishes his theoretical framework. He begins with the notion of consensual truth, a shared, mutually associative sense of reality. Statements that appeal to consensual truth attempt not to refer to external reality, but to a collection of ideas and beliefs shared by writer and reader. Together, these ideas and beliefs make up a literary heterocosm that was "a prime store and conduit of consensual knowledge and consensual communicative strategies" (30-31). Thus a travel writer, in order to make his observations meaningful, appealed not to external references, but to ideas he knew that his reader would possess. The reader, in turn, was able to infer the writer's meaning, understanding that an image, such as a blue swan, may not necessarily refer to an actual type of waterfowl, but instead worked to establish a sense of the exotic intended to shape the reception of the text as a whole.

Chapter three begins Sell's most intensive exploration of travel writers' use of rhetoric. He begins with genre and reception, positing that the relevant *ethos* for the genre of travel writing, in part because of its medieval origins, was wonder. A travel writer had to communicate the appropriate generic cues to activate this *ethos* of wonder, which helped to achieve the consensual truth necessary for a text that sought to convince its readers of its own veracity. To support his contention, Sell deploys his knowledge of classical rhetorical strategies, *captatio benevolentiae* (the capture of goodwill) in particular, to examine several travel narratives' prefatory material. Sir Walter Raleigh's attempt to guide the reader of his *Discoverie of . . . Guiana* (1596) is examined—arguing that Raleigh attempted to disguise the failure of his enterprise by establishing a general sense of wonder that engaged his reader's goodwill. "Raleigh has put the Ewaipanoma [men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders] in his text not to attest to his own belief in them or to invite the reader to believe in them, but in order that his tales of gold will sound comparably less improbable in a context of relativized wonder" (78) and in so doing, helped distract readers from his failure to find gold in Guiana.

The fourth chapter moves beyond prefatory material to examine the narratives themselves. The first text is Arthur Barlowe's narrative of his 1584 expedition to Virginia, printed in Haklyut's 1598 *Principal Navigations*. Sell is

attracted to Barlowe's description of Virginia because at the time, the space was unknown; it "existed entirely off the consensus and was a conceptual blank which required filling in" (92). Barlowe does so by describing the flora and fauna using familiar topoi of place. These topoi create meaning more through implication than denotation, Sell argues. The implications direct the reader to turn to the literary heterocosm to understand what Barlowe is attempting to communicate about Virginia. To help illustrate this strategy, Sell refers to similar sylvan descriptions from Spenser, John Speed, and others stretching back through Chaucer to Ovid, and Homer, showing shared strategies which evoked a particular image of place in a reader's mind. Barlowe's readers, argues Sell, filled in the blank of Virginia in terms of these earlier texts, rather than with an actual description of the colony. Travel narratives by Anthony Sherley and Edward Hayes received similar attention. The narratives all share, Sell points out, a distinct lack of concrete description. They evoke a sense of wonder, but do not tell their readers much about the places they visited.

The book's final chapter takes up the travel writer's veracity as established by the evidence of their own scarred and worn out bodies. By describing their travails, and sometimes their tortures, travelers presented their bodies as irrefutable evidence of their experiences. This was effective because, as Sell writes of Raleigh, "the body is mutually manifest, because we all know what it is to have a body, what it feels like to be cold and wet . . . the representation of the body acts as an experiential interface between the writer's and the reader's contexts" (149). The second half of the chapter pursues this strategy employing the world-as-stage metaphor to argue that the traveler became a type of actor who generated authenticity through the power of dramatic performance.

The epilogue posits *The Tempest* as an example of the early seventeenth century tension between a largely metaphorical epistemology, centered on Miranda, and a newer, empirical sense of the world located in the body of Caliban. For Sell, the play is a landmark that delineates the fading of a rhetorical, literary form of travel writing, that he has carefully investigated, and the rise of an empirical, scientific form of travel writing.

In reading *Rhetoric and Wonder*, there is no question of Sell's strong grasp of early modern rhetorical strategies. His analyses are compelling and clear. The texts he has chosen are largely, though not entirely, of the New World and

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.