so with sermons (120)? There are so many rich, suggestive strands to this study, written with exemplary clarity–and an appropriately dramatic flourish–impossible to summarize in this space. Donne is on dangerous ground that prefigures the Civil Wars: a context here given its due force. A riveting study.

The collection is lightly edited: some essays have "Works Cited," others do not. The index is the bare-bones sort. There are stray italics, etc. Although not for freshmen nor the "general reader," it is a valuable addition to Donne studies.

Walter Stephens. *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002. xv + 451 pp. $35.00. Review by THOMAS MOISAN, SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY.

Those drawn to the faintly sensational title of this engaging and learned study are advised not to overlook the end of its subtitle: "the Crisis of Belief." Closely interrogating an array of documents reporting corporeal interactions of demons and witches from the late Middle Ages and the "early" Early Modern era, Walter Stephens argues that the preoccupations these writings record respond to deep anxieties within the Catholic Church both prior to and during the Reformation about articles of faith and teachings it held to be, but were proving not to be, beyond question. Making a compelling case for a thesis that at a glance might seem counterintuitive, Stephens maintains that the theologians and, as he calls them, "witchcraft theorists" who produced these accounts saw demonic immanence, not as a threat to the tenets of the Church, but as their confirmation.

To be sure, Stephens draws this inference concerning things spiritual from texts highlighted by details decidedly material, from tales of, indeed, demon lovers, or rather, demon fornicators, forcing their attentions upon witches and more unsuspecting humans, and from anecdotage involving a variety of other forms of corporeal interaction with, and penetration by, demons, from demonically

powered long-distance flights, transvections of humans to witches' sabbats, to demonically induced infant deaths, to demonically possessed cats. What interests Stephens in these accounts is certainly not that corporeal interactions occurred or even that people believed they occurred, but their centrality in the Early Modern era as a recurrent trope in learned treatises about demons and in the confessions scripted for accused witches by zealous inquisitorial boards in witchcraft trials. Exemplary for Stephens is a working definition of witchcraft in 1505 that weaves into its enumeration of *maleficia*, or witches' crimes, a "strikingly insistent repetition" of the word *corpus* and its cognates, *res corporales*, *corporaliter*, emphasizing "at every turn," Stephen notes, "that these crimes were committed through the interaction of human and demonic *bodies*" (18).

What does Stephens see in this preoccupation with demonic bodies? Most obviously, courtroom depositions certifying demonic corporeality addressed a desire for proof of demonic existence–a desire for literally "tangible" proof in the form of interactive demons, Stephens's tenaciously close scrutinies of these texts show, as obsessive, for all of the learnedness of their discourse, as Othello's demand for "ocular proof"! Again, in positing this need to prove demonic existence, Stephens asks why it should recur so frequently and with such urgency. And, one might add, with such paradoxical implications. For the need to verify the existence of demons empirically would seem at odds with a Church that requires belief in things "visible and invisible." But it is precisely an unease with the many things "invisible" in which the Church requires belief that Stephens sees as displaced onto the demonological writings he examines. To "incorporate" demons performed the recuperative function of showing that beings and operations spiritual in nature and otherwise invisible existed; if demons existed, and, indeed, could even acquire the tools with which to perform physical acts– and here Stephens shows the pains Aquinas took to show that such was possible (62-3)–then other entities also normally invisible could be said to exist: good angels, Christ in his Eucharistic presence, the workings of the sacraments, divine justice, even divinity itself.

Indeed, as Stephens shows in his close readings of case studies of possession, for the demonologists and "witchcraft theorists" there could be no surer sign of a "divinity that shapes our ends" than a demon mouthing, or at least ventriloquizing, opposition to that divinity (346).

In arguing that it is in writings *after* 1400 that the association of witchcraft with physical interactions with demons becomes an ineluctable theme (18), Stephens permits us to elide his eponymous "crisis of belief" with the violent doctrinal contestations of the Reformation. After all, at a time when an issue such as the nature of sacraments, whether sacraments were merely symbolic or, as the Church held, effected what they signified, was the subject of schism-producing controversy, it confirmed the Church's position, Stephens shows, to cite evidence, or at least the "expert," first-hand testimony of witches, that demons had desecrated Eucharistic hosts, not to offer petty, symbolic insults, but to make a real, physical assault upon the divine *corpus* present in the host (210). Yet despite its conversancy with Reformation doctrinal controversies, *Demon Lovers* is not really about the Reformation any more than it is really about demon lovers; besides, the very organization of the book into textured readings of various accounts of various forms of demonic corporeality tends to blur chronology and divert attention from discrete historical developments. Rather, this need to affirm the reality the Church was claiming for invisible things antedated the Reformation considerably and suggests that belief and crisis had been at least casually acquainted for some time. Stephens cites the interest shown by Augustine and Aquinas in angelic corporeality and sexuality (62-4)–the latter a subject still vexed enough in the seventeenth century as to bring a blush to Milton's Raphael when Adam quizzes him about it; and Stephens also rehearses the struggle by theologians in the Middle Ages to reconcile Aristotle's taxonomically useful but determinedly anti-spiritualist philosophy with a system of belief in a spirit world (73-80). For Stephens the "crisis" with which the Church coped for centuries seems to be that "belief" could not alone dispel the suspicion that what the Church demanded that the faithful believe

was all made up or a construction of the human imagination, a faculty which, as Stephens shows, the Church feared as much as the devil himself (310). What the Early Modern era, with its valorization of rationalist inquiry and frontal challenges to biblical and ecclesiastical authority exposed, and what the corresponding preoccupation with demonic existence attempted to dispel, was, in Stephens's view, a profound and longstanding fear within the Church of the abyss, the fear, in Stephens's precious riff on Franklin Roosevelt, that "we have nothing to fear but nothing to fear itself"(355).

Ambitious as this theme is, the deeper value and pleasure of *Demon Lovers* lie in how Stephens develops it. There is obvious scholarly value in Stephens's strategy of drawing his inferences from a rigorously detailed inspection of a good number of primary documents spanning several centuries of thought and writing on witches and demons. There are both value and pleasure, the latter a tad vindictive, in following Stephens as he interrogates those who had been interrogators. Subjecting to an adroit linguistic and rhetorical scrutiny the language of figures whose own considerable linguistic and rhetorical acumen, united with more forcible measures, had been employed to inscribe accused offenders in what their accusers wanted them to say, Stephens deconstructs the writings of the "witch theorists" to reveal in their linguistic indirections and rhetorical evasions the precariousness of their projects, the need to validate their beliefs with evidence that demons did have bodily presences when their reason was telling them that it was distinctly possible, if not probable, that demons had nothing of the kind. Stephens acutely notes in the claims these writers make for demonic corporeality the recurrence of double negations and *litotes* (the "not-un" rhetorical constructions) of arguments that do not prove that demons exist and assume corporeal form but settle for showing that demonic existence cannot be disproven or that a demon "*isn't not* here" (355). In short, Stephens effectively metonymizes the "crisis of belief" that is his real subject in the writers he examines and whose denials and rationalizations *his* own considerable linguistic virtuosity exposes.

Still, in playing interrogator to reveal the ulterior agenda lurking in and in between the lines of the interrogators he examines, does Stephens not invite us to wonder about his own agenda here? In part, his aim is to offer an historical corrective. The writings he examines come enveloped in skepticism, skepticism from without about demons and the world of spirits that the authors posit as a heresy to be corrected by such evidence as they can muster affirming demonic corporeality, but also, as Stephens's deconstructions suggest, skepticism from within the authors themselves. Skepticism that formulations of the history of ideas have classically associated with the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Stephens dates, then, much earlier, in the Early Modern period. This allows him, in yet one more brace of paradoxes, to propose that the violent obsession with witchcraft so often read as a residue of the "Dark Ages" opposed to an ethos of rational, skeptical inquiry, was actually a product of that ethos, and that, in a variation of a parent destroying the child it has begotten, "[w]itchcraft declined when skepticism overcame the resistance erected against it" (364), resistance, if one follows Stephens aright, skepticism erected against itself. Even more important, there emerges from Stephens's analysis of these writings figures recognizable to "us" modern readers who also, presumably, approach the subject of witchcraft and demonic possession with skepticism. Indeed, this effacing of boundaries between them and us enables Stephens to gesture epilogically to the contemporary and see in such phenomena as anxieties over Halloween and accounts of alien abductions the same need to affirm the existence of a spirit world that motivated Stephens's cross-examined witch theorists (367-9).

Perhaps. The analogy between the two eras is certainly there, and not simply in the sense in which any two things can be seen as alike when viewed from a sufficient distance. But if it is true, as Stephens argues, that skepticism ultimately disposed of the interest in witchcraft it stimulated, are we not in the twenty-first century approaching matters of the uncanny and dark spirit world from an essentially different paradigm from the one from which the witchcraft theorists proceeded? For all of the skepticism that

permeated the writings Stephens examines, after all, can it be denied that the writers not only wanted but felt they should believe in a world rationalism threatened? Perhaps the desire for tangible proof of some spirit world does inhabit the tabloid and televised news accounts of wildly secularized close encounters, but surely not as something in which we feel we should believe in the way in which the weight of culture and institutional authority presumably led Stephens's witch theorists to feel they should. Perhaps, a parting cavil, we need to know a bit more of the popular culture operant on the minds and psyches of the writers Stephens examines than Stephens's hermetic, if compelling, approach rather filters, a culture of beliefs and prejudices, not the least of which was the misogyny that made the preponderance of witches female, a phenomenon Stephens surely acknowledges, but treats as a convenient given from which witchcraft theorists such as the influential Johannes Kramer proceeded, not a position they felt a need to prove anew (37). Still, Stephens's incisive study challenges preconceptions and gives us a view of a vexed era through the vexed minds of some of its recorders and shapers.

Henry S. Turner, ed. *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England.* New York: Routledge, 2002. 304 pp. + 14 illus. $30.00. Review by NICOLE GREENSPAN, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO.

"Is there a new subject for criticism?" John Guillory queries in his chapter of Henry S. Turner's edited collection, *The Culture of Capital* (223). What useful theoretical models and methodologies can scholars from different disciplines borrow from the *new economic criticism* and material culture, and how can they be applied to the study of early modern England? What exactly is the *culture of capital*? The thirteen essays in this volume, which emerged from the October 1998 conference, "Working Capital," held at Columbia University and Barnard College, attempt to address these questions. Collectively the articles, composed by literary scholars and