

would resonate as images of Catholics entrapped by the Elizabethan intelligence apparatus. To be fair, Hester himself admits to an ultimate uncertainty about his proposition (42).

Only a few minor errors mark this generally well-edited volume. The most noteworthy are probably the misspellings of two foreign language book titles, one of which is wrong in two articles and the index. On the whole, however, the volume presents an intriguing array of studies on an important topic that has not often enough been addressed directly, despite the number of books and articles in recent years that have taken for granted the importance of coteries and other literary communities in Early Modern England.

Larry F. Norman. *The Public Mirror: Molière and the Social Commerce of Depiction*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999. vii + 226 pp. \$40. Review by KIKI GOUNARIDOU, SMITH COLLEGE.

In *The Public Mirror*, Larry Norman's intention is to uncover the aesthetic and social conditions that made Molière's satires possible. The idea of the "public mirror" was used by Molière in describing his own plays as a means for audience self-recognition through satire. Norman argues that, with satire, there is a fine line that the playwright walks in order to satisfy his audience. Molière must keep his characters and their flaws specific enough to delight audiences with satires of their peers, yet his audiences must not realize that they themselves are also being targeted. In the first two parts of the book, Norman examines Molière's engagement of the audience, "both in the creation and in the reception of his works" (9), before turning to the actual dramatic structure of the plays in the third part.

In Part One, "Creation," Norman explains that, because *L'École des Femmes* was "dangerously triumphant" (13), Molière uses *La Critique de L'École des Femmes* as an apology for the first: the public is depicted on stage criticizing its own stage depiction in Molière's previous play. Of these plays, Norman says, "If we wish

to understand the aesthetics of Molière's comic mirror, we must look at the social configuration of its performance" (15). He believes that, for Molière, representation is "indissociable" from reception (16), and points out that, in *La Critique*, reception becomes in turn the subject of representation. The audience's reaction is placed on stage and turned into the comedy. Through the character of Uranie, Norman illustrates the tensions between general and specific depiction, and compares the comedy's representational dynamics to that of social commerce. Comedy is a genre that requires the presentation of an image of daily life, or "a mirror to manners" (36).

According to Norman, representation of social commerce was an art in Molière's theatre; it was orderly, witty, and lively enough to create comedy. His representation, though, may not have been his own at all, but instead the public's own portrait of their social commerce as a site of depiction. Norman contends that, among the upper, theatre-going classes during the reign of Louis XIV, "*honnêteté* is an emblem for a perfect aestheticization of social commerce, one in which the highest sign of distinction becomes an art that hides itself" (50). Therefore, as a playwright, Molière was more an observer of social commerce than a creator of original material and ideas.

Part Two, "Recognition," begins the discussion of the spectacle of self-recognition in Molière's plays: seeing oneself portrayed can give rise both to moral improvement and to cruel pleasure in the humiliation of the one targeted for ridicule. By provoking a sense of self-recognition, the "comic mirror" proves its efficacy and directness. Moreover, the specific reactions of the characters to the comic mirror indicate not only the power of its image, but also the forcefulness of the spectators' resistance to it. Norman discusses two levels that are present in theatrical performance: the level of "representation" or "spectacle," which includes everything linked to the physical elements of the production such as actors, props, audience members, etc., and the "real" story, which includes the subject matter and the author's treatment of it, the characters, and the dramatic action. Norman then proceeds to answer the question, "How does the spectator confront the comic mirror?" Drawing on

Riccoboni's analysis of seeing one's vices on stage, Norman describes three ways in which spectators can see themselves portrayed without gaining moral profit. The first is vanity at the moment of self-recognition, a narcissistic pleasure in seeing one's own faults. The second is misrecognition, that is, seeing another in the portrait of oneself. The last is painful recognition, which includes shunning of the public mirror and the inability to see oneself represented on stage.

In Part Three, "Dramaturgy," Norman focuses on *L'École des Femmes* and *Le Misanthrope* and suggests that they act as "a critique of both the social commerce of representation and the satirical comedy of manners that rehearses its dynamics" (151). *Le Misanthrope* examines comic creation, "by presenting characters who are defined as observers, portrayers, and judges of their peers" (153) and comic reception, by depicting the response of these characters to the portraits and judgments that result from these identifications. Norman then proceeds to a discussion of the characters of Célimène and Alceste by comparing them to Molière himself. This comparison is further illuminated when the differences between Alceste and Célimène are outlined; they both speak against current manners, but the circumstances surrounding their satires are very different. Alceste is motivated by hatred but Célimène is motivated by pleasure. Both characters, however, are interpreted as representing Molière: on the one hand, Molière wanted to befriend and seduce the upper class while, on the other, his satires of these very people could be biting and unpleasant. Lastly, Norman discusses the differences between the staging of tragedy and that of comedy. Molière's theatre acts as a parody of tragedy but, whereas in tragedy one views personal grandeur, "comedy explores the eyes' fascination with superficial merits and ridiculous faults" (196).

Norman concludes that, in Molière's plays, satire drives dramatic conflict, and the true lesson of Molière's drama is "not to abandon satire but, quite the contrary, to extend its insight into its own limitations of vision and to the limitations of self-recognition on the part of its subjects" (209). In Larry Norman's complex,

intelligent, and innovative analysis, Molière's comedy acts as a baroque self-reflexive mirror in which the spectator becomes aware of the nature of self-discovery and the fashioning of his or her identity.

Nicholas D. Paige. *Being Interior: Autobiography and the Contradictions of Modernity in Seventeenth-Century France*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. ix + 299 pp. + 4 illus. \$55.00. Review by ZAHİ ZALLOUA, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY.

Nicholas D. Paige's *Being Interior* makes a compelling case for the irreducibility of modernity to skepticism and secularism. Turning to the religious literature of seventeenth-century authors, mostly of women writing in the first person, Paige examines the historical process by which the works of those authors, displaying an interiorized subjectivity, came to be read as "autobiographical," and its importance for a more nuanced understanding of the origins of modern subjectivity—one which does not equate the beginnings of modernity solely with the advent of the Cartesian *cogito*.

Central to Paige's project is the metaphor of interiority, which permeates the religious or mystical writings of lesser-known seventeenth-century authors. Attention to the personal space of interiority in its religious context has indeed been a lacuna in contemporary criticism of the early modern period. Yet it would be an error, as Paige warns, to see *Being Interior* as a naïve valorization of religious inner space. Quite the contrary, what Paige seeks to illustrate is that from its very inception the autobiographical subject is mired with contradictions and paradoxes, and it is precisely these contradictions and paradoxes which Paige claims to be constitutive of modern subjectivity.

In his introduction, Paige quotes approvingly Judith Butler's formulation of the modern process of subjection: "[T]aken to be the condition for and instrument of agency,' Judith Butler has recently argued, '[the subject] is at the same time the effect of subordination, understood as the deprivation of agency'" (4). This essentially Foucauldian insight is confirmed in the early writings