

appears to depart a bit from the focused argument and methodology of the introduction and first three chapters. This chapter does not so much concern specific terms, the politics of fortune, or a pragmatic political ethos but, rather, the book's looser argument about political contests waged over the control of received semiotic conventions.

In turn, the fifth chapter—which traces a path from the actual event of the death of Richard, duke of York, through chronicle accounts, to Shakespeare's depiction—departs further from the book's central contentions. The principal considerations in this chapter are the "symbolic motility" (221) of the crown and the question of the extent to which Christological symbolism is present in various representations of Richard's death and, if it is, what significance this symbolism possesses. As fascinating as the various analyses in this chapter are, they stand at some remove from the concerns of the earlier ones—a distance all the more evident in light of the book's postscript, which offers brief comments on the pervasive Tudor term *faction*, thus bringing the reader neatly and fittingly back to the matter of the introduction.

Given the accomplishment and continued influence of Strohm's other books, a new one brings with it a great deal of expectation, and, overall, *Politique* stands as a worthy and apt addition to his oeuvre. Although its introduction's promise of a unifying argument is not, by the end, completely fulfilled, the value of the portion that has been met—as well as the findings of individual chapters considered in isolation—is unquestionable. Political historians of this period have, with this book, an indispensable resource, and literary scholars have, as well, a compelling provocation to continue the reassessment of the writings of fifteenth-century England.

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Moral Identity in Early Modern English Literature. *Paul Cefalu*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. x+225.

Intellectual historians are closer to their subjects than most scholars—closer in the sense that what they write is more like what they read than, say, the work of the social or political historian or the literary critic. Ideas and arguments are their currency, often in an idiom their subjects would recognize (Martin Guerre might have little to say back to

Natalie Zemon Davis, but Jaroslav Pelikan would get an earful from Martin Luther). Such ties cannot be said to bind the subjects of new historicist scrutiny to their latter-day students in literary studies. That movement's characteristic emphasis on discourse and ideology ensures that most modern critics work in an idiom of analysis distinct from any their subjects could have known, on problems that have a different shape—a shape by definition hard to apprehend in its time. A preference for discourse analysis and “thick description” advisedly undoes the early modern intellectual's effort to frame the world.

It is among the projects of Paul Cefalu's *Moral Identity in Early Modern English Literature* to ask what we might learn from taking the period's own theory seriously: in particular, how the thick, situated descriptions of moral life available in literary romance, lyric, and epic engage with the thin (which is to say, theoretical and normative) descriptions offered by Protestant theology. The likes of Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, John Donne, George Herbert, and John Milton, as Cefalu argues, encountered these ideas as ideas, and to understand them properly, we must too. His book undertakes two characteristic operations. The first is the more polemical, under the circumstances: the scrupulous, often critical unfolding and analysis of theological argument, with attention to both early modern and modern commentaries. The second is the reading of works of imaginative literature as a kind of laboratory where those arguments are put to the test. “Since literary texts place characters in approximately real ethical quandaries, they uniquely expose the limitations of the theoretical apparatus found in dogmatic theology” (7).

Cefalu covers a great deal of ground, from Luther to Richard Baxter, and each of the poets above gets a chapter of his own. The book is held together by a focus on Reformed theology's persistent difficulty in reconciling the structures of soteriology with the practical demands of “reordering the will and disciplining conduct” (3). The problem lies in the relation between justification and sanctification, between the righteousness imputed to the sinner by Christ's sacrifice and what Cefalu describes as “the partial renewal of ethical character through a process of integrating a regenerated ‘new man’ with a residually sinful ‘old man’” (2). Particularly troublesome is the proximity of sanctification to the habituation in virtue described by the classical ethical tradition, especially Aristotelian *hexeis*. Was sanctification a gradual process? Does each and every ethical act require an infusion of grace? Is grace itself anything like a habit? The Lutheran-Calvinist doctrine of the two kingdoms solves this trouble by making a sharp distinction between the temporal and the spiritual regiments. But what

Cefalu probes again and again is the difficulty theologians had keeping these regiments separate, particularly when they concerned themselves with the incentives for virtuous conduct.

The chapter on *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1593) sets these problems in motion. Cefalu works with a familiar account of how Sidney undercuts his hero-princes' commitment to the principles of classical virtue, diagnosing their dependence on an ethic of shame. But a midchapter excursus among the Reformed theologians demonstrates that divines were not so quick to dismiss shame's power, and Cefalu draws out a line of argument from Augustine through Luther to the late sixteenth century about why and how the devout should care about the opinion of others. Shame is to be despised, as Christ despised it; yet the value of "public evaluation" in reinforcing "a faint sense of assurance" (33) gets a hearing, especially among the earlier English Reformers. Going back to *Arcadia* with these problems in mind allows Cefalu to offer a fine reading of Philoclea's side of the famous suicide debate: she dismantles Pyrocles' ethical arguments, but then, uncertain of the practical power of her own, "she hits Pyrocles where it hurts by accusing him of not having the moral value of courage anyway" (38). In an emergency, she falls back on shaming. Cefalu takes Sidney to be testing weaknesses in received doctrine, both its internal inconsistencies and its failures to persuade: "the right poet figures as a meta-ethicist, evaluating ethical theory as much as he measures the conduct of characters" (46).

A chapter on Spenser follows, treating the relation between Guyon and the Palmer in book 2 of *The Faerie Queene* (1590). Cefalu suggests that the time-honored account of the book's progress from an order of nature to an order of grace should be extended to a third phase, of moral law—recognizing a Spenser who thinks a purely theological rhetoric is too weak to govern conduct with the firmness necessary to assure the destruction of the Bower of Bliss. Such collisions between doctrine and fiction give a basic shape to all Cefalu's chapters but the third, on conformist and puritan moral theory, which serves as the book's pivot between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There Cefalu argues that Richard Hooker, Lancelot Andrewes, William Perkins, and Richard Sibbes all "share the belief that regeneration does not imply incremental moral progress" (77). They impose a kind of collective discipline (despite their many differences) on earlier Reformers' tendency to blur the regiments. Cefalu is characteristically attentive to the moments when this rigor creates contradictions of its own, and the next two chapters draw out such problems in literary contexts again: the relation between servile and filial fear in Donne, and between *agape* and *caritas* in Herbert.

Throughout, Cefalu evaluates theological arguments for their consistency and inconsistency, and he takes his authors to be doing the same when they ask what doctrine is like to live with. The final chapter sets Milton in the context of the latitudinarian thinking that came to prominence after the Civil War. Cefalu introduces writers like Jeremy Taylor as proponents of a “holy living” theology that is plainly indulgent of what the puritans and conformists so resisted, “the pragmatic assumption that new converts ought to be allowed to go through the motions of faith as a short-term strategy in the pursuit of salvation” (157). Reformed religion is now open to *hexeis*, and Cefalu includes Milton in this company, as one whose “Irenaean or rational soul-making theodicy is entirely compatible with the regulation of behavior according to protocols of habit and custom” (158). He finds this pragmatism compatible in turn with that of William James, and that framework promises ways of resolving some old contradictions, particularly between *De Doctrina Christiana* and *Paradise Lost*.

Chief among those contradictions is that *De Doctrina* insists strenuously on rational deliberation, while *Paradise Lost* (1667) seems to allow Adam and Eve to act unreflectively in the garden—there is no moment of choice that grounds their obedience to God. “Whether we describe spontaneous obedience as virtuous or not,” writes Cefalu, in the voice of Jamesian pragmatism, “it can only be considered sufficiently virtuous if it meets *De Doctrina*’s criteria for virtue, that is, if it is combined with effective and binding practices of rational deliberation” (175). Adam and Eve cannot be true Miltonic pragmatists until they learn the bitter art of choosing. It is a peculiar felicity that Cefalu therefore proposes for the Fall: our first sorrow is also a first instance and exemplar of rational choice, on which Adam and Eve and their progeny may afterwards pattern their own pragmatism to God’s will. That choice is not made in the poem, Cefalu argues, but its possibility is the key to the paradise within. The merit of this reading is its attention to the kinds of choosing possible in and after Eden, and the moments when it does and does not happen. The conceptual apparatus, however, feels more than usually stiff. Commitment to the “logic” (168) of *De Doctrina* may obscure Milton’s formidable powers of self-contradiction, between and within texts; likewise commitment to the logic of the moral pragmatist argument. Here most of all the study has the vices of its virtues: the schemes of the theologians sometimes constrain the readings, and those readings tend to privilege argument in the texts above, say, imagery or narrative technique. Perhaps this effect feels strongest in the Milton chapter because that chapter is closest to Cefalu’s own ethical commitments.

This last speculation returns us to the book's most striking features. Not only does *Moral Identity* possess the intellectual historian's willingness to take seriously the arguments of its subjects; it is also concerned, more or less overtly, with what these ideas can teach us about how to live. Cefalu reads both his poets and his theologians as experimenters in the good of ethical theory, and his epilogue is the plainest evidence that he himself is up to something similar. He adapts some of the terms of object-relations theory to suggest that his book has been about a kind of historical impasse between ideas of grace and the force of the passions, in which "the official culture at large displays a very underdeveloped sense of the ways in which self-interest and morality might have been creatively integrated" (196). Although some readers are likely to be troubled, such judgments are hard to separate from the book's seriousness, its willingness to hold itself accountable to the same problems with which Luther and Donne wrestled. *Moral Identity* is valuable not only for its scrupulous analysis of theological argument and for some provocative readings, but for making us think again about what literary criticism has to do with questions about virtue. As Cefalu knows, the writers he studies would find their separation strange.

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Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture, 1681–1714. *Abigail Williams*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. viii+303.

This new book by Abigail Williams sets out to recover an important but forgotten historical aesthetic, namely, the Whig poetic tradition of the period from the Exclusion Crisis to the accession of George I. The Tory and Jacobite authors from this era now constitute the literary canon, yet, in fact, Whig poets of this time enjoyed considerable popularity and were the major beneficiaries of a sophisticated system of patronage; they were far from being losers in their own age. Many of our modern-day assumptions about the quality and character of Whig poetry under the later Stuarts derive from efforts of contemporary Tory authors—from John Dryden through to Alexander Pope—to discredit both Whig politics and the Whig literary enterprise. Thus there was an inherent polemical dimension to the discussion of literary merit. It follows that "we cannot understand early Whig poetry without first exploring the relationship between political and aesthetic judgments in the early eighteenth century" (19) and that we need "to disturb