

Judith H. Anderson. *Translating Investments: Metaphor and the Dynamic of Cultural Change in Tudor-Stuart England*.

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Coming upon a dead metaphor, lying on the ground like a thunderstruck mooncalf, most literary critics — it is in our training and nature — will be apt to give it at least a gentle prod with the toe of a boot. Sometimes it turns out to be alive; sometimes it moves only because we poked it. Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference. Judith Anderson has written a guide to this fundamental perplexity, a study of “the dynamic of metaphor” (7) in the cultural history of early modern England. Her interest is in what she calls “productive” or “creative” or “constructive” metaphors, and in how the flux between such vitality and mere code — dead metaphor — might give us terms for thinking about cultural change.

Anderson’s argument covers a lot of ground — from the works of Shakespeare, Spenser, and Donne to the Vestiarian Controversy of the 1560s and the economic writings of Gerrard de Malynes — but she takes her first bearings from the twentieth-century theorists Jacques Derrida and Paul Ricoeur. Derrida offers her an account of the persistence of the etymological trace, a theory of metaphor grounded in words. Ricoeur — from whom she also borrows a sense of metaphorical productivity as Hegelian sublation — describes the process of “lexicalization” through which a lively metaphor loses its polyvalence, governed by its role in particular sentences (and, by extension, in particular rhetorical and cultural contexts). The contest between surplus and lexicalization is this book’s subject, and Anderson teaches us how to measure the pressures in each direction. If she takes a side, it is Derrida’s, and her reasons are historical: the vernacular ferment of the period, its polylingualism, and the humanist grammarians’ emphasis on *verbum* over syntax (a subject central to her previous book, *Words That Matter*).

The chapters that follow work out these dynamics in a variety of settings. The word *investment* is a leitmotif, and she first tracks it through Shakespeare’s *Henry IV* and *Hamlet*, where it tangles together “clothing, commerce, and religion” (35), preparing us for the deep puns at the heart of the Vestiarian Controversy. Chapters on the metaphoricity of the sacrament and on John Donne treat theological questions and, particularly with Donne, “the danger that I [the critic] will find creative metaphor — the magician’s fictive art — where a Renaissance reader would find an assertion of code” (70). A closely argued chapter on classical rhetoric shows how some English translations of Cicero and Quintilian suggest a sharper distinction between metaphor and catachresis than the Romans were willing to make. The productivity of metaphor, to the point of abuse, is deep in the tradition.

The final chapter, which considers the *Lex Mercatoria* (1622) of the merchant Gerrard de Malynes, can stand for what is most distinctive about Anderson’s book. Like all that precedes it, it is the product of equal parts intense close reading and deep research. (The endnotes, fully a third again of the book’s length and set in smaller type, are a rich mine both of reference and reflection.) She unfolds

Malynes's body-soul-and-spirit allegory of "the three Essentiall Parts of Trafficke" (177) — commodities, money, and exchange — in order to show how he argues for the overriding economic importance of monetary policy. Malynes has his critics, both on account of his metaphors (which were disparaged by contemporaries such as Thomas Mun) and his theory (Mun again, and most modern economists). What Anderson is ultimately concerned to show, however, is how, for all of the potential intricacy of the relations between body and exchange, Malynes's conceit is sterile, never transforming or vitalizing what I. A. Richards would call its economic tenor. His book had little power to change the way his contemporaries talked about money. Critics mostly celebrate the discovery of metaphorical overplus: here is a valuable lesson in how metaphor might fail.

The very centrality of its questions to literary studies may be the greatest handicap for *Translating Investments. Words That Matter*, especially in its recovery of grammatical theory, had more surprises page-for-page. Here the big ideas are perforce more familiar, the innovations more incremental. The reward, however, is a fine sense of metaphor as a cultural project across an especially broad range of terrain in early modern England. Anderson insists, and teaches us to insist, on the local, historical conditions of metaphor's torpor and vitality, how writers thought about and went about killing and quickening the trope she calls "the scaffolding of human culture" (216).

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