

ways; the excessive desires unearthed through the cross-examination of witches takes us back to an earlier claim that *Bartholomew Fair* is a play about what it looks like to want too much, for example. Important, too, in including these last two chapters with their turn to violence is that they work to belie the idea that queer desire is necessarily liberatory and demonstrate how queer power dynamics can be both aggressive and erotic.

One of the strongest readings arises from her consideration of the erotic triangle in *Philaster*, a play with a sparse scholarly trail. While we are accustomed to plays in which a woman's cross-dressing allows her to gain access to a male beloved, here we have a character, female Euphrasia-male Bellario, who complicates the expected formula. The androgynous Bellario serves as a go-between for a master and mistress who are blocked in love, but theirs is not the typical intermediary role. While the play is similar to Jonson's *Epicoene* in that the audience does not discover that Bellario is cross-dressed until the play's end, it deviates from much early modern drama as Bellario has no desire to pair off with either member of the couple. Unlike *The Roaring Girl*'s Moll, Bellario wants to remain in "proximity and service" (59) to both of them. What is queer in this reading, according to Varnado, is not the direction in which desire flows—be it male to female, female to female, or male to male—but the existence of instrumentality as the focus of erotic desire. The very shape of a relationship is, thus, reconfigured.

Chapter 3's examination of the way witches are constructed out of paranoia in a series of collaborative and erotic acts allows for a revised approach to a well-worn topic; at times, though, the sharpness of the individual readings get lost amid Varnado's repeated desire to call such textual examinations queer. It is understandable that she wishes to return to her thesis; however, the argument does not need repetition to speak to either its imaginative scope or its critical usefulness.

Mara I. Amster, *Randolph College*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2021.290

The Restoration Transposed: Poetry, Place and History (1660–1700).

Gillian Wright.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. xii + 266 pp. \$99.

Restoration literature has so often been treated by the academy as the redheaded step-child of the long eighteenth century that Gillian Wright's new study focusing on English and Irish poetry from 1660 to 1700 is especially welcome and timely. It is also welcome for another reason. Wright redirects our attention from the London-centric drama and satires of the period to other places in which literature was produced and disseminated, notably Dublin and the coterie of writers that flourished there around Katherine Philips in the early 1660s, and to the still-undervalued influence Spenser had on Restoration writers. Scholars of drama know the formidable influence Jonson

and Shakespeare (and, to a less visible degree, Fletcher) had on Etherege, Dryden, Shadwell, and Congreve as well as the rich vein of explicit classical influence on the imitations, translations, and adaptations written during the late seventeenth century. Wright shows quite convincingly that Spenser belongs in this elect company of classical and Renaissance writers, despite the widespread perception by his Restoration readers, versed as they were in neoclassical principles, that both his language and idiosyncratic stanza form were archaic. The 1679 edition of Spenser is pivotal to Wright's argument. She demonstrates Dryden's abiding engagement with his Elizabethan precursor through a nuanced analysis of the annotations in his copy of Spenser's *Works* in Cambridge's Wren Library. For Wright, Dryden is a "most careful and tenacious reader" (57) of Spenser's canon, and while some of his critical responses can be "traced back to self-vindication, self-interest or self-promotion" (64), his reading of *The Faerie Queene* "represents the most acute, sensitive, and—in its own way—generous account of Spenser's poetry produced in the seventeenth century" (65). While Wright documents several other Restoration writers' debts to the 1679 edition, among them Oldham, Behn, and Howard, her analysis of Dryden's reception of Spenser stands out as one of the high points of this impressive book.

The second chapter of *The Restoration Transposed* is more diffuse, in large part because Wright offers a survey of literature produced in or about Ireland, often though not exclusively by Irish writers, a category with its own ambiguity, as she readily acknowledges. Parts of this somewhat amorphous survey of forty years of Irish creativity are nevertheless excellent. Dublin proves a "place of lively coterie composition and textual exchange" (81) for Katherine Philips during her sojourn there in 1662–63, when her play *Pompey* was performed at the Smock Alley theater and she entered fully into the circle of writers associated with the earls of Orrery and Roscommon. Equally valuable is Wright's comparison of the two earls as patrons, writers of commendatory poems, translators, literary theorists, and as spokesmen for the Protestant minority in Ireland.

In her third chapter, Wright explores the vast and complex terrain of "plants and trees" (143) in the Restoration, moving deftly from literary texts by both royalist and republican poets who use the rural landscapes in their works as political allegories to Evelyn's *Sylva*, an influential and classically learned primer for gardeners, published under the imprimatur of the newly established Royal Society, and Cowley's disillusioned poems and essays, written in the 1660s, praising country retirement and solitude. Milton's *Paradise Lost* fits neatly into this discussion, with Wright underscoring the "active, thoughtful and loving stewardship" (178) Adam—and especially Eve—have with the plants in their garden Paradise. The intense association of trees and plants with women leads to an adroit comparison of profeminist and misogynist uses of trees in Behn's and Rochester's poems set in parks. Wright's penetrating analysis of Behn's translation of the last book of Cowley's *Sex Libri Plantarum* (or *Six Books of Plants*) into English in the 1680s makes the case for the "bravura literary achievement" (202) of Cowley's final work considered in its own right and for the feminist and biographical significance of Behn's personal appropriation

of the material in her loose “Cowleyan” imitation of Cowley. Both the translator and the translated benefit from this close scrutiny.

The coda to Wright’s book retroactively argues the overlap of her three discrete chapters, exploring connections between and among them and situating her study as a complement to more familiar accounts of Restoration literature that emphasize the period’s sexual license and its urban and English settings. Her justification after the fact of her project is altogether unnecessary: this is compelling and engaging scholarship of the first order that one hopes receives the wider audience it so richly deserves.

Jennifer Brady, *Rhodes College*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2021.291

Spenser and Donne: Thinking Poets. Yulia Ryzhik, ed.

The Manchester Spenser. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019. xii + 234 pp. £80.

Spenser and Donne: Thinking Poets sets out to fill a gap in early modern English studies that might seem surprising. Despite the many scholars who work on, and teach, both authors, there is remarkably little criticism that engages in sustained comparison of their work. In her introduction to this collection of essays, Yulia Ryzhik proposes that this gap is largely the result of periodization—that even if the “convenient divide at the turn of the sixteenth century” (3) has to some extent been dismantled, Spenser and Donne are still associated with the assumptions that characterized each side of the divide, with Spenser attached to the medieval side while Donne is pulled forward to be made part of the forward-looking seventeenth century. But the two Elizabethan poets were contemporaries, Spenser a mere twenty years older than Donne.

In eleven essays plus an introduction, this volume aims to reassess the relationship between the two poets, though the question of how best to describe that relationship runs through the whole project. While some articles address examples of direct influence or parody (for example Ramie Targoff on sexual violence and sacrifice in both poets’ epithalamia), more often the comparison is based on “common preoccupations and continuities of thought” (5). As Ryzhik points out, the authors find different ways of characterizing the connection, speaking not so much of influence as of “overhearing” (Richard Danson Brown), “engagement” (Ryzhik), “encounter” (Ayesha Ramachandran), and “foreshadowing” (David Marno). The first three chapters approach the question formally, in detailed analyses of the two poets’ versification (Richard Danson Brown), use of tropes (Christopher D. Johnson), and of rhetoric (Niranjan Goswami). Other contributors compare themes (Ramachandran on philosophy in poetry), genres (Marno on devotional poetics), and common sources (Linda Gregerson on the influence of Ovid).