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## Book Reviews

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**Atkinson, Meera, *The Poetics of Transgenerational Trauma* (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017). ISBN: 9781501330872**

Sydney-based creative writer Meera Atkinson explicitly attempts to integrate recent socio-political conceptions of trauma with theories of affectivity, relayed amongst individuals, families and communities. She does this through seven contemporary examples of literary fiction by Anglophone and Francophone women writers. Her volume poses several questions in its broad survey of recent debates. Firstly, why are traumatic acts ‘understood as discrete events disconnected from the ... realities of social organization’ (2)? Secondly, how can literary works ‘help disrupt the spell of denial and naturalization’, especially regarding ‘the common tendency to cast some traumas as personal plights’ (2)? Such plights, exemplified for Atkinson by addiction and depression, suicide and violence, are largely seen by her as ‘an ahistorical anomaly’ (3). She gradually re-casts both questions. How do ‘chronicle[s] of transgenerational trauma’ – trauma that is both intra- and inter-generational – reveal ‘processes of transmission’ and their ‘cultural’ and ‘collective’ associations in politically efficacious ways (19)? Moreover, what motivates writers to pursue ‘such a daunting project’ (19)?

By now, it is obvious that this monograph refuses to be confined to a solitary discipline. Given limits upon length, this review will briefly examine some crucial assumptions, literary and conceptual, underpinning Atkinson’s book.

Because Atkinson believes trauma emerges from socio-political roots such as differences of wealth and race, gender and class, she advocates that it can most potently be seen in the ‘literary testimonies’ of feminist experiments (3). Indeed, she concludes that ‘the poetics of transgenerational trauma is an innately feminist practice’ (190). The experimental texts chosen are said to express repercussions of traumatic affect issuing from its ‘paradoxical lack of registration’ initially and its ‘belated hauntings’ (15; cf. 5, 72–73). They do so by deploying an experimental lexico-syntax with ‘alternating’ first- and third-person, past and present spatio-temporal, and shifting intimate and distanced perspectives (43; cf. 74). Beneath this assertion, Atkinson presumes that words can begin to ‘convey the visceral surge of terror or profound shame’

when employed in 'linguistic or structural experimentation' rather than in more conventional writing (16).

*Poetics of Transgenerational Trauma* begins Atkinson's specific account of literary testimonies with the widely translated 1984 *L'Amant* by Marguerite Duras. Yet, without argument, she ignores Duras's subsequent 'testimonial' versions, the 1991 *L'Amant de la Chine du Nord* and her co-authored filmscript of *L'Amant* directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud in 1992. Next, when enlisting the 2006 fictional memoir *Hyperrêve* by Hélène Cixous, she sees it exemplifying the hybridity, if not blurring, of genres as well as demonstrating the capacity of 'poetic' prose to engage 'elliptical narration' (21). However, Cixous serves another function here, namely, to illustrate how feminist writing captures socio-cultural and affective conceptions of 'bodily inscriptions' beyond 'biological sex' under the category of *l'écriture féminine*, which is consequently more attuned to 'currents of traumatic affect ... than more conventional forms of writing' (28, 29). Even if we sympathise with Atkinson's view that the 'musicality of poetics' of these examples of avant-garde writing is a 'form of *écriture féminine*' aimed at subverting privileged polarities, including 'logical and rational thought and language' (30, 29), it is not immediately evident that more conventional fictional and non-fictional writing cannot plumb the same traumatic depths. The 1991 *An Evil Cradling* by Brian Keenan comes immediately to mind. Nor is it obvious that Cixous' 'rallying cry' on behalf of *l'écriture féminine* enunciates a fully coherent program, let alone 'a theory proper', as Atkinson herself is forced to concede (29; cf. 31, 174, 176).

Whilst it is apparent that advocacy is Atkinson's prime purpose, her analysis of the affective realm appears problematic. For example, her reliance upon Spinoza centres upon her 'basic' interpretation that affect is 'a causal relation between body and mind' where affect 'necessarily involves cognition' because it is the mind's capacity 'to perceive affect that motivates response and action' (58). Hence, *Hyperrêve*, for Atkinson, epitomises 'the somatic, affective, and expansive agency of writing' that promotes readers' ability to 'perceive and understand' familial and cultural trauma which, she adds, 'cannot readily be understood logically' (59; cf. 68, 78). Yet the 'Origin and Nature of the Affects' – the third part of Spinoza's *Ethica* (1677) – logically deduces primary affects in the form of desire. Desire is definable as will when related to mind and as appetite when related to mind and body (III.P9.Schol.). Desire is then followed by the primary passions which divide between affects of joy and sadness (III.P11.Schol.). Although Spinoza claims that combinations and variations of desire, joy and/or sadness 'cannot be defined by any [specific]

number' of affects and that some, such as contempt and veneration, cannot be derived from them, he concedes that we are not always conscious of our appetites and that not all bodily responses – such as trembling – have 'any relation to the mind' (III.P59.Schol. and Def.5).

Advocacy divorced from analysis can be dangerous. As Atkinson also sets transgenerational trauma against questions of meaning and power, *EHCS* readers might have expected her to engage the likes of Jan Plamper, Joanna Bourke and Pierre Bourdieu. Nor are readers exposed to relevant issues of modern poetics raised by the likes of Dorrit Cohn, Monika Fludernik and Manfred Jahn.

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**Beecher, Donald, *Adapted Brains and Imaginary Worlds: Cognitive Science and the Literature of the Renaissance* (Montreal/Kingston/London/Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016). ISBN: 9780773546813**

Donald Beecher's lucid superimposition of a rigorous literature review of concepts of cognitive science (theory of mind, consciousness, memory, emotion, experience, selfhood, identity, conversion, apostasy, ethics, criminality) on primary questions of literary theory (identification, empathy, suspense, narrative flow, comedy, tragedy, tension, catharsis) is nothing short of outlook-changing – this is the kind of work that should be mandatory reading for every student of literature, whether pre-modernist or not. It also brings to life an almost forgotten way of looking at literature as something vital in the real world – a didactic tool, a way to train the brain. Literature, Beecher reminds us within his discussion of Philip Sidney, teaches using the inherent recognisability of interior processes shared between writer and reader.

The presence of sophisticated examples from a wide range of works of Renaissance literature (Petrarch, Shakespeare, Marlowe and Spenser, but also Thomas North's *The Moral Philosophy of Doni*, Robert Greene's *Menaphon* and John Marston's *The Fawn*, amongst many others) enriches the book's detailed and authoritative overview of the current state of scientific research in cognitive science and its relationship to the Humanities. The book provides a dozen significant aspects of human cognition or emotion, summarises

the most recent scientific analyses, and then builds a hermeneutic bridge toward the understanding of literary texts in an entirely new light. One of the most exciting aspects of this work is the fact that one of the hypotheses fundamental to the discipline of the History of Emotions – that early modern writers understood and applied the concepts of today’s cognitive science even though they lacked our names for them – has now been clearly proven.

Importantly, in his uniquely bracing idiom, Beecher argues meticulously and convincingly for the death of the notion of cultural history if seen as a phenomenon independent of biologically determined and survival-adapted mental structures. The book proposes a determinist (but not a reductionist, culture-denying) approach, one in which works of literature, much like other aspects of human creation, are seen primarily as resulting from the activity of human material brains ‘selectively engineered over evolutionary time [to showcase] ... our phylogenetic natures’ (4). In other words, the kinds of brains and natures humans have impact both on the way literary works are created and the way in which they function.

From the book’s rich offerings, I select the discussion of conversion, provided in the context of Petrarch’s works, which relates the process to narrative allegory (the story of the ascent of Mt Ventoux, *Familiare*) and dialogic examination (*Secretum*), methods which would have ‘no meaning at all without the prospect of change – a transformation of a kind that could be named and shaped, however vaguely, in the imagination’ (323), as well as without relationship to ‘such quizzical terms as “state” and “sympathy”, both of which are seen to inhere not in texts and narratives, but in spectators and readers’ (263). (I was sad not to see apostasy discussed in the context of *Il Canzoniere*, but was rewarded by finding it in the chapter on *Dr Faustus*). The chapter looks at conversion also in the context of the relationship of consciousness and memory, broader questions of the philosophy of mind. Memory is argued to have a ‘triage’ role in experience recognition, ‘not a part of conscious critical assessment, but an initial feature of memory composition’ (207), but also the role of ‘allegorizer’, the impartor of meaning, as ‘memories without map-worthy meanings are essentially useless to the survival-oriented organisms’ such as humans (208). Nostalgia is linked to the *peripeteia* of romance and makes archetypal necessity of return, with ‘nostos’ an immediately recognisable part of ‘the ethology of the race’ (259). Importantly, this literary interpretation of nostalgia is broadened to include all literature of longing, whether retrospective, aesthetic or erotic.

The chapter on memory also reframes the applied potential of Philip Sidney’s idea that ‘imaginative literature had no peer for its power to give

instruction in virtue and the best practices for conduct' since it mixes 'precept with example' (144), something it would not be able to do were it not for the ability of human minds to recognise patterns and precepts. Literature, argues Beecher, is a work of art designed 'to move and modify memory so that, *ipso facto*, what activates memory builds the ethically improved subject' (143–44) – an important reminder for the funding models of our University curricula.

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**Brooks, Ann, *Genealogies of Emotions, Intimacies, and Desire: Theories of Change in Emotional Regimes from Medieval Society to Late Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2017). ISBN: 9781138821859**

'The history of love and intimacy shows a fascinating interweaving of social, economic and cultural influences and explanations. The focus of this book is on the historical emergence of romantic love and intimacy in the West' (1), Ann Brooks states in her volume. The book opens with a stimulating essay by David Konstan who indicates 'why Foucault found it necessary to turn to classical antiquity in order to understand fully the new regimes of sexuality, power, and identity that arose in Western Europe, and so to set the stage for the long history that followed' (xix).

Brooks's volume offers an overview of several theories of change in emotional regimes from the Middle Ages to the late modernity. She considers 'intimacy, sexuality and desire as fundamentally embedded in discourses of emotions' (4, 15) and refers to Ann Laura Stoler's notion of the 'intimate' as a 'descriptive marker of the familiar and the essential, and of relations grounded in sex', as well as to her concept of the 'personal and political in emotional regime' and her method of 'mapping intimacy' (4, 8, 15, 19–23, quoting Stoler).

After introducing the main epistemologies that explain changes in emotional regimes (Chapter 1), Brooks furthers her analysis in the following chapters through recalling the concepts she considers particularly important throughout the book. In Chapter 2, she focuses on Michel Foucault's 'genealogy' (34–39) as used in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*, which undermines the alleged 'universality of the modern system of sexuality' (16),

then examines Foucault's notion of 'biopower'. Romantic love is addressed in Chapter 3, where Brooks reports Octavio Paz's idea that romantic love can be 'found in all societies and historical periods' (45), though with differences. She moves from studies on courtly love to an analysis of romantic love and its critics, focusing on Jane Austen, the Bohemians, Baudelaire, George Sand, and Otto Gross. Chapter 4 extends the analysis of colonial cultures through Stoler's and Anne McClintock's works, especially highlighting Stoler's study of the relationship between 'carnal knowledge and imperial power' which 'treats sexual matters not as a metaphor for colonial inequalities but as foundational to the material term in which colonial projects were carried out' (10, 19). Chapter 5 explores a variety of sociological theories which try to explain how intimacy has changed in Western societies in late modernity, addressing the debates about the concept of 'reflexive modernisation' (25–28, 96, 136); Anthony Giddens' notions of 'pure relationships' based on gender equality and 'plastic sexuality' (25–26, 89–92); and the work of Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, Lynn Jamieson, Eva Illouz and others. Brooks argues that, despite their differences, all these authors stress the 'detraditionalisation' of intimacy in the last fifty to 100 years (10, 24, 88), that is, 'the abandonment of traditional patterns of intimacy including: lifelong heterosexual marriage as the primary framework for the establishment of relationships, and for the procreation and raising of children; male dominance within heterosexual households; and marriage as opposed to cohabitation' (24). In late modernity, sexual intimacy, according to Brooks, may include 'serial monogamy, cohabitation, non-marital child bearing ... same-sex relationships and marriage' (24). She concludes the chapter by analysing the link between mental health and (the search for) happiness in love in late capitalism. In Chapter 6, Brooks focuses on feminist theories on the 'emotionalisation of society', and the 'turn to affect' (or 'affective turn') which she defines, quoting Ann Cvetkovich, as 'an intensification of interest in emotions, feelings and affect as objects of scholarly inquiry' (11). Analysed authors include Arlie Hochschild and her notion of 'emotional labour' (104); Laura Kipnis and her concepts of 'intimacy labour' and 'conjugal workers' (109); Patricia Clough, Sara Ahmed and, again, Eva Illouz, whose work investigates the relationship between romance and consumption, the marriage market and the architecture of the choice of mates, and the growing importance of sexiness (104–14). Finally, in Chapter 7 Brooks addresses the work of Lauren Berlant, the scholar who introduced the notion of the 'intimate public sphere' (102), focusing 'on the intrusion of the private into the public by showing how intimacy

and sexual practices which do not subscribe to a normative framework can be seen as a threat to established values, including traditional family values and heterosexuality' (117).

At the end of her overview, which uses extensive quotations to provide close readings of the chosen literature, Brooks stresses that 'there is some disagreement around the role of intimacy, love, emotions and desire across different emotional regimes from medieval society to late modernity', claiming that the question of whether courtly love really existed outside literature 'remains something of a mystery' (131). She adds that 'the relationship between love, intimacy and marriage is also contentious' (131), as is the extent to which romantic love was linked to the rise of capitalism and the growth of individualism (132). Nonetheless, she argues that feminist and social theories share a focus 'on ideologisation of intimacy in the course of the development of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries' and 'on shifting values away from traditional conceptions of the bourgeois family' (129). In her view, not only does this confirm a 'detraditionalisation in late modernity' (129) but it also underpins the main claim of her book, repeated several times, that 'intimacy is incompatible with traditional normative structures such as marriage and the family within heterosexual, patriarchal structures such as marriage, and in homophobic cultures', whereas 'intimacy has largely existed outside conventional bourgeois structures of marriage and the family' (4, see also 5, 11, 15, 129).

While this claim actually appears to be stated rather than demonstrated, it sounds in any case too general to the sensibility of those scholars who (as is often the case with historians) are eager to pinpoint differences between places, periods, genders, nations, classes, ethnical, religious, political groups, etc. On the other hand, the author is (legitimately) interested in sociological and philosophical theories of change rather than in historical narratives and debates.

Unfortunately, the book has not been very carefully edited and has many inaccuracies (which is surprising, for a renowned publisher such as Routledge), and duplicates material which can be repetitive. However, *Genealogies of Emotions, Intimacies, and Desire* still offers an up-to-date and rich survey to readers interested in knowing how changes in emotional regimes have been conceptualised and interpreted by scholars, particularly social scientists.

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**Hesson, Angela, Charles Zika, and Matthew Martin, eds, *Love: Art of Emotion 1400–1800* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2017). ISBN: 9781925432329**

At the centre of Jan Steen's painting of a *Wedding Party*, a merry old man invites a young woman to dance 'om de krans' (around the crown) – a popular Dutch pastime frequently condemned as inappropriate by the authorities. The artist mockingly contrasts the fashionably dressed woman with the shabby looking man, who is at least thirty years her senior and wearing old-fashioned clothes. The 'unequal love' of the couple in the foreground is mirrored by the newlyweds seated at a table in the background, where the old groom toasts his much younger bride. The foliated canopy over her head was known in the seventeenth century as a 'belkroon' (bell crown), symbolising the sanctity of the marriage, but the grimacing faces of the men flanking the bride clearly throw the sanctity of this particular union into doubt.

Jan Steen's *Wedding Party* featured in the exhibition *Love: Art of Emotion 1400–1800* (31 March to 18 June 2017) as one of more than 200 artworks from the collection of the NGV. In the accompanying publication, Matthew Martin writes that Steen uses the depiction of marriage, 'the ritual perhaps most closely associated with love in the Western tradition' to suggest that 'considerations of money or status, not love, might often take precedence' in the early modern period (160). Not only Martin, but also Angela Hesson and Patricia Simons stress that marriage was often more of a social contract with (romantic) love not necessarily coming into the equation. This is not to say that romantic love did not exist in the period before 1800, because it did, but that the concept of love was rather complex. Love ranged from affection to desire and switched between high and low, human and divine. As Anne Dunlop elegantly puts it, the essays in the publication (and the objects in the exhibition, I would add) suggest 'how historically contingent the idea of "love" always is, covering an extremely wide range of behaviours' (26).

The exhibition itself was organised around three themes (Anticipation, Realisation, Remembrance) subdivided into smaller sections in order to show the multiple faces of love, and the range of objects on display revealed the breadth of the NGV's collection. The accompanying publication is not a traditional exhibition catalogue: although all the works in the show are illustrated in colour, only fifteen objects are discussed at greater length in individual entries. The publication does not follow the organisation of the exhibition but has its own dynamics. Six essays deal with various issues such



as the materiality of objects associated with love and their social handling (Angela Hesson and Lisa Beaven), the role of the body (James Grantham Turner) or how the concept of love was played out in paintings of Antwerp art collectors' cabinets (Gary Schwartz). The essay by Matthew Martin mentioned earlier discusses rituals (of love) that forged and maintained emotional bonds within a group. Martin opens his essay with a discussion of Jan Steen's *Wedding Party* as an illustration of the performance of rituals associated with love and singles out the toast of the groom. He links this toast to a Dutch engraved goblet from 1681, which commemorates a marriage alliance through its inscription 'Getrouw in alles' (Faithful in everything). It is a great example of how art and material objects are associatively used by the authors to offer insights into the early modern world of love while at the same time creating surprising connections across more than four centuries and between different media in the collection of the NGV.

All the authors place the objects at the centre of their discussions. In 'Myths of Love', for example, Anne Dunlop examines a curiously shaped late sixteenth-century ewer from Urbino with two mythological love scenes to set up a wider discussion about Ovid, his writings on love and their reception in the visual arts. In an illuminating discussion, Dunlop shows how Renaissance ceramic artists not only used the stories of the *Metamorphoses* to illustrate their earthenware, but how they also imitated the process of transformation by copying prints into their design. The authors are keenly aware that the relationship between the objects and the concept of love is hardly ever straightforward. At the start of her essay, Patricia Simons thus emphasises that the 'relationship between art and reality is always complex' (56) before she discusses the spaces of love depicted in the visual arts (gardens of love, taverns and the artist's studio) which often contrast sharply with the venues in which love was validated socially. Following Simons' lead, one could read Jan Steen's *Wedding Party* as a space of love too. The bridal party at the groom's house shows a merry company dancing in front of the bridal bed and the intimacy between some of the couples brings to mind the Dutch expression 'van een bruiloft, komt een bruiloft' (from a wedding comes a wedding): the Dutch believed that new bonds were created at weddings. It is the merit of the exhibition and the publication that we look with fresh eyes at these objects and the emotions they evoke and create our own associations.

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**Knights, Mark and Adam Morton, eds, *The Power of Laughter and Satire in Early Modern Britain: Political and Religious Culture, 1500–1820* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017). ISBN: 9781783272037**

Studying laughter and satire, Mark Knights and Adam Morton argue in the introduction to this wide-ranging volume, is ‘to study how societies thought through, negotiated and contested shifting boundaries of morality and power’ (26). The volume’s useful introduction traces shifting theoretical understandings of laughter and satire in the early modern period. While the Hobbesian theory of laughter as an aggressive expression of ‘sudden glory’ over others dominated during the period, laughter was often ambiguous, and was understood in diverse ways (indeed, the introduction identifies five theories of laughter: superiority, sociability, reforming, incongruity and relief) (2–3).

The ‘vibrant duality’ (1) of laughter and satire – their ability to challenge the boundaries of power and morality *and* to foster communities – is insisted upon throughout the volume. Sophie Murray’s analysis of anti-monastic satire in visitation records and correspondence sent to Thomas Cromwell stresses the role of satire in creating an ‘imaginative space’ to ponder the destruction of monasticism (45). Andrew McRae’s examination of the famous poem, ‘The Parliament Fart’, also demonstrates the power of humour to disrupt. While the poem was ‘an urbane exercise in wit’, it drew consciously on ‘popular’ humour, subverting ‘elite’ political culture and revealing the contested – and often fluid – boundaries between popular and elite discourses (67–69).

Theory and practice, as Cathy Shrank’s chapter on early modern dialogues demonstrates, did not always add up. Shrank argues that attending to what Gregory de Rocher calls ‘textual laughter’ (i.e., narrative descriptions or phonetic expressions of laughter) can show how laughter worked ‘in practice’. Dialogues challenge dominant sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theories of laughter as a tool for mockery by demonstrating its often conciliatory functions. While many conduct manuals warned women against the dangers of laughter, textual laughter in Castiglione’s *Il Libro del Cortegiano* often depicted women’s laughter as having conciliatory or placatory functions (women and men laughing together or men laughing with other men also had diverse connotations, and men could also laugh in order to appease) (60–61). Given the volume’s emphasis on expanding the parameters of satire to include non-canonical works, greater attention might have been paid to gender in other chapters of the collection.

As Adam Morton’s chapter demonstrates, laughter was a ‘vigorous means

of *doing*' that could act in and shape the world (107). Satirical laughter could cause significant harm and this rendered those who employed it vulnerable to charges of sedition. In 1681, when Stephen College was convicted for conspiring to kidnap Charles II, his graphic satires ridiculing the king and church as 'popish' were used against him in court. 'Violent laughter', Morton argues, 'proved College's violent intentions' towards the king (128–30). Fiona McCall's examination of loyalist satire in the interregnum church (notably, the manuscript correspondence on which John Walker's 1714 *Sufferings of the Clergy* was based) also stresses the double-edged nature of mockery. While mocking the ignorance of the clergy strengthened loyalist identity, it also provided satirical material that might be applied indiscriminately to religion more generally (106). Ridiculing religion, as Mark Knights' chapter demonstrates, was thus not only dangerous for those targeted. Radical publisher William Hone was tried for profane libel in 1817, after parodying the church's prayers in a number of publications. One of the reasons for his acquittal was his demonstration that his parodies did not mock the church, but were instead vehicles to criticise parliamentary and ministerial corruption (209–10).

One of the volume's greatest strengths is its focus on non-canonical satirical material and its treatment of satire, not as a genre limited to certain literary forms, but as a 'mode' that is employed across diverse media. Robert Phiddian's essay on John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and *Polly*, for instance, focuses not on what defined satire in the eighteenth century, but what satire *did*, though Phiddian is sceptical about satire's ability to provoke reform ('There has been vastly more satire than there has been change caused by understanding of satire') (134–35). Phiddian instead emphasises the ability of satire to elicit emotions, such as contempt, which did not necessarily provide impetus for reform. Like Phiddian, Andrew Benjamin Bricker is sceptical about satire's capacity to effect reform. Eighteenth-century satire, Bricker argues, was ambiguous and morally uncertain, with variable effects on audiences (171–72). It did, however, often produce strong emotional responses, vexing audiences and forcing them to challenge their ideas and beliefs (172). Mark Philp's chapter also stresses the ambiguity of satire through his examination of graphic prints that depicted the feared invasion of Britain by Napoleon Bonaparte. While the scatological humour of these prints pokes fun at the French, realist elements in some early prints (notably, an invasion raft prominently placed in the centre of one print) imply very real anxieties about the possibilities of attack. Interestingly, Philp posits the

possibility that the print could have elicited nervous laughter (though this was not theorised at the time) (187–88), suggesting another possible disjuncture between theory and – here, bodily and emotional – practice.

As the diverse materials considered in this collection demonstrate, laughter and satire were thus flexible and ambiguous, both in intention and effect, and this made them dangerous to targets and authors alike. The volume's emphasis on looking to sources outside the canon and interrogating issues of reception makes it an invaluable collection for scholars in humour studies and in early modern studies more generally.

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**Mallipeddi, Ramesh, *Spectacular Suffering: Witnessing Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016). ISBN: 9780813938424**

In this wide-ranging study, a blend of historical enquiry and literary criticism, Ramesh Mallipeddi examines the lived and embodied experience of slavery from the perspective of masters, slaves and metropolitan observers. In case studies which range from the latter half of the seventeenth century through the era of Emancipation, his work is both structurally problematic and laudably insightful in its treatment of the interrelated issues of suffering, sentiment and subjectivity.

In his introduction, Mallipeddi describes his aim as the examination of particular moments of the witnessing of British Atlantic slavery, with emphasis on the ways in which these moments were characterised by sentimental affect. As the Atlantic slave trade attempted to turn human beings into commodities, a cultural discourse of sentimentalism developed by which both metropolitan observers and the enslaved could 'protest against the forces of capitalist modernity' and its 'relentless commodification' of human bodies (8). This approach is a fruitful one in the book's first three chapters. In a nuanced and perceptive commentary on Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, Mallipeddi foregrounds Behn's fascination with the hero's physical beauty, arguing that she simultaneously commodifies him as a spectacle while deploring that a man of beauty, dignity and lineage should be reduced to chattel. While the

play is often cited as an early example of anti-slavery English literature, Mallipeddi takes pains to point out that Behn's sympathy for her character's sufferings results from his appearance and background, and that she displays no such concern over the plight of enslaved Africans more generally. When Oroonoko is executed by the authorities of the English colony at Surinam, Behn is afflicted in sympathy with his suffering, but for her this death is a 'personal tragedy' (46), rather than a representation of the broader trauma of the institution of slavery.

In a similar vein, Richard Steele, co-founder of *The Spectator*, shed tears at the fate of the Carib woman Yarico, whose English lover Inkle sold her into slavery. But while Steele's response to this tale was, according to Mallipeddi, an example of the bourgeois sentimentality that characterised the formation in early to mid-eighteenth century England of 'a new affective public' (59), he mourned for Yarico as a spurned woman, rather than as a victim of racism and capitalism. Yarico's tale of woe was one of many stories of this era which eroticised female suffering, and to Steele, it was her gender, not her race, which led to her mistreatment. Laurence Sterne, too, engaged with the concept of enslavement without linking it to Britain's colonial endeavours; his characters are victimised by Catholic Inquisitorial persecution, not racial bondage. In Mallipeddi's view, Sterne's ardent patriotism blinded him to the depredations of his nation's slave traders and planters; he was neither able nor willing to reconcile his belief in a Protestant nation based on principles of liberty with that nation's eager embrace of slavery.

These three chapters are effective in displaying the ways in which even apparently anti-slavery texts failed to condemn the whole institution, instead reserving the authors' and readers' sympathy for the sufferings of a few, highly atypical fictional characters. But Mallipeddi hopes to analyse how abolitionists used examples of 'spectacular suffering' (77) on the part of enslaved men and women in order to turn public opinion against slavery. Yet his work includes few examples of such efforts, other than a brief discussion of the autobiography of the Bermudian slave Mary Prince. The book's remaining chapters examine several sentimental novels, Matthew Lewis's account of his experiences as a Jamaican planter, and Olaudah Equiano's famed autobiography. If the previous chapters present nuanced readings of well-known texts, these latter three offer insightful excavations of 'historical counterknowledge' (177) on the part of the enslaved, whether rejecting paternalist masters' attempts to win their gratitude, commemorating their lives and losses through sorrow songs and funerary rituals, or, in Equiano's

case, developing a sense of transatlantic black community which replaces the lost community of his childhood in Africa.

This latter half of the monograph offers many insights to readers interested in reading slave subjectivity from archival silences – but it seems as if it responds to a quite different set of questions and objectives than the earlier part. The epilogue presents a brief but thought-provoking account of the immediate aftermath of Emancipation, but it does not clearly connect with either of this Janus-faced book's two aspects. And we never learn why Mallipeddi chose to discuss slavery in the British Caribbean and not on the North American mainland, or why, despite including a number of illustrations, he pays no attention to visual as opposed to textual representations of slavery. *Spectacular Suffering* is thus in many ways less than the sum of its parts – but those parts are in themselves very worthwhile. The frustrating aspect of this book is that it could have been great; the redeeming factor is that in many places it is very good indeed.

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**Meiborg, Ceciel and Sjoerd van Tuinen, eds, *Deleuze and the Passions* (Earth, Milky Way: punctum books, 2016). ISBN: 9780998237541**

In the early twenty-first century critical theory took a now well-documented turn towards affect. Given Gilles Deleuze's substantial influence on affect theory, it is somewhat surprising that *Deleuze and the Passions* seems to be the first major collection of essays devoted entirely to studying his contribution to this still burgeoning field. Despite its title, *Deleuze and the Passions* does not limit itself to a narrow set of accounts of Deleuze's use of the term 'passion', but instead offers a series of insightful and thought-provoking essays, some of which trace Deleuze's engagement with earlier philosophers of passion (e.g., Spinoza, Nietzsche and Hegel), others which unpack Deleuze's writings on particular passions (e.g., jealousy), and still others which illustrate how Deleuze's writing on affect, emotion and passion might allow us to revivify longstanding critical projects (e.g., ideology critique, anti-capitalism and materialism). Growing out of a conference held in 2014 at Erasmus University Rotterdam, this volume is not so much a 'guide for the perplexed' schematising

Deleuze's philosophy of passion as a testament to the many productive uses to which this philosophy can be put today.

The volume's introduction begins by recounting Deleuze's importance to the recent 'affective turn' in 'discourses around post-Fordist labor, the economic and ecological crisis, populism and identity politics, mental health, and political struggle' (9). Since chronicles of the rise of affect theory are available in abundance, the editors do not spend much time surveying the movement as a whole, but instead offer a detailed account of how Deleuze's innovative re-readings of Spinoza, Leibniz, Nietzsche and Marx set the stage for the twenty-first century's affective turn. They break new ground by tracing Deleuze's adaptation of Spinoza's concept of 'passive affects' into a unique conceptualisation of the passions as 'the beliefs, perceptions, representations, and opinions that attach us to the world and that, by giving us an initial orientation, force and enable us to think' (11). Deleuze's philosophy, they suggest, destabilises the edifice of Cartesian rationalism by placing 'passion at the core of thought' (12). Although the introduction celebrates Deleuze's zeal for the joyous passions that necessarily accompany the liberation of thought (i.e., 'the becoming active of passion' [12]), it refuses to reify the 'caricature' of Deleuze as 'the affirmative thinker of spontaneous happiness that still dominates his legacy' (15). Instead, the introduction, like the volume itself, portrays Deleuze as both a champion of joyous philosophical creation and an important predecessor of more recent philosophers who, like Sianne Ngai, see 'ugly feelings' as fertile ground for anti-capitalist critique, and others who, like Slavoj Žižek, criticise the late capitalist superego's relentless injunction to enjoy.

Several essays in the collection offer in-depth accounts of Deleuze's passionate intervention into the philosophical milieu in which he was trained. Moritz Gansen's contribution discusses Deleuze's commitment to reviving and participating in a 'countercurrent in the history of philosophy, championing an affirmative and vital understanding of philosophy' in order to oppose the reigning 'taste for negativity ... paradigmatically embodied in the prevalence of French Hegelianism' (22–23). For Gansen, this project provides the basis for Deleuze's conceptualisation of philosophy as 'a matter of experimentation and creation ... of joyful passions' (40). Complementing Gansen's essay is Samantha Bankston's, which argues that 'Deleuze invents a logic of becoming that produces an aesthetic metaphysical system expressive of Nietzsche's Dionysian world' (57). Also focused on Deleuze's dalliances with Nietzsche, Sjoerd van Tuinen's essay celebrates Deleuze's genealogical

account of Nietzschean *ressentiment* 'as an inherently political passion open to a drama of divergent becomings' (18). Just as van Tuinen illustrates Deleuze's gift for productively analysing ostensibly negative passions, Arjen Kleinherenbrink's essay argues that Deleuze's encounter with Proust allows him to theorise jealousy as a profoundly revelatory emotion in which the lover recognises the beloved as an entity whose essence 'can only be thought, never made present' (73).

Focusing on Deleuze and Guattari's co-authored work, Jason Read argues that the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* advance substantially divergent approaches to the philosophy of becoming. For Read, *Anti-Oedipus* attacks not only Freudian psychoanalysis, but 'any explanatory theory that would reduce social relations to expressions of individual passions and desires' (115), whereas *A Thousand Plateaus* concerns itself with the positive, rather than polemical, project of producing 'an ontology and politics of assemblages' (116), which bequeaths to affect theorists like Brian Massumi an understanding of affect as 'the outside of emotion' (124). Where Read's essay provides new insights into the development of Deleuze and Guattari's thought in the late twentieth century, other essays bring Deleuzian thought to bear on current issues in critical theory. For example, Benoît Dillet's essay contends that Deleuze and Guattari offer an innovative alternative to ideology critique by developing a 'noology critique' that operates by 'inventing new human and non-human assemblages instead of clinging to old structures of thought' (144). Likewise, Louis-Georges Schwartz's essay advances Deleuze's writings on the two regimes of cinema by theorising a third regime, emergent in the twenty-first century, called 'Cinema Hostis', which is characterised by a 'mood of enmity [that] can only repeat itself in the form of weaponized affects used by parties to a struggle' (149). Finally, in the volume's last essay, David U. B. Liu turns movingly to Deleuze's suicide, resisting the impulse to allegorise it as enacting one or another of the thinker's particular philosophical convictions, and reading it instead as 'a further occasion to deterritorialize thought, in homage and continuity to [Deleuze's] pluralizing, multiplicative monism, to his singular multiplicity of selves' (169). Indeed, *Deleuze and the Passions* itself constitutes just such an homage. Like Deleuze's thought, the volume is challenging and rewarding, offering surprising readings of its sources which clear the way for a multitude of passionate becomings. As the editors write in their introduction, the volume is not only the product of passion, but also designed to incite in readers a passion for Deleuzian philosophy (20). It is available for free download



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**Messner, Angelika C., *Zirkulierende Leidenschaft, Eine Geschichte der Gefühle im China des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Köln/Weimar/Wein: Böhlau Verlag, 2016). ISBN: 9783412503482**

This book is about feelings, emotions and moods in seventeenth-century China, specifically how they manifested in the economic macro-region of Jiangnan in Southern China. Studies in the field of literature have sought to show that a ‘cult of emotions’ developed during this epoch, a ‘re-definition’ or ‘re-interpretation’ of feelings and moods: no longer understood as the counterpart of ‘reason’, they were now seen as part of human existence and cognition. Angelika Messner approaches the topic by analysing a series of hitherto untranslated medical texts. She searches for references to emotions and moods, their definitions and explanations, with the intention of contributing to the establishment of the research field of ‘Emotionswissen’ (study of emotions) in Chinese history.

The book is divided into six chapters, with an appendix, bibliography (primary and secondary sources) and an index. The first three short chapters introduce the era’s cultural and historical background, the series of texts, as well as Chen Shiduo (1627–1707), the author of the main texts under investigation, among them the *Bianzheng lu* (A Record of Differentiating Diseases) and the *Shishi milu* (Secret Notes from the Stone Room). The historical background of political transition and unrest in seventeenth-century Jiangnan, as well as banditry, rebellion and epidemics, contributed to mounting insecurity in daily life. Philosophically, the era also shows a break-out from traditional patterns, e.g., a transition from philosophy to philology and from a culture of scholarly elites to popular knowledge. The book focuses on this break-out as it is reflected in the field of medicine. Chapter 2 establishes the genesis of Chen Shiduo’s texts, which are a product of not one but many authors: among his drafts can be found the comments of colleagues and friends, adding their voices to Chen Shiduo’s own. The third chapter introduces various themes of

Chen Shiduo's life: his birth, his travels, his turn towards medicine and the situation of medical practice during the epoch. In these times of upheaval, the medical profession became an alternative to the traditional career of a scholar-official, and a means of resisting the new Manchu government. By placing Chen Shiduo in his social context and amongst his contemporaries, a useful overview of medical practitioners in Jiangnan is provided.

Chapters 4 and 5 present analyses of the texts. Chapter 4 portrays medical practice as a 'cluster of practices and theorems': diverse types of medical practitioners and their roles in society are discussed, including 'new doctors' (like Chen Shiduo) and their use of traditional methods of healing and justifications for this.

The chapter also explores the philosophical and political importance of the 'middle' through illustrating its importance anatomically. Chen Shiduo substantiates the importance of the 'middle' medically by defining a new 'canal' through which the 'qi' travels through the body, heated by a fire located closely to the kidneys. With this fire, the centre – the heart – is dethroned as 'ruler' of the body and Chen Shiduo directs the medical attention towards the lower middle of the body, which has to be strengthened in order to find a mode of 'balance between the extremes'. Chapter 5 then introduces a 'texture of affects and sensitivities', as it is understood with Chen Shiduo's new cartography of the body. Locations, manifestations and also cures for emotions such as fury, anger and fear are analysed within Chen Shiduo's theory: emotions are not removed from, but rather at the base of, many curable medical conditions. Love and grief, the signifiers of the 'cult of emotions' in the literature of seventeenth-century Jiangnan, are also reinterpreted medically: they are drives causing all kinds of medical conditions.

Thus, in Chen Shiduo's writings, the centre of the body moves from the heart to the lower middle, and this is interpreted as mirroring the socio-political circumstances of the time: Chen Shiduo and his contemporaries in Jiangnan were threatened by the Manchu from the north and the strengthening of the cartographic middle of the empire became a political program and a survival strategy. Emotions and passions, particularly in these fearful times of transition, thus became the 'circulation of social energy' in society.

This book is important and innovative on a number of levels. Firstly, it contributes to the understanding of the violent consequences of the Ming-Qing transition for local society in the Jiangnan area by illustrating the emergence and transformation of the medical profession. Secondly, by translating passages of Chen Shiduo's texts, Messner makes these texts,

which are part of the canon of traditional Chinese medicine in the People's Republic, accessible to a wider range of students. And thirdly, she adds to the literature on the idealised emotions of love and grief a method of analysis which offers a much broader range of application to emotions and their significance to the field of Chinese medicine.

It is a major contribution to research on emotions and is therefore recommended to a wider audience.

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**Miller, Mark J., *Cast Down: Abjection in America, 1700–1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). ISBN: 9780812248029**

Abjection has 'deep religious roots' and found an early application in classical antiquity for 'classes of people' made marginal to institutions and ceremonies (2). In *Cast Down*, author Mark Miller seeks to connect race with 'religious discourse's historical and symbolic development of abjection' (3). As a study in early America, *Cast Down* introduces a diverse set of historical questions linked to narratives of abjection and their intersection with social circumstances shaped by factors of religion or 'race' on the one hand and social constructions of difference on the other (4). The 'rhetoric of abjection' sits at the juncture between Enlightenment rationalism and 'religious warning' and is a key component in constructions of difference (5). Here, early modern and modern ideas of the self, the divine and community combine. The phenomenon of sentiment is further located within the social fora of religious institutional life and discourse (6). The author describes his project as one aiming to balance 'historicist practice' with 'theoretical insight', having beginnings as 'a meditation on the literary history of miracles and suffering' (6, 231). The work details 'religious abjection's direct and indirect contributions to race', reading eighteenth- and nineteenth-century religious and reformist texts with a view to how abjection discourses 'participated in the racialisation of the concept' (12–13). The 'language' and discourse of abjection is unearthed from multiple sources, to account for abjection's 'public' manifestations. In its effort to tie together diverse strands of the early American past around a single concept, the study is eccentric and succeeds on many counts.

The first chapter complicates abjection by focusing on revivalism's impacts on affective and emotional religious life in the early eighteenth century, and the formation of an 'evangelical public' (24). Jonathan Edwards' conversion narrative, often studied alongside earlier Puritan narratives, is positioned as a text 'more centrally concerned with the matrix of abjection' and the formation of a public 'liberal subject' as it departs from Puritanism in emphasising 'a sensational experience of affect and sentiment' (25–26). 'Affective religious performances' in New England in the 1740s were characterised by 'fainting, visions, trances, and ecstatic speech', enabling marginalised groups including women to manifest affective acts through revivalism (33–34). There was a shift toward emphasis on Jesus's love and increased support for women as Puritan ideals of female subjection and gender difference were increasingly abandoned (35). Revivalist conversions also introduced 'social religion' and 'spiritual feeling inside the bonds of faith' (37). Edwards' narrative also departed from the Calvinist salvation discourse that privileged 'faith alone' (46), and his 1742 treatise, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Protestant Revival of Religion in New England*, further characterised pain or otherwise 'harmful performances of affect' as 'exercises of love' towards Christ; this treatise is then interpretively linked to masochism (47–48). Revivalism is also causally linked to ensuing articulations of power along 'liberal republican lines' with eighteenth-century revivalism having 'cultural reverberations' for nineteenth-century articulations of race (53–54).

The focus then shifts to Indian abjection, due to its intersection with moral reform discourses in the public sphere. Indian abjection was contested by figures like William Apess, a Pequot and Methodist preacher who brought Native American civil rights questions into dialogue with temperance reform ideals, and whose autobiography was shaped by his own personal conversion experience. Methodism appealed to the 'colonial dispossessed' (60) and offered figures like Apess a 'foothold in the public sphere' (61). Apess repositioned Indian public identity in terms of masculinity, collective identity and bodily control (74). Forwarding a complex view of early nineteenth-century temperance rhetoric in the public sphere, Miller also discusses Indian abjection in a context of African and Native-American evangelical conversion experiences (57). Apess's Methodism was part of a broader 'evangelical public' within which moral virtue for the Indian was reclaimed as an 'oppositional Indian Christian male identity' constructed for the public sphere (55). The more objectionable aspects of his memoir were 'stricken out' so that it would appeal to a 'more sophisticated evangelical public' (81).

Miller next turns his attention to mid-century white abolitionists' and reformers' efforts to 'enter the public sphere by using a rhetoric of embodied suffering' (84). Here, a 'racial and gendered logic of suffering' (117) is discussed, offering an interpretation of white abolitionism that is nuanced, complex and contradictory. White abolitionism is interpretively tied to eighteenth-century affective conversion wherein 'sensational experiences of pain and affective senses of abjection' played a key role (85). Abolitionism's linkages to print culture and new market connections (86) saw its evangelical articulation in print and public and its uneasy positioning along racial divides. The hostile environment for abolitionism also saw its articulation rendered criminal in certain contexts. Martyrological texts emphasised bodily suffering and embodied abjection rather than broader structures of subjugation under which American institutional slavery operated. Abolitionism's 'rhetorical strains' (96) are here creatively unearthed for their intersection with spiritualism and speech in the public sphere. Women occupied a prominent place in these publics, departing from domestic positionings and becoming key mediators of abolitionist sentiment and sympathy; the gendered dynamics of abolitionism are set in terms of sympathy and sentiment (108–9).

Finally Miller turns his attention to sentimental works like Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Stowe uses 'emotional distress' to redefine the abolitionist narrative (118) and embraces black subjectivity and humor to secure renewed sympathy for the abolitionist mind. *Uncle Tom* functions as an emphatically public text and meeting place, within which a range of abolitionist ideas are filtered as a 'leavening of sentiment' took place, accompanying the novel's manifold spin-offs; the work further engages with 'high sentiment' (119–21). Departing from physicality and embodied suffering, Stowe instead introduces imaginative and psychological sentimentalism through 'Gothic, comic and minstrel forms' (140–41). White publicity is then problematised further, with abolitionist sentimentalism charted as emerging in the wake of earlier forms of sensationalism (147). Drawing from a diverse range of literature, *Cast Down* succeeds as a textual study of abjection and abolitionist emotion, offering an innovative addition to early American studies and the historiography of emotion more broadly.

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**Van Engen, Abram, *Sympathetic Puritans: Calvinist Fellow Feeling in Early New England* (New York: Oxford University Press 2015). ISBN: 9780199379637**

This is a profound work, rich in detail and lucid in prose, which considers the religious, literary and intellectual history of sympathy in the context of early American Puritanism. The author begins by doing the mining work too often lacking in emotions research on religion in the early modern Anglophone world by turning to the sixteenth-century European intellectual history of sympathy. By tracing the Erasmian and early Calvinist understandings of and discourses surrounding sympathy, Van Engen provides the important background to the development of a complex notion as it makes its way into an English religious setting. Through a detailed accounting of the historical semantics of 'sympathy', which is gathered from tracing how late sixteenth-century English translators struggled to provide accurate renderings of the concept, the author does the all-important work of providing the slippery linguistic background that underlay so much of early modern emotions discourse. The fact that Calvin himself, in composing his Latin biblical commentaries, often employed the Greek term *sumpatheia* – an editorial choice generally not in keeping with Calvin's attempts to provide lucid and easy-to-understand exegetical tools for his company of pastors – reveals some of the difficulty of understanding how sympathy was conceptualised and discussed in the period. That English translators of Calvin often resorted to laborious periphrasis in the last decades of the sixteenth century before the English cognate 'sympathy' became a usable word (as Van Engen dutifully shows) is an interesting moment in the history of sympathy, and it reveals the relative tardiness of its entrance onto the scene of Anglophone affectivity.

But the bulk of the book is concerned with the rich culture of sympathy that was negotiated and cultivated among New England Puritans in the seventeenth century. A crucial revisionist conceit of the work is the author's contention that Calvinists were not the dispassionate, dour, judgmental and staid automatons of our current cultural imagination, but rather belonged to an emotional community of impassioned fellow feelers. Indeed, Van Engen shows that early American Puritans focused their attention assiduously on sympathy, using its presence or absence as a way of adjudicating an individual's place among the elect. Carefully unravelling the prevailing picture of Calvinism as 'one of unfeeling austerity and tyrannical judgment' (7), which Van Engen traces to anti-Calvinist tendencies codified in nineteenth-century

American literature, a more nuanced portrait emerges of a New England Calvinism which not only takes sympathy seriously, but understands it to be an essential feature of the intersubjective relationships constitutive of the religious community, as well as (on occasion at least) evidence of an individual's election. And so, even though the prescribed affections operating in that community were often 'relatively ordinary' rather than ecstatically rapturous (75), they nevertheless played a central role in the religious literature produced therefrom.

Focusing on this spectrum of emotional power, Van Engen reconsiders and reconfigures the Antinomian Controversy, which arose out of debates concerning the legitimacy of ecstatic religious experience (with Anne Hutchinson playing the leading role). On the author's reading, the controversy was less about Puritan elders' attempts to shore up political order in the face of anarchic ecstasies, and more about deciding upon the theological permissibility of rapturous experiences of immediate revelation on the one hand, and 'relatively ordinary' emotional experiences on the other. Somewhat paradoxically, the antinomian defenders of a singular ecstatic experience as a sign of proof of one's election was seen to undermine the value of sympathy as a sign of sanctification (for anything short of spiritual ecstasy – per the antinomians – could not be counted on for full assurance of salvation). Thus, downplaying sympathy became a theological feature that resulted in the antinomians' rather unsympathetic excommunication. In a neat circle, then, Puritan sympathy extended only to those who appreciated its soteriological value.

This did not prevent the Puritans from eventually attempting to convert the Native Americans, however. According to the Puritans, sincerity of religious conviction in indigenous converts was demonstrated through effusive emotional expression (through a torrent of tears, for example). Here again proof of one's belonging among the converted hinged on appropriately oriented affections, the exhibition of which was a prerequisite for proper Christian *understanding*. Van Engen shows, however, that Native American converts were not often the recipients of the sort of sympathy reserved for Englishmen, but rather served as objects of that related but perhaps less respectful Christian feeling: pity. As in the case of Hutchinson, we therefore see just how neatly circumscribed but still often ambiguous Puritan fellow feeling could be, in this case through the author's close reading of seventeenth-century Puritan tracts on missionising the Natives. The picture only becomes more complex as Van Engen shifts to analyse the function of sympathetic

feeling in a prominent early modern captivity narrative, where he argues that Mary Rowlandson, in her 1682 *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, outright proscribes sympathy for Native Americans as she refuses to identify affectively with the community in which she's held. In considering these rival narratives, the book contributes meaningfully not only to emotions in early modern religious literature but also to ongoing discussions about emotions in colonial contact zones.

The many valences and uses of Puritan sympathy and similar feelings are on full view in *Sympathetic Puritans*. Readers will appreciate the author's ability to draw on the various traditions that inform conceptions of sympathy in the early modern period while simultaneously situating these varied sympathies in their distinctive early American context.

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