The third section is clearly the most eclectic in its focus, with material ranging from Spenserian and Miltonian epic to Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Again, questions of form are not addressed in any detail, and the focus here is on thematic and contextual aspects. Such a focus, however, allows for insightful discussion of, for example, humoral theory (in Cassie M. Miura's chapter on Burton) and more broadly of the human faculties (in N. Amos Rothschild's chapter on Milton) and their relation to sleep.

The individual chapters frequently offer first-rate scholarship, but there are some, perhaps inevitable, problems with the thematic unity of the volume. The selection of texts can appear somewhat random, and the focus on canonical material means that some of the Renaissance texts that most insistently thematize sleep—Lyly's *Endymion* or Nashe's *The Terrors of the Night* come to mind—are neglected. As noted, the section named "Sleep, Ethics, and Embodied Form in Early Modern Drama" is strictly focused on Shakespeare, which raises questions on general applicability. Various themes are addressed, often fascinatingly so, in individual contributions: for example, the question of gendered sleep is brought up in some chapters but is not flagged as a thematic interest. The time span of the volume, moreover, suggests the question of whether notions of sleep changed over time, but the emphasis on material before 1650 (with *Paradise Lost* as the primary exception) obviously does not allow for much consideration of this. And, as previously stated, the promised attention to form clearly varies between the chapters; in the end, this concept seems somewhat unconvincing as a structuring device for the book. Despite these reservations, *Forming Sleep* offers a rich, wide-ranging set of perspectives on a field that still merits much more scholarly attention.

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Nostalgia in Print and Performance, 1510–1613: Merry Worlds. Harriet Phillips. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. xii + 240 pp. $99.99.

In this compelling study, Harriet Phillips knowingly turns to the anachronistic concept of nostalgia to explain how the seemingly ubiquitous trope of the merry world—a pre–Reformation England inhabited by disguised kings, honest ploughmen, and mythical figures like Robin Hood—could serve contradictory purposes in commercial productions throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Through the lens of nostalgia, the past was transformed into a trope identified more by "the feelings it evoked" than "the exact contours" of the past it purported to portray, offering a memory of a flourishing, unified England that existed before the ruptures of the Reformation (40). As such, the merry world functioned as an ahistorical construct invoked both by Catholics lamenting the Reformation and Protestants harkening back to a "reformist native tradition" (2). Tracing the construct of the merry world as it moves from polemic

into commercial popular culture, Phillips provides an extensive exploration of how authors employed this "nostalgic fantasy" to negotiate the relationship of the present to the past and to interrogate the trope's value for addressing contemporary issues (20).

The first part of Phillips's book explores how ballads, cheap print, and theater transformed the merry-world complaint, which had appeared in mid- to late sixteenth-century court records as a lamentation over social change, into a hazy ahistorical construct that achieved cathartic resolutions of modern tensions by relocating them into the merry world. Thus, the merry-world setting of broadside ballads converted the narrative of the disguised king that had been used "to facilitate popular complaint" when it appeared in romances into an "escapist fiction" that posited the merry-world countryside as a space of abundance and unity between king and subject (56, 58). Similarly, authors William Elderton, William Kemp, and Thomas Nashe portrayed themselves in their works as inhabitants of the merry world, using cheap print to recast "their own disordered mobility" as nonthreatening mirth (72). The merry-world construct was not limited to conceptions of mirth but also incorporated a complementary nostalgia for the plain-speaking commoner, whose simplicity and ignorance of theology was perceived as an "embodiment of a timeless, organic, national tradition" (89).

The second half of the book examines what happens after merry-world nostalgia has been commodified and becomes a vehicle for authorial negotiations with their audience. Ironically, while the merry-world trope was used to depict a shared social past, the nostalgic haziness of the trope's meaning encouraged authors to use it as a site for stylistic innovation. For instance, the overtly stylized commoner's dialect first employed by the author of the Marprelate pamphlets was mimicked by other pamphlets in the controversy, becoming a marker of the debate rather than the past it imitated. Depictions of the merry world on stage in works by Munday, Chettle, Heywood, and Shakespeare functioned almost as a metatheatrical commentary on the trope itself—whether through portrayals of the construction and consumption of the trope, staging that separated the space of the merry world from the other elements of the plays, or examinations of the limitations of the merry-world trope and its inability to compete successfully with or to resolve contemporary social tensions.

Phillips's rich examination crosses generic boundaries to explore how the nostalgic lens that enables this literary trope to be used to negotiate societal tensions also opens it up as a space for stylistic innovation and metanarrative. Throughout the book, Phillips deftly draws upon Marxist and postmodern theory to explain how the nostalgic representation of the past provided authors with the opportunity to produce amorphous and continually shifting representations of the merry world, while simultaneously and self-reflexively using the trope to create a space through which to negotiate their own commercial identities. My only quibble with the book is that, at times, Phillips seems to slip into a distinction between high and low culture in which authored texts are depicted as having intentionality, while anonymous cheap print and ballads are merely responses to the whims of the market. Nevertheless, Phillips's exploration of the nostalgic vision of

the merry world deftly interrogates the interplay between various forms of popular culture in the period.

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Untimely Deaths in Renaissance Drama: Biography, History, Catastrophe.
Andrew Griffin.
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019. x + 198 pp. $45.

Untimely Deaths in Renaissance Drama compellingly demonstrates how Renaissance dramatists drew from and participated in methodological conflicts in early modern English historiography. It posits the early modern stage as a "historiographical laboratory" where playwrights experimented with narrative formulas both dramatic and extradramatic to make sense of life and death, the latter represented by heterogeneous visions (including providential, magical, mythographic, antiquarian, and humanistic) of historical causality. Paradoxically, these formulas become clearest when examining narrative failure, such as "untimely death," a fatality that occurs before it should according to the conventions of historical, biographical, and dramatic narrative forms. Such kinds of narrative abruption or disruption resist explanation and reveal much about early modern historical culture.

Untimely Deaths focuses on narrative abruption in four historiographically sophisticated plays by Shakespeare, Middleton, Marlowe, and Tourneur. Chapter 1 explores *Richard II*'s interrogation of the potential causes of Richard's death, deemed "untimely" by Bolingbroke in the play's closing lines. *Richard II* reproduces early modern historiography's overabundant and conflicting explanations for Richard's demise, which variously plotted Richard's biography in terms of secular humanism's great-man model, a tragic *de casibus* trajectory, providence, or chance. *Untimely Deaths* characterizes *Richard II* as a "problem tragedy" that dramatizes conflicts between these different approaches to historical interpretation without settling on any.

Chapter 2 demonstrates Middleton's synthesis of different historiographic modes in his city comedy *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. As the City of London's first chronologer, Middleton directly participated in contemporary London historiography, a practice that deeply informs *A Chaste Maid*. *Untimely Death* helpfully observes that recognizing the play's affinity with urban historiography resolves much of its apparent incoherence. Chapter 3 investigates early modern drama's engagement with mythic histories, arguing that Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage* speaks to the period's growing skepticism about Britain's Trojan origins. The most important facet of this myth was the *translatio imperii*, whereby Troy and Rome's imperial greatness was transferred to Britain through its foundation by Brute, Aeneas's grandson. *Untimely Deaths* proposes that *Dido* reimagines the *translatio imperii* as a story of "traumatic repetition," and lays bare its