

work to portray them as singular and exemplary figures, expose how early modern life-writing moves from facts to legend and speculation in different degrees, and how rhetoric, chronology, and often the biographee's own oeuvre could be recast to serve the construction of an ethos.

The second section opens with Zerari's in-depth study of Cervantes's first life, its Romantic underpinnings, and its connection to the English literary field, where Cervantes's *Quixote* made a lasting impact. Ponce Cárdenas's analysis of the structure of Gongora's first life highlights how his biographer seeks to promote both Gongora and himself in relation to Gongora's groundbreaking oeuvre. Candelas Colodrón's survey of Quevedo's first biography shares a similar concern and underlines its centrality in the construction of Quevedo's literary image. Sánchez Jiménez dwells on several topoi replicated in the first biographical accounts of playwright Lope de Vega, making a case for their interconnectedness. Yannick Barne's study of the life of Calderón centers on the biographer's efforts to separate the playwright's life from his work to elevate his *comedias* as moral and political instruments. Lastly, Mercedes Blanco's thought-provoking essay debunks many widespread myths around Sor Juana's life and demonstrates how her biographer subtly employs the hagiographic tradition to extol her human and literary achievements.

This book is indeed a most valuable contribution to the study of early modern biography. Its particular emphasis on Spanish-language canonical writers, including one woman writer, is a welcome and stimulating addition to the field. There is an inherent coherence throughout the volume as the essays, and their supporting scholarly apparatus, reflect common threads and concerns. One important insight of this book is that although these lives are highly encomiastic, derivative, and morally edifying, they are generally the starting point of our interpretation—or misinterpretation—of these writers, and a site where historiography, rhetoric, and fiction intertwine and collide. In sum, this superb book, reminiscent of the collective biographies of the Renaissance, is poised to become a fundamental reference text on the genre of life-writing in early modern Europe.

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*Play Time: Gender, Anti-Semitism and Temporality in Medieval Biblical Drama.*  
Daisy Black.

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Daisy Black's *Play Time* explores the representation of time in late medieval drama from a variety of theoretical perspectives, including supersession, queer futurity, and Michel

Serres's articulation of topological time. The study is particularly interested in how non-normative, nonlinear experiences of time in the plays work to shape the representation of gender and race. "The idea that certain arrangements of time act to obfuscate the times of others is particularly pertinent to this study," she writes, "as it rests at the intersection of gendered and racial histories of exclusion" (20). Ultimately, *Play Time* argues that medieval biblical drama offered alternatives to the ideology of supersession that shaped Christian imagination of the figure of the Jew. Each chapter pairs a theory of temporality with a biblical episode as it plays out across the cycle dramas.

The introduction begins with a meditation on the nature of time via David Bowie and Saint Augustine. It argues that human and divine experiences of time were not solely the theoretical purview of theologians but were also practical questions embodied in late medieval cultures of performance; it is attentive to the ways in which the practicalities of performance inflect the plays' theological concerns. Each chapter proceeds by reorienting conflicts between characters in the plays that have mostly been attributed to gender or race, attributing these conflicts instead to the characters' differing experiences of time. Thus, the first chapter, "The Old Man and the Pregnant Virgin: Linear Time and Jewish Conversion in the N-Town Plays," begins with the Incarnation, considering the Marian plays of the N-Town manuscript. Reconsidering the question of Joseph's doubt, Black argues that his disbelief that his virgin wife is miraculously pregnant is meant not only to provide humor at the expense of the elderly cuckold but also to demonstrate how Joseph cannot be reconciled to the new world order that Mary's pregnancy purports to call into being. Joseph's doubt is therefore Jewish doubt that remains to trouble supersessionist theories of time.

Like Joseph, Noah's wife is a figure who feels left behind by the new Christian dispensation. Chapter 2, "Grave New World: Fantasies of Supersession and Explosive Questions in the York and Chester Flood Plays," pits her against her husband, who reads his experience of the Flood through a supersessionary model of time, in which the past will be utterly replaced. Noah's wife, however, resists this narrative, insisting on the inclusion of the past within the present. In this regard, Noah's wife finds a kindred spirit in Gyll of the *Second Shepherd's Play*. In chapter 3, "Time Out of Joint: Queering the Nativity in the Towneley *Second Shepherd's Play*," Black reads the *Second Shepherd's Play* alongside Lee Edelman's theory of queer futurity, which resists the valorization of heteronormative reproduction. Here, Black points to the substitution of the stolen sheep for a human child in the cradle, and suggests that Mak and Gyll's marriage is (despite Mak's assertion of the contrary) childless, arguing that the episode of the stolen sheep in this play temporally, but temporarily, disrupts the linear timeline of the Nativity narrative.

Chapter 4, "Passion Meets Passover: Temporal Origami in the Towneley *Herod the Great*," similarly finds women resisting the temporal narratives in which they are forced to play their role. This chapter reads the mothers' resistance to the soldiers in the Towneley Massacre of the Innocents plays through the topological theory of time of Michel Serres. Serres's model analogizes topological time to a crumpled handkerchief,

in which distant and unrelated points might come briefly into contact. Black argues that the mothers' resistance is one such moment, that holds past and present together, even as Herod fruitlessly believes himself able to rupture time to prevent the fulfillment of prophesy. A conclusion turns to the Cornish play *Gwreans an bys* (The creation of the world) to put pressure on temporal models of periodization that draw a line between medieval and early modern theater, characterizing periodization as itself supersessionist.

The great strength of this book lies in its elegant integration of multiple approaches to temporality in its discussion of medieval drama. For this reader, it opened up provocative questions about the time of race: the terms *race* and *anti-Semitism* are used to describe the representation of Jews in the drama without much discussion of these terms. The primary mode of thinking about the figure of the Jew here remains typological, even as drama calls it into question. Given that modern discussions of medieval race are similarly crosscut by the question of time, might the discussions here offer new ways to think about the intersections of religious and racial alterity? Overall, *Play Time* provides compelling new ways to think about how late medieval drama intersects with questions of temporality, alongside a timely reminder of the power of performance to challenge dominant cultural narratives.

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*The Erotics of Materialism: Lucretius and Early Modern Poetics.* Jessie Hock.  
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This book makes a noteworthy contribution to discussions of how Lucretius's epic poem *De rerum natura* (hereafter *DRN*) was read, understood, absorbed, and used by a selection of early modern poets: Ronsard, Belleau, Donne, Hutchinson, Margaret Cavendish. It is not a reception history of Lucretius, though it does touch on instances of reception, and it does not make any interventions in—or even discuss—how classical reception methodologies might be applied to Renaissance texts. It takes for granted that we can read Lucretius in later texts, though some of those instances are not always wholly convincing and may be difficult to pin down as exclusively Lucretian. A discussion on how the author is recognizing intertexts (another term underused in this monograph) and a more detailed methodological explanation to underpin the material that follows might have headed off some potential criticisms and made clear how the work does, and does not, situate itself within the field of early modern classical reception.

That said, this book serves to establish the ways in which *DRN* was a provocative and anxiety-inducing text in the early modern period, with its “functional atheism” (2) and its arguments for a materialist view of the world where atoms, rather than gods, are responsible for governing nature and humanity. Not just, Hock suggests, was