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MRLS is under the general editorship of Dr. Rebecca Totaro, professor of English at Florida Gulf Coast University. She is the author of *Suffering in Paradise: The Bubonic Plague in English Literature from More to Milton*; editor of *The Plague in Print: Essential Elizabethan Sources, 1558–1603*; and coeditor of *Representing the Plague in Early Modern England*. She received the 2010 Monroe Kirk Spears Award for the best essay of the year published in *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* for her essay, “Securing Sleep in *Hamlet*.”

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Culinary Shakespeare
Staging Food and Drink in Early Modern England

Edited by David B. Goldstein and Amy L. Tigner

Eating and drinking—vital to all human beings—were of central importance to Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Culinary Shakespeare, the first collection devoted solely to the study of food and drink in Shakespeare’s plays, reframes questions about cuisine, eating, and meals in early modern drama. As a result, Shakespearean scenes that have long been identified as important and influential by scholars can now be considered in terms of another revealing cultural marker—that of culinary dynamics.

Renaissance scholars, as Goldstein and Tigner point out, have only begun to grapple with the importance of cuisine in literature. An earlier generation of criticism concerned itself principally with cataloguing the foodstuffs in the plays. Recent analyses have operated largely within debates about humoralism and dietary literature, consumption, and interiority, working to historicize food in relation to the early modern body. The essays in Culinary Shakespeare build upon that prior focus on individual bodily experience but also transcend it, emphasizing the aesthetic, communal, and philosophical aspects of food, while also presenting valuable theoretical background.

As various essays demonstrate, many of the central issues in Shakespeare studies can be elucidated by turning our attention to the study of food and drink. The societal and religious associations of drink, for example, or the economic implications of ingredients gathered from other lands, have significance for our understanding of both early modern and contemporary periods—including aspects of community, politics, local and global food production, biopower and the state, addiction, performativity, posthumanism, and the relationship between art and food.

Culinary Shakespeare seeks to open new interpretive possibilities and will be of interest not only to scholars and students of Shakespeare and the early modern period, but also to those in food studies, food history, ecology, gender and domesticity, and critical theory.

David B. Goldstein is associate professor of English at York University. His first book, Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare’s England, shared the 2014 biennial Shakespeare’s Globe Book Award. His essays on Shakespeare, Levinas, food studies, and contemporary poetry have appeared in SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900, Shakespeare Studies, Gastronomica, and other journals and collections.

Amy L. Tigner is associate professor of English at the University of Texas, Arlington. She is the author of Literature and the Renaissance Garden from Elizabeth I to Charles II: England’s Paradise and has published work in Modern Drama, English Literary Renaissance, Drama Criticism, Milton Quarterly, Early Theatre Journal, and several book collections.

296 pages / June 2016
ISBN 978-0-8207-0495-1 / $70.00s cloth
“Kneidel . . . has with this book filled a significant gap in Donne scholarship. In an original reading of these five largely neglected poems, Kneidel reveals how much a student of the law Donne was . . . [and] argues that the Satyres are themselves a form of early modern law. Highly recommended.” —Choice

Though law and satire share essential elements—both aim to correct individual vice, to promote justice, and to claim authority amid competing perspectives—their commonality has gone largely unexplored by both legal theorists and literary critics. Gregory Kneidel, in this thoroughly original work, finds that just such an exploration leads to fascinating new insights for both fields of study.

Reversing the more common association of satire with illegality, especially with libel, Kneidel takes as his test case the five formal verse satires written by a young John Donne in the mid-1590s. The Satyres, a highly regarded but difficult and little-studied group of poems, appeared just as “legal culture” was beginning to emerge in something like its modern, secularized form. By placing the Satyres within the broader historical narrative explaining the triumph of the Anglo-American common-law tradition over other legal jurisdictions, Kneidel demonstrates, too, that Donne was clearly informed about and interested in the legal controversies of the time, those that pitted the common-law tradition against ideas of equity as well as Roman civil and canon law, parliamentary legislation, and royal prerogative.

In fact, Kneidel argues, Donne clearly conceived of his satires as a supplement to—or even a form of—early modern law. The poems specifically engage with jurisprudential conflicts over the role of equity amid the numerous other forms of law that dominated the English legal landscape, as equity was just then losing its independent status and being absorbed by the common-law tradition. Like satire, equity considers and attempts to bridge the distance between justice and law, taking into account the unique circumstances of individual cases. Thus, by examining this argument about the rivalry of equity and law within Donne’s satires, we achieve a much clearer picture of the complexities of that historical moment, together with a fresh and insightful addition to the growing field of literature and early modern legal studies.

Gregory Kneidel is associate professor of English at the University of Connecticut. He is the author of Rethinking the Turn to Religion in Early Modern English Literature and currently serves as the associate general editor and textual editor of The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne.

256 pages / November 2015
ISBN 978-0-8207-0481-4 / $70.00s cloth
Private Lives Made Public
The Invention of Biography in Early Modern England

Andrea Walkden

Following the trial and execution of Charles I in 1649, the later seventeenth century witnessed an explosion of print culture in England, including an unprecedented boom in biographical writing. The vogue for such texts, which were known during the period as “lives,” encompassed an unruly social cast and generated visible and affectively powerful forms of public expression. Andrea Walkden offers a case study examination of this fascinating trend, bringing together texts that generations of scholars have considered piecemeal and primarily as sources for their own historical research.

Private Lives Made Public: The Invention of Biography in Early Modern England contributes an incisive, fresh take on “life-writing”—a catch-all label that, in contemporary discourse, encompasses biography, autobiography, memoirs, letters, diaries, journals, and even blogs—and examines why the writing of life stories appeared somehow newly necessary and newly challenging for political discourse in the late seventeenth century. To what purpose did contemporaries model and interpret that era through the lens of the life? How might their endeavor reframe our understanding of the political culture of later Stuart England, of the history of biography’s form prior to the Enlightenment, and of our own use of biography in academic literary culture?

Walkden engages readers in a compelling discussion of what she terms “biographical populism,” arguing that the biographies of this period sought to replace political argument with life stories, thus conducting politics by another means. The modern biography, then, emerges after 1649 as a cultural weapon designed to reorient political discourse away from the analysis of public institutions and practices toward a less threatening, but similarly meaningful, conversation about the unfolding of an individual’s life in the realm of private experience. Unlike other recent studies, Walkden moves toward a consideration of widely consumed works—the Eikon Basilike, Izaak Walton’s Lives, John Aubrey’s Brief Lives, and Daniel Defoe’s Memoirs of a Cavalier—and gives particular attention to their complex engagement with that political and literary moment.

Private Lives Made Public, by combining literary studies and popular trends, will appeal not only to scholars and historians but to practicing memoirists and biographers as well.

Andrea Walkden is assistant professor and director of graduate studies in English at Queens College, City University of New York. Her writing focuses on early modern British literature, including the poetry and prose of John Milton. Walkden has contributed to Writing Lives: Biography and Textuality, Identity and Representation in Early Modern England, as well as the journals SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900 and English Literary History.

216 pages / November 2016
ISBN 978-0-8207-0482-1 / $70.00s cloth
With Wandering Steps
Generative Ambiguity in Milton’s Poetics

Edited by Mary C. Fenton and Louis Schwartz

Throughout his poetry, as he explored how human beings could and should align their wills with God’s, John Milton grappled with this reality: as we travel through this life, our paths fork and choices are made, and thus the eventual integration into the divine “all in all” described in Paradise Lost is always delayed or projected forward. In this relationship, Milton sees a generative tension between certainties—such as the premise that God exists and is good—and contingencies, those acts and experiences that are generated by the created world. As the essays in this volume argue, it is this tension that fuels Milton’s creative power.

These nine scholars, then, take up those parts of Milton’s work that wander, that refuse to move in a straight line or come to a fixed conclusion. Milton is seen to be centered on beginnings without clear endings, on figures who cycle or recur, on moments of ambiguity or ambivalence that seemed designed never to resolve. Milton’s works draw readers into aesthetic, rhetorical, and epistemological schemes—plots, tropes, and arguments—that assert the value of differences while, at the same time, calling all differences into question. These essays represent an attempt to take the conversation about Milton’s relationship with difference in a new direction; while some critics have argued that “difference” is meaningless in Milton because all differences melt into a singular truth, other critics have seen these differences as destabilizing, rendering Milton a poet of uncertainty and indetermination. With Wandering Steps focuses instead on the procreative and creative impulses at the very heart of Milton’s poetry and poetic processes, wherein all paths are valid paths: however far they may seem to wander, they usually return, reunite, and imply the idea of a larger, consistent whole.

Mary C. Fenton is professor of English at Western Carolina University. Her essays on Milton have been published in SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900, Milton Quarterly, Milton Studies, The Cambridge Companion to “Paradise Lost,” and in several book chapters. She is the author of Milton’s Places of Hope: Spiritual and Political Connections of Hope with Land, and coeditor with Louis Schwartz of To Repair the Ruins: Reading Milton and Their Maker’s Image: New Essays on John Milton. She is a past president of the Milton Society of America and former dean of the graduate school at Western Carolina University.

Louis Schwartz is professor and chair of English at the University of Richmond. His essays on Milton and early modern English literature and culture have appeared in such journals as Milton Quarterly, Milton Studies, the Comparatist, and the Lancet. His book Milton and Maternal Mortality was the winner of the Milton Society of America’s James Holly Hanford Award. He is editor of The Cambridge Companion to “Paradise Lost,” and, with Mary C. Fenton, coeditor of To Repair the Ruins: Reading Milton, and Their Maker’s Image: New Essays on John Milton.

264 pages / November 2016
ISBN 978-0-8207-0488-3 / $70.00s cloth
In a major contribution to the burgeoning area of study that crosses between early modern texts and premodern cultures, Danila Sokolov argues for the necessity of reading the work of English Petrarchan writers in light of earlier medieval forms of poetic subjectivity. By doing just that, this book directly challenges one of the most enduring myths of contemporary criticism and shows that the many innovations associated with the poetry of Petarchism derive from medieval subjectivities that continue to inform modern ideas of selfhood and modernity more generally.

While the lines of division between the Renaissance sonnet and earlier poetry are some of the most entrenched in early modern scholarship, even the origin point of that discourse—responses to Petrarch’s Canzoniere—requires that we recognize that studies of medieval writing provide a necessary grounding. As Sokolov demonstrates through a series of careful readings of works by Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Spenser, Daniel, Drayton, and Shakespeare, this poetry is genealogically linked to earlier forms of discourse. In each of the instances discussed, the canonical Renaissance texts display their dependence on medieval technologies of selfhood, including those found in Langland’s Piers Plowman, Chaucer’s The Book of the Duchess, Lydgate’s The Temple of Glas, and Henryson’s The Testament of Cresyeide, among others.

Renaissance Texts, Medieval Subjectivities is not an attempt to identify acts of direct borrowing and imitation; instead, Sokolov focuses on continuities within structures of the poetic imagination: patterns of figuration, forms of textual selfhood, and discursive assemblages. Thus, the book opens up a field of productive engagement between the two periods without the constraints of material history and also introduces scholars of Renaissance literature to medieval texts that often escape their attention but that have the potential to illuminate important aspects of early modern poetry, culture, and the history of subjectivity.

Sokolov draws as well on a great deal of relevant historical evidence, focusing on Protestant attitudes toward labor, theories of melancholy, Elizabethan poetics of marriage, legal history, and the impact of syphilis. With this multifaceted, groundbreaking approach to what is first and foremost a study of poetry and forms of the poetic imagination, Sokolov demonstrates that Renaissance selfhood is medieval in its essence, its constitution can be traced historically and textually, and the Renaissance’s most well-known poetry still deserves fresh attention.

Danila Sokolov is a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Banting postdoctoral fellow in the Department of English Language and Literature at Brock University. His work has appeared in the Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, Modern Philology, the Sidney Journal, and SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900.

368 pages / February 2017
ISBN 978-0-8207-0497-5 / $70.00s cloth
How does soil, as an ecological element, shape culture? With the sixteenth century shift in England from an agrarian economy to a trade economy, what changes do we see in representations of soil as reflected in the language and stories during that time? *Ground-Work*, the first collection of essays to seriously address such questions, belongs to the expanding field of early modernist ecology studies and brings much needed scholarly attention to the materiality of soil, covering a diverse array of Renaissance texts and range of topics—from agrarianism to land surveying to the peculiar allure of swamps.

The numerous connotations of the word “soil” in English point to important cultural ideas; “soil” may refer to property, identity, hygiene, flavor. From its earliest appearances in reference to the ground, or the face of the earth, the term’s meaning expanded during the early modern period. Amid changing patterns of land use, contested political ideologies, and shifting religious beliefs, English Renaissance writers considered soil—ground, mould, earth, dust, mire, slime, peat, clay, etc.—not just as a material resource but as an opportunity to explore questions of power, knowledge, belonging, and being.

While “green” studies, animal studies, and new materialist readings of particular objects have recently been published, *Ground-Work* brings the methodologies and influences of such categories to bear on “brown” ecology, or the ecologies of soil. This substrate of so many other ecosystems, as Hillary Eklund asserts, deserves to feature in current debates about literature and the environment in early modernity. Contributors “dig up,” in a manner of speaking, centuries-old soils through the literary traces they have left, highlighting conceptions of soil both as symbol and as a feature of the physical world.

At its core, this volume aims to correct faulty assumptions that cloud our understanding of the ecological thinking of the past: that natural resources were then poorly understood and recklessly managed, that cultural practices developed in an adversarial relationship with natural processes, or that all forms of instability were regarded with suspicion. In moving past those assumptions, these essays elucidate the links between humans and the lands they inhabit, both then and now.

*Hillary Eklund* is associate professor of English at Loyola University New Orleans and the author of *Literature and Moral Economy in the Early Modern Atlantic: Elegant Sufficiencies*.
Milton, Materialism, and Embodiment
One First Matter All

Edited by Kevin J. Donovan and Thomas Festa

Bringing together eight original essays from leading and emerging Miltonists, this volume explores a second wave of critical thought about Milton’s monist materialism, the view that all existence arises from a single substance or reality. These essays consider the consequences of materialism and embodiment for political, phenomenological, religious, and gender-oriented approaches to Milton’s writings, intersecting with major current debates in early modern studies.

The discovery of Milton’s previously lost De doctrina Christiana in 1823 cemented the case for Milton’s systematic monist materialism in his account of Creation, but even before that, influential critics and commentators such as Thomas Newton and Samuel Johnson had remarked upon the startling and heterodox union of physics and metaphysics in Paradise Lost. What these eighteenth century critics perceived as a flaw in Milton’s design has, in recent decades, become the source of a reevaluation of the originality and coherence of Milton’s thought.

Donovan and Festa bring together a group of scholars who explore sensory matters of fragrance and sound, the literary politics of walking and of sexual reproduction, the ontology of embodiment as human beings and angels, and the appropriation of Milton’s materialism by both early Mormons in the nineteenth century and fringe figures such as gun enthusiasts in the twentieth. In so doing, they demonstrate the ongoing relevance of Milton’s writings in the history of views of embodiment and materialist thought. This volume will be a resource for future inquiry into vitalist materialism, modern and early modern alike.

Kevin J. Donovan is professor of English and director of graduate studies at Middle Tennessee State University, where he codirected the biennial Conference on John Milton from 1991 to 2015. He is coeditor of the volume Irish Drama of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, as well as a contributor and associate editor for the forthcoming King Lear: A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare.

Thomas Festa is associate professor of English at the State University of New York at New Paltz. He is author of The End of Learning: Milton and Education and coeditor of Early Modern Women on the Fall: An Anthology, which received the Best Teaching Edition Award of the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women.

320 pages / June 2017
ISBN 978-0-8207-0702-0 / $70.00s cloth
Recent & Recommended

The Noble Flame of Katherine Philips
A Poetics of Culture, Politics, and Friendship
Edited by David L. Orvis and Ryan Singh Paul

“Orvis and Paul consolidate in one place some of the influential examinations of Philips in recent years, alongside new work. . . . The volume does indeed demonstrate what its editors and contributors claim: a rich and diverse body of Philips criticism, with implications for seventeenth-century literary history in a broad and complex formulation. The volume is an ably framed summation and extension of work on a central poetic figure, containing many new insights and suggesting avenues for future study.” —Review of English Studies

Though renowned in her own time, noted Interregnum and Restoration poet Katherine Philips fell into relative obscurity within a few decades of her sudden death at age 32 and was soon relegated to the margins of the English canon. In recent decades, however, critics have begun to rediscover and recognize the importance of Philips's poems and translations. This first scholarly collection devoted solely to the poetry of Katherine Philips is an important milestone, not only in the continuing recovery of Philips's reputation, but in our understanding of her influence in the literary circles of the seventeenth century.

As Orvis and Paul explain, Philips's work ranges across genres, modes, and forms; she wrote epithalamia and elegies, pastorals and panegyrics, dialogues and Pindaric odes; she even tried her hand quite successfully at dramatic translation. Her significance as a poet became clear with her appearance in several notable print publications of the time, which had rarely included women writers. Though she continued to be cited by writers after her death—John Keats, for example, highly praised and quoted one of her friendship poems in an 1817 letter—editions of her poetry fell out of print after 1710, and her work became far less known. Until the recent surge in interest in “women's writing,” Philips, if mentioned at all, was seen by early twentieth century scholars as a minor writer who dealt with rather inconsequential subject matter.

The field of Philips scholarship is rich and diverse, however, despite its relative youth. As this collection demonstrates, her work resists attempts to pigeonhole it, bringing together questions of politics, sexual desire and identity, and poetic tradition. These 13 essays from a wide range of scholars are organized around three salient fields of inquiry: cultural poetics and the courtly coterie; innovation and influence in poetic and political form; and articulations of female friendship, homoeroticism, and retreat.

David L. Orvis is associate professor of English at Appalachian State University. He is coeditor of Psalms in the Early Modern World and has published essays on Shakespeare, Milton, Marlowe, and Herbert.

Ryan Singh Paul is assistant professor of English at Texas A&M University–Kingsville. His publications include essays on The Roaring Girl, Aemilia Lanyer, and the contemporary Indian-American novelist Bharati Mukherjee.

464 pages / August 2015
ISBN 978-0-8207-0474-6 / $70.00s cloth
Rethinking Shakespeare’s Skepticism
The Aesthetics of Doubt in the Sonnets and Plays
Suzanne M. Tartamella

“In this intriguing study of the skepticism inherent in praise poetry, Suzanne Tartamella offers Shakespeare’s Sonnets as an exemplar of that skepticism, a model that illuminates central conflicts in Taming of the Shrew, Anthony and Cleopatra, and most notably, Hamlet.” —Sixteenth Century Journal

“Rigorously argued and well-structured, Rethinking Shakespeare’s Skepticism is a valuable addition to sonnet criticism and provides a nicely nuanced integration of the sonnets with the plays, especially Hamlet.” —Sixteenth Century Journal

“Taking seriously the propensity of a poetry of praise and blame to turn its regard on itself, Tartamella traces a deeply rhetorical (rather than intellectual or social) element of doubt in the poems and plays, which she figures as the skeptical canker within the epideictic rose.” —SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900

“Rather than looking at Shakespeare’s religious doubt, Tartamella is concerned with Shakespeare’s skepticism regarding the natural goodness of humankind. The research and learning of the study are commendable, the writing is professional, and the insights are welcome. . . . Recommended. All readers.” —Choice

Tartamella casts new light on seemingly quite familiar material—Shakespeare’s Sonnets and a number of his plays, including Hamlet, The Taming of the Shrew, and Antony and Cleopatra. By placing the Sonnets within the context of the literary history of praise poetry, and exploring the underlying influence of early modern skepticism on Shakespeare’s writing, this book truly enhances our understanding of the subtleties and complexities in all of Shakespeare’s work.

Suzanne M. Tartamella is assistant professor of English at Henderson State University and previously taught at Gettysburg College. Her work has previously appeared in English Literary Renaissance; this is her first book.

304 pages / January 2014
ISBN 978-0-8207-0467-8 / $70.00s cloth
Preaching the Gospel of Black Revolt
Appropriating Milton in Early African American Literature
Reginald A. Wilburn

2014 John T. Shawcross Award of the Milton Society
2016 College Language Association's Creative Scholarship Award

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Eric C. Brown

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Danielle A. St. Hilaire

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