

throughout the corpus, noting that La Mothe Le Vayer, Molière, and La Fontaine all couch critiques of Christian theology in their treatment of Jupiter.

Original argumentation, insightful close readings, and fluid prose make this book an excellent read. The admirable audacity of Roche's project is also its primary difficulty. As what may once have been explicit references to Lucretius seep subtly into his readers' texts, they sometimes become so diffuse as to be indistinguishable from ideas gleaned from other sources. Roche certainly proves the presence and compatibility of many Lucretian ideas in his seventeenth-century readers. His tracing of their provenance is quite convincing, if necessarily inconclusive in some instances.

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*Punishment and Penitential Practices in Medieval German Writing.*

Sarah Bowden and Annette Volting, eds.

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This valuable anthology of ten essays brings to studies of correctional practices a welcome perspective: that of scholars of literature. As Sarah Bowden describes the project in the introduction, “we consider the representation of lived experience in literary texts, and how literary depictions intersect with such lived experience” (3). These essays supply what is usually missing from the normative medieval sources that prescribed penances or punishments, described transgressions, or recorded judgments in courts or other *fora*: they provide a view of how penitential and punitive practices were understood, manipulated, developed, and suffered. These literary scholars also apply critical approaches, many drawn from the work of Michel Foucault, relating to the inscription of pain on the body, the sexual dimensions of such inscription, and the poetics of the penitential self—aspects less frequently addressed by historians of law or pastoral care. The contributors are to be commended for their attention to the work of historians who have investigated penance and punishment; rarely should the reader wonder if segregation of disciplines has produced unfortunate oversights.

Even so, there is a pronounced orientation to fellow scholars of medieval German vernacular literature. Few of the essays provide any introduction or contextualizing (not even dates) for the specific works they analyze. The assumption is that readers will be quite familiar with medieval texts such as Rudolf von Ems's (1220–54) *Alexander*, Wolfram von Eschenbach's (ca. 1180–1220) *Parzival*, Oswald von Wolkenstein's (1376–1445) *Beichtlied*, Claus Spaun's *Fünffzig Gulden Minnelohn* and Hans Rosenplüt's *Spiegel und Igel* (both from the mid- to late fifteenth century), Johannes Pauli's (ca. 1455–ca. 1530) *Schimpf und Ernst* and Georg Wickram's

*Rollwagenbüchlein* (1555), the *Life* of Cristina von Hane (1269–92?), the *Life* of Elsbeth von Oye (1290–1340), and Konrad von Würzburg's *Pantaleon* (in the 1380s). Extending a welcoming hand to those readers who may not be familiar with these texts would have improved the collection. There are, however, hospitable gestures in the practice of translating all quotations from Middle High German, and in the substantial abstracts of the articles written in German. Each essay includes a suitable bibliography.

Readers who press on through the mysteries will be rewarded. Each essay typically takes a single text and a single problem in the sphere of punishment and penance illuminated by that text. The problems are important, and the texts are interesting witnesses. Every essay creates an opportunity for further investigation into other texts; the potential for inspiring future work is exciting. Among the topics engaged are the ways in which corporal chastisement expresses power over others, and over oneself. Henrike Manuwald tests fruitfully the proposition of René Girard (*La violence et le sacré* [1972]) that institutional retribution is, in essence, regulated vengeance. Her essay could be put in dialogue with the more recent work of Claude Gauvard (e.g., *“De grace especial”: Crime, État, et Société en France à la fin du Moyen Âge* [1991]). Instances of revenge that enhance our thinking about motive, purpose, and common standards are in Annette Volting's essay, “und wolt iuch hân gebezert mite’: Keie, Cunneware and the Dynamics of Punishment,” and in Jamie Page's consideration of the informal, social, and gendered devices for controlling others, “*Offenlich und unter ogen*: Honour and Punishment in Late Medieval Urban Life.”

Responses to corporal suffering are traced in the contributions of Sebastian Coxon (“schneident mir beid oren ab’: the Comic Potential of Corporal Punishment in Sixteenth-Century *Schwankbücher*”), Racha Kirakosian (“Penitential Punishment and Purgatory: A Drama of Purification through Pain”), Björn Klaus Bushbeck (“Körpergebrauch, Kontrolle und Kontrollverlust in den Askeseschilderungen der Vita Elsbeths von Oye”), and Katharina Mertens-Fleury (“Strafen und Leiden im Martyrium: Überlegungen zu Konrads von Würzburg *Pantaleon*”). The impact of suffering on the individual, and the implications for the concept of the self are further uncovered by Almut Suerbaum's interrogation of aristocratic self-representation in conflictual contexts (“Legal Process and Fantasies of Torture: Reality and Imagination in Oswald von Wolkenstein”) and Andreas Kraß's observations on poetic play on the self as subject and object (“Sünder, Prediger, Dichter: Rollenspiele im *Beichtlied* Oswalds von Wolkenstein”). The collection is beautifully anchored in philological foundations supplied by Henrike Manuwald (“*râche* zwischen, ‘Vergeltung eines Unrechts durch den Geschädigten’ und ‘Strafe’: Semantische Spielräume im *Alexander* Rudolfs von Ems”) and by Sarah Bowden in her exposition of the Middle High German meaning of *strafe* in the introduction to the volume. Both discussions, parsing the language of response to injury, complicate neat models of progression from private revenge to systems of institutional retribution.

The scope and varying perspectives of this slim volume form an excellent set of interlocking pieces to the puzzle of medieval punishment and penance. Taken in sum, the volume presents a compelling case for considering the two processes in conjunction: their nexus is extensive; the multivalence of each increases the points of interchange. The crossings and transfers of meaning, and the often strange medieval calculus of pain, in which suffering can be excessive, vicarious, validating, degrading, voluntarily undertaken, and brutally inflicted, are nicely brought to light in this collection, worthily conceived and deftly executed.

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*Coming To: Consciousness and Natality in Early Modern England.*

Timothy M. Harrison.

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*Coming To: Consciousness and Natality in Early Modern England* narrates the process whereby consciousness came to be intertwined with natality through poetry, asserting the importance of poetic mimesis in articulating originary experience. Understanding natality as the space in which thought, experience, ego, and self intertwine before “being pulled into the ‘orbital drag’” of the concept of consciousness (15), Timothy Harrison crafts an impressive historical and philosophical argument, situating early modern poets as active proponents of the emerging concept of consciousness. Whereas previous scholarship understands the concept of consciousness as an invention of philosophers, Harrison challenges existing paradigms that place consciousness studies elsewhere, identifying the necessity of poetry in the development of consciousness. *Coming To* provides rich historical contextualization toward the book’s aim to not only identify the connection between natality and consciousness, but also point toward the social and political implications of that connection.

The book focuses on three key early modern writers, Milton, Traherne, and Locke, attending to their engagement with an emerging philosophical conversation: is human thought and consciousness rooted in innate knowledge or empirical contact with the world? Examining the semantic shift of *consciousness* as it becomes synonymous to *experience* and *thought* in parts 1 and 2, Harrison argues that the imagined neonatal maturity, achieved by poets such as Milton within *Paradise Lost*, cannot be left within the periphery when examining how the concept of consciousness emerged. Harrison suggests the unique ability of mimesis within poetry allows for an imagined state of originary thought that philosophers can only theorize about. Part 2, “Traherne and the Consciousness of Birth,” functions in tandem with part 1, further evincing the critical role of poetry in the development of the concept of consciousness. Harrison provides a