

oikos-polis analogy; however quarrelsome the members of a family or state are, they remain determined by one another.

Finally, several authors address Spinoza's remark that in a successful state, women are excluded from politics. Susan James uses the passage to support her claim that, for Spinoza, political inequalities may contribute to the sustainability of the state. The reasoning is that different social classes and groups will develop different affective dispositions, including dispositions that reconcile people to subordination. Moira Gatens is more resistant to Spinoza's misogynistic attitude, considering the passage a philosophical weakness. The fact that Spinoza only uses historical evidence and no philosophical arguments to substantiate his point leads Gatens to conclude that Spinoza's anxiety about the socially destructive forces of the passions superseded his desire to validate a genuinely democratic polity, dealing a severe blow to Spinoza.

With these brief examples I hope to have aroused the curiosity of some readers, not only for this critical guide, which offers a very diverse collection of excellent essays, but also for the *TP* itself and its capacity to inspire and divide the imagination of some fine thinkers in our time.

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Reading Old Books: Writing with Traditions. Peter Mack.
Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. xii + 238 pp. \$35.

This monograph's topic complements those of Peter Mack's important books on the history of rhetoric and reading practices. Here an idiosyncratic collection of case studies addresses Petrarch; Chaucer and Boccaccio; Ariosto, Tasso, and Spenser; Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton*; and Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*. The book's strength lies in the lucidity, energy, and detail with which Mack attends to each case study. For this journal's audience, I will address only the first three chapters.

In an introduction on selected twentieth-century theories of tradition—linguistic, literary, sociological, anthropological, and historical—Mack foregrounds Hans-Georg Gadamer's perspective on a dialectical hermeneutic of history, tradition, and human understanding, while adding his own inflection regarding authors' and readers' "individual skills and choices" (21). Chapter 1 approaches Petrarchan tradition with a welcomed emphasis on Petrarch's use of classical texts and troubadour verse, as well as Dante's poetry. Much of this account synthesizes existing scholarship, but Mack's reading of specific poems stays keen and sensitive, including his own translation of quotations from Petrarch.

Chapter 2 analyzes how Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* translated, imitated, and adapted Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*. Chaucer's poem mirrors specific tropes and stylistic devices in the Italian source text, deployed for effects of characterization at significant

junctures both in parallel with *Il Filostrato's* narration and elsewhere as appropriations for Chaucerian style. To support that style of characterization made his own, Chaucer imported Petrarch's Sonnet 132 as well. Chaucer's narrative and rhetorical amplification of Boccaccio's text channeled with purpose its Boethian commentary on Fortune, adapting the moral perspective to be more sympathetic toward both Criseyde and Troilus while also more overtly Christian. From Chaucer's method of imitation and adaptation came a hallmark feature of his artistry in this and other narrative poems like *The Canterbury Tales*: "the complex games which Chaucer plays with the means of telling the story and in thinking about the purposes for which stories are told" (73; cf. 24, 81–96). Mack's analysis and argument build upon previous scholarship clearly and usefully with honed detail and critical focus.

Chapter 3 surveys creative agency in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Mack's synopsis of *Orlando furioso* will prove useful to readers not familiar with that long and lively poem, including his emphasis on Ariosto's artistic aim for "pleasure in narrative" through "a sequence of surprises and shocks which reverse each other" (107). Tasso built upon Ariosto's artistry in theory and practice, focusing his epic more thoroughly on Christian-Muslim political history with Christian devotion and divine favor serving more directly as components of warfare. Though the siege context and plot drama with Goffredo and Rinaldo adapted central plot lines and characters of Homer's *Iliad*, Goffredo's leadership steered the Christian army more toward the greater good than Agamemnon with Achilles. For Erminia, Tasso adapted Ariosto's Angelica and interlaced her devotion to Tancredi with his to Clorinda, whose tragic story integrated Homeric, Virgilian, and Petrarchan dimensions of characterization, plot, and pity, which Tasso's artistry channeled toward religious conversion before death and prophetic purpose afterward. Mack observes dimensions of Petrarchan resonance in the providential plot line of Rinaldo and Armida, wherein Tasso adapted that of Aeneas and Dido to reach beyond both Virgil and Ariosto with a vision of Christian forgiveness and reconciliation. Spenser's choice of structure for *The Faerie Queene* entailed less "overall narrative unity" than in Tasso's poem but "greater variety and surprise" as per Ariosto's chivalric epic, though with a "preference for implication over direct assertion" and a "seriousness of tone" closer to that of Tasso's style (125, 127). Spenser's adaptation of several episodes from Tasso's poem preserved their essential Christian focus but made them, Mack concludes, "more troubled, problematic, and unsure" (135).

These three chapters of the book can encourage specialist scholars to strive for new degrees of precision when assessing familiar topics of genre and literary tradition. That emphasis and Mack's lucid prose also make this book a valuable resource for those who teach these Italian and English texts.

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