

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.

Heather Blurton, *University of California, Santa Barbara*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2022.402

The Erotics of Materialism: Lucretius and Early Modern Poetics. Jessie Hock.
Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021. xvi + 234 pp. \$59.95.

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

Lucretius's poem regarded as dangerously heretical in Christian Europe, but the poem's explicitly avowed desire to seduce readers made it riskily wanton. Indeed, it is *DRN*'s tropes of sex and desire, especially the hymn to Venus, and the conflation of amorous seduction with poetic persuasion that this monograph hones in on to best effect. Hock is especially attentive to the end of book 4 of *DRN*, where the poem is concerned with erotic fantasy and sexual obsession, and with what an atomist philosophy might be made to represent and enable in early modern poetics.

Explaining the selection of Renaissance poets and works, Hock asserts that "a language of desire" finds a "natural home" in "lyric" (7), and certainly there is some fruitful matter explored in the chapters to come, including some welcome attention to female writers: Lucy Hutchinson and Margaret Cavendish. But this correlation between matter and form—desire and lyric—is one easy to question (what about the circulation of literary desire in early modern drama, or the prose of, say, Philip Sidney?) and, in fact, some of the verse investigated (e.g., Lucy Hutchinson's epic *Order and Disorder*) does not fit this designation of lyric.

At times throughout this book, terms and arguments are used and made in lax ways that could have been productively tightened up. It would also have been useful to have had a brief discussion of why and how early modern poets were so able to engage creatively with Lucretius given his scandalous and heretical reputation in the period. We know from, say, the case of Ovid, that classical texts could be regarded as not quite respectable and yet still (perhaps because of that very lack of decency) be immensely fruitful sources to Renaissance writers, so that this kind of contradictory complexity is built into their reception. Some kind of framing of Lucretius to bridge the assertions of his dangerous status with his attraction for a range of early modern poets would have been helpful.

Especially useful and productive are Hock's discussion of Lucretian *simulacra*, a theme to be traced in later chapters in relation to erotic fantasies, and Hock's comparison between Lucretian and Platonic philosophies of love, beauty, and the divine. The latter, especially, nuances the generalized way in which Renaissance love lyric tends to be seen in relation to Petrarchism and Neoplatonism; asserting an alternative model for understanding Renaissance poetic erotics is one of the most valuable takeaways from this book.

Linda Grant, *Society of Antiquaries of London*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2022.403

Le lettere di Dante: Ambienti culturali, contesti storici e circolazione dei saperi.

Antonio Montefusco and Giuliano Milani, eds.

Bilingualism in Medieval Tuscany 2. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020. x + 626 pp. \$114.99.

Entirely devoted to Dante's *Epistles*, and as such unprecedented, *Le lettere di Dante* is a monumental undertaking both in size (626 pages) and in scope: it is a specialized