of Melior's private motivations in order to demonstrate that her passivity and adherence to socially acceptable gender norms are in fact a powerful public performance. Provocatively, Melior's construction of her first sexual encounter with Partonope through the discourse of rape is seen as both giving the knight 'the power of masculine aggression' and simultaneously undermining it (p. 98).

In the final chapter, the two models of patronage offered by Gwennere and Tryamour are contrasted. Comparisons between Chrestre's version of Marie de France's *Lanval* and the original show how the Middle English text foregrounds female sponsorship and makes a clear link between the knight's acceptance of the female patron and his success in arms (an idea also usefully elaborated in the first chapter in relation to *Troilus* and *Criseyde*).

Well researched and lucidly written, Vines’s monograph makes an important contribution to scholarship on women in romance and medieval culture more widely. Vines’s conclusion draws out the implications of her study in the context of the current trend for debunking binaries such as sacred and secular, and her notion that romances operate didactically by performing cultural modelling and offering practical guidance for behaviour is one that could be explored productively in relation to other Middle English texts. This monograph will be appreciated and valued by romance scholars and undergraduates alike.

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This book breaks new ground in the field of literary history. It proposes that certain medieval readers encountered a literary text not as a ‘friend’, ‘companion’, ‘commodity’, ‘object’, ‘portal’, or ‘threat’ (p. 3), but as a ‘neighbour’. Edmondson understands the neighbour in psychoanalytic terms, as the figure of the *Nebenmenschen* (next man) described in Freud’s *Project for a Scientific Psychology* and further amplified by Freud and Jacques Lacan. The *Nebenmenschen* is the first person from whom I take my bearings, but she also harbours what Freud calls the Thing: something alien and malignant. I suspect her of a capacity for horrific cruelty and yet (therefore?) I offer her my goodwill: a gesture that binds me to her while simultaneously secreting my hostility. Edmondson deploys this uncanny figure to explore the interactions between three medieval texts: Robert Henryson’s *Testament of Cresseid*, Boccaccio’s *Il Filostrato*, and Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*. To see these poems as proximate is to argue that each demonstrates the impossibility of escaping the terrible *jouissance* that we are repeatedly forced to confront in our relations with the neighbour. Henryson’s *Testament* ‘negates’ Chaucer’s *Troilus* by interring it, as ‘an especially radical form of neighbour love’ (p. 78); Chaucer’s encounter with *Il Filostrato* is not (as C. S. Lewis has it)
characterized by awe and disapproval but by an anxious excitement that is called forth by the desire of the other text. This intertextual dynamic is also explored thematically: Anglo-Scottish relations in the Testament, for example.

The book’s major theme is Troy as medieval England’s neighbour: a potent source of imaginary identification but one whose Thing intimates the potential annihilation of the symbolic order. In all three poems the avatars of Troilus are incarnations of Troy, inhabiting what Lacan calls ‘the space between two deaths’ (symbolic and actual), returning again and again to threaten the living. Críseyde is also undead, but as courtly lady she is also the Thing (Edmondson has to work hard to make this point, since Chaucer’s text does not wholly support it); by sublimating her Troilus puts up a barrier against the Thing, which means no one has to confront the fact that the Trojan Other does not exist.

The book’s originality lies in its argument that literary inventiveness is spurred not by an Oedipal relation but by ‘identification, aggression, love, charity, and the possibility of a community organized around something other than sacrifice and exchange’ (p. 36). This has large implications for textual relations. Proximity is horizontal not lineal, recursive not linear: the full meaning of Chaucer’s Troilus, for example, only emerges retroactively, when Henryson’s takes it in and ‘partially destroys it’ (p. 35), just as the erasure of Richard’s face from the frontispiece to Corpus Christi College MS 61 is symptomatic of the fact that ‘the complete picture of late medieval history is realized only once it has been destroyed’ (p. 206). Others will develop Edmondson’s model in relation to source study, book history, auctoritas, and translatio imperii et studii. It would be fascinating, for example, to set the view of Henryson’s Testament as ‘a defensive rewriting’ (p. 41) beside Rita Copeland’s understanding of medieval translational practice as an oscillation between two poles of scholastic analysis: exegesis and invention.

One limitation is that Edmondson does not always clearly distinguish between authors and their texts, or between the book as a material object, a medium of transmission, and free-floating text. To say that ‘the libido and aggression that we impute to the other … is … our own repressed desire coming back to us in ciphered form’ (p. 18) means different things in relation to the book as object, text, tradition, or fantasized incarnation of the author.

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On the face of things, T. Matthew N. McCabe’s extremely thoughtful study of Gower’s Confessio Amantis is fragmented, switching between Gower’s debt to Ovid and Christian theology or between metamorphosis and ethics. The common theme in Gower’s Vulgar Tongue, however, grows increasingly persuasive.