Reviews

Pierre Béhar and Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly (eds), *Spectaculum Europaeum: Theatre and Spectacle in Europe from the End of the 16th to the Middle of the 18th Century – Manuel de l'Histoire du Spectacle en Europe de la fin du XVIe au milieu du XVIIIe siècle*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1999, pp. x + 818, hb. DM 298, ISBN: 3447040394

The idea for this substantial, not to mention handsome, volume of 39 essays was conceived during a conference held in 1989 at Tours, where participants working in the field of early modern theatrical studies noted the need to 'transcend boundaries between the various disciplines and national traditions' (vii). The editors are to be congratulated for translating this complaint into a remedy, in an offering by 19 contributors divided into drama, opera, tournaments, and entries and festivals. Each of these sections contains articles dealing with aspects of each theme across nations (with the exception of an extended essay by Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly entitled 'Tournaments in Europe'). Contributions are in either French or English, a reflection of the interdisciplinary nature of the collection, with French being reserved for the Romance-speaking world.

The work is intended as a handbook (ix). As such, it is evidently not as comprehensive as an encyclopaedia, nor as concise as a text book. If the intended readership is a student one, then it will be well served by a wide-ranging coverage of early modern theatrical forms in Europe. Researchers, too, will occasionally find there is more to this volume than a reference work. Pierre Béhar's study of drama in Crete, for example, is informative and stimulating, demonstrating that an overview of the evolution of local trends during the period can yield valuable insights. Béhar argues that the development of classical ideals during the Renaissance and seventeenth century allowed Crete to hold on to its Hellenist heritage without falling out of step with cultural trends in the rest of Europe (338). Each article is followed by a bibliography, a sensible alternative to one extended bibliography for the entire volume. It is here that the variable quality of some of the contributions comes into play. The bibliography provided for the Ruprecht Wimmer's contribution on neo-Latin European theatre is impressively thorough, an ideal resource to encourage further research (51–77). Readers consulting the recommended works following Pierre Béhar's essay on 'la

tragédie et la comédie en France et leurs variantes', however, will be frustrated by the erratic arrangement of works into themes and authors (though only one mention each for tragi-comedy and opera), and in chronological rather than alphabetical order (188–196). This is compounded by notable absences, such as Perry Gethner (Rotrou), Mitchell Greenberg (Corneille), as well as some typographical errors (Patrick Dandrey instead of Dandray, 194). The differences in bibliographical layout will hinder, though ultimately not impede, the work's utility as a research tool.

Generalisations, inevitable in a work of this scope, are occasionally misleading. Surely the impact of the Reformation deserves more than a mere paragraph (5–6)? While many hagiographic legends dramatised in the early modern period date from the beginning of the Church's history, Hermenigildus, martyred by Arians in 576, is rather late to be classed as an early Church martyr (17), and Baronius revised and edited the *Martyrologium Romanum*, he did not create it (44). The 1548 interdiction of the mystery-play by the Parlement of Paris only named the capital and environs, so did not banish such performances from the provinces, as suggested by Béhar (164). Louis XIII's edict of 1641 absolving actors of the charge of infamy, authored largely by Richelieu, is surprisingly not mentioned in an account of the development of the theatre in France (164). Despite the bibliographies contained in the volume suffering from a lack of a consistent format, and stylistic infelicities, the work's strength lies in its parts. Neo-Latin theatre is not confined to an overview of Jesuit colleges, as secular and Protestant drama is considered, as well as Benedictine theatre (46-7). The progression from drama across regions, and then into opera, ballet and festivals, is well-structured and coherent. The advantage of the volume's international approach is clear in the treatment of opera. The informed discussion of foreign influences on English Restoration opera by Marie-Claude Canova-Green (413–415) links well with preceding articles on opera in Italy, the Iberian peninsula and France. Canova-Green's account of the growth and survival of 'Opera in England' (405–427) contrasts with the subsequent essay, a brief survey of 'Opera in the Netherlands' (Rudolf Rasch, 429-435), and a strikingly small appendix (a bibliography containing five named sources). Rasch tantalisingly mentions how, during the second half of the eighteenth century, 'opera became an important factor in Brussels musical life', yet brushes this aside: 'this lies outside the scope of this study' (431). George Gömöri's later article on 'Entries in Poland' similarly dismisses treatment of religious festivals 'both for lack of space and lack of detailed work into the subject'(766), surely the very reason to justify further attention.

Canova-Green engagingly details the politicisation of ballet, a reminder that forms of the arts were recruited by Richelieu as 'cet instrument de propagande politique' (498). This trend is observed in England as well, where 'Beauty and Love were central to the masques as allegories of modes of kingship, of rule in which moral and political intepretations were fused' (537). Sara Smart's lucid exploration of 'Ballet in the Empire' is enhanced by some fascinating anecdotal evidence: the first recorded ballets at the Munich court took place as late as 1651 at the instigation of Louis XIII's niece, Henriette Adelaide. Upon her marriage, the new electress faced some disapproval for her enthusiastic support of ballets (her involvement was active: she choreographed a 1657 performance, 553). One lesser-known variant of public spectacle examined by Watanabe-O'Kelly's article on Tournaments is the horse ballet, or *baletto a cavallo*, in France, Italy and the Empire, in which a group of horsemen perform movements riding to musical accompaniment, a 'relatively rare and extremely costly and sumptuous

entertainment' (598). The volume really comes into its own with its treatment of royal entries and other public ritual. In 'Triomphes, entrées, feux d'artifices et fêtes religeuses en Italie', Paulette Choné rightly turns her attention to beatifications, canonisations, the translation of relics, and the Forty Hours' devotion, as invigorated examples of a Counter-Reformation aesthetic (649). Choné then considers the influence of this essentially Italian display on French ceremonial, particularly in the use of fireworks (670–72), though François de Malthe's illustrated *Traité des feus artificiels* (Paris, 1628), reissued several times during the seventeenth century, is overlooked in the bibliography. Sylvaine Hänsel evaluates the celebrations surrounding the canonisations of specific saints in Iberia, such as the wave of popularly venerated saints honoured in 1622: Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila, Francis Xavier and Isidore of Seville (689), the local celebrations of the latter being related by Lope de Vega. Hänsel also includes the spectacle associated with the *auto de fe*, noting that these were usually marked with firework displays (682).

The welcome inclusion of religious fiestas, as well as less obvious events such as bridal processions and university traditions across Europe, make the fourth part of the volume the most enlightening. This is countered by the fact that the volume suffers from the lack of an obvious epistemology. The introduction is brief and does not clarify the parameters of spectacle. Indeed, a satisfactory definition for the concept is not really provided, even if the influence of some genres on the evolution of others is amply demonstrated. Are the concepts of theatre and spectacle interchangeable, for example? Is not every spectacle theatrical in nature, and every play a spectacle? These crucial questions remain unanswered. The addition of unexpected, even banal, phenomena implicitly challenges received perceptions of what constitutes a show of spectacle (despite the absence of funerals, executions, coronations and sacramental rites). These events all share a sense of interaction, for a spectacle remains invalidated without witnesses. Justice, power, performance, all have to be seen to be enacted, in a complicity that often betrays the vulnerability of the devisors. All that separates a mob from a crowd is the level of satisfaction. This crucial interdependence is silently explored in this volume, and a concluding article would have been practical in what is essentially a pan-European synthesis.

Seventy-nine lavish illustrations serve the volume well. While festival books are featured (714), the volume's range does not extend to frontispieces and other forms of printed iconography, which can be fruitful sources to evaluate performance history (as observed once in the caption to Fig. 32, 270). There is a need for such an approach, particularly in the context of the wider discourse of what Alison Saunders terms the 'visual versus the verbal' in early modern culture. Despite these misgivings, the work clearly surpasses its stated aim of being a handbook, and proves itself an extensive reference guide to differing aspects of spectacle in Europe that enhances 'our understanding of all forms of theatre and spectacle in the period under review' (vii). The editors and publishers are to be commended for the work's uncompromising length and scale, and it will undoubtedly prove indispensable to students, as well as useful to researchers.

University of Durham **Paul Scott**

Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England*, Routledge, London, 1999, pp. viii + 332, hb. £50, ISBN: 0415181488

Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England portrays education as the primary instrument of religious aculturation in a 'godly community . . . operat[ing] to maintain itself' (p. 5). Within this overall framework, Charlton has three points to make about the education of the female sex. First, attitudes to women led to a different education from men. Second, girls were educated 'informally'. Third, women were agents of education. Only the last two points follow his earlier work, *Education in Renaissance England* (1965). The latter concentrated on the education of boys and, suggestively, defined education as a more broadly secular commodity.

Women, Religion and Education begins with attitudes to women (everything from women martyrs to wife-beating) and argues that there were two positions on the education of women – one emphasised the usefulness of nurture in curbing the nature of the 'weaker vessel' and the other stressed that women were essentially corrupt and uneducable. Both stemmed from a misogyny that was defeated by the end of the seventeenth century when it was recognised that having girls as educands and women as educators was 'not only possible but desirable' (p. 26).

The book proceeds to a discussion of general religious instruction, through the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, the Homilies, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, godly books for householders and sermons. The third chapter contains information on general educational aids, such as mnemonics and verse. Also included are parental models [ungendered], female Biblical models, funeral sermons, punishments and so on. Chapters two and three of this book are not gender-specific. Charlton's argument is that godly education functioned to turn girls *and* boys into loving spouses and responsible parents and a major focus of the whole book is the collaborative marriage relationship that resulted from this training. The book is thus located very much within the historiography of the history of the family.

Chapters four through seven are mostly gender-specific. The chapter with the most coherence gives a picture of schools for girls, especially in the London suburbs. A chapter on women as recipients of education contains rather general material on chaplains, tutors and governesses, 'advices' and godly tracts aimed at girls. A chapter on women as agents of education connects women's church attendance to the cultural transmission of godly religion to children and servants. The argument is that women's self-education was connected to their role as educative agents. There is fascinating material on women learning how to memorise, repeat and write down whole sermons and Charlton claims the considerable success of a Christian humanist curriculum based on Erasmian notions of Biblical repetition (p. 161). Women's diaries and eulogies provide evidence about private meditation and prayer and the connection with general household duties is made apparent by women keeping embroidered Bibles in their linen chests.

Charlton argues that women educated families as mothers rather than wives. Maternal 'education' began when a prospective mother consulted an astrology manual to ensure the good health of her unborn child. This is an argument that conflates evidence of women's care for their children with their role as educators. The argument originates with Charlton's rejection of 'the Stone-Ariès-Shorter thesis' that early-modern families featured low levels of affection (pp. 193–6). Thus, this chapter contains material on women's 'informal' teaching methods at home, but also asserts their desire to breast-feed and provides evidence of their grief when children died.

This is a curate's egg of a book. Some conclusions are banal, others quite interesting. While there is much of relevance, large sections seem hardly relevant at all and there is tedious repetition of factual material. Mary Vere's patronage of Obadiah Sedgewick makes three appearances; the index entry for one is absent. The book's structure is that of multiple examples, rendering it a good reference tool for sources on attitudes to women, prescriptive literature, women's religious education and rather a lot more besides.

Charlton states 'this is not a feminist history' (p. 4) and he certainly draws no conclusions about the appearance in the late seventeenth century of the 'female voice', such as Makin and Astell, on women's education. Rather the book is more concerned to make the point that '[a] deep residual attachment to gender relations based on patriarchal power was not as all-dominant . . . as we might believe' (pp. 46–7). This position would have had more value for intellectual debate had he engaged, not just with the history of the family, but with important works on gender-training and education such as Anthony Fletcher's *Gender, Sex and Subordination* (1995) and Josephine Kamm's *Hope Deferred* (1965), neither of which are mentioned.

University of Hull **Amanda Capern**

John Callow, *The Making of King James II: The Formative Years of a Fallen King*, Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 2001, pp. xi + 373, hb. £20, ISBN: 0750923989

Before his accession in 1685, James II lived for fifty-two years in his brother's shadow. Energetic as Charles was indolent, James as Duke of York carved out for himself not just a role, but also a career. He gained a taste for soldiering in Flanders in the 1650s; he exploited his honorific appointment as Lord Admiral to become the principal administrator and commander of a newly powerful navy; and he supported a variety of commercial ventures. According to John Callow's study of James before he became King, conventional wisdom would have it that in all of these activities the Duke was something of a success, and would square this with his disastrous record as king by ascribing it to mental and physical degeneration brought on by syphilis. Dismissing the degeneration thesis, Callow points out that the Duke's successes owed more to the efforts of others but the failures were often his own. The fact that the former just outweighed the latter in the eyes of posterity was owing as much to James's construction of his own elaborate, if confused, memoir as to their real value.

Callow's judgement on James is a severe one, although he relents a little to accept that the navy did derive some benefit from the political attention it gained through James's advocacy. It is not an unreasonable judgement, for it would take a lot to redeem James from the low regard in which his intellectual ability was held by a large number of his contemporaries. But it is scarcely new; and the insight hardly adds up to the 'controversial' and 'seminal' work which is advertised on the dustjacket. Moreover, the book is poorly organised and its grasp of political context imperfect, so that the accounts (for example) of James's role at the navy, or his significance in domestic affairs, are fragmented and difficult to follow. And while Callow criticises other biographers for failing to use manuscript collections – in particular James's letters in the

Bodleian and the British Library and papers in Manchester relating to the Duke's household – he makes surprisingly little use of them himself, nor of other important collections – for example the Carte or Clarendon manuscripts – which might illuminate James's political or administrative roles.

At best, *The Making of King James II* provides a brief glimpse of the potential for a more rigorous assessment of James and his influence before 1685: how his interest was managed in Parliament, through Sir Allen Apsley and others; his financial difficulties, brought on, apparently, by extravagance; the influence of his mercantile interests on English diplomacy and commercial and military policy; and, above all, the significance and centrality of the Duke in English and Scottish politics for almost twenty years.

The History of Parliament **Paul Seaward**

Anthony Close, *Cervantes and the Comic Mind of his Age*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. vii + 375, hb. £50, ISBN: 0198149986

Some forty years ago E.C. Riley's ground-breaking *Cervantes's Theory of the Novel* showed how the works of Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616), particularly *Don Quijote* (1605, 1615) and the *Novelas Ejemplares* (1613), put forward a new concept of the novel as a distinct genre emerging out of the traditional poetic canons. In his seminal study Riley assembled, surveyed and elucidated Cervantes's numerous comments on prose fiction, as contained in his novels, in the light of the literary theory of the time. As well as shedding light on Cervantes as a literary critic, Cervantes's theoretical conception of his own art of narrative, Riley concluded, helps illuminate aspects of his own fiction.

In his *Cervantes and the Comic Mind of his Age* Anthony Close aims to 'supplement, not supplant' (p. 9) *Cervantes's Theory of the Novel* by examining Cervantes's poetics of comic fiction, an aspect which goes unexplored in Riley's monograph of 1962 on the grounds that no explicit pronouncement on the subject of comic fiction can be found in Cervantes's writings. Lack of formal theoretical discussion, Close argues, does not necessarily mean that Cervantes remains silent about the nature of the comic. For, as with his remarks on prose fiction, Cervantes's comments on how comic fiction should be written are scattered, more often than not in an informal manner, throughout his works. Common to these two facets of his poetics of fiction is also Cervantes's determination to stand against strands of pre-existing literature. Whereas the Books of Chivalry constitute the target of Cervantes's poetics of prose fiction, his views on the art of comic fiction are directed towards, on the one hand, the vogue for didacticism within the picaresque novel best represented by the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1544) and by Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599), and, on the other, the theatre of Lope de Vega (1562–1635) and his followers. In this respect, one of the many merits of Close's book lies in showing how Cervantes's comic works of the 1600s emerge as a reaction against the comic fiction of his contemporaries. Close does so by paying equal attention to Cervantes's conception of the comic, to Renaissance literary theory, and to what Close describes as a cluster of social practices, a 'comic mind', within the Spanish Golden Age. Of the latter both Cervantes and his antagonists will ultimately be an expression. What distinguishes Cervantes, however,

from the literature of entertainment dominant in Spain around 1600 is both his inclination to think in theoretical terms absent in other writers of comic fiction of the time, and his ability to transform major comic motifs derived from the picaresque, the *comedia* and the *novella* at a time when comedy had entered a period of crisis.

Part I of Close's book begins with an analysis of Cervantes's complex attitude to satire, which is inspired by a founding principle of his poetics, that of appropriateness (*propiedad*), and proceeds to examine the ambiguous concept of 'the truth of the history'. Focusing on *El coloquio de los perros*, one of the *Novelas Ejemplares*, on Cervantes's own comic theatre, and on the preface to *Don Quijote* part I as well as on several episodes from the novel, Close shows how Cervantes re-elaborates his primary models, Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* and the picaresque novel, and how he directs his attacks against the chivalry novels and the *comedia*. In part II the focus of attention shifts from Cervantes's poetics of comic fiction to the collective mentality of his age which informs the former. Undergoing profound change in the sixteenth century, in Cervantes's age this comic mind-set came to affect literary theoreticians and comic writers alike. It did so through a series of forces of repression operating at institutional, socio-genetic (a term taken from Norbert Elias's *The Civilising Process*) or behavioural level, which included courtly manners, social and religious discipline and an increasingly academic ethos. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 are devoted to a discussion of the traits of this comic mentality. Particular attention is given to the *mote* and *apodo* tradition, by far the most popular type of jest in the Spanish Golden Age. While masterfully showing how *Don Quijote* – a text which is meant to provoke the reader's laughter – stands as a reaction against the popular species of jest, Close omits an important link within that comic tradition, Leon Battista Alberti's *Momus sive de principe* of ca. 1452. Translated into Spanish in 1553 and reprinted in 1598, notably a year before the publication of, respectively, *Lazarillo de Tormes* and *Guzmán de Alfarache, Momus* was perceived as a typical representative of that comic tradition by practitioners of comic genres of the first three decades of the seventeenth century like Francisco López de Úbeda and Salas Barbadillo. Given the widespread dissemination of *Momus* and other humouristic writings by Alberti in Renaissance Spain, exploration of the impact of these texts on López de Úbeda, Salas Barbadillo and Cervantes's fiction could have proved an extremely fertile field in Close's monograph. All in all, however, a minor lacuna in an otherwise impressive book.

University of Nottingham **Alejandro Coroleu**

A. J. Piesse (ed.), *Sixteenth-Century Identities*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000, pp vii + 190, hb. £40, ISBN: 0719053832

The dominant images associated with this volume of seven essays on early modern identity are those of orientation and exploration. Appropriately, three of the articles reconnoitre the fashioning of identity through contemporary spatial and geographical representations, while the others expatiate on individual or collective worlds of interiority. The light editorial guidance of A. J. Piesse allows for resonances and connections to accompany the reader's journey through the book, signposting the importance

of allowing individual voices in the past to be heard through the agency of co-working historians and literary scholars in the present.

Most of the essays concentrate on the explication of a particular text or series of texts through a variety of reading styles. There is a stimulating directional survey by Douglas Gray which presents a longer view of individualisation than that hitherto posited in debates about Burckhardtian concepts. Subsequent essays point up the complexity of tracing the 'selving' process in the works of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century writers. The case-study by Mike Pincombe on the poet and statesman Thomas Sackville's attempt to find an individual authorial voice, and Helen Wilcox's counterpointing of Martha Moulsworth's *Memorandum* and John Donne's *Devotions* examine the aspirations of individuals in expressing selfhood, and reflect the opportunities offered and constraints posed by the different modes of autobiography. The question of collective identity is broached in Eiléan Ni Chuilleanáin's study of attitudes in print towards the manipulation of sacred space during the Reformation, and in Ciaran Brady's dissection of the mentality of the New English in late Tudor Ireland, as evidenced in William Herbert's *Croftus*. Victor Watts and John Scattergood are engaged in a search for evidence of the roots of national self-consciousness through toponymy and chorography, the latter in Leland's *Itinerary*, and the former also in Leland's work, and that of Camden, Harrison, Lluyd and others.

Contemporary European intellectual issues and trends are shown to have informed many of the texts discussed in the book. The works of the great self-fashioners, Erasmus and Justus Lipsius, were highly influential, for example, in the areas of salvific thought and social disciplining, respectively. English chorographers participated in the networks of scholarly correspondence encompassing most of the European countries, and poets were *au fait* with literary fashions elsewhere. Yet, away from the great theological and cultural debates of the age, we have brought to our attention the affective growth of a widow, Martha Moulsworth, who quietly articulated a confident sense of herself in her *Memorandum* of the 1630s, and the seemingly haphazard meanderings of John Leland which revealed a changing England in the 1540s.

This volume makes a genuinely interdisciplinary contribution to an understanding of how forms of self-consciousness in early modern England and Ireland developed through a multiplicity of genres, and in ways that cannot be totally explained by reference to intellectual fashions. The questions raised herein are an encouragement to fellow-explorers to think laterally in their respective fields as they ponder the topic of 'finding identity'.

National University of Ireland, Maynooth **Colm Lennon**

Jane Spencer, *Aphra Behn's Afterlife*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 309, hb. £45, ISBN: 0 198 818484 8; **Annette Kreis-Schinch**, *Women, Writing and the Theater in the Early Modern Period: The Plays of Aphra Behn and Suzanne [sic] Centlivre*, London, Associated University Presses, 2001, pp. 273, hb. £36.50, ISBN: 0838638619.

These books define the extremes of feminist studies of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century women writers. Jane Spencer's erudite and entertaining book offers an

important argument about gender and influence and brings an exceptional grasp of historical nuance to Behn's works themselves and the various ways in which they were coopted by later writers in the service of a range of different agendas. In Kreis-Schinck's book the production is riddled with errors (Centlivre's forename is misspelt on the title page and cover), the historical contextualising is weak, and even the acute close reading cannot redeem wider problems of conception and execution.

Spencer's study of 'Aphra Behn's afterlife' challenges a number of myths about Behn's reception. The distinction between the 'daughters of Orinda' (Katherine Philips, famous for chastity) and the 'daughters of Astraea' (Behn, dealing in raunchier images of femininity) is granted to have been useful to some women writers, but it is shown to have offered a useful way to engage with specific audiences at specific historical moments rather than a monolithic reality. Subtle and sensitive readings are offered of some cases where this binarism breaks down in interesting ways: thus Jane Barker the celebrated virgin poet and novelist praises Philips and denigrates Behn, but at the same time appropriates themes and plots from Behn in a way she does not from Philips. The generally-held view that after her death in 1689 Behn's reputation led to the virtual disappearance of her work (with the exception of *Oroonoko* which continued to have cultural currency but only as mediated through the dramatic version of Thomas Southerne) is revealed as a complete myth, with Behn's *Oroonoko* being reissued until 1800 and *The Rover* being one of the most popular of Restoration plays performed in the eighteenth century, though in adapted, even bowdlerised, forms.

Spencer's introduction and first chapter begin an ambitious study of 'the relations between women and the literary canon' (p. 1). Given a biology in which the child's soul was believed to descend from the father while the mother only provided the material shell, an ideology of gender where women were associated with physicality and men with intellectuality, and a culture where metaphors of paternity were crucial in defining an emerging literary canon, Behn's position as a female writer with potential literary 'descendants' was inherently problematic. The narrative of Behn's reception is one of 'high, though gradually declining, popularity, coupled with critical mockery and detraction' (p. 3), and her very professional success became one of the factors for demoting her in the emerging sphere of literary high culture.

The first section of Spencer's book, 'Reputations', deals with the emerging myth of Behn, concentrating especially on her poems, which 'strengthened the idea that, in Aphra Behn, sexuality and writing were inseparable' (p. 27). The emergence of a 'biographical tradition' is also examined, as is the reception of her verse, with Pope, 'the standard-bearer of neo-classical correctness' (p. 51), condemning Behn's poetry but not above appropriating echoes from it in his own representations of female sexuality. Spencer emphasises the difference in the reception history of Behn's fiction and drama. The movement for stage reform in the late seventeenth century did not end Behn's popularity as a dramatist – *The Rover* had separate editions in 1709, 1724, 1729, 1735, 1741, and 1757 – and commentators on the drama are willing to make allowances for historical difference when confronting the frank and mocking sexuality of the plays. (The most outrageous moment in Behn's dramatic oeuvre, incidentally, was held to be the episode in *The Rover* where Blunt, stripped to his underpants by the confidence trickster Lucetta, falls through a trapdoor into a sewer – male dignity and not decency seems the point of much of this criticism). On the contrary, the history of Behn's fiction is 'intimately bound up with the reception of the novel as a form' (p. 85), with the early novel being considered in itself unrespectable, its cultural

acceptance depending on placing male figures at the centre of its history, to the detriment of Behn's cultural reputation. (This very brief summary travesties Spencer's complex survey.)

Spencer's second section traces Behn's 'Influences' separately on male and female writers. Thomas Brown, Thomas Southerne and Samuel Richardson are read as 'Sons of Behn', with Brown helping to found the Behn myth, Southerne mediating Behn's work to the Age of Sensibility, and Richardson constructing an identity as male novelist by appropriating but also resisting the patterns of Behn's fiction. A 'feminist reading of influence and reception' (p. 134) is called for. An even more complex narrative emerges from the examination of the Daughters of Behn. In the 1690s Behn's name was used 'as a banner to authorize women's ventures into writing' (p. 154), and she was 'generally an enabling model' (p. 155) for dramatists like Catharine Trotter, Mary Pix and Delarivier Manley. In the early eighteenth century, however, the figure of the feminine writer was being constructed, and the cost of acceptance was to adhere to a chaste, compliant and domestic model. To women who aspired to this, Behn was not so much enabling as threatening or at best ambivalent. Anne Finch and Jane Barker, for instance, show troubled relations with their distinguished foremother. In the mid eighteenth century Behn's reputation changed still further, and her name was invoked as 'a bad example of women writers' (p. 173), though later in the century some women, secure in their respectable reputations, like Elizabeth Griffith, Clara Reeve and Hannah Cowley, looked back to Behn sympathetically. Cowley's *A School for Greybeards* (1786), a revision of Behn's *The Lucky Chance*, shows the difficulties but also the attractions of Behn as model for a female dramatist.

Spencer's final section, 'Receptions', offers a detailed reading of two specific literary afterlives, of *The Rover* and *Oroonoko*. The section on *The Rover* offers some astute detailed readings of Behn's play while at the same time tracing its posthumous history through eighteenth-century editions and performances to Kemble's revision of it as *Love in Many Masks* in 1790. It is a complex rather than a linear evolution: a 1757 edition, for instance, restores some contentious elements cut in earlier versions. Behn's open eroticism was a problem but even more so were her challenges to ideas of gender propriety, and much theatrical ingenuity was expended in preventing Blunt stripping on stage and in bowdlerising Hellena's frank and witty dialogue. A softening and sentimentalising process sees Willmore transformed from Behn's satire on the rake into a Georgian 'fine Gentleman'.

In the case of *Oroonoko* the key issue is the text's gradual cooption by the anti-slavery movement. Behn's 'troubled and opaque text' (p. 232), while problematizing the colonial project, seems not to criticise slavery as such – some people are slaves by nature, and the hero is himself a slave-dealer – but only to attack the dishonourable act of enslaving a prince. Southerne, who adapted Behn's novel into an influential drama, actually writes in a commercial justification of the slave trade. Later adaptations, though, were created or appropriated by abolitionists to make direct anti-slavery statements. Three dramatic versions appeared in 1759–60, and in *The Prince of Angola* (1787) John Ferriar, a leading Manchester campaigner against slavery, produced an 'explicitly abolitionist' (p. 258) play which argues that 'MIND has no COLOUR'. However, as *Oroonoko* again gained political and cultural significance, it was increasingly separated from Behn, being regarded as the work of Southerne, and when Behn is invoked it is to mock the improbabilities or improprieties in her almost forgotten text.

While Jane Spencer's book will be a model for all later studies of gender and literary influence, Annette Kreis-Schinck's is disappointing, and its self-description as the 'first monograph study offering in-depth analysis' of the plays of Behn and Susanna Centlivre claims too much. The two dramatists are compared in their representations of women, emphasising their treatment of marriage, divorce and widowhood, genre, sexual desire, and education. The conclusions, that 'the discursive controversies being fought over women's roles in society and culture provided sufficient space to delineate some place, however restricted, from which women could speak and write', are unexceptionable but lack historical nuance. Previously Annette Kreis-Schinck has specialised in modern literature, and her inexperience with Restoration and early eighteenth-century drama is apparent in her tendency to go to secondary rather than primary sources, and a few minor errors. Thomas Wright's *Female Vertuosos* appears, for instance, as *The Female Virtuoso* (p. 250), and she fails to realise that 'Mrs Gwin', who played Angelica-Bianca in *The Rover*, was not Nell Gwyn, but, as Janet Todd makes clear, Ann Marshall Gwyn. The book also, I deduce, has spent some time in press. The bibliography contains few items after 1995, a long time in criticism: she does not, for instance, seem to know Laura J. Rosenthal's *Playwrights and Plagiarists in Early Modern England: Gender, Authority, Literary Property* (1996), the best recent book to compare Behn and Centlivre.

The first chapters plod through material of questionable relevance – the introduction of registers of births, marriages and deaths in 1538, the murder of Arden of Faversham in 1551, Palladio's 1585 theatre in Vicenza. When she moves into the Restoration period and later, her contextual material is familiar. Kreis-Schinck's reading of competing voices in Mary Astell's work is interesting, but it is hard to escape the feeling that we have heard most of this before. There are problems too in her contextualising of the dramatists within contemporary theatrical practice. The index contains only some fifteen plays not by Behn or Centlivre, conveying a curiously attenuated view of contemporary theatre, the plays are unrooted in the material circumstances of their production and performance, and one is left uncertain about the relationship between tradition and the individual female talent.

Because of this, some of Kreis-Schinck's best observations are called into question. She argues, for instance, that female sexual desire is so difficult an issue for women dramatists that the expression of female desire shifts the genre of the play – in Behn's from comedy to tragicomedy, in Centlivre's to farce. However, it is unclear whether this is peculiar to women dramatists: does Lady Brute's desire in *The Provok'd Wife* not shift the comedy likewise to tragicomedy and farce?

The book is highly selective in its choice of material: for Centlivre, there are only brief mentions of her most famous plays, *The Busy Body, The Wonder: a Woman Keeps a Secret*, and *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*. The passionate and independent Violante in *The Wonder* and the reformed mistress Mrs Plotwell in *The Beau's Duel* cry out for fuller treatment. The book is better on Behn than Centlivre, and the comparison almost always unhelpfully relegates the latter to a briefer and subordinate position: Kreis-Schink accepts the traditional views of the poverty of Centlivre's language (since she fails to acknowledge the importance of political wordplay and allegory).

The decision to concentrate on the phases of women's lives means that we never get a sense of any play as a whole. In the case of Centlivre's *The Basset-Table*, Lady Reveller appears in the section on widows (p. 126), Lady Lucy in that on class and marriage (p. 81), Valeria in the chapter on women's education (pp. 214–17), with

little attempt to draw threads together. Silent women in Centlivre feature in the section on sexual desire, but without the two best examples, Mrs Plotwell and Miranda in *The Busy Body*, who have been briefly alluded to earlier.

The book is whimsically divided into acts and scenes rather than chapters, and the author has an idiosyncratic prose style, in which rhetorical questions definitely over-feature. It is a pity that these features vitiate the argument, since it has interesting points to make, especially about the expression of female desire.

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