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2013

Of Love and War: The Political Voice in the Early Plays of Aphra Behn by Judy A. Hayden (review)

Karen Gevirtz



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Karen Gevirtz

The Scriblerian and the Kit-Cats, Volume 45, Number 2, Spring 2013, pp.
267-269 (Review)

Published by The Scriblerian and the Kit-Cats

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/scb.2013.0033>



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at roughly the same time in Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. For example, the section on Wales begins with the well-known transplant, Katharine Philips, who in her poem “On the Welch Language” “engages with Wales” in “almost ethnographic tones,” while noting that the local language “hath her beauty Lost.” Ms. Chedgzoy places in dramatic parallel with Philips one Magdalen Lloyd, a transplant from Wales in domestic service in London, whose memories provide comfort and “human connections despite geographical separation.”

The chapter on “Women’s Writings and the Memory of War” examines Bradstreet’s mediation of past history and current civil war in the 1640s. Attention is also turned to the step-daughters of Margaret Cavendish—Elizabeth Brackley and Jane Cavendish—and their turn to memories that sustained them through the trials of the Civil War, while their father was first in battle and later in exile, and their ancestral homes were besieged and sometimes occupied by Roundheads. Not enough is done with these two fascinating women. Their manuscript collection, Bod. MS. Rawl. 16, an admixture of verse; a play about marriage choices, *Concealed Fansyes*; and a strange *Pastorall* involving witches, is discussed without much logic, and, oddly, there is no reference to the publication of *Concealed Fansyes* (ed. Nathan Comfort Starr, *PMLA*, 1931). But the chapter turns quickly to Lady Hester Pulter, whose manuscript in the Brotherton Collection (Lt q 32) contains over one hundred poems and an unfinished prose romance, this latter not discussed. Pulter’s poems are highly political, and use public spaces and landscapes as sites of memory for the lost world of the Royalists in the 1640s. Although the poems discussed are not given dates and are quickly reviewed, they show that Pulter is a writer who needs

more attention. Lucy Hutchinson is also surveyed too quickly, and it seems as a counterbalance to the royalism of the other women discussed in the chapter.

The final section, “Atlantic Removes, Memory’s Travels,” is given over to Behn and Mary Rowlandson, returning the focus to the Americas. Both authors purport to write histories, and both present memories of the “Other.” While one can enjoy imagining Behn as a Bible-reciting memorialist as Rowlandson is, it is Rowlandson who demonizes the “Other” in presenting the horrors of her captivity while Behn celebrates the memory of the African Oroonoko and of the Caribs, a people approaching a praeternatural state in a prelapsarian Eden before corruption by the English and the Dutch. As good as the discussion of the role of memory is in this section, one longs for a discussion of what Behn and Rowlandson have left out, especially Rowlandson, whose account lacks the coherence that Behn appears to muster.

This handbook is a useful survey of the use of memory and memorial techniques in seventeenth-century writings by women. In-depth analyses will wait for others who build on Ms. Chedgzoy’s recovery.

Mary Ann O’Donnell *Manhattan College*

JUDY A. HAYDEN. *Of Love and War: The Political Voice in the Early Plays of Aphra Behn*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010. Pp. 303. €63; \$85.

Arguing that Behn’s early plays should be read as responses to the political turmoil of the early part of Charles II’s reign, Ms. Hayden contends that she “does not board the political bandwagon during the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis. Although her plays may have become more vocal and certainly more outwardly royalist after the Exclusion Crisis, they consistently express political content.” Each of the five

chapters has a common focus: the relationship between each play and the political issues of the early years of the Restoration. A Conclusion and Appendices provide the relevant period political documents.

Chapter One addresses *The Young King*, which Ms. Hayden dates to the period between 1664 and 1670. Relying on Frederick Link's 1968 Behn biography, Ms. Hayden uses the dedication, a document usually used to help date the play's origins, to reject the notion that the play was begun or that an early draft was written while she was in Surinam, as well as the theory that it was revised during the 1670s. "That she was able to revive this play in 1679 owes much to the similarity of the political issues of Restoration and Exclusion." Chapter One also discusses the romance plot taken from La Calprenède, the inclusion of a Druid among the characters, gender, the play's use of the restoration plot that is characteristic of Carolean drama—a term used interchangeably with "Caroline literature," "Restoration-type drama," and "Restoration drama"—the play's effort to historicize the Stuart monarchy, and the "parallel in Polish/Swedish historical events during the reign of Sigismund III with those in mid-seventeenth-century England," which Ms. Hayden calls "remarkable."

The other chapters on the plays also follow this form: they open with a description of a historical situation, identify issues in the dramas, and provide descriptions or lists of contemporary male-authored plays that share with Behn's a technique (a character like a Druid or a Moor) or an issue (such as incest). Chapter Two argues that "*The Forc'd Marriage* is a restoration-type play that re-historicizes the events surrounding the collapse of the Interregnum government and the return of the Stuart monarchy." In Chapter Three, Ms. Hayden

explains that in *The Amorous Prince*, Behn criticizes not Charles II's sexual exploits nor his preference for sex over governing, but the courtiers who supply women to tempt him. Yet Behn's drama, like those of her male contemporaries, "demonstrate[s] public anxiety about the King's lack of sexual restraint." With *The Dutch Lover*, the subject of Chapter Four, "Behn reaches her stride as a shrewd and competitive playwright." The play was a miserable failure, however, and Ms. Hayden accepts Behn's claim that it was the actors that killed it: "Hippolyta's questioning of gender privilege must have been both intimidating and shocking to the male hierarchy. That the actors intentionally sabotaged the play, then, is perhaps not surprising, and, under the circumstances, the lack of approval from her audience is unfortunate, but understandable." Chapter Five on *Abdelazer* maintains that his "point is that contemporary contention about Catholicism is merely a means to distract and to divide the polity over the chief issue at stake—the succession"—thus positing religious issues as separate and a diversion from the real problems of royal succession. Much of this chapter draws parallels between the character of the Queen and the actual Duchess of Portsmouth; for example, "While the Queen rifles the treasury for her lover in this play, the expensive Duchess of Portsmouth spent money in lavish receptions and refurbished on numerous occasions her sumptuous apartments. The estimate is that with her pensions and her presents, she cost the country nearly £40,000 annually."

The conclusion, focusing on a justification for viewing Behn's early plays within the context of her male contemporaries, reviews women's opportunities to enter the public sphere during the Civil War, Commonwealth, and Restoration, and also

speculates about what Behn thought and felt. Primarily, however, it seems designed to inveigh against critics who label her a “feminist,” although what either they— whoever they are—or Ms. Hayden mean by that term remains undisclosed. “If then we must label her,” Ms. Hayden writes in her final sentence, “let it be as a playwright or poet, as a fiction writer or translator, since, after all, she frequently included herself as one of the brothers of the pen.” When it comes to Behn, it seems we should be in a postgender world. Since the previous 200 pages often acknowledge that Behn encountered and sometimes used gender ideology, it surprises that this is really what Ms. Hayden wants us to conclude from her work. Only two paragraphs before, she notes, “That Behn claimed a space within the masculine domain of public writing was highly irregular and certainly made her a target for satire.” Nor is it news anymore that the term “feminist,” however defined, is problematic when used to describe the ideologies and methods of women in times and cultures other than the one that coined the term. Overall, *Of Love and War*’s extensive lists, descriptions, and summaries evince that, like her male contemporaries, Behn indeed was a product of a time when politics and theater were inextricable.

Karen Gevirtz Seton Hall University

Theatre and Culture in Early Modern England, 1650–1737: From Leviathan to Licensing Act, ed. Catie Gill. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010. Pp. xii + 178. \$99.95.

Nine essays provide a rich exploration of the cultural contexts of theatrical production during what Ms. Gill terms the “long Restoration.” The two texts referenced in the collection’s subtitle indicate two key themes throughout the book. First, she convincingly suggests that the Hob-

besian perspective was soon replaced by Locke’s “theories of equality” and that the effects of this displacement can be seen in the period’s theater. The second theme, on growing efforts to regulate the theater in the early eighteenth century, however, is less visible than Ms. Gill asserts. While “Restoration censorship was not ‘predictable or tidy,’” Ms. Gill states, the Licensing Act “formalized the state’s interest in controlling drama.” Although the collection offers nuanced insights into social trends, issues of censorship are not prominent among these insights.

Paddy Lyons’s “What Do the Servants Know?” reveals that although “Outside the entertainment industry, . . . servitude and knowledge were not at all aligned in Restoration England,” on the stage “it is taken for granted that servants generally can and do *know*” their masters’ and mistresses’ most private thoughts and activities. Investigating “how the Restoration could imagine servants differently . . . from how servants were viewed in Restoration life,” he finds a “radical change to what servants are imagined to know” becomes manifest in plays written after 1700, when servants increasingly take more active roles in comedic love plots. For him, Lockean notions of class help produce this change. Jacqueline Pearson’s “Flinging the Book Away: Books, Reading, and Gender on the Restoration Stage” argues that, although “In Restoration comedy, genteel characters are expected to have read,” to depict them as reading on stage “risks the appearance of bookishness, professionalism, and a lack of the sociality and heterosociality that were becoming so crucial in the construction of a genteel masculinity.” She maintains that early Restoration anxieties concerning women’s reading “decrease in intensity after the turn of the century” while “concerns about masculinity and