

poetry alive for us and for our students. Like other valuable works of criticism, this book leaves us wanting even more, but able to think that “more” for ourselves.

Marsha Urban. *Seventeenth-Century Mother's Advice Books*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. xii + 206pp + 16 illustrations. \$69.95. Review by TIM REINKE-WILLIAMS, KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON.

Scholars of early modern women and gender have long been aware of the importance of parent-child relationships in determining family and household politics. Pioneering historians of the 1970s and 1980s such as Lawrence Stone, Alan MacFarlane and Ralph Houlbrooke found prescriptive advice literature to be a useful source for helping to formulate questions about the nature of domestic life. Many of these sources were problematic as they were male-authored, and as such revealed more about early modern patriarchal ideology than the practices and experiences of daily life. One exception to the rule was a sub-genre of female-authored mother's legacies, published mostly in the first half of the seventeenth century. Authored by women from the gentry and upper middling sorts, these texts were written by expectant mothers for their husbands and their unborn offspring. Fearing they might die in childbirth, some women chose to clarify how they wished their children to be raised in the event of their demise. Varying in tone between passive and pious, forceful and angry, such writings can provide some degree of information as to what women themselves considered the duties of a good parent to be. The responsibilities of motherhood provided women with a rare occasion to publish their own thoughts without occasioning an immediately hostile reaction, and in general contemporaries accepted that women could not be forced to remain silent if by writing or speaking out their desire was to help their children. As Patricia Crawford, Laura Gowing, and Linda Pollock have shown, the exclusively female functions of childbirth and breastfeeding united women as mothers, and gave women a unique natural authority that men could not enjoy. By entering the public discourse through their role as mothers, women sidestepped male disapproval and avoided potential attacks on their authority as women.

Urban's book begins with a useful and up-to-date summary of much important literature on the family, demography, and fertility in early modern society, before moving on to highlight some of the major themes and issues discussed in such texts. Expectant mothers emphasised the need to inculcate ideals of modesty, chastity and piety into their children, as well as some semblance of equality and agency for women. The deportment of the child was of utmost importance, and Elizabeth Grymeston believed modesty in dress, speech, and action to be attributes of both sexes. Dorothy Leigh stressed the importance for both young women and young men of maintaining chastity prior to marriage, and by using the term 'children' she appears not to have differentiated greatly between her male and female offspring (although she placed the responsibility for a loving marriage squarely on the man's shoulders). Urban also discusses how piety and elite social rank enabled female authors to project positive self-images. Elizabeth Joscelyn wished to be perceived as a God-fearing, learned woman from a God-fearing family, whilst the social position of Elizabeth, Countess of Lincoln, imbued her text with an assumed public agency.

After this introductory chapter Urban discusses a specific text in greater detail. *Age Rectified* was published in 1707, over fifty years later than the other legacies, and differs significantly from the earlier, but better known texts. Urban demonstrates that it was written by one Anne Brockman, a member of the Kentish gentry who only began to have children at the age of thirty-five. Brockman identified herself with a "neighbourhood" of mothers, showing how motherhood could bring women into various social networks and potentially earn them respect and credit in their local communities.

Brockman's purpose in writing was markedly different than the other women discussed by Urban. Rather than instilling a love for God in their children, Brockman argued that mothers ought to rear their offspring so that they retained a love for their mother throughout their lives so that elderly gentlewomen could cohabit with their adult children in peace and quiet. Whilst earlier advice books focused on piety, self-sacrifice, and chastity, *Age Rectified* re-envisioned the duties of a mother. She discussed the time parents allotted for their children, arguing that by building a foundation of parent-child interaction early in life, parents were building an annuity of sorts. By banking upon the emotional connection from childhood, parents, especially mothers created an emotional annuity that they could draw upon in old age when they

needed support from their adult children. Brockman changed the role of mother from one of enforcer of Christian values to one of guide to ethical choices, emphasising that mothers should let their children go as they mature and reduce interference in the lives of their offspring to a minimum in order to hold on their affections in adulthood. Her strategy was to produce an independent adult with natural parental ties. Like her predecessors, Brockman was concerned with providing her children with lessons for a good life, but these lessons are also providing her with a retirement plan—a place in her adult child's household.

Brockman also moved away from the focus on motherhood to seek to improve the lives of aged mothers, advising women to take any available opportunity to obtain knowledge of physic and surgery as this would enable them to be useful and charitable individuals, earning them esteem from their neighbours by helping out in times of illness. Brockman's aim was to make old age a time filled with activity and people for women. She pointed out that advice was seldom given to the aged, who were either venerated or thought ridiculous, expressing her fear that the aged did not want to admit their faults, a lapse that might create difficulties with the younger generation.

Marsha Urban has done a great service to literary scholars and historians by bringing to light and discussing in such detail a much neglected text. As well as getting a real sense of the author and her motives, Urban links *Age Rectified* to important recent scholarship on motherhood and old age in early modern England. Scholars interested in either of these topics must read this book.

Sophie Tomlinson. *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xiv + 294 pp. + 12 illus. \$85.00. Review by AYANNA THOMPSON, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY.

As anyone who works on Restoration texts knows, scholars of the earlier seventeenth century and the later eighteenth century often either ignore Restoration drama or treat it like some bizarre anomaly that occurred *ex nihilo*. Sophie Tomlinson's new book *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama*, however, offers an important intervention by demonstrating "the literary and theatrical continuities" between early seventeenth-century court productions and later