Mary Jo Kietzman. *The Self-Fashioning of an Early Modern Englishwoman: Mary Carleton's Lives*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004. 350 pp. + 12 illus. $79.95. Review by TIM REINKE-WILLIAMS, UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK.

Mary Jo Kietzman's book is an interdisciplinary study of Mary Carleton, the daughter of a Canterbury fiddler who appeared before the Old Bailey in 1663 charged both with bigamy and with claiming to be Maria von Wolway, a German aristocrat. Carleton's trial attracted widespread attention and her performance in court was so convincing that she was acquitted. After the trial, Mary admitted that she was not in fact Maria von Wolway. Her confession shocked London society and made her a Restoration celebrity. Kietzman's book draws on London and Middlesex Sessions records, Quarter Sessions and wills from Carleton's home county of Kent, London parish registers, and biographies and pamphlets written by and about Mary Carleton to reconstruct her life and place her within the context of literary developments of the later seventeenth century.

Kietzman argues that Mary Carleton anticipated and helped produce changes in women's status in the late seventeenth century by suggesting that she exploited the implicit recognition of women's right to voice opinions in public that emerged as a result of the Civil War. Kietzman believes Carleton's actions helped lead to changes in economic practice, popular mentality, and philosophical thought about identity. She describes Mary as a practitioner of "self-serialization," a concept she defines as the creation and deployment of constructed personages in response to specific situations.

Kietzman argues that self-serialisation was a recognisable social practice and behavioural style of London's lower orders by the 1660s that involved improvising performances and inventing personages. She explains the emergence of this phenomenon by locating it within the context of economic and political changes which led to a loss of social legibility and increased commercial activity but which also made it possible to realise imagined projects, schemes, and performances. Lower class women had no choice but to develop chameleon-like personalities to ensure their economic security. Kietzman takes this further and argues that Restoration culture actively encouraged social display within urban settings of show and promenade. Displaying or verbalising the self was an acceptable and rewarded mode of comportment. With the right clothes and accoutrements women of any social class could

create and represent an artificial personage in public. The extent to which women controlled their creations depended on their confidence or courage and the tropes of public femininity in existence.

Kietzman describes Carleton's life as one of continuous self-serialisation and suggests women of the lower orders "performed" multiple self-identities on the London streets. She argues that Carleton's trial appealed to ordinary Londoners because it showed self-fashioning to be a possibility for the lower sorts. According to Kietzman, the narratives Carleton deployed in court and in print emerged from and were responses to her social circumstances. Her self-serialisations enabled her to advance her personal interests.

As well as being a social practice, self-serialisation was a textual process with wider literary significance, aiding the development of a realist aesthetic by creating both author and constructed personages from social experiences. Kietzman believes that by creating different personages and asserting subjectivity beyond the categories society allowed her Mary Carleton was a precursor to the autobiographical subject of the eighteenth century and the inspiration for the heroines of Aphra Behn and Daniel Defoe. Carleton anticipated the novel by representing self-serialisation as something positive and created and embodied the picaresque mode, a genre that grew out of specific social experience and flowered in a print culture seeking the lives of more or less ordinary individuals.

Kietzman's monograph can be located within a number of trends in historical and literary studies. She places Mary Carleton's experience within the wider context of the historiographies of women's lives in early modern London and of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century crime. This is not a particularly strong aspect of the book. Although Amy Froide's recent thesis on single women is cited, many other important works are missing from the bibliography, particularly the monographs of Laura Gowing and Margaret Hunt. Kietzman argues that Carleton's self-serialisation enabled her to survive within the metropolis. Presumably the book went to press before Kietzman could consult Bernard Capp's recent monograph *When Gossips Meet* (2003), in which Capp suggests a number of other means by which ordinary women negotiated their position within patriarchal society.

By retelling Carleton's story through pamphlets and biographies Kietzman ought to have engaged with studies of cheap print that have dealt with authorship, readership, and increasingly with issues of genre and consumption.

Adam Fox, Peter Lake, Joad Raymond, and Tessa Watt have all made significant contributions to the study of the content and reception of pamphlet literature, but again, other than an article by Fox, this historiography is notable by its absence.

Most importantly, Kietzman places Carleton within the study of female subjectivity at a halfway point between Stephen Greenblatt's ideas of Renaissance self-fashioning and studies of the self in relation to the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century. To this reader Kietzman appears to have been aspiring to write a work of new historicism by recreating the life of an early modern celebrity author through her writings. Considering the title of the book, it is somewhat perverse that Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980) was absent from the bibliography, and it might have been beneficial for Kietzman to consult Bernard Capp's fine study of another self-publicising early modern writer, *The World of John Taylor the Water-Poet* (1994).

Kietzman's attempt at an interdisciplinary approach is unfortunately unsuccessful. As a work of social history, there is insufficient engagement with issues of audience and consumption of printed texts, and Kietzman admits in chapter four that her archival research was not as fruitful as she hoped it to be. Literary scholars will likewise find the book a disappointment. The texts being examined do not appear to have been subjected to either a particularly close reading or presented within a sufficiently sophisticated theoretical framework. Ultimately, this is a missed opportunity. Although the idea of self-serialisation is an interesting one that deserves further investigation, it remains to be seen if this study will convince historians or literary critics to pursue it further.

Marta Straznicky. *Privacy, Playreading, and Women's Closet Drama, 1550-1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 175 pp. $75.00. Review by NANCY M. BUNKER, MACON STATE COLLEGE.

Privacy, Playreading, and Women's Closet Drama, 1550-1700 historicizes and contextualizes early modern women's closet plays: plays explicitly written for reading, rather than public performance. Marta Straznicky's study reveals that these plays are "permeated with traditions of commercial drama," grounded in an "aristocratic … private" literary culture (1). Closet drama, an alternative