

and finely written book, and Dodds reads her chosen texts attentively and illuminatingly.

Kate Narveson. *Bible Readers and Lay Writers in Early Modern England: Gender and Self-Definition in an Emergent Writing Culture*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012. x + 235 pp. + 12 illus. \$99.95. Review by LISSA BEAUCHAMP DESROCHES, ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY.

Kate Narveson's examination of lay writing in divinity is a thorough and wide-ranging recovery of texts about the emergence of identity through authorship in the period. She further examines gendered authorship in a balanced context, placing texts by male and female authors side by side to offer insights on key similarities as well as differences. Indeed, as she traces the fascinating subtleties that connect reading and writing practices, she shows how the concerns with identity in this period are important to both men and women for similar reasons. In drawing attention to these significant points of similarity, Narveson firmly places the emphasis on identity as people construct it through reading and writing. This larger context is then applicable beyond the period she sets for her examination and in fact constitutes a theoretical hermeneutic.

In the first part of the book, consisting of four chapters, Narveson focuses on the ephemeral connection between the internalizing process of reading practices, in both active and passive senses, and the expression of writing, both as a "passive" reproduction of received generic convention and in the active sense of selecting what conventions to use for the purpose at hand. Narveson resists the easy conclusiveness of essentialist arguments and treads the paradoxical lines of her evidence, showing how passive and active modes co-operate in both reading and writing practices. And despite prevailing notions of either subversiveness or subordinated models, Narveson demonstrates how the paradox of "guided reading" invites readers to engage directly with the text in order to find a sense of connection with it, without the guidance necessarily controlling the response. Using a variety of examples from men and women of different classes and levels of education, she reveals the web of common elements that form a common

sense of belonging among readers of prayer books, spiritual memoirs, and the bible itself, both in printed texts and “private” manuscripts intended for family or personal use. Thus she demonstrates that the notion of applying reading to everyday experience, so important to Reformation exegesis, implicates each reader as an emerging identity, in the deliberate and conscious process of self-construction as a writer. And, through selective imitation, each writer reflects that process for readers in turn, encoding (sometimes deliberately, sometimes without design) the paratextual details and exegetical methods in their own hands—literally, in manuscripts in their own writing as well as print.

Part 2, divided into three chapters, focuses the discussion on the question of gender, but not by exclusive examination of one or the other; like a few other critical voices, Narveson espouses the importance of placing female authors in context beside male authors, with some interesting results. The first is that in devotional prayers, gender does not seem to signify; as in medieval exegesis, when monks gendered themselves female to describe an intensified, intimate awareness of Christ, so in Reformation prayers, the soul has no specific gender. This may seem an equivocation, but it is not; think of Donne’s Holy Sonnet 14 or 18: appropriating a differently gendered voice is the same as relinquishing bodily gender as a marker of identity, or at least it has the same effect for readers and writers: “Voice, [Danielle] Clarke reminds us, is a rhetorical construct. And the rhetoric of the devotional voice tends to suppress gender” (Narveson, 132). Secondly, Narveson’s conception of “discursive horizons” is useful beyond the categories of gender that she uses it to explore, and, I think, beyond the period too:

these examples indicate the role of genre or mode in shaping voice. Genres carry conventions: the voice of the historian is far less gendered than that of the flirtatious correspondent. ... By ‘horizon’ I mean the vista of texts and discourses that appear in a compilation or composition. ... [this] included the full range of texts the person read in print or manuscript and the oral discourses he or she participated in. Scripture and godly books might be the immediate context for devotion, but Latin adages and observations by Montaigne might for one author be situated in the same general vicinity while for another, the *Book of Common Prayer* might dominate the

landscape, and for another, broadsheets giving news of God's providential acts might stand next to the earnest conversation with neighbors that followed a sermon. A discursive horizon may be broad, including classical literature, political events, Church Fathers, and continental theologians, or it may be narrow, including only the Bible and godly books. Further, a horizon has a foreground, a background, and peripheries, and can therefore be a useful way to think not simply about what texts and discourses register in a person's writing, but what prominence they have and how other texts are qualified by their position in relation to the dominant discursive features. (Narveson, 133-134)

In this sense, a rhetoric of reading—print, manuscript, Bibles, social conversation—becomes a “schoolroom of print,” teaching people through both reading and then writing how to remake themselves as reading material for others.

Such practices are indeed problematic for the emerging professional class of clergy: if laypeople can claim authority as authors simply by reading readily available texts, then what is the distinction of professional office and formal education worth? The final chapter and conclusion return to this question, first addressed in the opening chapters regarding how to read independently and with guidance at the same time. Just as in earlier chapters, Narveson charts tension between passive and active habits as advocated by clergy and practiced by laypeople, so too in her conclusions she returns to the theme, amplified by the intervening discussion. She points to how authorship can itself negotiate a position within a hierarchical order and still be functional, claiming the authority of experience (like Chaucer's *Wife of Bath*) but still respectful of patristic sources and/or educated clergy, for instance. Thus the emerging genres of lay divinity, while threatening to clergy's authority as professional interpreters of scripture, yet motivate clergy to continually justify its status as educated guides.

The only weaknesses I noticed here are slight and relevant only in certain contexts. Given the wide-ranging application of the theoretical model Narveson develops, she gives very slight treatment to the monastic traditions of exegesis that in many ways inform the Reformation reading practices she examines so thoroughly. Such background is an

enormous and complex study in itself, and so admittedly difficult to treat fairly as background; but some basic review and reference could have been included here, with direction to further more specific research, and might have enlarged the discussion more explicitly. As well, I would like to have seen a more explicit engagement with theoretical models of reading, given the kind of ideas Narveson herself develops. At one point she makes a brief reference to Wolfgang Iser's concept of reading as performance, but beyond this she limits herself to period-relevant criticism only. The absence of reference to Stanley Fish and Roland Barthes stands out; Barthes in particular seems a blind spot, given his theorizing of authorship and writerly/readerly writing and reading. That being said, however, some may consider this a strength because the omission permits Narveson to concentrate on excavating and recovering manuscript sources, so again, the weakness I note here is relevant only for some. Overall, this is a sophisticated and engagingly lively discussion that ranges impressively through the primary and critical sources involved—perhaps more so than Narveson recognizes herself.

Derek Hirst and Steven N. Zwicker. *Andrew Marvell, Orphan of the Hurricane*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. xvi + 197 pp. \$99.00. Review by GEORGE KLAWITTER, HOLY CROSS COLLEGE.

For *Andrew Marvell, Orphan of the Hurricane*, Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker have undertaken a difficult and, as they admit twice in their introduction, suspect construction or re-construction of Andrew Marvell's "imagined life." Since the poet left us few autobiographical comments, they contend readers are free to create for themselves the man-behind-the-poems as much as they can discern or think they can discern behind the lyrics and the prose (both letters and tracts).

For chapter one, they focus on "Upon Appleton House," and after Vitally Eyber's rather exhaustive 2010 analysis of the poem (*Upon Appleton House: An Analytic Commentary*) it is a wonder that Hirst and Zwicker could find anything fresh to say about that long poem, and they admit that the poem cannot be successfully explicated with any kind of finality. This opening chapter of *Orphan*, however, adds some