

tive, full of double negatives, surmise, and interrogatory constructions” (59), which challenge the reader to engagement.

Woods finds these linguistic challenges to the reader to a greater and lesser degree in all of Milton’s work. But her analysis of the metaphors, indirect locutions, double negatives, rhetorical questions, and surmises in *Areopagitica* persuasively demonstrates how Milton requires the reader to translate between the vehicle and tenor of his proliferating metaphors, to consider a statement in the context of its opposite, to answer his questions, and to weigh his surmises (99). Her study fittingly ends by tracing the effects of the “inspiring and indeterminate” rhetoric (173) of *Areopagitica* on two traditions of readers who have evolved “(what we now call) conservative and progressive definitions of individual freedom” (179). In the current debates by Washington think tank spokespersons between “liberty’ as free markets, unimpeded by government, and ‘liberty’ as social opportunity, aided by just governance,” Woods finds evidence that Milton’s “words ... have found force in the individual time and place of their interpreters” (195). Woods ends her contribution to recent testimonies to Milton’s continuing relevance with a brief excursus on the contribution of contemporary neuroscience to the discussion of human freedom, where the capaciousness of Milton’s mind, she argues, would have made him “quite at home” (197).

Barbara Wooding. *John Lowin and the English Theatre, 1603-1647*. Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2013. 209 pp. + 2 Figures and 1 Table. \$99.95. Review by NANCY M. BUNKER, MIDDLE GEORGIA STATE COLLEGE.

While John Lowin’s name may not be well known in the scholarly documents of theatre history, his career and role in early modern drama records a life spent working at the craft he loved. In this first comprehensive study, *John Lowin and the English Theatre, 1603-1647*, Barbara Wooding establishes the trajectory of a multi-talented man with deep ties to Southwark and the theatrical enterprise. She situates Lowin at the beginning of seventeenth-century drama, noting that his career developed after Shakespeare’s and after the death of theatre

pioneer James Burbage. Wooding examines Lowin's role as a performer, company manager, and parish leader.

Records of his function and purpose within the King's Men Company provide a narrative from which she traces the evolution of Jacobean then Caroline drama. From archives and snippets of information about his life outside the theatre, Wooding establishes a portrait of this less well-known man and the less-studied plays from which he fashioned a place among the players for over fifty years.

Wooding contextualizes Lowin's career from the beginning of the book, and maintains this emphasis throughout. She notes that his early credits on stage include roles in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus, his Fall* and John Marston's *The Malcontent*. Both plays involved controversy and censorship, which prepared him for the anti-theatrical prejudice hovering over the playhouse productions, and allowed him to study his craft among such greats as Richard Burbage, John Heminges, and Henry Condell. Partial cast lists show Lowin first undertaking the role of Politique Would-Be in *Volpone*, next Sir Epicure Mammon in *The Alchemist*, as well as Falstaff in Shakespearean revivals. Research indicates that he created the role of Henry VIII. Wooding points out that documentation of later roles relies on the printed texts because "for almost all of Lowin's known roles, there are no variant texts, and no surviving actors' parts (22). She addresses the treatise *Brief Conclusions upon dances, both of this age and of the olde*, Lowin's pamphlet written after the Gunpowder Plot and the playhouse closure due to plague in 1606, as a way of remaining professionally active with his peers while theatres were closed.

Wooding points out the critical shift in company history after the King's Men obtained Blackfriars. The opportunity for a wider repertory designed to meet both the newer "wealthier" audiences and the Globe's "citizen-based, mixed audience" intersected with works of Beaumont and Fletcher that had not been available to the King's Men (29). At this time, the role of Melantius in *The Maid's Tragedy* appears to be Lowin's creation, and he also participated in the pageant for the inauguration of London's Lord Mayor, Sir James Pemberton. Simultaneously, Lowin assumed a more active role as a citizen with duties and responsibility over apprentices and financial oversight in the rebuilding of the Globe. Wooding's commentary on the first decade

of Lowin's career advocates for his involvement as a player and for his work in a premier group with seasoned professionals. *All is True*, a Shakespeare/Fletcher collaboration, critiques "court extravagance" (48) during Henry VIII's reign; for Wooding, the blatant hostility of that play engages the wider political objective of interrogating England's dynastic leaders even as the "Empire was beginning to crumble" (49). The role as Bosola in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* marked career advancement as Lowin came to be associated with the play's long-standing popularity. Wooding suggests achieving the "balance between black humour and tragedy" proves his sophisticated and developing skills (58).

Among the more revealing facts of Lowin's career, his constancy remains a hallmark. Wooding's portrait of the actor's career explicates myriad sophisticated roles; the helpful Table closing Chapter 5 furnishes complete cast lists for seven plays in addition to *The Duchess of Malfi*, and delves into Lowin's roles amidst historical, political, and religious circumstances. She expertly examines his evolving development within the ever-shifting demands of public taste, treating each play as a case study, bringing clarity and understanding to the actor's roles. Lowin's repertoire included playing Domitianus Caesar in *The Roman Actor*, a new play that Philip Massinger brought to the stage upon taking over as lead playwright after Fletcher's death. The formidable character demanded a commanding stage presence who portrayed manipulative strategy and stubbornness but nothing that would threaten King Charles I. Lowin's old Counselor, Eubulus, in *The Picture*, portrays the voice of wisdom while addressing concern about powerful leaders who are inattentive to the "excesses of peace" (114). At this time, Lowin, along with Joseph Taylor, continued acting and took on administrative responsibilities for the King's Men after John Heminges' death.

The Deserving Favourite affords Lowin the role of Iacomo, a despicable character "without redeeming virtue, rapacious, cowardly, deceitful, and concupiscent," according to Wooding, demonstrating Lowin's superior acting accomplishments at a time when the distinction between court taste and public taste becomes noticeable (148). The one surviving manuscript of *The Swisser* affords textual scholars with a clean, carefully annotated text from which we can examine

Lowin's character, Andrucho. The actor works with "many of the preoccupations" (155) of earlier times as a disguised aristocrat who ferrets out lack of self-awareness and exploits dishonest appearances, especially those of "court deception" (156). *The Soldered Citizen* also has one surviving manuscript that suggests "notorious rather than successful highwayman" John Clavell's authorship (159). Lowin as Undermyne reprises comedic citizens echoing early sixteenth-century city comedy motifs; the character is the play's sole demonstration of self-discovery and personal development. Wooding's painstaking analysis of the facsimile deserves note as accounting of revisions and directions supports her claim for the text as a "working script for rehearsal" (175).

Lowin's role as Titus Flaminius in *Believe as You List* showed a vengeful and cruel behind-the-scenes catalyst for unrest and disorder. The controversial drama exploits the assurances of Fortune's wheel: once at the apex, a downfall begins immediately. Lowin as Belleur in *The Wild Goose Chase* embraces a comedy of humours that functions as a "paradigm for all the brittle battles of the sexes fought with wounding words rather than sharpened swords" whose popularity waned after the Restoration (192). Forever the craftsman, Lowin's comedic assignments in the repertory system of early modern theatre point to an exceptional actor who remained in the theatrical circle even during the civil war.

John Lowin and the English Theatre, 1603-1647 offers scholars engaging insight into the activities of the King's Men Company, close critical readings of the plays foregrounding Lowin's characters, and his contribution to performance history. Wooding's straightforward methodology enhances her study: she brings aspects of early modern theatre history such as construction and management of the playhouse and "developments in dramatic practice and taste" (65) into a conversation about the company's leading playwrights and Lowin's roles, the economic and legal challenges, and the evolving prestige of players during the 60 years covered in her study. At every turn we are reminded that England's monarchs played a major role in the success of theatre; also, the omnipresent plagues threatened the viability of such entertainment, and players were among the most vulnerable of the nation's subjects. Her enquiry into Lowin's life deserves praise for

making familiar one of the leading actors of the London stage, especially for unearthing the historical documents with which we might re-envision the Jacobean/Caroline theatrical spectrum.

Jessica Dyson. *Staging Authority in Caroline England: Prerogative, Law and Order in Drama, 1625-1642*. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013. 210 pp. \$109.95. Review by ELISA OH, HOWARD UNIVERSITY.

Encompassing literature, legal history, and politics, Jessica Dyson's *Staging Authority in Caroline England: Prerogative, Law and Order in Drama, 1625-1642* analyzes plays by Phillip Massinger, Richard Brome, Ben Jonson, James Shirley, and John Ford in the context of English legal debates about sovereign prerogative and legitimate legal authority in the two decades leading up to the Civil War. Building on Martin Butler's political readings of Caroline drama, Dyson contends that plays in the commercial theater during Charles I's reign debated the king's use of arbitrary sovereign prerogative over taxation, imprisonment, billeting troops, and monopolies. Dyson's welcome political approach to reading these plays argues that they increasingly criticized Charles's insistence on the divinely supported royal prerogative to act outside the law and that they presented alternative legitimate legal authorities. Furthermore, Dyson asserts that "[i]n over-asserting kingly and central authority, the plays suggest, Charles's policies raise the possibilities of destabilisation, fragmentation and disintegration of legitimate legal authority" (13).

In each chapter, Dyson frames her close readings of the plays with a specific seventeenth-century legal discourse of sovereign authority and the king's proper relationship to the law. Chapter 1, "Rights, Prerogatives and Law: The Petition of Right," situates Jonson's *The New Inn* and Brome's *The Love-sick Court* or *The Ambitious Politique* in the context of the dissatisfaction expressed in 1628 by Parliament's Petition of Right, which urged the king to limit his legal prerogative. Dyson argues that *The New Inn* "advocates the balance of subjects' rights against a moderated, if not curtailed, royal prerogative" (20). The play's mock court set up by women and ruled over by the servant Pru shows a struggle for individual rights when characters present