

more often than every two years, Cavendish, like many of his peers, bred his annually, and between 1597 and 1623, his estate increased its number of foals born each year from two to fourteen. As his receipt books have been lost, Edwards points out, it is impossible to determine whether Cavendish made any profit on his horses.

Such a sizable enterprise as his required the work of many hands, and Cavendish employed a stable-master, as well as laborers, stable-lads, grooms, stablers, smiths, and farriers. Not only did these estate workers care for the horses, but they were also responsible for moving their charges between properties and between Cavendish's country and London homes. Records of Cavendish's travels are fascinating. Not only did he travel with a retinue of retainers as well as the wagons which transported the vast amount of baggage that went along with, say, an extended stay in London, but accommodations for his employees and stabling and fodder for his horses were expensive and sometimes difficult to find. Much of the time, it was less cumbersome and more cost-effective to have the horses driven back home or sent to one of his closer properties, with the entire entourage repeating the trip when it was time for Cavendish to leave for home.

There is no denying that Edwards's book makes two valuable contributions to the history of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. The administration of a great estate is revealed to have been a vast and unending enterprise, with countless responsibilities to be balanced and recorded. In addition, Edwards illuminates the period from a fresh and fascinating angle through the detailed record of equine husbandry at Cavendish's stud, opening an entirely new perspective upon the role of the horse in history.

Theresa Varney Kennedy. *Women's Deliberation: The Heroine in Early Modern French Women's Theater (1650-1750)*. London and New York: Routledge, 2018. xii + 202 pp. \$109.95. Review by MARY MCALPIN, UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE.

The "deliberation" of Theresa Varney Kennedy's title is to be understood in a quite specific sense, linked to a play on words with "women's liberation." Kennedy's argument is that by producing hero-

ines in opposition to those found in the work of male playwrights, seventeenth-century women writers laid the foundation for a new type of heroine who would triumph in the eighteenth century: the “deliberative heroine.” This type of heroine, the central character of her play, is “an independent free agent who drives the plot via deliberative action” (13). In short, she produces the play’s resolution through choices based on the exercise of her rational faculties, in accordance with the guidance of her heart.

The emergence of the deliberative heroine in the eighteenth century represents, for Kennedy, a liberation from the constraints that had bound her three older sisters: the “irrational,” the “dutiful,” and the “bold and brazen” heroines. Although the products of female playwrights who by representing them on stage “questioned traditional views on women and rationality” (9), these three types are said to remain under the sway of “negative female stereotypes and/or social norms” (140). Kennedy indissociably links the struggle of women playwrights to enter a male-dominated field to the evolution of their heroines, making this narrative of the rise of a new theatrical character type also a teleological story of the shedding of negative images of women, especially those tied to the Aristotelian tradition that had so influenced French classical theatre. But Kennedy also presents women playwrights as coming over time to a feminist enlightenment, tied to the Enlightenment itself, and above all to the increasing rejection of Cartesian dualism as the eighteenth century progressed.

The book’s chapters present in turn the three types of characters that prepare the way for the deliberative heroine. Chapter one considers the irrational type, with Racine’s *Phèdre* the key anti-model. As will be the case in each succeeding chapter, Kennedy gives us a useful summary of often obscure plays by women, divided into four parts: an analysis of how the play fits the topic at hand, its sources, its performance history, and finally, a plot summary with selected quotations. The five irrational heroines featured in chapter one may be driven by lust or vengeance but, in contrast to *Phèdre*, are said to “take full responsibility for their actions” (18). In the next chapter, dedicated to the dutiful heroine, the model against which women playwrights are said to be working is of course *Chimène*, of Corneille’s *Le Cid*. For Kennedy, “*Chimène* reinforces the patriarchal framework

instead of questioning it" (56), as opposed to the heroines of the six women-authored plays presented in this chapter. The latter occupy central, rather than auxiliary, roles and their intellect and eloquence are highlighted, rather than their obedience to authority. Kennedy sees a direct link between this characterization and the works' lack of success; for example, she writes of Françoise de Graffigny's *La Fille d'Aristide* (1758), shut down after only four performances at the Comédie-Française: "Contemporary spectators likely disapproved of the play's underlying message that women deserve financial independence" (86).

As this late date demonstrates, Kennedy is not arguing that the older types disappear with the birth of the deliberative heroine. But given that Graffigny's play bombed in 1758, we are justified in asking: Why then was her novel *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*—published in 1747, with its similar ending—such an enormous hit? One weakness of Kennedy's critical method is that it elides an important question: Could Graffigny not simply have written a bad play? Chapter three, on bold and brazen heroines, is more satisfying. Kennedy again includes a play by Graffigny, *Phaza*, first staged in a private home in 1753. Kennedy argues, convincingly, that the brazen and bold heroine could have developed only in such settings, and was indeed the product of salon culture. Her description of these heroines is nuanced; while driven by love, they are not presented as irrational. Rather, they allow themselves to act on their romantic desires, initiating amorous relationships, rather than "playing 'hard to get'" (100). Most significantly, they do not regret their behavior, in sharp contrast to the woman-created female characters explored in chapter one.

The deliberative heroines of Kennedy's fourth chapter differ most from this third type in that they take on more serious matters. Two of her five examples are even, in Kennedy's words, "deliberative rulers"; that is, they are caught up in political intrigue at the highest level, while the other three "negotiate the travails of ordinary life" (141). The most important aspect of their characterization, in terms of Kennedy's general argument, is that these heroines balance rationality and emotion in a novel way. In addition to Graffigny's *Cénie* (1750), which enjoyed a record number of performances at the Comédie-Française for a woman playwright, Kennedy considers Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni's *Les Caquets* (1761) and its highly successful run at the

Comédie-Italienne. Kennedy argues that this type of heroine was by far the most appealing of her four types, in terms of audience reception, in that she refuses to succumb to pressure, instead remaining faithful to herself and to those she loves.

This study is a useful and well-researched addition to the critical corpus on early modern women playwrights, and as such it is deserving of praise. I do take issue, however, with two aspects of its general argument. The first, mentioned above, is the outdated assumption that any evidence of conservative or even misogynist rhetoric on the part of a woman writer must be attributed to patriarchal oppression, while any echo of contemporary feminist beliefs demonstrates that the woman playwright is “consciously aware” (13) of what she is doing with her play. However dear feminist principles may be to us, we need to avoid attributing a total lack of agency to women whose creative works exhibit different views. My second point is rather a desire for more development of the claim by Kennedy that her deliberative heroine “inspires the modern-day heroine, who wins audiences’ esteem precisely because she is the most well-rounded and complex type” (141). In many ways, the deliberative heroine as Kennedy describes her is indeed “a multifaceted, modern protagonist” (141), but proving a link between this eighteenth-century type and such twenty-first-century heroines as Katniss Everdeen of *The Hunger Games* (Suzanne Collins, 2008) would require a lot more analysis of the socio-political environment of both eras, not to mention of what came between (174). But again, and in conclusion, this study is a highly useful contribution to its field, despite the weaknesses I have just raised.

Agnès Lachaume. *Le Langage du désir chez Bossuet: Chercher quelque ombre d'infinité*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2017. 730 pp. €125.
Review by DAVID EICK, GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY.

Arch theorist of divine right absolutism, author of orations enconced in the French literary canon, preacher at the court of Louis XIV, tutor to the Grand Dauphin, proponent of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and professor of desire, according to Agnès Lachaume, author of *Le Langage du désir chez Bossuet: Chercher quelque ombre*