

Heather Wolfe, ed. *The Literary Career and Legacy of Elizabeth Cary, 1613-1680*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. xi + 258 pp. \$69.95. Review by NANDRA PERRY, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.

As the first essay collection devoted to the writings of Elizabeth Cary, *The Literary Career and Legacy of Elizabeth Cary, 1613-1680* sets out to do more than simply celebrate Cary's centrality to the study of early modern women's writing. This twelve-essay volume also seeks to establish Cary's relevance to our understanding of seventeenth-century religious controversy, political thought, and manuscript culture—not only in England, but also in Ireland, where Cary lived for four years, and on the Continent, where her children continued her religious and literary legacies. This ambitious program is accomplished by broadening the focus of the volume from Cary's two best-known works, *The Tragedy of Mariam* and *The History of Edward II*, to include considerations of Cary as a poet, translator, polemicist, patron, and religious and literary role model. The end result is a nuanced treatment of the relationship between gender and authorship in early modern England, one that manages to "avoid generalizations about gender that would smooth over [Cary's] consistently ambiguous portrayal of male and female figures and her complicated appropriations of typically 'male' genres" (2), while at the same time suggesting just how integral women and women writers might have been to the "male" discourses in which Cary's writings participate. In these essays, Cary's "marginal" position as a Catholic woman writer emerges as a strategic point of departure for interrogating our own categories of historical and literary analysis. By carefully tracing Cary's movements across religious, national, gender, and generic boundaries, the authors not only contribute to the study of an important early modern woman writer, they also make a convincing case for the contribution of early modern women's writing to the study of "authorship, form, and reception" (2).

The volume is divided into four sections. Parts I and II treat Cary's best-known works, *The Tragedy of Mariam* and *The History of Edward II* respectively. Part III is devoted to Cary's lesser-known writings, while Part IV discusses her legacy as a literary patron and role model. The emphasis of Part I is on context. Pointing out that 19 of *Mariam's* 22 scenes contain at least one lyric, Illona Bell argues that the play's already ambivalent treatment of early modern gender and marital ideals is further complicated by its "often ironic

links to the Renaissance lyric tradition” (18). Erin Kelly explores how the play’s engagement with early modern discourses of martyrdom complicates interpretation of Mariam’s “public voice,” while simultaneously critiquing the tendency of contemporary Protestant martyrology to silence female martyrs. Allison Shell reads the preface of Thomas Lodge’s translation of Josephus’s *Antiquities of the Jews* as a key to Cary’s “autodidactic” approach to the Mariam story, and moreover as a clue to how we might more fruitfully integrate Cary’s biography into criticism of her literary work.

The first two essays of Part II continue the emphasis on context. Curtis Perry’s chapter on the folio version of Cary’s *History* links the text to controversies surrounding Charles I’s favorite, George Villiers, duke of Buckingham, while Mihoko Suzuki roots it in Cary’s innovative readings of both English and Continental political theorists. Jesse Swan and Margaret Reeves direct attention to the *History*’s own complicated history in both manuscript and print. Swan argues for the importance of the 1680 octavo, which is usually dismissed either as a redaction of the folio or as an unreliable earlier version, tracing the octavo’s postpublication history and making a case for its independence from the folio text. Reeves discusses the relationship of two recently discovered manuscript versions of the *History* to the folio and octavo, linking all four texts to Cary, while demonstrating that the two printed versions are independent productions with separate aims stemming from two no-longer-extant sources.

The essays in Part III are the most innovative and illuminating of the collection, situating Cary nearer the middle than the margins of important religious and political debates of the 1620s and -30s. Karen Nelson contextualizes Cary’s translation of the first part of Jacques Davy du Perron’s *Réplique à la réponse du Sérénissime Roy de la Grand Bretagne* (Paris, 1620) within contemporary controversies about the increasing power and prominence of Catholics in England. R. W. Serjeanston attempts to reconstruct Cary’s career as a religious controversialist in her own right. Based on his readings of the print and manuscript sources that influenced both parties, he speculates about the contents of the now-lost treatise Cary directed at her Protestant son, Lucius, second Viscount Falkland. Reading the authors of the Great Tew Circle against the *Life*’s account of Cary’s dispute with William Chillingworth, Serjeanston makes a convincing case for Cary’s influence on many well-known works of religious controversy, including Chillingworth’s *Religion of Protestants*

(1638). Nadine Akkerman attempts to recover Cary's reputation as a manuscript poet. Based on the poem's frequent association with a popular epitaph attributed to Cary in two manuscript sources, she argues for Cary's authorship of a 44-line elegy for the Duke of Buckingham, reading Cary's own complicated political and personal loyalties into the elegy's ambivalent portrait of the Duke.

Part IV of the collection maps Cary's literary legacy, crossing the national boundaries that tend to limit our sense of her interests and influence. Deana Rankin discusses the likely impact of Cary's four years in Ireland on her literary and religious identity. Reading the Irish Catholic Richard Bellings's *A Sixth Booke to the Countesse of Pembroke's Aradia* (dedicated to Cary in 1624) alongside the *Life's* account of her time in Ireland, Rankin explores how Cary's public role as wife of the Lord Deputy might have challenged her "earlier perceptions of the borderline between private and public pursuits" by affording her "the possibility of practicing both writing and Catholicism in a newly emerging Irish public sphere" (204-5). Marion Wynne-Davies points out common themes in the writings of four of Cary's children, Lucy, Anne, Patrick, and Lucius. Lucy and Anne wrote from their cloister in Cambrai. Patrick traveled throughout Europe, eventually making his way back to England, where he converted to Protestantism and secular verse, while Lucius assumed his father's title and his role as an outspoken defender of Protestantism. Wynne-Davies argues that the literary preoccupations of Cary's Protestant and Catholic children alike reflect her concerns with the dangers and difficulties of judgment, the dynamics of personal transformation, and the material and social costs of spiritual choice.

The common themes discussed by Wynne-Davies in the last essay suggest one point of criticism for the work as a whole. Readers are likely to find themselves wishing the authors had more time and space to talk to each other about the recurring emphasis on judgment, conversion, and political and domestic tyranny running throughout Cary's writings and linking her to her sources. However, this weakness is an effect of the collection's own integrative approach, which carefully lays the groundwork for addressing the questions it makes possible.