

Footnotes on each page provide variants and show textual adjustments. The editors address continuous line numbering, reproducing textual elements such as speech prefixes as exactly as type permits, and normalizing punctuation above or below the line has been normalized. Special note is given to the difficult task in distinguishing full stops from commas, which reflects the scribe's practice. N. W. Bawcutt, G. R. Proudfoot, and H. R. Woudhuysen checked the edition and deserve high praise for their meticulous attention to detail. A quick read, this play will interest those intrigued by the provenance offered by early modern texts, rare manuscript scholars, and bibliographers.

Sidney L. Sondergard. *Sharpening Her Pen: Strategies of Rhetorical Violence by Early Modern English Women Writers*. Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2002. 188 pp. \$38.50. Review by JANE LYTTON GOOCH, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

In his Introduction, Sidney Sondergard makes interesting connections between six female writers, from the time of Henry VIII to Charles I, in their use of rhetorical violence. All of these authors have different purposes within their social and political environments, but all decry actual violence as a means of persuasion. They have, however, adopted rhetorical violence, or the description of physical suffering, as a means to strengthen their arguments and create a powerful feminine voice. Sondergard clearly makes his point that these writers use violence in their images, tropes, and arguments to combat male dominance, to assert their intellectual autonomy, and to create approval for their writing. He has chosen three—Elizabeth I, Aemilia Lanyer, and Lady Mary Wroth—who have already received much critical attention and placed them beside three relatively unknown writers—Anne Askew, Anne Dowriche, and Lady Anne Southwell. By examining how they use rhetorical violence, Sondergard establishes the presence and importance of the individual authors within their literary works. In order to

understand the texts, he says, one must realize the authors' particular motives.

Sondergard devotes a chapter to each writer, examining them in chronological order. His thorough discussion, with specific reference to critical comment and the literary texts, is supported by extensive notes, a valuable bibliography, and an index. He has obviously given a great deal of thought to the subject, and he is able to show why six unique female authors, who are opposed to violence, would adopt rhetorical violence as a tool to make their voices heard. The earliest example of the description of violence is the most startling. Sondergard looks at Anne Askew's *Examinations* in Chapter 1. Having steadfastly denied the doctrine of transubstantiation, Askew was accused of heresy, imprisoned, and tortured on the rack on June 29, 1546. Her account of the racking and horrible suffering in prison is remarkable for the lack of rhetorical violence; she chooses not to use her pain to win support, but, instead, to offer calm resistance through a defense based on scripture. As Sondergard points out, Askew's personal experience is the strongest argument, and she does not need to embellish it with gory details to make her voice powerful. The *Examinations* are not, however, without rhetorical violence. The editor, John Bale, also wrote a commentary which focuses on Askew's suffering in order to promote his political and religious agenda to oppose the Catholics and identify Askew as a Christian martyr.

In his discussion of the writing of Elizabeth I, Sondergard shows how she cleverly uses rhetorical violence for the purposes of gaining sympathy from her subjects as the vulnerable queen and of exerting power over them by a show of force. Elizabeth needs to demonstrate that she is as strong a ruler as a man, and although she abhors violence, she believes that sometimes it is necessary to weed out anyone, Mary, Queen of Scots, for example, who threatens her personal safety. Elizabeth makes effective use of the images of wounding, the deformed body, and the infection of the body politic to justify the show of force in governing; strong measures must be taken, even though violent, to rid the country of danger.

Anne Dowriche's *The French Historie* (1589), a long narrative poem based on the French civil wars, is the subject of the third chapter. Through the persecution of Protestants, Dowriche shows the dangers of sectarian violence and the feminine inclination to support the suffering victims. In a manner similar to Askew, Dowriche's description of the execution of Protestants focuses on images of martyrdom and prayers of forgiveness for the executioners. She does include, however, male accounts of horrible violence, and these grisly details, while reminding the reader of violent Biblical history, are effective for their cathartic value and for creating an antipathy to excessive cruelty. The Catholic persecutors are shown to be under Satan's influence, and the fictional Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, executes the leaders of the Huguenots to protect herself, much like Elizabeth I dealing with the Catholic threat in Mary, Queen of Scots.

In Chapter 4, Sondergard presents Aemilia Lanyer's rhetorical strategies in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611); she uses Christ's Passion to promote feminine virtues and to assert her individuality as a female poet. Biblical examples of women who have defeated evil men support Lanyer's belief that the Crucifixion is mankind's principle crime, not Eve's disobedience. Lanyer argues against the male hierarchy in her society, and she is opposed to violence directed at innocent people. She advocates humility and self-sacrifice, following Christ's example, as a means to bring honour to the sufferer. Further, Lanyer suggests that women can reverse the male cruelty of the Crucifixion by doing good deeds and saying prayers. Her devotion to Christ can bring her strength and can help to combat the anti-feminist attitude that male poets are superior. Lanyer goes so far in her use of rhetorical violence, as Sondergard explains, to call on women to become Christ-like soldiers in a battle to alleviate suffering and to gain feminine power.

Sondergard turns next to fictional violence in the romance of Lady Mary Wroth, *The Countess of Montgomeries Urania* (1621). Here, male and female roles are reversed with passive men and aggressive women. As men, according to Wroth, gain power through falsehood and violence, so she invests her women, Urania

for example, with the capacity for violence to gain control, but who often decide against it. A further reversal is apparent in Wroth's treatment of the lover's suffering; the convention in courtly love is to demonstrate the man's pain, but Wroth looks at the woman in love and makes her metaphorical dangers literal. Wroth affirms a feminism that contradicts the violence implied by male descriptions of love.

In his sixth and final chapter, Sondergard moves from fictionalized romance to the commonplace book of Lady Anne Southwell in which she describes her unhappy marriage of 32 years. Like Askew and Lanyer, Southwell gains control through her stoicism; she believes that the trials and suffering in life are designed to make her stronger. Sondergard shows how her writing allows her to overcome the pain of her past, particularly her adulterous husband, and to confirm the values of honourable people, especially women. She objects to the expectation that women must be subservient, claiming that men and women are equal or God's creation is imperfect. Sondergard refers to *A Wife Now the Widdow of Sir Thomas Ouerburye* (1614) to illustrate Southwell's defense of women through her criticism of Donne's light-hearted treatment of illicit relationships.

The comparison between actual experience and fiction is effective in Sondergard's book to show the importance of rhetorical violence as a tool in the hands of female writers. From a racking to an unhappy marriage, with illustrations of rhetorical violence in the realms of politics, history, scripture and romance in between, he has presented six unique voices, all of which promote feminine values by, paradoxically, adopting the masculine imagery of violence. Sondergard's scholarly approach gives his study a firm foundation and enables him to bring disparate works together to support his argument that this rhetorical strategy of violence gives these female authors a stronger identity.