

goal has been amply achieved in its completion by Professors Gossett and Mueller.

Jo Wallwork and Paul Salzman, eds. *Women Writing: 1550-1750*. Victoria: Meridian, 2001. 251 pp. \$20.00. Review by MIRIAM TASHMA-BAUM, THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY.

Women Writing: 1550-1750 is a collection of sixteen essays, earlier versions of which were given as presentations at a conference on early modern women's writing held at La Trobe University in Melbourne in July, 1999. The volume is a special book issue of *Meridian*, the La Trobe University English Review, 18.1 (2001). Following an introduction by Paul Salzman are essays by Elaine Hobby, Susan Wiseman, Julie Sanders, Lloyd Davies, Rosalind Smith, Sheila T. Cavanagh, Andrew McRae, Patricia Pender, Kim Walker, Mona Narain, Kate Lilley, Sophie Tomlinson, Jo Wallwork, Diana Barnes, Heather Kerr, and Patrick Spedding. Ten of the contributors are Australian, both academics and postgraduate students, and one of the purposes of the book is to showcase the significant amount of work being done on early modern women by Australians. The essays indeed display a variety of approaches to this fast-growing field, however despite its seemingly wide-ranging title, the collection is confined to essays on English writers and one American writer—Anne Bradstreet—writing of England.

The opening essay by Elaine Hobby interestingly analyzes attitudes towards the male and female body in Jane Sharp's *The Midwives Book* (1671), a modern edition of which was recently produced by Hobby, arguing that the empirical data found in such texts puts in doubt theories of the early modern body based on Foucault and Lacan. Hobby also argues for the need for further recovery of lost works by seventeenth-century writers "regardless of the gender of [their] author," for only through "an integration of work on male and female texts" can the latter be fully understood (20-1). Another article questioning traditional views is Patrick Spedding's "Eliza Haywood, Writing (and) Pornography in 1742"

which reveals that Haywood, who according to former biographers had transformed into a “moral crusader” (238) following her denunciation in Pope’s *Dunciad* (1728), was in fact responsible, together with William Hatchett, for the anonymous translation of Crébillon fils’ notorious erotic novel *La Sopha* in 1742.

Kim Walker’s and Susan Wiseman’s articles are both devoted to Anne Halkett. The former studies Halkett’s use of models taken from romantic drama to define her self and her life story. Susan Wiseman promotes the political valency of Halkett’s work, arguing that “the very dynamic of writing about conspiracy, involving drives to both concealment and revelation, has assisted in the obscuring of the significance of Halkett’s text as a political as much as a sexual memoir” (42). The two articles on Mary Wroth similarly insist on the link between the political and the literary. Sheila T. Cavanagh’s “East meets West in Wroth’s *Urania*” argues the centrality of Mary Wroth’s “ambitious world vision” of a “unified, global Christian territory” (97) for understanding the motivations and failures of the protagonists of *Urania*. Rosalind Smith’s essay on Wroth’s sonnet sequence *Lindamira’s Complaint* focuses on Wroth’s attempts to exploit the flexible genre of the complaint for political and authorial self-promotion. Two essays on Katherine Philips, by Sophie Tomlinson and by Kate Lilley, again combine historical and literary contextualizing. Tomlinson discusses the “Sources of Female Greatness in Katherine Philips’ *Pompey*” and finds them in the theatrical precedents of the femino-centric court of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, transformed by Philips to fit the Restoration stage. Lilley attempts to deflect the “catachrestic riddle” of the relation between Philips’ love elegies and early modern lesbianism “in favour of a rhetorically motivated analysis of readers and writers, textual practices and orientations” (174).

Three essays in the collection deal with Margaret Cavendish. Jo Wallwork discusses the Duchess of Newcastle’s critique of Robert Hooke’s *Micrographia*, finally suggesting—not entirely convincingly, in my opinion—that Hooke’s work, with its fascination with the microscopic world, and Cavendish’s fantasy of *The Blazing World* are similar in that they “both signify a poetic and untram-

meled vision of the ‘new’” (198). Another article on Cavendish is Heather Kerr’s fictocritical essay, “Margaret Cavendish and Queer Literary Subjectivity,” which explores Cavendish’s—and Kerr’s—self-perceptions and generic experimentation. Lastly, Diana Barnes discusses the “Restoration of Royalist Form in Margaret Cavendish’s *Sociable Letters*,” arguing that Cavendish appropriates this courtly genre in order to paint a picture of female friendship which “models the behavior and modes of affiliation that constitute a reformed or restored royalist polity” (204–5).

An essay on a very different work of epistolary fiction, but one that again argues the use of the epistolary mode for the promotion of a female reading of political culture is Mona Narain’s “Body and Politics in Aphra Behn’s *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister*,” which traces the subtle links between the sexual and the political iconography in the novel. Both, according to Narain, are “ultimately reduced only to a sign of a sign . . . repeated endlessly in a cycle of market exchange—a herald of the coming capitalist age” (161). Andrew McRae also focuses on nascent capitalism, from a very different angle, in his study of “The Travel Journals of Celia Fiennes.” McRae observes that “on the one hand, [Fiennes] endorses a nation built on godly thrift and industry, which is consequently malleable to the touch of the bourgeoisie . . . Yet on the other hand, the country’s strength must also rest on a more traditional commitment to property . . . the female traveller . . . may thus rightfully expect that England’s economic success will produce relatively standardized forms of civility and beauty” (112).

Patricia Pender’s “Anne Bradstreet’s *A Dialogue Between Old England and New*” is similar to McRae’s study in that it focuses on women’s writing which accords with rather than resists the ideological milieu within which it was written. Pender defends this early political work of Bradstreet, which privileges the “dutiful daughters of colonial New England” over their “imperial mother,” (124) against what she regards as the dominant feminist reading which accords value only to writings that seem “isolated, autonomous . . . articul[at]ing some form of proto-feminist polemic” (127). Pender convincingly argues that such an approach may blind the

reader to historical difference, and to the actual qualities and strengths of much early modern female writing. Very similar arguments are also made in Lloyd Davies' study of Dorothy Leigh's *The Mothers Blessing* (1616), which insists that Leigh's "thought-provoking conformity" allowed her to "raise some testing arguments about existing relations among men and women, parents and children, and masters, mistresses and servants" (60). Similarly, Julie Sander's article on "The Coterie Writing of the Astons and the Thimelbys in Seventeenth-Century Staffordshire" observes that the study of the epistolary writing of Constance Aston Fowler and Winefrid Thimelby breaks the feminist pattern of "the isolated and alienated Renaissance and early modern woman writer" (50). Sander's insistence that the letters need to be studied within their coterie context, and not in an isolated category of female writing, fully accords with the position of Elaine Hobby as well.

As a group, with the exception of Heather Kerr's essay, the articles share an insistence on historical contextualization. They thus move beyond the search for ideal female resistance and 'authenticity' to a more sophisticated combination of careful historical research and theoretical insight. The theoretical attitudes themselves are varied, and I would agree with Paul Salzman that, as he says in his introduction, "taken together, the essays collected here offer a snapshot of the diverse ways in which the field was addressed at the very end of the twentieth century" (10).

Anna Trapnel. *The Cry of a Stone* (1654). Ed. Hilary Hinds. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000. i + 119 pp. \$28.00. Review by U. MILO KAUFMANN, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN.

Anyone who has spent a day or two reading in the British Library's large collection of apocalyptic tracts of the English mid-seventeenth century will have no difficulty appreciating the charged atmosphere which is context for this prophetic work by Anna