admit, as I do, that she has opened the way to what should be continuing and fruitful dialogue.


This interesting and eclectic book traces the trope of violation through a wide variety of sources. “Violation” is meant in a very broad sense: it includes rape and personal assault, but also adultery, torture, and symbolic emasculation. Further, crimes against property (including women) are a violation, and, ultimately, Stuart absolutism is the greatest violation of all. She quotes William Hakewell claiming with alarm that the king’s “pleasure cannot be bounded by law” and explains that his choice of “pleasure” rather than “will” is significant: “Hakewell chose the less subtle of the two terms to make his point that the king’s impositions amounted to a seizure or ravishment of subjects’ property against their will—a violation” (181). Throughout the book Burk examines the discursive interplay between personal, social, and political violation, the vocabulary of which she perceives as an abiding rhetorical resource for writers in various genres.

Burk’s foundational texts are Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*—commonly known as the “Book of Martyrs”—(first edition 1563) and Bale’s *Epistle Exhortatorye* (1544). The latter savages the Catholic leaning bishops of England for their desire for wealth and pleasure; this is symptomatic of their ultimate allegiance to the heresies and oppressions of the papacy. The former book, and particularly its woodcuts by John Daye, dramatizes the perverse cruelty of the hierarchy and in particular Bishop Bonner. Burks sees a combination of horror and titillation in these works; that is, while we are supposed to sympathize with martyrs we nonetheless may feel “a vicarious thrill”; “While the text and the woodcuts construct rules for readership that make such an act decidedly transgressive, the illustrations do not and perhaps cannot exclude the prurient gaze” (69). Some readers may think Burks is straining her gaze in some cases. Many of the woodcuts the book reproduces just look like torture to me without any sexual charge whatsoever, but her strong reading of other woodcuts does reveal a pornographic and perverse violence.
In chapter five, Burks demonstrates that the tropes of martyrdom could be used both by Parliament in debates over property rights and by the unhappy Arbella Stuart Seymour in her attempts to marry and then to justify a marriage entered into without consent. Where Cecil and other members of the court saw her as "pathetic, vain, and deeply delusional" (210), Burks depicts an iconoclast trapped by her position into an unnatural life but offering defiance rather than meekly surrendering. The chief strength of the book is Burks’s compelling case for overlapping semantic fields in the personal, the political, and the dramatic.

Burks uses these backgrounds to good effect in her interpretation of Measure for Measure in chapter two. The visual and verbal background of clerical abuse she establishes in her first chapter does reinforce the difficulty of seeing Duke Vincentio, particularly in his adoption of a monastic cover, as anything other than “as skilled a manipulator and conman as Jonson’s Volpone” (74). In this chapter Burks also discusses the interrogation and torture of Anne Askew by Bishop Bonner and develops the parallels between this violation and Angelo’s attempt to violate Isabella. Ultimately the play becomes a depiction of widespread injustice with only a tenuously reestablished order administered by an untrustworthy duke. Askew also figures into Burks’s analysis of Chapman’s Bussy D’Ambois. Chapman’s play develops sympathy for the adulterous countess of Montsurry by developing a common visual vocabulary between her torture and that of Askew’s as presented by Foxe. The weakness of the king of France and the rapacity of his brother provide a political context for a world where a husband inhumanly wracks his wife.

Burks turns her attention to women as property in her analysis of Middleton and Rowley’s The Changeling. Here the contest turns on the double meaning of “will” as desire and as intent. Beatrice-Joanna’s father’s unquestioned authority over his daughter means that she cannot have her will in any socially sanctioned way when she prefers Alsemoro to her betrothed Alonzo. By violating patriarchal order she creates the conditions of her own violation by DeFlores. In an excellent chapter on Shirley’s neglected play The Cardinal, Burks discusses the increasingly open class conflicts that led to the revolution. Alvarez in particular represents the effeminate sexuality that the “short haired men” (Puritans) caricatured in the Cavaliers. The cardinal himself is both a corrupt politician and a sexual predator: religious, political, and sexual crime are inseparably and disturbingly linked.
Burks is also interested in the question of periodicity: “this study considers Restoration drama (and the political discourses in which it participated) to have been situated at the end of a long seventeenth century, a century of political developments and discourses that supplied the Restoration with ideological and metaphorical constructs ready for use”(2); it is not a separate literary period nor the beginning of a long eighteenth century. This strikes me as problematic. Literary history is concerned with both continuities and discontinuities. Certainly the tropes of violation she sees in Jacobean drama are echoed in Restoration literature. On the other hand, Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* are published within a year of each other, yet it is difficult to conceive of them as representing a single literary period because of the immense gap in aesthetic and political assumptions (and this despite the face that Dryden was dazzled by *Paradise Lost*).

The book’s weakest chapters (the last three on Cavendish, Dryden and Behn) are, I believe, a consequence of Burks’s indifference to discontinuities. In her chapter on the duchess of Newcastle, Burks sees Cavendish as questioning the idea of monarchy because of the frequent misbehavior of rulers in her works: “might not her readers likewise think themselves prompted to ask, given the folly, vanity and falsehood of kings, subjects should trouble themselves for monarchs’ sake?”(291). Of course on one level, as Burks is aware, this is a function of narrative: Cavendish is writing about the upper classes and for there to be narrative or dramatic tension, someone has to be the antagonist. But everyone during the Civil War had to reconsider his or her assumptions about monarchy. For a book so largely concerned with politics, there is strikingly little consideration of what political philosophers and commentators had to say. Hobbes, for instance, appears only in a couple of footnotes. When Burks points out that Cavendish “accepts the proposition that noblemen, like beasts, are ruled by their desires”(288), this shows the naturalist current in the philosophical revolution of the seventeenth century, a continuity, but not one with much connection to the religious discourse upon which many of her readings rely. In this Cavendish bears an affinity to the radical skepticism characteristic of much Restoration literature.

It is perfectly possible for a Restoration author to be skeptical of previous justifications of political or natural order and still support the monarchy (e.g. Halifax, for instance, also not mentioned in the book). Dryden is an excellent example (he was, after all, a member of the Royal Society which planned to
start knowledge on a new footing). In her efforts to establish continuity, Burks even argues that a Restoration audience would have seen the uxorious Boadellin in *The Conquest of Granada* as an analogue for Charles I. I doubt it; even aside from the fact there is no contemporary evidence for this response, Charles I had been executed twenty-one years previously. After that had come Cromwell, the Dutch Wars, the plague, the Great Fire and a variety of other traumatic events. Emotionally and intellectually, 1649 to 1670 was a long time.

Behn fits very nicely in this framework of Restoration skepticism, and it distinguishes her from her Jacobean predecessors. Burks claims more originality for Behn than she is perhaps entitled to: “[Behn’s] women, like the women in Dryden’s comedies and Wycherley’s and Etherege’s and Shadwell’s, have desires and pursue love interests. The difference between Behn’s women and their contemporaries is the dignity she accords them”(347). This is false: Shadwell and Durfey in particular are well aware of the danger to women in a patriarchal society and are full of women characters who with wit and integrity critique the patriarchal order.

I do not think Burks knows the Restoration as well as she does earlier periods. For instance, she suggests that Shadwell was a Tory initially and that his split with Dryden was political. I know of no reason to believe that Shadwell ever entertained Tory sympathies (although Ormond was a patron of his father’s). *Mac Flecknoe* probably dates to 1676, before the terms Tory and Whig had any real consequence, and Dryden’s enmity is founded on literary and social grounds.

I do not disagree with Burks’s claims of continuities, but there is a great deal more discontinuity here than she is prepared to acknowledge. That aside, this is a fine book, well researched and original, and will be particularly valuable to anyone interested in Jacobean drama.


Both of these collections celebrate Dryden’s tercentenary and are gener-