

John Bowes. *Richard Brathwait: The First Lakeland Poet*. Great Britain: Hugill Publications Ltd, 2007. viii + 256pp. £12.95. Review by SIOBHÁN COLLINS, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK.

The merits of John Bowes's biography of Richard Brathwait (1588-1673) are threefold: one, it reintroduces an author only vaguely known today even by specialists within the field of seventeenth-century literary studies; two, it includes a substantial amount of quotation from a large range of Brathwait's works, which gives us a strong sense of the author's style and thought; and three, although Bowes's work "makes no pretensions to being serious literary biography" (iv), he draws an interesting portrait of Brathwait through contextualizing his writings within the times and place in which he lived, hence the subtitle: *The First Lakeland Poet*.

Although one occasionally comes across allusions to Brathwait's popular conduct books, *The English Gentleman* (1630, 1641, 1652) and *The English Gentlewoman* (1631, 1641), or perhaps his lively *Barnaby's Journal* (1638), this prolific seventeenth-century author is little read or known, nor are there many editions of his writings available in print today. Brathwait's works, although of unequal merit, include some interesting titles and subject matter and span over three decades of the most turbulent English history. It is worth listing his works here as this information is not readily available elsewhere. This substantial list, which is sourced primarily from *Early English Books Online*, Bowe's references, and Edmund Gosse's account of Brathwait and his writings in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, is most likely not complete. Many of Brathwait's writings were published anonymously or under pseudonyms and some of them have probably been lost. As Gosse points out, in a marginal note to *The English Gentleman* (1630) Brathwait refers to an earlier work of his, *Huntsman's Raunge*, of which no copy survives.

Brathwait's works include the following: *The Golden Fleece* (1611) verse, much of which is biographical; *The Poet's Willow* (1614), a collection of pastorals; *The Yong Mans Gleanings* (1614), a prose work, drawing on the writings of St. Bernard, of Clairvaux; *The Prodigals Tears* (1614), afterwards reprinted along with *The Schollers Medley as Nursery for Gentry* (1638); *A Strappado for the Devil* (1615), satires in verse

founded on George Wither's *The Abuses Whipt and Stript*, *The Smoaking Age* (1617; 1703), a prose treatise; *A New Spring* (1619), verse; *A Happy Husband* (1619), prose and verse; *Essaies upon the Five Senses* (1620, 1635, 1815); *The Prodigals Teares with A Heavenly New Yeeres Gift Sent to the Soule* (1620); *Times Curtaine Drawne* (1621) verse; *The Shepards Tales* (1621), a collection of pastorals; *Natures Embassie: or the Wilde-mans Measvres: Danced naked by twelve Satyres* (1621), a collection of odes and pastorals; *The Whimzies* (1631; 1859), a prose work of curious characters; *Anniversaries upon his Panarete* (1634, 1635), a poem commemorating his first wife; *The Arcadian Princess* (1635), prose and verse; *The Fatal Nupital* (1636), elegy; *The Lives of all the Roman Emperors* (1636); *A Nursery for Gentry* (1638, 1651); *A Spiritual Spicerie* (1638), prose and verse; *An Epitome of All the Lives of the Kings of France* (1639); *Art Asleepe, Husband?* (1640), prose; *The Two Lancashire Lovers* (1640), a novel in prose; *The Penitent Pilgrim* (1641); *Astrea's Teares* (1641), an elegy on Brathwait's godfather, Sir Richard Hutton; *Mercurius Britannicus* (1641), satirizes the puritan, William Prynne; *Panaretees Triumph* (1641); *Times Treasury* (1652); *A Muster Roll of the Evill Angels* (1655; 1659), a prose account of noted heretics; *The Honest Ghost* (1658), a satire in verse; *Panthalia* (1659); *To his Majesty Upon His Happy Arrival In Our Late Discomposed Albion* (1660); *The Chimney Scuffle* (1662); *Regicidium* (1665), a satire; *The Captive Captain, or the Restrained Cavalier* (1665), prose and verse.

Over the course of thirteen chapters organized chronologically, Bowes offers us a detailed family history and biographical account of Richard Brathwait, or "Dapper Dick" as he was apparently known. The earlier chapters range from the time Brathwait spent studying law at the Inns of Court as a young man to his early retirement to the family estate of Burneside in the parish of Kendal. Later chapters focus on his final years of personal and political disappointment with the Puritan revolution and the restoration establishment, which Brathwait expressed through a series of biting satires. Bowes's writing is clear and accessible; his book is engaging, even if its subject's character is often, un-wittingly perhaps, less so.

Brathwait's life-long passion for literature intersected with his "ob-session with the flesh" and his essentially righteous Christian disposition (19). As Bowes writes, "[a]lmost all of Richard's works, directly or indirectly, castigate lust, ambition, extravagant dress, greed, and bad

behaviour" (87), traits which he himself exhibits at various stages of his life. His love of extravagant dress is presumably what gave rise to his nickname "Dapper Dick," which appears as "Dagger Dick" in page seven of Bowes's book (one of a number of typographical errors, or a Freudian slip of the pen, perhaps). Bowes traces Brathwait's "self confessed descent into unbridled licentiousness" during his time in London, and his occasional bawdy encounters thereafter (19). Abandoning the "years of drink, ribaldry and fornication," Brathwait married Frances Lawson of Nesham near Darlington in May 1617, and retired to Westmoreland to assume "the role of a quiet, able, respectable and public-spirited gentlemen" (53). Over the course of time he became deputy-lieutenant of the county of Westmoreland. Richard and Frances had nine children, and shared 16 years together before her death in 1633. Bowes depicts Brathwait's marriage as one of sincere and loving attachment. Brathwait's "self-evident contentment," he writes, is "preserved for posterity in *A Happy Husband*" (48). Also, Brathwait's *Anniversaries upon his Panarete* commemorates his dead wife in loving terms.

Bowes gives the following description of Frances Brathwait, which he gleans from Richard's writings: "Kind, modest, obedient, virtuous, fertile and warm-natured she made an excellent wife and mother" (55). This may all be so. Nevertheless, Bowes argument that Brathwait modeled his ideal female, as represented in *The English Gentlewoman*, on the virtues of his wife is not entirely convincing. Bowes states that "Frances mirrors *The English Gentlewoman* so closely that Richard even recommends her skin complexion—'a native red' (from *Anniversaries upon his Panarete...*)—as a sign of moral steadfastness" (105). However, the ideal female characteristics recommended by Brathwait in *The English Gentlewoman*, down to the importance assigned to the woman's ability to "displays her guiltless shame in a crimson blush" (*EG* p.46), are commonplace in this period and derive often from the writings of the Church Fathers. The work is also contemporary in its allusions. For instance, Brathwait suggests in his conduct book that female readers of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* deserve to be denounced along with the most infamous seductresses. Reassuringly, Bowes tells us that Frances's "reading was limited to books which supported her faith and which were useful in the direction of her domestic household

affairs” (107). The link Brathwait makes between a devouring female sexuality and the reading of *Venus and Adonis* appears also in one of his satires that predates his marriage to Frances:

Ile be thy *Venus*, pretty Ducke I will,
 And though lesse faire, yet I have farre more still,
 In loves affaires: for if I *Adon* had,
 As *Venus* had: I could have taught the lad
 To have beene farre more forward then he was,
 And not have dallied with [s]o apt a lasse

Bowes is at his most interesting and persuasive in his discussion of Brathwait’s often ambiguous religious and political affiliations over the course of and in the immediate aftermath of the civil war. Brathwait’s valuable estates were sequestered for a time once Royalist forces were driven from Westmoreland, but by 1650 he was discharged from sequestration and appointed justice of the peace by the new authorities. Although Brathwait adapted to the republic, his commitment to the institute of monarchy was never in doubt. Even so, following the Restoration he is critical of governmental abuses and aspects of Charles personal rule, which impacted on local land issues and taxation. The Brathwait that comes to life in Bowes’s biography is a more complicated man than traditionally portrayed by earlier authorities on his life, such as Anthony A. Wood and Joseph Haslewood. This book successfully challenges the image of Brathwait as simply a devout Christian and well-contented country gentleman by positioning him as a man of his times, devout, yet given to worldly concerns regarding wealth, property, power and sex.

On a final note, while Bowes treats the reader to plenty of quotations from Brathwait’s writings, the referencing system Bowes employs is inadequate; he references the works he quotes from in endnotes, but neglects to include page numbers. However, the biggest criticism I have of this book is the very poor quality of its production; when you open the book wide enough to prevent its tendency to close back on itself (which makes it difficult to read with any comfort), the book snaps and many of the pages either come loose or half-way detach from their minimally glued bindings. What you are left with, on reading the entire book, resembles a folder containing a large quantity of loose and untidy pages. This is unfortunate considering the obvious

labor Bowes invested in writing this much-needed and interesting biography of Richard Brathwait.

Laurie Ellinghausen. *Labor and Writing in Early Modern England, 1567-1667*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. ix + 155 pp. + 5 illustrations. \$99.95. Review by JULIE D. CAMPBELL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY.

In this study, Ellinghausen examines the careers of the non-aristocratic authors, Isabella Whitney, Thomas Nashe, Ben Jonson, John Taylor, and George Wither. For each of these figures, Ellinghausen discusses his/her identification with labor and what that means for the rhetorical poses that each assumes. Noting that Whitney identifies as a poor maidservant, Nashe as a day laborer, Jonson as a blacksmith, Taylor as a waterman, and that Wither generally celebrates the virtue of his labor, she argues that these positions allow them “to negotiate restrictions” and re-frame them “as a platform for authority” (5). Making frequent reference to Marxist views, Ellinghausen contends that all of these authors are “situated within a broad and complicated transition from pseudo-feudal custom to systems of social organization that support and are supported by capitalism” and that their careers are “important indices of cultural transition in process” (15).

The key notions that Ellinghausen seeks to illustrate are that privileging the virtues of labor creates a new paradigm in the writing of early modern England and that through observing this development one may have a better understanding of the social shift taking place. To develop these ideas, she builds on the work of scholars such as Richard Helgerson and Raymond Williams by examining each writer’s self-presentation and “alignment” regarding social relations. In the process, she explores the historical context for each figure and provides close readings of his/her work.

Beginning with Whitney, Ellinghausen notes that although in *The Copy of a Letter . . . by a Yonge Gentilwoman: to her Unconstant Lover* (1567) Whitney engages in “the rhetoric of novelty” as she inserts a female voice into the debate about lovers and “caters to readers’ tastes by experimenting with popular mid-Tudor genres,” she also “presents readers with the less familiar viewpoint of a woman for-