

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

Trapnel, now offered in a well-edited modern version complete with a fifty-page introduction, twenty-one pages of notes and eleven pages of bibliography.

The matter of the editorship for *The Cry of a Stone* is much more readily addressed than that of its authorship. Hilary Hinds thanks Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education for the semester's leave which allowed her to finish this work, and she had help from a number of libraries both in the UK and in the US. The work exists in two different editions, both published in 1654. Her working copies were those held at Cambridge and the British Library; though other copies are available at Harvard, the University of Chicago, and three of the Friends or Quaker colleges in the U.S. Sixteen libraries in all have copies, a fact suggestive of the book's erstwhile popularity as well as its relevance for both political and religious radicalism. Hinds' editorial policy is well laid out and she provides excellent annotations for virtually all the proper names that turn up in the primary document. But the primary document is vexatious, as the editor freely admits, in the questions it poses concerning authorship.

The conundrum of authorship has two parts. On the one hand much of the text is the imperfectly remembered transcribing of an anonymous reporter who, we gather, had a phenomenal memory, for, while admitting his limitations, he still reproduces reams of material delivered spontaneously by Anna Trapnel, who often prophesied for hours at a stretch. This reporter did not attend all of her remarkable sessions, nor did he catch everything at those he did attend, candidly confessing more than once that he could not catch words when her voice dropped. It is true that this reporting is introduced by Trapnel's brief personal memoir, of a piece with the spiritual autobiographies of the period, in which she modestly gives her credentials as a prophetess, including a supernatural healing and a divine calling. Yet the fact remains that an invisible mediator stands between the reader and the primary material of Trapnel's prophecy. What were this reporter's penchants and prejudices in filtering that prophecy to the reader? We cannot know.

The second part of the authorship mystery is an eternal one associated with primary religious experience. Hinds touches on this without grasping the nettle as firmly as she might have. Anna Trapnel insists that she is God's mouthpiece. She is self-effacing to an extreme, and it is natural to interpret this more in light of the biblical prophets than in terms of the position of women in the English seventeenth century. In our post-Enlightenment age it is a bit awkward even to raise the question of supernatural provenance for certain sorts of utterance, though, given the dynamism of true belief in many parts of today's world, it is not irrelevant to ask such questions.

We can distinguish between two related kinds of such mysterious utterance and put our question somewhat more exactly. While *The Cry of a Stone* is without real literary merit—the spontaneous poetry in particular is pretty poor stuff—it invites consideration in terms of two traditional categories: those of prophecy and of apocalypse. These are by no means identical, and though Trapnel is a Fifth Monarchist, which means she followed the sect which credited Daniel's apocalyptic revelations of the four kingdoms and the subsequent reign of God, her work is much more a thing of prophecy than of apocalypse. The latter genre, in both its biblical and its intertestamental manifestations, stressed a fixed future, the salvation of a few from a richly elaborated catastrophe, numerological signs, and typological recapitulation of Old Testament motifs. Prophecy, in contrast, stressed the possibility of change and redemption, the concerns of immediate justice, especially for the poor, and so the call to action in the public world, rather than resignation and a qualified hope.

Fifth Monarchist or not, Trapnel clearly follows the model of prophecy rather than that of apocalypse. She repeatedly grieves for the neglect of the poor, a concern at the heart of the radical agenda. She faults Cromwell for betraying the trust of many in taking on the trappings of power. While we need not suppose she had supernatural knowledge of Cromwell's last several years, it remains that she gives a penetrating critique of his immediate and anticipated failures. At the same time she shows little interest in

the typical apocalyptic preoccupations. While many around her are fixing a date for Christ's second advent, she scarcely touches on the subject. She has little or no interest in an earthly reign with the saints. This self-forgetting brings us around again to the mystery of authorship.

Her title, *The Cry of a Stone*, implies the miraculous inspiration of the mute. How, then, do we as enlightened moderns address the wonder which drew all manner of prominent public figures to witness a common woman speaking out of religious ecstasy? It is the sort of question which Milton in his invocations to the muse in *Paradise Lost* and Bunyan in his Apology prefacing the *Pilgrim's Progress*, spoke to directly, if in terms uncongenial to our own time.

The reader of the editor's introduction will certainly notice the prudential nod to any number of currently fashionable critical strategies. There is, I suppose, no escape from fashion, but it may that so idiosyncratic a work as *The Cry of a Stone* warrants consideration in less familiar terms. That said, I affirm Ms. Hinds' service in making this remarkable work available in a modern edition.

Mary Beth Rose. *Gender and Heroism in Early Modern English Literature*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002. xxii + 139 pp. \$15.00 (paper). Review by M. J. VECCHIO, MIDDLE COLLEGE/LAGUARDIA CC, CUNY.

"Heroism is a space into which a culture projects its idealizations, and, as such, designates meaning and determines value," writes Professor Rose. Her book argues that, during the seventeenth century, English literature's prevailing "active male heroism of rule, exploration, and conquest" transforms itself into one that "valorizes the patient suffering of disaster and pain." Characterized by endurance, not action, the terms of this new heroic mode align with those historically employed to idealize women (113). Under this revised definition, women may be classified as heroes, a category reserved previously for men, because all features of the "heroism of endurance" are feminine. Moreover, in this model men