

Summer 1993

Review of Tina Krontiris, *Oppositional Voices: Womtlen as Writers and Tanslators of Literature in the English Renaissance*, and Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman, editors, *Women, Writing, History: 1640-1740*

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Levin, Carole, "Review of Tina Krontiris, *Oppositional Voices: Womtlen as Writers and Tanslators of Literature in the English Renaissance*, and Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman, editors, *Women, Writing, History: 1640-1740*" (1993). *Faculty Publications, Department of History*. 71.

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Reviews of Books 295

congregations. Bruce Gordon demonstrates how Heinrich Bullinger's pupil Rudolf Gwalther through his travels and personal connections with English and Scottish leaders extended the influence of the Zurich Reformation to Scotland. G. H. M. Posthumus Meyjes reconsiders the irenicism of the Genevan theologian Charles Perrot by focusing on his critique of another irenicist, Georg Cassander. Willem Nijenhuis interprets a letter sent by the Reformed church of Zeeland to the Scottish Kirk in 1643, demonstrating not only the sympathy of Dutch Calvinists for the opponents of King Charles I but also the careful line the Zeelanders had to tread because of their government's insistence that the churches must maintain neutrality in the civil war.

In the first of the essays on England, Claire Cross traces the preservation of books from suppressed English monasteries by former monks, many of them active as Anglican clergy. A. G. Dickens probes the symbolic meaning of a mock battle between partisans of the Reformation and partisans of Mary Tudor's Catholic restoration among London schoolboys in 1554. David M. Loades analyzes the piety of the restored Catholic church under Mary Tudor and demonstrates the ambiguities and limitations of the restoration. He shows that Marian Catholicism exhibited few of the distinctive traits of Counter-Reformation piety. Andrew Pettegree studies the Latin polemics of Protestant exiles from Mary Tudor's England and offers a bibliography of their publications. W. J. Sheils describes the disciplinary system erected at Northampton in 1571 by Puritans operating within the structures of the Anglican church, but creating a religious system sharply at odds with the episcopal structure of the national church.

In the section devoted to Scotland, John Macqueen analyzes Alexander Mylin's collective biography of the cathedral clergy of the diocese of Dunkeld. The lengthiest study in the book, "The Religion of Early Scottish Protestants," by James Kirk, traces the careers of a great number of individuals who founded Scottish Protestantism and gradually transformed it into a powerful national movement. The final essay, by Jane E. A. Dawson, describes the emergence of Calvinist discipline in St. Andrews. The author shows that St. Andrews was a highly atypical city and so could never become a model for the national Reformation though it could and did provide leaders for the broader movement.

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Tina Krontiris. *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance*. New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall. 1992. Pp. x, 182. \$39.95.

Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman, editors. *Women, Writing, History: 1640-1740*. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press. 1992. Pp. 239. \$40.00 cloth, \$18.00 paper.

These two books on women writing in early modern England are very different and both make an important contribution to a growing body of critical studies. Krontiris's study centers on six fairly well-known writers: Isabella Whitney, Margaret Tyler, Mary Herbert, Elizabeth Cary, Aemilia Lanyer, and Mary Wroth. The purpose of her study is to explain how the same culture that produced a prohibitive ideology for women about what were their capabilities could also produce at least some women who wrote, published, and sometimes voiced criticism of this system. Krontiris did not intend to be exhaustive; rather, she was interested in those who raised an oppositional voice, and chose the above six writers for

close study. Krontiris argues that for women writers of the time the language with which they wrote was the language of men and had within it a misogynist bias. Using such language often made escaping stereotypes and establishing new meanings all the more difficult. Krontiris points out that a woman writer in a patriarchal culture must develop strategies against her own internalization of the oppressive ideologies that surround her. One of the key points to Krontiris's thesis is that a woman's writing must be read differently. Krontiris makes the important distinction of what was theoretical and what were the lives women actually lived. What was presented as cultural norms were not always practiced, and ideologies were changing and contested, especially with competing social groups who held divergent interests. Krontiris frames her study with a discussion of cultural attitudes toward women in the Middle Ages and how the impact of the Reformation changed these attitudes in the early modern period.

English women writers responded indirectly to the obstacles they encountered. Many of them did translations, so that the words were not originally their own, or they acted as patrons for male writers. They proclaimed their modesty. Many of them circulated their work privately until someone with greater authority prompted them to publish it. Krontiris carefully explicates the dangers and difficulties for women to publish their work. Publication was directly linked with an aggressive sexuality; to appear in print was to appear in public, and thus also to seek male attention. A very small number of women (Wroth, Tyler, and authors of some pamphlets) used direct challenge as their strategy for writing.

In analyzing the works of these women, Krontiris is determining their opposition to contemporary dominant ideologies, especially those on gender. She wants her readers to understand how cultural fictions determine what female writers finally say and the texts she examines are places where various meanings are constructed and negotiated.

The women Krontiris studies, while they all have much in common, have great differences as well. Tyler and Whitney were both early secular writers of middle-class background, self-education, and ex-servants at the time they wrote. Tyler is especially noteworthy for her assertion of a women's right to read, study, and translate literature of all sorts. Mary Herbert and Elizabeth Cary, both aristocratic women, had little choice over whom they would marry, and both favored female characters who were inoffensively assertive. Krontiris's final pairing looks at Aemilia Lanyer and Lady Mary Wroth who were both outspoken women writers at the Jacobean court. Krontiris asserts that Jacobean women were more confident and assertive than their counterparts a century earlier, such as Margaret Roper. In their private lives both women appear to have been nonconformists: loquacious, active, the mothers of illegitimate children. Lanyer had a particularly interesting connection with medieval women writers; her association of Christ with femaleness continues a theme developed by Julian of Norwich. Krontiris's analysis of Wroth's problems with Edward Denny that forced her to withdraw from sale the *Urania* demonstrate the interconnectedness of economics, gender, and class.

Krontiris contends that the dominant ideologies of the Renaissance oppressed women, telling them they were inferior to the superior male. Yet, these ideologies were not monolithic. The contradictions within them allowed room for some women to maneuver through. Krontiris presents solid scholarly work in support of her thesis. Her study is an important contribution to the study of women writers.

The collection edited by Grundy and Wiseman is a very different book from that of Krontiris, containing essays that express a variety of methodologies. The editors identify all

the contributors as “feminist scholars and critics” (p. 10), but beyond that the contributors do not share a single critical perspective. The title reflects the divisions within the book and the central ideas its contributors hope to explore. The editors’ purpose for the collection is to map the interrelationships of writing, gender, and historical circumstances through the contradictions found in the writings of early modern women. The book concentrates on the period 1640–1740, after print had become the dominant mode of literary production. Many of the issues raised by Krontiris are further explored in this collection.

A number of essays are concerned with women writers’ involvement in a variety of discourses, and their intervention in politics. Another central question is how a women’s reputation shapes and influences her writing. The various authors, when considering early modern English women writers, dispute the meaning of the essential nature of women, and whether feminine identity is artificial, fluctuating, or transformed by historical accident. The editors argue that “women” is an unstable and disputed category, and that this contention them means that “writing” is not something either obvious or given, and that “history” as a category also raises new sets of questions. The fact that late seventeenth and early eighteenth century England had joint monarchs, William and Mary, and then another queen, Anne, as rulers meant that some women writers struggled with conflicting political and symbolic strategies made possible by women’s rule.

As is often the case with collections, some of the essays are more useful and interesting than others. This book discusses many, many women writers, some better known, others more obscure; some of these writers reappear often in several essays. Some of the essays consider so many different writers they become encyclopedic without being particularly valuable on any specific writer.

Elaine Hobby carefully analyzes the complexity of the interrelationship between femininity and religious belief in the writings of political radicals of the 1650s, especially Margaret Cavendish, Lady Eleanor Douglas (earlier Davies), and some Quaker women. Issues in Hobby’s essay are continued by Susan Wiseman, who considers the contradictions around the issues of court, power, gender, and sexual desire in the writings of Cavendish. Jeslyn Medoff provides an especially interesting essay on how Aphra Behn’s reputation influenced the work of her successors. Ros Ballaster also discusses Behn, as well as Delarivier Manley, to consider their use of fictionalized autobiography.

Perhaps the most interesting essay is by Diane Purkiss, “Producing the voice, consuming the body: women prophets of the seventeenth century.” Purkiss discusses the many women prophets who spoke and wrote in public and private, and how these women’s bodies were the means by which they negotiated a space to speak within the confines of the religious discourse of the time. Purkiss discusses fasting and food imagery and metaphors of bodily dissolution and female reproduction. Her article is a marvelous coda to the work of Caroline Walker Bynum.

Some readers will find too much jargon and cumbersome writing in Krontiris’s work, and even more in some of the essays in the Grundy and Wiseman collection. But if readers persevere, they will find both books immensely valuable in understanding the connections between cultural constraints and women seeking voices in early modern England.