

tional aspects of Zitz-Halein's story revolve around her entangled relationship to the progressive but promiscuous Franz Zitz, a Mainz lawyer and later leader in the events of 1848, with whom she lived in marriage for eighteen months. Separated from him since 1839, Zitz-Halein was acutely aware of the threat to financial and social respectability that acceding to his demand for divorce would entail and successfully fought a notorious battle to remain his legal wife.

Zucker is clearly uncomfortable with the paradoxes and contradictions with which the life of his subject is riddled. To his credit, he does not withhold them from his readers. But rather than tease out their implications in a more differentiated reflection on constructions of gender in her time and ours, he attempts to defend the absence of a "conscious feminist ideology" (192) in Zitz-Halein's political activism against some monolithic definition of contemporary feminism that, while never clearly specified, seems to be a stereotypical version of "women's lib." In contrast to Allen, who engages in spirited dialogue with contemporary theories of feminism and explicates the historical context in which women negotiated their entry into the public sphere, Zucker seems embarrassed by the rootedness of nineteenth-century women's activism in the domestic sphere—an embarrassment that probably explains the slow development of feminist research on this period.

Daughters, Wives, and Widows: Writings by Men about Women and Marriage in England, 1500–1640. Edited by *Joan Larsen Klein*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992.

Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama. By *Karen Newman*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy. By *Barbara Freedman*. Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 1991.

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J OAN LARSEN KLEIN's *Daughters, Wives, and Widows* is a multidisciplinary anthology of texts about women and marriage that "were among those most widely consulted and highly regarded by men and women both in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century ceremony and the state's homily on matrimony, a compendium of laws regarding women, a gynecology manual, and pamphlets on housewifery and conduct and concludes with Dorothy Leigh's published "letter

of advice" to her sons. The range of selections, most of which are otherwise unavailable in modern editions, together with Klein's brief yet incisive introductions, will make *Daughters, Wives, and Widows* a much-used text by both scholars and students.

Organized according to such categories as "the orthodox stance," "puritan views," and "the cavalier lady," the selections make visible not only reigning orthodoxies but also the heterogeneity that fractured patriarchal ideology: religious discord between Anglicans and Puritans; conflicts between religion, humanism, and the emerging sciences; divergences between practical knowledge and theological precept; and debates within humanism itself. For instance, where the humanist Vives rails against women's "ungoodly crying and unreasonable calling, craving, and bullying" (116), fellow humanist Erasmus asserts, "No man . . . had ever a shrew to his wife, but through his own default" (84). Interestingly enough, it is the compilers of law and medicine who of all the male authors represented in this volume are most sympathetic to women, verifying Klein's remark: "The further our texts move away from theological assumptions about women's place and the nearer they come to describing the actual conditions of women's lives, the less emphasis we find on notions of women's subordination, inferiority, and frailty" (xii).

My quarrels with Klein's editing are few. Alongside her selection of the first English printed book on obstetrics, Eucharius Roeslin's *The Birth of Mankind*, it would be judicious to offer one of the popular anatomies that reproduced notions of female imperfection—perhaps Helkiah Crooke's *Microcosmographia, a Description of the Body of Man* (published in London in 1615) or Johnson's translation of the works of Ambroise Paré (London, 1634). In addition, given the reference to female sodomy in William Perkins's *Christian Economy*, an acknowledgment of the law's peculiar silence about early modern forms of lesbianism would be useful. Finally, at times there is a frustrating lack of information provided about passages Klein deletes from the original texts. But these are small defects in an otherwise valuable book.

If Klein makes available to more readers the early modern discourses that reproduced as social fact the categories of daughter, wife, and widow, Karen Newman's *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* helps us to interpret the slippages and contradictions within such discourses, as gender is employed or effaced in the service of other ideological interests. Whereas Klein's selections provide a complex picture of patriarchy's internal workings, Newman emphasizes female resistance to male domination. Her method of reading gender historically is directed as much toward those feminists who disregard history as toward those new historicists who ignore gender. Employing an impressive array of texts—anatomies, ballads, conduct books, court cases, homilies, village rituals, scaffold speeches, sumptuary laws, sermons, and

stage plays—Newman first delineates dominant ideologies and then uncovers the instabilities that threaten them. Reading drama alongside other historical documents, Newman astutely describes how representations of female scolds, witches, criminals, and their dramatic counterparts in Shakespeare's and Jonson's plays, expose and exceed patriarchal mandates.

At her best, Newman enacts an exciting deconstruction of early modern gender ideology, including its complicity with racial, national, and economic hierarchies. Particularly compelling are her chapters on the construction of witchcraft as the inverse of a nurturing maternal force and on the intersection of race and femininity in representations of the monstrous. And yet, despite my enthusiasm for Newman's recovery of female agency, she does not always convince me of the power of the internal subversion she describes. For instance, in her brilliant reading of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, Newman argues that insofar as the play calls attention to the constructed character of gender representation, it undermines patriarchal ideology. In this and other analyses, Newman privileges female speech as intrinsically transgressing and theatricality as inevitably deconstructing gender roles; yet she does not persuade me that linguistic energy or metatheatrical display, as disruptive as they may be, offset the ideological weight of Kate's taming. Indeed, in arguing for the subversively equivocal nature of Kate's final speech or the self-fashioning of women's scaffold confessions, Newman momentarily disregards the power structure reproduced by enforced marriages and the execution of witches. Whereas speech and theatricality partake of ideology, they also inhabit a different register of power: verbal transgression and bodily performance may stage a scene of agency, but they do not necessarily disrupt structural constraints. Nonetheless, it is an indication of the strength and provocativeness of Newman's work that, through the problems she confronts, she points us toward the development of a method that (1) recognizes the different status and effects of speech acts, theatrical representations, and material structures; and (2) does justice to women's strategies for power without overestimating or diminishing the extent to which those strategies are determined by available rhetorics.

Like Newman, Barbara Freedman is concerned with the politics of reading, but *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy* moves beyond *Fashioning Femininity's* new historical awareness of the textuality of history and the instability of texts to disrupt our ability to fix on an interpretation altogether. A difficult but rewarding book, *Staging the Gaze* stages a series of debates among feminist theory, cultural materialism, Lacanian psychoanalysis, film theory, theater theory, Renaissance optics, and Shakespearean criticism. More of a theoretical intervention than a reading of plays, each essay advocates

the rethinking of representation along deconstructive lines, for which the illusionary tropes of the theater provide the primary terms of analysis.

Defining theatricality as the “fractured reciprocity whereby beholder and beheld reverse positions in a way that renders a steady position of spectatorship impossible” (1), Freedman outlines a “theatrics of reading” that subverts “the metaphysics of presence in which the theater is traditionally implicated” (74). Shakespearean comedy, with its penchant for dislocating perspective and its thematization of error, dream, censorship, displacement, and illusion, serves as the occasion for celebrating resistance to interpretation. Freedman situates her analyses of “the subject” and the self-deluding methods we employ to know, to see, and to read within a political context of difference, hierarchy, and mastery. Sometimes her subject is gendered, and sometimes the “gaze” that is staged is patriarchal; but whereas her approach is informed by feminism, it is more dedicated to exposing the problem of mastery involved in interpretation than in the interpretation of gender.

It could be argued that despite Freedman’s subordination of gender to a symptom of interpretive dilemmas, the deconstructions she enacts are as much feminist in impulse as postmodernist in style. The problem with such a view is that it avoids the question of whether it is possible to keep in play multiple interpretations while maintaining a feminist perspective. Freedman herself encounters this difficulty, as her reading of *Taming of the Shrew* momentarily comes to rest on the subservience of Kate, who is described as trapped in an impossible double-bind. Freedman’s later effort to unsettle this reading by distinguishing between sexist narrative and destabilizing performance not only assumes the inherent subversiveness of theatrical modes of representation but also leaves Kate behind as Petruchio is installed as deconstructor. As much as Freedman asserts that “no one discourse is the master here, and no one object . . . is the primary text that the others are recruited to explain” (5), it seems that in the agon of gender relations the discourse of mastery and the mastery of one discourse are unavoidable.

Despite their differences, because *Staging the Gaze* and *Fashioning Femininity* are positioned at the boundaries of various theoretical discourses they share some strengths and vulnerabilities. Their emphases on fashioning and staging not only usefully direct us to the ideological and psychic work involved in the construction of femininity but also raise the question of how much the use of theatricality as a trope is enabling for feminist criticism. Whereas Freedman’s psychoanalytic interest in the gaze intersects productively with Newman’s emphasis on historical spectacle, together these books suggest the continuing difficulty of synthesizing historical and psychoanalytical approaches. Although Freedman grounds her analysis of the indeterminacy of perspective in Renaissance

optics, her reliance on Lacanian psychosexuality is ultimately unmitigated by a historical consciousness. The feminist and historical intent of her work would be strengthened by an analysis of "gender in terms of its local and specific formations" (Newman, xix). At the same time, it is from precisely such a critic as Newman, who is obviously well versed in psychoanalytic methods, that one hopes for a future indication of the possibilities of a historicized psychoanalysis.

In *The Law's Resolutions of Women's Rights* (included in Klein's book), women are said to "make no laws, they consent to none, they abrogate none. All of them are understood either married or to be married and their desires are subject to their husbands. I know no remedy, though some women can shift it well enough" (Klein, 32). To their credit, these three books advance our knowledge of the complex strategies women employ to "shift it" within the confines of early modern patriarchal relations.

Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism. By *Marianne DeKoven*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991.

1915, the Cultural Moment: The New Politics, the New Woman, the New Psychology, the New Art and the New Theatre in America. Edited by *Adele Heller* and *Lois Rudnick*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991.

Engendering Culture: Manhood and Womanhood in New Deal Public Art and Theater. By *Barbara Melosh*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991.

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IN THIS OUR POSTMODERN moment when national boundaries are daily being redrawn by civil and ethnic wars, multinational corporations, and global information systems, it is crucial for feminist scholars concerned with recharting disciplinary and gender borders to emulate the Angel of History and look again at previous moments of cultural dis-ease in order to see ourselves now. Like today, the inauguration of the twentieth century was accompanied by a breakdown of intellectual, social, sexual, political, and aesthetic boundaries as capitalism spawned its empire and its resistances in the wake of the enormous upheavals initiated by new means of production and consumption.

In American critical and historical usage, modernism refers to a fifty-year span between 1890 and 1940 when the terms of social life as well as