Louise Schleiner. *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. Pp. xxi, 293.

Jean R. Brink, ed. *Privileging Gender in Early Modern England*. Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1993. Pp. vi, 250.

Both Louise Schleiner's and Jean Brink's most recent contributions to the study of early modern women's writing demonstrate the current revisionist trend in feminist scholarship of the Renaissance period. Following Jean Kelly's influential assertion that woman did not have a Renaissance, feminist critics of the 1970s and early 1980s tended to dismiss Renaissance literature as an exclusively male domain unworthy of sustained critical attention. Such an attitude is perpetuated in Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's foreword to Schleiner's *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers*. Commenting on the marginalizing of female authors by literary historians, the two critics list eight examples of neglected writers—only one of these women (Mary Wroth) derives from the early modern period. Ironically, Schleiner herself goes on to reject the assumption that the female literary tradition began in earnest only during the nineteenth century, and instead urges the necessity of adopting a diachronic approach (p. xv).

Tudor and Stuart Women Writers provides a rich account of the literary activities of women in early modern England. Schleiner questions "how Tudor and Stuart women came to write anything for public and semipublic circulation when they faced so many kinds of obstacles to doing so" (p. xvii). The text's answers to this question are diverse, and in this diversity lie both the book's strengths and its weaknesses. Schleiner forewarns the reader of her "eclectic" (p. xvii) methodology, which draws on "the spheres of discourse pragmatics, discourse psychology, Marxist and psychoanalytic theory, sociology, feminist textual study, and cultural semiotics" (p. 195). These various approaches result in three central strands in her argument. Women's writing, Schleiner contends, was enabled and determined by 1) the reading formations within individual households, 2) the dynamics within religious groups, especially during periods of dissent, and 3) the achievement of a female authorial identity by means of subverting or appropriating ideologically-based male enunciative positions.

The connections between these arguments are not consistently elucidated and, since the book is structured chronologically rather than thematically, the coherence of Schleiner's discussion suffers at times. Apart from this organizational weakness, however, Schleiner's account has much to offer. In particular, the range of female voices treated by Schleiner is impressive. Transcending the religious and class boundaries that have limited our view of Renaissance women's writing, Schleiner supplements the writing of aristocratic Protestant women (such as Mary Sidney and Mary Wroth) with more obscure authors from the ranks of Catholic families (e.g. Anne Dacre Howard and Elizabeth Weston) and waiting women (e.g. Isabella Whitney and Margaret Tyler). Her discussion of the works of unfamiliar authors is supported by extensive quotation and translation (by Connie McQuillen and Lynn E. Roller), as well as a 45-page appendix devoted to reproducing individual poems.

Jean Brink's *Privileging Gender in Early Modern England* brings together the work of 12 critics concerned with the function of gender in early modern texts written by or about women. The first two essays are closely related to Schleiner's work. Mary Erler extends the study of female literacy in the Tudor period beyond its conventional focus on aristocratic circles in her examination of the book ownership and reading practices of the Fettyplace sisters. Her paper provides fascinating evidence of the intellectual and spiritual "exchanges" (p. 17) occurring between women in the first half of the sixteenth century. Margaret Hannay analyzes Anne Vaughan Lok's and Mary Sidney Herbert's common strategy of circumventing the restriction of women's public speech by means of biblical translation. Comparing the two women's rendering of Psalm 51, Hannay contends that both present Protestant doctrine and make political statements by appropriating the psalmist's male persona.

Five of the papers in *Privileging Gender* are concerned with gender in the works of Shakespeare. Examining those female characters who threaten patriarchal order, these critics (perhaps surprisingly) agree on the dramatic movement of Shakespeare's plays toward a containment of the "unruly" woman. This consensus results in large measure from the almost exclusive focus on Shakespeare's histories and Roman plays. Margaret Downs-Gamble and Catherine La Courreye Blecki offer fine intellectual studies of Kate (*The Taming of the Shrew*) and Volumnia (*Coriolanus*), respectively. Jean Howard compares the centrality of gender to the political themes of Heywood's *Edward IV* and Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, arguing that, in the history play, the cultural anxiety deriving from contemporary social change was frequently diverted onto the figure of the prostitute, and relieved by her dramatic resubordination to male authority. Phyllis Rackin and Jean Brink each theorize on Shakespearean scholarship, past and present, devoted to gender. Rackin urges that gender ideology of Renaissance England (which she conflates entirely with Shakespeare's own) is radically different from ours; those critics who view Shakespeare as subverting or interrogating that ideology have failed, Rackin implies, to adequately historicize their understanding of early modern sexuality. Brink, tracing the "dark ladies" of Shakespeare's creation, likewise asserts the playwright's endorsing of patriarchal ideology. Thus, in her reading of *Antony and Cleopatra*, she valorizes Octavius's appraisal of the Egyptian queen: "Octavius sneeringly insinuates that Cleopatra has emasculated Antony, and the action of the play validates his judgment" (p. 103). Such a reading ignores the highly problematic nature of Octavius's own character.

The remaining five papers in the collection return to a revisionist approach to women's lives and writing. Retha Warnicke refutes the claim that the concepts of public and private were blurred during the Renaissance and that little personal or solitary time existed; she goes on to suggest how this distinction affected the lives and social roles of women. Donald Foster argues persuasively for the need to reconceive women writers as authors. Rejecting the effacement of the author common to post-structuralist, new historicist and feminist criticism, Foster posits a maternal, rather than paternalistic, model of reading, and applies this model to the life and writings of Elizabeth Tanfield Cary. Juliet Fleming examines the role of gender in the establish-

ment of a national vernacular; the first English dictionaries regularly addressed themselves to female audiences, associating women with a lexical extravagance in need of regulation. Judith Kegan Gardiner responds to previous characterizations of Margaret Fell Fox as either a Quaker saint or the "helpmeet" of her second husband, George Fox; she argues for Fell's unique contribution of a familial rhetoric to express her Quaker beliefs. Gardiner defines Fell's voice as maternal, combining intimate and public discourses to articulate an egalitarian view of both class and gender. Finally, Mark S. Lussier reads Aphra Behn's *The Rover* as a sophisticated critique of her society's masculine economy of desire; the play then moves toward a counter-culture of marital relations based upon emotive, as opposed to venal, considerations.

Overall, the individual essays in *Privileging Gender* demonstrate the extensive scope of gender criticism as an approach to early modern literature, while the collection as a whole suggests those common issues pertinent to our understanding of the period are still very much in the process of definition.

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Jean-Paul-Médéric Tremblay. *Comme en plein jour. Dossier sur l'Éminence grise alias François Leclerc du Tremblay, en religion le père Joseph de Paris, frère mineur capucin (1577-1635)*. Sainte-Foy, Photocopie d'une lettre manuscrite, 1995, 23 x 15 cm., 11 illustrations.

Le titre de cet ouvrage, à la rédaction duquel J.- P.- M. Tremblay a consacré dix années de recherche au Canada et en Europe, me rappelle par sa longueur celui des volumes des seizième, dix-septième et dix-huitième siècles. Il est clair-obscur, approprié et suggestif. Il convient tout à fait au portrait complet, nuancé et objectif que l'auteur veut dresser de son héros, incatalogable, inclassable, "incontournable," comme l'est tout homme-orchestre, donc dangereux ou suspect, surtout dans notre monde de spécialistes. Il s'agit en l'occurrence d'un capucin français (1577-1638), bien connu dans l'histoire sous le surnom de *l'Éminence grise*; on l'appelait aussi le père Joseph; il fut plusieurs années confident, conseiller, voire secrétaire du Cardinal de Richelieu sous le règne de Louis XIII. Ajoutons qu'il est le contemporain de Jansénius (1585-1638). Autant dire qu'il fait et fait encore couler beaucoup d'encre et. . . de peinture. Témoin l'illustration de la couverture du volume: le tableau du peintre Jean Léon Gérôme (1824-1904) datant de 1873 — on peut le voir aujourd'hui au Museum of Fine Arts, à Boston —, où l'artiste officiel le montre en train de dire son bréviaire, tout à fait indifférent aux courbettes des courtisanes à gages s'évertuant à le saluer au passage à l'issue d'un entretien avec Richelieu.

Comme en plein jour est nettement articulé et charpenté un peu comme un traité de morale ou de psychologie, avec divisions, subdivisions et sous-titres. Il comprend trois parties inégalement réparties en 11 chapitres. Le lecteur trouvera, à la fin de la