également les 45 « Responces » poétiques dans lesquelles Des Roches entretient un débat avec un poète pétrarquiste anonyme.

Dans ses conclusions à propos d'écrivains individuels aussi bien que dans sa discussion de l'écriture « féminine » ou « masculine » ou des conceptions « masculines » ou « féminines » de la temporalité, Yandell évite avec soin toute généralisation facile. Elle trouve chez les auteurs qu'elle étudie une grande variété d'approches aux questions de la temporalité. Elle constate pourtant que les hommes « share an insistence on time as a relentlessly progressive phenomenon » (p. 213) qui emporte la jeunesse et la force, et qu'il faut vaincre en cherchant une forme d'immortalité poétique ou spirituelle. Elle trouve chez les femmes écrivains peu d'exemples de cette préoccupation avec l'immortalité poétique (*exegi monumentum*) et aucune tentative de saisir le moment passager de peur de la vieillesse ou de la perte de la beauté (*carpe diem*). Les femmes écrivains semblent s'intéresser beaucoup plus à l'utilisation créatrice du temps pour apprendre, pour écrire, pour aimer. Yandell constate que « the women poets [. . .] challenge the notion of an antagonistic time to be conquered. [. . .] [they] accord a much less prominent role to the inevitable march of Chronos in their works. [. . .] [they] ultimately evince a temporal philosophy that seeks to acclaim the enduring qualities of the present » (p. 213–15). Chez elles, la temporalité est souvent cyclique et en évolution, et met en valeur « the processes of writing, meditating and discussing over the finished product of the book » (p. 145).

L'auteur m'a convaincue de la validité de sa thèse et de sa méthode, non seulement pour cette étude mais pour d'autres du même ordre. Elle aurait pourtant pu renforcer le lien entre sa thèse de base et certaines de ses analyses d'œuvres et d'auteurs spécifiques ; les notions liées à la temporalité se perdent parfois, restent implicites plutôt que spécifiques. Je répondrais volontiers à son appel à la fin du livre, « a collaborative call for additions to [my] arguments » (p. 216), et j'espère que d'autres le feront aussi, après avoir lu ce livre des plus stimulants. Une telle discussion enrichirait notre lecture de tous ces auteurs.

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Katherine Eggert. *Showing Like a Queen: Female Authority and Literary Experiment in Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000. Pp. ix, 289.

According to an anecdote about the authorship of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* that first appeared in John Dennis's *The Comical Gallant: or The Amours of Sir John Falstaffe* (1702), the Falstaff star vehicle was written to satisfy a request from Elizabeth I for a new play about the “base Knight” that would “shew him in Love.” In his edition of Shakespeare's plays published seven years later, Nicholas Rowe repeated the anecdote, then offered one of his own about *1 Henry IV*:

Upon this Occasion it may not be improper to observe, that this Part of Falstaff is said to have been written originally under the Name of Oldcastle; some of that Family being then remaining, the Queen was pleas'd to command him to alter it; upon which he made use of Falstaff.

Taken together, these anecdotes intimate that Elizabeth performed a significant role in shaping two early modern dramas; individually, however, they depict rather different acts of collaboration. In the former, the queen serves a remarkably generative function, encouraging Shakespeare to rethink one of his most popular creations and to write a new kind of play for him. In the latter, Elizabeth functions as the anxious head of state authority who monitors the playwright and compels him to alter his work as she sees fit. Given Rowe's foundational position within Shakespeare's subsequent editorial legacy, it should come as no surprise that his anecdote would be the more influential, that the form of collaboration suggested there has largely underwritten scholarly treatments of Elizabethan literature in which the monarch haunts and restricts the literary production of her most gifted subjects.

New Historicists such as Louis Montrose may have complicated this simplistic interpretative narrative by insisting that a reciprocal, interdependent, and even symbiotic relationship existed between monarch and poet-playwright; but true to Rowe's account, Elizabeth's authority — especially her anomalous feminine authority — remained central. Consequently, critics like Montrose essentially remained stranded in the same subject-ive position with regard to that authority as did the writers they examined. In her rich, provocative, and elegantly written book, Katherine Eggert liberates herself from this replicative critical engagement by directing our attention to the generative function of Elizabeth's reign. Arguing that Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton reconstituted the current — or in Milton's case, remembered — political “problem” of a female monarch into an opportunity to experiment with new poetic and dramatic forms, Eggert strategically decenters the queen in her analysis of these writers' work in order to look closely at how “the disruptions of social and political hierarchy initiated by queenship” (p. 20) occasioned literary innovation. The result is not only a much-needed critical reassessment of the early modern literary canon that melds a New Historicist awareness of literature as cultural artifact with a literary-historical account of influence and experimentation, but also a series of dazzling, often transformative, readings of canonical works such as *The Faerie Queene*, *Hamlet*, and *Paradise Lost*. Eggert's book, as the previous titles might suggest, is a very ambitious undertaking, but its ambitions are deftly managed and largely realized.

In a brief introductory chapter, Eggert locates her arguments about Elizabeth, feminine authority, and generic experimentation within those of New Historicist critics, only to make more vivid the divergence of her intended methodological and interpretative path from theirs. Chapter 2 treats *The Faerie Queene* as a kind of genre thought-experiment in which prior traditions of epic poetry are revised and expanded so as to accommodate Spenser's stated task of championing femi-

ninity. Eggert's primary argument here, which is fine-tuned, amplified, and reworked in later chapters, is that the major generic changes in the poem beginning in Book 5 are necessitated by "alliances between poetry and femininity proposed in Books 3 and 4" (p. 27). The implications of Eggert's analysis for rethinking the shift to pastoral in Book 6, the function of the *Mutabilitie* cantos, and, indeed, the poem's troubling lack of closure are significant.

Shakespeare's plays are the focus of the next three chapters. In Chapter 3, the longest of the book, Eggert examines the progression of Shakespeare's two major tetralogies of history plays, arguing that, like *The Faerie Queene*, they take up the problem of Elizabeth's queenship along with potential alliances between female authority and what she terms "ravishing literary effect" (p. 53). These are certainly a lot of plays to discuss in fifty pages, but Eggert adroitly sifts through a range of characters and scenes — and a number of contemporaneous non-Shakespearean texts — gleaned evidence of how the presence of female authority in the plays ultimately becomes the impetus for theatrical experimentation. In *1 Henry VI*, for example, Eggert maps out Joan La Pucelle's dramatic trajectory from a vocally powerful character to one who by the end of the play has been practically silenced, literally upstaged by the sudden appearance of demons. In *Henry V*, Katherine of France's unwillingness to indulge enthusiastically in the king's fantasies of producing male heirs subtly strips his dynastic ambitions of their epic grandeur and, in the end, exhausts the credibility of the history play itself as a genre.

The fourth chapter of the book, an examination of *Hamlet*, is a *tour de force* of close reading that really showcases the advantages of Eggert's eclectic methodology, her willingness to mix and match historicist and formalist approaches. As was the case in previous chapters, Eggert centers her discussion on the issue of succession in *Hamlet*, examining it in terms of its extra-textual/historical resonances and in the more strictly literary context of generic innovation. Indeed, if the play repeatedly flirts with and finally stages a dynastic disaster that anticipates the imminent collapse of the Tudor line upon Elizabeth's death, Eggert observes that it also frets over the possible succession of Shakespeare's company by the boys' companies of Blackfriars and St. Paul's. But what is particularly stunning about Eggert's argument here is the way she incorporates the play's textual instability into her analysis, claiming that the first three extant texts of *Hamlet* (Q1, Q2, and F) "also gesture toward the concerns of the theatrical profession over its status and over its ever-tightening relation to the monarchy" (p. 102). In the concluding pages of the chapter, Eggert makes good on her claim by analyzing key variants between Q1, Q2, and F with reference to subsequent editorial efforts to associate the play closely with Shakespeare's authorship and "to disassociate it, both literally and historically, from the influence of queenship" (p. 125).

The last of the three Shakespeare chapters considers two plays, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Winter's Tale*, written after Elizabeth's death. Both plays, Eggert argues, self-consciously represent the appeal of the theater as a feminine place, its authority as feminine and feminizing; but the conclusions of both plays also opt to discard such forms of feminine theatricality now that the queen is dead

and a certain nostalgia for her reign threatens to take hold. The theatrical experimentation that follows from this complex literary/historical encounter with female authority results in a new Shakespearean genre Eggert terms “feminine tragedy,” by which she means “tragedy that happens to women” and “tragedy that happens when the very femininity that produces theater comes to an end” (p. 133). Particularly striking here is the discussion of *The Winter's Tale*, in which Eggert argues that the de-eroticizing of Hermione's body — accomplished through her “death” and resurrection — eliminates her as “a threat, either sexual or successional, to masculine rule” (p. 165).

In the book's final chapter and an afterword, Eggert turns to Milton in order to demonstrate how even several decades after Elizabeth's death, her anomalous reign continued to foster literary experimentation, culminating finally in the emergence of the novel in the eighteenth century. Beginning with readings of post-Restoration accounts of Elizabethan England that nostalgically glorify the queen, Eggert contends that Milton remembered things quite differently, that his memory of female rule and the anxiety it once provoked in Elizabeth's subjects underwrites the arguments he makes in the prose tracts in favor of divorce and against monarchy. From the prose tracts, Eggert moves on to a brief analysis of Milton's 1634 *Masque*, then devotes the remainder of the chapter to a reading of *Paradise Lost*. Here Eggert's scrutiny of Eve's subjection in the poem shifts the interpretative focus profitably away from the oft-debated question of Milton's attitude toward women. Instead, she persuasively argues that Milton's poetic treatment of Eve should be read as “a meditation upon the relation between femininity and sovereignty” (p. 172).

Eggert covers a lot of ground in this book, working through nearly a hundred years of literary history, three major writers, and three substantial bodies of criticism. It would be unfair, in this context, to ask her to do more. Should another scholar, however, choose to follow Eggert's important lead, it would be exciting to try out her arguments about female authority and literary form in an analysis, for example, of the two versions of Sidney's *Arcadia*; or to see how her central thesis is complicated by Jonson's literary experiments, especially some of his masques and entertainments, in which Elizabeth's authority has been partially eclipsed by that of a new queen.

There is a great deal to be learned from *Showing Like a Queen*, not only from Eggert's readings of the texts so many of us teach and write about, but more importantly, perhaps, from the *ways* she reads them. I emphasize the plural here because it seems to me that the book serves as a model for how original and productive inter-methodological, if not interdisciplinary, approaches to literature can be.

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