references, while *Macbeth* has about twelve, we can consider why the past is more resonant in the former play. Such observations are useful to both literary and performance analysis, as are those in the third part of the book.

While the three essays in Part II share a common focus, those of Part III consider disparate characters and how the audience understands them. Part III suggests that hired murderers in the plays are generally in a class-bound relationship to a venal authority, and that the use of body parts is more likely to arouse disgust from an audience than either murder or rape. The first of these propositions seems very generative: one can imagine extending its insights to a re-examination of other serving characters, who might be said to exist as a function, not as a subject. The second is considerably more provocative, particularly when Cohen suggests that Lavinia's mutilated body necessarily arouses disgust, while neither her rape nor her murder does (p. 163). The way in which he defines "disgust," as a universal human emotion of physical revulsion (p. 160), is crucial to his meaning here, yet he has clearly saved his most controversial analysis for last.

As my comments may suggest, one strength of the book is the way that it addresses matters of race and class. Its comments about gender are far less important and focus strongly on the father-daughter relationships portrayed in Shakespeare's work. The book does not address the plays' concern with unstable gender categories (especially because of cross-dressed boy actors or heroines in disguise), or indeed with the instability of class identity (Christopher Sly comes to mind, as do Maria and Malvolio). Yet that focus on class and race is certainly the author's prerogative, and Cohen offers intense, rich readings of specific moments that should appeal to many critics.

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Ulrike Strasser. *State of Virginitv: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003. Pp. 264.

Historical narratives describing early modern state-building have long been dominated by the spectre of Max Weber, with his emphasis on the formative power of Protestantism over processes of secularization, rationalization, and the public sphere. Recent attempts to move beyond this model, however, have opened up a more varied explanation for the development of political centralization, and one that expands upon the important component of gender. In *State of Virginitv: Gender, Religion, and Politics in the Early Modern State*, Ulrike Strasser continues to question past assumptions by examining the "nexus of state formation and control of marriage and family" in the case of Catholic Bavaria (p. 22). The book argues that not only did the example of this southern German state reveal that Catholicism itself "operated with the modernizing state and not in antithesis to it," but also that the matter of sexuality, and specifically female virginity, was

reconfigured by political and ecclesiastical figures to serve the purposes of a new and emerging polity.

Reconceptualizations of marriage, virginity and celibacy were central to the Protestant agenda, of course, but Catholic authorities were also intensely preoccupied with such issues; not only did marriage, for example, “[represent] the boundary around which the difference between the laity and the clergy was organized in the Catholic taxonomy of sacredness and sexuality” (p. 35), but it also constituted “the institutional enactment of god-given hierarchies” between men and women, and within Christian society as a whole (p. 37). In Bavaria, the regulatory injunctions of the Council of Trent worked in rough parallel to the secular administration of rulers such as Maximilian, who sought to build “a public order on the bedrock of economically stable households” (p. 47). While Trent sought to impose new rules and an increasing clerical presence onto the previously somewhat-flexible institution of marriage, Munich’s bureau of marriage aimed to preserve the social order by prohibiting premarital unions, banning “profligacy”—or “lewd as well as economically thoughtless behavior” (p. 54)—and, above all, confining marriage to “orthodox, honorable, and financially stable burghers” whose economic and “moral” superiority would best ensure the public order.

Unsurprisingly, women, while not altogether powerless to resist such measures, came out the losers, especially if they were unfortunate enough to find themselves on the lower end of the economic scale. Equally problematic were those indeterminate—or “unassimilated”—women who fell under the categories of prostitutes and nuns, “set apart from male-headed households and not (yet) defined by the presence or absence of sexual relations” (p. 57). In a particularly interesting chapter, Strasser conjoins the institutions of the brothel and the convent—the secular and the religious houses of women—which were both “tightly connected to changing attitudes toward marriage and sexuality” (p. 66). By curtailing the public presence of women religious and confining them to the cloister—and by banning the civic brothel altogether—secular and ecclesiastical authorities were “[erecting] a sharp divide between the state of marriage and the state of chastity, as exemplified by the monastic life;” in doing so, they “thereby increase[ed] the moral pressure of both states of being and [made] women the main bearers of new moral obligations and also the involuntary guardians of new social and sexual boundaries” (p. 84). At the same time, confined religious women also served an essential function for secular authorities such as Maximilian, who “willingly seized on the opportunity to appropriate the religious labors of the nuns and harness their spiritual protection”—their prayers in particular—“to the fortunes of the ruling dynasty” (p. 132).

In part two, Strasser continues to examine Bavaria’s regulation of sexuality within the changing historical context of the seventeenth century, when state-endorsed patriarchal governance as well as conceptions of virginity (and profligacy) were subject to increasing judicial and institutional control and a “harsh moral climate” (p. 106). The Thirty Years’ War especially “mobilized powerful images of femininity and masculinity among the rulers as well as the ruled;” according

to Strasser, “[The] city as virgin symbolized a community’s intactness, innocence, and determination to fend off enemies,” while “the city as raped woman stood for conquest, violation, and debasement.” “And,” Strasser continues, “women felt the power of these vitalized images” (p. 104). Sexual purification thus became associated more than ever with social purification, with anti-profligacy laws holding lower-class women particularly responsible “for purging the community of the stain of nonmarital sexual regulation” (p. 121).

Within the confines of their increasing sequestration, religious women and nuns refused to be “reduced to spiritual delivery devices for the powerful.” Adaptability, evasion, and other “weapons of the weak” were utilized, for example, by the women of the Ridler and Pütrich convents, who transformed their traditional skills in cloth production to clothe the remains of saints for public exhibitions, or to take possession, through some guile, of other sacred remains such as the body of St Dorothea, which “became a medium of exchange of spiritual and material goods, as well as gifts of affection between the female saint, the cloistered women, and their secular female kin” (p. 144). In this sense, “[The] nuns lost one form of prestige due to cloistering but eventually gained another precisely because of enclosure” (p. 148).

Strasser examines finally another female community that emerged in seventeenth-century Bavaria, in the arrival of Mary Ward and her “Jesuitesses,” who brought their educational enterprise to the German state. Though they inhabited an “ambiguous status betwixt and between the religious and the laity” and were ultimately condemned by the Church, the “English Ladies” nevertheless continued to receive strong state support, as they were perceived to serve secular society by “inculcat[ing] normative femininity in their pupils” (p. 161). The condition for this support was a “pressure toward accommodating the interests of authorities and families” and the larger public order; nevertheless, the English Ladies succeeded in “[broadening] the range of acceptable female identities” with a presence that would remain unequivocally “anchored in the world” (pp. 167, 170).

Strasser does not explain wholly convincingly why the Bavarian princes would embrace oppressive tridentine and secular reforms while sanctioning Ward and her English Ladies, whose status as single women, no matter how honorable, was elsewhere treated with severe measures. *State of Virginity* is also marred by occasional redundancies between chapters, even if they serve to further reinforce her arguments. Despite these small weaknesses, Strasser has produced an important and elegantly-written book that should appeal to anyone interested in state-building, gender, sexuality, and the new historiographical currents they encompass. Such examinations yield rich insights especially in the case of Bavaria, a city at whose center stands a monument to the queen of all virgins (the Mariensäule), who “served as a point of reference” for measuring geographic distances and as a “monument to the victory of Catholicism and its values” more than three hundred years ago (p. 178).

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