

critical discussion and now finds itself pedantically policing textual reception, more interested in getting the history right than getting the text, Fernie's *Demonic* is a journey we should all take. We will not be the same at the end.

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Deanne Williams, *Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), xii+278pages, ISBN 978-1-403-91164-3, £55.00 (hb).

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Richly researched and persuasively written, *Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood* is confidently presented as 'the first scholarly book devoted to Shakespeare's girl characters and conceptions of girlhood' (1). The time and space delineated by Deanne Williams is situated at the confluence of three areas, childhood, child-parent relationships and the threshold of womanhood. Attention paid to children in Shakespeare has tended to focus on boys, owing to their twofold presence on stage as characters and actors; research on daughters all too often leaves in the shade other aspects of girlhood and privileges historical, cultural or psychological approaches over performance issues; while women's studies view girls as a first stage towards womanhood rather than a specific period of expression and empowerment.

Inevitably Williams's study takes her into those confluent areas, but she is careful to ensure that she does not stray from her focal point of interest. The very notion of girlhood is complicated and enriched by its cultural and linguistic instability: 'child' was used in opposition to 'boy' and 'girl' also designated youths well into the fifteenth century – (con)fusions that acquire all the more significance on a stage where 'girl' characters were written for, and performed by, boys. This, paradoxically, may have authorised the latter to explore a fuller range of sensibilities, including those that were removed from the canons of socially defined behaviour, such as the 'peevish', 'froward' attitudes of 'wenches' like Silvia, Katherina or Juliet that despair their fathers.

Viewing Shakespeare 'through the lens of girlhood' (209) and a close discussion of texts and props adds nuance to plays such as *The Taming of the Shrew* and revisits some assumptions we might have received from women's studies. The lute provides

a fascinatingly subtle instance: Katherina and Bianca both rebel against their father's assumption that they should learn to play the lute. And the instrument invites a sensitive reassessment of Ophelia: starting from the stage direction in Q1, *Enter Ophelia playing on a Lute and her hair down, singing*, Williams discusses the two versions of Ophelia's 'madness scene'. In Q1 Ophelia offers a controlled performance of distress, coherently constructed through music and song, holding the stage and imposing her presence on the other characters, 'her hair down' being here a signifier for girlhood rather than madness. This contrasts with the 'minimalist *Enter Ophelia*' (73) of Q2 and the more clearly oriented *Enter Ophelia distracted* of the 1623 Folio, which introduces a script that offers a more distraught behaviour, marked by snatches of song and dialogue that are interrupted by the other characters.

Shakespeare's stage girls include historical girls, such as Richard II's child bride, Isabelle de France, who was barely ten when he died. Williams reads the character from this historical perspective, and the performance as that of a boy playing a girl, not an adult queen: movingly, the character becomes a precocious child who has fashioned her own role as a self-possessed, dignified queen – with, nonetheless, intimations of girlhood surfacing. Whether Shakespeare wrote the part for a boy actor playing a girl, as opposed to a mature queen, is left unresolved, in my view, but it is dramatically appealing, and I fully endorse Williams's invitation to directors: 'Now may very well be the time to see the Queen played by a child actor' (72).

'Princely training' (106) schools Miranda for her return into the world and enables Marina to erect 'a barrier of narrative that works to preserve her chastity' (106) as she transforms her girlhood into an active and engaged rhetoric: in becoming a self-sufficient storyteller, she reverses the child-parent pattern, as her father acknowledges: 'I / Have suffered like a girl' (5.1.132). After re-enacting, far from the court, the 'lost pastoral of childhood' (117) and the 'unfledged days' (1.2.77) remembered by Leontes at the beginning of *The Winter's Tale*, Perdita finally establishes her status as a girl and a daughter and, so doing, 'regain[s] dynastic status and restore[s] a broken family' (124).

From stage girls, the book moves on to girls on stage – historical girls, for whom girlhood was, indeed, a performance, 'little ladies' who were also allowed the privilege of performing in masques for court and family entertainments. Milton's *Comus* (1634) 'places a girl at its centre' (149), who was performed by fifteen-year-old Alice Egerton for the family household. Williams shows how Shakespeare's plays and representations of girlhood also played a formative part in helping Elizabeth, James I's daughter, through her mourning of her brother and preparation for marriage.

The final section is devoted to girls writing for the stage. Rachel Fane was fourteen when she wrote a *May Masque* (1627), reminiscent of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which her brothers and sisters performed. Williams traces Fane's transformation of 'her own reading, knowledge and experiences into a dramatic work that reflects and affirms her own world and its values' (173), entertaining her family and 'consolidat[ing] their ties and collective identity' (189). In contrast, the Cavendish sisters, Jane and Elizabeth, engaged in collaborative writing while in captivity during

the Civil War, writing a masque, *A Pastorall*, and a play, *Concealed Fancies* (both around 1645), which carries echoes of *As You Like It* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. No longer ‘the construct of an all-male stage’ (191), girlhood is here ‘the authors’ subject, as well as subject position’ (192), a redefined space ‘of personal and artistic empowerment’ (192), ‘a time for imagination and theatricality’ (207). At the same time, as Williams recalls in her closing paragraph, Shakespeare’s girls are ‘creatures of performance’ (209) – a useful reminder, relevant for our time, that ‘performances of girlhood ... are not attached to age or biological sex’ (210). So doing, she opens up fresh perspectives for further research in ‘the rich history of girls on stage’ that she so elegantly explores in this volume.

Janice Valls-Russell has edited and translated into French *Djanet Sear’s Harlem Duet* (2013). She has co-edited a collection of essays on children lost and found in early modern Europe, *Enfants perdus, enfants trouvés: dire l’abandon en Europe du XVI^e au XVIII^e siècle*, forthcoming (Paris, Garnier, 2015).

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W. B. Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England* (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2014), xii+265pp., ISBN 978-0-19-968152-5, £65.00 (hb).

H. Gaston HALL

This is a masterly study of the most widely known English theologian of the last years of the reign of Elizabeth I and the reign of James I and VI. It is also a book with cultural implications extending beyond the venomous theological polemics in which William Perkins (1558–1602) – in a more conciliatory way of preaching, teaching and writing – helped to establish the Church of England not only in law, but in the hearts and minds of a majority of his compatriots, making it ‘far more truly a national Church in the period before the outbreak of the Civil Wars than afterwards’ (ix). Brown Patterson, an ordained priest, emeritus professor of history and formerly dean of the University of the South at Sewanee TN, divides this scholarly revision of Perkins studies into eight readable chapters, of which four are adapted from previous distinguished publications. They deal respectively with the unsettled Elizabethan settlement, Perkins as apologist for the Church of England, salvation and the thirty-nine articles, practical divinity and the role of conscience, Biblical preaching and English prose, the quest for social justice, Jacobean attacks on and early posthumous defense of Perkins’ doctrine, and his important legacy. They