Wade, Mara R. *Gender Matters: Discourses of Violence in Early Modern Literature and the Arts.* New York: Rodopi, 2013.

By Lisa Tagliaferri, The Graduate Center, CUNY, USA

1 Originating from papers presented at the 2007 conference "Gender Matters: Re-Reading Violence, Death, and Gender in Early Modern Literature and Culture" at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, this edited volume presents an interdisciplinary and multivalent approach to questions surrounding gendered violence from the late Middle Ages through to the 18th century. Organized thematically, the collection predominantly treats Europe with an emphasis on England and Germany, but also includes an essay on Japanese drama (Oyler) and one that points to the New World (Niekerk). Because of its interdisciplinarity, with chapters in the fields of literature, history, musicology, art history, performance, and cultural studies, this volume is appealing and relevant to a wide range of scholars working in and around Early Modern Studies.

2 The first thematic section entitled "Women Warriors, Fact and Fiction" includes two essays, one on historical women and one on Japanese drama. Judith Aikin's contribution considers three German countesses serving as leaders during wartime over the town of Rudolstadt in the principality of Schwarzburg. Beginning with the context of polemicists who wrote both against and in favor of female rulers in the *querelles des femmes*, Aikin situates three historical women within this discourse who each achieved increased protection for their principality during their respective residencies, and were depicted in image or writing as militant in some way. With particular attention to Aemilia Juliana and her written songs and prayers, Aikin argues that these women, though not participating in violent military campaigns, proved to be effective in protecting the lands and people they were expected to watch over. Nonviolent yet effective female leaders proves to be an engaging inquiry, which could benefit from more analysis of the reception of the countesses by others, and the countesses' own self-construction, which this essay points to but does not elaborate upon. The second chapter, by Elizabeth Oyler, follows the character of Tomoe through both official repertoires and extracanonical no plays. Through historical background and analysis of the prolonged narratives that concern the most-recognizable pre-modern Japanese woman warrior, Oyler contends that the alternative stories recounted in the extracanonical no and kabuki theaters serve as a space for resistance against the reduced feminine roles that Tomoe is permitted to inhabit. As this is the only essay that treats a topic outside of the European

early modern period, more context would be helpful to aid those who are unfamiliar with the described canon. The fascinating subject of Tomoe is a bit constrained by the short piece offered here, and a little more focus, either on the textual analysis or historical background, would make for a more developed argument.

3 The next section explores the theme of "Violent Women, Violated Men" with essays in art history and literary studies that examine this topic within German, Italian, and French contexts. Helmet Puff claims that Albrecht Dürer casts the male artist as an "exceptional victim figure" in his drawing *The Death of Orpheus* (43). This well-researched piece considers religious undertones of male victimhood, as well as tensions with the Italian state that issued forth the model for Dürer's drawing. As Italy is both a seat for Renaissance art and known for homoeroticism, the figure of Orpheus, who also serves as a symbol for the male artist, is particularly complicated but ultimately malleable as a figure throughout this period. This essay could further elaborate on the victimhood of Orpheus in concrete terms; there is a lot to say about how he is tied to the Christ figure in this drawing, which could be more substantially rendered. The investigation into German art continues with Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly's chapter on the eroticization of Judith, which considers the dialogue between Luther's Bible translation and early modern artists. Watanabe-O'Kelly's interdisciplinary and comparative approach proves to be very effective in her considerations of German visual artists who eroticize Judith against the Italian artists and German dramatists who present a less-sexualized version of the widow who moves from the banquet to the beheading without a bedroom scene. Here, the vestiges of the conference paper are a little too apparent as not all of the images (that would be most welcome in a presentation) build upon the argument, and more analysis is desired. However, in the striking discussion of the male gaze and the complication of the figure of Judith, Wantanabe-O'Kelly justifies her assertion that German artists are unique in their depiction of Judith.

4 The following two essays in this section pair well as inquiries into Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*. Julie Singer's chapter focuses on three narratives surrounding the 1537 assassination by Lorenzino de' Medici of his cousin, the Florentine duke Alessandro de' Medici. Each of these three narratives – Lorenzino's own *Apologia*, Benedetto Varchi's *Storia fiorentino*, and the twelfth novella of the *Heptaméron* – pivot around homoerotic and homosocial triangles at the heart of the historical story. In particular, Singer's analysis of the normalization of the antagonists within the French narrative by Marguerite de Navarre as contrasted with the more forceful Italian narratives is most cogent, as she argues that each of these texts work to remasculate Lorenzino. Marcus Keller's essay discusses how tales 1 and

70 of the *Heptaméron* function to frame the collection with violent female characters working against innocent men. Through well-considered analysis, Keller makes the case that "women's cruel behavior depends on the complicity of violent men and only becomes effective in a society that is … dominated by men" (127).

5 Catherine Gray, Brian Sandberg, and Lori Humphrey Newcomb contribute politically-minded essays to the third section, "Violence and the Gendered Body Politic." Gray and Newcomb analyze English texts in the 17th century that consider masculine soldier bodies in contrast to the feminine body politic of England in the excellent and polished "Tears of the Muses: 1649 and the Lost Political Bodies of Royalist War Elegy," and a new convincing reading of Davenant's 1662 play in "The Law Against Lovers: Dramatizing Civil Union in Restoration England," respectively. This latter piece is particularly effective in that it considers Restoration civil union legislation against contemporary marriage and partner legislation, suggesting that gender institutions are always in flux. Sandberg's "Calm Possessor of his Wife, but Not of her Château: Gendered Religious Violence in the French Wars of Religion" evaluates the political consequences of mixed-confessional marriages in the south of France, with Paule de Chambaud and Claude de Hautefort's union as a case study.

6 Elizabeth Black's strong essay leads the section on "Gender in Print" with an examination of three emblems and their implications of women's status within law in Pierre Coustau's *Pegme*. In her analysis, Black shows how Coustau's argument – that women should be treated as children before the state – falls apart due to his inclusion of exceptions, failure to thoroughly address the Amazons, and general belief that gender difference lies in the mind and not the body. Black is particularly adept at her discussion of gender and this proves to be a solid contribution to the collection. Tara L. Lyons's chapter discusses the function of prayer books as props in the hands of a lady on the early modern English stage, and how it is often a malleable symbol that can be redefined. She includes a fascinating discussion on the depiction of the Dance of the Dead in *A Book of Christian Prayers*. More details around the history of this particular book could tie the arguments of this essay together a bit more, as it is unclear what specific book would be utilized in the plays discussed. Gerhild Scholz Williams considers the theme of gender and violence comprehensively in his essay on the function of news in two novels by Eberhard Happel. As it treats the major themes of this collection quite well, this essay is very topical here, though more nuanced treatment of cross-dressing could be offered, in addition to some comparative context

alongside other errant knight stories from the early modern period (such as Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*).

7 Although previous essays have addressed drama, the section "Gender and Violence on the Stage" provides three more contributions to the inquiry around dramatic writing. Susan Parisi offers an interesting comparative analysis that considers how the classical myth of Cybele and Atys proliferates into opera libretti by Francesco Rasi and Philippe Quinault. The discussion of gender could be more fluid here, and a point-by-point argument may have built a stronger claim. In a compelling essay that contextualizes literature within its political circumstances, Curtis Perry argues that the collaboratively-written play *Gismond of Salern*, based on Boccaccio's *Decameron* tale, serves as a critique of Elizabeth's failure to address the question of succession, while simultaneously recommending its own writers to serve within government. This robust essay could be rendered even stronger through the addition of the context of Elizabethan English consumption of other Italian texts, including advice literature. Addressing the violent female masquers in Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich convincingly asserts that the women who all literally die over the course of their own masque also manage a degree of success in that they "substantially and permanently [disrupt] the male-controlled court" (301). Missing from Kolkovich's discussion is an analysis of the use of Italian character names in this English play, which certainly must have significance.

8 The final section on "Virtue and Violence" features two closely-connected essays on Flemish art and Neostoicism from Carmen Ripollés, who uses images very effectively to substantiate her arguments on the figure of Fortune within Frans Francken's *The Painter's Studio*; and Lisa Rosenthal who discusses *kunstkamer* paintings in Antwerp, including Francken's, to make a case on gender codification at work in masculine consumers and producers, and the seductive feminine-gendered economic market. Anne J. Cruz's essay on the figure of the *emparedada*, or walled-in woman, provides literary context and theoretical approach to her mediation between the debasement and empowerment of the *emparedada's* position. The volume closes fittingly with the chapter by Carl Niekerk on the 1746 treatment by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert's story of Inkle and Yarico. Using postcolonial theory to more fully access the multiple layers of violence and gender expectations at work in this imperialistic narrative, Niekerk effectively argues that the tale is not anti-imperialist, as traditionally contended, but actually denotes a shift of the goals behind imperialism.

9Though this text does maintain some of its origins as a conference, with a particularly long view of the Early Modern period, the resulting volume's varied approaches and broad

perspective make for a comprehensive approach to gender and violence. With abstracts prefacing each chapter, valuable images utilized by several contributors, and a focused introduction by Mara R. Wade, the book is well-appointed for scholarly consultation. The essays, in their scope, offer insight to both those working in particular fields and those with more interdisciplinary approaches to Early Modern Studies.