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Per Sivefors, *Representing Masculinity in Early Modern English Satire, 1590-1603: "A Kingdom for a Man."*
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Per Sivefors, in his robust study of Elizabethan verse satires, draws out the varying yet expansive treatment of masculinity and manhood. Through his historicist approach, Sivefors concentrates on texts that were considered as satire by Elizabethan writers and readers (3). By deftly close-reading them he argues that Elizabethan satires were more than just vituperative, Juvenalian, and 'coterie writing' produced by men for men's consumption (4, 12). The satirical works in question refer to the following collections: John Donne's five satires (c. 1593-98), John Hall's *Virgidemiarum,* published in two installments in 1597 and 1598; John Marston's *Certaine Satyres* (1598) and *The Scourge of Villanie* (1598); and finally, Everard Guilpin's *Skialetheia* (1598). These writers were all men in their early twenties who shared a sense of camaraderie in homosocial spaces of influences like the Inns of Court and Universities (12). Overtly misogynist and homophobic, these writers easily bonded over their economic precarity, objectives (mimicry of power, condemnation of vices), and common targets (proud women, effete men, male social climbers, gender-benders, and coney-catchers) (8-14).

Although the project adequately acknowledges the influence of Roman satire and classical masculinities, it mainly deals with the historical contexts in which Elizabethan masculinities were shaped in the late sixteenth century (4). As Sivefors points out, manhood, in this period, was plural, heterogeneous, and shared a complex dynamic with patriarchal norms (2). The theorization of satire and masculinity becomes complicated for each writer with their distinct ideological participation in homosocial spaces of literary production. Despite the

challenge in theorization, Sivefors cautiously de-couples satirical assertions of masculinity and dominance from actual patriarchy. In the book, manly virtues and notions—like self-control, aggression, violence, husbandry, and maturity—are brought under investigation to provide an insight into each satirist's unique depiction of Elizabethan manhood (24).

The book is divided into four chapters and a Coda. The first chapter, "John Donne's Satires and the Precariousness of Masculine Self-Control," investigates the validity of masculine virtues like moderation and self-control in Donne's satires. With the new court culture's introduction of the need for sophisticated emotional and physical deportation, self-control, restraint, and repression of emotions became a matter of compulsion (44). Within this socio-political milieu, Donne's satires neither promoted nor threatened patriarchal norms. Their transgressive qualities within the admissible confines of patriarchal self-control make it challenging to generalize Donne's gender politics (45). However, Sivefors meticulously analyzes these satires to show the inherent conflict in Donne's approach to masculine performances that were anything but stable. Satire 1 is a poem of "one-upmanship" where masculine restraint is usurped as the satirist is left with no other option but to undermine "Stoical standards of constancy" (48). Satire 2 shifts from inconstancy to hate. Guided by the Juvenalian spirit, the speaker's self-control and moderation eventually lead to an immoderate vitriolic attack on Coscus. In the course of the attack, Coscus, the womanizer, is effeminized by Donne. Effeminizing the targets was a common strategy to build misogynistic male bonds among Elizabethan satirists. Satire 3—"the least overtly 'satirical' of Donne's satires"—deals with masculine composure and religious choice (50). It portrays a tussle over masculine self-definition as manhood is depicted as a vivacious victim of desire that can only be rescued by "the female right faith" (51). In Satire 4, the speaker loses his calm and becomes powerless against the abuses of the court (54). Here the speaker is effeminized in his perturbed attack. Moderation and ideals of manly restraint elude the courtly elites (any elite) as they become realistically unattainable. Lastly, Satire 5

foregrounds the precarious positionality of the satirist in the existing power structure, which causes much of his aggression. The satire clarifies that self-regulation is unattainable for a satirist in a world dictated by power abuse and worldly desire.

Donne's self-controlled verses are contrasted by Marston's violent satires in Chapter 2. "Violence and the Male in John Marston's *Certaine Satyres* and *The Scourge of Villanie*" deals with the inseparable nexus between violence and masculinity in Marston's satires. Marston's invocation and subsequent rejection of Stoicism might hold the key to the ideological stimulus behind his aggressive satires (69). This chapter traces the transition of Marston from a love poet to a satirist, where his persona becomes both disciplining as well as punishable, "an object of castigation" that is never beyond reproach (74). Sivefors, in the chapter, is cautious in his treatment of the conceptual 'violence,' especially textual representation of violence associated with various masculine stereotypes (81). Marston's satires reveal violence as an instrument of power, and thereby, the failure of masculinity based on such violence. Manliness, for Marston, is not a "positive ideal," which is only evident in the satires' repudiation of patriarchal norms and regulations of male excess (70). This satirical yet legitimately violent persona is further solidified as Sivefors explicates Marston's rejection of homosocial and fraternal bonding. Moreover, Marston depicts "not the idealised humanist notion of Man but its negation" as he strips down his targets to apes and animals to expose their irrational unmanliness (78). The failure of masculinity is ingrained in every avatar of Marston's satirist, from being "a cool medical professional, a passionate revenger and a sexual aggressor" (80). The very self-undermining quality of his satires that turns satirical aggression against the satirist exposes the vacuity of violence and self-control within and without patriarchal manhood.

Where Marston deals with the failure of masculinity, Joseph Hall deals with "failed patriarchs" in the third chapter, "The Failure of Husbandry in Joseph Hall's *Virgidemiarum.* Here, Sivefors studies the depiction of "failed patriarchs," i.e., men who failed to procreate, lost control of their household or were unskilled in monetary matters.

Emasculated men targeted by Hall constituted country squires who lived in the city, poets, and other urban decadents. The chapter mainly focuses on understanding masculinity as structured around husbandry, pedigree, land ownership, provision, and procreation (95-97). This chapter endeavors to fathom how changing economic requirements affected Elizabethan masculine codes. Issues of child education and child-rearing, in *Virgidemiarum*, expose the shortcomings of patronage and primogeniture as economic systems of sustenance. By attacking lifestyle practices of a wide range of male types—country squires, landowners, poets, courtier snobs, country yeomen who either wasted (or lacked) resources or were bodily unfit to procreate—Hall's satire mocks mindless consumption and inadequate self-control. Hall's complaint was that the patriarchal economy during his time was constantly changing and rendered "flawed precisely because changing" (109).

It is true that Hall demonstrated poets as failed patriarchs, but no other poet captured the satirist's transition from youthful flyting accompanied by its "demonstrative loudness" to a state of mature manhood better than Everard Guilpin. Sivefors expounds this transition from the direct, legal rhetorical excoriation of the targets (signifying youth) to an indirect, distanced attack of the satirist persona (signifying manly restraint) (131). This last chapter, "Age and Manhood in Everard Guilpin's *Skialetheia*", explores literary devices and tropes like the *adversarius*, friendship, jealousy, and narrative distancing to analyze the staging of manhood in *Skialetheia.* While the epigrams and the first three satires are built on the shared themes of youthful boasting and male insult, the last three satires promote a sense of constancy, restraint, and masculinity, drawing from Stoic philosophy. Sivefors offers a nuanced description of the politics of youth in the Elizabethan period without which the movement towards manhood in Guilpin's satire is quite ungraspable. In *Skialetheia*, although the targets of satire remain the same (effeminate men, "sodomizers," and those lacking proper manhood), what distinguishes it from other satires is its portrayal of the inherent unstable intricacies in masculinity that exude from the very process of writing satires.

Satire, as mentioned before, although had a propensity to assert masculinity was always in conflict with the norms of hegemonic manhood. The history of satire is, therefore, anything but linear. Sivefors, in the Coda, "The Ban on Satire and the Representation of Masculinity," describes the aftermath of the Bishops' Ban of 1599 on satire. The chapter deals with the rhetoric of patriarchal dominance and patriarchal hegemony in the post-Ban anti-satirical (and anti-anti-satirical) satires of the early 1600s (144). The discussion on patriarchal manhood in the early comedies of Ben Jonson shows that during this time satirists already assumed the position of the friendly patriarch who was good-natured, amicable, yet admonitory. The persona of the satirist as a patriarch was very distinct and hardly assumed by satirists before the Ban (146).

To conclude, Sivefors approaches satirical masculinities, i.e., exclusively hetero-male masculinities through various agonistic yet overlapping perspectives that sought to negotiate manhood in verse satires. This book, more than anything, teaches one the art of historicist criticism that demands a complete submersion into a historical period within which literary texts were produced. This historicist approach is opposed to the current 'presentist' trend of whimsically deploying one's favorite theorists/philosophers at technically anything for the sake of mapping/projecting already given arguments. The methodological rigor and care that went into shaping this book teach readers, especially literary studies scholars, how to approach gender and literature without falling into the temptation of making grand historical claims from literary texts. The *gravitas* with which Sivefors interprets gender—by paying close attention to historical contexts, poetic diction, symbols, imagery, and other rhetorical devices—elevates this work to the highest order of literary criticism. Students, teachers, and scholars, not only of European Renaissance but literary studies in general, gender/sexuality, and early modern masculinities, will have much to learn about politicization/genderization of Renaissance verse satires from Sivefors' scholarship.