**Mora, María José and Manuel J. Gómez-Lara, editors. *Thomas Durfey's Love for Money, or The Boarding School (1691): A Critical Edition*. Peter Lang, 2023. 239 pages**

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> "If the Renaissance is the Golden Age of English comedy, the Restoration is the Silver" (J. Douglas Canfield 211).

Though ignored or found distasteful in the nineteenth century, Restoration comedies have received both validation and attention for about a century now. Scholars initially studied and praised the work of the classic big names (e.g., George Etherege, William Wycherley and William Congreve) and gradually brought attention to the talent of less-known authors (Aphra Behn in particular). In the last six or seven decades there have been quite a few revivals of plays by Behn, John Vanbrugh, Edward Ravenscroft, Otway, Mary Pix, etc. However, there is one Restoration playwright that remains largely "forgotten", as John McVeagh puts it: Thomas Durfey. While he is not as forgotten as McVeagh suggests, this playwright still deserves greater attention from both scholars and theatre practitioners.

Thomas Durfey was rather popular in his time, particularly in the 1670s, very prolific (as the more professional writers used to be), certainly pragmatic in his approach to things, mocked by some fellow writers (see McVeagh 1, 14), and attacked by the Non-Juror Jeremy Collier (who also criticized John Dryden, Congreve and Vanbrugh; see Wheatley 351). Certainly, writes McVeagh, he was "by no means a terrible writer" but essentially "an entertainer" (14-15). Although intended as praise, this commentary may ultimately do Durfey a disservice. Durfey may have aimed to please both playgoers and patrons, and although there are signs of his adapting to the changing tastes at the turn of the century—from libertine comedy to the exemplary or "humane" comedy defined by S. S. Kenny—his plays also share a common thread: a tendency to critique libertinism (see Wheatley; Gómez) and a certain sympathy for female characters oppressed by husbands or lovers; actually, a woman's perspective is dominant in many of his plays (see Hughes 187-90, 200-01). Durfey may approach farce more obviously than other playwrights, but we should neither be as prejudiced as John Dryden regarding farce

and "low comedy" (in the Preface to *An Evening's Love*) nor take for granted that all farce is sheer innocuous entertainment. The editors of this excellent and much-needed edition of *Love for Money* express the hope that it will contribute to the ongoing reassessment of Durfey's literary merit (19). This is a hope I fully share.

Restoration comedies are not documentary reflections of their time; rather, they are cultural artefacts shaped by specific systems of production and constrained by theatrical conventions and prevailing fashions. Nonetheless, they reveal not only the literary preferences of their authors and the expectations of their audiences, but also the social transformations, anxieties, and tensions characteristic of one of the most dynamic periods in English history. There remains a clear need for modern editions of many Restoration texts. Although a considerable number of plays and poems—including most of Durfey's—have been digitally scanned and made available over the past two decades, a reliable scholarly edition is always preferable. A case in point is the 2014 edition of *The Marriage-Hater Matched*, edited by María José Mora and Manuel J. Gómez-Lara, with the collaboration of Paula de Pando. The edition under review offers another compelling example of what a modern edition should achieve, enhancing our appreciation of Durfey's talent for comedy and the nuanced perspective underlying the farcical facade.

This edition collates various copies of the first quarto (Q1) and four later editions, and the text has been modernized rather prudently, only to the extent necessary to enhance readability and internal consistency. Some instances of such modernization include changes in punctuation, the standardization of character names, and similar minor changes. The editors offer a fully annotated text, where only a few notes appear to be redundant or perhaps unnecessary (e.g., about Mars and Apollo [49, 143]), though most of them are very useful and explanatory. They also provide an introduction to Durfey's life and career, the theatrical context of the play and its stage history, and obviously its plot, aesthetic values and partially didactic nature.

Some works from the Restoration period have an important connection with topics from the time, and *Love for Money* is one of those works, on which the remainder of the present review will focus: the work alludes to the political issues derived from the Revolution of 1688,

namely Jacobitism. Durfey's contemporary and fellow playwright John Dryden, a committed Tory, alludes to the illegitimacy of the new regime in *Amphytrion* (1690). Durfey, once a staunch Tory supporter of James II, seems to have accepted the *de facto* joint sovereigns, William III and Mary II, with notable enthusiasm. The reader may enjoy *Love for Money* without this background knowledge, but a thorough analysis of the play requires some contextualization. While no editorial introduction can substitute for a sustained critical essay, the editors provide a concise yet well-documented analysis, addressing both the play's anti-Jacobite tone and its overtly corrective character—features characteristic of Durfey's later works. The editors state that Durfey "is veering towards exemplary comedy" but still makes humour predominate (24, 29-30).

Love intrigues are an essential element of comedy, Restoration comedy included, but there is certainly an evolution in the period: the gay-couple pattern of the 1660s was followed by the more libertine, satirical or politically involved versions of the 1670s, in which cuckolding was a homosocial game, and the pattern eventually evolved into a more exemplary version in the marital-discord comedies of the 1690s and the sentimental reformed-rake trend popularized by Colley Cibber. In *Love for Money*, Durfey creates two intrigues and two types of masculinity. The lead male character, Jack Amorous, played by William Mountfort, is a witty rake that has, in the editors' words, "a touch of the gull" (24) and is very different from both the clever predatory seducers of the 1670s and their later softer versions (e.g. William Congreve's Mirabel). Amorous is, like those previous seducers, a witty schemer and womanizer; unlike them, he is rather a dupe. The other hero, Young Merriton, represents a more gentlemanly alternative to the old-school gallants, and he is involved in a rather romantic love intrigue. We should bear in mind that many plays of the earlier decades paired two different kinds of heroes and created very different double plots (e.g., Young Bellair and Dorimant in George Etherege's *The Man of Mode* or Belvile and Willmore in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*). Besides, Durfey's Mirtilla, the virtuous heroine and a victim of the surrogate-father villain, Sir Rowland, may remind us of Etherege's Emilia or Behn's Florinda. Nevertheless, in the 1670s, the romantic plot used to be clearly a secondary line of action, whereas the libertine's successful intrigue was the major source of humor and entertainment.

Intrigue and ridiculous comic characters are the major source of entertainment in this play, and the turn toward farce and low comedy suggests a greater reliance on the performers, in contrast to high comedy, which depends more heavily on the playwright's skill in crafting witty dialogue than on physical humor or clownish antics (one of the reasons why Dryden preferred high comedy). The editors provide an analysis of the cast (34-36), which proves very useful. Particularly interesting is that Lady Appleton was played by Anthony Leigh. The Jacobite woman, a believer in the divine sanction of the monarchy, "teaches the true doctrine of passive obedience at home" (I. 396-7), so as she is the actual head of her family, she provides a domestic version of a monstrous model for the body politic. Her masculinization seems to work both as a comic device and as a part of the anti-Jacobite propaganda. It is yet another indication of Durfey's skill in balancing two aims: entertaining his audience through humor while simultaneously critiquing abusive authority, corruption, and deceit.

To sum up, the well-rounded analysis of the play presented in this edition proves that *Love for Money* has plenty of layers, from political satire, farce, and romance, through to humor and a corrective nature.

All in all, this excellent edition enhances both scholarly and general appreciation of the play and may well contribute to its potential revival on stage. It is, without doubt, an engaging, humorous, and thought-provoking work.

**Notes**

[1] In the 1670s, Durfey wrote for the two companies and not exclusively for the Duke's Company, and though he had sided with the Tories during the Exclusion Controversy in the late 1670s, after the Revolution of 1688, he did an about-face turn in his political agenda, which might show a change of mind, or rather some eagerness to please the Whigs in power (see Hughes 338).

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