

Teresa Barnard (ed.), *Anna Seward's Journal and Sermons* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), pp. 245, ISBN 978-1-4438-9586-6. RRP £61.95 or \$80.50.

doi:[10.1017/S1740355319000056](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355319000056)

Anna Seward's Journal and Sermons collects a journal (composed between 1762 and 1768), previously published only in heavily censored form, with four sermons, never previously published, all written by Anna Seward (1742–1809), and presents them in a scholarly edition with notes and introduction by Teresa Barnard. Barnard also reproduces Seward's letter to her literary executor, Walter Scott, which provides useful background information. The semi-fictional journal, written in epistolary form, fully merits Barnard's claim for its novelistic qualities, and the four sermons fully merit her claim for their 'retrospective evidence of Seward's contribution to feminist Enlightenment debate' (p. 1), even though I would have wished to see both of these claims – especially the latter – discussed at greater length in Barnard's astute but brief introduction. On the whole, this volume, which makes Seward's full journal and sermons available to readers for the first time, is an important complement to such previously published volumes as *The Collected Poems of Anna Seward*, edited by Lisa L. Moore (Routledge, 2015). Accordingly, Barnard adds to and complicates what is currently known about this important writer in ways that will be of value to those interested in the role of women in the established Church in the late eighteenth century, the eighteenth-century sermon, eighteenth-century English culture, Seward's life and writing, eighteenth-century women's engagement with contemporary ideology, the novel of sensibility, or literary juvenilia.

As Barnard explains in her clear and sensible Note on the Text, Scott heavily censored Seward's juvenile letter-journal for its posthumous publication, 'removing over half of the contents' and modernizing the spelling and punctuation as well (p. 1). Fortunately, Scott 'saved the censored extracts and letters', although 'the originals of his published sections no longer remain' (p. xi). Barnard has wisely decided here to retain 'the original spelling, punctuation, and underlining' in the restored passages, and has printed them in italics to distinguish them from the passages edited by Scott. In this way she distinguishes – and rehabilitates the reputation of – those passages that Scott dismissed as mere "gossip" (p. 4), passages which well deserve Barnard's claim for their literary style, their significance as a record of Seward's life, and their 'insights into the manners and mores of mid-eighteenth-century England' (p. 2). By retaining the original orthography, furthermore, Barnard succeeds in restoring the 'immediacy' of Seward's writing, an important aspect of the epistolary (p. 4). Barnard has also refrained from standardizing the language of the four sermons; this allows readers to see how Seward scripted the performance of her work by underlining the words she wished emphasized by the male clergymen who would, perforce, be delivering the sermons. Fortunately, three of the sermons (written in secrecy during her lifetime and delivered without any acknowledgement of her authorship, but desired by her to be published under her own name after her death) are printed from manuscripts in Seward's own hand (p. xi). Unfortunately, 'Sermon Two is

not written in Seward's hand, and is presumably a copy made by the clergyman, Mackleston, who delivered the sermon' (p. xi). Readers of this sermon may wonder at points about the possibility of transcription errors, but Barnard does not consider the question.

Barnard's introduction gives the journal nearly five pages and the sermons less than two. Within this limited space she helpfully contextualizes the journal in terms of eighteenth-century letter-writing and in terms of novelistic conventions, those of the novel of sensibility in particular. The journal itself fully supports Barnard's insightful claim that 'Seward tends to present her characters and anecdotes by using various writerly techniques that give her journal all the appearance of an exchange of letters, writing of people's appearance and behaviour and building stories around them' (p. 5); there is much here to build on, for scholars who may not have previously considered Seward as a student of the craft of fiction or as an observer of the lives of provincial Englishwomen. I can well imagine Jane Austen smiling and nodding in appreciation at Seward's assertion in one letter that 'Love, & a Competency, not Love & a Cottage, is my motto' (p. 54).

I would argue further that this letter-journal deserves to be studied as evidence that Seward – before she turned her attention to the genres that earned her renown in her lifetime – was a serious apprentice to the craft of novel-writing. In particular, the journal provides a new lens through which to read Seward's verse novel, *Louisa: A Poetical Novel, in Four Epistles* (which, though little read today, went through four editions in 1784 alone, according to the *DNB*). Although very different in style, *Louisa* resembles its precursor in its focus on the experience of 'Sister-Sufferers' who have been hurt by the fact that 'gold, and dazzling state, incessant prove, / In Man's hard heart, the Murderers of Love' (Seward, *Louisa*, Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, p. 9). Yet more telling, perhaps, is the fact that both volumes are addressed to a fictional correspondent by the name of Emma.

As Barnard does, I follow Seward's lead in referring to the letter journal as a 'juvenile' work (p. xiv), even though the author was already 19 when she began writing the journal and was 25 when she stopped. The term is, I believe, appropriate, not only because the journal predates the works published in Seward's lifetime but also because, as noted above, it asks in some ways to be read as a work of literary apprenticeship. For these reasons, this 'juvenile' journal deserves study as a work of literary juvenilia and may fruitfully be read alongside such other eighteenth-century juvenilia as those by Hannah More, Anna Maria Porter, and Austen.

When it comes to the sermons Barnard does not, as she does with the journal, offer the names of particular contemporaries working in the same or related genres; nevertheless, she makes an important intervention in the history of the sermon simply by bringing to light this documentary evidence of women's participation in the work of the eighteenth-century Anglican pulpit. The sermons' rarity and significance are illuminated by Barnard's succinct explanation that:

the established church was . . . concerned with submissive female piety; the Anglican pulpit was masculine and authoritative For an Anglican woman to intrude into this male domain with her own ideology, she would

have to mount a challenge to the traditional structures[,] and in wishing to publish the sermons under her own name, albeit posthumously, Seward was doing exactly that. (p. 6)

Unfortunately, whether or not Seward is the only woman on record to have mounted such a challenge to the masculine hold on the Anglican pulpit at this period is not something Barnard addresses explicitly.

The introduction may also feel a bit too short to any readers who, upon noting the assertion that ‘an Anglican woman’ could have ‘her own ideology’, hope to find further discussion of Seward’s particular ideology as conveyed in these sermons. Class, economics, revolution, politics, and policy are just a few of the conventionally masculine subjects that Seward’s sermons show her to be engaged with. Yet apart from a brief summary of each sermon, Barnard leaves it largely up to the reader to discern how each sermon might, in its content, be negotiating the conflicting imperatives to perform ‘submissive female piety’ and to challenge established ideology. This may pose difficulties in the case of Sermon One in particular, for Barnard’s assertion that the sermon functions to ‘encourage women away from domesticity’ and to find, instead, ‘fulfilment through education and employment’ (p. 7), while thought-provoking and defensible, is not immediately easy to reconcile with the sermon’s affirmation of male priesthood in the person of Samuel (p. 186) or with its repeated and explicit affirmations of a woman’s duty to serve the nation, as ‘a wife’, by focusing her ‘maternal attentions’ on ‘the tender minds of her children’ (p. 183). It is disappointing, therefore, that Barnard does not take (or was not given) the space to provide evidence and analysis in support of her assertion.

One great puzzlement – and potential source of frustration for the reader – is Barnard’s inexplicable decision to reference all Shakespeare plays (and Seward invokes four different plays in the journal’s first letter alone) by providing the page number of a particular edition of Shakespeare’s collected works instead of following the time-honoured and infinitely more useful convention of citing act, scene, and line numbers, while leaving the choice of edition up to the reader. Those who wish to locate a particular passage, as long as they know the play, would be better served by Google than by Barnard’s endnotes. For the numerous biblical references in the endnotes to the sermons, Barnard provides the names of the editors of the particular online edition she quotes from, but she does not identify which version of the Bible this edition is. (Spoiler alert: she is quoting the KJV.) That said, however, I would add in Barnard’s defence that these failings reflect more poorly on Cambridge Scholars than they do on her. Not every academic author is or should have to be a professional copy-editor, and every academic book deserves the careful attention of several sets of eyes. This book would have benefited in many ways from a little more editorial oversight and support.

Despite these few quibbles, I commend Barnard and Cambridge Scholars for making these significant and interesting texts by Anna Seward available to scholars. Barnard’s editorial principles are sound, and although her introductions and endnotes do not offer the last word on the significance of either the letter-journals or the sermons, they constitute a very good first word, one which,

moreover, raises thought-provoking questions that should generate significant future scholarship. This is more than we need to ask of a first edition.

Lesley Peterson

Retired Professor at University of North Alabama, Independent Scholar, and Editor of the Journal of Juvenilia Studies

Rachel Starr, *Reimagining Theologies of Marriage in Contexts of Domestic Violence: When Salvation Is Survival* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. viii + 225. ISBN 9781472472533. RRP \$150 or £105.

doi:[10.1017/S1740355319000068](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355319000068)

This fine and eminently readable work is a revision of the author's doctoral thesis completed in Argentina. Starr now teaches at the Queen's Foundation in Birmingham, UK, and the book 'explores the reality of domestic violence in the different, but historically entwined, contexts of Argentina and England' (p. 1). The statistics are horrifying, and Starr identifies that among the risk factors to women are 'dominant Christian teachings and practices around marriage' (p. 2). The 'focus' of her study 'is how Christian beliefs and practices serve to legitimate domestic violence' (p. 37), and while the book will be an uncomfortable read for many Christians, she succeeds well. Not only an activist in resisting domestic violence, Starr has a knowledge of the field that is probably unrivalled (as the 45-page bibliography and 1256 footnotes testify). Here, then, is a work to be reckoned with, scholarly, accessible and bursting with quiet topicality and relentless but constructive theological criticism.

Domestic violence is 'any act or omission that causes psychological, physical, sexual or economic harm, or that restricts a person's freedom (including reproductive freedom) and development by means of control or coercion...' (p. 22). It is given 'hermeneutical priority' (p. 15). Christian traditions are mostly silent about the subject because ambiguous attitudes to the body and sex have led to a 'spiritualization of marriage, the physical realities being pushed to one side' (p. 41), and because of the widespread influence of the doctrine of headship. Carefully assessing the 'three goods of marriage' (ch. 3), *fides* or faith is 'potentially beneficial' (p. 55) but only when it is 'refashioned as friendship' (p. 50). The 'good of children' has been used to deny contraception and abortion to women, and to emphasize motherhood 'as the natural vocation of women, and the means by which they are saved' (p. 60). 'Covenantal models of marriage, popular in Protestantism and more recently in Catholicism, have a grave defect: biblical covenants are enacted by violence and take[s] the form of a binding agreement between unequal partners, through which a set of obligations are imposed onto the weaker party' (p. 73). The marriage metaphor in the Old Testament prophets is a shaming metaphor 'which still works to reinforce women's low social status' (p. 77). While the idea of covenant, qualified by