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Sophie Tomlinson, ed. *The Family of Love* by Lording Barry. Manchester: Manchester University Press, *The Revels Plays*, 2022

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[See table of contents](#)

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155

past criticism. In addition to an authoritative modern-spelling reproduction of the play-text itself, Tomlinson's mesmerizing new edition begins with an introduction detailing the surviving texts of the play, the life and critical reputation of the playwright, *The Family of Love* in its 'moment', the authorship debate, the play's sources and intertexts, and its stagecraft before finally offering a succinct critical analysis of the play itself. The edition concludes with three appendices: an examination of the text's marginal annotations (212–3); an account of the 'Marstonian' features of the play identified by Charles Cathcart in 2008 (214); and an analysis of the representation of the historical sect known as the Family of Love in two texts likely known by Barry, *The Displaying of an Horrible Sect* (1578) and *Basilicon Doron* (1603) (215–20).

Tomlinson's introduction to her edition, as with that of any edition of a critically neglected early modern play, needs to cover a large amount of ground to present readers with the fullest possible interpretation of what will likely be for many an unfamiliar text. Tomlinson acknowledges as much in the opening to her introduction, where she observes that this play 'require[s] a reconsideration' as 'a material text' (2). Such attention seems especially necessary for *The Family of Love* since our understanding of this play has undergone substantial changes in the short period between the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first century alone, including 'the reattribution of [*The Family of Love*] to Barry' and 'developments in textual scholarship and theatre history over the last fifty years' (1–2). Despite this extensive task, Tomlinson's introduction is written clearly and engagingly. Though she rightly acknowledges Dillon's earlier unpublished work, Tomlinson effectively and efficiently brings existing scholarship on this play up to date, while furthering knowledge of *The Family of Love* through her own research. Tomlinson's work will inevitably prove a cornerstone of future scholarship on this play.

Particularly valuable here is Tomlinson's contextualized account of the titular Family of Love, the religious group pointedly subjected to the play's social satire. Knowledge of the historical sect is crucial for a full critical understanding of Barry's play, and Tomlinson provides the necessary facts succinctly and coherently for any reader who may be unaware of this historical context. Especially striking is Tomlinson's crisp assessment of the circumstances under which Barry came to ridicule this group on the stage. Although 'a non-dogmatic group' who 'preferred outward conformity to proselytising and martyrdom', Tomlinson observes, 'the attacks of the Family's "clerical antagonists" under Elizabeth I' gave birth to 'a stereotype of the Familist' as 'licentious, subversive and hypocritical'; as Tomlinson notes, the comedy of *The Family of Love* 'builds on these accusations'

(14). The play's humour is thus revealed to be rather hostile, constructed from contemporary prejudice, but it is to the edition's credit that Tomlinson chooses to confront and contextualize rather than rationalize the more distasteful elements of the play's performance history.

Of course some might find it worth noting that while Barry's sole authorship of *The Family of Love* is taken as given in Tomlinson's edition, Middleton remains a strong presence throughout the introduction. Connections — whether critical, authorial, textual, or thematic — are readily found between *The Family of Love* and *A Mad World, My Masters* (14), *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (15), *No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's* (26), *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (36, 43), *A Fair Quarrel* (43), and *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (49). Rather than suggesting any Middletonian involvement in the text, however, Tomlinson uses these connections to establish how strongly *The Family of Love* intersects with the wider theatrical culture of city comedy produced during the early 1600s, which she also evidences by its connections to work by another of the play's previous candidates for authorship, Marston (e.g. 18–23). Tomlinson likewise provides a convincing account of the play's contribution to a wider vogue for Familist plays as well as being a city comedy, inspired by Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan* in particular (18). Tomlinson thus establishes *The Family of Love* not as an early modern dramatic curio but as part of a dramatic culture neglected in modern critical and editorial scholarship but very much noticed by Barry's contemporaries.

As we have come to expect from the Revels Plays series, Tomlinson's edition of the play-text is presented with clarity throughout; copious annotations and illuminating explanatory notes highlight the social, political, legal, literary, and religious contexts in which Barry's comedy is steeped. An early example is Tomlinson's gloss of Glister's third line, where he criticizes Gerardine because his 'lands be in statutes' (1.1.3). Tomlinson explains that statutes 'are bonds sworn before officers of the Staple (a body of merchants) allowing the creditor to seize a debtor's land ... Glister objects to Gerardine because he is in debt, his lands mortgaged, because he wastes time and money being a gallant, and is too young to select a stable partner for life' (65). Such explanations are vital for making the social comedy of this unfamiliar play accessible to present-day readers, and Tomlinson's clarity and depth of research is evident throughout the edition's notes as she establishes this play-text as one that provides a witty window into early seventeenth-century commercial society.

Tomlinson's new scholarly edition of *The Family of Love*, the first in over forty years, is a valuable contribution to the Revels Plays catalogue and another admirable instance of the series's demonstrable eagerness in recent years to offer more

critically neglected plays the same editorial treatment as their more oft-studied counterparts (an approach not yet consistently seen in the Arden Early Modern Drama or New Mermaids series). Tomlinson firmly brings *The Family of Love* into critical focus with an edition that will prove invaluable for those seeking to engage with the play in future pedagogy and research. In the acknowledgements with which Tomlinson opens her edition, *The Family of Love* is pointedly described as a 'prickly play' (xii); and towards the end of the introduction we learn of the assessment of the play offered by the seventeenth-century owner of Tomlinson's copy-text: '[a] sorry comedy' (39, 58). Tomlinson's edition nevertheless explores the play with such objective clarity and scholarly seriousness that it is difficult to depart from her edition without feeling that the text's importance to the history of early modern comedy has, through the formal scholarly weight of her work, been firmly established.