In *Gender, Theatre and the Origins of Criticism*, Marcie Frank explores the theoretical and literary legacy of John Dryden to a number of prominent women writers of the time. Frank examines the pre-eminence of gender, sexuality and the theatre in Dryden’s critical texts that are predominantly rewritings of the work of his own literary precursors – Ben Jonson, Shakespeare and Milton. She proposes that Dryden develops a native literary tradition that is passed on as an inheritance to his heirs – Aphra Behn, Catharine Trotter, and Delarivier Manley – as well as their male contemporaries. Frank describes the development of criticism in the transition from a court-sponsored theatrical culture to one oriented towards a consuming public, with very different attitudes to gender and sexuality. This study also sets out to trace the historical origins of certain aspects of current criticism – the practices of paraphrase, critical self-consciousness and performativity.

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GENDER, THEATRE, AND THE ORIGINS OF CRITICISM

From Dryden to Manley

MARCIE FRANK
This book is for my family: Kevin, Emma and Violet Pask
Contents

Acknowledgments

Introduction. The critical stage

1. “Equal to ourselves”: John Dryden’s national literary history

2. Staging criticism, staging Milton: John Dryden’s The State of Innocence

3. Imitating Shakespeare: gender and criticism

4. The female playwright and the city lady

5. Scandals of a female nature

Notes

Bibliography

Index
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