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978-0-521-18865-4 - Gender, Theatre, and the Origins of Criticism: From Dryden to Manley

Marcie Frank

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GENDER, THEATRE, AND THE ORIGINS OF CRITICISM

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.

MARCIE FRANK is Associate Professor of English at Concordia University in Montreal. She has published essays on David Cronenberg, Susan Sontag and Horace Walpole.

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

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