



María José Mora y Manuel J. Gómez-Lara (Eds.). (2023). *Thomas Durfey's «Love for Money, or The Boarding School» (1691). A critical edition*. Peter Lang Verlag. 240 pp. ISBN (ePUB): 978-3034346412; ISBN (Softcover): 978 30343 46245.

María José Mora and Manuel J. Gómez-Lara have enlarged the Restoration Drama collection with a new title. This edition of Thomas Durfey's *Love for Money, or The Boarding School* (1691) is the third volume of the series published by Peter Lang, available in both softcover and eBook formats. It was preceded by *Mr. Turbulent*, edited in 2020 by Jorge Blanco-Vacas, and William Mountfort's *Greenwich Park*, edited in 2021 by Jesús Correa Sánchez. Recently, in 2024, Edward Ravenscroft's *Mamamouchi, or The Citizen Turned Gentleman* by Eneas Caro Partridge was also added to the list.

All the scholars mentioned are members of the [Restoration Comedy Project](#), whose beginnings date back to 1995, and has since produced a significant number of comedy editions. Mora and Gómez-Lara have a long experience in bringing to light theater pieces long neglected but nevertheless, as they prove, worthy of consideration. In 2014 they issued *The Marriage-Hater Matched* also written by Durfey in 1692. This particular collection by Peter Lang is peer-reviewed and meticulously produced. The cover reproduces a conjectural reconstruction of the Dorset Garden proscenium arch by Javier Terrados Cepeda, the Sevillian architect's image is used with different colors in other, earlier, editions under the auspice of the project, which serves as a visual marker of continuity.

The introduction to the present work provides context for the author, the play itself, its staging and the first publication of the text. While little is known about Durfey's early life, his political involvements and cynical character, always eager to please diverse monarchs, are crucial to understand his literary, comedic, production. Thomas

Durfey was born in 1653 in Exeter, it is debated whether his ancestors could have been protestants arrived as aristocratic refugees from La Rochelle (pp. 13-14); a willingness to support that idea could justify the change of spelling of his surname he eventually made to D'Urfey. Regarding his education and first occupation what is known for certain is that in 1676 he was sworn a member of the King's Company, assuming this premise, previously he must have been at least a scrivener's apprentice. As a writer, Durfey produced poems, dramas and songs; his bawdy comedies were the most successful, together with songs and ballads he even incorporated into operas.

Durfey achieved early success with his comedy *Madam Fickle* (1676), which earned him royal favor. He continued writing plays and songs that often incorporated satire. His popular *Don Quixote* adaptations featured music and song, a hallmark of Durfey's work, but they also attracted criticism, particularly from Jeremy Collier, who attacked the immorality of the English stage. Although Durfey defended his work, the controversy and changing audience tastes led to a decline in his popularity. He continued writing plays and operas, such as *Wonders in the Sun* and *The Modern Prophets*, but these later works were not so well received. Durfey also contributed to political satires and royal panegyrics, but the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which saw the fall of his Tory patrons, forced him to adapt to new circumstances. Despite setbacks, Durfey's integration of music into drama and his ability to shift between genres made him a prominent figure in Restoration theater, though his influence eventually waned. As Mora and Gómez-Lara note, "the image of Tom Durfey as a genial entertainer seems to have overshadowed his dramatic achievement and made him sometimes be taken for little more than a buffoon or a jester. By the turn of the twentieth century, his literary reputation did not stand very high" (p. 18).

Love for Money, or The Boarding School was the first comedy Durfey produced after the Glorious Revolution, adapting his work to the new monarchical moral requirements. The opening introduces familiar elements from the old comedy style, like the character Jack Amorous, a carefree rake who mocks female virtue and marriage. He



believes that true happiness comes from free love, not from the obligations of marriage. He humorously compares courtship to a long, difficult fox hunt that is not worth the effort. In contrast, his friend Young Merriton praises the woman he loves in an exaggerated, idealistic way, comparing her beauty to heaven and claiming she has all the good traits of women without any of their flaws. Durfey balances the serious and moral elements of the play by filling it with lively incidents and a variety of funny characters, including lower-class and mischievous ones. The comedy was both praised for a successful mixture of noble characters with comedic troublemakers and criticized for excess of low comedy and sentimentality. Durfey himself admitted that he focused more on plot and humor than on wit, which was true of his style. Nevertheless, the play seems to have been acclaimed by the public.

Concerning its stage history, editors discuss the dating, which has been subject to various interpretations. Initially, it was believed to have premiered as early as December 1689 or January 1691. However, later evidence, including references in satirical works and records, suggests a premiere in March 1691. The prologue and epilogue of the play, as well as historical events like the siege of Mons, support this revised dating. Despite the challenges in determining its exact premiere date, the play remained popular in the early 18th century, as evidenced by periodical notices and later adaptations such as the “ballad-opera afterpiece written by Charles Coffey with the title *The Boarding School, or The Sham Captain*” (p. 38).

In reproducing the epistle dedicatory, the editors abound in the differentiation between the text itself and the actual play, as the author himself states in the opening lines: “I am so happy to lay it to your feet and by your unquestioned merit, judgment, and noble patronage secure the credit of these printed sheets in the reading, as the applause of the impartial and judicious have already done in the presentation” (p. 47).

The current edition collates multiple copies of the early editions of the text, including Q1, Q2, and Q3 from various libraries and universities, as well as broadside publications that provide extended versions of certain songs. Q1 serves as

the base text, but variants from other editions are incorporated when they correct errors or offer better readings. Footnotes record these emendations, but only significant differences are noted. Editors claim some intervention in spelling and punctuation has also been necessary to make the text accessible to a larger number of readers. Changes include expanding or regularizing contractions, modernizing punctuation, adjusting question marks and exclamation points, and standardizing character names, stage directions, and speech attributions for clarity. Additional information, such as scene settings and character actions, has been supplied in brackets when missing from the original text. Nevertheless, the original forms have been preserved when required to preserve the character’s idiosyncrasy.

The annotations, abundant but not excessive, are indicated by the lines of the text in footnotes with specific expressions highlighted in bold. This avoids breaking the reading flow and allows for diverse type of explanations: socio-historical context, differences given by the collation of early editions or semantic clarifications.

The edition closes with a list of references used also suitable for further reading. A full separate list of all the Restoration comedy editions produced by the Sevillian research group would have been a helpful addition, both to promote the previous publications and to provide extra context for this new one.

Certainly, this work serves the purpose of enhancing both the general and academic understanding of Durfey’s production, which, though dismissed by his contemporaries and some twentieth-century critics as mere jest, was nonetheless appreciated by his public. Gómez-Lara and Mora intend to challenge and reshape this negative perception of this Restoration writer.

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