

present state of play in the field and puts an apt punctuation mark on an important addition to the study of Shakespeare's Sonnets.

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Renaissance Psychologies: Spenser and Shakespeare. Robert Lanier Reid.

The Manchester Spenser. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017. xiv + 352 pp. £80.

Renaissance Psychologies is an ambitious and impressive work of scholarship that will command attention from specialists in early modern (or Renaissance and Reformation) literature and culture. Reid places the major works of Spenser and Shakespeare in an intellectual context that ranges from classical and medieval culture to modernism (Shakespeare's "epiphanies" are instructively compared with their counterparts in Joyce and, to a lesser extent, Proust and Faulkner), and his documentation marshals an equally breathtaking range of scholarly literature. The book is unmistakably the crowning achievement of a lifetime's careful research in European philosophy, theology, psychology, and literature.

The book's seven chapters are organized into two sections, "Anatomy of Human Nature" and "Holistic Design," both of which proceed through systematic contrasts between the two authors. Beginning with their treatments of self-love, part 1 develops its sustained polarity between the hierarchies of Spenser's Christianized Platonism and the "experiential thinking" of Shakespearean drama through the categories of passion (humoral psychology), intellect, and soul or spirit. Part 2 describes basic patterns and structures that establish a synoptic view of each author's works: there are, for example, three "modes of temptation" that govern the structure and progress of each, organizing Redcrosse's descent and recovery, Macbeth's downward spiral, Lear's journey into madness, and so forth. The argument proceeds largely by classifying, listing, labeling, and diagramming, although these categorizing labors periodically open out into sustained and illuminating stretches of commentary, whether on characters like Britomart, Falstaff, Juliet's Nurse, or Lear, or on whole plays (especially *The Tempest*) and allegorical episodes (Mutability, Alma's castle). The strategy of treating the two authors as representative of opposite intellectual and aesthetic tendencies can, of course, be reductive—in my view it produces a much more satisfying account of Shakespeare, a dynamic and thoroughly ambivalent artist, than of Spenser, conservative and static in comparison—but Reid's intellectual honesty and analytic tenacity most often overcome this limitation by engaging directly with competing views and by thinking critical issues through with a full sense of their complexity, rather than resting content with broad generalizations.

One risk of attempting so resolutely “holistic” (or synoptic, or, less sympathetically, totalizing) account of each oeuvre is that individual works or moments may be forced to fit the pattern. There are minor errors: for example, a reference to “the balcony encounter” in which Romeo and Juliet “pledge love in a mutual sonnet” (246), or another to Duessa as “conjured from hell by Archimago” (223). And there are distortions, as when we read that “in the passional world of book 3 [Duessa] tries to prevent alliance with Chastity” (223), despite the fact that Duessa’s presence in book 3 is limited to the lingering trace of an unrealized intention in the argument to 3.1. The discussion of Mordant, Amavia, and Ruddymane in book 2 of *The Faerie Queene* (179–85) assimilates Amavia to a category of idealized feminine figures, in spite of her suicide and her intertextual links to Dido in a Pauline allegory best glossed by Augustine: “What is more pitiable than a wretch without pity for himself who weeps over the death of Dido dying for love of Aeneas, but not weeping over himself dying for his lack of love for you, my God” (*Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick [1992], 15). The description of holistic design in *The Faerie Queene* in which this commentary appears is the most polemical aspect of Reid’s argument. He thinks he knows exactly which virtues would have featured in the unwritten books 7–12, and he laments the consensus view of the poem as complete in its present form as “a tragedy of modern criticism” (37).

However much readers find to disagree with in *Renaissance Psychologies*—and the margins of my review copy are filled with reservations and rejoinders—they cannot but admire the erudition and (with one or two exceptions) evenhandedness with which Reid presents an argument that is traditional in its intellectual commitments but pathbreaking in its scope and force. The book commands respect even when it does not compel assent.

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“The Revenger’s Tragedy”: The State of Play. Gretchen E. Minton, ed.

Arden Shakespeare: The State of Play. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017. xiv + 280 pp. \$102.

Gretchen E. Minton has assembled an admirable collection of essays of current scholarship on *The Revenger’s Tragedy* (ca. 1606). The book’s three parts—on “Religion and Genre,” “History and Topicality,” and “Performance”—accurately represent the current major debates around this play. Taken together, the essays and introduction provide the reader with a solid understanding of the “state of play” for *The Revenger’s Tragedy* in scholarship, on film, and on the stage. Minton has brought together a range of perspectives without imposing a singular point of view or interpretation, and the result is a volume that speaks to the liveliness of current scholarship on