

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.
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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

Middleton, *The Revenger's Tragedy*, and revenge tragedy. The appeal of the volume is therefore broad; it will prove differently but equally useful to academics looking for a deep dive and students meeting the play for the first time.

As Minton notes in the introduction, “part of what has been so difficult in understanding *The Revenger's Tragedy* is the way in which it interweaves genres” (2). One of the great strengths of this collection is the authors’ willingness to grapple with the play’s juggling of multiple generic registers. As Linda Woodbridge notes in her afterword, the essays highlight “many instances of *discordia concors* . . . or maybe just *discordia*” (255). Erin E. Kelly’s essay “*The Revenger's Tragedy* and the Morality Play Tradition” is especially noteworthy in this respect, as she resists binary modes of thought that still have a foothold in early modern scholarship. This is especially useful for those, like myself, who do not have Kelly’s facility with morality plays as influencers of later drama.

Shakespeare is a powerful ghost both in *The Revenger's Tragedy* and this collection. The many comparisons between Middleton’s *Vindice* and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* are perhaps inevitable, but the essays that truly stand out are those that take stock of the broader corpus of drama in the period. Karen Marsalek, for example, expertly links *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *Hamlet* with *Measure for Measure*, with particular attention to head tricks and bed tricks. And Lucy Munro looks in detail at swearing in the play, with particular attention to its chronological proximity to the Act to Restrain the Abuses of Players: coming just before this law against oaths on stage, the play marks a particular “cultural moment” that “had a marked effect on the ways in which plays were written and performed” afterward (142). Also noteworthy is Katherine Gillen’s important and timely work on “Fashioning English Whiteness.” Her deft use of *The Ghost of Lucrece* and early modern constructions of race are insightful and bring important perspectives to present-day readings of *The Revenger's Tragedy*. Gillen’s essay highlights, however, just how desperately our field needs to diversify. Gillen quite rightly makes use of work by Kim Hall, Ayanna Thompson, and Arthur J. Little, but it strikes me that we—as a field—have a long way yet to go in terms of amplifying voices of color.

There are also a couple of moments in Ian McAdam’s essay on “Calvinism and the Problematic of Character” that I want to touch upon. The essay does not spend enough time unpacking its “most controversial claim”: that “the narcissistic *erosion* of clear patterns of masculine identification in this historical case accentuates the misogynistic cultural formulations” (100). The argument is not given sufficient space to develop, and the historicizing that might have made it more effective is obscured behind what—at first glance—appears to be a paternalistic claim. I share McAdam’s conviction that *Vindice* and *Hamlet* should not be cast as “proto-feminist”; but his essay does not do enough to contextualize, for example, casual equations of “effeminization” with the “undermining of human agency” (101). It is not always clear enough where Calvin’s arguments end and McAdam’s begin.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the final section of this volume, with three very different and valuable contributions to the study of this play in performance. This is

necessarily limited by its sparse performance history, but this volume will certainly be a starting point for me in looking at the play on film and on stage in the future.

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