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A review of "Staging Women and the Soul-Body Dynamic in Early Modern England" by Sarah E. Johnson Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014.

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an actor . . . and believed they were actually seeing princes act” (228, 234). The plays’ characters could personify abstract political concepts, supply theatergoers with exemplary “models of behavior,” and nurture “a feeling of togetherness” that “contributed to the emergence of early modern national identity” (232, 115). This book does not fully deliver on the promise of its subtitle, and a more sustained study of the performative dynamics of Elizabethan nationhood is still needed. But Hertel has valuably shown that the English history plays of the 1590s addressed the issue of national identity with caution, dialogically, open-endedly, and, like Macmorris, in the interrogative mode.

Sarah E. Johnson. *Staging Women and the Soul-Body Dynamic in Early Modern England*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014. xi + 185 pp. \$60.00. Review by JESSICA L. MALAY, UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD.

Johnson opens her discussion of the soul-body dynamic in early modern England with a brief discussion of John Donne’s *Why hath the common opinion afforded woemen Soules* in order to introduce the ambiguity surrounding the female soul. The early modern gendering of the soul as masculine and the body as feminine along with the Platonic view of the soul as the governor of the body produced a gendered hierarchy which had implications for the representations of women on stage. Johnson suggests that the “feminization of the soul is wrapped up in male attempts to define or manage the very concept of the soul” (16), and this contributed to composite representations of women as bodies and spirits on stage. This exploration of the soul-body dynamic through its Jacobean staging is intended to highlight that “the gendered soul-body dynamic plays a role in representations of and attitudes towards women beyond literature that engages explicitly and centrally with this relationship” (20).

Johnson discusses Jacobean puppetry as staged in *The Revenger’s Tragedy* and *Bartholomew Fair* arguing that an analysis of the puppet in these plays provides an opportunity to explore the emptying out or division of the body and the soul (or spirit) as well as the relationship between the body and the spirit that were once conjoined. In her discussion of Vindici’s relationship to the murdered Gloriana,

Johnson reveals how this play mocks the interpenetration of spirit and matter. At the same time she considers how the play engages with contemporary ideas that did not completely discount the connection between the mortal body and a spirit who may retain some interest in the body after death. Vindici's desecration of Gloriana's corpse is described here as a type of prostituting, thus identifying Gloriana as body and the female soul as defined only in relation to male honor. However, Johnson provides a complex explication of Vindici's relations to Gloriana's bones to show that Gloriana's body can also be seen to function as an allegory of death. In this way she suggests that Vindici's revenge becomes a type of *danse macabre*. Johnson goes further asserting that in this play Gloriana's bones possess an uncanniness that blurs the separation between the material and the immaterial with implications for a gendered agency that appears on the surface to be denied Gloriana. This theme is visited again in the discussion of *Bartholomew Fair*, especially in the character of Ursula who appears to be a representation of flesh, and yet this fleshiness Johnson suggests is not always in opposition to the soul.

In the discussion of Fletcher's *The Tamer Tamed*, Johnson positions female resistance to male authority as a legitimate desire of the soul. This leads to a discussion of the relationship between the will and the soul with the will positioned as "one of the soul's highest functions" (75). Fletcher's portrayal of Maria as steeped in the practice of rhetoric is presented as a means through which women could pierce through male deception using rhetoric as a weapon of the will in order to resist attempts to define her as body only, as Petruccio attempts to do with his new bride Maria. Johnson suggests that this play registers "an awareness that the hierarchical and gendered division between soul and body" is a "rhetorical construct available for manipulation" (104).

Moving to Middleton's *The Lady's Tragedy* Johnson continues her exploration of the relationship of the material body separated from its spirit or soul in death, and the nature of the female soul. As in the *Revenger's Tragedy* Johnson explores the power which the male can exert over the female body—the material form of the female. However, she creates a compelling argument for the way in which this play portrays the female soul as possessing the ability to manipulate the male body. Johnson does acknowledge this presentation of the female soul

as superior to a male spirit that is still fully conjoined with his body is problematized through early modern associations of tyranny with a feminization of the body. Again, as in the case of Gloriana in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, Johnson also points out that the Lady inhabits a liminal space between a spirit who once inhabited a female body, and the allegorical figure of Wisdom, which in many ways effaces what the audience would recognize as feminized attributes. The Lady's only recourse, her only way to effect agency is to "slip forth" from her body like a freed "prisoner" (115). Yet, Johnson suggests that the Lady's active concern for her body, and the ability of the males in the play to manipulate her corpse implicitly determines her worth and remains a contested space between the Tyrant and her love Govianus. The discussion of this play best represents Johnson's nuanced approach to the many and often contradictory representations of the female soul-body dynamic on the Jacobean stage.

After a brief discussion of stone and spirit in *The Winter's Tale* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, which returns to themes such as the slippage between soul and spirit, ideas related to animating forces and the material, with a nod to the contribution of the Pygmalion story to contemporary representations of male manipulation of the female body, the book turns to masquing in the court of James I. This focus on the masque moves the discussion of the body-soul dynamic into the broader political realm of the Jacobean court which placed James as the governing spirit or soul of the state. The masques are presented as relegating the female masquers to their bodily roles as vessels with the design of the masques juxtaposing bodies and scenery, foregrounding the material. However, Johnson points out that there are explicit verbal references to the soul-body dynamic in the comparison of the mixture of bodies and souls to that of fresh water and brine in *Blackness*, or in the confusion expressed in Daniel's *Tethys Festival* about the status of figures as shadows or bodies. The dancing bodies were designed to create wonder in the audience which Johnson describes as evoking the soul. This discussion continues to develop themes of the relationship between the female body and the soul, and the status of the female and the feminine as represented in these court masques.

In the Introduction (20) and later in the book (82) Johnson attempts answer anticipated criticism that given the plays discussed

were written by men, presented in environments dominated by men, the plays presents primarily a male understanding of the body-soul dynamic. She counters by insisting that these plays, in particular Fletcher's *The Tamer Tamed* do "present female subject positions that push against conventional gender norms" (82). She also contends that a female presence in the audience would encourage playwrights to at least consider female attitudes in the construction and presentation of their plays. This may be so, but the discussion could benefit from a greater examination of this assumption. The inclusion of a female authored play, for example Elizabeth Cary's *Mariam* with its overt concerns for body and soul may have provided useful insights when examined alongside the plays and masques featured here.

Johnson makes clear her purpose in this study was to sample "how theatrical probing into the soul-body dynamic can translate into more positive representations of women and challenge oppressive gender ideology" (164). How far the book goes to accomplish this is unclear. However, its greater value is its often complex and nuanced examination of the contested relationship between gender and spirit inherent in discussion of the soul and body in early modern culture.

Michael Martin. *Literature and the Encounter with God in Post-Reformation England*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014. Viii + 221pp. + 4 illus. \$109.95. Review by LISSA BEAUCHAMP DESROCHES, ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY.

Michael Martin's book, *Literature and the Encounter with God in Post-Reformation England*, is a readable and critically engaged consideration of the complexities of religious feeling for everyday people during a period in which critics more commonly point to the newly emerging fields of science and politics over religion. Indeed, Martin's methodology introduces the importance of relinquishing a critical condescension toward religious conviction in order to consider it on its own terms. Using the phenomenology of Heidegger as a basis for his approach, Martin delivers a straightforward and comprehensive picture of an interesting variety of sources that trace a developing chronology of individual connections to the divine over the course