

so long was tempered, and “only” thirteen jurists directly implicated in Charles I’s death were executed. Klemp’s is a work of history, a compelling one for specialists who wish to know more about Laud’s and Charles’ speeches and prayers, and their textual afterlives.

Angelika Zirker. *William Shakespeare and John Donne: Stages of the Soul in Early Modern English Poetry*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019. xii + 268 pp. £80 / \$120.00. Review by P.G. STANWOOD, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

This ambitious and important study opens with the troubling words of the Ghost of Hamlet’s father who urges Hamlet not to forget that he must take revenge, but also to care for his troubled mother: “O step between her and her fighting soul” (3.4.109). He intends intervention; but as reflective observers of this theatrical action, we understand that “the soul, which is the receptive spectator of the play, will see in it what is going on inside itself, and make it externally visible” (xi). Angelika Zirker’s intriguing prologue leads on, of course, not to *Hamlet* but to non-dramatic poetry that is dramatic, and so to the two co-equal parts of her book: “Shakespeare’s *The Rape of Lucrece* and Donne’s *Holy Sonnets* are central to this study because they reflect, perhaps more clearly than any other early modern English poems, on the relationship between the soul as an inner space and as the immortal self by showing it involved in a drama that concerns the balance of its faculties as much as its eternal fate” (5). This assertion and its promise is fulfilled in the closely detailed study that follows of Shakespeare’s epyllion and (selectively) of Donne’s nineteen sonnets (Westmoreland Sequence).

But Zirker says more in her introduction in an effort to clarify and expand this difficult theme. We must re-consider the nature of the soliloquy, she urges, not merely in its traditional sense of inwardness and interiority; but rather we must re-imagine the soliloquy in order to show a history that uncovers its continuity from a “devotional practice to a literary one” (11). Moreover, “this subjectivity and the self-exploration as connected with a focus on the inward state and its expression through the soliloquy have to be linked to the realms of both

literature and religion" (11). The soliloquy is a dramatic constituent of both poetry and drama, and it provides, through the intermediary of the soul, a link between these two genres. Finally, Shakespeare and Donne, whose exemplary works provide the focus of this book, "enact the drama of the soul ... by alluding to psychomachia, by addressing the soul, by allegorizing it" (15). In both poets, "the stage of the poem becomes a stage of the soul, and on this stage, the soul is going through different stages towards immortality" (15).

The Rape of Lucrece is a very long poem (1855 lines written in rhyme royal), hugely popular in its time, and widely regarded as a "noble" work. Its language is extravagantly witty and conceited, and its lugubrious theme defined by a number of rhetorically contrived, set speeches ("soliloquies") by the two principal protagonists. Tarquin and Lucrece both speak not to each other, but in reflective passages which Zirker reads with detailed care in four chapters—close reading, she insists—is necessary. The drama of the soul is exposed (or extricated) in these tendentiously named divisions: The first, "Motivating the myth: allegory and psychology," studies the first three lines and the early stanzas of the poem. There follows, "'Thou art not what thou seem'st': Tarquin's inner stage and outer action"—an opposition, we learn, that Shakespeare achieves by "mingling physical aspects and aspects concerning the soul in foregrounding fear and desire that contain and pertain to both body and soul" (32). The broad outline of the argument is served by the particularity of the remaining sections of Part 1, which are devoted to *The Rape of Lucrece*. The very thoughtful and intensely rigorous exposition is often arduous, requiring the reader's patient attentiveness. The extremely generous annotations require further and concentrated attention.

The study of *Lucrece* now ended, the author turns in the second half of her book to "John Donne's *Holy Sonnets* and the so(u)le-talk of the soul." The unusual pairing of two dissimilar works—the sonnets considered as a unified whole—has been earlier explained, for we are concerned with the soul in dramatically staged soliloquy. Four of the sonnets, in which the soul is addressed, receive special attention: "Oh my black Soule," "If faythfull Soules," "Wilt thou love God," and "What yf this present." These and the remaining sonnets all broadly reveal the poet/speaker as the protagonist in a drama where the poem

becomes the stage.

“Oh my black Soule” “teems with dramatic allusions, e.g., to *The Summoning of Everyman* and *Doctor Faustus*, to name only two examples” (110). But *Tamburlaine* is offered as a gloss on color, in which the hero’s determination is described: he pitches “white” tents, his “furniture” is red, and “*Black* are his colours” (4.1.48 ff.). Zirker recalls Donne’s allusion to these colors in a letter to Wotton in 1608/9 in which he describes his sudden sickness “as fearefully ominous as Tamerlins last dayes black ensigns” (130). She additionally points to the liturgical use of color—black for Good Friday, white for Easter, and so on. This sonnet is rightly shown to possess many associations, the last lines being especially fraught, for they bespeak “the final stage of the soul: dy(e)ing in Christ’s blood” (134). All of these reflections usefully extend the commentary on this (and the other sonnets) recorded in *The Donne Variorum* (2005), whose last year of reporting is 1995. Zirker is reading the *Holy Sonnets* in a new light and “against the background of the soliloquy, especially with regard to the communicative situation but also the drama of salvation that the speaker experiences and gives expression to in these miniature dramas” (152).

Further sections in this long chapter take up the traditional and historical context of the soliloquy, a word first associated with Augustine who wrote the *Soliloquia* as his own dialogue with an unseen interlocutor whom he would later identify as Ratio or Reason. Zirker extends this fascinating discussion to include especially Thomas Rogers’s translation of Thomas à Kempis’s fourth book of the *Imitation of Christ*, which he called *Soliloquium Anima: The sole-talke of the Soule, or, A spirituall and heavenlie Dialogue betwixt the Soule of Man and God* (1592); and so we are drawn to traditions of devotion, meditation, inner dialogue (e.g. *Richard III*), and Shakespeare’s “Poor soul” of Sonnet 146. In the subsequent chapter we face “The speaker on the stage of the poem: Holy Sonnet “This is my Playes last Scene”” (184 ff.).

This sonnet follows “Oh my black Soule” in all manuscripts, and so the speaker also moves from soliloquy to life as a stage, but he engages also with the inner stage in separate parts. The line-by-line analysis that follows is a brilliant display of the kind of close reading that opens new meaning while unveiling the thematic direction of the book. Such a discussion cannot be adequately summarized, but

the commentary on the last lines of this sonnet is especially cogent. Donne writes, "Impute me righteous thus purg'd of evill, / For thus I leaue the world, the fleshe, and deuill" (13–14). Zirker carefully records the various and conflicting interpretations of *imputation*: Protestant or Catholic emphasis? And the adverbial *thus*? Looking back, or looking forward to a future event? The difficulty may be settled: "The ambiguity ... allows for both a reading that points towards Catholic dogma of purgation and for one that is based on the Protestant doctrine of imputation; the speaker refers to both denominations in one single line" (214). And "thus" can be read "extradiegetically," referring to all that has happened and all that is to come (214).

The concluding chapter of *William Shakespeare and John Donne* gathers the book's thematic threads into a fitting peroration. The author surrounds her closely and firmly organized chapters with great learning and knowledge, not always necessary to display; for sometimes one idea reminds her of another that intrusively requires a footnote—where *OED* references should go, incidentally, not within the main body of the discussion, for the frequency of their citation is tiresome. The study of *The Rape of Lucrece* opens and occupies half the book, exhausting the reader who might feel that the book has reached its end. The later chapters on the *Holy Sonnets*, perhaps because these poems are obviously discrete, confined and autonomous, prove most successful, and for many readers likely more compelling of study than the excerpted passages from *Lucrece*.

The book is very carefully composed and attractively presented, and quite free from typographical error or misprint. One or two trivial observations: faith *Donatus* (14) should read saith *Donatus* (a common mistranscription); *partakes* for *partakers* (126); *Honly* for *Holy* (182). And the reference to Jeremy Taylor (142, note 10) should correctly give *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (1651), with attendant correction to the bibliography (but note the contemporary edition, ed. P.G. Stanwood, Oxford UP, 1989).