

Levellers' writings and to examine them and Milton's together, and of Williams's capacity and integrity in making the attempt. I'm wary of reviewers' frequent tendency to ask for a book different from the one an author undertook to write. Still, I did find Williams's final two chapters, on *Paradise Regained*, especially with their (worthwhile) emphasis on Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," an awkward fit for the rest of this already very long volume. And its length is indeed an issue for any reader wishing to grasp the work's thesis in a focused manner. I mentioned earlier the book's main genre: that of documentary and historical presentation of materials that are then argued to be relevant to a reading of Milton. Yet much of this book verges into another valuable but demanding genre: the thematic reception history, most recently and impressively exemplified by John Leonard's *Faithful Labourers* (2013). For me, this aspect of *Milton's Leveller God* occasioned something of a trial of patience, and I often felt that reference to the work of others—instead of being tackled repeatedly, sometimes rather severely, in the body of Williams's text—could have been compacted and deposited decorously in his notes.

Naya Tsentourou. *Milton and the Early Modern Culture of Devotion: Bodies at Prayer*. New York and London: Routledge, 2018. ix + 176 pp. \$149.95. Review by DAVID AINSWORTH, UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA.

*Milton and the Early Modern Culture of Devotion: Bodies at Prayer* urges scholars to pay closer attention to the ways in which Milton connects bodies to faith, suggesting that the body at prayer both expresses internal devotion and produces and embodies that devotion itself. Tsentourou draws our attention to historical theories of genuine and expressive prayer to demonstrate how Milton locates true faith within the body of the believer.

After contextualizing her argument about embodied prayer in her introduction, Tsentourou considers material culture in its historical

and linen specifically to show how Milton attacks the material idolatry of Laudian liturgical garments. This chapter focuses on Milton's anti-prelatical tracts and *Areopagitica*, while also setting the Lady's

embodied devotion in *Comus* against the spectacle of Comus' court and of the bishops Milton derides. Milton can attack the spectacular performativity of faith, she argues, without rejecting the Lady's equally embodied performance.

In her second chapter, Tsentourou focuses on *Eikonoklastes*, suggesting that both it and *Eikon Basilike* present their readers with a model to differentiate between authentic and inauthentic prayer. After a very brief look at liturgical and participatory prayer in the period, she contrasts the set forms of performative prayer offered as authentic by *Eikon Basilike* with what Milton presents as more authentic: extempore prayer which emerges from the heart out of an "intercourse" between the human and divine (75) and which Milton conceives of using bodily language of digestion, reproduction, and birth. The chapter also looks at Milton's treatment of manna in *Paradise Regained*, arguing for a linkage between its materiality and its spiritual efficacy.

Tsentourou's third chapter turns to Adam and Eve's prayers in *Paradise Lost*, both before and after the Fall. Her examination briefly examines hymns, liturgy, and music before focusing on sighs and groans as an expressive and bodily form of prayer. The chapter ends by surveying medical understandings of sighs and groans in the period, drawing a linkage between deep emotional expressions of faith and these sounds, as well as connecting Adam and Eve's prayers in Books 10 and 11 of *Paradise Lost* to Donne and Herbert.

The fourth chapter draws upon the previous material to make a case for Samson's destruction of the Temple in *Samson Agonistes* as a material and embodied prayer. After discussing the function of gesture and bodily posture both in prayers and in rhetorical performance, Tsentourou examines the bodily aspects of Samson's performances in the tragedy, culminating in his twin performances before the Philistines (for them, and then for God). She concludes that Samson's violence, and the material violence it triggers, figures forth his prayer: destroying the Philistine temple is thus not the object of Samson's prayer but the vehicle of its expression. The chapter concludes by noting that the theatricality of the tragedy, as well as Samson's own theatricality, complicates its portrayal of prayer.

In a seven-page epilogue, Tsentourou looks briefly at prayer in *Paradise Regained*, looking at Jesus' hunger and his soliloquy on the

subject in Book 2 of the poem. She differentiates Jesus' prayers from those she's examined in the rest of the study (Adam, Eve, and Samson in particular) in that Jesus merges the spiritual and physical worlds and expresses a mediated linkage with the divine through his power to stand, bodily, on the roof of his father's temple.

Overall, I find Tsentourou's intervention useful and compelling, drawing scholarly attention to the specific and bodily aspects of prayer within Milton's work while being attentive to how Milton's contemporaries understood and construed the act of prayer. Her approach seems especially generative when applied to texts where scholars have already examined bodies (the Ludlow Mask and *Samson Agonistes*, especially), while also illuminating when applied to Milton's prose works. This book also demonstrates her strengths in synthesizing ideas, whether from theological tracts discussing prayer or from secondary criticism. Her discussion of Milton's use of linen as a symbol for the corruption of the Laudian church, for example, draws upon a range of work on material culture to read passages in several of the anti-prelatical tracts.

The deepest problem with this book is likely unsolvable: Tsentourou accepts (as do I) that Milton is a monist materialist, which necessarily bears upon any discussion of physical or embodied prayer. If no meaningful distinction exists between body and spirit—if, at best, they can be differentiated only through a degree of rarefaction, like that between ice and steam—then the state and work of the body must be a central characteristic of prayer. But given all of that, how can one escape from the many ways in which theological language encodes a difference between soul and body? Merely deploying the word "spirit" implies a distinction that materialism challenges. This study offers the possibility of rejecting the body/spirit distinction outright, and along with it, calling into question the obvious hierarchy of form which Raphael suggests when visiting Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost*, where he suggests that angels have bodies but that they are better ones for being less grossly material. If Milton sees genuine prayer as expressed through the crude clay of the human form, might that offer some sense of rehabilitation for human bodies? And yet, both Milton and Tsentourou seem bound by the distinctions they might question: *Paradise Lost* differentiates between the excremental dregs of the material universe and the airy material abstractions of

Heaven, while Tsentourou treats the physical and spiritual as two distinct but related things throughout her book. Indeed, this book's unique contribution to the scholarly conversation draws our attention to material bodies at prayer in Milton's work; it thus focuses upon how the material matters spiritually, instead of calling into question its differentiation from the spiritual.

Tsentourou makes a second distinction in this study which requires a clearer sense of definition than she provides: a distinction between interiority and exteriority. Making the fair criticism that most scholarship on Milton's theology and on prayer in Milton, specifically, concentrates on the internal state of the believer and not on external forms, Tsentourou establishes convincingly that Milton pays close attention to bodies, to clothing, and to physiology. Without a clearer definition of how she distinguishes between interior and exterior faith and prayer, though, I am unsure how to parse some of her arguments. Some of what she classifies as being "interior" needs to be more clearly situated within her model of exterior and bodily prayer. If the Holy Spirit enters the hearts of believers and inspires their faith as well as guiding their interpretation of scripture, is that action taking place inside believers or is it an "exterior" process? Is an internal conversation between a believer and God necessarily involving externality, both in that God exists outside the believer, and in that the conversation involves a body as well as a soul? Because Tsentourou wants to examine external bodily expressions and to challenge the idea that these can only be expressions or signs of an entirely internal process, she naturally does not emphasize things that may happen within the body, but I doubt that she would argue that an internal organ isn't still a material part of the body as a whole. To what extent, then, can embodied prayer be internal? There's a blurring between physical internality and externality, both emphasizing the body, and between internality in the sense of interiority as set against a collective exteriority that necessarily engages with the world. Tsentourou does argue in her introduction for a blurring between the internal and external worlds, but stops short of making a case that Milton ultimately wants to demolish the distinction in favor of the material, external body and not the inward, disembodied life of the soul in direct relation to God.

The preceding complaints amount to wishing that this book was bolder in its argumentation. I also wish that it were longer. Tsentourou's brevity is often welcome, especially when she encapsulates contemporary debates on genuine prayer or draws upon broader scholarly discussions of things like material culture, the Derridean specter, or performativity studies to set up specific readings of Milton's poetry and prose. I found myself wanting more of her analysis of Milton's writing. This book draws upon a number of rich veins of scholarly discussion, from the eroticism of faith to the debate about the younger Milton's understanding of ritual, and it spends time with some of the less-studied prose. It offers lively and engaging readings of Milton's work. But in moving quickly and in opening up so many interpretative possibilities, these readings can be unsatisfyingly brief.

For example, the end of the first chapter looks at bodies in Milton's *Mask*. Over eight pages, it makes a case that the Lady's ideal of devotion as expressed through performance places an embodied experience of faith before the eyes of her audiences (human and divine). To do so, it first suggests that the mask comments on dramatic form at least as much as it does religious ritual, associates the bestial bodies of Comus' court with antitheatrical rhetoric to make a case for the dangers of performative embodiment, addresses the linkage between the Circean cup and the role of wine in embodied worship, relates Comus' disguise to Archimago's in Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, connects the Lady's entrapment to ritual conformity and the inescapable nature of the material world, looks at Comus' apparel, discusses the transformative power of song, and finally, connects the Lady's resistance to spectacle to the audience's. With so many ideas crowding for space, the section cannot do much close reading of the *Mask*, though it does some; the Lady's own words are covered in about a page, while the specific ways in which the *Mask* presents her body receive almost no attention. The book's generativity relates in part to this kind of analytic breadth, in the sense that it offers a great many ideas for others to develop, but it can also be unfocused or neglectful of important elements of or objections to its arguments. I wanted to know what Tsentourou thought of the specific ways in which the Lady's body is addressed within the *Mask*. What significance does the liberating power of Sabrina's song have on her larger arguments about a body entrapped by materiality?

And how does she reconcile her reading of a body-in-performance with the Mask in its published form, or with the specific implications of Milton using Alice Edgerton's body to make his point?

The brevity of the book's close readings can also leave me wanting more. The first chapter looks at the Lady's speech about her "rapt spirits" (46) without directly engaging with the Lady's threat that these spirits will provoke an earthquake, which looks to me like a direct connection being made between something coded as immaterial and something grossly material. The fourth chapter makes a strong case for reading Samson's inward meditations immediately before he destroys the Temple as expressions of an embodied, external, material phenomenon (see especially 119–22), but offers no analysis of that "great matter" (116) that the messenger speculates Samson may be thinking about. Here, the drama makes a direct linguistic connection between Samson's process of thought and the material world, which seems important, if not vital, to the chapter's larger focus. But the analysis concentrates entirely upon the way in which Milton's Samson omits the reference to God which is central in the Judges account, then moves on to Carey's article about Samson as a terrorist.

Despite spending so much space on complaints, I do recommend this book. Even, or especially, in its flaws, it will be richly generative of future scholarship, calling as it does upon Milton scholars to treat Christian faith as a material practice. I look forward to seeing how Tsentourou builds upon her work in the future.

Kevin J. Donovan and Thomas Festa, eds. *Milton, Materialism, and Embodiment: One First Matter All*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press. vii + 249 pp. \$70.00. Review by ERIC B. SONG, SWARTHMORE COLLEGE.

In the introduction to this collection, the editors signal the need for a "rapprochement" between historicist scholarship focusing on early modern monism and "the ecocritical concern for the nonhuman in contemporary vitalist materialism" (2). The editors leave unspecified exactly what kind of rapprochement they seek to foster. If this encounter involves Milton scholarship being informed by recent