sources demonstrates, has little substance. Who now proposes Spenser as an essentially gentle poet of romance or that Shakespeare's works are timeless?

This book makes its own intervention, however, in a now crowded field. It also provides students with a very useful overview of current critical debate on how both these writers engage with the idea of the nation as well as Spenser's status as a colonial author and Shakespeare's Catholicism.

Dermot Cavanagh

Nancy A. Gutierrez. *'Shall She Famish Then?': Female Food Refusal in Early Modern England*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003. Pp x, 146.

Female food refusal, familiar to us in our own culture in the form of *anorexia nervosa*, has most frequently been historicized in relation to female saints of the Middle Ages and 'fasting girls', as they were called, of the modern period. Nancy Gutierrez in *'Shall She Famish Then?'* fills the gap between these two characterizations of female self-starvation with a richly nuanced discussion of the complex resonance of food refusal by women in the early modern period in England. She resists, however, a linear argument which positions the early modern period as transitional between the religious perspective attributed to the Middle Ages and the clinical or 'scientific' perspective widely said to characterize discussions from the later seventeenth century through the nineteenth century. Rather, she draws upon a range of methodologies to illuminate the multiple ways in which a preoccupation with women's eating 'epitomizes the revolutionary anxiety that characterizes seventeenth-century English culture and politics' (2). For Gutierrez, the body of a woman who chooses starvation in response to institutional pressures within the family or within the state brings together questions of gender, agency, social practice, and institutional power. The significance of her refusal to eat, however, may vary with the woman and the context in which it occurs, and may simultaneously suggest both victimization and agency.

The texts discussed are varied. They range from the historical record of the death of Margaret Ratcliffe, lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth, through two seventeenth-century tragedies, to popular pamphlets published in England between 1589 and 1677 describing 'miracle maidens' who survived without eating for substantial periods of time. An epilogue looks briefly at Nicholas

Rowe's *Jane Shore* and Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*, two eighteenth-century works in which female food refusal is infused with sentiment and pathos. Gutierrez argues that such a range of texts, while they suggest the centrality of the age's preoccupation with female food refusal, do not lend themselves to a single interpretation. What is important is their multiplicity and variety.

A fascinating discussion of an actual event, the death in 1599 of Margaret Ratcliffe, illustrates the way in which a death following refusal of food could, in a succession of possible narratives, be variously interpreted, and the way in which the narrative allowed to prevail reflects the investments of its tellers. Thus, though an obvious possible reading of events might see in the refusal to eat, as in the death of Ophelia, an act of suicide which would have made her death impossible to recuperate, in the officially accepted version Margaret is construed to have pined away of a heart broken by the loss in the Irish wars of her beloved brother. Historical evidence suggests another possible narrative – that the broken heart may have been due to unrequited love – but it is the narrative of generosity of spirit and nobility rather than the narrative of rejection and victimization that is circulated. The narrative of sensitivity is reinforced by the queen's command of an autopsy, which confirms that disease was not the cause of death, and a noble burial, in spite of the fact that Margaret's father was only of the landed gentry. Gutierrez subtly reveals the ways in which investments in issues of gender, class, and personal and political advantage constrain the interpretation of a potentially unruly expression of personal agency. Thus female food refusal is seen in the explanation that emerges as neither an expression of religious devotion as it might have been in the Middle Ages nor an expression of rebelliousness or dysfunctional development as it might have been in more recent periods.

In contrast, the decision of Anne Frankford in Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (c. 1603) to starve herself explicitly links female food refusal to questions of sexual behaviour, though after initial mention sexuality disappears from the discussion. For this discussion Gutierrez takes as the relevant context not the royal court of Elizabeth I, or even the domestic situations of the gentry and nobility whose families are represented in the play, but the religious – in her argument specifically puritan – context evoked by the play's issues of transgression and punishment. Although many critics have viewed Anne's refusal of food as an act of atonement for her adultery and hence religious submission, or an assumption of personal agency and hence a criticism of hierarchical marriage, Gutierrez reads her decision to starve herself as an act of replacing her husband's punishment with the fasting and prayer associated

with puritanism and hence political resistance to episcopal authority. She therefore focuses on such puritan issues as conscience and exorcism.

According to Gutierrez, the language of the play suggests that Anne's relationship with her lover Wendoll is one of demonic possession. Gutierrez accepts the suggestion of Stephen Greenblatt and others that 'possession' (in Anne's case adultery) is a form of subversion, but she also argues that fasting too, as a form of exorcism practiced by nonconformists and denounced by the established church, took on connotations of sedition. The complexity of this argument is seen in its conclusion: 'Thus, Anne's adoption of the strategy of fasting and prayer, defined by the culture as subversive, [is] her means to regain her identity as wife and Christian, defined by her culture as positive ideals …: the dominant idea of woman's subservience to a patriarchal authority shares space with the emerging idea that individual conscience, not church or state, is the final authority' (50).

Gutierrez suggestively brings into an analysis of the play discourses and events (what she calls 'topical allusions') that would have been available to early modern audiences. For those spectators for whom questions of possession, exorcism, individual conscience, and episcopal authority were pressing issues – and I agree with her that there may well have been in the audience spectators with such nonconformist concerns – the phenomenon of food refusal in the play may well have resonated as she describes. Other spectators, however, as other published readings cited by Gutierrez suggest, may well have experienced the play's potentially polemical edge differently. There are points at which Gutierrez herself seems to realize that her argument may be a bit of a stretch. For example, while she asserts that 'the disruptive behavior of the demoniac is paralleled in Anne's adultery', she also feels compelled to admit that Anne's adultery is 'a situation not as overtly sensationalistic as the behavior of a possessed individual', even though it is 'certainly excessively unnatural for her established identity as loving wife' (46). In other words, the parallel between Anne's adultery and demoniac possession may well not have occurred to many of the play's first observers. Nevertheless, the critical payoff of the analysis lies in the rich reflection it offers upon an aspect of the local historical context.

Like Anne Frankford, Penthea in *The Broken Heart* by John Ford (c.1630) starves herself to death because she feels herself to be an adulteress. Her 'adultery', however, is not a result of her own choice but of a marriage imposed by her brother in spite of the fact that she was previously contracted to another man to whom she still considers herself married. Two other marriages in the play are also a result of external intervention. Gutierrez focuses specifically on 'motifs of anatomy and appetite as gendered activities [that] expose the sterility

of Spartan spousal practices' (57), and the repressiveness of the play's Sparta is taken to be a reflection on the values of hierarchy, discipline, and self-control associated with the Caroline court.

For Gutierrez the word 'anatomy' is more than a metaphor. It represents 'the male culture's desire to expose and lay open interiorities – especially women's interiors – for scrutiny' (59). To this impulse she links the social practice of arranged marriage. The analogy depends on seeing anatomy (in which the corpse, gazed at and acted upon in its passivity, is feminized) as a form of the male 'traffic in women'. A female response to this male strategy of control is food refusal, which constitutes a defiance of male control by means of a strategy of withholding oneself from the community and its values. The themes of anatomy and appetite come together in act 4, scene 4, in which the self-starved body of Penthea is unveiled and subjected to the gaze of her brother, her betrothed, and the audience. Gutierrez brilliantly disentangles the ironies of self-effacement, violation, and agency encoded in her position and in the contrast between Penthea's death by refusal to ingest food, Orgilius's murder of Ithocles by stabbing, and his later suicide / execution by bloodletting and filleting of his arms. If love is equated with appetite, and gratification of desire is continually frustrated, food refusal becomes a way of taking that frustrating of desire out of the hands of controlling males. However, in its self-destructiveness it becomes 'a kind of rebellion, not *against* authority, but *within* [the Spartan code of self-restraint]' (61). Nevertheless, as Gutierrez argues, Penthea's refusal to accept her new status as the wife of Bassanes not only reveals her autonomy and agency, but has political consequences for the Spartan leadership.

The final chapter discusses a number of popular pamphlets published in England in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries describing 'miracle maidens' who survived for a period of time without ingesting more than at most a few drops of liquid. An appendix contains an invaluable chronological handlist, to which might be added Richard Morton's *Phthisiologia: or, a Treatise of Consumptions* published in Latin in 1689 and in English in 1694. Unlike Anne Frankford or Penthea, these young women do not refuse to eat out of a sense of guilt or grief. Gutierrez differs from those scholars who accept the theological or physiological explanations offered by the pamphlets as indicating a transitional period between sacred and secular interpretations of the significance of female food refusal, because both the religious and scientific readings refuse to acknowledge as possible explanations recalcitrance or deceit. She focuses not on the decision of the women not to eat, but rather on how their community recognizes and recuperates the implicit rebelliousness of their

actions. To this end she finds useful the vocabulary of postcolonial criticism, which allows her to address in the texts she discusses issues of 'private and public space, female passivity and agency, and individual vulnerability and empowerment' (81).

For Gutierrez the popularity of such accounts, with their obsession with the starving woman's body, suggests their cultural importance. The young woman who refuses food, because she disrupts the patriarchal household, is experienced as a threat to the larger community which mobilizes to contain her food refusal by explaining it. Her body, separated from her agency, is scrutinized, often eroticized, turned into a spectacle, and subjected to surveillance. Her story, separated from her voice, is narrated and interpreted by a male author as a sign of God's power or as the capacity of the human body to survive without food. The household thus becomes a site in which private experience is mediated by public officials. Such accounts therefore 'provide a gendered microcosm in which to view [the] production of [English] cultural identity' (88).

The sheer number of 'miracle maiden' accounts suggests both the power of food refusal to compel the attention of others as well as its power to disturb. It also is evidence that the phenomenon in the early modern period was widespread. Most critics writing on the subject of early modern female food refusal would therefore have used the pamphlet material in an early chapter as a context for the individual examples, historical and literary, that receive fuller treatment. The decision of Gutierrez to treat the popular accounts last signals her refusal to treat them as documentation and her insistence that like the dramatic texts she discusses, they too must be treated as rhetorically informed male-authored representations. The critic's job, then, is to unpack the relationship between the authorial voice and the represented female subject position.

In the multiplicity of this book's arguments can be found both its strengths and its weaknesses. Individual chapters are insightful, provocative, and challenging. However, the chapters are more persuasive as self-contained essays than as part of a book because the links between them, in spite of references to preceding discussions, often seem tenuous. Gutierrez is so careful in her methodological scrupulousness not to force the connections between different types of texts and readings that she neglects to make explicit the connections even when they are there. What I longed for was a developing argument that would bring the insights of the individual chapters together. Among the issues raised at various points that I would have liked to see more consistently developed from chapter to chapter are female sexuality, the location of the early modern idea of selfhood in the body, the cultural significance of food, and the notion that 'self-control has a different meaning for women than it does for

men' (4). I also questioned the author's characterization of her own methodological strategies as performance criticism, rhetorical analysis, and postcolonial critique. Of these the last, because most limited in its application, is most clear, though one might question the political implications of extending postcolonial critique to the situation of women generally. However, the dramatic texts discussed are far from 'the realization of [scripts] in performance' (22), which she says performance criticism takes as its object of study. Reservations aside, however, this is a brave book. It moves the phenomenon of an aspect of female suffering from the margins to centre not only of the stage, but of the social and political arena as well. It is also immensely readable in its easy movement between narrative and analysis and between past and present and impressive in its firm grasp on the limits of interpretation.

Leanore Lieblein

James Hirsh. *Shakespeare and the History of Soliloquies.* Madison, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003. Pp 470.

This vigorously argued account of the history of soliloquies moves from the classical past to the present day. The writer adopts a literalist formalistic approach based on a rigorous inspection of textual detail. There are, he suggests, three categories of soliloquy: classical and renaissance self-addressed soliloquies, Shakespearean and other 'feigned' soliloquies (designed to be overheard), and modern interior monologues. These categories are demonstrated by abundant illustration from a wide range of dramatic texts. The pivotal text is Hamlet's celebrated speech, 'To be or not to be', which the author claims to be a feigned soliloquy. The book originates in an article written back in 1981, which he believes has not received the attention it deserves. By enlarging the context of his argument about this speech, he hopes he will convince a wider audience of the relevance of that particular analysis.

Unfortunately, there seem to be certain fundamental confusions in Hirsh's approach. Certainly, on a literal reading, traditional texts show that soliloquies were regarded as self-addressed speech, and in many cases they are feigned soliloquies, designed to be overheard for the advantage of the speaker. But the advantage is always very explicit, and immediately obvious to the audience. There has to be a clear purpose to deceive in a feigned soliloquy. And a