

also through the interplay of both texts taken together. Anselm Haverkamp's penultimate chapter turns to "Hegel's reading of Shakespeare" as perhaps the "foremost instance of what it means philologically, in terms of method, to read literature philosophically" (168), and finds that "Hegel deciphered in Shakespeare's theatre an epistemological drama of objective history, rather than of lived experience" (178).

For the final chapter, Paul A. Kottman takes Hegel's commentary on bliss in Christian art, most fully realized in "the religious love, the passionless love, of Mary for her son, Christ" (187), as the framework for a perceptive reconsideration of Stanley Cavell's reading of *The Winter's Tale*, foregrounding instead the crucial role of "maternal grief and maternal love" (195) in Leontes's conflicted path toward acknowledgment and restoration. An afterword by Charles McNulty offers a closing rumination on the challenges and rewards of staging *King Lear*, a play sometimes figured as more readable than performable in its philosophical complexities.

All told, *Entertaining the Idea* collects original, engaging essays that deftly handle the unique pressures the phenomenology of performance can exert on the history of ideas and the matter of embodied ethics.

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Female Desire in Chaucer's "Legend of Good Women" and Middle English Romance. Lucy M. Allen-Goss.

Gender in the Middle Ages 15. Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2020. ix + 226 pp. \$99.

Lucy Allen-Goss's far-ranging and exciting monograph offers a provocative way of recuperating the often-occluded representation of female desire in medieval texts. Further, Allen-Goss's project is interested in discerning female desire that is explicitly not structured in relation to or shaped by male desire. This kind of desire can be—and often is—represented as heterosexual, but it subverts representations of traditionally feminine and masculine behaviors as those are coded in other medieval texts; presents women as emulating homosocial and/or homoerotic male behaviors in their heterosexual relationships; flips traditional Aristotelian tropes of female bodies as cold, wet, and penetrable, and male bodies as hot, hard, and impenetrable; and draws on cultural anxieties over same-sex female desire and autoeroticism.

Allen-Goss's project addresses Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* and three late medieval romances: the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, the *Sowdone of Babylon*, and *Undo Your Door*. These works, Allen-Goss argues, have been marginalized by scholars for their inchoate qualities of incompleteness, aporia, lacunae, and fragmentation; yet it is precisely through these qualities that their subversive representations of female desire are most potently represented. Drawing on contemporary queer theory that reads lesbian,

same-sex, and nonheteronormative desire articulated most forcefully in and through textual disjunction, Allen-Goss rehabilitates these texts as rich sites of female desire.

Allen-Goss's book is structured as three chapter diptychs, each split between Chaucer's *Legend* and a romance. Chapters 1 and 2 investigate Chaucer's legend of Philomela and the Alliterative *Morte Arthure* as responding to the trauma of rape. Philomela's weaving of a tapestry to identify her attacker after he has cut out her tongue offers a pointedly feminine mode of survivor speech that decisively departs from traditional gendered metaphors of textual production in which male authors, from Jerome on, repeatedly imagine penile pens incising yielding feminized skins. Meanwhile, in the *Morte*, a heterosexual rape perpetrated early in the story disrupts gender relations so categorically as to haunt the remainder of the narrative, which is filled with scenes of male feminization that lead to the Round Table's downfall.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on anxieties over feminized men and masculinized women with Chaucer's legends of Medea and Hipsiphyle and the *Sowdone of Babylon*. In Chaucer's *Legend*, Jason successfully seduces women through a "studied performance of male femininity [that] exposes the latent deviancies of the women he encounters" (83); this performance is especially effective with Medea, who assumes the threatening masculinized role of his military advisor only to be betrayed, thus accentuating the *Legend's* play with gender-fluid characters and its ultimate need to put them back in their properly gendered places. In the *Sowdone*, the Muslim heroine Floripas is keeper of Christian relics, which she hands over to crusader knights upon her baptism and incorporation by marriage into the Christian community. In the *Sowdone's* French source, however, Floripas is a hyper-sensualized, eroticized character, whose conflation with relics raises concerns over excessive and inappropriate idolatry of inanimate objects. The *Sowdone* keeps Floripas's close association with inanimate objects but startlingly rewrites it: unyielding, agential, impenetrable, and Marian, Floripas becomes a nonbinary "stone butch" (130) character.

The final two chapters extend an earlier thread tracing gendered depiction of the architectures enclosing female characters in these texts. Allen-Goss begins with Chaucer's gender-fluid treatment of the infamously sexualized wall separating Pyramus and Thisbe in his legend of Thisbe, and the female genital associations of the labyrinth, through which Ariadne's unspooled thread, the polar opposite of Philomela's woven tapestry, guides Theseus in Chaucer's legend of Ariadne. The final chapter offers a gorgeously rich analysis of *Undo Your Door*, pulling together discussions of the mechanisms of medieval window fastenings, embalming techniques, Marian ivory statues, and the emergence of diptych paintings. Allen-Goss demonstrates how *Undo Your Door's* female heroine is wholly in control of her enclosed bedchamber and thus her sexuality. Yet that same sexuality is coded as disordered through her excessive attachment to an embalmed corpse kept in the same room, reiterating twinned concerns over idolatry and autoeroticism.

Through deep readings weaving together sociocultural history, materiality, and contemporary theory, Allen-Goss recuperates female desire, whether visible and expressly disordered or invisible yet haunting the text, as the animating core of works too long unrecognized for their radical exploration of nontraditional femininities.

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Freedom and Censorship in Early Modern English Literature. Sophie Chiari, ed. Routledge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture 48. Abingdon: Routledge, 2018. 252 pp. \$160.

This book, a collection of twelve essays by scholars of early modern English drama, poetry, and translation (some quite distinguished), with a coda by Roger Chartier, addresses a wide array of topics: satire as slander; differences between manuscript and printed texts; the influence of contemporary events on literature; drama as critique of regulation; and translation as a mode of restraint.

Four of the essays stand out in particular. Dymrna Callaghan writes on blank verse as an element of Shakespeare's experimentation with poetic license. In an era that attempted to regulate not just speech but expressions of all kinds, blank verse might speak truth to power. Jonathan Pollock demonstrates that John Florio chose deliberately not to translate certain passages in Montaigne's *Essays* for his 1603 edition. These passages depict female sexual behavior in crude terms and unflattering contexts and would have been risky to include in a translation dedicated exclusively to female literary patrons, starting with Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford. Line Cottegnies's enlightening study of John Benson's 1640 edition of Shakespeare's sonnets brings together the book trade, current events, and genre development in its analysis. She gets it right: this was in no way a pirated or bowdlerized edition. Her explanation of the inclusion, omission, and organization of the sonnets is clear, logical, and undoubtedly accurate. Benson violated no canon and no copyright. Cottegnies also shows literary publishing beginning before Humphry Moseley.

In his coda, Roger Chartier brilliantly disambiguates the volume. He parses what he calls the "particularities" of English censorship compared to Continental practices. He reaffirms that burning books should be understood as ceremonial and symbolic, although Cervantes portrayed burning as the most drastic form of censorship. Chartier further imparts the productive, formative, and inspirational aspects of what is generally called censorship. Some official attempts at censorship were overly ambitious, like the uniquely English Bishops Ban seeking to repress entire genres; others were not ambitious enough, such as when only parts of plays were objectionable. Chartier, like some essays here, reinforces that "agents of censorship" were not just