

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.

Elizaveta Strakhov, *Marquette University*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2022.419

*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. Dympna 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

church or state officials but rather many and layered (201). There should be no surprise that copies of texts that circulated in manuscript differ from printed products. Neither are new editions a reflection on or a betrayal of earlier ones. Some things are “untranslatable” (204), and authors had to respect sensibilities of patrons as well as regulators. Chartier’s last word is a caution that although varied, extremely repressive forms of press regulation did exist in early modern England.

While the editor’s introduction declares that censorship of drama was different from censorship exerted by the church and state, Janet Clare notes correctly there was, in fact, overlap between the efforts. Peter Blayney conclusively shows the Stationers’ Company did not conduct censorship. The erroneous Frederick Siebert is later cited confirming that the company was an organ of state censorship, and although the 1586 Star Chamber decree did apportion most censorship duties to the church, the company was not under ecclesiastical control. Moreover, the High Commission was never composed primarily of Privy Counsellors (Leland H. Carlson, “The Court of High Commission: A Newly Discovered Elizabethan Letters Patent, 20 June 1589, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 45 [1982]: 295–315). Nor did the provision that licensers of manuscripts be named in printed books make censorship in the 1630s efficient or even effective. Surely in Lady Mary Wroth’s complicated personal situation there was motivation more complex than self-censoring to protect her voice as a published female author.

Nevertheless, this book has many merits, one of which is the unintended conclusion that imposing censorship into the regulation of publishing, printing, and performing in early modern England is a labeling that in no way accurately conveys the intricate yet nuanced reality of practices at that time. This lexicon has long needed correction and refinement, and this book clearly demonstrates that need persists.

Sabrina Alcorn Baron, *University of Maryland*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2022.420

*Immortality and the Body in the Age of Milton.* John Rumrich and Stephen M. Fallon, eds.  
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. xiv + 244 pp. \$99.99.

---

This collection includes twelve new studies of representations of the embodied self in Milton and some of his near contemporaries. These studies offer fresh assessments of the body and aspirations for transcendence in Milton’s works and in a wide range of other early modern authors, including Pietro Aretino, Francis Bacon, John Donne, John Bunyan, Hester Pulter, and Margaret Cavendish.

Part 1 begins with a piece by W. Gardner Campbell that elaborates William Kerrigan’s idea of the “the enfolded sublime”—Kerrigan’s term in *The Sacred*