exploration of "the problem of signifying religious difference through accusatory, partisan labels" (126).

Chapter 4 shifts from Puritans to Lutherans. The "stage Lutheran" is not a familiar character type, but in the late sixteenth century Lutheran was used much like Puritan, as a term of abuse, though Luther himself, as in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, remained a hero of the early Reformation. Rowley's *When You See Me You Know Me*, one of a cluster of plays derived from Foxe, has an irenicist message, at least in terms of varieties of Protestants. Recent histories of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century religious belief and practice increasingly understand it as mixed and muddled, and such a muddle almost necessitates a toleration based on simple pragmatism.

The final chapter on Shakespeare's *Pericles* begins with a question by archaeologist Sarah Turlow: "What happened to Catholic things in a Protestant world?" One "thing" Walsh has in mind is the tomb of poet John Gower, in (now) Southwark Cathedral, down the street from the Globe, but Gower himself is another such thing. His *Confessio Amantis* was a major source for the play, and he himself—a dead Catholic poet returned "from ashes"—is the play's presenter. While the play is set in a pagan world, it resonates with traditional Christian rites in a way that calls us to think about "the developing post-Reformation consciousness of the Catholic past." The play's "fantasies of resurrection and reunion" echo "proscribed intercessory rites," which are neither rejected nor embraced, but rather transformed into the aesthetic experience of the theater (183).

The New Historicist secularization hypothesis has rightly been challenged many times, but Walsh charts the development, represented in the theater, of a different kind of secularization. The philosopher Charles Taylor describes modern society as secular not in the sense of rejecting religion but of accepting pluralism: people of many faiths (or none) can peacefully coexist. The acceptance of Jews, Muslims, and other non-Christians was still a long way off, but early modern England was at least becoming tolerant of different Christians.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2021.299

Political Aesthetics in the Era of Shakespeare. Christopher Pye, ed. Rethinking the Early Modern. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2020. 288 pp. $99.95.

Can we talk about aesthetics before aesthetics? It is a question of startling theoretical ambition, as Christopher Pye lays out across his two contributions. The style of these essays is dense with "ideational consolidation" (4), to use a Pyeism, but their richness is well worth unpacking. For Pye, political aesthetics describes much more than art's

usefulness for staging power. The aesthetic is always political and vice versa because both mark their autonomy by representing that autonomy to themselves (e.g., in the play-within-a-play). This attempt to establish one's own origins by making those origins visible is the core fantasy of sovereignty and the period at large, inasmuch as the early modern describes both a historical struggle to be free from medieval inheritance and (more importantly) our own historicizing consciousness, the way we become modern by narrating the story of modernity's origins. In short, aesthetics is at once necessarily political and necessarily early modern.

The collection's first part most directly engages this theoretical problem, beginning with Andrew Sisson's brilliant reading of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Sisson lays out the history of aesthetics from Baumgarten to Rancière clearly and concisely, and finds the course of that history anticipated by how Shakespeare challenges humanist notions of friendship defined by shared "judgments of sense," determined by pregiven social affinities (the *bon sens* of men of class). Emilia and Flavinia reverse this order; through them, Shakespeare explores "a sociability that is not the ground of aesthetic activity so much as its product," one on the "threshold" of what Rancière calls the aesthetic regime (38). Russ Leo finds a similar threshold not in Shakespeare but in his early critic Thomas Rymer. Rymer's reflections on the failures of poetic justice in Shakespeare reveal deep contradictions within the mimetic regime of the arts, which for Rancière predates the aesthetic. In Rymer, mimesis collapses into aesthesis, because the attempt to make God comprehensible inevitably takes God's place by "establishing the conditions under which" God becomes "intelligible" (85).

A second group of essays tackles the politics of aesthetics. Tracy Sedinger and Joel Dodson turn to Rancière to find, respectively, in *Julius Caesar* an emergent form of aesthetic judgment emancipated from predetermined meaning, and in Edmund Spenser an aesthetics corresponding not to liberal abundance but to the scholar's impoverished and needy imagination. Meanwhile Jennifer Rust finds in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a dialogue between political theology and political aesthetics. If sovereignty attempts to instrumentalize the aesthetic, Bottom's dream suggests the aesthetic's tendency to escape control. But this escape, she argues persuasively, is not so much from theology into secularity as from instrumentalization as such: reimagining the Christian language of the body, Bottom models the power of aesthetic freedom "to reconfigure existing modes of social and political consensus" (160).

Finally, four case studies of *The Tempest* demonstrate how questions of political aesthetics can generate a variety of perspectives on the same play. Hugh Grady offers the lone dissent against Rancière. Precisely because Rancière's account of aesthetics is so sweeping, pertaining to the very foundations of epistemology, Grady finds its usefulness for theorizing art limited. Instead, he returns to Adorno to restore the negative aesthetics implied in *The Tempest*'s utopianism. Colby Gordon's terrific essay traces the aesthetics of sound in the play across two poles. The first is the soundscape of Schmittian political theology, where exceptional rupture and thunder both mirror and generate the sense of

Prospero's absolute, sovereign control. The second slips that control: this is the autonomous—or perhaps more accurately, autochthonous—music of the island itself. Here non-human agency limits sovereignty's command, suggesting an aesthetic prior to and beyond sovereignty's attempts to instrumentalize it.

This collection greatly rewards the close attention of anyone interested in political theology, phenomenology, and of course aesthetics. I simply close with a question that is more of a comment, prompted especially by Dodson's provocative turn to Spenser. The title's "Era of Shakespeare" is surely meant ironically. In taking the part for the whole, it rehearses the key aesthetic move: phenomenalizing origins. But what does it say about the purchase of aesthetics now, given that the synecdoche "Shakespeare" dominates the field less as a sign of our origins and freedom than our impoverishment, our hunger for resources?

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2021.300