

of McKeown's investigation lies Bielke's combined stable/library/armoury—720 square meters of splendid pastimes for an elderly count, reflecting on the pranks of Fickle Fortune.

McKeown is able to prove that Bielke arranged an imposing gallery in his library, adorned by the commissioned emblematic paintings. Thus he made a suitable pictorial representation of the interests and mindframe of a well-educated nobleman in the highest social position. But Bielke chose just a number of emblems from the abundance in *Emblemata Horatiana*, and McKeown makes it plausible that at least some of these choices are explained by the biography of Bielke; there is “a more personal narrative behind the abstractions” (71). McKeown sees shadows of “aggrieved innocence of the paintings' owner” (71). Even some of the small changes in the way the printed emblems were transferred are convincingly explained as results of Bielke's personal situation. For a person who considered himself wrongly accused of treason, it was, obviously, important if centrally placed figures in the deeply meaningful emblems carry symbolic objects in the good right hand or in the unclean and ill-fated left one.

Bielke died at the eve of the reign of Charles XII. The library was moved by the heirs to Skokloster; the paintings were forcibly dismantled from the walls and sent with the books to the same castle. McKeown's study is not only well-researched; it is also a good example of intellectual archaeology. A puzzle of observations, material findings and scholarly learning is made into a convincing whole.

All the paintings are represented in the volume together with their counterparts in Vænius, including the texts. The plates are also accompanied with Gomberville's explanations in the translation of Thomas Mannington Gibbs (1721), and with commentaries by McKeown.

Katherine Ibbett. *The Style of the State in French Theater, 1630-1660. Neoclassicism and Government*. Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009. vii + 176 pp. + 4 illus. \$99.95. Review by MICHAEL MEERE, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY.

*The Style of the State* invites us to look differently. With this book, we get a glimpse of what is behind the imposing and, at times, dusty

edifice that is French seventeenth-century theater. To this effect, Katharine Ibbett reexamines Corneille and his generation of playwrights in the light of reason-of-state political thought, including polemical texts that emerged during the *Fronde* (1648-52) and Counter-Reformation, Machiavellian politics, colonial policies, and the cardinal de Richelieu's political legacy. Challenging the commonplace notion of a "depoliticization" of French tragedy during the 1640s, Ibbett offers a provocative yet solidly supported demonstration of the intrinsic relations between the spectacle of theater and the spectacle of political action in early modern France.

The book is divided into five chapters and ends with a short "Coda." In the introductory chapter, also appropriately subtitled "Curious Perspectives," Ibbett takes us through the history of the formation of French neoclassicism during the nineteenth century to show that what we term "neoclassicism" is in fact a narrative construction of the Third Republic that has had surprising longevity in criticism. In this self-proclaimed "array of gripes," she highlights the pamphlets of the *Fronde* and the creation of "Frenchness" as rooted in anti-Italianism (and thus anti-Machiavellism) (23). The chapter also offers a skeptical look at the nineteenth-century opposition of Corneille's moral probity to "his alleged arch-rival Richelieu," Louis XIII's minister who has often been associated with the Florentine political theorist (15). While Ibbett suggests that this rivalry is probably untrue, she underscores the persistence of the opposition in literary history, which has made Corneille a representative of French *générosité* and integrity in contradistinction to Richelieu's "Italian duplicity" and theorists of reason of state (16). Ibbett reminds the reader of these foundational aspects of seventeenth-century literature and political theory to chip away at this monumental structure more effectively. Her task is precisely to show not how Corneille's work defies Machiavellian concepts, but how it "engages in precisely th[e] stratagems" of reason of state (17).

From a methodological point of view, Ibbett explains how the political legacy of Corneille in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has created rifts within literary criticism, "pitting attention to style, as the domain of the right, against sociology, the preserve of the left" (20). The author takes a diplomatic stance by not taking sides; rather,

she adopts a two-prong approach, bringing together French and American perspectives on this period. Ibbett is mostly concerned, she claims, with “ways of doing, with practices in both government and theater, and with the changes in staging that usher in the neoclassical drama and thus the crafting of a new genre of what came to be called ‘regular’ tragedy” (23). Thus, Ibbett structures her book by raising a particular political question in each chapter and then reading literary texts either alongside or against it. Her eloquent and engaging style and the overall structure of the book are admirable.

The next chapter reads two non-canonical, martyr tragedies of the 1640s as support for the “Politics of Patience” promulgated by the Counter-Reformation government. Ibbett argues that, instead of focusing on the martyr’s body and suffering, like in medieval hagiography, Puget de La Serre’s *Thomas Morus* (1640) and Saint-Balmon’s *Les Jumeaux martyrs* (1650) shy away from the martyr figure’s resistance to the established power and (noble) suffering to zoom in on the so-called “secondary” female characters who *wait*. By analyzing the unspectacular depiction of martyrs in painting and tragedy, Ibbett suggests that the spectator figured on stage, the woman-in-waiting, is no longer a merely pitiful character, but rather “is held to be a model to be followed” (48).

From here, Ibbett concentrates on Corneille and does not turn back. In Chapter three, we continue to read about martyrs, Polyeucte and Théodore, but instead of promoting a domestic policy of patience, Ibbett argues that, as Corneille’s plays are set on the outskirts of the Roman Empire, we can, and should, “think of a play as a colonial government, or, more pointedly, of a playwright as being like a colonial governor” (60). In turn, *Polyeucte* and *Théodore* lead us to questions of colonialism, the governing of subjects abroad, and the problem of conserving bodies as they relate to the particular vocabulary of the reason of state politics and the conservation paradigm (67). Hence, instead of judging or giving reasons to *Polyeucte*’s success and *Théodore*’s failure, like much criticism sets out to do, Ibbett is more concerned with “the political response to the body of the martyr, and the strategic attempt to keep that body in life” (76). Through close readings, we come to realize the polyvalence of the term *conserver*: we can conserve honor, love, bodies, and virginity, of course, but we can also think

of Corneille's martyr plays in terms of a "conservative paradigm of reason of state" by which bodies are managed rather than eliminated for the good of the state (90).

Chapter four, titled "Taking One's Time, or, Cléopâtre is Corneille," suggests that Corneille's favorite tragedy *Rodogune* manipulates the keeping and disclosing of secrets, and, broadly speaking, temporality, and, in turn, "explores the theatrical dimension" of how early modern rulers made decisions and practiced power in the discourses of reason of state. Ibbett thus analyzes time and timing in *Rodogune* in relation to political strategies, elaborating the analogy between "the practices of theater" and "the practices of politics" (96-97). Notably, through another close reading, we see how suspense and effect are results of both politics and theater: the coming to terms with the contingent, dissimulation, and the "end-inflected and endless manipulation of circumstances" are all elements of a Machiavellian ruler like Cléopâtre and of a playwright like Corneille (114-15). The ("productively naïve") parallel has limits, however, for Cléopâtre "ultimately fails" whereas "Corneille's liberty in conserving the effects of the story succeeds. Her secrets are given up in the movement of the final act itself, but Corneille retains the power that she loses" (121).

"The Rules of Art," is ingeniously the last chapter, for it tackles the question of theory *after* discussing theater and political practices, hence challenging critics who tend to consider seventeenth-century literature practice as a result of theory. Ibbett, of course, argues the contrary, and elucidates connections between the cardinal de Richelieu's *Testament*, "an exemplar of the genre of reflection on past political action," and Corneille's *Trois Discours sur le poème dramatique* (132). We come to consider Corneille's *Discours* as a mark of "inquiry into the bounds of theater, and into the bounds of the playwright's role," for, as Ibbett argues, "Corneille uses the language of government to create his own terrain and sovereignty" (152).

This is a book that approaches the foundational texts of French neoclassicism "from different angles and through the prism of other sorts of plays" and, as a whole, it succeeds brilliantly in its endeavor "to show how a different relation to neoclassical theater opens up a different perspective on the state" (155). All the same, one necessary criticism to make of Ibbett's first monograph would be her sporadic

oversights and sweeping statements that arguably require nuance. For example, when discussing the staging of the martyr tragedies in Chapter two, Ibbett posits that “the crux of the martyrological narrative is the relation between victim and audience, between the exemplary figure and those who follow in his, or increasingly her, wake.” “In the plays of these years,” Ibbett continues, “such a relation was necessarily troubled as the seemingly defining moment of the martyr play was pushed off stage. In the new martyrological theater, the spectator is left stranded, waiting to see something whose importance is continually stressed but which can never come about in our presence” (38). Not physically showing the martyr’s death, however, has precedent and is thus not so new: in fact, several earlier hagiographical tragedies, such as Laudun d’Aigaliers’ *Dioclétien* (1596), Pierre Troterel’s *Sainte Agnès* (1615) and Etienne Poytevin’s *Sainte Catherine* (1619), the latter both about female martyrs, do not stage the saints’ demise. Nonetheless, such pitfalls are rare and, overall, Ibbett’s project is a fruitful contribution to scholarship. The unlikely and unexpected connections throughout the book lead to perspicacious insights that will certainly nourish the future of French seventeenth-century studies.

Fernand Hallyn, *Descartes: Dissimulation et Ironie*. Geneva : Droz, 2006. 214 pp. 18€. Review by REBECCA WILKIN, PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY.

A materialist masquerading as a metaphysician? A dogmatist in disguise? Descartes’ confident prose continues to spur readers to search out contradictions and confusion: telltale ripples on a too-smooth surface. In *Descartes: Dissimulation et Ironie*, Fernand Hallyn provides vocabulary for understanding the discrepancies that readers past and present have alleged between Descartes’ thought and his expression of it. Ferrying deftly between the specifics of rhetorical strategy and the larger controversies into which words played, Hallyn sheds light on the constraints surrounding scientific discourse as well as on the passionate reactions inspired by Descartes’ philosophy and person. Dissimulation—that tool of the free-thinking atheist—was a frequent feature of Descartes’ expression; mistrust thus was (and remains) a rational response to his writing. Yet Hallyn’s purpose is