Booknotes

David Norbrook. *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics 1627–1660*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pp. xiii, 509.

This timely history of republican political culture and republican poetics, which includes examinations of Marvell and Milton in relation to texts by often neglected figures: Fisher, Hall, Marten, May, and Wither, shows how writers re-imagined English political and literary culture during the Puritan Revolution. The book, which appeared in December 1998, on the eve of the 350th anniversary of Charles I's execution on 30 January, 1649, is an attempt at recovering the suppressed "republican element in English cultural history" through literary culture, and more specifically, through poetry" (p. 7). Norbrook takes up the new historicist and cultural materialist concern to interpret literary texts in the context of social rhetoric. This study is an ambitious and rewarding contribution to the relationship between artistic and literary representation in seventeenth-century England, and generated considerable discussion at the Sixth International Milton Symposium in York, U.K., 1999.

Viviana Comensoli and Anne Russell, eds. *Enacting Gender on the English Renaissance Stage*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999. Pp. 270.

Applying diverse approaches generated by the current state of Renaissance criticism and theory, this book examines the "evolving interest in the intersections of gender ideologies, theatricality, and cultural production in early modern England" (p. 2). A multi-authored collection, *Enacting Gender* engages the diverse range of current debates over issues such as the one-sex model, cross-dressing, race and region, and women as the authors, subjects, and objects of theatrical representation, and successfully resists any unified analysis of gender in the English Renaissance theatre. While

Shakespeare features prominently in the book, he shares the stage with such dramatists as Marlowe, Fletcher, Webster, Elizabeth Cary, Richard Brome, and Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley. Early modern drama specialists, cultural critics, and feminist critics will find the volume provocative and compelling. The contributors to Part 1, Janet Adelman, Alan Walworth, Mary Floyd-Wilson, Joyce Green MacDonald, and R. L. Kesler, investigate the effects that epistemologies of sex, race, and subjectivity have on representations of the gendered body in drama. In Part 2, Rosemary Kegl, Alison Findlay, Michael Shapiro, Laurie E. Osborne, and Christina Luckyj consider in various ways the roles of women as authors, subjects, and objects of theatrical representation. The volume includes an extensive bibliography, notes on contributors, and an index.

Jeffrey Denton, ed. *Orders and Hierarchies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Europe*. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1999. Pp. xii, 206.

Originating from a series of papers delivered at the J. K. Hyde Centre for Late Medieval and Renaissance Studies, University of Manchester, this "coursebook" studies various social structures of Western Europe between 1300 and 1600. Since the exploration of social development demands a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach, the contributors to this book were selected from a wide range of disciplines, including history, anthropology, art history, literature, and political theory. The tensions between the various images of social order and a heightened toleration for diversity, which play themselves out in the pre-industrial world, are analyzed by the contributors. Chapter 1 provides a useful distinction between the functionalist and Marxist conceptions of social structure. Chapter 2 compares conception of social order in the Christian West and Islamic East. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 examine such cultural expressions of the age as the works of Dante, the narratives of Froissart, and the images of English kings. Chapters 6 and 7 focus on England, and explore issues of kinship, knighthood and commons. Chapter 8 and the concluding chapter turn to governmental structures in Ragusa and order in Venice respectively. The volume includes bibliographical guides and a selective index.

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