BookNotes

Robert Markley. *The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600-1730*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. viii, 315.

With a tightly focussed discussion that bridges economics and textual analysis, Robert Markley challenges long-held historical narratives that place mercantilism in England and Europe as the dominant financial force of the seventeenth century. Markley examines China, Moghul India, and Japan as indispensable powerhouses in the business of trade. The English literature of 1600-1730 often imagines the Far East as simultaneously hungry for English goods and as a site of inexhaustible untapped natural resources. And while successful trade was linked to civility by both the English and the Dutch, seventeenth-century China arguably could illustrate the relative failures of western countries: England and Europe were beset with corruption in government, brutal wars, famine, and high rates of unemployment, while China seemed politically stable, economically advanced, culturally refined, and fecund. Markley investigates travel accounts, East India Company and Dutch East India Company records, and the writings of Jesuit missionaries; he interweaves such sources with textual analysis of works by Milton, Dryden, Defoe, and Swift. The end result is a careful and illuminating discussion of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century trade relations, as well as burgeoning notions of English nationhood.

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Jesse M. Lander. *Inventing polemic: religion, print, and literary culture in early modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. x, 324.

The introductory chapter of *Inventing polemic* argues that a new kind of polemic, marked off from that of earlier ages by factors which include its printed form, flour-