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-

ished in England from the early sixteenth century to the Restoration. It concludes that

the literary culture of early modern England was fractious, robust, and deeply polemical, a fact not registered by received literary histories, which, impatient with theological squabbling and polemical exchange, have approached the period through modern editions that regularize and sanitize the hurly-burly of early modern print.

Caveat lector: those who are already aware that early modern theological debate matters, or that early modern writing cannot be studied exclusively by reading texts in modern editions, may not find the argument of this book consistently novel.

Its first two chapters discuss texts with obvious polemical content: the *Acts and Monuments*, with particular attention to its successive editions and abridgements, and the Marprelate texts, seen as having succeeded in “popularizing polemic.” The third turns a little unconvincingly to *Hamlet*, arguing that “while Q1 remains within (...) polemical culture, Q2 objectivizes and rejects polemic,” and the fourth considers *Pseudo-Martyr* and *The First Anniversarie*, reminding readers that Donne was averse neither to polemic nor to printed publication. A fifth chapter on *Areopagitica* compares its polemical quality with the more moderate stances of its post-Restoration successors. A sixth tells the story of the founding of Chelsea College as a Jacobean nursery for polemical divinity, and of pleas for its revival after the Restoration. This is a workmanlike book, although I think the publisher’s blurb goes too far in describing it as an important one.

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