

REVIEW ARTICLE: THE NEW GLOBALISM'S BUBBLE

Douglas Bruster

***A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. Jyotsna G. Singh. Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture 60 (Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2009). 400 pp. + xvii. \$149.95 cloth.**

'Global' appears in this large collection's title where we have become accustomed to seeing the word 'postcolonial'. Less judgmental than 'postcolonial,' 'global' has the advantage of seeming a paradigm that, being more spatial than political, neither excludes nor judges. To follow out the full title, though, is to note a pragmatic focus here: the twenty-one essays' insights about what editor Jyotsna Singh calls 'the Global Renaissance' are filtered through the tiny island nation of England. Still, a wide scope and a sensitivity to England's engagement with the world can be discerned in the locations explored. Africa, America, Bermuda, the Canary Isles, China, France, Holland, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Java, Malta, Portugal, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Turkey, Venice, and Virginia all make an appearance in this Companion. It is divided into four parts — 'Mapping the Global'; "Contact Zones"; 'Networks of Exchange: Traveling Objects'; and 'The Globe Staged' — with the majority of its essays distributed in the middle two sections.

As much as the title's adjective catches our attention here, the word 'Renaissance' begs for comment. Scarce in the critical lexicon since around 1988 — when the term 'early modern' usurped its place — 'renaissance' has returned to the field without much fanfare. Readers will notice it, for instance, not only in the anthology under review but also in the name of this journal. Sent down for sins of omission, the 'Renaissance' has rejoined us as a penitent. Less elitist and courtly than before, it offers something that 'the early modern era' does not: a compact way of expressing two centuries and more of cultural history.

As a brand name, why else might 'The Global Renaissance' work where, say, 'Global Culture in the Early Modern Era' does not? One could argue that the

expansiveness which 'the early modern' carried with it has been translated from its chronological orientation — its suggestion, that is, that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries functioned as a prelude to our own, modern, era. Now taken for granted, that diachronic extension has been supplemented with a spatial reach, and 'Renaissance' allowed back into the mix owing to the associations of value it has always carried with it. In this way, chronology has been supplemented with geography. In the 1990s it was important to say that English books from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were full of things that were, or were almost, modern, and that they were chauvinistically English. Now it seems important to say that these English books were full of things international in scope and cosmopolitan in nature. 'Global' facilitates this. It is also worth offering, finally, that while one can just make the case that early seventeenth-century London, Paris, and Venice had developed, or were developing into 'early modern' cities, modernity did not emerge in some of their eastern counterparts to the same degree.

By now, critical discourse on the early modern era's international scope is well established. Published in 1937, Samuel C. Chew's foundational study, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England During the Renaissance*, is almost seventy-five years old. More recent work by such scholars as Emily Bartels and Michael Neill, to name only these, has helped define a thriving critical subgenre. Today most scholars in the field know that, when opening a journal or monograph, they are more likely to read about trading ships and foreign encounters than stanzas and boroughs. Whether called cultural studies with an international emphasis, global historicism, or 'new globalism' (Daniel Vitkus's useful phrase), investigation of the 'Global Renaissance' has not only arrived but matured. As the conclusion to this review will suggest, it may also have reached, and passed, its peak.

The growth of conversation within this critical subgenre means at the very least that more can be expected of it. From such an anthology as this we could be justified in seeking at least three things:

1. Substantial use of foreign archives and languages.

It is not unreasonable to think that research devoted to 'the global' should be based on multiple languages, and on investigation conducted in various national archives. However passionately pursued, arguments about 'the idea of X' in English-language materials can seem overly conventional, even insufficient when not contextualized with materials from other languages and places.

2. A compelling answer to the question: 'Why Literature?'

Why focus on literature when what is sought seems closer to the province of history? This query can be answered a number of ways, but the gap between many literary

critics' training and a largely historiographic endeavor needs to be accounted for. Similarly, anyone familiar with patterns of hiring and pedagogy in the field knows that the realm of the literary enables research like this. A larger cultural investment in the works of Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton, for example, makes it possible to publish a \$150 volume that examines England's international engagements during these figures' lifetimes.

3. Analysis that transcends cliché.

'Global Renaissance,' as we have seen, works in part as a brand name advertising an area of investigation. In this way, it is not unlike a store sign reading 'World Electronics' or 'International Dry Cleaning.' Owing to largely unfamiliar terrain, critics writing in a post-disciplinary environment can rely heavily on words and thoughts that seem compelling, but ultimately remind us of New Criticism's tendency to make every poem sound the same. Things are 'complex,' 'multiple,' 'pluralistic,' and 'diverse'; entities 'contact,' 'engage,' or 'intersect'; responses to other cultures are 'anxious,' 'complicated' and 'ambivalent.' Everywhere there is pervasive 'intermingling and amalgamation' (355). Owing to the collection's topic, 'difference' is of course to be expected. Yet it should not be advanced as the be-all or end-all of inquiry.

How well does *A Companion to the Global Renaissance* (hereafter *The Global Renaissance*) satisfy these desiderata? After a summary of the anthology's contents, we will return to this question and address some other implications of the volume as well.

Singh is herself a new historicist, and not surprisingly her introduction bears all the rhetorical maneuvers we have come to admire in that genre of writing. Beginning with Elizabeth's hand on a globe in the famous Armada portrait (which decorates the jacket of the hardcover), Singh compares it with another globe in a roughly contemporaneous Mughal court painting. These terrestrial images suggest, 'perhaps in an uncanny way, that they were part of a gradually emerging "global cultural economy"' (4). This emerging dynamic, she offers, asks us to reconsider the dominance of a largely European paradigm when we think about English texts and agents from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The key to this reconsideration is an emphasis on the cosmopolitan culture that both depends on and feeds travel. Singh sees the flipside of cosmopolitanism as being xenophobia (6, 8), though it is not clear, even from the essays that follow her introduction, that English interest in the larger world was ever as sophisticated as our more modern definition of 'cosmopolitan' would imply.

Part One of *The Global Renaissance*, titled 'Mapping the Global,' begins with Daniel Vitkus's 'The New Globalism: Transcultural Commerce, Global Systems Theory, and Spenser's Mammon.' Vitkus discusses the limitations of small-ball

criticism—in which he includes book history and ‘other forms of micro-material historicism’ (33)—over and against what he feels are the advantages of the ‘global turn’ available in global systems theory (35). An unexpected focus on Book Two of *The Faerie Queene* allows Vitkus to suggest ways in which this global turn might underpin a canonical text, though his analogy of the Cave of Mammon to El Dorado seems somewhat forced. While Vitkus’s reading of this episode opens up provocative questions about Spenser’s portrayal of money and desire, it is not clear that when these questions are translated into ‘global’ discourse they do not float a little above the actual language of the text. Critical globalism, as Vitkus calls it, therefore runs the risk that exegetical paradigms of all kinds do, from the Robertsonian to the Wallersteinian: a flattening of texts’ specificity in the service of arguments which seem, at the time, a greater good.

Appropriately, though, the exegetical approach of Vitkus’s essay prepares us for the appearance of Augustine in Crystal Bartolovich’s “‘Travailing’ Theory: Global Flows of Labor and the Enclosure of the Subject.’ In the course of rediscovering Puritanism, Bartolovich contrasts the particularized autobiography of Richard Norwood (1590-1675), the early surveyor of Bermuda, with Augustine’s more open life study. The money quote for Bartolovich comes when Norwood associates the protection of his soul with the enclosure of common spaces: ‘the Lord was pleased to . . . keep out Satan as it were with a pale or hedge from making that common inroad into my heart as he had so long used to do’ (quoted 61-2). Bartolovich dislikes private property, admires the Diggers, and, with Gonzalo in *The Tempest*, fantasizes what places like Bermuda could have been were things to have been held in common. Her research, which depends heavily on theories of the 1970s and 80s, could have benefited from more familiarity with the work of Americanists—who have explored similar questions of faith, property, and community in some detail owing to the voyage of a leaky hull called the Mayflower. And if we pause over an endnote reading ‘I have used the Sheed translation of Augustine because I like it’ (65, n.11), we may well feel that the pleasure in individualism it betrays is both ironic and uncommon.

In his essay ‘Islam and Tamburlaine’s World-picture,’ John Michael Archer extends Robert Weimann’s remarks about the applicability of Heidegger’s ‘world-picture’ to early modern English literature. Weimann has asserted the role of the world picture in such studies as, among others, *Authority and Representation in Early Modern Discourse* (1996), *Author’s Pen and Actor’s Voice* (2000), and *Prologues to Shakespeare’s Theatre* (2004). Although he does not cite Weimann, that scholar’s treatment of Heidegger would seem to undergird Archer’s deployment of the concept in this essay. Archer approaches Islam in 1 and 2 *Tamburlaine* through the twin dynamics of cartography and ethnography. Pushing hard to find Islam in Marlowe’s plays, he winds up admitting that there’s less there than meets the eye. Archer’s concluding realization

that nothing very complicated (such as, for instance, a religion or society) can ever be well represented, perhaps represented at all, stands as a monitory insight for a collection otherwise invested in a certain level of representational transparency.

The final essay in this ‘mapping’ section, Chloë Houston’s ‘Traveling Nowhere: Global Utopias in the Early Modern Period,’ dovetails so closely with the following chapter, Andrew Hadfield’s ‘The Benefits of a Warm Study: The Resistance to Travel Before Empire,’ that they deserve to be discussed together. Houston examines three utopian texts and their relation to travel writing: More’s *Utopia*, Bacon’s *New Atlantis*, and Johann Valentin Andreae’s *Christianopolis* (a Latin-language work published in 1619). She generates some compelling insights by setting *Utopia* in the wake of Lucian’s *Vera Historia*—a text that deserves to be better known than it is—and asserts the participation of these utopias in ‘global discourse’ owing to their ‘interest in the processes and imaginative potential of global travel’ and their belief that ‘the world held some undiscovered corners that might hold the secret to the ideal human way of life’ (95). Houston’s uneasiness about the idea and practice of travel vis-à-vis these utopias is actually confirmed by Hadfield’s essay, which starts the ‘Contact Zones’ section of *The Global Renaissance*. Building on previously published ideas, Hadfield reminds us of the vexed reputation of travel in the early modern period. For every endorsement of journeys to distant places, he shows, other writers were prone to see travel ‘as a profligate undertaking, wasteful and dangerous, and more likely to corrupt than educate the traveler’ (102). From Ascham and Montaigne to Spenser and Nashe, authors understood travel not as a good in and of itself, but rather as a potentially dangerous way to make observations and produce knowledge that might be more safely generated through reflection.

Between these divergent responses to travel—the utopian fantasy of journeying to a secret place, and the cynical fear that, wherever one goes, humanity will be the same—lies another position that attends to the give-and-take between visitor and host. Such is the subject of Nandini Das’s “‘Apes of Imitation’: Imitation and Identity in Sir Thomas Roe’s Embassy to India.’ Roe, England’s first official ambassador to India, was involved in a well-known episode that Das uses to open and close her essay. Vaunting the inimitability of English miniature painting, Roe was forced by the Mughal emperor to accept a wager: a court artist would imitate a painting that the ambassador had brought with him and Roe would be asked to discern the English original from among multiple Indian copies. That Roe was challenged by this exercise (or, according to another account, stymied by it) provides Das with the occasion to explore the role of imitation in the encounters between travelers and their hosts. Das draws on the work of Hadfield, and of Jonathan Sell, to tease out the way travel can produce self-reflexive thinking—a reconsideration of one’s own land and culture in relation to the new society one is encountering. If Das’s emphasis on the

mutual interpretation of manners ultimately leads her to some of poststructuralism's more familiar cul-de-sacs, her essay nevertheless presents an entertaining account of two different individuals, and cultures, thrown together by history.

Richmond Barbour tells fascinating stories about England's international trading group in 'A Multinational Corporation: Foreign Labor in the London East India Company,' which deals with material the author treats at more length in his informative Palgrave book from the same year, *The Third Voyage Journals: Writing and Performance in the London East India Company, 1607-10*. Beginning, almost obligatorily, with Barabas and Antonio, two world traders from the early modern theater, Barbour proceeds to narrate the ambitious—and seemingly reckless—trading activities of the English in the East. Barbour's easy style helps him write fluent history for literary critics, though he displays a disabling naiveté about the economic when he castigates those London Company shareholders who 'profited despite the terrible mortality among their agents and workers' (145). Surely Barbour must realize that the size of these profits, and the attractiveness of the trading goods themselves, were not only not in conflict with *but indeed directly proportional to the difficulties overcome in attaining them*. This is an uncomfortable fact, but to ignore it is to misunderstand the most basic relations among value, price, and effort during this and every other historical period.

Sometimes storytelling leaves one more impressed with the teller than the tale. Such is the case with Mary C. Fuller and her contribution to this volume, 'Where was Iceland in 1600?' Fuller takes her brief from a seldom read portion of Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, Arngrímur Jónsson's *Commentary of Island*, and notes that 'Iceland was tightly connected with England through the cod fishery, whose *economic* centrality has been appreciated by historians even while its narrative poverty has served as a barrier to engagement by textual scholars' (160, emphasis in original). It is not clear, reading Fuller's essay, that scholars of any kind have been greatly harmed by their ignorance of Iceland. She may be right to say that 'Looking at the place of Iceland in Hakluyt's anthology reanimates a corpus of documents' (161), but surely not all reanimation is rewarding. Finally, if it is true that 'these documents might also provoke a re-examination of some fairly fundamental categories' (161), Fuller owes it to her readers to complete that re-examination rather than gesture toward it.

More important than Iceland, Russia makes an appearance here in Gerald MacLean's 'East by North-east: The English among the Russians, 1553-1603.' MacLean concentrates on England's sixteenth-century encounters with the Russian court and people, noting the disgusted superiority that English visitors betrayed in their accounts of Russian society. MacLean contrasts this response with English characterizations of the Ottomans: 'Although both were regarded as tyrannical, the empire of the Ottomans was greatly admired and envied, while that of the Russians was largely scorned and

imagined to represent an imperial order that the English could consider themselves already to have surpassed' (175). This last sentence flags the role that 'empire' plays in MacLean's narrative, which continually emphasizes the imperial aspects of encounters and situations which appear to have had stakes of a considerably lower nature. The figures whose stories he tells seem to have considered themselves fortunate merely to have stayed warm, fed, and alive in a place that made England seem, in comparison, the height of civilization.

When Catherine Ryu begins 'The Politics of Identity: William Adams, John Saris, and the English East India Company's Failure in Japan' with a declaration of her ethnographic neutrality—she will proceed, she informs us, 'without privileging the modern assumption of the superiority of the West to the East' (179)—we guess that we're in for a lecture of sorts. No surprise, then, when, far from remaining neutral on the relative positions of the West and East, she plumps strongly for the sway of the East, scolding us in her conclusion to recalibrate our fantasies of Western modernity in relation to China's empire of silk. If, in re-telling the familiar story of the English Factory at Hirado, and of its failure, Ryu has a chance to take a position midway between the West and the East, her disciplinary chauvinism for China and Japan leads her to lose this battle of midway. Oddly, though, what's most perplexing about Ryu's essay isn't her partisanship but rather the complete lack of evidence for her central topic: notions of 'English' and 'un-English' identity and behavior. Ryu quotes documents that nowhere mention England in the nationalistic way she wants them to, and then goes on to discuss them as though they had. The result is frustrating, for it makes the early modern strangely Victorian in nature.

The last essay in this section, Ian Smith's 'The Queer Moor: Bodies, Borders, and Barbary Inns,' asserts, largely on the basis of weak etymological relations, that 'The inn, by definition, is a queer place' (191), and uses English fantasies of sodomy as a way to connect such figures and issues as Othello, Islam, Leo Africanus, and race. Smith's remarks hop from theme to theme in the manner of an indulgent jazz solo. When we are finished with the essay, we have been informed that inns, hotels, travel, and translation are all 'queer,' thus emptying that word of specificity. When everything meaningful is queer, we could ask, how can the term convey anything?

The third part of *The Global Renaissance*, 'Networks of Exchange: Traveling Objects,' extends the field's recent interest in material culture with its focus on things. Matthew Dimmock's 'Guns and Gawds: Elizabethan England's Infidel Trade' draws on contrasting references in the Dutch Church Libel of 1593, which mentions foreign merchants who bring in 'gawds' and take out 'Our Leade' and 'our Ordenance' (207-208; quotation at 208). Dimmock surveys the longstanding animus against the triviality of luxury goods (whose importation was even more longstanding) and examines it alongside England's growing reputation as an 'infidel' trader—a nation only too

willing to trade its metals and weapons with anyone willing to buy them. The English 'were fast becoming the arms dealers of the early modern world' (217). A particular irony arose when English merchants sold metal that had been stripped from Catholic buildings and statuary following the Reformation: made an 'infidel' nation by Rome, England colluded with the more traditional infidels against Catholic domination of the West. One of the rare missteps in Dimmock's otherwise excellent essay is his eagerness—like Ryu in the 'Japan' essay—to adduce 'Englishness' where it's not explicit. The Dutch Church Libel mentions (ancient) Egypt, France, Belgium, Spain, and the Low Countries ('the country nation'), and alludes to the 'paris massacre,' but never mentions England by name. Instead, it alludes to the author's country only by implication: 'this land,' 'their Countries brest.' Clearly we don't need the words 'England' or 'English' to understand reference to a national identity. At the same time, however, it means something that these words do not appear in the Libel.

Mathematics lies at the heart of Patricia Parker's 'Cassio, Cash, and the 'Infidel 0': Arithmetic, Double-entry Bookkeeping, and *Othello's* Unfaithful Accounts.' Parker gives us a fascinating introduction to the Arabic basis of early modern mathematics as a prelude to teasing out the implications of Iago's infamous description of Michael Cassio as a 'great arithmetician,' a 'Florentine' and 'counter-caster' (*Othello*, 1.1.19, 20, 31). *Othello*, in her reading, is deeply concerned with—even, at times, obsessed by—the new culture of mathematics and representation that came with England's commercial and intellectual expansion during the Renaissance. The figure of '0' (here 'zero,' but also, of course, a capital 'O') proves instrumental to the nothing that Iago—an "accountant" who, in Parker's description, 'manipulates the credit market of the play, until it is too late' (238)—makes into something. Perfused with mathematics and other varieties of commercial language, *Othello*, Parker shows us, functions as something like a Shakespearean city comedy with a tremendously uncomic ending. A final note here. Parker's essay is unusually packed with quotations and citations; a footnote helps account for this, perhaps, in explaining that it draws on material from a book-in-progress. From the rich insights this piece offers on *Othello*, we are in store for a worthy follow-up to *Shakespeare from the Margins*. At the very least, the information she provides as context to *Othello* will be essential reading for anyone interested in the play.

Where Daniel Vitkus's reading aligns Spenser's Cave of Mamon with the myth of El Dorado, in 'Seeds of Sacrifice: Amaranth, the Gardens of Tenochtitlan and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*' Edward Test uses Book Three's reference to 'Sad *Amaranthus*' to argue that, like European gardens newly blooming with New World plants, *The Faerie Queene* functioned as a site of 'transatlantic acculturation where peripheral knowledge and material from Mesoamerica invigorates local London with a new mythic register of the natural world from the Americas' (257). Test knows more

about the genus *Amarantus* than almost anyone you would be likely to meet, and he labors not only to make the Mexica people relevant to the literary and botanical spheres of early modern Europe, but to foreground that relevance as a kind of cultural superiority. Somberly informing us that he wants to ‘reverse the traditional Eurocentric template’ (242), he proceeds to downplay human sacrifice in Mesoamerica by pointing out that Europeans were capable of extreme cruelty as well. Test’s quotation, as proof, of Nashe’s *Unfortunate Traveller* (252) alongside Cortés’s non-fictional account of Mexican sacrifice is sufficiently bizarre without being told that, while European punishment ‘seeks to end a cycle of revenge,’ sacrifice in the New World ‘serves to prevent violence from erupting in the community’ (253). It is somewhat difficult to imagine that those about to be sacrificed felt especially pleased to be donating their still-beating hearts to urban planning this way, just as it is difficult to believe the author is right when he claims ‘I do not mean to romanticize the Mexica’ (252). The essay absolutely romanticizes the New World. If its argument about a Mesoamerican source for *The Faerie Queene* is too partisan to be accepted, however, it nonetheless sheds useful light on the importation of plants into Europe following the voyages of discovery.

We move next from flowers to coins. In “‘So Pale, So Lame, So Lean, So Ruinous’: The Circulation of Foreign Coins in Early Modern England,” Stephen Deng surveys the presence, status, and role of foreign coins in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His essay necessarily rehearses a substantial amount of monetary history, including Henry VIII’s disastrous debasement of English currency and Elizabeth’s noteworthy re-establishment of the same, although at times it relies too much on a few historians (including Carlo Cipolla and Nicholas Mayhew). Deng is good on the different groups of characters and their differentiated currency in *The Shoemakers’ Holiday*: he shows that the richer characters have and value distinctive foreign coins in contrast to the lower-rank characters, who have less remarkable English currency. Deng’s second claim—that ‘xenophobic attitudes toward foreign coins’ may reveal ‘a critique of [the] English state’ (273)—seems profoundly counterintuitive. It is not surprising that he provides no evidence for it.

The next essay, Barbara Sebek’s ‘Canary, Bristoles, Londres, Ingleses: English Traders in the Canaries in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,’ offers a solid introduction to England’s involvement with the Canary Isles. This well-constructed and informative piece tells its story mainly through the life and career of the businessman Marmaduke Rawdon (who shares with Praisegod Barebone one of the more memorable names of the century). The Canary Isles famously provided England and other countries with the songbird named after them, but even more importantly the sweet wine called ‘canary’ and ‘sack.’ Sebek’s essay follows Rawdon from England to the Canaries and back again, and the story of his life reads like a rough draft for a

Defoe novel. Oddly, Sebek's interest in detail rarely extends to English political or military history; she seems puzzled, for instance, when the story of Rawdon's life 'suddenly jumps ahead three years in three sentences, from 1640 to 1643, the only occasion in the entire narrative that time is thus compressed' (288). The unwillingness to invoke Edgehill or other events early in the first English Civil War perhaps appropriately tracks Rawdon's own seeming diffidence about political obligation. But surely there is a distinction between not caring deeply about an obligation and not recognizing it?

For some reason Adam Smyth starts "The Whole Globe of the Earth": *Almanacs and Their Readers* with the Elizabethan penchant for small things before turning to his real topic—almanacs, what was in them, and how they were used. He is interested in defining almanacs in relation to life writing. Though Smyth concedes that almanacs are not quite diaries, various marginalia and other marks of readerly use suggest, in his interpretation, that they were precursor to the kind of life writing that one encounters in diaries. In their chronological ordering of events and issues both large and small, they provided, in Smyth's account, the template for the day-by-day recording of existence that would be associated with diaries and personal journals. This is not exactly a 'global' essay, but perhaps such is a good point to make. The majority of English subjects were interested in the world immediately around them, as well as the afterlife, and even when almanacs featured information useful to travelers they seem to have been purchased in great numbers by those who stayed at home.

Were a comic novelist enjoined to imitate the modern academic's foray into historiography, it might wind up sounding like Ann Rosalind Jones's 'Cesare Vecellio, Venetian Writer and Art-book Cosmopolitan.' The parodic aspect comes not from the scholarship itself—for the research here is sound—but rather from the earnestness with which Jones enlists her facts in the service of an idealized vision. Jones likes Vecellio a great deal, and winks at his faults in order to praise his open-mindedness in having compiled information about and portraits of the costumes of sundry lands. Vecellio is praised for representing female merchants, though he just happens to share the 'Venetian belief that high-ranking women should lead their lives enclosed within their fathers' or husbands' walls' (310). Elsewhere Jones compliments him for treating 'veiling and polygamy in a non-judgmental way' (318). Jones finds herself unable to do the same when it comes to the rest of the West, however, for she offers up Vecellio's biography as a kind of ideal against which 'colonizing' impulses look tawdry and backward. In Jones's portrait, Vecellio is a delightful cosmopolitan happily engaged with the sunny culture of the Ottoman Turks' Mediterranean (there is no mention whether he reads *The New Yorker*). To those who labored with their bodies, he must have seemed to enjoy a life of rare privilege. In this, he looks suspiciously like a modern-day academic traveler blissfully above the details of power, judgment, or

violence. That such may not be the reality of Vecellio's world or our own seems lost on Jones. Perhaps this is her point, but to ignore the harsh realities that enable and protect privilege seems willful rather than smart.

In 'Bettrice's Monkey: Staging Exotica in Early Modern London Comedy,' Jean E. Howard follows up on points made in this writer's own *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* some years ago. This is particularly apparent in her exploration of the early modern playhouses' strategies of linking the near and the far, and the collocation of social relations via stage properties. 'Bettrice's Monkey' comes from a stage direction in Jonson, Marston, and Chapman's *Eastward Ho*, wherein we are told that Bettrice enters, 'leading a monkey after her' (quoted at 325). By the end of the essay the monkey is still a monkey but is no longer Bettrice's. Howard argues that the monkey is properly the living toy of Gertrude, and was responsible for high jinks on the Blackfriars stage. This may be true, but it comes as a supposition in an essay that does not live up to Howard's best work. Its page-long 'Coda' (a riff on Massinger's *The City Madam*) is so inexplicable, in fact, that it almost seems to have been written to take up space.

Earlier essays have explored Japan, Iceland, Russia, and the Canary Isles, among other places, and Virginia Mason Vaughan takes us to Malta in 'The Maltese Factor: The Poetics of Place in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Knight of Malta*.' She faithfully narrates the history of the 1565 siege, and explores its literary representation in both Marlowe's play and *The Knight of Malta* by Field, Fletcher, and Massinger. 'Neither fully European nor African,' we are informed, 'to early modern English readers Malta was an international amalgam of sailors, pirates, merchants, and slaves' (341). Vaughan repeats a move we have seen in other essays when she remains oddly neutral about something that must have had pressing implications for the individual involved. For instance, when she tells us that Jean de la Valette, the Maltese commander, 'had extensive experience with military operations against Turkish forces,' she mentions that this included 'service as a galley slave on a Turkish ship' (343). Considered even dispassionately, this sounds like a horrific ordeal for Valette, though in Vaughan's account it comes off like a line on a job applicant's resumé. Vaughan's main point is how different Marlowe's representation was from the historical record. She implies that Marlowe did this in order to stage, through Barabas, Elizabeth's *realpolitik*, though this is never really demonstrated.

The collection comes to a close with a sermon of sorts. In contrast to Jones's essay, David Morrow's 'Local/Global *Pericles*: International Storytelling, Domestic Social Relations, Capitalism' likes its moral judgments strong and neat. Morrow participates in the contemporary rejuvenation of Marx by reading *Pericles* as a socially conscious romance. He extends Walter Cohen's excellent essay 'The Undiscovered Country: Shakespeare and Mercantile Geography' (from 2001's *Marxist Shakespeares*)

by taking seriously the play's interest in place, commerce, and commodification, and by grounding such interest in the genre of romance. Because seeing *Pericles* as a progressive document is difficult with George Wilkins in the picture, Morrow leaves him out. This is a shame, for doing so not only erases an important laborer from the conjunction of hands that produced *Pericles*, but misses an opportunity to consider how Wilkins's predatory life, no less than Shakespeare's own, may have shaped in a compensatory way what went into this strange and wonderful drama. Readers interested in Wilkins, Shakespeare, and *Pericles* will benefit from consulting Suzanne Gossett's Arden 3 edition (2004) as well as Charles Nicholl's *The Lodger Shakespeare: His Life on Silver Street* (2008).

To return to the three desiderata laid out at the beginning of this review: how well does this book live up to the desire for substantial use of foreign archives and languages; an answer to the literary conundrum; and analysis that transcends cliché? Although some of the essays here give us one or more of these things, on the whole the collection's value comes not through any cohesiveness of direction but rather through its conglomeration of testimony to England's collective restlessness during this era. As we have seen, this sometimes involves insights dropped casually in the midst of an argument that does not devote itself entirely, or even very carefully, to their value. Although many of the essays could have profited from acquaintance with foreign archives and materials in other languages, the collection is generally focused on English-language sources.

Taken as a whole, then, what does *The Global Renaissance* suggest about the field of inquiry it represents? Some concluding observations:

1. We are most interested in stories about people.

Absent from *The Global Renaissance* is any map of the world. (The only map, Ortelius's map of Iceland, seems included mainly as decoration.) This is inconvenient, as readers searching for Tenochtitlan or the Canary Isles or Hirado or Malta need to look elsewhere to confirm their locations. The anthology's illustrations typically represent individuals: Jahangir, Will Adams, a Turkish woman. This inconvenience is worth pointing out mainly because it confirms a truth suggested by the essays themselves: despite a declared interest in systems, history, culture, geography, or beliefs, what the writers return to again and again is *biography*—the story of people living their lives with friends, family, and strangers, on ships and land, at home and abroad.

2. Making moral judgments about these people is uncomfortable unless they are English.

The master narrative of the new globalism is largely melodramatic, relying as it does upon single-minded, predatory explorers and preternaturally cultured indigenous

peoples. When the sub-narratives are told, though, we invariably sense that things are more complicated than this template suggests. England itself was a crossroad for invading powers, and its culture—if such a thing exists in the singular—was the product of too many influences to count. Despite such truths, we find it hard to resist idealizing those whom the English and Western Europeans came in contact with. ‘Global’ criticism would be more compelling if it started with an admission that no nation or people is uniquely corrupt (or, alternately, that all of them are).

3. We have largely forgotten what poststructuralism has taught us (though we often reinvent it at the drop of a hat).

Over and over the critics here rediscover the legacy of deconstruction, though not through any direct engagement with poststructuralist theory itself. Derrida is never mentioned, for instance, nor Barthes. Instead, the writers notice with some satisfaction that constructed binaries tend to collapse when any pressure is put on them, that categories have extremely porous boundaries, and that words are invariably slippery. Such is usually implied to be a function and symbol of Western arrogance rather than a property of language itself (every language, in fact). Overall, as with point #2 above, there is too little critical self-consciousness about desire itself: what we want from the past, as well as from our research; what is likely to remain outside of our grasp. Perhaps with its irony poststructuralism is too threatening to the sobriety of this critical genre.

4. The distance between our teaching and research has never been greater.

The insouciance such criticism is prone to when it comes to desire is matched only by its blindness to another truth: the gulf between our research and teaching has never been wider. This essay started with the desire for attention to the ‘literature question’—that is, discussion of whether, and how, discourse about the global renaissance relates to the poems, plays, and prose works taught in literature departments. It is not clear that scholarship has to serve teaching this way, but if it does not we are left asking ‘Why should this be investigated and written up by a professor of English?’ Like the early modern explorers themselves, we are sailing further and further away from what we know. The advantage is obvious: we put ourselves in a position to gain new knowledge. The disadvantage is less obvious, but real: we take ourselves ever further from what our students, their parents, our colleagues in other departments, and even the general public believe we are teaching.

5. The market for critical discourse regarding the global early modern era has reached its peak.

Reading the bibliography to this volume alongside its contributors’ list of past and forthcoming publications suggests that the decade following 2001 will be remembered

for its explosion of interest in 'global' discourse. The majority of contributors to *The Global Renaissance* have books on Palgrave Macmillan or Ashgate presses. Now, Palgrave and Ashgate clearly know their business, but their many recent and forthcoming publications in this area suggest that a saturation point has been reached. It is hard to imagine that scholarship in this area can continue to grow, particularly at the pace we have witnessed. When research becomes, as it must, ever more specialized, it is difficult to imagine that hiring committees will be able to make arguments for candidates whose strengths lie further and further afield from language and from the material practice of story and song. Even in a climate that has seen interdisciplinarity become the norm, how can English departments justify their existence when remaking themselves as departments of cultural history? This is a real as well as a rhetorical question, and the answers to it will help to determine how, and in what form, global criticism will develop.

A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion presents us with a mixed bag. A few of the essays are quite good, but many could have benefited from more editorial oversight. As a collection, it teaches us that, when translated into an interest in coins, spices, flowers, wine, or animals, new historicism's focus on small things looks the same whether the Thames or the Ganges is in play. It also reminds us that criticism no less than culture itself is an imitative practice, and that all trends ultimately give way to other trends. This *Companion* thus comes to us, as most in its genre do, as a sign that the field will soon be sailing in a different direction.

University of Texas