



PROJECT MUSE®

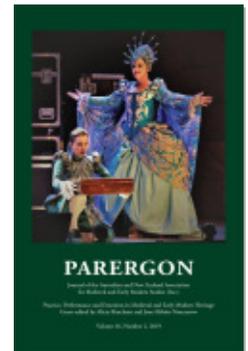
Addiction and Devotion in Early Modern England by Rebecca
Lemon (review)

Patrick Ball

Parergon, Volume 36, Number 2, 2019, pp. 224-226 (Review)

Published by Australian and New Zealand Association of Medieval and Early
Modern Studies (Inc.)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.2019.0085>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/742763>

proceedings were reversed and the dead heretic was rehabilitated (pp. 112–13). Perne was consistently faithful to the prevailing current of religion. William Cecil managed to survive the vicissitudes of Reformation and served almost four decades as Chancellor. Purity of doctrine and fidelity to tradition were among the factors prompting a 1582 report to conclude: ‘the whole bodye of the Universitie is oute of frame’ (p. 22). Cambridge, like any institution, was made up of many people and those people disagreed. The academic context should not, Law warns, be underestimated as a context for resistance (p. 140). During the Elizabethan era, it was treason to proselytize others into Roman obedience (p. 151), whilst Catholics organized book burnings in an effort to root out heresy (pp. 78–79). Treason and bonfires were serious. Other protests were more benign. In 1565, believing the vice-chancellor was too ‘popish’, university students seized his horse and mockingly shaved the horse’s head, causing the mane to resemble a tonsure (p. 169).

Law’s fundamental arguments and conclusions cannot easily be gainsaid. She is right to argue that Cambridge did eventually become a Protestant university. Ultimately its teachings and practices were reformed. The early infusion of Lutheran ideas, the later accommodation of Presbyterian commitments, led to an even later acknowledgement that religious diversity could not be eliminated and indeed it was perhaps undesirable to even attempt it. Barnes, Latimer, Cranmer, and a number of their colleagues were among the most significant figures in the English Reformation and each had some roots in Cambridge soil. The study of Reformation at the University of Cambridge is an exploration of social, political, and religious considerations, and a close reading of those factors reveals that the results of Reformation were ‘both decisive and divisive’ (p. 38).

Perhaps the state of Reformation in the University of Cambridge can be put down to a deliberate policy on the part of authorities who refused to ‘open windows into the souls of university men’ too widely (p. 123), and this, coupled with strategic conformity, helps to explain the nuanced and conflicted history of religious change in this chapter of Reformation history.

THOMAS A. FUDGE, *University of New England*

Lemon, Rebecca, *Addiction and Devotion in Early Modern England* (Haney Foundation Series), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018; hardback; pp. xv, 280; 4 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$65.00, £50.00; ISBN 9780812249965.

This volume traces changing understandings of addiction, demonstrating the concept’s former associations with devotion, which the modern, clinical sense obscures. Lemon, a literature scholar, draws on multiple disciplines to argue her case, and her work should assist scholars in several fields.

Etymologically, the word derives from the Latin ‘to speak’; an ‘addict’, in Roman contract law, was one sentenced, bound over to someone or something. In sixteenth-century England, addiction developed connotations of devoting oneself

to something. Addiction to the right thing was estimable. It could, however, involve compulsive abandonment, addiction as possession, inclining towards the term's present-day, pathological sense.

Lemon considers the word's application to one mode of addiction (in the modern sense), namely to drink, showing how the sense heads toward modern understandings, but she examines too its more intangible forms: devotion to God, fellowship, love, and so forth. She expresses hope that her investigation of alcoholism will stimulate research into other pathological addictions. No doubt it will.

The volume opens with a survey of the literature of addiction. This is admirably thorough, as are the endnote references. They represent an invaluable resource for anyone entering the field, although their comprehensiveness renders them a little daunting.

Then follows a set of four chapters, each devoted to an early modern play that features the word 'addiction', and whose action centres on addiction. Lemon uses each play to situate in its historical context one particular sense of addiction, while interpreting the play in light of the concept, advancing a reading not previously apparent. Her arguments are sophisticated and nuanced (though hard to reproduce in summary).

Chapter 1, for instance, contends that Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* dramatizes the consequence of failure to commit, whether to God, the Devil, or any particular line of study. Calvinist theology represented addiction to God as heroic; Faust demands a contract from Mephistophilis because his willpower is insufficient to bind him by addiction alone. Failure to addict himself is what damns him.

Lemon proceeds to explore other aspects of addiction in Shakespeare's plays: to love and melancholy in *Twelfth Night* (examining its transformative power); addiction to fellowship in the *Henry IV* plays, where Falstaff turns to drink to overcome increasing rejection by Hal; perhaps most interestingly, in *Othello*, where Cassio's addiction to alcohol and Othello's to love are used to question an addict's responsibility for actions taken while intoxicated. Occasionally, Lemon possibly carries her argument too far; what she has to say is nevertheless always interesting.

A final section addresses shifting attitudes to health drinking, a practice imported from the Low Countries by soldiers returning from the Dutch Wars, between the 1580s and 1660s. Lemon seems apologetic for this chapter's different approach, but this is one historians may find especially interesting. Participation was, effectively, compulsory, producing drunkenness (and heading towards modern alcoholism). Voluntary or otherwise, health drinking entailed submergence of the individual within the general will. Lemon shows how secular writers, such as Jonson and Shakespeare, satirized pledging in the 1580s and 1590s; reformist pamphleteers later condemned it, increasingly stridently. In the 1630s, Cavalier poets embraced it as laudable: it created sentiments of unity and liberation among captive or disheartened loyalists.

This is highly interesting, though Lemon may not appreciate pledging's full implications. She presents it as something disapproved of initially by both secular and godly writers. However, the situation was possibly more complicated. The Dutch Revolt pitted Protestant patriots, aided by England, against Catholic Spain, so soldiers' health drinking potentially had jingoistic, sectarian overtones. If these continued after pledging established in England, how might Catholics have responded? Jonson was certainly Catholic, Shakespeare possibly so: their wariness conceivably had a sectarian aspect. If so, did England's increasingly Protestant culture release puritans to condemn the practice on moral grounds, while its dissipating religious significance enabled royalists to appropriate it for use in a new political contest? This merits further investigation. Such a qualification, though, does not invalidate Lemon's argument: it builds upon it, testament to its power to engage the reader.

Overall, the work succeeds in unfolding changing understandings of addiction, drawing attention to its forgotten links to devotion. Lemon amply demonstrates that addiction involved abandonment to something beyond oneself: God; the beloved; a community or cause; a substance. Such addictions might be estimable, but could have deleterious consequences, depending on the source of addiction. Addiction also interfered with legal notions of selfhood and responsibility; there was uncertainty whether the addict controlled or was controlled by the addiction. In prompting scholars to pay closer attention to the word's implications, the work performs valuable service. Readers are unlikely to take the term or concept for granted in future.

PATRICK BALL, *University of Tasmania*

Lu, Mingjun, *The Chinese Impact upon English Renaissance Literature: A Globalization and Liberal Cosmopolitan Approach to Donne and Milton* (Transculturalisms, 1400–1700), Farnham, Ashgate, 2015; hardback; pp. 248; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781472461254.

This is an intellectual history of globalization; how ideas about China, as a material and cultural presence, were received and treated in seventeenth-century texts and literature. Mingjun Lu's argument is that key intellectual values of cosmopolitan Europe came about by interactions with other cultures, and that these negotiations and the values that they produce can be seen in its literature. Donne and Milton, among others, are sites for such negotiations, drawing upon ideas about China that filtered through what were perceived to be Chinese goods and through reports of Jesuits, both of which updated older ideas about Cathay already operating in European culture.

Before the eighteenth century and its interests in chinoiserie, Lu claims that China plays a role in Europe that has not been recognized by scholars thus far more interested in interactions with Moorish, Jewish, and American peoples in this period. Lu suggests that contemporaries were unsettled by the place of China, perceived as self-sufficient, not inferior nor enemy, in a European hierarchical