

information. The numerous maps, illustrations, and bibliography of primary and secondary sources only enhance the volume's value. One hopes that Moryson, Herbert, and Blount will find similar treatment.

Miles Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007. xiii + 318 pp. + 22 illus. \$40.00. Review by TILLMAN W. NECHTMAN, SKIDMORE COLLEGE.

The India Office Records, now housed at the British Library in London, occupy more than nine linear miles of shelf space. From this trove of archival material, scholars have produced countless lectures, essays, articles, and monograph-length studies of the English East India Company (EIC) and the English/British empire in South Asia. Miles Ogborn's impressive new book, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company*, approaches this same archive from an important new direction. Rather than reading the words on archival documents to discern what they can tell us, Ogborn looks at texts produced by and about the EIC as material objects in their own right.

Indian Ink is, then, a history of writing, but it is simultaneously situated against historiographic work on the English/British empire in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century South Asia. Moreover, *Indian Ink* is a history of information and knowledge that insists on the interactivity between the technologies that produced texts, prints, scripts, and books as well and the geographic history, the movement, of these textual objects from the local context in which they were produced through the global landscape of trade, commerce, and empire. As he maneuvers adeptly in, through, and across these diverse historiographic trends, Ogborn convincingly demonstrates that Britain's archive from imperial India is itself a material manifestation of the technologies that simultaneously produced and recorded the imperial encounter. As Ogborn notes, "writing was not simply a commentary upon what happened, it was very much part of the action." (26)

Indian Ink consists of six chapters, a preface, and a prologue, and the narrative of the chapters moves, more or less, in chronological order. In the first chapter, *Indian Ink* is at its most theoretical. Here, Ogborn argues for the

substantive merits of linking the history of empire, the history of the book, and new trends in history that offer geographic interpretations. Stated differently, Ogborn argues that power and knowledge hinge simultaneously on both the forms in which they are communicated and the modes by which the communications are disseminated. "Following the written word through these spaces and journeys," Ogborn suggests, helps us "map out a geography that traces how trade and empire were done in place and in the relationships between places" (21).

Ogborn's second chapter, cleverly titled "Writing Travels," is a focused study of the movement of royal letters back and forth between London and Asia and the concomitant networks of meaning and power that these physical objects forged. Here, Ogborn turns away from the much-studied genre of "travel writing" to present a valuable study of "how writing travels" (32). By studying the forms and styles that letters from monarch to monarch or Company to prince took across the early years of the seventeenth century, Ogborn is able to highlight the value of these texts not only because of the ink they carried but also because they were the tools of a collaborative diplomatic process. These texts, in short, quite literally produced the space in which global trade and commerce could function between East and West.

If letters helped shape commercial space, written words proved equally valuable as the EIC worked to control the global network of employees and agents who operated in its name. The third chapter of *Indian Ink* offers a new and much-needed investigation of the precise form, schedule, and structure of communications between the London-based leadership of the EIC and its employees in the East. Here, as elsewhere, Ogborn takes pains to note, though, that writing was not, as we might too easily assume, a simple tool for imperial power. Rather, the textual relationship between London and places like Fort St. George was often fraught, contested, most remarkably thin. In any given year, an average of only a handful of letters passed between the EIC's directors in London and the Company's agents in the East, which meant that a few folio pages of paper both structured and sustained the EIC's global trading system. Company directors were, Ogborn shows, only too aware of the structural and instructional work their letters had to do, often dedicating space in their annual letters from London to coach overseas agents on how to read and respond to letters from London.

Though the Company's leadership was aware that writing functioned as

the means by which to regulate collective corporate authority across vast distances, Ogborn argues that the EIC's directors were less than eager to involve themselves in England's prolific, mid-seventeenth-century print wars. As domestic turmoil from the 1640s to the 1660s produced an explosion in English print culture, the printed word became a potentially dangerous political tool, one that the Company would have preferred to avoid. However, that same proliferation of print cultivated a space from which the Company's critics could attack its policies and practices. The fifth chapter of *Indian Ink*, then, argues that the EIC was drawn into the politics of print in seventeenth-century England precisely because it "depended upon privileges that could be removed by political authorities for whom print had become the medium of politics." (155) The Company made use of political print culture to counter objections from those who would have seen the Company reconfigured, if not completely undone, and who expressed their own arguments in print. As Ogborn notes, "the power of the press meant that print had to be countered with print." (155)

Likewise, in chapter five, Ogborn demonstrates that printed lists of Company stock prices were also constitutive print contributions to the public debates around the EIC in this period, particularly as the relationship between Company stock and the national debt grew more and more tangled in the last decades of the seventeenth century. On the one hand, printed lists of stock prices were one of the most transparent ways in which the Company could present itself to the public. On the other hand though, public suspicions of the Company coupled with rumors that stock prices were artificially manipulated and inflated complicated the meaning of stock lists. Though such lists quite literally constituted the public value of the Company, they also engaged the Company further in the contentious world of late-seventeenth-century print politics. For better or worse, the public saw the EIC through the lens of the printed word.

In its last substantive chapter, *Indian Ink* turns its attention to print culture in India. Here, Ogborn admits that the only printed documents in seventeenth-century India were the texts sent from London by the Company's directors. Prior to the late-eighteenth century, writing in India referred to manuscripts rather than printed texts. To get to the history of print in India, then, Ogborn is forced to make a rather large chronological leap from the late-seventeenth century to the late-eighteenth, but the jump is well worth

making. By taking the opportunity to explore how print culture was introduced and used in late-eighteenth-century India, Ogborn offers us a history that overcomes the temptation to read print culture in British India as intrinsically either neutral or imperial. Rather, Ogborn introduces us to contentious conversations among EIC agents about how best to translate Indian manuscript literature to print and how best to understand that literature within the context of the Company's expanding Indian empire. At the same time, Ogborn also offers a magnificent discussion of the work of men like Nathaniel Halhed and Charles Wilkins, whose efforts transformed Bengali as they "translated" it from a manuscript to a print language. The printed word, in this instance, became the literal geographic space at which imperial power was contested and contextualized.

As Ogborn argues in this book's prologue, "*Indian Ink* argues for an engagement between the histories of overseas trade and empire and the history of the book in order to understand a changing world." (275) *Indian Ink* insists that we take a new look, in a new way, at the writing produced by the EIC's engagement with the East. It insists that we see the writing less as a product of that engagement and more as an active part of the process of engagement. Writing is not the result of history, Ogborn argues. Rather, it is a "vital part of the practices that are actively involved in shaping how the world works" (274). Seen in this light, those nine miles of records at the British Library are incorrectly seen as mere records of history. They are the history itself.

Jack Cunningham. *James Ussher and John Bramhall: The Theology and Politics of Two Irish Ecclesiastics of the Seventeenth Century*. Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2006. xx + 233 pp. \$99.95. Review by JOSEPH M. MCCARTHY, SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY, BOSTON, MA.

John Bramhall, responding to James Ussher's biographer, Nicholas Bernard, who suggested that Bramhall's theological viewpoint was antithetical to Ussher's, denied any meaningful breach between them. Their differences, Bramhall contended, were merely peripheral, their foundations common. He adduced the analogy of the *menorah*, whose branches were oriented the each other by being joined at the base. The inadequacy of traditional catego-