

Anthony Parr. *Renaissance Mad Voyages: Experiments in Early Modern Travel*. Cultures of Play, 1300–1700. Ashgate: Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT, 2015. xii + 237 pp. + 13 illus. \$104.95. Review by M. G. AUNE, CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

In 1995 Anthony Parr, now professor emeritus of English at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, published *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* that helped facilitate the renewed scholarly interest in early modern travel. His latest book, *Renaissance Mad Voyages*, is a kind of career capstone, drawing together many of his ideas and those inspired by his work.

Examples of what Parr calls “mad voyages” can be found throughout English history, but they reached an acme in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this sense, voyage is broadly defined, including pilgrimages, mercantile travel, exploration, diplomatic missions and military expeditions. By the seventeenth century, it would include educational travel as well as a literary category. Parr stretches the term further to include “personal enterprise” and “entrepreneurial activity” or stunts such as those performed by eccentric Englishmen such as John Taylor’s using oars of stock fish to row a boat made of paper from London to Queenborough, Thomas Coryate’s walk to Venice and back, or Will Kemp’s dancing from London to Norwich (7). Parr writes about these men and many others, notable and obscure. But this is not simply a book of eccentrics, because as Parr points out, simply recounting the travels and the travelers does not tell us much that is new.

Instead, he works to contextualize the voyages and the writing about them in terms of English attitudes, stretching back to the Middle Ages, for and against travel, questions of social class and mobility, economics, entrepreneurship, and individuality. The first chapter introduces these ideas, provides initial examples, and argues that mad voyagers are a particularly English form of eccentric. The chapter concludes with an examination of the ship of fools motif as means of understanding how the early modern English saw travel as a form of folly, but also how it is a phenomenon whose “folly and madness were strategic, a means of experiment and enquiry, and an expression of personal will” (28).

Chapter two begins with an account of the travel satire contained within the Christmas revels at Gray's Inn in 1594–1595. In it, Parr finds class-based critiques of pilgrimages, mercantile travel, and most notably travel wagers. The rest of the chapter examines specific examples including Sir Robert Carey's walk to Scotland, Richard Ferris's sailing around the south coast, John Lepton's ride between London and York, and Ben Jonson and Taylor's apparently competitive walks to Scotland. Rather than stunts, Parr sees these experiments as a working out of conflicts over humanism and travel, which would eventually lead to the practice of the Grand Tour.

Case studies of Kemp's dance and William Bush's ingenious ship, whose cannon fired automatically and which he sailed on water, land, and through the air from Lambourn to London in 1607, constitute chapter three. Parr chose them to illustrate the variety of activities he considers mad voyages. Kemp's is much better known but Bush's was a remarkable feat not only of physical endurance but a marvel of engineering. Using Anthony Nixon's pamphlet describing the voyage and variety of other evidence, Parr argues that Bush's journey was more than a stunt. It was sponsored by West Berkshire gentry and designed to raise interest in and money for an expedition to Guiana. In contrast, Kemp's journey is characterized as a travel stunt that has become, thanks in large part to his pamphlet describing it, "an important piece of the myth of English individualism" (95). Parr finds that while the dance journey contributes to the cultural tension over games and sports, it was not quite as novel as is typically thought and regards it largely as an act of self-promotion.

The book's strongest section concerns travel wagers and covers chapters four and five. Parr rightly acknowledges that travel wagers have largely been ignored in scholarship of travel writing. Wagers were not only a way for the travel to raise money but also served as a form of insurance. They were also a contentious practice, frequently not honored by the bettors and seen by some crass or as evidence of travel's questionable morality. As a means of finance and insurance, wagers enabled many forms of travel, from pilgrimage to mercantile voyages to diplomatic efforts. Parr goes deeply into the subject here explaining the laws and customs governing early modern lotteries and insurance and how they shaped attitudes towards betting and travel.

Nearly a third of chapter five is a careful study of Coryate's journeys as exemplars of travel wagers. Parr characterizes Coryate as a profiteer and showman, but at the same time an innovative writer about foreign lands with a "talent ... for adaptation and discovery" (173). He is the epitome of the early modern English individual.

In chapter six, Parr uses Ben Jonson's "On the Famous Voyage" to raise further questions about the function of mad voyages and travel wagers. He draws on a variety of Jonson's works, as well as Thomas Dekker's pamphlets to explore early modern attitudes towards social reform, the metropolitan space and, for Jonson, on the uses of satire. Along the way, Parr also provides a useful critical history of Jonson's poem, running from the 1980s to the present.

Renaissance Mad Voyages is the first entry in Ashgate's new series, Cultures of Play, 1300–1700, dedicated to "recount[ing] the history of early modern wit, humor and games" and "provid[ing] a forum for reconceptualizing the play elements of early modern ... life." Parr's book makes a very strong contribution to the former goal. The book is a rich trove of well-researched, valuable materials and information for students and scholars of early modern English culture. It is light, however on the second goal, largely steering clear of theoretical interventions and using terms such as tourist, early modern, and Renaissance unproblematically. This however, may be part of the book's conceit, as Parr concludes it with a thoughtful afterword that calls for more interdisciplinary scholarship on mad voyages both literal and literary.

Alan Perreiah. *Renaissance Truths: Humanism, Scholasticism and the Search for the Perfect Language*. Ashgate: Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT, 2014. li + 168 pp. \$109.95. Review by KARIN SUSAN FESTER, INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR.

The distinguished scholar of medieval logic, Alan Perreiah, takes the reader on a captivating and enlightening journey. *Renaissance Truths* is certainly a book about logic, but more so, Perreiah wants to fill a significant gap: to acknowledge those late medieval and early Renaissance scholars who also "sought to recover or invent a language that was pure and truthful in the way of Adam's original tongue" (16). The