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### Review of *REED in Review: Essays in Celebration of the First Twenty-Five Years*, edited by Audrey Douglas and Sally-Beth MacLean

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*Master F.J.* provide further insight into why Elizabethan prose fiction looks to Heliodoran romance as an alternative to the Italian decadence epitomized by the novella. Lyly, for instance, shows how Naples corrupts Euphues, which Mentz reads as a figurative locale for the problems of the novella form itself. The fiction of Thomas Lodge, by contrast, enacts a “transformation from sinner to saint” that looks backward to romance’s medieval, Catholic, and continental roots (162). By assaulting the Protestant, Heliodoran models of Greene and Sidney, Lodge also escapes from his own professional mentor, Greene. Thomas Nashe, the last Elizabethan writer Mentz considers, represents a skeptical modification of the Heliodoran-flavored romance tradition. Nashe, Mentz argues, creates characters whose “strategic dishonesty” helps them to “endure the world’s inconstancy” (184, 201). Nashe anticipates Cervantes in his self-conscious use of the romance form as he too borrows from its formal structure while mocking its follies. Mentz concludes by returning to the literary afterlife of Greene. Greene’s dubious moral example, his penury, his undermining of cultural mores, and his realization that readers create meaning contribute to making him the exemplar for emerging authors in print. His lingering influence announces the central position that prose fiction would take in English literary culture.

*Romance for Sale* extends the conversation begun by scholars such as Richard Helgerson and Laurie Newcomb whose reading of Elizabethan prose fiction’s influence on habits of reading and writing challenges traditional theses regarding the rise of the modern novel. Through his examination of a Heliodoran vogue that modeled new opportunities for commercialization while diffusing criticism, Mentz’s study provides compelling new contexts for prose romance and for authorial careers. His study of how authors strove to situate themselves in their peritexts provides fresh insight into how popular romance sold itself. Yet, in a book titled “romance for sale” that emphasizes romance’s marketplace cache and the concomitant rise of print authorship, it is odd to find little mention of the material conditions surrounding the sale of romances. An examination of who was publishing these texts, their sale price, or how native prose romances competed with older translated medieval romance as well as continental imports (such as the Palmerin cycles) would deepen an understanding of the cultural forces at work in the production and consumption of romance beyond individual authorial interventions. The scope of Mentz’s study is ambitious—covering romance as commodity, the emergence of professional authorship, the habits of an anonymous middlebrow readership, religiously motivated generic change, the influence of a Heliodoran moment, as well as the professional jostling for recognition among late Elizabethan writers. But like the tangled plot lines he follows, Mentz’s own narrative threads do not always lead to a focused conclusion. It is not evident, for example, how Protestant critiques map onto romance’s market value or which more substantially initiates generic change. Mentz’s lively conjunction of market and morality as factors shaping Elizabethan writers of prose fiction, however, offers original perspective into the struggles of Thomas Underdowne and numerous Elizabethan writers and translators who anxiously sought models for their uncertain fictions.

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AUDREY DOUGLAS and SALLY-BETH MACLEAN, eds. *REED in Review: Essays in Celebration of the First Twenty-Five Years*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006. Pp. 271. \$70.00 (cloth).

The mission of the *Records of Early English Drama* (REED) is enormous: to locate, transcribe, and edit all documentary evidence dealing with drama, pageantry, and public ceremony in England before 1642. REED does so through a range of publications, including

Web sites, a semiannual newsletter, and, most importantly, a series of twenty-four volumes that collect these documents along with critical introductions and editorial apparatus. These publications stress both that drama can fruitfully be understood as a local phenomenon and that drama can—indeed, must—be considered according to its conditions of performance. Performance history asserts peculiar evidentiary demands, and REED has been instrumental both in foregrounding performance as an interpretive framework for early English drama as well as in stretching the boundaries around the object of study to include, for example, secular music, minstrelsy, and local court records.

Though REED claims to establish “the broad context from which the great drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries grew” (<http://www.reed.utoronto.ca/index.html#what>) one of the most important things REED has done is bring medieval drama to the forefront of literary and performance studies, understanding it in its own right rather than as a wan precursor to Elizabethan playwrights. Its collections of court documents, household accounts, and pageantry ephemera have done much to advance the study of non-Shakespearean drama before 1642. Such broad-based archival and editorial work, however, necessarily produces gaps and aporias. This volume seeks not to redress those gaps but to expose and explain them, thus beginning to respond to Theresa Coletti’s famous appeal that REED acknowledge its own historicity (“Reading REED: History and the Records of Early English Drama,” in *Literary Practice and Social Change, 1380–1530*, ed. Lee Patterson [Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1990], 248–84).

In the first section, this volume outlines the beginnings of REED as an international collaborative effort. Alexandra F. Johnston depicts REED’s beginnings as a series of colloquia and informal meetings, at which central questions regarding actual performance conditions emerged. She also includes a list of the founding players with short descriptions of their participation in REED. Sally-Beth Maclean tracks the variety of tasks required to bring this editorial project to fruition: for example, collecting manuscript data from Chester and York required reconstructing pre-1642 county divisions using early maps of England, which in turn required exploring spatial and conceptual boundaries among boroughs, parishes, and households. Abigail Ann Young emphasizes REED’s polyvocality and the particular editorial demands that working across Latin, English, and Anglo-Norman creates. She points to the usability of REED volumes both for those whose Latin is weak and for those with more linguistic training; this usability is a result of REED’s careful editorial policies, which Young enumerates.

The second section, “REED’s ‘Performance’: Impact and Response,” details how REED archives have facilitated certain trends in scholarly research. For example, John Marshall argues that REED’s collection of financial records from William More of Worcestershire demonstrates the existence of Robin Hood games in the county; more broadly, Marshall shows that financial documents such as these help us read the history of Robin Hood mythology as fundamentally rooted in shifting ideals of charity and modes of parish fundraising. Paul Werstine credits REED with refusing “to accord Shakespeare the preeminence he otherwise enjoys in English drama” (101). REED’s entrance into Shakespeare studies has allowed scholars to examine the itineraries of traveling companies as well as to revise theories about Shakespeare’s “bad quartos.” REED has also influenced work in non-Shakespearean Elizabethan theater history, as Roslyn L. Knutson demonstrates. Her investigation of the move in Elizabethan drama studies to focus on patrons, tour routes, and other features of company life tracks this move to REED. Her discussion notably balances her sense that REED has provided crucial historical data but has also created some resentment among some over a turn toward archival research at the expense of other kinds of analysis.

The final section turns toward REED’s future, concentrating particularly on the technological developments that will both facilitate archival research and change research practices. Some of these changes have already begun: for example, an ancillary project, *Records of Early Drama*, expands the geographic boundaries to include Scotland. As Eila Williamson and John J. McGavin show, these documents suggest that Scottish drama was more indebted

to Continental influences than insular ones. Other changes are just on the horizon. Gervase Rosser persuasively argues that the inclusion of guild documents in the REED archive could illuminate the relationship between drama and everyday realities of labor and production. In another vein, Tanya Hagen imagines the possibility of a “repertory edition” of Elizabethan texts, akin to the multiple editions of Shakespeare’s plays. This edition would be a hypertext archive and include a facsimile, an “old-spelling” rendering, and a modernized version. James Cummings explains the costs and benefits of such digitalization of archives and editions, emphasizing the need for standardized, free, and legible storage methods. Indeed, this section is devoted to considering how to make REED archives accessible to a broader audience. To that end, the volume concludes with John Lehr’s select bibliography that provides “examples of scholarly work that has used or commented on REED texts” (237).

This third section begins to think about the blind spots in REED’s archival and editorial work, and it provides some interesting remedies. Yet there is too little of this kind of investigation. While some contributors, like Suzanne Westfall and Jenn Stephenson, theorize the effects of the unavoidably fragmentary nature of the records as well as, in Westfall’s words, the “impossibility of representing the past accurately from within the prisons of our own paradigms” (89), the volume as a whole turns away from such scrupulous self-analysis. It could potentially be useful as a meditation on the kind of archival work that underwrites medieval and early modern scholarship (literary, performative, or otherwise), but instead it shies away from digging into difficult questions of historical recovery, editorial interpretation, or archival analysis. The volume advertises itself as a celebration of REED’s first twenty-five years, and it certainly succeeds as such. But the volume and its readers could benefit from a bit less celebration and a bit more self-examination.

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PETER MARSHALL and ALEXANDRA WALSHAM, eds. *Angels in the Early Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 326. \$99.00 (cloth).

Angelology, broadly construed to incorporate the study of both good and evil spirits, played an important role in the intellectual and cultural life of early modern Europe. To date, however, historians have focused more on the dark side of the spiritual realm, perhaps because of the popularity of witchcraft studies over the past several decades. Beneficent angels, it would seem, are due for a reassessment, and Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham’s edited volume, *Angels in the Early Modern World*, is a step in this direction. A brief glance at the table of contents confirms the fertility of this research agenda; the essays compiled here treat an impressively wide range of issues: the occult sciences of the Renaissance, Reformation theology, mortuary culture, European colonialism, witchcraft, early modern theories of language and literature, gender, and popular culture. Since it is impossible in a short review to do justice to such a broad array of topics, I will instead focus on a pair of themes that seem to run through many of the chapters.

First, as would be expected in a volume dealing with the early modern period, the Reformation looms large. Angels, on the one hand, aroused Protestant suspicions because they functioned as mediators between man and God, and for some reformers their adoration was reminiscent of the cult of the saints. On the other hand, however, angels were undeniably scriptural and thus could not be merely dismissed as Catholic inventions. Given the ambiguous status of angels, analyzing attitudes toward them can provide hints about continuity and change in the Reformation era and contribute to a more nuanced account of confessional contrasts. In Philip Soergels’s essay, “Luther on the Angels,” for example, Luther’s reformed angelology treads a fine line between respecting a popular need for direct contact with the