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0521481619 - Voyages in Print: English Travel to America, 1576-1624

Mary C. Fuller

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The decades leading up to England's first permanent American colony saw not only territorial and commercial expansion but also the emergence of a vast and heterogeneous literature. In the multiple relations of writing to discovery over these decades, these texts played a role more powerful than that of simple recording. They needed to establish certain realities against a background of skepticism – the possibility of discovery, the lands discovered, the intentions and experiences of the discoverers – and they also had to find ways of theorizing their enterprise. Yet conceiving of the American enterprise positively or even survivably proved surprisingly difficult; the voyage narratives evolved almost from the outset as a genre concerned with recuperating failure – as noble, strategic, even as a form of success. Reception of these texts from the Victorian era on has often accepted their claims of heroism and mastery; through a careful re-reading, Mary Fuller argues for a more complicated, less glorious history.

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Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture

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The last twenty years have seen a broad and vital reinterpretation of the nature of literary texts, a move away from formalism to a sense of literature as an aspect of social, economic, political, and cultural history. While the earliest New Historicist work was criticized for a narrow and anecdotal view of history, it also served as an important stimulus for post-structuralist, feminist, Marxist, and psychoanalytic work, which in turn has increasingly informed and redirected it. Recent writing on the nature of representation, the historical construction of gender and of the concept of identity itself, on theatre as a political and economic phenomenon and on the ideologies of art generally, reveals the breadth of the field. *Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture* is designed to offer historically oriented studies of Renaissance literature and theatre which make use of the insights afforded by theoretical perspectives. The view of history envisioned is above all a view of our own history, a reading of the Renaissance for and from our own time.

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For Maynard Fuller

June 17, 1929 – November 4, 1993

After my skin has been thus destroyed, then from my flesh I shall see
God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not
another. (Job 19: 26–7)

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