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Brian C. Lockey

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LAW AND EMPIRE IN ENGLISH RENAISSANCE LITERATURE

Early modern literature played a key role in the formation of the legal justification for imperialism. As the English colonial enterprise developed, the existing legal tradition of common law no longer solved the moral dilemmas of the new world order, in which England had become, instead of a victim of Catholic enemies, an aggressive force with its own overseas territories. Writers of romance fiction employed narrative strategies in order to resolve this difficulty and, in the process, provided a legal basis for English imperialism. Brian C. Lockey analyzes works by such authors as Shakespeare, Spenser, and Sidney in the light of these legal discourses, and uncovers new contexts for the genre of romance. Scholars of early modern literature, as well as those interested in the history of law as the British Empire emerged, will learn much from this insightful and ambitious study.

BRIAN C. LOCKEY is Assistant Professor of English at St. Johns University, New York. He has published articles in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, *English Literary Renaissance*, and the *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*.

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