

*Taming Capitalism before Its Triumph: Public Service, Distrust, and "Projecting" in Early Modern England.* Koji Yamamoto.

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*Taming Capitalism* explores the relationship between seventeenth-century English society and its "projectors"—i.e., individuals who promoted techniques for improvement in a variety of fields, from natural resources management and crown finance to education, hospitals, and poor relief. It analyzes how public distrust of the projector shaped the self-identity of promoters, their marketing strategies, and their access to credit, while also having broader scientific and political repercussions. Yamamoto seeks to offer a "post-whiggish rethinking" (21) of P. Slack and J. Mokyr's "culture of improvement" narrative.

The chapters follow a chronological progression. While some focus on illustrative case studies (for example, the Stour River navigation scheme), others adopt a more general approach to the period under consideration. The main periods highlighted are monopolies and fiscal experiments under the early Stuarts (1630s–1640s), business partnerships under the later Stuarts (1660s–1670s), and joint-stock companies in "Defoe's Projecting Age" (1690s). The first chapter presents the quantitative sources used to chart the respective evolutions of projects and discourses on them. Yamamoto then delves into the detail of this evolution, drawing on a variety of political and literary sources from promoters (letters, proposals, petitions), their opponents (pamphlets, songs, theater plays), and the political power that either supported or blocked the projects (parliamentary speeches, minutes, and bills).

Overall, Yamamoto's project to find a middle way between grand syntheses and specialized case studies is a success. The book combines substantial archival research, attention to detail, and nuance with a capacity to highlight more general patterns in the evolution of projecting. It reconstructs the wide assortment of people and institutions involved in projecting, as well as the troubled and uncertain political environment in which this activity took place. Most fascinating in this respect is how the "pervasiveness of distrust" (22) enabled complaints from the "middling sorts," such as small landowners and craftsmen, to reshape the promoter's strategies, thereby contributing to the rise of modern sciences (with a greater emphasis on verification and experiment) and a more democratic approach to economic development (through parliamentary debate).

In other areas, the book's hypotheses sometimes appear less robust. This concerns, in particular, the limited contextualization of some of the material and the lack of definition of central concepts. In terms of contextualization, at a microlevel the author often assumes the readers' familiarity with characters and events, conveying the impression that the book is addressed to a specialized audience, when both the topic and approach could inspire an array of researchers across human and social sciences. At a more macrolevel, discourses against the projector often echo the old condemnation of usury, mobilizing the same concepts (contra-nature activities, play with time), images (greedy and

malicious predators), and rhetorical strategies (opposition between personal profit and common good). Connecting the two streams of criticism would have enabled the author to further develop the comparison made in the first chapter between the medieval merchant and the early modern projector, while tracing further back the origins of modern discourses on corporate social responsibility evoked in the last chapter.

The correlated notion of commonwealth that underlies the different phases of projecting would also have gained from being historically analyzed, as it seems to have relied on an evolving notion of the people (from a sacred whole to a collection of individual interests) that affected both the formatting and selling of projects. Finally, “systematic accounting” is briefly mentioned as having facilitated implementation of projects (160), but its potential role as part of the apparatus developed to monitor distrust is not explored. Relating project accounting to the history of accounting as a technology of justification may have been fruitful. The definition of core concepts also raises questions. The notion of projecting is one most historians encounter in their research, as it concerns the way in which people of the past imagined the future and conceived ways to influence it. Such a fascinating topic may have benefited from more than a merely etymological discussion revolving around the alchemical metaphor (3–5). As humans have been projecting since the beginning of time all over the world, emphasis could have been placed on the specificity of the seventeenth-century British phase in the global and long-term history of projecting.

What about the interdisciplinary landmine that is capitalism? The term mostly appears in the introduction and conclusion of the book, where it is not defined, while being strikingly absent from the core chapters. The rapid survey of a small section of the never-ending literature on the topic (272–76) contrasts with the book’s overall precision and depth of analysis. The capitalist process at play in seventeenth-century projecting seems to be the dynamic combination of entrepreneurship and its taming—or criticism translating into concrete social, political, and economic constraints. Yet this perspective is not developed. Capitalism does not seem to have been the author’s main center of interest. Perhaps this aborted debate points toward a significant issue in the historical field—namely, the difficulty of publishing historical work that does not claim to explain the present or draw lessons from the past for contemporary problems.

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*Gender, Family, and Politics: The Howard Women, 1485–1558.* Nicola Clark. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. xiv + 206 pp. \$78.

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The aristocratic house of Howard is among the oldest in the United Kingdom and it remains the leading Catholic family in England. The Duke of Norfolk is one of the