

Recent Studies in The English Renaissance

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CRITICAL and historical studies in the non-dramatic literature of the English Renaissance from mid-1959 to October, 1960, illustrated the development of revised approaches that has of late characterized the effort of academic humanism to make its contribution to the current reassessment of English-speaking values. A little (though not much) has been contributed to the post-war reevaluation of Renaissance humanism and to the discrimination of its responses to the complexities of its times; but—despite the related work of medievalists—a preoccupation with new departures in the sixteenth century still tends to cloud our sense of the continuities they depend on. This is the more remarkable since both Elizabethan and Stuart studies are currently at their liveliest in the reappraisal of the handling of continuous traditions (no longer regarded as merely medieval and ossified, if not yet recognized as native). The recent revival of enthusiasm for Italian Neoplatonism has induced discriminations of Platonisms and some insistence on the continuity of an Augustinian Christian-Platonism on which it impinges, representatively in Spenser and in general with reference to notions about both love and religion. Our current related interest in the influence of the devotional tradition extends this effort of discrimination into the seventeenth century where investigation of Donne's response to Neoplatonic love and commentary on a number of lesser poets inclines to offset our late preoccupation with eccentricities, continental or neurotic. One effect of these interests has been to modify our sense of the crucial significance of the new science and to induce a reassessment not only of all it called in doubt but of what it called into play for poetry in the renewal of traditional scientific imagery. Indeed, the most suggestive (if not as yet pellucid) aspect of our reappraisal of the Renaissance English temper and mind remains at the moment the explication in historical terms of the imagery the poets drew from traditional sources and manipulated with varying degrees and types of original talent. If this activity is chiefly concerned

for the time being with somewhat minor poets and poems, yet recent work on Milton (especially in the periodicals, though also in one massive scholarly contribution and one or two books) fittingly illustrates the effective confluence of our current interests.

I

It cannot be said that recent work in the early English literary renaissance as yet reflects the current revisionary activity of the historians. (See A. G. Dickens on Thomas Cromwell: New York, Macmillan, 1959, and the Lollards, London, New York, Toronto: Oxford, 1959; the third, Tudor volume of D. Knowles on the religious orders, Cambridge: University Press, Toronto: Macmillan, 1959; M. H. Curtis on humanistic education in the universities, Oxford: Clarendon, New York, Toronto: Oxford, 1959; W. K. Jordan's two volumes on philanthropy, New York: Russell Sage, 1959, 1960.) Even current differences of opinion as to Erasmus have no recent, though they have had earlier, reflections in studies in our field. (See the comments by Knowles, the controversial study by Louis Bouyer, Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1959, and the related study of Sadoletto by R. M. Douglas, Cambridge: Harvard, 1959.) P. O. Kristeller's revision of his list of Latin manuscripts (New York: Fordham, 1960) should stimulate activity in one part of the humanist background; and C. F. Bühler's handsome reprint of Caxton's apology for the *Eneydos* (Syracuse: University Press, 1960), D. B. Sands' edition of his *Reynard* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1960), and L. B. Hall's humanistic reading of the Douglas *Eneados* (*SRen*, 7 (1960), 184-192) should help to illuminate the background nearer home. But early English humanism rejoices of late in but a couple of articles and two books—one of them representatively summing up the ideal of Renaissance humanism as it has been devotedly recommended for imitation by many academic humanists in our own disturbed climate of opinion, the other somewhat uncertainly seeking the reappraisal more cautious and historically-minded scholars have been approaching.

The Sir Thomas More Circle by Pearl Hogrefe (Urbana: Illinois, 1959; vii, 360) offers a broad account of humanist reforming ideas about nature and the law of nature, nobility, religious reform, law and government, education (including women); but in order to avoid disturbing our admiring response to the more obviously relevant centers of humanist thinking, it omits by "a considered judgment" (7) any consideration of "religious contro-

versy about the fundamentals of the Catholic faith" (while of course including the opinions of humanists about the obvious corruptions of scholasticism and superstition, and observing that they all remained faithful Christians). It will thus serve (as a sort of contemporary American Seeböhm) to provide students with a generalized picture of what the reformers would have hoped to do if their Christian-humanist ideals had not been involved in politically and philosophically complicated questions (to some of which, as still with us, the student should be induced to go on), about what the church is and what its relation to the state, what nature it is whose law governs the pursuit of happiness, and so forth. These are certainly questions the humanists and their Elizabethan successors had to deal with in their literary "efforts at counsel by demonstration"

The second part of Miss Hogrefe's study points us in that direction by considering the reflection of humanist ideas in early-sixteenth-century secular drama—a topic not much attended to since A. W. Reed's still relevant work. The relation is important, and the influence is perhaps in later drama not one merely of simple ideas. But Miss Hogrefe does not presume to go beyond the appearance of these in such as Medwall, Rastell, Heywood. As to the literary techniques of humanism, R. J. Schoeck adds to his constellation of illuminating notes a couple on Aulus Gellius among the humanists and More's witty use of him (*RN*, 13 (1960), 127-129, 232-233); and Rainer Pineas considers some of the patristic and Protestant models for More's manipulation of dialogue as a controversial weapon for demolishing opponents (*SRen*, 7 (1960), 193-206). These literary interests should be stimulated by H. A. Mason's revaluating scrutiny of the old problem of the relation between Christian-humanist reform and what the author describes (with somewhat undefined Arnoldian emphasis) as "*wit*" (*Humanism and Poetry in the Early Tudor Period*, London: Routledge, New York, Toronto: British Book Service, 1959; v, 296). Despite the uncertainties of its critical and historical approach (and often of its style), this effort to reappraise the seminal Lucianic technique represented by Folly will give aid and comfort to those who think Christian humanism more lively than synthetic. The medieval theological and literary background seems to remain insignificant for Mason; and the crossing of Father Surtz's books seems to have been much delayed—though one of his articles is among the very few items known from American learned journals. Consequently

an inclination to accept reforming Erasmian Christian-humanism, with Miss Hogrefe, as a constant and stable norm issues in the end in somewhat old-fashioned literary interpretations. Yet American scholars should find interesting Mason's efforts after discrimination of Erasmian humanisms, perhaps especially the sense that Pace, for instance, represents a superficial literary humanism different from More's. It is a phenomenon (somewhat ironically) still evident in England; and North-Americans are naturally much inclined in their circumstances to a kind of *de-fructu* attitude. This discrimination supports an enlightening effort to explain and illustrate what the author calls literary "translation"—though some others might prefer to describe it as "transfiguration"—whereby the classical is subsumed in the Christian to provide a new, and particularly a *witty*, instrument of expression quite beyond the comprehension of drab historians. The chapter on "the discovery of wit" points in directions which might be clarified by a fuller sense of the kind of late-medieval Christianity the wit is being subsumed under. It points forward, with Mason's account of Wyatt in the book's second section. To follow its implications profitably something would have to be done about the fact Mason comments on by way of introduction—that, in attempting to explicate humanism, we find ourselves implicated by our necessary use of its tools and assumptions. Among these, one that makes itself evident throughout Mason's scrutiny is the wit-coated-reform-pill theory of poetry sustained by a superficial reading of Sidney. If we could see that the late middle ages provided the humanists with a good deal of wit to be contributory to the "translation," we might escape this hobbling formula. After all, as Bush once memorably said, it must be admitted that Chaucer wore his cowl with a difference. And, though Knowles may remind us that his pilgrims ceased in our time to wend their way to Canterbury, the crowd of their Elizabethan offspring continued to cross the river to the south bank. But one must accept one's implication. And it is both difficult and improper to attempt to be both Chaucerian and a surveyor.

II

The relation of Elizabethan literature to earlier English humanism, more or less specifically with reference to "translation," has been the concern of a number of recent volumes. J. Winny's modernized selections in *Elizabethan Prose Translation* (Cambridge: University Press, Toronto: Macmillan, 1960; xii, 151) bring

into interesting relations items representing a number of developing concerns (philosophical, educational, fictional, and so on) in a way that illustrates the "conservative" and "revolutionary" humanistic attitudes described in the introduction. Not only is the process of "Englishing" represented, but a number of suggestive collocations present themselves—as of North's almost dramatic effect (and his colloquial imagery) with Florio's failure to reproduce the bland irony of his original (and, one would add, to capture much of the shadowing of Auerbach's figural Montaigne). Sections of the *Sebond* are made usefully available in a new translation by A. H. Beattie (New York: Ungar, 1959; 122) with an introduction outlining the difficulties of its attitude (without throwing very much light on the quality of its fideism). But this does not illuminate the stylistic aspects of "translation" as do Winny's selections or T. M. Cranfil's (somewhat blurred) facsimile edition of the unique copy of *Rich's Farewell to Military Profession*, 1581 (Austin: Texas, 1959; lxxxii, 359), with its detailed textual and explanatory notes and its representation of what a popularizing Elizabethan mind could do with its various models. Until we have clarified even further our sense of the continuity of English prose represented by these volumes, we shall not be able to appraise adequately such neoclassical influence as are represented by N. Knox's massively documented report on *The Word "Irony" and its Context, 1500-1755* (Durham, N. C.: Duke, 1960; 268). Knox's interest is in the latter part of his period, and the word does not come into general English use till the later seventeenth century; but this sort of dictionary study, with tentative consideration of the theoretical and practical context, might be useful for some of our other words. This word is of course part of a humanist complex that has had less attention than it deserves since Thomson and Sedgewick and Thompson; and for our purposes Knox provides rather context than analysis. His accounts of his word's classical dramatic and rhetorical bearing, and his thorough investigation of its bearing after Defoe bracket uncertainties in the use of its extraordinarily varied English synonyms by our rhetoricians and commentators. But his very thoroughness here will arouse the curiosity of our special interests as to other contexts. Patristic and medieval distortions of the classical rhetoricians must have an interesting bearing on the ironic notions of the early humanists and their successors; and the use of the word in humanist (as well as in classical) Latin ought to throw some light on the hesitation to

use it in English—and so on the still difficult relation between neo-classical humanism and the native tradition (an aspect of which is examined with reference to Harvey and Nashe by D. Perkins in *PQ*, 39 (1960), 224-233).

This is suggested from another direction by A. Kernan's relation of the malcontent comedy of Marston and others to Elizabethan satire in *The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale, 1959; x, 261). Though theatrical malcontentment is beyond our rôle, it is good to see some of the notions developed in recent commentary on Swift (not all of it from Yale) being carried back into commentary on his predecessors. The contrast and relation between satire and satiric comedy (illustrated here not only by Marston but by his major and minor colleagues in both kinds) throws light on both and on the limitations of the Elizabethan "satyric" conception. Yet it may be a question whether some of the more intelligent Elizabethan practitioners did not have a somewhat clearer sense of the difference between author's intention and the satyric persona than Kernan allows—even if they do not appear to be able to maintain the distinction any better than he himself. Kernan finds no place on stage for either Folly's rostrum or Rabelais' easy chair; but Knox shows that writers of English had some sense of the irony Kernan does not mention till he gets to the comic. Consequently, the merely Juvenalian satyr must be but one element in the background of Jaques and his colleagues. It is therefore to be hoped that there will be further investigation into those reasons for the development that "are buried deep in the complex causes of the Renaissance and are beyond the scope of this work" (53), and indeed that the author will further investigate the matters so far relegated to footnotes. The relation between Marston's Kinsayder (with Folly behind him) and the Puritan reformer is too significant to be dismissed as "more a matter of curiosity than critical interest."

Such relations are of critical interest because of their bearing on such questions of continuity and discontinuity as are represented by Mason's determined association of Wyatt with the early humanists and their "translation," and his insistence on the discontinuousness of typical Elizabethan "imitation." Further appraisal of Muir's findings must affect our sense of the relation between popular and courtly in Wyatt, between the Wyatt who echoes fourteenth-century love-clichés for the ladies' annuals and the Wyatt whose "translation" of Seneca associates him with Erasmus and More.

Our attention is forced by the Devonshire manuscript and its history on layers of poetic effect invisible in the golden world of the golden treasury (or golden history). In this context (and with the psalms and the satires), the wit of the sonnets sustains, as Mason argues, a much more detachedly realistic, moral, human, and even humanistic view of woman than Petrarchanism affords. But it remains a question whether the break between More and Wyatt, Shakespeare and Donne, is as decided as he would argue. Before we can arrive at intelligible conclusions as to that, we need to go back through Mason to ask what was the nature of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century tradition that was operative in early sixteenth-century England—and whose implications for love are perhaps not inadequately represented by More's two wives, how it continued into the later sixteenth century and how "Petrarchanism" was translated into it—not simply how the English imitated Petrarch, which they did not in any but a very English and thoroughly humanist sense. We have also to inquire why Wyatt had an affection for—of all people—Cromwell, and why, as Mason notes, the Roman Catholic Surrey so often sounds like Tyndale in his phrasing (or like some Q source). It is possible that we have here, as presently in the seventeenth century, been inclined to exaggerate the importance of continental influences and new models, and to underestimate the vitality of the complex native tradition on which they impinge and which translates them, with modifications, into itself. As Mason says, Jonson translates from Vives in *Timber* and develops the spirit of Wyatt in his *Penshurst*. But he does so because Sidney has been there before him; and Sidney's witty distaste both for Gossonian humanism and for the afflatus of Italian Neoplatonism draws support from Vives' continental and English friends.

In the periodicals and in *Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies Presented to F. P. Wilson*, edited by H. Davis and H. Gardner (Oxford: Clarendon, New York, Toronto: Oxford, 1959; viii, 355), many more articles than can be mentioned here make their contribution to our understanding of the rhythm of this continuity. Tillyard's plea in the Wilson volume for a more appreciative reading of the *Mirror's* efforts to work out literary problems in popular terms should be read along with R. S. Sylvester's account of Cavendish's humanistic manipulation of the fall-of-princes theme (*SP*, 57 (1960), 44-71). Kathleen M. Lea's examination of the manuscripts and motives of Harington's translation, with its coarsening and allegorizing tend-

ency to the loss of Ariosto's detail (also in the volume whose title is happily reminiscent of the scope and charm of Wilson's Toronto Alexander lectures), and W. R. Davis' account (*SP*, 57 (1960), 123-143) of the revised thematic unity of the *New Arcadia* approach the problem from two quite different points of view. F. W. Sternfeld's identification of popular songs used by Shakespeare and J. B. Leishman's commentary on his variation of the eternizing theme in the sonnets (both in the Wilson volume) indicate two distant terms of reference that are at least linked by the theme of transience, however differently conceived. Indeed, Leishman's contrasting of the Shakespearean handling of this theme at once with the self-exalting classical model in Pindar, Theocritus, Horace, and with the varieties of spiritual and aesthetic idealism represented by Petrarch and his French imitators, not only focuses attention on the universalizing (if non-Christian) irony that surrounds it in the sonnets (and in a measure in Drayton, if not in Daniel) but also induces a wish that the ironic bearing of the dark lady might get much more attention. Perhaps some fuller consideration of her archetypes and antitypes might illuminate the Sidney-Donne-Shakespeare sequence a little more, especially with respect to the response to Ovid, moralized or demoralized. This is what is chiefly emphasized in the account of the "new" poetry in E. Huebler's introduction to his edition of *Shakespeare's Songs and Poems*—a handsome piece of bookmanship (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959; lviii, 534), which includes not only all the poems and songs but a collection of "detachable" passages from the plays that should prove immensely useful for the illustration of the Shakespearean range. Very properly with reference to his consideration of the general reader and student, Huebler declines to become involved in academic disputes as to biographical facts or doubtful attributions; but there may in consequence be complaint from the more ambivalently minded that the very full explanatory notes tend to reduce possible ambiguities in the phrasing and hence complexities in the mood and tone. The admirable comments on the special "tragic" qualities of the *Rape* only underline the kind of difficulty to be encountered in mediating between Renaissance poetry and the modern reader which is suggested by D. C. Allen's appraisal (Wilson volume) not of the Ovidian quality of *Venus* but of the humorous and satiric treatment of her, in contrast to Huebler's Ovid and *Hero and Leander*, in terms of the ancient theme of "hunting," soft and hard, and the significant literary associations

to be traced (beyond though after Miller and Putney). This effect of significantly witty complexity is what is principally highlighted, along with the erudition of the Renaissance poet and his explicator, in D. C. Allen's *Image and Meaning: Metaphoric Traditions in Renaissance Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1960; viii, 175), from the March eclogue, through *Muiopotmos*, Herbert's *Rose*, Lovelace's *Grasse-hopper*, Marvell's *Nymph* and Appleton, to the startling and undeniable crowing of Vaughan's cock. Some unambivalently minded readers are bound to feel that to explicate the key metaphors of such poems with reference to their contexts in Greek and Latin poetry, Scripture, the Fathers, de Lyra and other commentators, Comes, the Geneva Bible, and Montaigne, is to break butterflies upon a wheel. But if one can fight one's way towards what is centric in the process, one may catch a glimpse of the pattern the book and its poems are describing—not that of a vicious or mystical circle but of some sort of unhermetically-sealed helix whose base, at any rate, is firmly set (like Appleton's) on the ground of hard experience.

But in the months immediately past it is the work on Spenser that most fully illustrates the movement of our minds, through a variety of approaches. A. K. Hieatt's *Short Time's Endless Monument* (New York: Columbia, 1960; 118) will surely be found by many to be a stunning instance of the newer approach to Spenserian (and Renaissance) techniques in its interpretation of *Epithalamion's* formal use of symbolic numerical devices. Its ingenious perception and modestly intelligent explication of the fact that the poem includes 365 long lines, 68 short (seasons plus months plus weeks) and 24 stanzas will seem trivial to those of us who cannot accept Puttenham's patterned devices as a significant part of the Elizabethan poetic picture; but this ingenuity provides a fulcrum for an extraordinarily significant analysis of the way in which the poem focuses the circling astronomical hours (after one has beaten one's way back through later new-philosophical doubts) on Spenser's marriage. Like all good interpretation, the book raises more questions than it answers. Since it does not explain why the procession of astronomical time and the terrestrial variations consequent on the sun's erratic ecliptic are focussed, at the poem's center, on the marriage-service, it must raise the question of the bearing of Ptolemaic and pagan mythological appearances on the poem's reading of the symbolic significance of holy wedlock. Hieatt justly sees the circling of the sidereal hours as symbolizing the harmony of a

natural plan with which the marriage is consistent; and he is probably right in arguing that Milton, among other Renaissance readers, must have responded to this symbolism. But even in Spenser what offsets the ironic sense of earth's temporal displacement, symbolized by solstitial extremes, is not simply a vitalistic principle of continuous generation—however much this poem, so read, may illuminate the Gardens of Adonis and Eden; and this is not all that is reflected in the Boethian-Chaucerian consolation rightly discerned in the background. The explication is a dazzling example of what can be done to renew and deepen our reading of Renaissance poems by the systematic application of a medieval-Renaissance datum. And yet it may be felt that the full implications of the poet's *sprezzatura* have not come through, despite the perceptive reinterpretation of the envoy as a *tornata*. There is no reference to the Song of Songs (which the mythological figures certainly obscure); and the only reference to the Prayer Book occurs in a note in which it is observed that there appears to be no numerical significance in the printer's decorative device for the poem's page—rows of sickles, which are also used in a printing of the Prayer Book and (ironically?) one of *The Palace of Pleasure*. In carrying forward this sort of study (as it is to be hoped the author will), perhaps some relation can be established between Spenser's astronomy and its doctrinal context—in which it is possible that there may be some place for late medieval attempts, like D'Ailly's, to relate pagan to Biblical chronology and both to astronomy and astrology.

Much recent Spenser commentary points thus in what should prove profitable directions—as does J. M. Steadman's reinterpretation of Scudamore's hammering insomnia in the House of Care in terms of iconographical convention, Erasmus' adages, medieval exegesis of Ecclesiasticus, Philo Judaeus, and, ultimately, the offspring of Cain and the effects of jealous envy (*SRen*, 7 (1960), 207-224). And the way for this is firmly cleared by the two major items of recent Spenser scholarship, R. Ellrodt's *Neo-platonism in the Poetry of Spenser* (Geneva: Droz, 1960; 247) and M. Pauline Parker's *The Allegory of "The Faerie Queene"* (Oxford: Clarendon, New York, Toronto: Oxford, 1960; 326).

Since Ellrodt's "complimentary thesis" was presented in 1949 and has been thoroughly revised for publication (along with his major, on the Metaphysicals, which, most lamentably, has not yet reached the surveyor), it provides a significant comment not only

on the older Neoplatonist interpretations but on the more recent resurgence of critical Neoplatonism. To prepare for its interpretation of the "problem" of the hymns, it deals with the chronological question (all four hymns are late) and surveys the "Platonism" of Spenser's preceding poems. The survey depends on the introduction's distinction between medieval and Renaissance Platonism, and as to the latter between the moral and political (largely Ciceronian) Platonism of the early northern humanists (what Jayne in his 1952 *CompLit* article calls "Socratic Platonism"), the cosmological Platonism of the early Florentines, and the Hermetic Neoplatonism of Pico (which is rapidly confused, by the Renaissance, as by most of its historians, with Petrarchanism, Castiglione assisting). As Ellrodt says, "The distinction . . . invites a labor of discrimination" (11), one in which Renaissance historians might sedulously engage since, despite its lack of our historical and academic equipment, the Renaissance had the means to make it for their purposes. (Some of these are suggested by J. K. Feibleman's discrimination of Orphic idealism and native Greek realism in Plato himself, in *Religious Platonism*, London: Allen and Unwin, Toronto: Nelson, 1959; and by Paul Vignaux in his recently translated study of the diversity of medieval schools in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, New York, Toronto: Meridian, 1959).

Ellrodt provides a lead and a demonstration. Here, to be all too summary, the point is that, despite "Platonic" and even French imagery, there is nothing essentially Neoplatonic in Spenser—in his view of human love or anything else—up to the hymns. What there is is (what one might say is typical of the English) a purified medieval Platonism, with a moral and Ciceronian emphasis, highlighted by Petrarchan and by some Neoplatonic imagery which serves only to illuminate, not to Neoplatonize, the base. Spenser has no interest in "intellectual beauty," but only in beauty incarnate, in his bride, as the love of God is incarnate in Christ; he has no interest in Platonic intermediaries—angelic mind or world soul—for nature immediately reflects the beauty of its creator; he telescopes the earthly and the heavenly Venuses and all that goes therewith instead of separating them; "idea" means "image" for him (and all that goes with that in an Augustinian poetic) not an abstraction (and all that goes with that in a Neoplatonic poetic); and Woodhouse is right in observing that the attempt to explain Holiness as a blending of Aristotle and Plato breaks down, for the reason that its parents are "mediaeval piety and Elizabethan

protestantism" (52). It is *only* in the hymns that the influence of Italian Neoplatonism exerts itself. Our difficulty with them arises from our failure to recognize that, while this direct influence produces new tensions, it is subordinated to the earlier pattern. The hymns do not involve the Platonic ladder; their pattern is the three-stage pattern of medieval devotion. Their interest is psychological rather than cosmological or mystical. Their poetic is Augustinian, and they thereby clothe "the bare bones of Calvinistic doctrine with Platonic radiance and wonder" (199). Yet the analogue for their view of loves and beauties is to be found not in Ficino but in the more traditionally orthodox Christian or Jewish Platonism of Louis Le Roy and Leone Ebreo. (The latter will appear again later in Donne's background; and his Philonic and thoroughly scriptural Platonism occupies an important place among the varieties of attitude authoritatively described in Cecil Roth's *The Jews in the Renaissance*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1959—varieties that are at least analogous to the northern varieties of response to the southern Renaissance.)

This inadequate summary can give no sense of the rich detail of the study; but it is the direction that matters here—and the applicability of the argument to both Donne and Milton in a way that might pull the continuity of our Renaissance together without requiring us to sacrifice the discrimination of its technical, emotional, and ideological rhythms. It may be complained that Ellrodt does not sufficiently support his interpretation of Spenser's development with reference to what was going on in his experience and especially in its post-Armada background: the bearing of the poetry on the present state of England is what gives the contemplation of the Augustinian poetic its point. It may also be felt that the ethical tensions underlined by Calvinism are therefore apt to be unduly obscured by the radiance. And even the final chapter on "Renaissance Platonism and the Augustinian Tradition"—though it provides a more lucid and tough-minded and, in terms of Leone Ebreo and some English documents, more solidly historical interpretation than Miss Wallerstein, whom it fails to mention—yet leaves vague (and so will leave some readers suspicious of) the relation between Elizabethan protestantism and medieval devotion. But this is only to say that it will stimulate discussion and shows where there is work to be done.

M. Pauline Parker's sensitive if somewhat discursive commentary, *The Allegory of "The Faerie Queene"* (Oxford: Clarendon, New

York, Toronto: Oxford, 1960; 326) does not undertake to do any of this work; but the author would probably accept with a good grace (and not regard as merely fanciful) the observation that the book pretty well represents for our time what the intelligent, fairly well-read, genuinely humane, and devout Elizabethan common-reader would have made of the poem on a first reading. The book will induce an entirely sound response from students, and many questions. What is significant about it for our purpose is that it perceptively maintains so sound a line through a considerable range of information and appreciation, and so rarely seems inadequate (as in the case of *Mutability*), without (much as in the case of the average Elizabethan reader) having any clear frame of reference. More coherent critical canons are needed than are apparent in its nevertheless suggestive chapter on "Allegory, Symbol, Sign, and Type"; and, historically, these need the support of the distinctions Ellrodt indicates. The significance for Spenser of the ascetic and moral (as against dogmatic) theology of the devotional tradition requires to be buttressed by a more discriminating definition of the imaginatively integrated vision Augustinian Christian-Platonism substituted for the Platonic ladder (5-6). Otherwise it will prove difficult to prevent this vision from sliding back through an un-English mysticism towards the dualisms implied by the easy notion that Spenser's imagery would have been confirmed for him by the Platonic "vision of the immutable Ideas" (45). Spenser's clownish young man, at any rate, had no such vision.

Yet the whole weight of the book stands against such displacement, and with Ellrodt it should confirm the miscellaneous perceptions recorded in various recent articles. The lively difference of opinion between W. J. B. Owen (*MLN*, 75 (1960), 195-197) and A. C. Hamilton (73 (1958), 481-485) about the terms of the Raleigh letter and the structure of the poem probably cannot be resolved without a clearer and fuller reading of Spenser's poetic with reference to the background indicated above. A. C. Dallet's appraisal of ideas of sight in the poem (*ELH*, 27 (1960), 1-15)—a matter commanding renewed interest just now in Milton studies—fruitfully combines aesthetics and optics to show that this is one of Spenser's binding themes: but its allusions to the Geneva Bible are unhappily not supported by any reference to such key passages in the background as later interested Donne—*De Civitate Dei*, XXII, xxix, or *De Trinitate*, XI. The comment by H. M. English, Jr., on Spenser's accommodation of allegory to history and to the

double aspect of Elizabeth as virgin queen and queen of love (*JEGP*, 59 (1960), 417-429) approaches a sense of the many-handed ambivalences of images that Gregory enjoyed more than Augustine (and Spenser perhaps more than Calvin). However that may be, the doubleness of both the queen's aspects suggests itself in much recent historical writing: in the revisions in J. B. Black's *Reign of Elizabeth* (Oxford: Clarendon, New York, Toronto: Oxford, 1959; J. G. McManaway's exact research and report in *Elizabethan and Jacobean* as to the significance of a document in an Essex letter-book in the Folger; Garret Mattingly's *Armada* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959); or A. L. Rowse's account of what turns out to be "an ambivalent and difficult theme," *The Elizabethans and America* (New York: Harper, 1959); though England's Eliza reenters by way of the beautiful little centenary facsimile, edited by J. M. Osborn for the Elizabethan Club, with an introduction by Sir John Neale—*The Queenes Maiesties Passage through the Citie of London the Day before her Coronacion* (New Haven: Yale, 1960; 64 and map), past pageants whose counterparts are everywhere in Elizabethan poetry.

Less ambiguously, A. C. Hamilton's review of Spenser's mimetic treatment of myth (*ELH*, 26 (1959), 335-354) ranges from the contrapuntal analogy between Christian and classical in Book I to an "embodiment" in Book VI that a more coherent poetic might well have termed "literal"—and even, with some stretch of imagination, "figural"—rather than "romantic." And as to the structure of the whole poem, A. S. P. Woodhouse's latest comment on "Spenser, Nature, and Grace" (*ELH*, 27 (1960), 1-15) firmly returns us to the original hypothesis as to the two orders (in 16 (1949), 194-228) by citing Augustine, Thomas, Erasmus, Calvin, Hooker, to demonstrate that nature and grace are basic to the frame of reference and, in effect, that not to maintain the distinction between them is to risk trapping oneself in the undifferentiated muddles of vitalism, naturalistic humanism, or Neoplatonist mysticism. Yet the statement reminds us that this is part of the frame of reference, and that there was in the period "a wide variety of opinion as to the relation" between the two orders (2), surely a fact adequately enough illustrated by the Putney debates alone! Most complaints about the original hypothesis have perhaps made the mistake of getting no further than the frame (which is unshakable) and of not penetrating to the question of the Spenserian relation in terms of "thesis, antithesis, synthesis" as defining the

structure of the total poem (which is not). Perhaps A. C. Hamilton's belief that all the knights have in some sense "like race to run" suggests a more profitable course to take through the dust and heat. Certainly both Ellrodt and Parker imply that, while the story of Red Cross is Calvinistic in frame and is chiefly occupied (as Woodhouse originally said) with the order of grace, all its themes have to do with "relation"; and Red Cross never becomes either any great shakes as a theologian or, despite his mountaineering, a mystic—for his still clumsy feet remain firmly planted on the ground of the natural order even after he has risen from his proneness to despair. We might contemplate the relation between the Spenserian relation (which may itself, even in *The Faerie Queene*, suggest a wide variety that is being poetically and not synthetically centralized) and the varieties of relation illustrated by the series of names above. W. H. Marshall's note on the difference between the Calvinistic "sign" theory of the major sacraments and Spenser's notions in the first book (*MLN*, 74 (1959), 97-101) is much to this point, especially since it raises the question as to what the first book thereby does to the heart of the Calvinistic theology of redemption. As Marshall indicates, we could certainly use a more perceptive sense of the relation between poetry and sacramental dogma in our period than is presently available to us (despite the activities of Anglican theologians). But we also need, as his note would imply, a much clearer notion of the bearing on the Christian liberty everybody in the period is more or less talking about, in effect, of differences of opinion about some basic doctrines that the modern critical mind (for rather obvious reasons) has little attended to. Most of the disputes in the theological frame of reference—whether as to nature and grace, or the Trinity, or the Creation, or the two natures in Christ—are reflections of less tangential differences of opinion as to such matters as contrition and the perseverance of the saints, which are at the heart of most of the poetry of the period. There are signs that we may see these reanimated—even more at the moment in the seventeenth than in the sixteenth century.

III

Seventeenth-century scholarship is of course much concerned these days with the matters involved above, and much less concerned than it used to be with their "connexion with the history of the times." For the English, at any rate, such matters tend to

have a solid experiential base; and it is therefore to be hoped that before long we shall begin to see them again in the historical context which has been in the past months the significant pre-occupation only of the latest volume of the Yale *Milton's Prose*. Since C. V. Wedgwood's historical writing has been dedicated to the proposition (common just now among professional historians) that "theory and doctrine are more often explanations of actions already envisaged or performed than their initial inspiration" (*The King's War*, 11), it is interesting to watch her probing the relation between imagination and history (in essays on Machiavelli and Charles' last, Davenant masque) in *Truth and Opinion* (London, Toronto: Collins, 1960; 254), and in *Poetry and Politics under the Stuarts* (Cambridge: University Press, Toronto: Macmillan, 1960; vii, 220)—though in the latter the topicality of ballads, masques, complimentary and satiric verses, involves little political theory and less typology, and consequently leaves Marvell's Horatian ode not surprisingly "puzzling." The effect of political experience on the changing poetical texture in which the cavalier spirit expressed itself is briefly but much more perceptively characterized by Robin Skelton in *Cavalier Poets, Writers and their Work*, No. 117 (London: Longmans, New York: British Book Service, 1960; 52). This account of the metrical and figurative qualities that shift from Carew through Suckling and Lovelace to Waller, with reference to the Renaissance gentleman (without chivalry), decreasingly Donnean wit and increasing cynicism and finish, is a small model of literary appraisal. On a much larger scale (if with less delicate perceptions) Spartaco Gamberini surveys the major poets from Chapman, Donne, Jonson, through the religious and the lay Metaphysicals and the Cavaliers, to the Restoration (*Poeti Metafisici e Cavalieri in Inghilterra*, Firenze: Olschki, 1959; 269), setting them between the medieval church and the Royal Society, and appraising their varieties of wit with reference to shifting literary principle from Ascham through Sidney to Bacon and Hobbes, and—what is of course of special point—with reference to baroque, mannerism, and Marino. Because it is based on our great authorities (though it does not know the more recent work of such as Mazzeo and Nicolson), this continental study is particularly significant in its perception of the uneasily witty situation of the lay metaphysicals in their moralizing position between the religious and the cavalier. Indeed, it is worth while to preserve the old school divisions in order to define the principal tensions of the period that are resolved

by the greater poets. It is not accident or a surveyor's economy that brings together H. H. Huxley's edition of Leonard Digges' translation of Claudian's *Rape of Proserpine* and J. Horden's of Quarles' *Hosanna or Divine Poems on the Passion of Christ*, (Nos. 16 and 15 in the English Reprints Series, Liverpool: University Press, 1959 and 1960 [*sic*]; xiii, 81; xxx, 57), volumes which, as to their critical and textual introductions, their textual apparatus and their combination of fine reproduction and fine printing, might provide a good model for the projected series of Renaissance texts on this side. Or brings together T. B. Stroup's edition of *Selected Poems of Daniel of Beswick* (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1959; xxx, 201) and the edition by G. M. Story and Helen Gardner of *The Sonnets of William Alabaster* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford, 1959; liv, 65).

Stroup's charming (if not very talented) would-be Horatian poet, who ranges from Ecclesiasticus to Platonic love, and the Gardner-Story (not much more talented) would-be mystic represent aspects of the seventeenth-century scene that should help to illustrate the achievements of the greater poets of the period while inducing us to take a little less condescending view of their difficulties from our Beswickian alabaster towers. Daniel represents (as Stroup's engaging introduction shows) the average cultivated reader and imitator, with no strong line of his own, not even (despite some satire) the cynical. Alabaster is of more explosive stuff. But Story's authoritative introduction, with its account of Alabaster's unhappy conversions and the relation of his poems to the Jesuit devotional tradition (underlined by Miss Gardner's notes), does not necessarily lead one to agree entirely that the inadequacies of his poems spring from "limited poetic talent." The relation with Donne's sonnets, so sensitively indicated by the editors, has also the effect of underlining some distressing but instructive contrasts. This is especially the case if Alabaster's accomplishments are set between Southwell's as explained by J. R. Roberts, for instance, in "The Influence of *The Spiritual Exercises* of . . . Ignatius on the Nativity Poems . . ." (*JEGP*, 59 (1960), 430-435), and Donne's in his sonnets as seen by D. L. Peterson (*SP*, 56 (1959), 504-518) in relation to the Anglican doctrine of contrition and as manipulating traditional devotional topics in accord with Hooker's pastoral directions. Some of the discriminations that need to be made in this connection are less adequately indicated in P. Caraman's anthological representation of recusant experience, especially of persecution rather than in

the devotions only incidentally illustrated in *The Other Face* (London, Toronto, New York: Longmans, 1960) than by some other books that may be overlooked as having only a remote bearing on our affairs: B. Ulanov's *Sources and Resources: The Literary Tradition of Christian Humanism* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1960) reviews the principles and practice of Augustinian rhetoric from Boethius on, in a way that discriminates its varying manifestations and may, for our purposes, chiefly illustrate the high—or low—point on the curve represented by the Florentines; Louis Cagnet's *Post-Reformation Spirituality* (New York: Hawthorne, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1959) analyzes affective and imaginative techniques while warning us not to exaggerate the unity of the tradition and appraising the conflicting continental—and especially French—views of mysticism and devotion our major authors were well aware of and Alabaster seems confused by; and the English Institute's *Critical Approaches to Mediaeval Literature*, edited by D. Bethurum (New York: Columbia, 1960) brings together a series of appraisals of Augustinian "pan-allegorism" both chastening and informative for ourselves. As to Alabaster, what appears in this context is a mind caught between a rigoristic Calvinism and a vague mysticism, unable to sustain a consistent direction and incapable of using poetry in a coherent Augustinian way, as Southwell does for the purposes of his audience and Donne for the purposes of his, for the disciplining of the will and for homiletic communication. Such minds suffered the pitiable confusion represented by the confusion of Alabaster's texts, far beyond even the confusion—so much clarified by Gardner plus Peterson—imposed on the text of Donne's sonnets by similar minds. Indeed, both Daniel and Alabaster present fascinating problems requiring a display of editorial skill such as one would expect from their respective editors. In the case of Alabaster it is fascinating to compare the editorial reconstruction of a form in which he *might* have published the sonnets (if he had been able to manage a clearer line or to decide what audience he was writing for) with what is revealed by the skilful textual machinery.

A good deal of significant work of late has assisted our efforts to emerge from the unhistorical confusions induced by the notion that the metaphysical style is simply the witty man of unified or of neurotic sensibility. By way of rhetoric and devotion we approach a reading that involves a man speaking purposefully to a particular audience with a disciplined perception wrought out of

the tensions of the time. This is the effect of several recent reconsiderations of the historical significance (in its own place, as well as for our purposes) of the metaphysical criticism of the early part of our century: J. E. Duncan's *Revival of Metaphysical Poetry . . . , 1800 to the Present* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959; 227) with Kathleen Tillotson's review in *Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies* of the period from 1800 to 1872, and Arnold Stein's of Donne in the 'twenties and the problem of historical consciousness (*ELH*, 27 (1960), 16-29). Each involves (after Kermode), specifically with Stein and by implication in the other two, dissatisfaction with the unhistorical myth, issuing in Johnsonian or alternative imperciptions, of some periodic dissociation of sensibility. It is chastening to look back through the astigmatism of our predecessors and their distortions of the metaphysical poetic facts Duncan attempts to characterize in his first chapter. (This is no doubt the critical justification for the history of criticisms: at least it warns.) Further, what Duncan and Tillotson disagree in saying, for instance, of Donne and Browning was much needed for the latter poet.

But it is perhaps evidence of something more than the speed of criticism's winged chariot that Duncan's characterizing chapter still seems caught in the suspicion that wit and piety will not mix and that the "integration" of metaphysical poetry is essentially ambiguous. At any rate, we have (with Duncan, whose account of such rhetorical matters is admirable) come into repossession of Donne's logic and its figures. It now remains to see in what context and for what purpose they are being used; and here just now we must follow the lead of Wallerstein, Martz, and Gardner, in the direction only just touched on by Duncan in a reference to White.

Indeed Miss Gardner's own contribution to *Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies*—"The Argument about *The Ecstasy*"—is not only a beautiful example of historically controlled explication but a most significant contribution to Renaissance scholarship in its demonstration of the poem's debt to the humanistic Jewish Platonism of Leone Ebreo, especially when this is lined up, as Miss Gardner could not of course line it up, with Roth's account of Leone in his Renaissance Jewish context and Ellrodt's insistence on the parallels between Spenser and Leone. (It will be interesting to see what is made of Leone by M. Y. Hughes in a quite independently conceived article to appear shortly in *PMLA*.) What Leone represents in his dialogues on love (as Gardner and Ellrodt show)

is a form of orthodox Jewish Platonism that declines the ecstatic extremes of Ficino, Pico, or Bembo. Instead it develops a view, not of the difference between desire and intellectual love, but of the difference between an imperfect and a perfect love, in terms of a thoroughly ethical psychology of sight and the image received and given, and of the circle of love completed by lovers which completes the soul by a mutuality only to be manifested through body. Miss Gardner's exposition and explication indicate that this is a view likely to be mightily attractive to the English. (It is not, it may be added, at all cabalistic: the notion that the Jewish tradition in the Renaissance must be so is as much a delusion as the notion that the Augustinian tradition must be *Neo-platonic* to mean anything for poetry. Its roots will probably be found, crossed by Platonism, in the venerable tradition of Jewish humanism represented by such as the twelfth-century Ibn Ezra, about whom few but Browning appear to have clear and distinct ideas.) Leone will now begin to appear behind many English poems; and it will soon prove necessary to insist on differences. In this connection, it may be regretted that, while Miss Gardner has firmly and lucidly put the whole argument represented by *The Extasie* on the track, she refrains from anything more than observing "the analogues Donne found for himself" (302). Perhaps it was right to refrain from noting that the violet is a devotional emblem of humility, and especially of the humility of the Incarnation. That would only start another argument. But Donne's possible sense of the irony of the fact that Leone's dialogues are unfinished—lacking the fourth, on consummation—would have pleased Browning. Is Leone, perhaps, the poem's spectator, "so by love refin'd"; and will he "part far purer then he came" through having overheard something implying an honorable estate signifying a mystical union by giving and receiving of a ring and by joining of hands?

The ironic collapse of many of the analogues inherited by Donne and his contemporaries has always, of course, been sharply illustrated by the effects of the new science, though many studies (and even Grierson's comparison of Donne's situation with Tennyson's) have had the effect of making seventeenth-century poems look like Victorian documents in the cultural history of science rather than the effect of deepening our Wordsworthian sense of science as a source of material for poetry. Though it does not attempt to appraise the ironic complexities of this context, S. K. Heninger's *Handbook of Renaissance Meteorology* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State,

1960; ix, 269) admirably fills in the details of another segment of the Elizabethan world-picture in the airy region of hail, fire-drakes and other phenomena between Babb's melancholy and West's angels, reviewing their reflections in our poets and canvassing their sources from Pliny through Batman, Rabanus Maurus, Nicholas of Lyra, and so on. Equally useful in this connection is W. S. C. Copeman's *Doctors and Diseases in Tudor Times* (London: Dawson, 1960; 186), a humanistically professional history; and the reprints of the old Carlos translation of Galileo's *Sidereal Messenger* (London: Dawson, 1960, 111) and Mottelay's of Gilbert's *De Magnete* (New York: Dover, 1959; liv, 368). But of much greater literary significance are M. H. Nicolson's *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1959; xvii and the reprint, with a revised introduction and additional notes, of her *Breaking of the Circle* (New York: Columbia, 1960; xv, 250).

The concern of the earlier book (first published ten years ago) with the fragmentation by the new science of the aesthetics of the macrocosmic-geocosmic-microcosmic circles has been rendered the more rather than the less relevant by recent studies of correspondence and the devotional tradition. Since Neoplatonized mystical vision can induce an even more than Victorian nostalgia as to the medieval principles of order, proportion, hierarchical unity, harmony (reviewed in the book's opening chapters), the central chapter on Donne's *Anniversaries* remains timely in declining (as used to be the habit) to isolate from its context in the poem and in immediate experience the passage on the "new philosophy," and more especially in relating it (and the situation the poems handle) to perceptions as to the human situation already induced by the "old" philosophy (and sufficiently emphasized by patristic commentary) though underlined anew and more sharply by the "new." The extraordinary paradox of the period's scientific situation (from our point of view) lies in the mingling, illustrated in the last chapters, of scientific method with remnants of correspondence, animism, occultism, and what-not, in Harvey, Gilbert, Kepler, Newton. That they would have discovered little without this mingling is also one implication of Max Caspar's authoritative biography of Kepler, translated (with recent bibliography and annotations) by C. D. Hellman (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1959; 401), which also bears on Miss Nicolson's ultimate interest through Miss Hellman's long corrective note on the question of Galileo's failure to mention Kepler's laws of planetary motion on

account of his belief in the perfection of the circle and suspicion of the elliptical (136). The paradox issues in the tension between circularity and infinity, content and aspiration (or security and enterprise), in the later poets Miss Nicolson reviews, from Cowley through Milton to Henry More. Though the closely related account of mountainous gloom and glory escapes our limits (by being chiefly concerned with the dispute over the Flood and Burnet and the effect of such matters on eighteenth-century taste and descriptive poetry till reason attains its most exalted Alpine mood), the introductory chapters review the seventeenth century and its background, and a theological chapter more fully develops the context, indicated in the other book, through patristic and medieval commentary to the significant acceptance by Calvin of mountains as features of pre-lapsarian nature (still making its declaration to such as have eyes to see) and the pessimistic insistence of Luther that they are scars consequent on human depravity. Protestantism itself presents its poets with its version of the problematic opportunity; and we may discern with Miss Nicolson's scientific help, as well as through Leone, why we have a sense of continuity, despite the obvious differences, as we move from Spenser's old astronomy and style to Donne's new. What Miss Nicolson demonstrates is that the poetic grasp of changing scientific "facts" in the seventeenth century has to be interpreted in terms of the poets' use of new materials to revitalize old imagery and old significances in new existential contexts. It is this grasp of the existential human situation that lies behind her resolved reassertion, in the new introduction to the *Circle*, of the view that, despite the tendencies of other recent approaches, the "shee" of the *Anniversaries* must be interpreted as a universal involving not only the Drury child but on the one hand Astrea and on the other reminiscences of the most excellent and glorious person of Queen Elizabeth and her kingdom A thoroughly English and even more than comparatively literary preoccupation with the immediate realities of experience is something Donne shares with most of his fellow poets—including Spenser; for, as Ellrodt remarks passingly in reviewing the Spenserian chronology, the Sapience of the fourth hymn is reminiscent of Colin's vision of the queen. Nothing could be more typical of the Renaissance problem or the English temper.

Three aspects of the typical seventeenth-century temper as it expressed itself in prose are illustrated by L. Babb's *Study of Robert Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy"* (East Lansing: Michigan State,

1959; xii, 116), H. Trevor Hughes' *Piety of Jeremy Taylor* (London, Toronto: Macmillan, 1960; xi, 185), and Peter Green's *Sir Thomas Browne, Writers and the Work*, No. 108 (London: Longmans, New York, British Book Service, 1959; 39), while F. P. Wilson's Ewing lectures, *Seventeenth Century Prose* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960; 129), provide a neat and finished survey, with special attention to Burton, Browne, biography, and the sermon. Though Babb (in an admirably judicious and comprehensive chapter) and Green have of course a good deal to say of science, they and Hughes principally contribute to our understanding of aspects of Anglicanism. As one would expect, Babb's authoritative account of Burton on the not merely Elizabethan but Renaissance malady includes an immensely useful descriptive analysis of the book's material, development through its editions, sources, and authorities. But, much more importantly, it analyzes Burton's attitude and purpose in terms of his Christian-humanist background, and with enough reference to *Folly* and Burton's ironic humor to keep one reminded of that basic element in the tradition (which perhaps principally distinguishes it from Augustine). It is interesting that Babb should make it plain that the successive additions to the *Anatomy* were non-technical and greatly increased its commentary on human behavior and the human condition, that he should nevertheless find Burton showing no interest in parliament, the theatre, court festivities, education, the gentleman, Biblical exegesis and its problems, or literary theory (which would, one would think, put him quite out of court these days!), that he should give us so perceptive an account of Burton's social ethics as those of a rational and temperate (and by no means rigoristic or Stoical) Christian-humanist, and that he should end (with the *Anatomy*) with an authoritative investigation of Burton's illogical acceptance of the illogical Anglican doctrine of grace (and, one should add, works). This ought to induce highly profitable further investigations into Burton's relations with Hooker (to whom he seems to pay no attention) or Perkins (to whom he does), especially if these can sustain Babb's sense of the Burtonian (and seventeenth-century Anglican) combination of ironic contempt and pity, of exhortation to a rational standard of behavior with sympathetic counsel and consolation for inevitable failure, also sensitively appraised by Wilson. Taylor is, with so many differences, after all remarkably like, though it is regrettable that he could not view his own prose

and imagery with more ironic wit. This is not a matter of much concern to Hughes, who however (for his own proper ministerial purposes) provides an admirably detached account of Taylor's piety (meaning his pastoral moral theology), as a replacement for disreputable Roman Catholic casuistry, in relation to Taylor's experience of civil war, his views on ecclesiastical polity, and especially his (Christian-humanist) doctrines of sin and redemption. Hughes' account of Taylor's works in this connection should be of use to us, as developed from a point of view that has no great interest in our literary concerns but is much concerned with the concerns that motivated Taylor's writing. There is nothing at all here comparable to Wilson's critical appraisal of Taylor's style. But there is much that has a bearing on our approach to seventeenth-century poetry: the rejection, with respect to Taylor, of the separation of moral theology from ascetic theology and Christian ethics of conduct (as by K. E. Kirk), the sense of the difficulties Taylor finds himself in through following Thomism in linking conscience with the cognitive rather than the conative (where he might be contrasted with Donne), his justification of the Anglican borrowing of tools for the purpose from the Philistines with his dissent from Jesuit probabilism, his interest in the Perfectionists, the improbability of his having become mystical in his later life, and his very English interest in meditation and conviction that ecstasies and rapture, though of an eminency, may prove the "effluxes of religious madness" (compare Burton and Donne) and are less to be sought than the sober daily imitation of Christ in holy living as a preparative to holy dying. These are views we must take into account before we see the visionary eye of Saint Teresa behind Taylor's homiletic figures with Wilson, while admiring his discriminations of the styles of Andrewes, Donne, and their plain-style critics. Not to appreciate with Wilson the variety of seventeenth-century styles would be to demonstrate a radical inability to respond to the period's variety of texture; and yet there is a basic unity of attitude along Anglicanism's broad muddle way that we have perhaps not adequately discriminated, though it is suggested by Taylor's critical comments and such a passage of Andrewes as one Wilson quotes, on the necessity not simply of saying one has seen a star but of following it through wretched, commonplace difficulties. Even in Browne it is difficult to be certain when science on the one hand or Hermetic correspondence on the other has lost the way in an anatomical search for the seat of the

soul or in an *O altitudo!* Both Wilson and Green appraise the tension between fideism and scepticism in him, between wonder and curiosity. Wilson beautifully analyzes the polarities of his style, and illustrates his response to nature as the art of God—a notion that would save us a good deal of mystification about the double standard of truth if we could see its analogical scientific and poetic significance for the period. Green reviews his response to Dante and the medieval ladder of being and his vitalism, but ends by stressing the extent of his debt to the Authorized Version. Perhaps that should take us back through parliament, theatre, court, education, the gentleman, and science, to scriptural exegesis and literary theory.

But there has been little examination of Renaissance literary theory as such during the months of this survey. Luciano Ancheschi's *L'estetica dell' empirismo inglese: I Da Bacone a Shaftesbury* (Bologna: Alfa, 1959; 114) is worth noting because its contrast of Shaftesbury with Locke and Addison depends on its introductory emphasis on Neoplatonism in Sidney's interpretation of Aristotelian *mimesis* and on the shadow of Platonism—*ma sola un' ombra*—to be discerned in Bacon's fragmentary aesthetic, in the relation between baroque and his notion of "felicity" of style, and in his opinion of fancy in poetry (though nothing is said of his notions of the function of imagination in religion), and in *una certa oscillazione di significati*—a felicitous phrase—in Hobbes' on the fancy. With less precise discriminations of the varieties of Platonism from Sidney through Donne than Ancheschi offers, this has been the dominant critical (though with rhetoric to guide, not theoretical) approach to our period for some time; and it is still a most prolific, though not the only, approach in recent Milton commentary. The perceptions that are in process of modifying it are clear enough in much of the recent criticism reviewed above, but they have not as yet reached the stage of authoritative general formulation. They are being developed, as they should be, with reference to particular poets and poems.

What is for the time being to be achieved in this quarter is indicated by Allen's explication of "Upon Appleton House" (in *Image and Meaning*) and J. A. Mazzeo's interpretation of Cromwell as Machiavellian prince in the Horatian Ode (*JHI*, 21 (1960), 1-17). Allen's explication of the delicate allusion of the Appleton poem to points of reference from Horace through the Virgin's *hortus conclusus* makes us see it as a penetratingly witty and sharply serious

commentary on the critical mood of the general withdrawn from civil war without. The poem is as immediately existential and political as (more tactful than) *Absalom and Achitophel*, and perhaps more perceptive advice to a planter. Mazzeo interprets the ode as expressive not of an ambiguously nervous view of Cromwell nor of uncertain idealism but of Marvell's "awareness of the ethically irrational and problematic character of human experience" (2), of his sense that "in the last analysis man is moral but society is not" (17), and that (in effect, one gathers) this being so, it is only art—like the political art of Cromwell or the commenting art of the poet—that can deal with the human situation. Mazzeo's use of *The Prince* as datum, and his interpretation of the poem as a tribute to Cromwell's practice of its Machiavellian art has been roundly criticized by Hans Baron (*JHI*, 21 (1960), 450-451) on the ground that, however accurate and interesting its reading of the poem may be, it seriously misinterprets and "modernizes" Machiavelli and really depends for its datum on Tom May's *Lucan*. This survey must firmly decline to become involved in any Italian wars or Roman holidays: it has enough troubles of its own at home. But it may not be irrelevant to observe that, whatever is the truth about Machiavelli, the Fairfax tutor, Milton's assistant, the member for Hull, did not have to go to Machiavellism to learn what Mazzeo (and Allen) say his poems imply as to the human situation and the necessity for art in handling it. The kind of simple idealist-Machiavelli contrast Mazzeo has in mind when he contrasts the tensions of the poem with the simple God-Satan opposition (not meaning of course to recall the extremely tricky pair in the epic Marvell praised) has certainly obscured the Renaissance tradition in which Marvell was writing his ode. But what he is said to have implied of society was said by Paul about the church of Corinth and by many devout medieval and even Renaissance members of the church catholic. And it was not Machiavelli who said (in the English of the Tudor translation) and in words not unlike those later addressed to Thomas Cromwell) that civil philosophy must "with a crafty wile and subtle art endeavor . . . to handle the matter wisely and handsomely for the purpose . . ."

Explications like Allen's and Mazzeo's induce us to see how much seventeenth-century poetry is in the tradition of medieval homily and humanistic counsel, especially the praise of princes that is by way of being a hortatory mouse-trap. "The play's the thing . . ." There is a sense we need to get at in which this is true even when

the king sits high on a Satanic throne of royal state, and when the mouse-trap has the dimensions of the divine ways in history as Marvell's superior in the Latin secretaryship represents them in *Paradise Lost*.

IV

Miltonic scholarship continues to display the weight and range represented by C. Huckabay's immensely useful continuation of Stevens (including Fletcher's contributions): *John Milton: A Bibliographical Supplement, 1927-1957* (Duquesne Studies, Philological Series, No. 1, Pittsburgh: Duquesne, 1960; xi, 211). If attention continues to be commanded by many of the dilemmas and argumentative centers represented here, yet recent activity displays the confluence of steadily accumulating historical scholarship with critical perceptiveness open to the illumination of exegetical approaches developing in other areas—a confluence no doubt demanded by Milton's representation (or at least reflection) of most of the major problems and interests of the English Renaissance.

Biographically and as to ideas, dilemmas are the principal concern (of necessity) in the introductory material in the second volume (1643-1648), edited by E. Sirluck, of the *Prose Works* (New Haven: Yale; London, Toronto: Oxford, 1959; xi, 840) and (by choice) in Emile Saillens' *John Milton: poète combattant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959; 350). Both underline, for example, the bitterness (rather than the ultimate insights) resulting from Milton's first marriage; indeed for Saillens this mood begins to show itself in the earlier poetry in consequence of the frustration he supposes to result from tête-à-têtes with the young Bridgewater ladies during rehearsals for the masques, as to which he develops, from a suggestion originally made by H. F. Fletcher in 1941, some charmingly Gallic (and not entirely improbable) speculations. All such biographical readings are, of course (like much Renaissance history and literary biography), really glosses on the complex which is reflected in the poems and especially in the divorce tracts, and in which Petrarchanism and even some elements of Neoplatonism have a place that requires precise appraisal. The Yale volume's thoroughly scholarly and accurately detailed account of the historical and biographical background of the second group of prose writings clearly illuminates the controversial movement of Milton's mind through the complex, and ought (if subsequent volumes imitate it) to give the Yale *Prose* more than merely Miltonic his-

torical authority. Saillens is throughout principally impressed by the rigidity of Milton's response to experience, seeing in the poetry and especially *Paradise Lost* (where he is following Muir) resulting tensions between Humanism and Puritanism, poetry and religion, human sympathy and theology (though curiously not between angry human indignation and theology), and other such pairs as have traditionally provided Miltonic criticism with an expository dialectic in which it runs the risk of trapping itself.

Some aspects of the French critical context, with a lively interest in Milton's revolutionary activity (though no clear grasp of his ideas), enable Saillens to run this risk with often penetrating verve; but (as its title may suggest) R. L. Brett's *Reason and Imagination: A Study of Form and Meaning in Four Poems* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford, 1960; xi, 143) represents most of its dilemmas with lucid intelligence. A desire to return, through recent critical languages, to a revitalized historical approach proves to mean—it is our common condition—a return in the case of Milton (Pope, Coleridge, Eliot are the others) to the synthetic "Christian-humanist" principles of the 'thirties, with the poems expressing the integration of nature and grace through revelation's completing of the imperfect and restoring of the impaired by (what has come since) a sacramentalization of nature. Though much of this may (as has been argued) provide the dominant themes of the prose, its rational application to the meaning of the poems naturally results in an uneasy sense of what Milton took long to learn—that nature and grace do not so readily get integrated outside the study, that revelation does not in this life finally complete the imperfect or restore the woefully impaired (however it may tend to do so: the Latin is *indies . . . renovatur*), and that nature is not easily sacramentalized (if that is the right word) and is not disposed for long to stay so. Since imagination and form by themselves will not reverse this process (but only at best intensify the oscillation), Milton's *Mask* slides for Brett (as it has for most of us at some time or other in the past) by a series of interpretative stages from integration through an "uneasy accord" between nature and grace to become once more Herford's Puritan hymn to chastity. Thence we proceed towards the series of cruxes in the last poems, through the opposition of the sacred to pagan pastoral in *Lycidas*, interpreted with a sensitive elegiac melancholy which only makes sadder the reminiscence of Johnson's Miltonic (and essentially metaphysical) impercipience.

Recent American criticism includes a number of energetic efforts to escape from this Miltonic trap in the early and later poems. Sears Jayne ("The Subject of Milton's *Ludlow Mask*," *PMLA*, 74 (1959), 533-543) substitutes for (or sets alongside) the reading of the relation of nature and grace through a three-level ethic (temperance, chastity, virginity) a reading that makes the poem a [Neo-]Platonic "*Masque of Chastity*" by demonstrating how its mythology is derived through Spenser from the Florentines we have seen Ellrodt firmly removing from the Spenserian center and virtually from the early Spenserian context. This brilliant explication of the masque's imagery as operating entirely on the level of Neoplatonized nature gives the book of the Lawes-Milton Bridgewater musical a beautiful unity; but it leaves untouched (indeed it specifically repudiates) the "labor of discrimination" Ellrodt invites, and thus raises questions yet to be resolved—such as the question as to how what lies behind the poem's Neoplatonic mask is to be related to what Ellrodt argues Spenser is highlighting with Neoplatonic imagery in the hymns, or whether the ecstasy we are to "hear even unto" implies the Neoplatonic distinction between desire and intellectual love (and so must take us back to a Neoplatonized Herford).

Somewhat similarly—though less unifyingly and with quite different results—Elizabeth Sewell's *The Orphic Voice* (New Haven: Yale, 1960; x, 463) and Isabel Gamble MacCaffrey's *Paradise Lost as Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1959; 229) vitalize our sense of Milton's response to the Orphic agony and to the creation-myth of Raphael. Milton is but incidental for Miss Sewell in the flood that leads on to Rilke. But her account of the Orphic resurrection in Sidney, Bacon, Reynolds, includes illustrations which show that "the Orphic casualty of the first period was Milton" (68). The reasons for this are, as Miss Sewell says (70), out of reach of the theme of her study—which assures us that we need not be disturbed that Reynolds "probably conceived of this art as magical and cabalistic, as Pico in part seems to have done" (79), and consequently does not inquire what the later books of Milton's epic may imply in this connection. These books do not bulk very largely in Mrs. MacCaffrey's account of the epic as a recreation of a lost world through myth (Cassirer and Blackmuir), which naturally emphasizes the pre-lapsarian Raphael rather than the post-lapsarian Michael, and so tends to conclude with the daemonic voyage rather than with the "moral structure" of the poem, at which it barely

arrives in the end. Mrs. MacCaffrey's explication of the epic's pregnant key words, proleptic imagery, fecundity rather than ambiguity of reference, hierarchical organic relations, substantial rather than accidental analogies, energize dimensions that often fade out of severer contemplations of the moral structure; but the difficulty presented for us by their relation, and by myth's relation, to the moral structure is perhaps suggested by the way in which her exposition of the "vitality and pattern" of Raphael's universe is followed by the chastening observation that Christianity has consistently condemned animism, and this by the immediate ascription of it to Milton as a congenial and necessary postulate behind the conception of a mythical paradise having its own metabolism (148). So Satan says; but something has got lost meanwhile.

From a quite different point of view (though one not unrelated to Brett's), John Peter's *Critique of Paradise Lost* (London: Longmans; New York: Columbia, 1960; ix, 172) subjects the faults of the epic to a critically detailed (and highly revealing) examination and concludes (more or less with Waldock) that these demonstrate an unresolved tension between Milton's Pauline God and the humanity of the Son's and the poem's treatment of Adam and Eve. Peter finds Raphael's animism vulgar, and thus focusses our attention on parts of the poem not much attended to by Sewell and MacCaffrey; and this, interestingly, without making any mistake as to Satan and with an unusually perceptive response to Michael. But with God goes the theology of the poem; and consequently a reading of the last books which is even more sensitively humane than that of the Master of Jesus, is unable to avoid sentimentalizing the Fall in what the historical criticism which Peter rejects must regard as a most unMiltonic way. That however is a basic issue on which Peter has taken a determined stand in refusing to suspend his disbelief in some basic beliefs Milton thought he could count on in his audience—among them one that theologically-minded historical critics have recently been working out in some detail, the Augustinian notion that God has chosen to communicate with men through Scripture, historical experience, and nature in a way that would (at whatever cost to their ideally Neoplatonic notions of divinity) focus their attention on the unsentimental humanity of the Son. This is a principle that is accepted as the basis for a contemporary reading of the epic quite different from Peter's in R. M. Frye's *God, Man, and Satan: Patterns of Christian Thought and*

Life in "Paradise Lost," "Pilgrim's Progress," and the Great Theologians (Princeton: University Press, 1960; x, 184), the great theologians being chiefly those who have been developing a neo-Augustinian existentialism. Historical students of literature will regret that the lucid introductory explanation of Augustinian poetic is not clearly adumbrated in the exegesis of the poem, and that the intended mediation between Milton's poetry and contemporary neo-Augustinian Christianity is kept clear of encumbrances (some of which might have proved illuminating) by an all but total absence of reference either to seventeenth-century religious history and its theological cruxes or to the recent Milton scholarship Frye must be supposed to know well. But even those not of that persuasion will find the exegesis clarifying the traditional Miltonic problems: Satan as exemplar of a non-participating evil denying any objective basis for truth and perverting the creature from action in accordance with the potentiality of its own nature; right reason as a fully existential use of intellect devoted to participating choice; the perversion of the genuine in Adam's Fall, in contrast with both rigoristic and sentimental interpretations; the contrast between an angry Father and a loving Son as itself a "vulgar opposition" in the light of an eternal providence inducing a process of growth; and much more to the purpose. Yet, despite Frye's prefatory and concluding insistence to the contrary, it is probable that the contrasting collocation of Milton's effort after a "total view" of evil with Bunyan's archetypal individual Christian will induce in some readers a kind of neo-Augustinian version of the Sewell-MacCaffrey-Peter views of *Paradise Lost* as having a displaced center or a mythic frame. This may partly result from the neo-Augustinian poetic's not having done its historical and critical work in focussing our attention on what the total poem is about, and on what it aims Mrs. MacCaffrey's vast circularity of myth and Peter's sensitive humanity at. The exegesis tends to the quite unMiltonic, however Barthian notion, that anxiety ends when Adam attains the paradise within and the epic ends. All Adam "attains" in the poem is the sum of wisdom, which sets him in the way of making (like our author) difficult additions.

It is curious that the only recent comment on Milton's own view of his poetry should be one that all the above efforts might profitably have used: Mary Lascelles' note in *Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies* on "The Rider on the Winged Horse" who goes along with "other notes than to th'Orphean lyre" as Milton returns from

the celestial to earth—the point about Bellerophon being that (like all the rest of us) he fell off. Involved in this is Milton's progressive recognition of the conditions of the process whereby a true poem may be enabled to make good use of its faults. Since the sense of this comes largely out of the dilemmas of the prose, the second Yale volume is of crucial importance as to the development of Milton's moral structure. In addition to its admirable annotation of detail, its analysis of the processes of Milton's thought is highlighted by such perceptions as Sirluck's discrimination of Milton's idea of education from the Comenius-Hartlib line to place it firmly in the Christian-humanist tradition (in a way confirmed by Curtis' comments on it from the university point of view), and his demonstration of the dependence of Milton's arguments from the law of nature (and especially the introduction into the divorce argument of the secondary law of nature) on the concurrent development of parliamentary apologetics. Textually also the volume is interesting; and L. W. Coolidge's manipulation of devices to provide a representation of the massive revision in the second edition of the first divorce tract answers a long-felt need. Historically and textually the volume makes plain the developing processes of Milton's thought in a way that should prevent us from supposing there is anything static about his response to experience in the poems. The extent to which the text of the first divorce tract does this is bound to induce complaints that its devices do not do so fully or clearly enough. It is the effect of a good piece of work, as of a paradox, to make one think of a better. Already G. B. Evans has demonstrated with reference to the eight copies of the 1644 *Doctrine and Discipline* collected by Fletcher for Illinois (*JEGP*, 59 (1960), 497-505) how much more can be got out of Milton's text. (Bowers' *Textual & Literary Criticism* has but one astringent comment on Milton; and—despite the old rime—Miltonists are unlikely ever to become much interested in the beer-breaks of M. Simmons' or S. Simmons' compositors; but nearly everything Bowers has to say is relevant to the Milton text and especially to the text of the revised prose and *Paradise Lost*.) Though Evans chooses for the time being to restrict himself to the description of the textual facts, his findings, added to Coolidge's, underline the admirable Yale volume's illumination of the process whereby Milton makes his warfaring way through the underbrush of the controversial secondary law of nature (and through a series of frustrations) towards the way Adam takes with the "heroism" that is still the central

problem (as it is the central theme) of *Paradise Lost*, though not much attended to by the critics surveyed above. Indeed, these findings may be shown to confirm our sense that the prose chiefly illustrates for students of literature the developing Miltonic principle, basic to the "heroism" of the poems, of Christian liberty (consistently with a rankly amateur suggestion of twenty years ago: *Yale Prose*, II, 151).

There is a good deal of current interest in this process. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski analyses Milton's political beliefs and polemical methods at another crucial moment, 1659-60, (*PMLA*, 74 (1959), 191-202) with special reference to the complexities of the political application of his notion of Christian liberty. Kester Svendsen (*Texas Studies in Language and Literature*, 1 (1959), 11-29) brilliantly relates the invention and expression of *Pro Se Defensio* to the style of *Paradise Lost*, as to the manipulation of data, multi-valued allusiveness, developing echoes, and much more that is to the point; and he does this in a way that demonstrates the inadequacy of the form-meaning dialectic and excites one's anticipations as to the emergence of a completely renewed sense of the relations between the poetry and the prose. M. B. McNamee's *Honor and the Epic Hero* (New York: Holt, 1960; xvii, 190) is so simplified and doctrinaire in its contrasting of the classical and Thomistic conceptions of magnanimity and of the Thomistic and Augustinian that it can only leave us with the contradictory assertions that Milton's conception is Thomistic though his "Stoic withdrawal" makes it "practically Augustinian." But Burton O. Kurth's *Milton and Christian Heroism: Biblical Epic Themes and Forms in Seventeenth-Century England* (*University of California Studies in English*, No. 20, 1959; 152) more promisingly approaches the complexities of the active and contemplative, cosmic and inner conflict, classical and Christian, the old and the new dispensation, through a consideration of the experiments of minor Biblical poets between Du Bartas (and Spenser) and Milton's effort at an unattempted fusion of their hexameral (and discursive), New-Testament (and allegorical), Old-Testament (and classically heroic) rimes. If these poets are substituted for Svendsen's Salmasius and Alexander More, and if the supposition can be tolerated that Milton had something of the same contempt for them as he had for his controversial adversaries (a supposition that would probably distress Kurth), and if the allegorical poets (the Fletchers, Benlowes, etc.) are set, as by Arno Esch (*Anglia*, 78 (1960) 40-55), a little more subtly in the

earlier tradition of Christian poetry (Prudentius, Sedulus, etc., etc.) and in the devotional tradition which is part of the inheritance of English Christian humanism, then this material becomes the more significant—especially with respect to the effort (which sharply differentiates the English religious poetry of the period from all forms of Neoplatonism) not to visualize the idea but (as Esch says) to make it (or better, the image) translucent. But what is needed for that is the much clearer sense, towards which Kurth is trying to make his way, of the theological differences as to redemption involved not only in the Renaissance view of classical genre but its views on scriptural genre; for this alone will prevent the investigation from slipping back, as Kurth's does, to a disjuncted view of the heroism of *Paradise Lost* not unlike McNamee's, through a misreading of the poem as essentially hexameral.

Milton's systematic theology is the subject of some very significant periodical contributions. J. M. Steadman's exposition of the causal structure of man's first disobedience, in terms of Aristotelian, Ciceronian, Ramist logic, clarifies some of the disciplined devices Milton used to insure (so far as one can) against a sentimental or rigoristic response (*JHI*, 21 (1960), 180-197). C. A. Patrides demonstrates how consistent Milton is with the typical Protestant theory of the Atonement and suggests how important it is to recognize his poetic preservation and modification of legalistic emphasis (*PMLA*, 74 (1959), 7-13). W. G. Madsen clarifies the significant fact of the Fall in *Paradise Lost* and the sense in which it was fortunate, both against sentimentalists who cannot see where or why it happened and against such as would transubstantiate manna to gall by confusing the relation between poetry and dogma in the seventeenth century (*MLN*, 74 (1959), 97-101). W. B. Hunter (in two articles: *Harvard Theological Review*, 52 (1959), 9-35; *JHI*, 21 (1960), 349-369) sharply reconsiders, in the light of theological history, Milton's "heresies" as to the Second Person of the Trinity and the Incarnation, showing that he is less simply heretical than has been supposed, that his doctrine as to the Son's generation goes back behind Arius and Nicaea to "subordinationism" to find emanatory stages in the manifestation of the Logos which nevertheless depend upon the Father's will, and as to Christ to find in Aristotelian "predominance" the principle of the union of two will-possessing persons (not simply "natures"). Though they are not allowed to disturb the systematic and historical exposition, allusions in these articles to the Creation and to the principle of "pre-

dominance" in marriage and the mystical body of Christ indicate their bearing on other cruxes in *Paradise Lost* about which one looks to hear more from Hunter. For the time being, it seems clear that the Platonizing return to Philo (that venerable ancestor of Leone), with the Cambridge Platonists, revitalizes what has been threatening to become rigoristic, without, however, being allowed (as it is progressively inclined to do with the Cambridge Platonists and Shaftesbury . . .) to slide back through Origen into an undifferentiated emanatory vitalism. One wants to hear more about what predominates in these matters, or processes. In another article (*Rice Institute Pamphlet*, 46 (1960), 1-14) Hunter appraises against this background such imagery as that of light in the poem (though unfortunately without reference to marriage and the Fall); and at that very hour, J. H. Adamson (*Harvard Theological Review*, 53 (1960), 269-276) was intent on reaching forth through the theological thicket to demonstrate the risks surrounding us by arguing that it is Milton's symbolism, not abstraction, that is significant, that Milton's thought is unquestionable emanationist, that there is no point in looking for minute theological differences between Neoplatonist and Christian Platonist—though, ironically, cheek by jowl with Adamson in the same issue, and without any reference to Milton, T. A. Wasserman, S. J., was most carefully relating and differentiating Augustine's devotional theory of the Trinity and the metaphysics of Plotinus. (See 264-267.) Thus warned, we may proceed through the ambiguities in the name of Eve, noted by D. C. Allen (*MLN*, 74 (1959), 681-683) and only too well known to fallen Adam and the goodlier of his sons, and so, with Mother Mary Christopher Pecheux, to "The Concept of the Second Eve in *Paradise Lost*" (*PMLA*, 75 (1960), 359-366), which very properly and illuminatingly focusses our attention not only on Raphael's annunciation but on the significant parallels and contrasts (supported by patristic commentary) between the Annunciation and Eve's fall, and on Eve's secure and subordinate place in Michael's books. This is a beautiful demonstration of Milton's use for his peculiar purposes of traditional devotional patterns, even though we may modify our sense of the poem's "eventual happy ending" by recalling that the second Eve does not actually appear in it, and that when she does appear in Milton's poetry—like Una, Sapience, Shee, and the Lady—she is represented as involved in the perplexing existential situation.

As is perhaps but just, though unusual, some of the serenest work

of the past months has been concerned with Milton's last poems. It is interesting that Saillens, though inclined to regard *Paradise Regained* as negative and restrictive (which, as to what Satan represents, it bluntly is) and *Samson Agonistes* as political (which, as commentary, it certainly is in part), nevertheless gently appraises the one in terms of the imitation of Christ and the other with reference to Racine's Port-Royal preface to *Phèdre*. Neither of these matters is specified in the context of A. S. P. Woodhouse's firm appraisal (against Hebraism and Hellenism: *UTQ*, 28 (1959) 205-222) of the tragic effect produced through *Samson* by the adaptation of classical form to Christian content and outlook. Despite a rooted distaste for the name of Dalila and a consequent underplaying of her role in the process, Woodhouse's analysis of Samson's movement from despair and remorse through repentance should put an end finally to the notion that Milton's poems have no middle but only unexpectedly circular returns. Indeed, it may induce someone to insist at last that they are all middle, and very much *in medias res*. This analysis is supported by a most perceptive appraisal of Milton's manipulation of classical convention (particularly as to the chorus) and by a neat discrimination of his tragic effect from the classical (especially Sophoclean) in comparison with Shakespeare; and also by the view of Christian tragedy this leads to, involving the firm recognition—all too unusual even in historical criticism these days, and one that Milton himself found it a hard task to learn—that the view depends on the Christian notion that suffering and adversity *are* blessings. It may be regretted that, having observed the tendency of patristic and medieval commentary to arrive at various and often mutually incompatible interpretations of the Samson story, Woodhouse plumps decisively for the "repentant-sinner-restored-to-God's-service" view (which is of course very Protestant) and declines to "complicate the question of the possibility of a Christian tragedy" by introducing the alternative, figural reading (which is not necessarily as mystical as many literary historians seem to think) of Samson as a "type". Milton's line is firm; but since it is principally occupied in reconciling the apparently mutually incompatible ideas that suffering and adversity are blessings with (as *De Doctrina* and *Paradise Lost* continually insist) the notion that God is merciful, we may suppose that his poetry did not end by declining the lesser incompatibilities it was dictated to make use of (any more than his married life did). *Samson Agonistes* is principally concerned after all with the doc-

trine of contrition; and the function of devotional typology is to focus attention on the Passion as a pattern to be imitated, even by God's Englishmen and despite both the legalism and the superstition that would divert attention from it. If we follow Woodhouse's authoritative exposition in enlarging its context, both Ann Gossman on ransom (*RN*, 13 (1960), 11-15) and G. R. Waggoner on the challenge to single combat in *Samson* (*PQ*, 39 (1960), 82-92) should help us to maintain perspective. It is ably sustained by the convergence, in Christ's progressive discovery of the significance of sonship, of Barbara Kiefer Lewalski's extensive analysis of the theme and structure of *Paradise Regained* as they are focussed on a dramatically developing character illustrating Milton's Christology (*SP*, 57 (1960), 44-71) and L. L. Martz's appraisal of the poem's combination of the meditative frugality of the *Georgics* with the meditative affection of the devotional tradition—with a wise (if surprising and not yet very thoroughly documented) reference to the Ferrar papers, which may induce us to look back through the Renaissance English tradition. It is remarkable that many interpreters these days preface their discourses with the observation that we can never hope to regain in its totality the reading of a Renaissance poem its contemporaries can be imagined to have enjoyed (like some *Paradise lost* to us). But this nearly always proves prefatory to some absolute assertion or complaint about other critical wrongheadedness. A survey of recent work suggests on the contrary that devoted and disciplined scholarship consistently enjoys the satisfaction of approaching and seeing the point.

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