Book Reviews

A. S. P. Woodhouse, *The Heavenly Muse: A Preface to Milton*, edited by Hugh MacCallum. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972. pp. 373. $20.00.

Soon after his retirement in 1964, A. S. P. Woodhouse began his third attempt since 1943 to put together a compendious study of Milton: but by a Miltonic irony, the "thin-spun thread" of his life was cut after only a few months at the task. Woodhouse's opening statement of "the nature of his effort and its aim," is an outline of the historical scholarly method which he intended to follow in the book. The statement is so lucid and so entirely right that it should be memorized as the literary scholar's Hippocratic oath (pp. 3-4, 99). Professor MacCallum, in trying to present a compendium of Woodhouse's writing, has included "four kinds of source for the material gathered in this volume: published articles; manuscript revisions of published articles; unpublished chapters in manuscript; public lectures." These sources cover a period of some twenty years, and the editor has elected to "weave together passages from two or more versions" of similar material. Deeply as Milton scholars are indebted to MacCallum's thorough effort, they must regret that Professor Woodhouse had not the time to carry out his own magnificent plan.

Another irony is the fact that the book's cost makes it unavailable to most students and to many teachers who would profit from Woodhouse's Milton criticism, both the considerable portion that has been published before and essays and lectures here offered for the first time.

The soundness of Woodhouse's Milton scholarship and his eminence as a teacher have been generally recognized far beyond Canada's borders for more than three decades. In reading through the material previously published, one becomes once more aware of how pervasive his criticism now is and of how many of his students (J. Max Patrick, Ernest Sirluck, and Arthur E. Barker among them) have become eminent Miltonists. This collection also reminds us that Woodhouse had a way of illuminating even Milton's major ideas with what seems little more than an incidental phrase. In introducing Milton's early sonnet *How Soon Hath Time*, for example, he comments: "All that is in a poet's power, and all that matters, is that by grace he may use his talent in God's service and with submission to his will" (p. 52). This paraphrase of Milton's concluding couplet causes the reader's mind to spring immediately to another sonnet, *When I Consider How My Light is Spent* and to the Invocation to Light at the beginning of Book III of *Paradise Lost*. Inherent in Woodhouse's phrase is Milton's idea of the function and process of grace itself. Thus Woodhouse illustrates in his own writing the manner in

which Milton himself makes language illustrate the processes which the words in themselves only label or describe. Further along in his discussion of the same sonnet are two very important points about the relationship of Milton's early poetry to the later epics and to *Samson Agonistes*: "Here in *How Soon Hath Time*, one encounters at last, though in simple and rudimentary form, the full Miltonic pattern and function (the resolutions of conflict by the imposition of aesthetic pattern)" (p. 52). This brief statement points to the consistency of Milton's moral and poetic vision and to the process through which Milton exercises his mind and art so that "grace" may function. This idea pervades Woodhouse's exegesis of the major poems.

Not every Milton scholar will entirely agree with all Woodhouse's conclusions: he warns on the first page, "It is arrogant of any critic, whatever his school, to imagine that he has said the last word on a subject, and naive of a reader to expect him to do so." The reader needs to remember this caveat when he comes to Woodhouse on the nature of Milton's idea of liberty. After quoting from *Of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*, one of Milton's magnificent statements on the obligation of the Christian to exercise the freedom that Christ has "bought" for mankind, he concludes: "The argument is applicable, of course, only to those whom Milton regards as true Christians, in whom alone he is interested. It assumes and perpetuates inequality by distinguishing between them and other men. The tendency of the argument is seen in Milton's denial of its benefits to Roman Catholics, to anyone indeed who will not acquiesce in his extreme reading of Christian liberty or grant to others in all circumstances the liberty of conscience which it prescribes. The failure resolutely to add equality to liberty makes Milton definitely inferior to Roger Williams as a theorist of liberty, and in other spheres besides the religious" (p. 105). No doubt in the light of twentieth-century political and religious principles, Woodhouse's conclusion is correct; but in a seventeenth-century context Milton's "distinction" seems more probably to have been a corollary of the now well-recognized necessity of guaranteeing the basic rights of freedom to minorities. The kind of "distinction" that Milton makes must have seemed to him, and to many of his English contemporaries, a minimum precaution against a coercive intolerance, much as twentieth-century liberals deny the right of Nazis and Communists to engage in activities that would eliminate all effective opposition.

There are a few other matters which might well have been clarified had Woodhouse been able to complete his work. For example, on page 285, he says that in the later books of *Paradise Lost* Satan becomes "less human and individualized." Surely the meaning is that the dramatic treatment which Milton accords him shows that Satan has become less angelic rather than less "human"; and when Adam behaves badly after the fall, he is in fact less human because he now partakes of the "pattern" established by Satan's perverse acts. This important dimension of the idea of "patterns" in Milton's epics is one that the book in its present form largely ignores, though Woodhouse insists upon "patterns" as the proper means of understanding and appreciating both Milton's literary art and his ideas.

In the same way in the very witty but too quick transition from *Of Education* to *Of Divorce* Woodhouse seems, probably inadvertently, to ignore this same dimension of pattern: "If we cannot get a teacher's college out of *Of Education* we are not likely to get a Reno out of the *Doctrine . . . of Divorce*," he says (p. 111). True, of course; but in the context of Milton's writing and his time, *Of Education* proposes not a Utopia but the means by which a man may make of himself a "true poem," and therefore capable of writing true poems, which are reflections of religious and ethical patterns — "The resolutions of conflict by the imposition of aesthetic pattern."

It is indeed unfortunate that Professor Woodhouse was unable to complete his study of Milton's theology, especially in the light of some of the recent work by Patrides, Hunter, and others, and to take cognizance of the controversy over whether or not *Christian Doctrine* is in fact entirely consistent with *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained.* As it stands, the massive synthesis of much of the theological material that is included in the book seems now tangential to the major issues that have been raised since Woodhouse wrote.

These regrets are elegiac reminders that the historical literary scholar inevitably is limited by his own time and place in the history of perception and knowledge; but Woodhouse has few equals in the long history of Milton scholarship.

DON E. RAY.

Peter Dixon, *The World of Pope's Satires*: *An Introduction to the Epistles and Imitations of Horace.* London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1970. Paperback, pp. xiv + 218. £1.20.

Mr. Dixon's title is accurately ambiguous for he examines both the world out of which Pope's later poems emerged and the microcosm which they create. Organising by topic ("Mammon," "the Stoic's pride"), Dixon moves freely between poems and background material. His examination of Pope's various tones — raillery, sociable urbanity, the passionate plain-speaking of *Epilogue to the Satires* — connects each with the eighteenth-century theories of satire and of human behaviour. Similarly, the conflict between "rival virtue" and "courtly pride" is supported by Roman theories and English economic or political realities.

The difficulties of this method of organisation and approach occasionally appear. Milieu may overwhelm the central material. Dixon demonstrates, for example, that Isaac Barrow made a distinction between the easy generosity of a rich man and genuine charity, but Barrow's having made that distinction neither strengthens nor weakens his argument that Pope made the same distinction between Bathurst's generosity and the Man of Ross' charity (pp. 149-52). Occasionally, too, his discussion does not consider all the available information. Associating Pope early in the book with conventional neo-classical attitudes towards decency and decorum (pp. 44-8), he later includes (p. 199), without comment, in a long quotation from *Epistle to A Lady,* the lines:

Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour,
Content to dwell in Decencies for ever.

However, such weaknesses are rare; more importantly, Dixon avoids the major pitfall of his method, that of losing sight of the poet as an individual because he is shown so clearly to be a man of his time. Repeatedly Pope is shown modifying or rejecting tenets of neo-classical convention (see for example, Pope and Horace's *Epistle* I, 1, pp. 157-60), and in the closing chapters Dixon defines Pope's particular positions towards two of the major philosophic problems of the eighteenth century — the conflict between Stoic and Epicurean and the spectrum between discord and harmony. Dixon asserts that, in Pope's poems, Stoic attitudes ". . . are subsumed under the more strenuous discipline of Christian fortitude" (p. 166). Further, Pope rejects both the flaccid cheerfulness of Epicurean disengagement and the rigid *Schema* of second-rate Augustan minds because of his awareness that Order is a precarious balance, "a flexible and dynamic state" (p. 196). A second danger in the Lovejovian method, that of wandering endlessly in well-trodden mazes, Dixon also handles skillfully. Commonplace ideas such as the contrast between raillery and railing (pp. 23-4) or the dispute between the Addisonian theory that merchant and landholder are mutually dependent and Tory mistrust of "the trading interest" are clearly but very concisely presented, while the emphasis of the book is upon less familiar material. Dixon's use of Castell's 1728 book on types of Roman villas is an excellent example of such material, useful to an analysis of Pope's ideas and simultaneously interesting in itself (pp. 70-5). Thus, the book is an introduction to the epistles and imitations in several senses: it describes the ideas and some techniques of the poems, fits these into the contexts of the age and of Pope's own ideas, and suggests several areas in which further and profitable research might be done.

Mr. Dixon ends his "Notes on Texts and Titles" with the statement that "words supplied by the happy conjectures of editors have . . . been assimilated without benefit of square brackets . . ." (p. xiv). In a world so filled with discord that one man's happy conjecture may be another's mad eclecticism, I prefer square brackets to silent assimilations. But this flaw, though irritating, is minor.

The one general criticism which may be made of *The World of Pope's Satires* is that it lacks a strong sense of chronological development in poems written between 1731 and 1738. In 1969, a year after Dixon's book first appeared in hard cover, Maynard Mack made, in *The Garden and The City*, a very intelligent but very rigorous demand that we see a specific pattern of development in these poems. Thus, what may seem a weakness in Dixon becomes, in fact, a strength, for his treatment of background and poems, flexible and varied in topic and approach, provides an alternative to Mack. As Dixon says, "order and energy co-exist," and his book serves to remind us of the energy which underlies and vitalises Mack's vision of order.

HELEN O. MOLITOR

Stuart Curran and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr., eds. *Blake's Sublime Allegory: Essays on The Four Zoas, Milton & Jerusalem.* University of Wisconsin Press, 1973. pp. 384. $17.50.

A commendable variety of critical approaches to Blake's prophecies is offered in the fourteen essays comprising this work. Most heartening to Blake students is that the collection, in total, gives a decided emphasis to structural matters and presentational methods as related to themes rather than favouring expositions of Blakean concepts divorced from artistic contexts.

The editors themselves contribute structural analyses, with Wittreich discussing "Blake's Epics and the Milton Tradition" and Curran "The Structures of *Jerusalem.*"

In his article, "Opening the Seals," Wittreich does justice to both Milton and Blake as he reveals their kinship in the fusion of epic mode and prophetic impulse. The dependence of both writers upon structural elements of the Book of Revelation is discussed and numerous critical stances of Milton's (many of them linked to David Pareus) are shown to be relevant to an appreciation of both traditional and innovative features in Blake's work.

In his discussion of *Jerusalem,* Curran concludes that what Blake achieved was ". . . a literary form of true Gothic dimensions." The essayist's method is to focus on complex inter-relations of often-repeated structures in order to illustrate that the poem is really shaped into a single archetypal pattern.

W. J. T. Mitchell's substantial "Dramatic Structure as Meaning in *Milton*" describes the tripartite phases of the poem and relates them to its fundamental meaning. Initially, Mitchell lucidly discusses the Bard's Song, with which James Rieger struggles in his article "The Hem of their Garments." Fundamentally, Mitchell demonstrates how *Milton* "calls the reader, not to contemplation, but to action;" incidentally he draws a number of valid, spontaneous analogies between Blake and Coleridge.

Two articles in the collection are expressly centered on Blake's pictures. Though often highly conjectural, John E. Grant's discussion of the "Night Thoughts" engravings in relation to the *Vala* manuscript is characterized by close scrutiny and alert commentary. Irene Tayler is less flexible as she studies the designs of Comus and their influence upon *Milton.*

Somewhat experimental in approach is "On Reading *The Four Zoas,*" by Mary Lynn Johnson and Brian Wilke. It is an attempt to waken personal response, often by attaching contemporary relevance to materials of the poem. More successful at expanding reader response is the traditional approach of Roger R. Easson in his discussion of "William Blake and His Reader in *Jerusalem.*" He considers a variety of authorial stances in clarifying reader-writer relationships and especially underlines the faith which Blake "vested in a hypothetical audience of the future."

Two articles on time and space by Ronald Grimes and Edward Rose, respectively, really add little to past critical considerations

of this topic. Grimes does contribute a somewhat helpful differentiation between eschatology and prophecy applicable to the Blake canon; but Rose simply casts the oft-discussed "eternal now" concept into Paul Tillich's language and rather self-consciously dedicates himself to finding parallels to Blakean thought in American writers.

"The Figure of the Garment," by Morton D. Paley, is another work too narrowly centered on concepts. Supposing critical ignorance because of limited discussion, the writer proceeds to attach the "old truths" to a rather formidable catalogue of references.

"Babylon Revisited," by Jean Hagstrum, explores the Luvah-Vala love relationship in its ideal and fallen manifestations. The article remarks categories of sexual perversions treated by Blake which inevitably lead to abominations in church and state. Hagstrum's impulse to make biographical applications sometimes deprives Blake of a deserved measure of projectivity.

Editorial irony may have been at work in the placing of articles at the beginning and end of the collection which decry criticism but do not desist from it. Nonetheless, Jerome McGann, in his "Uses of Blake Criticism," partially succeeds in explaining away the "apparent paradox" implicit in Blake's aim of creating a system without imposing himself upon his audience; and Karl Kroeber, in "Delivering *Jerusalem*," does some solid comparative commentary on Joyce and Blake.

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Books Received

BARR, ROBERT, *The Measure of the Rule.* L. K. Mackendrick, ed. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1973. pp. 308. $4.95.

BROADBENT, JOHN, ed., *John Milton: Introductions.* Toronto: Macmillan; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973. pp. 344. $15.75 (hardbound) $5.25 (paperback).

DE GELDER, WILLEM, *A Dutch Homesteader on the Prairies,* trans. H. Ganzevoort. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1973. pp. 92. $2.95.

DENNY, NEVILLE, ed., *Medieval Drama.* Stratford-upon-Avon Studies No. 16. London: Edward Arnold, 1973. pp. 254. $13.95.

FRYE, NORTHROP, *Fools of Time: Studies in Shakespearean Tragedy.* Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1973. pp. 121. $2.95.

JOHNSON, LEE M., *Wordsworth and the Sonnet. Anglistica* XIX, 1973. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1973. pp. 183. d.cr. 72.00.

KIDD, WALTER E., ed., *British Winners of the Nobel Literary Prize.* Don Mills: Burns & MacEachern Limited; Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973. pp. 280. $10.25.

KILGALLIN, Tony, *Lowry.* Erin, Ontario: Press Porcepic, 1973. pp. 211.

LEGGATT, ALEXANDER, *Citizen Comedy in the Age of Shakespeare.* Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1973. pp. 167. $10.00.

MCALINDON, T., *Shakespeare and Decorum.* Toronto, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1973. pp. 227. $16.25, £4.95.

JOHN MILTON, *A Maske: The Earlier Versions,* S. E. Sprott, ed. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1973. pp. 230. $25.00.

NOVIK, MARY, *Robert Creeley: An Inventory, 1945-1970.* Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973. pp. 210. $6.00.

PEARSALL, DEREK and SALTER, ELIZABETH, *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World.* Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1973. pp. 252. $25.00.

SWINDEN, PATRICK, *An Introduction to Shakespeare's Comedies.* Toronto, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1973. pp. 188. $9.75.