Carol Chillington Rutter. *Documents of the Rose Playhouse*. The Revels Plays Companion Library. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984. Pp. ix, 246. \$29.50.

In her Preface, the author outlines the intent, the form and the expectations of this volume:

This book is a 'documentary life': a collection of manuscripts selected and arranged to chronicle the day-to-day operation of one Elizabethan playhouse, the Rose, over the fifteen years of its existence. My objectives in compiling this life have been two-fold. First, to present these lively documents in such a way as to release their original energy again, to recreate the push and shove of the Elizabethan playhouse. Second, to introduce students to the possibilities and methods of documentary research by exposing them to the variety of material that survives for this period and by suggesting some ways of interpreting that material.

After the Preface and the Introduction, the book takes the form of a chronological account of the documentary materials remaining which pertain to the history of the Rose and those associated with it. It is consistently organized with an explanatory note before each manuscript extract and these stretch from 10 January 1586/7 with the Deed of Partnership in the Rose Playhouse to January 1604-February 1606 with the Sewer Records (where the Rose is mentioned for the last time). There are two indexes; the first of these lists all plays associated with the Rose and then indexes references to all plays mentioned in the Introduction (*but not* in the main body of the documentation) and the second is a general index of names and main topics.

The Introduction concentrates on Philip Henslowe and seeks to re-evaluate his character in the light of the evidence afforded by both modern scholarship on the Elizabethan theatre in general and by a fresh examination of the Rose documentation. The Victorian image of Henslowe as a "mercenary capitalist" is contrasted with the simple truth of the economics of the Elizabethan theatre - it existed to make a profit and James Burbage, with whom Henslowe is compared, becomes much more coldly mercenary in the comparison. Henslowe was "landlord" and "bankmanager" to the Rose companies and while clearly he did make a profit, so did they for

The Elizabethan playhouse was organized to make money. From Henslowe's point of view, or from Alleyn's, from Burbage's, or from Shakespeare's, the most successful play, the play that would run the longest and reach the widest audience, was the most lucrative play.

This emphasis on the economic facts of playhouse operation is, in my judgement, entirely in keeping with the evidence which remains (both for the Rose and for other playhouses, e.g., Paul's), and the arguments for the re-evaluation of Henslowe's character, I find convincing.

Sometimes, however, Ms Rutter's attempts to lead inquiry in new areas of investigation is based on less sure ground for she speculates expansively on an entry in

Henslowe's accounts for 1 December 1597; this reads as an outlay for 'bornes womones gowne.' Ms Rutter at that point suggests that men (like William Borne or Bird) may have been cast instead of boys "in many female roles: Shakespeare's Volumnia, Juliet's Nurse, Cleopatra, Lady Macbeth, Paulina and Mistresses Overdone and Quickly are cases in point." Are we really to imagine Juliet's Nurse in drag?

Not merely is the evidence here too slender for such a drastic re-evaluation of the accepted doctrine about adult stage practice, the comments do not take the age of the players clearly into account. How old was Borne? How old was a 'boy'? At Paul's the children were sometimes in the early twenties or even, on occasion in their middle age. While to suggest that we should reconsider the notion of boys as women is a valid exploratory suggestion, this comment implies much more certainty that the very slim evidence of a single account entry would warrant. The phrase 'Borne's woman's gown' might mean no more than the dress for the woman playing with or opposite Borne or be a special instance for a parody or comic show.

This note is, however, an exception for the prefatory comments on the documents are generally judicious and accurate but, inevitably, the views of the author colour the way in which the document is read. There is always this problem in the presentation of commentary and while Ms Rutter's analyses of the Elizabethan stage scene are always succinct and entertaining, there remains an argument for less discursive commentary and more straightforward explication of omissions and contradictions within the documents themselves.

The last section of the Introduction deals with the Editorial Procedures and Ms Rutter declares that

To have modernized the spelling would have meant making interpretative decisions that eradicated some of the information the documents contain and that compromised their integrity as primary sources. (pp. 28-9)

She is, of course, firmly placing herself in the R.B. McKerrow tradition, but how far is this decision in keeping with her frank admission that "None of the documents presented here is new"? If the documents are accessible elsewhere in old spelling, surely this was a golden opportunity to present them transcribed into modern form as is the normal practice of the Revels plays series. She argues that "old spelling will present few problems to the modern reader," but what, for example, would the average graduate student of today make of *Itm pd for bryngen of dellberds*' (p.48) or *Rd at brandimer the 8 of maye 1592*' (p.59)? It is easy to be wise after the event, but since all these documents are available in the original, why not produce this volume in modern spelling (with obscure or doubtful forms cited in the original)?

One of the primary purposes of this volume is to make these documents more accessible to students, but I fear that this is not achieved by using old spelling which, especially with Henslowe's idiosyncrasies, is often almost impenetrable – and for difficult interpretations there are seldom any explanatory notes. Furthermore I find the lack of an index to plays which also lists occurrences cited in the documents as well as the Introduction a weakness; it is not possible to use this

volume to determine the dates on which a particular play was performed, except by reading through the whole book.

The author points out that the Rose may have eventually ceased operation because of a tripling in the parish tax demand; Henslowe felt that economically it was no longer worth the outlay. This explanation of its demise is wholly in keeping with the nature of his relationship to the building. From the beginning, Henslowe, like the other theatrical entrepreneurs of the age, was in the business of making a living and he did make considerable profits from his venture. Ms Rutter has done valuable service in convincingly denying the Shylock-like image assumed for so long of Philip Henslowe and she has also clearly demonstrated that theatre history is not just the physical shape of a stage of a theatre building, but a living pageant of the lives of those involved where Alleyn's letters to his wife Joan (nee Henslowe) have as much relevance as an edict of the Privy Council.

While I have reservations about old spelling and the weaknesses of the indexing, this is a valuable contribution to the theatre history of the Elizabethan era and the Rose surely now awaits a study which will incorporate this documentation with its known repertoire and the lives of its players, to produce a living history of this playhouse.

REAVLEY GAIR, *University of New Brunswick*

Robert Wilcher. *Andrew Marvell*. New York (Cambridge and London UK): Cambridge University Press, 1985. Pp. xii, 191. \$34.50.

Robert Wilcher's book on Marvell, one in a series of Introductory Critical Studies of British and Irish Authors, is intended for "new readers," that is, "sixth-form students and undergraduates" (ix). It consists in a short chapter on "Marvell's Career in Its Context" and seven chapters of commentary on his English poems, the last ending with a brief description of his controversial prose. It has a useful bibliography of more than one hundred items. It has no index, but locating the commentaries on particular poems is easy, thanks to a detailed table of contents.

Six of the chapters of commentary are devoted to configurations of poems established by Wilcher's view of their themes and literary methods; the last chapter of commentary treats *Upon Appleton House* by itself. Wilcher does not try to organize the poems according to a theory of the poet's development, though he does assume that his political commitments during the Protectorate and the Restoration led Marvell to abandon lyric for panegyric and satire.

In the preamble to Chapter 2, the first of the chapters of commentary, Wilcher discusses a characteristic of Marvell that he thinks might frustrate those new readers who expect from poetry a straightforward communication: "that air of detachment" which grows out of a critical attitude toward experience and towards attempts to render experience within the bounds of particular perspectives and particular literary conventions. Taking off from T.S. Eliot's remarks on the quality of Marvell's wit, he describes this detachment as one of the most valuable qualities of the poet's art: the agent which preserves "that very openness to the possibility of alternative emphases or attitudes" (13).