invitation to the wedding banquet that marks the drama's honourable close.

General readers as well as specialists in theatre owe a debt of gratitude to the editors and translators in the Carleton Renaissance Plays Series. Except for occasional mistakes of fact in the introduction and notes about some Italian landmarks and novelistic character sources, the texts provide informative introductions to authors and works that deserve to be well-known. One can hope that these pioneering efforts at translation will lead to actual performances. Every admirer of Renaissance theatre should look forward with eagerness to the plays that will be appearing in this series.

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J.W. Williamson. *The Myth of the Conqueror. Prince Henry Stuart, A Study in 17th Century Personation*. New York: AMS Press, 1978. Pp. x, 219. \$21.00.

Like the lives of Edward V and Edward VI, other royal children cut off at an early age, that of Prince Henry, eldest son of James I and Anne of Denmark, transports us into a world of speculative fantasies. Dead at eighteen in 1612, he carried with him the hopes of those who yearned for a stalwart ninth to add to the list of eight English Henries – an event forlornly achieved (though Professor Williamson's tale does not stretch so far) with the pathetic assumption of that title, in Rome at the tail-end of the Stuart dynasty's fortunes, by Cardinal Henry, Bonnie Prince Charlie's younger brother. Henry IX was to be an unlucky designation; and the Tudor Harry's ghost might well have chuckled.

As the author is concerned to show at length, the Prince of Wales was from birth the centre of some fairly continuous mythologizing; the process of attempting to shape a ruler's personality, his course of action and future destiny, is the end to which the chapters of this study are devoted.

A compact book treating a quite brief life, this illustrated study attempts something relatively different from the usual kind of biography. The impulse to this kind of work comes from at least three sources: not only biography, but literary criticism and iconographic studies as well. As the subtitle makes clear, it has affinities, first, with recent work like Stephen J. Greenblatt's *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and His Roles* and his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: More to Shakespeare*, in which a life is conceived as a series of conscious iconic gestures, "speaking pictures" dramatizing the symbolic roles the protagonist elects for himself from the welter of experience and turns to meaningful dramatic account: life made artful, we might say, by an italicization of the moment. Beyond that, this study reveals the influence of twentieth-century criticism of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama (J. Leeds Barroll and John Doeblen are recent examples) in which the chief actors are seen to assume attitudes and postures that suddenly, by a kind of freezing into emblem, confer upon their actions a universal, idealized significance, a convention exploited particularly, as Professor Orgel has shown, in the masques of the Stuart court. And most important of all, of course, this study follows in the steps of art-historians like Roy Strong and Frances A. Yates on the symbolic lives in literature and art of Elizabeth I, Prince Henry's godmother. In general, however, Professor Williamson's work, though

well-researched and skillfully organized, and written for the most part in fluent, vigorous prose, lacks the panache of the first and inspires less credibility than the second of these influences; while in comparison with the third it achieves an altogether more modest significance. That may lie in the very nature of its subject. The author has chosen to apply the techniques of interpretative biography and mythographic criticism to an existence that hardly ever attained to being a conscious life, one cut short at the moment when the act of "personation" was only just beginning. The book is essentially an assemblage of persuasions, flatteries, preparations and anticipations, but the lack of fruition flattens the final effect: all prologue, no Acts.

Because the small central figure represents an opportunity or occasion for most of the time, we see him through the eyes of others and through a literary mist, no real personality ever fully emerging to manipulate the roles devised and urged upon him at length. In severe contrast to Elizabeth, say, there seems a lack of vital intelligence at the core, a thrust of personality that allows for the creation of myth and makes it credible when it appears. With a minor like Henry Stuart, the failure to apprehend the role *as* role seems to result, finally, in the role becoming a strait jacket.

Of the seven chapters, the first concerns the infancy of its subject and the beginning of the mythologizing process; the last treats the posthumous reappearance of the myth, after Henry's demise had cleared the way for a different mythology to be even more dangerously enacted by his brother, Charles I; and the five chapters in between focus mainly on the symbolism attached to Henry's person by a host of contributors, both literary (Raleigh, Jonson and Chapman among them), and political. First warred over by his parents in a particularly squalid domestic atmosphere, then courted by an aggressively Protestant court-party whose excesses alarmed the lovers of peace, at the end the prince begins to assert his independence in a mini-court of his own, apparently ready to strike out, alarmingly, on a course of his own. Williamson interestingly speculates that the arrival in England of German Protestant leaders to witness the marriage of Henry's sister, Elizabeth, to Frederick, the Count Palatine, offered an occasion for the mischief-making to begin. Merciful Providence intervened. Thames water and typhoid fever are the traditional culprits, but Williamson puts the case for poisoning, by Jesuits among others: "It is just possible that someone in England late in 1612 understood that the Myth of the Conqueror was about to become a bloody reality, and rather than see England and all of Europe torn asunder to satisfy the implanted ambitions of an eighteen-year-old prince, someone possibly ended his career as warrior before it could get underway. This is speculation, of course, but it is speculation that deserves further investigation" (pp. 168-9). But does it?

Much of what we read about Henry here is available, in rather conventional form, in Akrigg's *Jacobean Pageant*, which gives a balanced view of Henry's importance by treating his slender story as part of a larger historical context. In contrast, Williamson's isolation of Henry and his application of interpretative techniques of literary criticism to events in his life make for a scenario both heavily plotted and full of dark portents. Conventional forms of praise, glancing allusions to myth are drawn out into full-blown treatments of mythographic patterns. A fair example occurs at the very beginning (pp. 2-4) where the author notes that at his baptism Henry was shown to ambassadors on a bed whose coverlet was embroidered with the story of Hercules — a single bare fact that occasions an excursus of several pages on the various applica-

tions and meanings of the Hercules myth in the context of the Catholic-Protestant struggle. Here the number of references supposedly embodied in the very conventional allusion occasionally reminds the reader of the exegesis of Spenser's mythography in Book V of *The Faerie Queene*, a labour frequently in danger of becoming an end in itself.

The core of the author's argument in the fourth chapter, "The Rival Myth: Warfare vs. Fertility," in which he assembles, from an admirably extensive set of addresses and exhortations in poetry and prose, the materials for the two models of action offered to the young prince. The technique is that of mosaic, a large picture built up from innumerable small details; at the end, nevertheless, the antithesis seems fairly undynamic, the whole approach a little too schematized and programmatic, the patterns literarily rather than historically neat. That a bellicose Protestant party sought control of Henry's mind is beyond doubt, but that all those who expressed a more irenic view of life can be classed together as the Opposition devising mitigating strategies strains belief. Again, the thesis is rather spoiled by too much popular Freudianism, with its "phallic thrust of sword and lance" counterbalancing the supposedly more feminine myth of peace and fruitfulness; and also by a kind of literary detection that frequently goes beyond the evidence ("Chapman ... could observe at close quarters," "Chapman must have stood by and listened"). One would have liked to see more discrimination in the handling of the evidence, which remains remarkable for its fullness rather than for the ways in which it is disposed and evaluated.

These reservations apart, *The Myth of the Conqueror* provides a concise and convenient collection of documents relating to a minor though fascinating phase of English history. The fifteen illustrations provide a concrete image for a figure who frequently threatens to evaporate into mere martial Idea; and in the final chapter, "The Myth Prolonged," Williamson achieves a control over his materials and a firmness of view about Henry that is both shrewd and persuasive. The reader's final reaction to this aborted story is likely to be one of relief and an augmentation of his sense of irony: had he lived, what would this young puritan-in-formation have made of his nephew, the glaringly human Charles; and might he not have found a match in the Catholic bigotry of his other nephew, the intolerable James, of whom one of Louis XIV's courtiers is supposed to have said, "When you hear him talk, you know why he is here."

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Douglas Radcliff-Umstead, editor. *Human Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. University of Pittsburgh Publications on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Vol. IV. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: K & S Enterprises, 1978. Pp. 193. \$15.00.

This collection of essays, as the editor explains in his Preface, developed from a lecture series sponsored by the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at the University of Pittsburgh in 1976. The series is both interdisciplinary, representing departments of English, French and Italian, Germanics, Medicine and Fine Arts, and