North Central Conference of the Renaissance Society

News

Members are urged to plan promptly for our next conference, 20-22 April, at Carleton University in Ottawa. Further information is available from Don Beecher, Department of English, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, K1S 5B6.

Further reports on members' research activities will appear in the next number of the journal.

Survey of Teaching Activities

Our first survey of teaching among our membership will be of great interest to many of us, although, as might be expected, it is less satisfactory than the preceding survey of scholarly activities. One of the chief interests of a survey of courses is to show the members of each discipline what kinds of things are going on in sister-disciplines – something which many of us have only sketchy notions of even on our own campuses but which is particularly important in Renaissance studies. Ideally we should have all the news from the departments of Philosophy, History, Art and Music History, History of Science and Medicine, and Modern Languages, and the field of Middle Latin. In our organization, however, as in all parallel North American ones, the membership (as reflected in these reports) is dominated by English departments, for reasons with which most readers are familiar. Organizers recognize this difficulty, and make particular efforts to interest scholars in other disciplines. Some of these scholars feel, with more or less justification, that Renaissance problems seen from the point of view of an English specialist are not ones in which they are always interested, or that these problems are being treated parochially or even superficially.

Nevertheless the need for dialogue about our teaching and research among our specialist fields is paramount. If it sometimes seems to founder on the lack of a common approach, of a common area of interest, or of a common specialist language, or on an exasperatingly commonplace level of generality, one must charitably remember that the most fruitful effects of dialogue often grow from subsequent reflection and not from what is said on the occasion. In an historical field like ours, the doctrine that each should attend only to his own specialty often has short-term benefits of rigorous accomplishment in depth but seems to your secretary to be ultimately a counsel of despair. We need the stimulus of discovering

the bearing of other lines of teaching and research upon our own, at the same time that we need to avoid facile, premature generalization.

Another matter of importance which our report cannot reflect is the particular constellation of courses of which our Renaissance courses form a part on each campus. For undergraduate study, difficulties concerning sequential presentation of Renaissance materials within larger historical units, and of the representation of Renaissance materials in elementary courses are significant, and often relate to an anti-historical bias arising from a multitude of causes. Two respondents, for instance (one in Philosophy, another in English), reveal in different ways the trend in departments of Philosophy to de-emphasize the history of thought, with the result that the history of thought often becomes the preserve of scholars with historical interests but without philosophical training. Whether the demand is, for instance, for a historical logic, structuralism, semiotics, a sociological or anthropological approach, or merely modern relevance, the historical aspect of our field is likely to suffer in nearly all departments. At the same time, these trends may have already passed their apogee and are in any case not ones towards which many of us wish to take up merely adversary positions. It is only a pity that we are not yet able to discuss here the relation and comparative standings of historically and more theoretically oriented studies in our various institutions, as well as the position of Renaissance courses in these institutions' total curricula.

Your secretary is most grateful to all those who reported. Except when an inquiry is very likely, names of respondents are excluded here by restrictions on space, but questions can be directed to respondents through this office (Hieatt-Somerset, Department of English, The University of Western Ontario, London, Canada, N6A 3K7).

We turn first to *undergraduate work*. Among *interdepartmental courses* in the area of the Renaissance, The Adventure of the Renaissance at York University (Toronto) is probably the most successful in terms of enrolment (ca. 200), partly because by taking it undergraduates can satisfy the Humanities requirement for which they are all responsible. A selection of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* has been the core text for two years. The course has dealt with the series *humanitas, potestas, societas, proportio, religio, transformationes*. The following are read and studied: Castiglione, Cellini, Erasmus, Galileo, Machiavelli, Marlowe's *Faustus*, Montaigne, More, *Symposium*, Shakespeare's *Tempest*. Used are Hillerbrand, *Protestant Reformation*; Rice, *Foundations of Modern Europe*, Wadley, *Michelangelo*; Ross, *Portable Renaissance Reader*; Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*. Slides and recordings play a large part in teaching. Staff bear witness to the serious intellectual work and enjoyment in the course (chaired by Gwenda Echard, French). A similar (but elective) course is given at The University of Western Ontario, but enrolment has not reached twenty in two years, and serious involvement of a sizable interdepartmental team becomes difficult to justify. Victoria College of the University of Toronto has an introductory course, Renaissance Culture, on representative figures of the Renaissance (Petrarch to Shakespeare). It is described by another correspondent as a survey of developments in the arts, thought, and science, concentrating on their impact on literary and visual artifacts. The State University of New York at Buffalo has one joint history, music, and art course in

the Renaissance. Guelph (Ont.) offers Medieval and Renaissance Culture (some of the major sources of Christian and modern thought in the works of representative writers). The Medieval and Renaissance Colloquium of the University of Michigan offers a slate of interdepartmental courses each term, drawing on English, History, Political Science, the Law School, etc. The Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies of Ohio State offers Renaissance Florence, and has had available for some years a major in Medieval and Renaissance Studies. At the graduate level the Center offers another interdisciplinary course, changing annually (e.g., Medieval and Renaissance Epic). Barnard College, with the help of an NEH grant, has initiated a course studying courts and their mythology — Charlemagne, the Este, and Elizabeth I. Akron College has planned a team-taught course on Elizabethan nationalism in literature and politics, perhaps centred around the Henry IV tetralogy and studying English poetic attempts to surpass Continental models, and literature in praise of Gloriana which affirms the English national identity. A senior Honours Seminar explores myths of the courtier and the Golden Age. University College of the University of Toronto offers History of the Western Theatre from the Middle Ages to 1660. Queen's (Ont.) offers Petrarca and Boccaccio in translation, although it is not clear in what sense this is interdepartmental except in enrolment.

In the matter of new ideas, respondents in some cases threw out what are obviously no more than interesting talking points or reaffirmed faith in practices which are now fairly familiar. Other ideas were presented in terms of incipient courses, or current ones, as above. Bloomsburg State College (Pa.) has been discussing a team-taught English Roots of the American Experience, allowing ample scope for Renaissance studies, and an interdepartmental epic course — Homer to Milton. In the Ph.D. programme of the Graduate Centre for Study of the Drama at the University of Toronto, a course in the problems of preparing Renaissance texts for performance takes as reference point a group of plays, 1601-07, including *Measure for Measure*, in which the device of a disguised duke or prince is used: Marston's *The Fawn* was to be followed through printing practices; intellectual milieu; materials for explanatory notes; techniques for establishing textual authority; and (in the matter of performance) "dated" sensibilities and values; speaking untranslatable language; reconstruction, replica, or adaptation; problems of technical production; rehearsal; and, if possible, production. A correspondent teaching drama at Michigan State is concerned with how slides, tapes, and videotapes make students aware of the need to be both readers and theatre-goers; and at Youngstown State (Ohio) a teacher of the English 16th century and Milton claims great success in using the language laboratory. Attending it regularly, students choose from among numerous recordings of professional actors reading the assignments. Recording his own lectures on occasion for hearing sessions in the laboratory, the teacher uses the liberated class-time to permit students to read poetry aloud. H.R. Secor (French, University of Toronto) suggests graduate seminars, possibly as regional colloquia, in the History of Printing and in Renaissance Palaeography. He points also to the lack of readily available, good English or French (particularly important in Canada) translations of certain essential texts (e.g., Petrarch's *Secretum*, Ficino's *Commentary on the Symposium*, More's *Utopia* (in French)). A correspondent at Wayne State wants seminars in Renaissance intellec-

tual history, and a Canadian correspondent (a member of an English department) asks resoundingly, "Should not English departments in Canadian universities become departments of World Literature?"

For undergraduate courses concerned with the *English Literary Renaissance* members from seventeen institutions reported, large and small, thirteen American and six Canadian. Apart from the appearance of these materials in introductory courses and in the first half of one-year surveys of British literature, they may be represented in a single English Renaissance literature course (three) or a course in a longer period (1300-1650: one; 1485-1714: one). More frequently they are divided into three or four courses: two courses in poetry and prose, respectively of the 16th century (Tudor, Humanism and Elizabethan: 11, one of these with special emphasis on Spenser) and the 17th century (Jacobean, Jacobean and Caroline: 11, one with special emphasis on Milton); one course on Renaissance drama (6) or Medieval and Renaissance drama (4); or the Renaissance drama may be split into two courses, roughly Tudor (2) or the beginnings through Elizabethan (1) and Jacobean-Caroline (2). In one instance the poetry and prose of both centuries also appear as one course. Almost every institution has in addition at least one Shakespeare course including sometimes a course in *Hamlet* (2) and, no doubt, in other single plays. Michigan State has three Shakespeare courses (non-majors, majors, seminar). Seven institutions have Milton courses; two have Spenser courses. Windsor has a Spenser-Milton course; Carleton a Chaucer-Spenser course; Central State a Chaucer-Renaissance course. The character of English departmental requirements (e.g., one course, or none, before 1800) and sequences (introductory through seminar or study-course) is not given here, although one of the most interesting and unusual is that of Barnard College: all English majors are required to take a junior-year colloquium on the period 1500-ca. 1750, or they may substitute three courses in this period, exclusive of the Shakespeare course.

For *M.A. and Ph.D. programmes in English*, statements must be interpreted with caution, because circumstances apart from titles of courses are likely to alter cases rather more than with undergraduate programmes. Sometimes listed courses may not be offered annually or may be offered infrequently. Some respondents simply stated that their institutions did or did not offer the M.A. or the Ph.D. in English, and such information is not included here.

Among larger institutions Ohio State offers Renaissance Prose, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Renaissance Poetry. Michigan offers at the M.A. level Renaissance (one term) plus a proseminar in Renaissance literature. At the Ph.D. level three to four doctoral courses in English are offered each term, with attention to cyclical representation of periods and genres, so that a Renaissance course will generally be offered every one to two terms. On the other hand the University of Toronto catalogues a profusion of courses: Medieval and Renaissance Latin Drama; Renaissance Images of Man; Songs and Sonnets: the Renaissance Lyric, 1500-1600; George Chapman; Spenser and the Spenserian Tradition (Raleigh to Yeats); Spenser and Sidney; Marlowe; English and Scottish Court Drama and Revels, 1485-1625; Shakespeare's Plays in Performance; Shakespeare's Comedies; Studies in Shakespeare's Tragedy; Shakespeare's Rivals: Dekker, Heywood, Middleton, Marston, Others; Political Plays of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries; Studies in Jacobean

Comedy; Studies in Jacobean Tragedy; Jonson, Donne, and their Successors; Studies in 17th-Century Prose; Studies in 17th-Century Poetry; Milton. The graduate programme in Renaissance Studies as such, however, was suspended because of financial restrictions.

Among other institutions with Ph.D. as well as M.A. programmes Bowling Green State gives Shakespeare and a seminar in Renaissance literature. Kent State offers Shakespeare, Renaissance Drama, Non-Dramatic Literature, 17th-Century Prose, Milton, and a seminar. Wayne offers a "standard run of courses." Western Ontario generally offers two or three Renaissance courses: at present Renaissance English Literary Humanism, Shakespeare, Platonism and Neoplatonism for Students of Literature. Michigan State gives a Shakespeare Seminar and Renaissance Drama, plus a seminar on Renaissance topics (e.g., Ben Jonson, pastoral).

At the M.A. level Carleton (Ottawa) has courses in Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton. Youngstown State (Ohio) offers Shakespeare, Renaissance Literature excluding Shakespeare, and a seminar in Studies in the Renaissance. Bloomsburg State College (Pa.) offers Elizabethan Poetry, Jacobean Drama, Shakespeare, Metaphysical Poetry, Milton. Northern Michigan offers its undergraduate courses plus a seminar. Akron follows the same plan with a seminar in Metaphysical Poetry. Guelph offers English Drama before Marlowe, *Hamlet*, other courses (e.g., English Bible) by arrangement. Windsor (Ont.) gives a Shakespeare course and a course in other Renaissance writers which varies from year to year.

Undergraduate and graduate programmes in History, Philosophy, Modern Languages, Middle Latin, Art History, Music History, and History of Science were reported too spottily to give more than a sampling to interested colleagues in other disciplines.

At the *undergraduate level* the Department of History at Queen's offers The Renaissance (15th century in Italy, including history of culture), Central European Reformation, the Church in the Late Middle Ages. At Carleton are given History of Europe in Renaissance and Reformation, Italian Renaissance, Historical Writings and Political Thought in the Italian Renaissance. Western Ontario offers Europe and England in the 16th and 17th centuries; The Reformation; England, 1399-1642; Age of the Renaissance. In French, York University (Ont.) offers at its Founders' College French Literature of the Renaissance, 16th-Century French Poetry. McMaster (Ont.) offers 16th-Century French Literature. Huron College (affiliated with Western Ontario) offers Humanisme et Renaissance, and Western Ontario offers Renaissance Literature. Italian undergraduate courses of the University of Toronto are Trends in Renaissance Thought, Renaissance Lyric Poetry, Renaissance Epic Poetry, Renaissance Comedy. Italian Renaissance Literature in English, and Petrarch and Boccaccio are offered at Western Ontario. Spanish-Italian at Queen's includes a seminar on *Don Quixote* and la novela picaresca, and an Italian Renaissance course. Western Ontario offers Spanish Prose of the Golden Age. The Spanish civilization course at Cleveland State currently emphasizes the Renaissance. In German at Waterloo is offered Humanism and Reformation (reading, interpretation, critical analysis of prescribed texts of Erasmus, Luther, Sachs, etc.). Western Ontario offers German Literature of the 16th and 18th centuries. At Carleton, in Art History, Renaissance courses are available on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th

year levels. Western Ontario offers Italian Renaissance Art; Northern Renaissance Art. The State University of New York at Brockport gives Northern Renaissance Painting, Early Renaissance Art, High Renaissance Art, Mannerism. The School of Architecture of Waterloo offers Renaissance to Rococo for a sense of periods and styles. At Guelph in Music there are two Renaissance Music History courses in addition to the Collegium Musicum and performing groups. Western Ontario offers Medieval and Renaissance Music.

At the *graduate level* in History, Queen's (M.A. and Ph.D.) offers Central European Reformation and The Church in the Later Middle Ages (given jointly with corresponding undergraduate courses as required). Western Ontario offers Selected Topics in the Renaissance and Reformation; Tudor and Early Stuart England. In French, Western Ontario offers Du Bellay's Poetry. Graduate courses in Italian at the University of Toronto are Italian Humanism in the 15th Century, Lyric Poetry from Petrarch to Tasso, Ariosto, 16th-Century Theatre, Boiardo and the 16th Century, "Carolingian" Poetry. In Spanish at Queen's are New Approaches to the Picaresque Genre, Lope de Vega, Don Quixote; at Western Ontario, Lope de Vega, Calderon and Contemporaries, Cervantes, Tirso de Molina, Golden Age Poetry, The Picaresque Novel. At the M.A. level in German at Waterloo are offered Andreas Gryphius and His Time (development from Humanism and Renaissance to Baroque). Western Ontario offers German Literature of the Reformation and Baroque.

A. KENT HIEATT, *Co-ordinating Secretary*