readers that the religious writer, the devotee of *philosophia Christi*, therefore deserves the best part of their attention. At least an equal share is being directed to the satirist, the witty critic of contemporary weaknesses. This is well in that students are led to discover, in the first place, some of Erasmus's most readable and lovable pages. Moreover, Dr. Sowards does not present satire as an end in itself but as a means to an end, that end being moral and religious uplift. He does, nevertheless, move away from Bainton's radical emphasis on Erasmus's spiritualism. It may not do full justice to Erasmus if the *Praise of Folly*, the *Colloquies* and also the *Ciceronianus* are presented primarily as satirical works. But then, how many incomprehensible, or at least unreadable, essays have been produced in an attempt to capture his complexity? One would certainly expect that Dr. Sowards's book will lead many readers to the point of developing their own approaches to Erasmus. The careful formulation of many brief statements makes it clear that a good deal more might be said on the point in question. For example, we read, and by the very formulation are invited to qualify, that "Erasmus had no very great interest . . . in visual art" and also "no very strong sense of history." "His works are bare of descriptions of nature" (yet, one might add, sufficiently document his appreciation of nature). Even the discussion on the precise degree of Erasmus's involvement in the composition of *Julius exclusus* will perhaps continue in spite of Dr. Sowards's persuasive arguments for his sole authorship.

After dealing with Erasmus's satirical writings and with his Christian scholarship, the book offers, with good reason, a slightly shorter treatment of his controversial writings and his protests against war. Especially impressive is the lucidity of the short section devoted to his controversy with Luther over Free Will. In his opening paragraph Dr. Sowards states calmly that Erasmus is almost unknown "to modern readers, even fairly sophisticated ones." One certainly wishes this little book a great many fairly sophisticated readers, for it is admirably suited to enlighten their ignorance concerning Erasmus.

PETER G. BIETENHOLZ, *University of Saskatchewan*

Joseph W. Houppert. *John Lyly*. Twayne English Authors Series, 177. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975. Pp. 169. \$8.25.

Twayne's English Authors Series generally serves the useful if unexciting purpose of providing up-to-date summaries of the work of, and the state of modern scholarship on, the various authors covered by the series. Houppert's Lyly volume deals with biographical information, Lyly's prose narratives, and the plays, and covers in workmanlike fashion, within the limitations noted in Houppert's Preface, both the works themselves and the critical ground up to the early 1970s. Houppert's labour does not seem, however, to have been one of great love: witness the weak and brief final chapter on Lyly's reputation and influence. It is only four pages long, lacks positive force, and certainly does not inspire the reader to take Lyly's works down from the shelf.

One trouble with the volume is a deadening excess of blow-by-blow, sometimes speech-by-speech plot summary: an excess even though the book is aimed at a readership of "students and teachers who [are] . . . not specialists in sixteenth-century literature" (Preface). Perhaps the series publisher insisted on this detail; if so, the insistence was a mistake. More-

over, the plot summaries are of course accompanied by running critical commentary; and the combined mass of plot detail and commentary both confuses the reader and on occasion seems to cause even Houppert to lose his way. On p. 101, for example, Houppert explains part of a scene in *Endimion* by using the very kind of topical-allusion criticism he has commented on unfavourably only six pages earlier; and on pp. 135-6 he writes of *Mother Bombie* as showing the triumph of life over chance—then outlines the purely “fortunate” events that lead to the play’s happy ending. Some plot matters, too, are inevitably left unexplained (for example, *Endimion*’s dream, pp. 105-6). It is also unfortunate that, because of space problems, interpretations which differ from Houppert’s are sometimes entirely relegated to the footnotes (as with *Loves Metamorphosis*), while Houppert’s own views are often stated as facts. Less plot summary would have allowed more space for different critical opinions.

Although Houppert brings much that is his own, and that is valuable, to this volume, he seems at times too willing to accept previous critical judgments as to the flaws in Lyly’s work. I also find it unfortunate that a book dealing with Lyly’s plays should contain so little about Lyly’s theatre—and that “the dramatic” is apparently equated by Houppert (p. 97) with changes in situations or in characters. Hence perhaps Houppert’s strange view that *Woman in the Moon* may be Lyly’s best comedy (p. 128), and his failure to see (p. 136) that the comic multiplications of *Mother Bombie* are an essential part of the play’s dramatic humour. Houppert’s decision not to include discussions of possible political allegory in the plays also seriously affects his critical judgments on plays such as *Endimion* and *Midas*.

A short review is no place for complex argument against a scholar’s literary interpretations; but I must enter a protest against some of Houppert’s views: for example, that in Lyly’s case, stylistically, “quantity determines quality” (p. 16); that Lyly’s chief theme is (that old chestnut) “the distinction between appearance and reality” (p. 17); that a novel is *per se* superior to a moral treatise (p. 41); that Lyly’s comedies do not deal significantly with the effects of lust (p. 53); that Lyly’s comedy of love and sex does not have much in common with Restoration comedy of manners (p. 147); that chance in earthly happenings “destroys the possibility of perception” (p. 94); and that Lyly had no thematic purpose in combining in *Midas* two stories of *Midas*’ folly rather than using just one (p. 114).

Houppert’s writing is sometimes sloppy (for example: “Compared to William Shakespeare or Edmund Spenser, Lyly’s literary output was slight”—p. 14; “How . . . can a girl disguised as a boy learn about herself when she, in fact, isn’t?”—p. 85; “the mythological and the pastoral gave way to the bourgeois and the drawing room”—p. 147). Unnecessary repetition and verbal awkwardnesses occur (see pp. 17-18 on Lyly’s style, and p. 65, “serve as commentators about”). Houppert also talks down to his readers. A quoted speech already described by Houppert (p. 32) as “mock-humble” also includes, within square brackets in its text, authorial comments pointing out the ironies. Stylistic popularization is attempted, in phrases such as “in true-blue English fashion” (p. 22), “the ‘diamonds-are-a-girl’s-best-friend’ tradition” (p. 76), “*vive la différence!*” (p. 97); these stick out oddly from the discussion of what are stylistically some of the most formal and elegant of Elizabethan dramatic comedies.

As a general introductory book on Lyly, I suppose that Houppert’s volume will be useful; but it seems unlikely to win for Lyly any new enthusiasts. It covers the ground (though not the historical and social contexts of Lyly’s work); it provides some new views; but there is little more to be said for it. Readers may wish to correct the reference on p. 96 to Dipsas

and Bagoa; this should be Dipsas and Geron. And why, when speculating (p. 14) on Lyly's reason for writing no more plays after the early 1590s, does Houppert not mention the closing down of the boys' companies which performed Lyly's dramatic work?

ANNE LANCASHIRE, *University of Toronto*

Thomas O. Sloan and Raymond B. Waddington, eds. *The Rhetoric of Renaissance Poetry: From Wyatt to Milton*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974. Pp. vi, 247. \$10.

The Rhetoric of Renaissance Poetry prints ten new essays that the editors believe mark a stage in the study of rhetoric and Renaissance poems. They claim that their subject has undergone "a standard evolutionary process—first primary exploration, then consolidation and refinement, and finally reaction, reform, and exploration of new directions" (p. 1). The editors also claim that their authors "are united in their belief that the understanding of Renaissance poetry requires painstaking attention to intellectual and literary traditions. And they are equally united in the conviction that the awareness of such contexts must not be permitted to substitute for critical sensitivity to the poems per se" (p. 2). As might be expected, the authors are not all equally successful in avoiding that substitution.

Two authors who do not avoid it are Arthur F. Marotti on "Donne and 'The Extasie'" and Michael McCanles on "The Rhetoric of the Sublime in Crashaw's Poetry." Both these papers overwhelm their subjects with elaborate theoretical speculation. Mr. Marotti argues that Donne's poem celebrates conjugal love and publicizes his own marriage in such a direct way that the reader is involved "in the poem's emotional dynamics" (p. 158), but before Mr. Marotti does this, he turns his attention to so many complicated traditions that the critical sensitivity that might have judged Donne's success, here only assumes it. Likewise Mr. McCanles elaborates so sophisticated a theory in explanation of Crashaw's poems that the poems seem very small and insignificant indeed by comparison with Mr. McCanles's own efforts.

Nevertheless, Mr. McCanles makes real use of the rhetorical tradition. Several of the other essayists, however, use little more than the word "rhetoric" itself. Thomas A. Hanner on "The Humanism of Sir Thomas Wyatt," Michael Murrin on "The Rhetoric of Fairyland," Anthony La Branche on "Samuel Daniel: A Voice of Thoughtfulness," and Stanley E. Fish on "Catechizing the Reader: Herbert's Socratean Rhetoric" all use the words "rhetoric" and "rhetorical" where they could as well use "poetic" and "poetical." Mr. Hanner does briefly discuss the importance of rhetoric in humanism, but he fails to show the connection between his historical remarks and his analyses of poems, and Mr. Fish for his purposes gives us both "pedagogical" and "catechetical" as better synonyms for "rhetorical."

John T. Shawcross in "The Poet as Orator: One Phase of His Judicial Pose" clearly puts to real use something from rhetoric. He shows that some poems are misread as deliberative when they really practise a forensic technique he calls *distributio-recapitulatio*, a technique he describes in the traditional terms of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and then clearly identifies in Wyatt and Gascoigne. But Mr. Shawcross is determined to disclose a tradition and argues for the presence of this technique in some poems where it is very hard to see. By the time