taries (*In Matt.* IV, on 26: 39; P.L. 26, 205), cited by Colet and Erasmus in their interesting debate upon the nature of Christ's personal fear and sorrow at the hour of his death (Epp. 108-111). However, readers would find it easier to understand and assess the uncertain nature of Erasmus' theology if they were offered a fuller treatment of the scholarship that lay behind such references.

In a prefatory note the two translators, D.F.S. Thomson and R.A.B. Mynors, indicate the nature and purpose of the few alterations they admitted to the literal meaning of Erasmus' Latin. Most of these are of a minor nature, serving chiefly to accommodate Erasmus' intentions to modern English usage. There are also a considerable number of instances where a single word is rendered with two, and in a manner not demanded by the meaning. However, this device makes possible the creation of more elegant rhythms, the refinements of which offer some counterpart to the gracefully paralleled sounds and structures that characterize Erasmus' style. Occasionally there are more radical changes, in almost every instance affecting an adage. These are evidently attempts to reproduce the casual and familiar quality of Erasmus' allusions, but they are not always successful. In some instances the proverbial quality of a phrase is lost altogether: "in utramvis aurem dormire licere putarem," literally, "to sleep on which every ear you choose," becomes "to sleep easily" (Ep. 80:96). In other cases a familiar adage is less satisfactory than its classical counterpart: "Conabamur de una fidelia duos linere parietes," literally, "I was trying to whitewash two walls from one pot," becomes "I was trying to kill two birds with one stone" (Ep. 113:69). In yet others biblical or classical allusions are lost: "Mihi hic neque seritur neque metitur," literally, "here I neither sow nor reap," becomes "I have no axe to grind" (Ep. 137:52); and "Si . . . ut Harpocrati satisfacias admoneam," literally, "if I remind you to give satisfaction to Harpocrates," becomes "if I tell you to keep to yourself" (Ep. 78: 18-19). These alterations, it should be added, are carefully footnoted and do not detract from the impression of careful accuracy in the translation. Moreover, every change, whether major or minor, serves the general purpose of reproducing the "colour" of Erasmus' Latin prose, a task the translators have managed with remarkable success. In fact the whole range of Erasmus' literary manner has effectively been reproduced. There are letters in which we can detect the strained, tasteless, or even frivolous rhetoric of which Cornelis Gaguin and Colet complained; others are charged with the austere power of bitter frustration, or the unadorned simplicity of personal remorse; and there are letters at once casual and elegant, courtly and engaging, filled with the informal sophistication Erasmus called "Attic charm." In capturing all this the translators have achieved what mattered most to Erasmus himself: a style suited to the man (Ep. 54).

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Sister Geraldine Thompson. *Under Pretext of Praise: Satiric Mode in Erasmus's Fiction*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973. Pp. xvi, 198. \$12.50.

This is a remarkable and invaluable volume on some of Erasmus' writings if only because it introduces the reader to an aspect of Erasmus' works which, up till now at least, has had precious little attention paid to it. By definition all generalizations are indeed danger-

ous, but it may be safe to say that the majority of Erasmian scholars have devoted their time and energies to a study of the great Dutch humanist's role as an educator or instructor and have, in the process, ignored his literary talents and abilities. That Erasmus' educative role, and as a consequence of this, his thought, should be one's primary concern is quite beyond dispute; the *locus classicus* of Erasmus the mentor is, of course, his *Enchiridion militis Christiani*, a work in which he himself apologizes for his literary unconcern by pointing to his function as teacher. Such a stance by the author himself has encouraged scholars, both past and present, to emphasize the moralistic Erasmus at the expense of the literary one.

The importance of Sister Geraldine's study lies in the fact that, while recognizing Erasmus' primary importance as teacher, she nonetheless stresses his sometimes remarkable literary abilities through a systematic and closely argued study of his "fiction." Her work, as the title suggests, is concerned with the literary device of satire as found in the *Praise of Folly*, the *Colloquies*, *Julius secundus exclusis* and *Ciceronianus*. The study is a significant and complex one largely because it confronts head-on the irresolvable tension in Erasmus' fiction between the literary and the moralistic—a tension which Erasmus assuredly would not have felt by virtue of his primary self-proclaimed role as teacher. Indeed, it is highly likely that he would have bristled at the term "fiction" as applied to some of his writings if, by it, he understood "untruth." Unfortunately, however, matters of little or no concern to Erasmus become, for the critic and scholar, areas of enormous complexity. In the final analysis, the problem that Sister Geraldine works on deals with means and end in Erasmus' fiction. With one notable exception Erasmus' literary abilities vary in inverse proportion with his didactic role—as the teacher waxes the *literator* wanes. The notable exception is, of course, Erasmus' literary masterpiece the *Praise of Folly*—a work in which the literary devices of satire and irony and the dramatic *persona* of Folly complement, rather than contend with, the didactic nature of the work. The *Praise* is the centre-piece of all of Erasmus' fiction because of its skilful blend of matter and manner. Sister Geraldine's chapter on *Folly* elucidates the complexities of the work by pointing out tones and shades of satire and irony and their relation to the various narrative stances of the *persona*. In my opinion, this chapter is certainly the final word on the fine balance between literary and didactic technique in the *Praise of Folly*.

If *Folly* is the Platonic essence, all of Erasmus' other fictive pieces suffer by comparison and become mere shadows of the ideal. Certain of the *Colloquies* approach *Folly* but, with the *Praise*, Erasmus reached the pinnacle of his literary career and would never again attain and sustain the supreme balance of matter and form that he reached with *Folly*. For example, in the *Ciceronianus* and *Julius exclusis*, the scales are tipped in favour of the moralist with the result that satire and irony are transformed into simple invective and dramatic flesh and blood characters into cardboard propagandists.

In conclusion, no review can do justice to any book and this principle is certainly true of Sister Geraldine's study. Suffice it to say that *Under Pretext of Praise* is an essential book for those interested in the study of the relationship between Erasmus as a literary figure and Erasmus as an explicator of the *philosophia Christi*.

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