done for all of us. Moreover, I am content with the book as it is—with the omissions that evoke Rosalie Colie's method as teacher: never uttering the self-aggrandizing, the chilling too much. It is as though the omissions say, with the half-cajoling, half-challenging concern that launched, well, perhaps not quite a thousand monographs by others: "Why don't you just look that one up? No one has quite done all that could be done with it. You can never tell where it might lead."

S.P. ZITNER, *University of Toronto*

Joseph H. Marshburn, *Murder & Witchcraft in England, 1550-1640*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971. Pp. xxvii, 287. \$7.95.

This handsomely printed and grotesquely covered book consists of brief summaries of thirty-five cases of murder and witchcraft between 1550 and 1635, each of which inspired pamphlet, ballad, or dramatic literature. Each entry consists of a description of the crime and its denouement, often in an English that all too faithfully reflects the confusing syntax of the original literature, followed by complete references to the pamphlets, ballads, and plays that the case inspired. A second section, entitled "Auxiliary Entries: Incidents and Titles," includes much shorter summaries of other cases between 1553 and 1640. There is also an index of extant and non-extant plays referred to in the text. There are twenty-five illustrations, all taken from sixteenth and seventeenth century literary sources illustrating many of the cases discussed. The illustrations are very good. Neither Marshburn's Preface nor the treatment of his materials, however, inspires much scholarly confidence. Scholars familiar with the remarkable studies of Alan MacFarlane, Keith Thomas, and G.R. Elton will find little here to interest them. Nor does this study contribute anything to the recent revival of scholarly interest in crime and criminals that has characterized some recent Victorian studies. The Preface is hopelessly too compressed to offer any but the most conventional comments on the material and so badly organized that it is difficult to follow. Marshburn obviously knows the literature well, but it is doubtful that he has thought about it much. The first paragraph of the Preface purports to describe the condition of England in 1476 when Caxton set up his first printing press without the author's evidently having read any literature about late fifteenth century England published in the last forty years. Nor does Marshburn appear familiar or at all concerned with the large literature upon the subject of printing, literacy, and social history that has recently so enlivened sixteenth century studies. Many of the cases of murder and witchcraft described here describe episodes that have vexed some of the best scholars in sixteenth century history: the murder of close relatives; the social groups from which witches emerged; the peculiar concatenations of social, legal, and religious attitudes that tantalizingly lie under the surface of these jaunty, moralizing, often pompous documents. This book resembles nothing quite so much as a good graduate student's collection of notes and references at the early stages of some future seminar paper.

The book jacket, however, reminds the reader of that mysterious world of publishers' categories in which the University of Oklahoma Press imagines that this book belongs. The jacket refers to "Other Books Off the Beaten Path" that it has published, including popular accounts of American murder cases, John Greenleaf Whittier on supernaturalism, and a

study of phrenology. Such editorial judgement and advertising language probably deserve the reviews they get. It is unfortunate that editors and readers did not suggest to Marshburn that the materials he has gathered together are important and genuinely interesting and deserve to have something intelligent said about them. For this, however we must await another book, hopefully not "Off the Beaten Path," or a bright graduate student's seminar paper.

EDWARD PETERS, *University of Pennsylvania*

The Fowles of Heauen or History of Birdes, ed. Thomas P. Harrison and F. David Hoeniger. Austin: The University of Texas, 1972. Pp. xxxvi, 332. 61 colored illustrations, 3 facsimiles. \$15.00.

The sixteenth and early seventeenth century writings on natural history were an outgrowth of the medieval encyclopedias which had, with few exceptions, relied on earlier works and popular lore. The approach of Longolius and Turner who identified species and noted behavior and habitat was the exception. Respect for tradition demanded that the customary ancient and medieval authorities be cited, whether valid or not, even at a time when a humanistic spirit evinced in the critical appraisal of Aristotle and Pliny and in the observation of natural phenomena, encouraged a speculative attitude, anticipating the beginnings of modern zoology. To the literary historian, Edward Topsell's translation of Gesner's *Historia Animalium* is less important for the kind of factual descriptions which prompt marginal notes such as "A story of a Linxe by D[r]. [John] Cay, taken in London by the sight of this beast in the Tower," than for its complication of conventional ideas which occur so extensively in writings of the same period to illustrate aspects of human nature. Given in detail in *The Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes* are the traditional materials which form the basis of the animal imagery used so profusely not only in renaissance drama and poetry but in many kinds of prose, including educational treatises and political pamphlets.

Implicit in this figurative treatment is the view of the world as a *speculum moralis*, the kind of approach to natural history illustrated in such works as Archibald Simson's *Hieroglyphica Animalium* (1612) and Richard Brathwaite's *The Schollers Medley* (1614). *The Fowles of Heauen* is the third and last part of Topsell's writings on the animal world. For his first two volumes on quadrupeds and serpents printed by Jaggard in 1607 and 1608 he depended almost entirely on Gesner; by 1614 he completed one fifth of a work on "the third part of living creatures," translating it not from the third book of Gesner's *Historia Animalium*, "qui est de avium natura," but the *Ornithologiae* of Ulysse Aldrovandi which appeared between 1599 and 1603. Topsell's incomplete work was never published and it exists in one manuscript at the Huntington (El. 1142).

In this work he reverted to the traditional method of treating birds alphabetically rather than follow Belon and Aldrovandi and "raunge them vnder their proper kindes wherein men many tymes are deceived and the readers troubled." He never got beyond the third letter and by that time he had been forced to make some abridgement because Aldrovandi had allotted an entire book to the cock. Topsell reduced *de Pulveratricibus Domesticis* to twelve chapters, and the present editors wisely abridged the abridgement, omitting all reference to the domesticated bird. Thirty-seven wild birds are presented,