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,

from the Alcatraz to the Cuckoo. Aldrovandi intended that his treatise should be *utile et dulce* and he endeavoured to treat each bird from all aspects giving "Aequiuora, Synonyma, Genus, Differentiae, Locus, Cognominata, Denomenata ... Moralia, Vsus, Mysteria, Hieroglyphica, Historica, Symbola, Numismata, Icones, Emblemata, Fabulae, & Apologi." As the editors remark in their useful introduction, "nothing ancient, medieval, or modern wherein the bird is named does he consider extraneous to his purpose. As the English parson confronted the task of abridging this huge tome, it is little wonder that he concluded only three letters of the alphabet." Topsell's work is a repository of ancient, medieval and renaissance ornithological lore, faithful to the authority which he is anglicizing. For this reason the publication is an important event even though the editors observe that had it been published at the time "it would have popularized the subject through the pious eyes of the translator but affected the serious study of birds very little."

This volume took some years to prepare. According to the preface, Professor Hoeniger was concerned chiefly with the text, glosses and variant readings; Professor Harrison with the other editorial matters. The simple statement minimizes the monumental task which the editors undertook. Besides establishing the sources of innumerable quotations in classical and medieval authors, the editors give locations for each bird in the first editions of Topsell's three main authorities—Aldrovandi (his chief source), Belon, and Gesner. They note where Topsell deviates from such authorities, making use of other writers such as Turner, for example, or adding—comparatively rarely—a personal observation. They give useful negative evidence when a quotation attributed to a certain author cannot be traced. They include their own valuable identifications and observations on birds. They also provide variant readings, and appendices consisting of further identifications of birds in Topsell's projected list (from *dabchicke* to *yelamber*), a glossary of heraldic terms, and a catalogue of proper names.

In addition, *The Fowles of Heauen or History of Birdes* is outstanding in terms of book production. While placing proper emphasis on the work's scholarly nature, the design is exceptionally artistic. The elegant typography, the arrangement of the illustrations on the page, the muted colorings are splendidly appropriate, and are in themselves a tribute to the importance of this first edition and to the fine achievement of the editors.

BERYL ROWLAND, *York University*

Albert Hyma. *The Life of Desiderius Erasmus*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1972. Pp. 140.

The reader looking for the mature deliberations of the author of *The Youth of Erasmus* in this book will be disappointed, as will the reader looking for a biography of Erasmus. Far from expanding on his original work, Professor Hyma is usually content to restate it, with some modifications and some pungent remarks on those he feels gave it insufficient respect. Not a great deal of close study is given to the late Erasmus, though we are assured that its author in his teaching "always emphasized the enormous change in the character of Erasmus between 1525 and 1536." The change in question is seen in terms of a Pauline conversion, in fact a turning away from humanism and back to the *devotio moderna*—very interesting indeed if one accepts the argument that he had ever really left it.

Though we can but envy the equanimity with which he footnotes his own earlier work,