Maid's Tragedy or *Philaster*, it is time for him to question his own assumptions.

The primary assumption behind Kirsch's theory about "providential" unity is the idea that a play cannot be good if its merits are "merely" theatrical; it must also present a morally coherent picture of the real world. Plays that present such pictures (Shakespeare's, Middleton's, Jonson's) receive Kirsch's approval, and are treated to some extremely penetrating critical discussion – indeed, the chapter on Middleton stands along with Richard Levin's essays in *The Multiple Plot* as the most illuminating criticism we have on that playwright. But when a play fails this arbitrary test, Kirsch subjects it to lamentably reductive analysis, and misses the valuable theatrical experiences that it does offer us; this is especially true of his chapters on Marston and Ford. Perhaps critics should simply stay away from works that they dislike.

One final note. Good as this book is at its best, it would be even better if Kirsch argued his points for what they are worth. This reviewer found many of his views quite tantalizing, and longed to be persuaded or given more solid evidence, but found only hints and guesses. As Martin Price wrote of Kirsch's earlier work (*Dryden's Heroic Drama*, 1965), "This book contains so much that is excellent one could only wish it more comprehensive." We should demand a sequel.

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Ruth H. Blackburn. *Biblical Drama Under The Tudors*. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1971. Pp. 208. \$11.

This critical survey discusses the "phases of development through which the Biblical drama passed," and its relationship to Reformation controversy (7), in terms of some twenty-two English, Latin, Greek and German play-texts from about 1525 to 1620, all written, acted or published in England. Blackburn argues that this drama, mainly Protestant in treatment, though often medieval in theme, exchanges its original New Testament, anti-Catholic subjects for Old Testament moral proof-texts in the Elizabethan period, and later declines altogether, possibly because of Puritan anti-theatre sentiment. Chapters treat John Bale's works, *Godly Queen Hester*, the humanist drama of Thomas Watson, Nicholas Grimald, John Christopherson and John Foxe, seven pre-Shakespearean plays including *Jacob and Esau*, Wager's *Marie Magdalene* and Garter's *Susanna*, and four late pieces, the Lodge-Greene *Looking Glass*, Peele's *David and Bethsaba*, and the *Esther* and *Prodigal Son* plays from the 1620 German anthology.

In itself this miscellany of diverse traditions, periods, languages and dramatic auspices lacks continuity, and the volume's non-definition of what constitutes a Tudor Biblical play confuses the subject still more. Though amplified, revised and acted well into Elizabeth's reign, the Corpus Christi cycles receive skimpy treatment, mainly in a background chapter that notes, for example, their "little attempt at local color or historical objectivity," "naïve literalism" and "peculiar charm of unaffected devotion" (17-18). The Digby *Conversion of St. Paul* and *Mary Magdalene* (limits ca. 1480-1520) are unaccountably neglected, though the latter's relationship to Grimald's and Wager's plays seems relevant here. Instead, the volume begins incongruously with Bale's *Three Laws*, a morality play without Biblical plot. Later, *King Darius*, two-thirds of which is moral allegory, is analysed, along with the very

fragmentary parable morality, *The Cruel Debtor*. Of the prodigal son drama, however, only the German play is discussed, and little appears on its Tudor tradition in parable plays like *Acolastus* (translated by Palsgrave, and acted in Latin at Cambridge), *Pater, Filius et Uxor*, *Lusty Juventus* and so forth. Finally, the scanty early Elizabethan specimens are filled out by two continental Latin plays ca. 1540-49, Sixt Birck's *Sapientia Solomonis* (adapted for performance at Westminster in 1565-66), and Theodore Beza's *Abraham's Sacrifice* (translated by Golding in 1577), while George Buchanan's works, partly published and perhaps acted in England then, are left out.

The play-chapters themselves, bridged by biographical-historical information, consist of indifferent plot analysis, often substantively incorrect quotations, value judgments, some theme commentary and a discussion, using an 1873 English Bible, of dramatists' use of scriptural subjects. While the volume takes a novel perspective on Tudor drama, assembles much scattered data and studies generally unread plays, the analysis is incomplete and undercut by factual errors. For instance, Grimald's *Cbristus Redivivus* deals with the gospels' inconsistent versions of the sepulchre visit, but we are not told *how*, and in a simple mistake, Cleophas' wife instead of himself is said to stand out in the last act (90). In *King Darius*, Equity is wrongly described as a female (127-28), in *Cruel Debtor* a speech about Simulation is said to concern Flattery (129), and *Jacob and Esau* is termed a "theological and moral travesty," evidently because Jacob, a "Uriah-Heepish" Joseph Surface guilty of "deceit" in the candid birthright bargain, troubles the reader's "theological assumptions" (150-54). Finally, this volume, though by-passing some scholarship on the plays, occasionally presents already published ideas as if they were new: in the discussion of Tyndale's influence on Bale's *Three Laws* (45-46), for instance, certain of T. W. Craik's identical conclusions in his *Tudor Interlude* (74) are stated but unnoted.

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Richard Mulcaster. *Positions*. Abridged and edited by Richard L. DeMolen. New York: Teachers College Press, 1971. Pp. xii, 284. Cloth \$6.95. Paperback \$3.50.

One of the better series now appearing in the history of education is that issued under the general editorship of Professor Lawrence A. Cremin of Teachers' College, Columbia University. While neither limited to nor even specializing in the Renaissance and Reformation, eight of its forty-odd volumes touch directly on the period and another eight or nine, indirectly.

Catering to a broad university market, the series includes a variety of publishing forms: reprints of standard monographs, collections of documents, selections from authors.

Typical of one of these forms, the single treatise, is Richard L. DeMolen's edition of Richard Mulcaster's *Positions*. It has been abridged, losing mainly the lengthy chapters on physical education; some of its terminology has been modernized and a twenty-three page introduction has been added.

In the introduction we find an updated sketch of Mulcaster's life based on DeMolen's unpublished dissertation, and a summary of the *Positions*. The "most prominent English schoolmaster in the sixteenth century," best known for his long headmasterships of Merchant Taylors' and St. Paul's schools, is placed in the context of the civic-oriented and