but it does produce emphases that are on occasion overstated or pressed too narrowly, as in the claims for "relevance." In the Italy of *The White Devil* English audiences no doubt saw much that struck home; but such appositeness does not necessarily become itself the subject of the play. To find that *The White Devil* is concerned with "the overriding theme of a corrupt society" confuses context with matter. The effect of the play's relevance is to make credible its moral relativity by reminding spectators of the nearby corroborative evidence. Moreover, the notorious ambivalence of Webster's tragedy gains force by the play's formal relation to a tradition that from its inception deals uneasily with the absolutes of virtue, duty, and death. Lever properly opposes the concept of a Jacobean drama "where tragedy sat for ever re-enacting man's primeval fall"; yet for all its originality Jacobean drama does not lose the resonance created by an Elizabethan awareness of model and archetype, even though that awareness came increasingly to bear ironically.

The Tragedy of State has a pleasing style graced by many exact touches, as in the description of Chapman's Cato facing the after-life "in the spirit of a Dantesque Ulysses." The book, however, suffers from its accommodation to an audience of "students without a highly detailed knowledge of Jacobean drama." The necessity to provide summaries of the plays (of which three at most might be thought obscure) mars the work. One wishes it had been possible for Professor Lever to insist that his listeners do their homework before attending.

GUY HAMEL, *University of Toronto*

Richard Levin. *The Multiple Plot in English Renaissance Drama*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971. Pp. 277.

During the last decade Professor Richard Levin has published a baker's dozen of articles on the construction of English Renaissance drama. Now these articles have been augmented by considerations of other plays, grouped in a careful schema of varieties of multiple plot drama that centers on about thirty exemplary analyses, framed by two "theoretical" chapters, and given both an appendix on the double plot in Roman comedy and a useful bibliography. The result is *The Multiple Plot in English Renaissance Drama*.

In the first chapter, "The Unity of Multiple-Plot Drama," we are given a survey of opinion which insists perhaps too strongly – (one recalls Yeats' little essay on "Emotion of Multitude," for example), on the apparent prejudice against secondary plots in critical writing before the 1940s, and then goes on to state the aim of the book: "a systematic treatment of the subject [by supplying] the necessary framework for gathering together and assimilating this scattered material" resulting from the newer, more accepting attitude toward multiple plots. The chapter continues with a listing of the varieties of connection among characters from different plots: connection through conventional relationships (neighbours, kinsmen), and common settings (fairs); through causal relationship (aggressor-victim); and through formal relationships (analogous functions in different plots). Over these categories hovers the presiding idea of Aristotle's "four causes," which also provides another kind of connection – an "affective relationship between plots ... corresponding to Aristotle's final cause." A last paragraph, however, suddenly abandons this schema for an

other – “a set of categories located entirely within the formal mode, because it is the one that most directly determines the specific structure and effect of the plays.”

Subsequent chapters analyse and illustrate these new formal categories. Each chapter opens with a discussion of the category, and illustrates its range through a variety of examples and several full-dress plot analyses. We go from “Direct Contrast Plots” (as in *The Changeling*), to “Three-Level Hierarchies” (as in *1 Henry IV*), to “Clown Subplots: Foil, Parody, Magic” (as in *Faustus*), and end with “Equivalence Plots” (as in *Troilus and Cressida*). Another chapter, rather too ambitiously titled “The Limits of Multiplicity,” treats *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and *Bartholomew Fair* as the most complex instances of multiple plot drama; and a final chapter, “Beyond the Categories,” briefly considers multiple plotting from historical and generic perspectives, suggesting further directions for critical inquiry.

One suspects that after a general agreement on the importance of its subject, the brilliance of some of its analyses and the usefulness of its taxonomy, reactions to the book will be almost as multiple as its subject. The “Chicago School,” like the “New Criticism,” still raises many hackles. On the whole I think the favourable opinions will be nearer the mark. *The Multiple Plot in English Renaissance Drama* is unfailingly intelligent. It is compendious and laborious in the good senses those words had in the Renaissance. The distinctions between foil and parody are acute; the insights we get into the ethical problems raised, say, by *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, show how far one can go in clarifying the thought of a play by attending to its construction. But at some points the book seems less rewarding. Not all plays “imitate actions.” Or, putting the case in “Chicago” terms, not all plays have plot as their “prime part” or “organising principle.” In some, plot is a secondary consideration, a trellis on which ambience or idea flourish. The difficulty with the metaphor hidden under the terms “construction” and “structure” is that it occasionally misleads, prompting us to attend too much to plot when plot is not primary. I suspect that readers will find the treatment of *Troilus and Cressida* less satisfactory than the splendid discussion of *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* precisely because the idea or ethos of some plays, rather than “their specific structure,” determines their effect on us. The two parts of *Henry IV* might well have been given less cursory treatment, if only to contrast plays with similar “plots” but dissimilar emphases on “plot” as an organizer and unifier of the plays’ materials. One feels that anatomy has – though at a very few points – been taken for the whole of medicine. Yet perhaps such objections and an occasional reaction against the thinness of some of the analyses are only signs of how well the book otherwise manages its narrowness of focus and breadth of example.

S. P. ZITNER, *University of Toronto*

Sylvia D. Feldman. *The Morality-Patterned Comedy of the Renaissance*. The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1970. Pp. 1-165. 18 Dutch Guilders.

Despite its title, this study deals only with plays of the English Renaissance. Its hypothesis is “that a category of Renaissance drama exists which has not yet been recognized. Its purpose is to isolate and describe the characteristics of that category: the morality-patterned