that did not bear the seeds of the future, are discussed in the same manner that Freud discussed woman, in terms of what she lacked – taking man as the normative human being. So; ‘Medieval history writing is full of myths, secular and religious. (I define myth as fiction passing as fact)’ (7). Poor Adam and Eve, reduced to the ontological status of Batman and Robin. We learn that, ‘Villani has his eyes on the ground more than Otto of Freising’ (16). Poor Bishop Otto, floating on clouds of wish fantasies. Forgive him St. Sherlock, for believing that the City of Man is an endless cycle of pride and greed. What bad history to begin the story of the City of Man with the blow of Cain.

So, too, the relevance and depth of Humanist history, so important in Renaissance historiography, disappears in the face of what it lacks in real history. The elevated style, the educational ideal of emulating models of heroism and character, is seen as a slavish copying of stereotypes.

In short we have here a view of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance such as Voltaire might have held. But since then we have also lived through the mixed blessings of the scientific enlightenment.

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Elmer M. Blistein, ed. *The Drama of the Renaissance: Essays for Leicester Bradner*. Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Press, 1970. Pp. xiii, 199. \$7.

This handsome volume contains ten excellent articles. One half of them deal with Shakespeare, and the wide range of interests of the man honoured is reflected in the variety of themes treated, in English, Italian, and Spanish literatures.

Roy W. Battenhouse, of Indiana University, writes convincingly on ‘The Significance of Hamlet’s Advice to Players,’ taking that advice as Hamlet’s, and not necessarily Shakespeare’s. ‘The play as a whole – states Mr. Battenhouse – implies a criticism of Hamlet’s taste and theorizing.’ ‘Hamlet’s theories – the reasonable conclusion is – through their outcome in action, are being placed and tested within the orbit of the play’s total story. And that test, interestingly, makes double irony of Hamlet’s advice to players. For on the one hand, we watch a Hamlet who violates his own rules, and on the other hand, we realize what intolerable drama we would be stuck with if he didn’t. Shakespeare’s play, if it obeyed Hamlet’s advice theory, might be as lifeless as *Sejanus*.’

The other essays on Shakespeare are ‘Theme and Structure in *King Henry IV*, Part I,’ by Fredson Bowers, University of Virginia; ‘Iago’s “if”: An Essay on the Syntax of *Othello*,’ by Madeleine Doran, University of Wisconsin; ‘Shakespeare’s Dark Vocabulary,’ by Paul A. Jorgensen, University of California, Los Angeles; ‘Shakespeare the Ignoramus,’ by S. Schoenbaum, Northwestern University; and ‘The Comic View of Life in Shakespeare’s Comedies,’ by M. A. Shaaber, University of Pennsylvania. Mr. Bowers re-reads, very carefully and very closely, a play which has been read very frequently, and comes forth with new and fruitful conclusions; Miss Doran successfully analyses the conjunction ‘if’ to conclude that ‘syntax is the most intimate way to show movement of mind; it is the dramatist’s most refined tool in shaping monologue or dialogue’; Mr. Jorgensen stresses vocabulary to help us understand a play, and taking *Macbeth* as a salient example, concludes that ‘the dark vocabulary does ... make us more nearly adequate to appreciating fully Shake-

Shakespeare's skill with his most important tools: words'; Mr. Schoenbaum starts with the negative premise of many detractors to assert with some authority that Shakespeare is 'an intellectual, not an ignoramus'; and Mr. Shaaber reaches the point of view that 'the comic view of life [in Shakespeare's comedies] is largely a comic view of love.'

William Gager wrote in Latin (one of Professor Bradner's interests), but, insists J. W. Binns, University of Birmingham, in his study of 'William Gager's *Meleager* and *Ulysses Redux*,' the world of the drama, not the epic world, was Gager's concern. Mr. Binns sets Gager firmly in the Renaissance period, and concludes that Gager was 'an Elizabethan dramatist, who wrote in one of the greatest periods of English literature.'

The Italian contribution, by Bodo L. O. Richter, State University of New York, Buffalo, aims persuasively to rescue the anonymous and remarkable *Venexiana* from unwarranted indifference on the part of readers and critics. The Richter essay on '*La Venexiana* in the Light of Present Criticism' is a masterly one, with accurately presented documentation. The two Spanish contributions, 'Tragedy in the Spanish Golden Age,' by C. A. Jones, Oxford University, and 'The Comedies of Calderón,' by Kenneth Muir, University of Liverpool, are splendid studies which catch the spirit of the seventeenth-century theatre in Spain. Mr. Jones finds, very correctly, 'a tradition which looked to the audience rather than to the rule book,' and Mr. Muir stresses, with acumen, the fact that Calderón, in his comedies, was intent on 'the maximum of entertainment' for his audience.

The Drama of the Renaissance is an important compilation of superior essays, worthy of the distinguished teacher and scholar to whom it is dedicated. The authors of the chapters (which are preceded by a Foreword by Elmer M. Blistein and followed by a Bibliography of Leicester Bradner) and the editor are to be congratulated on a significant *homenaje*.

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Douglas Radcliff-Umstead. *The Birth of Modern Comedy in Renaissance Italy*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1969. Pp. ix, 285.

The author states in the introduction to his study that he is 'attempting to show how Italian dramatists succeeded in creating a vital theatre from the model set by ancient Roman playwrights,' and promises that he 'will trace the development of secular drama in Italy from the early efforts in Latin by humanists to the varied careers of dramatists like Aretino and Ruzzante,' with the period under consideration extending 'from the middle of the Trecento to the middle of the Cinquecento.' He says further that his 'intention is not to study every play written during those centuries, but to select those dramas which best illustrate the transition from a medieval to a Renaissance view of man and society.'

Among the dramatists considered are such notable personalities as Ariosto, Machiavelli and Aretino who represent the best in the Italian theatre during the first half of the Cinquecento. Some important names have been left out, however. Not to have mentioned, at least in passing, such figures as Dolce, Contile, Lorenzino de' Medici, Varchi and some others, appears to be a severe limitation. The author is to be commended for including Angelo Beolco as an example of a dramatist who wrote in dialect, but it seems curious that he doesn't also mention the remarkable dialect play *Venexiana* of unknown authorship. Andrea Calmo might also have been mentioned in this connection.