THE RENAISSANCE

EXCLUDING DRAMA

INTRODUCTION BY
ELIZABETH STORY DONNO

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The entry for each writer consists of a biography, a complete list of his published books, a selected list of published bibliographies and critical studies on the writer, and a signed critical essay on his work.

In the biographies, details of education, military service, and marriage(s) are generally given before the usual chronological summary of the life of the writer; awards and honours are given last.

The Publications section is meant to include all book publications, though as a rule broadsheets, single sermons and lectures, minor pamphlets, exhibition catalogues, etc. are omitted. Under the heading Collections, we have listed the most recent collections of the complete works and those of individual genres (verse, plays, novels, stories, and letters); only those collections which have some editorial authority and were issued after the writer's death are listed; on-going editions are indicated by a dash after the date of publication; often a general selection from the writer's works or a selection from the works in the individual genres listed above is included.

Titles are given in modern spelling, though the essayists were allowed to use original spelling for titles and quotations; often the titles are "short." The date given is that of the first book publication, which often followed the first periodical or anthology publication by some time; we have listed the actual year of publication, often different from that given on the title-page. No attempt has been made to indicate which works were published anonymously or pseudonymously, or which works of fiction were published in more than one volume. We have listed plays which were produced but not published, but only since 1700; librettos and musical plays are listed along with the other plays; no attempt has been made to list lost or unverified plays. Reprints of books (including facsimile editions) and revivals of plays are not listed unless a revision or change of title is involved. The most recent edited version of individual works is included if it supersedes the collected edition cited.

In the essays, short references to critical remarks refer to items cited in the Publications section or in the Reading List. Introductions, memoirs, editorial matter, etc. in works cited in the Publications section are not repeated in the Reading List.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

One of the traditional dates for the beginning of the English Renaissance is 1485, a date commemorating the defeat of Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field and inaugurating with Henry VII the more than century-long rule of the Tudors. Such a chronological starting point neatly accords with the political rule of a single dynasty in the 16th century; it also neatly accords with the emergence of intellectual forces that shape so much of the literary output for the next two centuries. But it offers problems in that certain writers (like Stephen Hawes, Alexander Barclay, and "Beastly" John Skelton, as Pope calls him) either in terms of technique or of subject matter seem to have at best a transitional if not indeed a medieval cast. Moreover, the problem of dating is intensified by the curious curve of literary development in the century. Those poets at the court of Henry VIII who introduced the "sweet new Italian style," as the critic Puttenham characterized them, represent a spot of brilliance just as the humanists connected to his court represent an intellectual ferment that we associate with the devolving concepts of the Renaissance, but this is followed by a poetic lag or slacking of achievement that has notoriously been labelled the "Drab Age." Then at the end of the 1580's there is a sudden proliferation of writers who are, in C. S. Lewis's terms, "golden" in manner and in matter. After the turn of the century they are succeeded by others pursuing different literary styles and approaches in a fragmenting of humanistic values until these values may be said to be reconstituted in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

In turning to a recovery of classical authors, with an accompanying recovery of their critical tenets, the generation of humanists for whom we have adequate records looked to both the Greeks and the Romans, though the recovery of the Greek language came slowly (the first Regius professorship of Greek was established in 1540) and had a relative short duration in the century as a discipline stirring much general academic enthusiasm, a fact decried by Elizabethan dons. John Colet (1467?–1519), an early humanist and the founder of St. Paul's School, which became a prototype of later grammar schools, did not endeavour to learn Greek until he was in his fifties, but he did spark interest in the development of a historical interpretation of the Bible in his lectures at Oxford and later in London. His influence on Erasmus in countenancing a rejection of the medieval schoolmen was marked, and although his interests were primarily theological, by his styling the writings of the Middle Ages as "blotterature," he typifies the reactions not only of the first but also of the second generation of 16th-century humanists.

Thomas Linacre, both a physician and a grammarian, translated a number of Greek works into Latin, achieving special applause for his renderings of Galen. His Latin grammars were also popular; one went through 50 editions in the century though Colet rejected a text prepared for St. Paul's School in favour of one prepared by his headmaster, William Lily, which was then revised by both Colet and Erasmus. This composite work became the authorized grammar in 1540, and generations of schoolboys conned it word for word, giving point to the jesting incorporation of phrases from it into literary works (for example, the opening scene of Act IV of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*). With later doctoring, it was destined to continue as a textbook well into the 19th century.

The most important of English humanists both in his own right and in his close association

with the internationally acclaimed Erasmus was Thomas More. Early in his career he shared with him a joyous enthusiasm for Lucian, that arch-scoffer at religion, and together they prepared Latin translations of a number of his dialogues which were published in 1506. More's most famous Latin work is, of course, the *Utopia*, which he himself generally referred to as *Nusquam* (though modern commentators like to emphasize the possible play on the meanings of the Greek *eu* (good)-place and *ou* (no)-place. Modern commentators also have wrestled with the intention of the piece: does it offer a serious pattern for rectifying social and economic abuses or is it a *jeu d'esprit* with some serious overtones in the vein of an Erasmian counterpart, the *Praise of Folly* (*Encomium Moriae*)? Interpretations are multiple, frequently reflecting the political bias of the commentator. Publication of the *Utopia* in 1516 was a major factor in establishing More's international reputation as a humanist; for readers of the vernacular there was a translation in 1551 by Ralph Robinson. Of his productions in English, the *History of Richard III* (also in a Latin version) is an impressive (though unfinished) example of a rhetorical projection of an eminent figure from recent history, in which More weights the argument so skilfully that the image of the malevolent crookbacked usurper (according to Erasmus, one of More's shoulders was higher than the other) dominated the histories down to the time of Horace Walpole's *Historic Doubts*—and later.

Though not an Englishman by birth but perhaps so by his own predilection and that of his humanist friends, Erasmus deserves consideration because of his enormous impact on intellectual and educational theories during the century. One of the characteristics of the Renaissance was a recovery of the art of rhetoric which in the later Middle Ages had succumbed to the dominance of dialectic. And to this recovery Erasmus contributed greatly. He also tirelessly plundered Greek and Latin and Christian authors to compile an ever increasing collection of adages that became a staple for writers, secular and religious, who delighted to lard their works with telling maxims. This practice was to bear special fruit at the end of the century in the early essays of Bacon, which, as has been observed, represent an elaboration of related wise sayings on a particular topic. Erasmus's *De copia* is a manual proving the means of attaining a copious or "facundious" style. It provides a store of examples taken from the entire spectrum of classical authors and gives directions on how to order these into a commonplace book (or "tables") that can be dipped into by the student seeking an effective comparison or metaphor, aphorism or anecdote. Writers from John Lyly to Andrew Marvell might as readily as Hamlet have said, "My tables—meet it is I set it down." Though written for St. Paul's School, this text had an international audience: there were about 180 printings during the century issuing from 21 different cities.

Some scholars label individuals like Colet, More, and Erasmus as "Christian humanists" because of their efforts to justify the study of pagan writers by stressing the compatibility of the moral outlook of their works with Christian doctrine. (There is here perhaps a sideswipe at the image of the indulgent Italian Renaissance glorying in a sensual paganism, though it too, as with the rest of contemporary Europe, was Christian.) And, indeed, of the humanists already mentioned, all but More studied in Italy.

After the Henrician reformation, the religious situation and, consequently, the mood change. There is, first, an attempt by the government during Edward's short reign (1547–53) to impose Protestant doctrine on a not altogether willing populace; then there is a right-about-face to Catholicism during Mary Tudor's even shorter stint as queen (1553–58), with the result that during her reign many of the ardently reformed sought exile in Switzerland or the Low Countries. After Elizabeth's accession, these Marian exiles felt free to return, and return they did, but having come under the influence of Calvinism and other reformed doctrines, they were imbued with even stronger Protestant fervor.

Such radical changes in such a short period made an immense alteration in the social and political scene, with a corresponding effect on literature. There was now a range of religious attitudes within the Church as well as without – reformers within, reformers without – and much of the literary energies of the period were spent on doctrinal and related political issues even as was to be the case in the next century. But those who had participated in the pendulum swing of religious alteration, while they endorsed humanistic principles, gave both

priority and emphasis to their religious beliefs. The general mood in England becomes increasingly Protestant, increasingly anti-papal. On the part of these second-generation humanists there was a corresponding rejection of literature that emanated from Catholic countries, particularly from Italy. One describes the dangerous translation of Italian books: "They open not fond but common ways to vice but such subtle, cunning, new, and divers shifts to carry young wits to vanity and young wits to mischief, to teach old bawds new school points, as the simple head of an Englishman is not able to invent, nor never was heard of in England before, yea, when papistry overflowed all."

At midcentury, two humanists both ardent Protestants – Thomas Wilson and Roger Ascham – writing now in the vernacular, follow up the educational approach of Erasmus. Like him they look largely to Cicero and Quintilian. Thus they too stress the art of rhetoric as the means to attain eloquence and accept the triple ends of oratory – teaching, delighting, and persuading – as pertinent to any mode of discourse. Wilson's two textbooks, one on logic and one on rhetoric, with a wealth of examples, were well known to the imaginative writers of the Elizabethan period, and Ascham's *Schoolmaster*, published posthumously in 1570, though it discusses educational theory, offers critical *obiter dicta* that became general.

The compatibility of this rhetorical approach with the critical doctrines of Horace, particularly as set forth in the *Ars poetica*, meant that for most critical thinkers the poet, who in Horatian terms both teaches and delights, easily merged with the orator. Another effect of Horatian ideas was an incipient neo-classicism. Thus the principle of decorum (suiting the manner to the matter) was linked to a theory of literary kinds (epic, satire, etc.) and to the three styles (low, middle, and high) considered appropriate to each kind. Above all, the idea that literature should be didactic was widely endorsed in theory. Still, many authors, particularly those writing for a popular audience, went their own exuberant ways despite these prevailing tenets.

Curiously, it was not until the last two decades of the century that criticism achieved an independent status and then largely as a defensive against attacks on the immorality of the theatre and wanton Italian romances by stern-minded puritans. Sir Philip Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* (or *Defense of Poesy* as one edition is called) is the most urbane example of this critical response. Written c. 1583 but not published until 1595, it was, nonetheless, well known to the literary world through circulation in manuscript. Sir John Harington, for example, echoes it in the preface to his translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1591).

The first thing one ought to note about the *Apology* is that it is organized as a forensic oration, designed to persuade an audience of his suit that poetry is to be defended because it is superior to all other disciplines, in particular those of history and philosophy. (Whether he himself believed this is doubtful, but it is the posture he adopts in arguing his case.) By poetry, Sidney, as with many others of the period, includes all work that is fictive in nature, whether written in prose or verse. This explains his calling the *Cyropaedia* "an absolute heroical poem," because Xenophon presents a *feigned* image of Cyrus rather than a "true" portrait such as the historian Justin presents. Whereas the other arts necessarily imitate nature, the poet alone is able to conceive of things better than any that exist or of things that never existed, being inhibited only by the confines of his own wit and imagination. Consequently, in what Sidney hopes is not too saucy a comparison, the poet or "maker" is likened to that Heavenly Maker who made the natural world and then made man in his own image. ("Nature," as Sir Thomas Browne was to say, "is the art of God.")

In adopting the Greek term "maker" (*poetes*) as opposed to the Latin seer (*vates*), Sidney like other Elizabethans is stressing the craftsmanship of the artist shaping his artifact. He has little time for the Platonic doctrine of inspiration. Given the Renaissance admiration for the practical Romans who also discounted it, this is not surprising. Furthermore, with the supply of rhetorical manuals, acknowledged as useful alike for poet, orator, and preacher, the emphasis is on the Sidneian means – art, imitation, exercise. "Make me a poet," the ten-year-old Drayton begs his tutor, and the notion that one could "become" a poet is general though with some, perhaps because of their self image, there is also due concern for innate ability (*natura* or *ingenium*); Ben Jonson is an instance.

The focus of Sidney's argument is to establish poetry as the most efficient of the disciplines directing men to "right doing." Other disciplines are (tactically) reduced to "serving sciences" arranged in a hierarchy that culminates in the ethical-political concerns of men. It is the poet who best ministers to these concerns. By freely creating notable images, he teaches even as he induces delight, and by an empathetic means he persuades men to adopt "right action." Poetry – that is, the fictive – is seen as pragmatic. It is also seen as fulfilling the triple ends of classical oratory or eloquence. When in the *confirmatio* or proof of his case Sidney attempts to answer the charges that have been levelled at poetry from Plato on down, he is dazzlingly adroit, arguing by affirmation, concession, denigration, and denial. The intention of his *Apology* is to persuade the "poet-whippers"; in his own terms, the result shows perhaps more good will to poetry than good reasons, but it persuaded many of his contemporaries.

Amidst the numerous apologetic treatises, the one novel approach to criticism before the end of the century is provided by Puttenham in his *Art of English Poesy*, published in 1589 but much of it written earlier. In contrast to many of his contemporaries, he considers poesy to include only what is written in verse and not what is fictive at base. Particularizing the Horatian dictum that poets were the first civilizers of the world, he denominates them the first philosophers, the first rhetoricians, the first astronomers, etc., but, uniquely, he drops the moral posture to accept the end of poetry as providing solace and delectation. The *Art of English Poesy* was, notably, one of only three *English* literary works to be catalogued in 1605 in the new Bodleian Library.

The "courtly makers" who introduced Puttenham's "sweet new Italian style" – Wyatt, Surrey, and other "uncertain authors" – also introduced the sonnet form which had become a rage in Italy following Petrarch's infinite variety and skill in handling amatory lyrics in praise of his beloved Laura. (Since he was crowned in Rome in 1341 with the laurel – *lauro* – which ties in nicely with her name, the notion arose that the lady celebrated in his love poetry may have served only as a poetic peg, a situation certainly obtaining with many later imitators who took up the fashion of sonneteering.) His collection known as *Canzoniere* or *Rime sparse* (i.e., scattered rhymes) includes forms other than the sonnet (sestinas, madrigals) and subjects other than his varied psychological response to love such as those having a patriotic, moral, or religious cast. During his lifetime Petrarch was imitated, even plagiarized, and in the two centuries after his death Petrarchism became a veritable craze – some imitating his language or his manner, some composing *centoni* – poems made from bits and pieces of other poets – and some interlarding their poems with Petrarchan lines. His influence had no geographic boundary.

Both Wyatt and Surrey used Petrarch and the Petrarchists (particularly Serafino and the French Marot) for translation and/or adaptation; while Wyatt approximates the Italian form of the sonnet (an octave rhyming abba abba and a sestet of three rhymes), for some of his sonnets Surrey introduces a variation – three quatrains and a concluding couplet – that was so attuned to the quality of the language that it became the standard "English" or Shakespearean form. Their poems were first published in 1557, the year before Elizabeth's accession, in an exceedingly popular miscellany entitled *Songs and Sonnets* (and now generally known from its publisher as *Tottel's Miscellany*). It is important in that we know from manuscript sources that its editor subjected the poems of Wyatt to a kind of niggling editing, regularizing lines that he felt showed metrical ineptitude but which some would argue exhibit a sensitivity to metrical variety. The logical assumption is that he did the same for Surrey and the uncertain writers for whom there are no manuscripts extant. As a result of the volume's popularity, readers became conditioned to a metronomic regularity and to certain kinds of subject matter for lyrical verse, including the dour and the moralizing. Other poetical miscellanies of composite authorship followed, none of literary importance exactly but well remembered by the later Elizabethans. *A Handfull of Pleasant Delights*, a collection of ballads (including "Greensleeves"), first published in 1566 and again in 1584, includes one that is a reply to a lost ballad beginning "Where is the life that late I led" which both Petruchio (*The Taming of the Shrew*, IV.i.143) and Pistol (*2 Henry IV*, V.iii.147) recall.

In the title of lyrical collections of midcentury – like Barnabe Goose's *Eclogues, Epitaphs,*

and Sonnets and George Turbervile's *Epitaphs, Epigrams, Songs and Sonnets* – as much later with Donne's collection, the term "songs and sonnets" was applied to any collection of short lyrics; these writers do not generally adhere to the 14-line form of the sonnet proper, even as they do not exhibit the range of metrical variety typical of the more felicitous Elizabethans.

That remarkable vogue for sonnet sequences began with the pirated publication in 1591 of Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* and in 1592 of 28 of Samuel Daniel's sonnets to Delia. Although the arrangement of Sidney's poems (as is somewhat true of Drayton's later collection) allows for a psychological progression, it is important to recognize that a sequence is a lyrical medley, most often projecting the emotional state of the poet-lover in an "anatomy of woes," but that state can also serve as a point of departure for the introduction of related topics. One of the more interesting of such departures is when the poet turns critic, commenting on current literary modes. Sidney, for example, mocks stylistic fashions – euphuistic, Petrarchan, alliterative, and allegorical (no. 3, 6, 15, 28) – or he derides the doctrine of inspiration (no. 55, 74), or he tells of the therapeutic value of writing and of the power of verse (no. 34, 45, 50, 57–8), or even adopts an anti-poetic vein (no. 70, 90): "In truth, I swear, I wish not there should be/Graved in mine epitaph a poet's name." Others follow suit, most notably Drayton and Shakespeare. Since many of the poets turned not only to the Italian but also to the French imitators of Petrarch (Ronsard, Du Bellay, and Desportes), the charge was made (by Sidney Lee) that the sonneteers were veritable plagiarists. Such a charge took little account of the doctrine of *imitatio*.

This doctrine, ably expounded by Ascham in the *Schoolmaster*, urges writers to follow the best models, not in servile imitation but in an attempt to re-create the admirable qualities of their models. Since the subject matter of the sonnet, when it is not simply an occasional piece, is invariably an aspect of love in one or several of its manifestations, the difficulty of being genuinely original is patent, particularly since more than a thousand of them, it is said, were written in England in the years between 1591 and 1600 – hence the attempt to find points of departure that can be related to the poet-lover's experience such as critical comment on current literary fashions. But, inevitably, the matter of these sonnets tends to be much the same, leaving only the manner of expression to be varied. Such motifs as that of the melancholic lover and his recalcitrant mistress, of time the destroyer (*tempus edax*) and of the consequent need to gather rosebuds while one may (*carpe diem*) tend to be endlessly repeated, but, surprisingly, distinct poetic voices emerge from the many examples. Sometimes it is by the dramatic projection of an Astrophel (Sidney), sometimes it is by the introduction of audaciously novel language (Drayton), sometimes it is by employing a wide range of emotional states and subtle melodic expression (Shakespeare), and sometimes it is by psychological intensity (Donne). As anthologies attest, almost any late Elizabethan could produce one or more striking examples. The question of the poet's personal involvement, or "sincerity" in 19th-century terms, is irrelevant, since it is measured only by the poet's artistic achievement.

Supplementing the sonnet vogue is the variety of literary genres that make their appearance in the 1590's. A relatively long-lived one was the epyllion or little epic where writers looked to the witty licentious Ovid as their model, ignoring any moral intent just as the sonneteers had ignored it. Delighting in verbal invention, in ornamenting their poems with lovely images, and in exploiting rhetorical devices by means of *sententiae*, oxymorons, and hyperboles, they produced artful short pieces to titillate the reading public. Marlowe's unfinished *Hero and Leander* is the most accomplished, but Cambridge undergraduates, it seems, kept Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* under their pillows. Minor 17th-century writers continued the vogue – all the way up to 1646 with James Shirley's *Narcissus; or, The Self-lover*, though it is perhaps an early work – and they tend to exploit the more shocking and risqué myths.

A counterpart genre also looking to Ovid was the tragical complaint. In presenting the fall of a protagonist, occasioned by love whether reciprocated or not, this genre looked to a compounding of Ovid's *Heroides* with the medieval *de casibus* tradition brought up to date by the substitution of figures from English history, the latter as exemplified in the many editions

of the *Mirror for Magistrates* which recounts the fall of notable figures from Richard II on. It too was a highly rhetorical genre with verbal display substituting for the dramatic suspense inevitably lost through the *ex post facto* narration of the ghostly protagonist returning from hell to utter her complaint. But the form allowed for, even required, a moral, either admonitory or hortatory. Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* offers a modification of this general pattern.

Satire also became popular, showing some influence of the conversational quality of Horace's *Sermones* but mostly following the harsh and crabbed style of Juvenal and Persius. Misunderstanding the etymology of the term (*satura* = a medley, in reference to the variety of subjects or of forms employed), the Elizabethans thought that it derived from *satyr* and therefore should be rough and bristling with syntactical and verbal difficulties. The medieval traditions of satire of estates and types (usurers, lawyers, etc.) and of fools were also tapped, and satiric elements were introduced into almost any genre (e.g., Daniel introduces passages on cosmetics in the *Complaint of Rosamund* even as Hamlet charges women in the person of Ophelia for their like affectation). Epigrammatists wrote satires in little which were often both scandalous and libellous. This practice resulted in the calling in of satires and epigrams by the authorities in 1599 and the restricting of future publications. Despite the ban, some 50 new collections were printed in the following 15 years.

The pastoral mode, whether in verse or prose, was also extremely popular. Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* (1579) introduced a variety of classical and Renaissance forms (dirge, singing match, love complaint; allegory and beast fable), with the shepherd-*persona* taken to represent a poet, a lover, and a pastor-of-his-flock. Its experimental basis is patent in the variety of stanzaic forms employed, and it has a timely parallel in the prose experimentation that characterizes John Lyly's two "novels" (1578 and 1579), wherein he affects the highly mannered style of euphuism that has taken its name from his titular hero. The appeal of this mode rests on its juxtaposition of two realms – the real world (often of the court) and the, seemingly, idyllic green world to which characters retreat whether it be the forest of Arden (as in Thomas Lodge's pastoral romance *Rosalind* and in Shakespeare's appropriation of that story for *As You Like It*) or Arcadia (as in Sidney's prose epic which takes its title from the pastoral locale). In its wide confines the mode allowed for a range of genres – romantic epic (with Spenser), prose epic (with Sidney), prose romances (with Lodge and Robert Greene), and pastoral lyrics by a plethora of authors (*England's Helicon*). In their customary syncretic fashion the Elizabethans looked to classical writers like Theocritus and Vergil, to Italian writers like Sannazaro, Tasso, and Guarini, and to the Spanish Montemayor.

Offsetting the rural charms of the pastoral was a vogue for realism – tracts on roguery, which were climaxed by the cony-catching pamphlets of Robert Greene and Thomas Dekker or the picaresque novel with Thomas Nashe (*The Unfortunate Traveller*). Offsetting the concern with rhetoric in the popular euphuistic or Arcadian vein, or a combination of the two, was the exploitation of colloquial diction with its carry-over of the speaking voice, well exemplified in Sidney's sonnets which use dialogue (" 'What he?' say they of me, 'now I dare swear,/He cannot love: no, no, let him alone' ") or in Donne's *Songs and Sonnets* ("For God's sake, hold your tongue and let me love").

Translation, whether of the classics or of contemporary or near-contemporary works, was valuable on at least two counts. Either translators rendered the original in striking and vivid fashion so as to capture the flavour of the original even if somewhat transmogrified by prevailing attitudes or, if not, they made accessible important works that became the warp and woof of the Elizabethan ideational carpet. Examples of the first would include Sir Thomas North's noble translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*; Sir John Harington's sprightly translation of Ariosto's romantic epic, the *Orlando Furioso*; Edward Fairfax's elegant translation of Tasso's *Gerusalemma Liberata*, and John Florio's racy translation of Montaigne's *Essays*; examples of the second would include George Chapman's rendering of all the works of Homer and Philemon Holland's many translations of the classics – Livy, Plutarch, Suetonius, etc. The long labours of the last two translators continued well into the 17th century.

A special place should be accorded the earlier translation (1561) by Sir Thomas Hoby of Castiglione's *Courtier*, which in place of the humanist-scholar established the courtly man of letters as a paradigm to be copied. A measure of the Renaissance concern for the ideal is indicated by Castiglione's admission (in his dedication) that although the perfect courtier does not exist, he is following the pattern of Plato in setting forth the perfect state, of Xenophon in setting forth the perfect ruler, and of Cicero in setting forth the perfect orator. It truly was a seminal work, going through at least a hundred editions before 1600 with translations into Spanish, French, German, and Latin as well as English. In contrast to Machiavelli's *Prince* (significantly not to be translated into English until the 17th century), which sets forth the political man, Castiglione in his dialogue sets forth the apotheosis of the social man, the courtier serving as a median link between the ruler and the ruled. Ophelia's description of Hamlet records the qualities of this ideal figure:

> The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's eye, tongue, sword.
> The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
> The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
> The observ'd of all observers....

A special place should also be accorded the great composite work of translation in King James's reign – the Authorized Version of the Bible – since nine-tenths of it goes back to the translations of Tyndale and Coverdale in the 1530's, supplemented by other 16th-century versions.

Closely related to translation are the philosophic poems, since these tend to sum up the received wisdom of the period and reflect current views on a range of topics – psychology, philosophy, and theology. Despite the promptings of the new science, writers (as with Milton later) sometimes opted for the tried and well-worn world view to provide their basic construct. An example is Sir John Davies, who in a poem exploring the social, musical, astronomical, and cosmological implications of order and movement chooses to follow the Ptolemaic scheme in place of the Copernican (stanza 51, *Orchestra*, 1594). Two French works, both translated in the period, were to have a long influence, La Primaudaye's *French Academy*, which expounds the moral, metaphysical, and physiological doctrine of the microcosm (man as a "little world" in contrast to the macrocosm), and the Huguenot poet Du Bartas whose encylopaedic account of the history of man from the creation on influenced innumerable writers, as well as readers, from Donne to Milton.

In a somewhat different vein, Samuel Daniel's *Musophilus* (1599) offers a rare historical perspective; although humanistically oriented, he does not, like most of his contemporaries, reject the Middle Ages out of hand nor does he emphasize the value of fame (the common immortality *topos*) but rather the conviction that poetry and, by extension, learning is its own reward, the "thing," as he says, "that I was born to do." Ending with a somewhat uncommon literary glance at the current geographic explorations, he envisions the time when worlds in the "yet unformèd Occident" may speak in the accents of his native land.

The steady development of English as a literary medium continued the quarrel among those who wished, on the one hand, to enrich it by foreign borrowings and neologisms and, on the other, by the use of doublets and triplets to express near synonymous meaning – the transference of Erasmian copiousness to the vernacular. The quarrel also extended to the matter of spelling reform; a phonetic basis had been advocated as early as Sir John Cheke, and the question of correct orthography and pronunciation continued to be debated (see *Love's Labour's Lost*, V.i.).

A further long-lasting quarrel had to do with the introduction of classical meters and the displacing of "rude beggarly riming," which, according to the humanists, had been introduced by the barbaric Goths and Huns. Though classical writers opposed rhyme in poetry, they used it in prose to a certain extent, a rhetorical trick which became fashionable among Tudor preachers: "Let us as we be talkers so likewise be walkers" (or, much later, with Donne: God "flings and slings and stings the soul of the sinner"). Such a practice

accounts for the frequent critical charge of "rime without reason." Some of the best poets toyed with the notion of writing unrhymed verse – Sidney, Spenser, and especially, and surprisingly, Thomas Campion, who as a musician-poet handled rhyme as well as metrics with enormous skill. Motivation for such a departure from the native tradition stemmed partly from the humanists' opposition to anything medieval, partly from the desire on the part of poets to extend the range of the vernacular and raise it to the level of Greek and Latin. Milton's preface to the second edition of *Paradise Lost* (1674) wherein he terms rhyme the "invention of a barbarous age" is a late instance of this attitude.

In all this ferment one must not disregard the changing status of the aspiring writer vis-à-vis the technological advance of the printing press and the increasing consumer market it produced. The early tradition that obtained among the poets at Henry VIII's court was aristocratic since they looked to an audience of their peers. Living a tickle existence within a context, as Lear puts it, of "Who loses and who wins; who's in and who's out," they recognized that their skills might serve their personal advancement within that courtly context, but they disdained publication. This aristocratic disdain for the press characterizes a certain number of Elizabethan authors – all of Sidney's writings were published posthumously and Sir Walter Ralegh caused the cancelling of the initials S. W. R. added to two lyrics in *England's Helicon*. The same distaste for publication continued into the 17th century as is evident with Donne and Marvell.

But in the 1580's young graduates from Oxford and Cambridge were coming up to London, sometimes taking up residence in that "third" university – the inns of court – and these so-called "university wits" often tried to earn a living by their pen. It was a precarious existence. Authors surrendered all rights to their work upon receiving payment from the publisher (about 40 shillings for a pamphlet by a popular writer, with perhaps a pottle of wine thrown in). Hence they needed to write in haste, to be capable of "yarking up" a pamphlet in a day and a night, as Robert Greene was reputed to do, in order to sustain themselves even if it were only by a meal consisting of Rhenish wine and pickled herring. (Such was the "fatal banquet" that caused Greene's early demise.) Their alternative was to seek patronage from a nobleman or prosperous member of society, but this too was precarious since patrons were notoriously niggardly or vacillating, or so the writers complained. Many like Nashe and Dekker suffered imprisonment for debt; others like John Lyly could only bequeathe patience to their creditors, melancholy without measure to their friends, and beggary not without shame to their families.

In the course of a life which spanned most of the century (1520–1604), the hack poet Thomas Churchyard wrote innumerable occasional pieces in order to elicit rewards from potential patrons in all levels of society. He could well be speaking for many professional writers of his day when in a begging letter to the Lord Chancellor Christopher Hatton (who had already beggared himself by building a lavish palace to honour the queen), he wrote: "I know it is miserable to crave, servitude to receive, and beggarly to want." He could also be speaking for an even greater number of those who gravitated to the court to pay homage and seek favour when in a second letter to Hatton, he wrote: "I blush, being old, to beg and yet not ashamed to receive, being a courtier."

In the last years of the aging queen, new moods began to prevail and a certain disenchantment set in. The politically attuned looked to the north to James VI of Scotland, but in only a short time after his arrival in England, Elizabethan disenchantment yielded to Jacobean pessimism. The world, to some, was running down, nature was decaying, the end of the world was being forecast, and, as Donne put it, the "new philosophy" was calling all in doubt. In the course of the next 60 years, the cosmology of microcosm-macrocosm which had provided an ideological basis for political, social, moral, and aesthetic views surrendered to a mechanistic outlook, the accumulated result of the Baconian concern with science and the actual scientific achievements of Copernicus, Gilbert, Galileo, and Descartes.

For literary writers, however, there was no sharp break with the late Elizabethans in the early decades of the century. Three lines of development had their origins in writers who bridged the two periods either by literary impact or by chronology. There is, first, the

Spenserian tradition which continues in writers fusing Christian and mythological resources and employing mellifluous rhythms and lush (or grotesque) imagery. The result is religious or philosophic narrative. Giles Fletcher the Younger, for example, wrote a short devotional epic (*Christ's Victory and Triumph*) which blends Spenserian allegory with something of the spirit of Catholic baroque literature; it looks back to the Elizabethan poet Robert Southwell and ahead to the intensely flamboyant style of Richard Crashaw. His brother Phineas Fletcher was also in the tradition, writing a (very) long anatomical and allegorical poem *The Purple Island* which, in a sense, takes its point of departure from *Faerie Queene* II.9. He was sufficiently Spenserian so that his erotic narrative *Britain's Ida* could be palmed off in 1628 as by the Prince of Poets himself.

The Spenserian pastoral vogue also continued unabated: idealized landscapes (nymphs and dryads) frequently offset by the rustic (milkmaids and hock carts); in this vein Drayton, Nicholas Breton, William Browne, and George Wither were all skilful practitioners. In departing from the vogue of the shepherd, real or symbolic, employed as a focal point, Phineas Fletcher obtained a certain novelty in his *Piscatory Eclogues* (compare Sannazaro's *Eglogae piscatoriae*, 1526) just as Marvell was to do later with his substituting a mower (and his scythe) for the more usual shepherd to evoke suggestions of mortality.

Though a number of minor writers (and a major one like Milton) show something of the Spenserian quality, others found the style too diffuse, too soft, too feminine. These became the "sons of Ben," influenced by the classical restraint and tautness of Jonson's writing, and they represent a second line of literary development. In his *Timber; or, Discoveries*, a commonplace book with excerpts and notations from his readings in classical and Renaissance writers, Jonson reveals his humanistic orientation – concern for moral truth and artful presentation. In his non-dramatic writings, he follows Martial for his epigrams and Catullus for his songs. His many occasional pieces show that he learned the art of courtly compliment perhaps all too well.

Jonson's fondness for the couplet connects him with other 16th-century figures who were shaping their rhyming verses with point but not yet with the constriction of the narrative flow that was to mark the later closed couplet, with Marlowe, for example, in *Hero and Leander*, Drayton in the *Heroical Epistles*, and Fairfax in translating the final couplets of Tasso's *ottava*. By the time of Edmund Waller and John Denham this earlier kind of metrical suppleness is moving rapidly in the direction of the antitheses and end-stopped lines of the Augustans.

The country parson Robert Herrick is perhaps the most unmistakable follower of Jonson with his dainty and elegant handling of amatory themes in carefully articulated forms. Despite the surface gaiety of his poetry, he frequently sounds a contrasting note, underscoring the themes of mutability and death. These *topoi* from the Latin and Elizabethan poets – *tempus fugit, carpe diem* – along with a prompting to libertinism, provide a logic of persuasion for the cavalier poets – Thomas Carew, Richard Lovelace, and Sir John Suckling. Their amateur and aristocratic status is carefully nurtured, with the poems of Carew, for example, though widely circulated, not appearing in print until after his death.

The third line of development is provided by John Donne, whose "masculine" voice influenced some of the same poets influenced by Jonson, even as he himself was on occasion. Though late Elizabethan poets – Chapman, for instance, and Shakespeare – show elements of the so-called metaphysical style of poetry, it is Donne who is its exemplar. It is a style characterized by Dr. Johnson, and later critics, as one yoking heterogenous ideas and images together, straining after novelty, and exploiting arcane learning in witty and abstract images. Contrastingly, Carew (in "An Elegy upon the Death of ... Donne") sums up Donne's contribution in quite other terms:

> The muses' garden with pedantic weeds
> O'erspread, was purg'd by thee; the lazy seeds
> Of servile imitation thrown away;
> And fresh invention planted.

Donne's "fresh invention" – a rhetorical term – is stylistic since his subjects are amatory or religious; his means are equally rhetorical – the employing of irony, paradox, and hyperbole. The use of the conceit had been popular since the time of Petrarch; what Donne and his followers do is to seek for ever more striking and ingenious analogies. Donne also capitalizes on the Ramist appropriation of the first two parts of rhetoric (invention and arrangement) to the art of dialectic, which, historically, was often considered the adjunct of rhetoric: hence the argumentative cast of his poetry, as in the logic-chopping of "Lovers' Infiniteness." (For a later example, note the syllogistic basis of Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress.") The witty, casuistical Ovidian note sounded in some of his poems may be said to be brought up to date by the influence of casuistry – the mustering of arguments to defend a case of conscience – which was expounded by the Cambridge divine William Perkins (d. 1602) and much employed by religious dissenters of the 17th century. Like Sidney and Drayton, Donne conveys a sense of direct reaction to emotional experience (though the best sonneteers, inevitably, seem concerned with their own psychic response rather than that of the lady who triggered it), but, almost uniquely, he gives expression to a mutual love. To accord with the complexity of his feelings, he adopts a tortuous style, a difficult rhythmic movement, and an abrupt association of ideas. Other poets who capture something of the Donnean characteristics include the two Herberts, Henry Vaughan, Henry King, and Marvell; the last mentioned may be taken as the prime example of how poets, exposed to a wide range of styles, could amalgamate aspects from any line of development in making their own artful constructs.

Religious poetry, to which Donne contributed importantly, constitutes an essential part of the 17th-century legacy. In the 1590's it had served as a partial corrective (or a new subject) to the pre-eminence of the love sonnet. In 1595 Barnabe Barnes (author of a notoriously licentious sonnet) published *A Divine Century of Spiritual Sonnets* – his muse, the Holy Ghost; and mention has already been made of the Jesuit Southwell who wrote two volumes of religious lyrics and whose prose meditation *Mary Magdalen's Funeral Tears* (1591) contributed to the fashion for poems on weeping (Crashaw's "The Weeper"; Marvell's "Eyes and Tears").

One of the marked aspects of this poetry is its employment of erotic language, often disturbingly sexual. Apologists look to the medieval worship of the Virgin, the allegorization of the Song of Songs, or the raptures of the mystics for justification but seldom to the ease with which a writer of both secular and religious lyrics could adopt the idiom of the one for the other. The principle of decorum – suiting the style to the subject – has ceased to apply, and the straining after intensity, as in some of Crashaw's poems, becomes maudlin if not offensive. George Herbert, on the other hand, conveys a sense of religious fervor in a great variety of stanzaic forms by distilling his emotion and relying on a pared language. His search after novelty is perhaps represented by his geometrical or "shaped" poems (for example, "The Altar" represents its subject in form), a device, Puttenham had said, exhibiting brevity and subtlety.

Closely related to such shaped poems was the vogue for emblem books. These include an illustration (usually an engraving), a motto, and a poem, as did the eclogues of Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*, but, unlike Spenser, they dilate on the moral or religious symbolism of the picture. In 1586 Geoffrey Whitney published the first emblem book in English, most of it translated from Italian sources; in 1635 George Wither published a collection and in the same year appeared the most popular of all, that of Francis Quarles. The attraction of this capsuled visual-poetic morality stems, as Quarles put it, from the recognition that the "heaven, the earth, nay every creature [are] but hieroglyphics and emblems of His Glory." Its importance, apart from its "plebeian" appeal to contemporaries, rests on the appropriation of the emblematic mode by poets of greater stature.

If the emblematic mode reflected the ancient cosmic view of analogies and correspondences between macrocosm and microcosm, the ancient physiology of the doctrine of the humours continued – the notion that the balance or imbalance of the four fluids of the body (black bile, phlegm, blood, and choler), corresponding to the four elements, dictated an

individual's temperament: one's psychology depended on his physiology. Elizabethan and Jacobean medical and moral writers expounded the topic at tiresome length, and Jonson's two humour plays made literary capital of the theory. Increasingly, melancholy came to dominate the scene, perhaps because Aristotle had affirmed it signified superior intellectual ability. Like many of his contemporaries, Donne languished, "pressed with melancholy." Seriously ill with the "vapors" in 1623, he wrote a series of meditations on his infirmity (*Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*): "But what have I done either to breed or to breathe these vapors? They tell me it is my melancholy; did I infuse, did I drink in melancholy into myself? It is my thoughtfulness; was I not made to think? It is my study; did not my calling call for that? I have done nothing willfully, perversely toward it, yet must suffer in it, die by it." Poets wrote "pills" to purge it or lyrics to glorify it, with Milton adopting countering poetic views in "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." But the most extensive treatment, prompted by the author's need to be busy in order to avoid its effects, is found in Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, a title like many earlier ones (*Euphues, The Anatomy of Wit*; *The Anatomy of Abuses*; *The Anatomy of Absurdity*) proposing a dissection of the subject. Concerned primarily with manifestations of melancholy in love and religion – the two literary poles of the period – Burton provides a wealth of speculation and information on the human condition. The same impulse characterizes the physician Sir Thomas Browne whether he is considering religious belief, burial customs, or common errors; a Baconian approach to science, "oracular observation," and a rationalistic prompting jostle with an encyclopaedic concern for ancient authorities.

A very popular, and novel, genre was that of the "character," a sharp portrayal of a social type (the courtier, the gull), or of a scene (a tavern, a bowling green), or of a virtue but, more often, of a vice. It was a form which could lend itself to wit, to realism, to satire, or to moral adumbration. Its immediate sources are composite – the realistic depiction of rogues in the mid-16th century, the development of satire and epigram in the 1590's, and perhaps the extended *dramatis personae* that Jonson offered the reader of *Every Man Out of His Humour*; since his characters, though depicted in action, are marked by an obsessional bias, there is a similarity to the static types depicted in the "character" sketches.

The first characters (1608) were those of Joseph Hall, who in 1597 had claimed to be the earliest of the satirists. Entitled *Characters of Virtues and Vices*, his volume tends toward abstractions in a pithy antithetical style. A particular fillip was given to the genre with the publication in 1614 of a collection by Sir Thomas Overbury and his gentlemanly friends, a publication appearing after Overbury's poisoning in the Tower of London which resulted in a cause célèbre. Other writers, among them John Stevens, Nicholas Breton, and Richard Braithwaite, picked up the formula; a departure is Geoffrey Minshull's *Essays and Characters of a Prison and Prisoners*, 1618, written "to banish melancholy" while inside the King's Bench prison and addressed to friends at the inns of court. In a ready appropriation of cosmology, he defines a prison as a "microcosmus, a little world of woe ... a little commonwealth, although little wealth be common there." In 1628 John Earle published his collection entitled *Microcosmography*, his double-barreled title proffering either the "little world of man" as microcosm or a "little description" of the world of man. Much admired for his ironic and genial observations, he moves easily into the epigrammatic: "A GALLANT is one that was born and shaped for his clothes; and, if Adam had not fallen, had lived to no purpose."

When related genres are taken into account, the increasing tendency to prose writing in the 17th century becomes clear. There is, first, the essay, which shows an affinity with the "character" of, say, resolution, or of gardens, or of the wise statesman, or of the traitor (as with Thomas Fuller), the difference being that the essay writer tends to personal moral statement without the witty play of ideas or of language. Second, it shows an affinity with biography which was given an impressive nudge by the translation of classical sources such as Plutarch's *Lives* and Suetonius. In contrast with such heroic (or unheroic) delineation, the native tradition developed out of the medieval saints' legends and issued in two impressive 16th-century works that, significantly, were not to receive publication until the next century.

William Roper's life of Sir Thomas More is a touching and artful example of the hagiographic tradition by More's son-in-law while the life of the haughty prelate Cardinal Wolsey by his gentleman-usher William Cavendish is very much in the *de casibus* tradition of the rise and fall of an important historical figure. As mentioned earlier, More's *Richard III* is too much of a rhetorical projection to be accounted biography even as Bacon's *Henry VII* is so much concerned with the political scene that it more aptly falls into the category of history. The most famous of 17th-century literary biographers is the "angler" Isaak Walton who wrote sympathetic accounts of his two friends Donne and Sir Henry Wotton (for the *Reliquiae Wottonianae* of 1651) and of George Herbert and the "judicious" Richard Hooker.

The third form with affinity to the "character" (and the essay) is the epistolary. It goes back to the medieval formulary or *ars dictaminis*, which had as its source the letters of Cicero, Seneca, and the younger Pliny. Consequently, it falls under the governing principles of rhetoric with the triple ends of teaching, delighting, and persuading. Erasmus had written a treatise on letter writing (1522) in which the various kinds were categorized (encomiastic, familiar, etc.) with examples taken from classical authors. In 1586 two works in the vernacular appeared, William Fulwood's *Enemy of Idleness*, which was directed to a middle-class audience and Angel Day's *The English Secretary*, intended for professional writers who could make profitable use of his section on tropes and figures – the sure index to its rhetorical connection.

Though once again Joseph Hall claimed originality in a "new fashion" with the publication (1608–11) of *Epistles in Six Decades*, by 1602 Nicholas Breton had already anticipated the shift from the earlier formulary to an entertaining and informal approach with his *Post with a Mad Packet of Letters* (presumably transposed from its later title *Post with a Packet of Mad Letters*) which went through more than a dozen enlarged editions before the end of the century. This approach appears to best advantage in the four volumes published by James Howell, *Epistolae Ho-Elianae*, 1645–51, a collection dealing with his travels abroad (the Alps seemed "uncouth huge monstrous excrescences of nature"), his later report from Spain of the English travellers Mr. John and Mr. Thomas Smith, who had metamorphosed themselves into the Duke of Buckingham and Prince Charles and had come to woo the Infanta, and his imaginative excursions from Fleet Prison where he spent eight years writing, or revising, his specimens. The easy and lucid style of the letters, which frequently shade into short essays, is in striking contrast with the wayward quality of a Burton or the sonorous effects of a Browne, conveying rather a sense of familiar communication: "You know also how the gaggling of geese did once preserve the Capitol.... But the goose quill doth greater things; it conserves empires (and the feathers of it get kingdoms; witness what exploits the English performed by it in France), the quill being the chiefest instrument of intelligence, and the ambassador's prime tool. Nay, the quill is the usefullest thing which preserves that noble vertue, friendship, [which] else would perish among men for want of practice." Such writing manifests another in the several steps leading toward simplified and utilitarian prose.

Though the notion is initially surprising, the way was prepared by the sometimes acrimonious debate about proper preaching style which began in the 16th century and continued with much increased vigor into the 17th. In the Renaissance, homiletics was accepted as another aspect of the rhetorical art, and the various manuals of schemes and tropes were advertised as useful for the preacher as for the fictive writer or the lawyer or statesman. But with the increasing fervor of the religious reformers, a division sharpened between the traditionalists who advocated the enlisting of humane learning to make their sermons effective and the "modernists," often identified as puritans, who spurned such profane helps, advocating, instead, the concealing of human wisdom or even the rejection of it in favour of plain elucidation of the Scriptures. Since both puritan and anglican, whether of the 16th or 17th century, had been subjected to the same rhetorical training (the curriculum remaining the same except for an expansion of subjects), the division of opinion did not reflect doctrinal differences so much as it reflected differences as to what was the most efficacious means of persuading the greatest number to endorse Christian doctrines. Thus it was the case of one kind of rhetoric replacing another.