

should not be misled by H. S. Bennett's superb trilogy, *English Books & Readers 1475–1640* (1952–1970), for Bennett knowingly dons blinders: the key term in his title is "English Books." Superior editorial staffs, more efficient printing plants, and access to the international market gave Continental printers a competitive edge that London shops could not challenge. Thus from *Utopia* down, many Latin works by Englishmen were printed abroad and accordingly fail to appear in *STC*, while the few reverse lend-lease authors first printed in England are proscribed writers like Erastus, Bruno, and Sarpi.

This generalization is beyond doubt for the period down to 1640 where I can speak from knowledge, including Miner's key period 1580–1630. Miner hesitantly considers this possibility in one footnote (p. 1032), but hastily sweeps it under the rug. In fact the evidence on Renaissance book buying and ownership is by no means as scanty as he implies. The remarkable library of the wealthy collector Lord Lumley (later Prince Henry's) contained only a small minority of English books.² Administrators like Sir William Petre and Lord Burghley regularly imported books. Working scholars, whether dons like Gabriel Harvey and Robert Burton or busy writers like Ben Jonson, John Donne, and John Selden, routinely relied on foreign books.

The living scholar who has made the most exhaustive survey of the field, Sears Jayne, puts the matter bluntly: "The *Short-Title Catalogue* . . . would not represent accurately the books read in Renaissance England, since English readers owned far more Continental than English books."³ Jayne misleads in the opposite direction from Miner, since he is concerned with the elite, but then, it was the elite class that introduced Stoicism.

If Continental books were not available, where did the translators get their originals? Where did Elyot, Ascham, and other humanists expect teachers to get the classics they prescribed so liberally? It is true that one class of books was to prove an exception. Assured of a captive market in cheap schoolbooks, Elizabethan printers struck off numerous pirated editions of standard Continental texts of writers like Cicero, Virgil, and "good old Mantuan" (about 1610 English schoolmasters like Farnaby and Bond began editing worthy rivals). Most of the London Latin prints in which Miner shows lively interest, such as the Seneca *Tragediae*, the Ciceros and Horaces, fall in this dull classification, and the revised *STC* will show that the surviving editions are much more numerous than Miner realizes. But who will suppose that the cultivated Elizabethan layman did his serious reading in these equivalents of Rinehart, Riverside, and Dell paperbacks?

However interesting as a fact of publishing history, the scarcity of serious editions of the classics in *STC* is an unreliable basis for conclusions about reading habits. This writer pretends to no expert knowledge on the impact of Stoicism, but if, as Miner argues, the English did not read Stoic texts in the period 1580–1630, it was not because Latin texts were unavailable; they simply do not appear in *STC*.

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Notes

- ¹ "Patterns of Stoicism in Thought and Prose Styles, 1530–1700," *PMLA*, 85 (1970), 1023–34.
- ² Sears Jayne and F. R. Johnson, *The Lumley Library* (British Museum, 1956).
- ³ Sears Jayne, *Library Catalogues of the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1956), p. 4.

Mr. Miner replies:

The aim of our inquiry is to learn about the transmission of kinds of classical thought to England, about the pattern of that transmission, and about the nature of what was transmitted at various periods to various writers. The work of Pierre Courcelle (referred to in the article) shows how complicated the matter is and how many are the kinds of evidence required. Professors Williams and Freehafer put in question certain aspects of my article. Since corrections of error and additions of fact can only be welcome, I shall minimize any possible element of controversy by merely referring to what is actually said in my article, to the evidence on which it is based, and to the questions raised by these gentlemen.

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Marvell's "Little T. C." Continued

To the Editor:

I rejoice to have converted Professor Cullen [Forum, May 1971 *PMLA*, pp. 280–81] on the one point I had really at heart. Indeed my "Reply" would not have been written had he not tried to prove that "The Picture of Little T. C." was an invitation to promiscuity; I would not allow Marvell, in this poem at least, to become responsible for any present day girl-reader's going wrong. True, Professor Cullen still sees T. C. as a prospective *femme fatale*; if so, the phrase must mean in the United States something rather different from what it does in France.¹

Having pocketed the pound I shall let the pence take care of themselves. I shall abstain from discussing any other point here, all the more willingly since I am reviewing for *Etudes Anglaises* that book of Professor

Cullen's to which he refers in his last footnote, and shall again have a few things to say about his interpretations of Spenser and Marvell. But the complaint in the last paragraph of his "Reply" calls for some explanation on my part that goes much beyond the immediate occasion of our controversy. I apologize for having classed him as a New Critic since he disclaims this title. Years ago (*RES*, Nov. 1957, p. 382) I confessed that I used "New Criticism" to include anything that had been written on Marvell after my (French) book was published in 1928. But, jest apart, there is more of Empson's search for hidden meanings in Professor Cullen's method (as in many of his fellow critics') than he seems to be aware of. He claims that he is historical; he is . . . up to a point. When he meets history he either devalues it, as in "April," or ignores it, as in "Little T. C." And the obvious does not satisfy him. True, he does not make much use of the now well-worn "ambiguity," but he has a substitute for it, viz., "ambivalence"—a word already used in his "Reply" and occurring again and again in his book. He even sees a deeper meaning, too deep for me, in the frivolous conclusion of my "Reply"; so I shall give a graver one to this "Rejoinder," for him to exercise himself upon it: "Ante omnia tamen, fratres, hoc in nomine Domini et admonemus, quantum possumus, et praecipimus, ut . . . prius illud quod lectum est credatis sic gestum, quomodo lectum est; ne subtracto fundamento rei gestae, quasi in aere quaeritis aedificare."

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¹ An unfortunate double misprint has slipped into the third and last footnote of my reply to Professor Cullen (*PMLA*, March 1971, p. 277). Though Louis Lecocq's book was published in Paris there was no "Perversion" in its publication; on the contrary "Perversion" should be read, instead of "Version," in the title of S. K. Heninger's article, published in *JHI*.

Literature and Morality

To the Editor:

I have been most happy with the new trend in *PMLA*, specifically the Forum, which, I feel, adds a new dimension to the publication in its pursuit of truth.

However, if I may, I should like to add something which I do not believe has been made clear in the letters published in the Forum thus far. Scholars since World War II have tended to assume that Henry James is beyond criticism when he draws a clear line between the "moral" and the "aesthetic" in *The Art of Fiction*, saying that the latter is a matter of "execution" and that there cannot be moral or immoral

"execution." This assumption, however, is completely false.

In order to show why it is false, I need to examine the words *moral*, *immoral*, and *unmoral*. It should be apparent that our language is deficient in that it poses only one word as the logical opposite of *both* the words *immoral* and *unmoral*. This has led to a terrible blurring of the distinction between the *general* and the *specific*. On the general level in which *moral* contrasts with *unmoral*, we mean by the former term "moral matters"—those matters which any person gives "top priority value" to. Now everybody everywhere, educated or uneducated and regardless of social status or wealth, gives "top priority value" to *something*. If he is educated, he may be very articulate about it; if he is not, he may not even understand clearly that he does so. But it is simply not possible for a person to be *human* and at the same time *unmoral*. As a matter of fact, it is this insight which Stephen Crane uses when he draws a distinction between man and nature and says that, *because* of nature's unmorality or indifference, man must *build* a brotherhood.

Now, to go back to James, I think that one can see that he has not "won" the field at all. He has simply indicated that he places the "aesthetic" above all else in his value system—in other words, he indicates that he gives to the "aesthetic" that "top priority value" which makes his judgment a fundamentally moral one in the general sense. When we see this clearly, we can then debate whether James's doing so was justifiable or not. I personally do not believe that it is at all justifiable, for it places "something else" above "humanistic" value, just as many persons professing "humanism" do. Only if the human being is placed first in the value hierarchy, it would seem, can one lay claim to the title of "humanist."

Obviously, one's decisions about such matters will affect his politics as well as his views of literature. My purpose here is to point this out so as to clear away the confusion which, I feel, underlies so much that passes for "literary criticism."

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PMLA and Politics Continued

To the Editor:

It would be unfortunate if Professor James L. Allen's letter, "*PMLA* and Politics" (Jan. 1971) were to pass unremarked. Leaving aside the fact that *PMLA* has long been a repository for the Association's internal and perhaps even political affairs (e.g., the presidential address), I must say that the recent articles of Professors Smith, Hook, Crews, Ohmann, and others have made the journal vastly more readable,