

terminology, particularly as seen in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century usage and custom. All the evidence supports the conclusion that 'some, perhaps many, of the franklins of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries formed a group of people who by birth, by wealth, or by achievement ... were ranked among the "gentils" of medieval society' (p. 117), and an examination of the Franklin described by Chaucer (pp. 118 - 41) proves him to be 'a worthy representative' of this social group. In the final discussion (Chapter VIII) Dr Specht follows the ten critics cited in his note of acknowledgement (p. 146) to conclude plausibly enough that 'the Franklin's handling of the moral problem of the Tale . . . enjoyed his creator's own wholehearted approval' (pp. 171-2); though I am not happy about the easy assumption that the three Boethian ballades taken to exemplify 'the Chaucerian ethos' (*Trouthe, Gentillesse, Lak of Stedfastnesse*) are in any sense more 'personal' (pp. 146 ff.) than any other of Chaucer's works.

The book often gives a very leisurely impression (witness the indulgent provision of photographs, and the irritating modern use of *occupatio*, for example: 'This is, however, not the place for a rehearsal of the well-known critical views on . . . Chaucer's modifications of his source, ... Breton *lais*, or ... courtly love' (pp. 164-5), followed by three uncritical bibliographical footnotes); and in the end I wonder whether, given the derivative nature of much of the Chaucerian material, a more accurate title would not be the description of the book which appears on the back cover: 'a discussion of the franklin "class" of late medieval England', in which Chaucer's Franklin would have his place as chief literary example.

PHILLIPA HARDMAN

Puritans and Libertines: Anglo-French Literary Relations in the Reformation. By H. M. RICHMOND. Pp. xii+402. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1981. £19.25 net.

Professor Hugh Richmond's latest book is a disconcertingly uneven one, not least because its virtues and vices are not immediately easy to define. I shall briefly attempt to do so here, but would predict that the book's curious mixture of brilliance and wrongheadedness will provoke discussion for some considerable time to come.

Even the blurb is an oddity, in that, although it is largely composed of phrases used in the book itself and is an accurate description as far as it goes, very little indication is given of what the second half or so of the book offers. It would seem that the author himself had difficulty finding unity in his study, which is not surprising, since the first six chapters have a clear thesis about the supposed nature of the influence of France on English literature, while the remaining chapters might have had some such title as 'Further Examples of the French Connection'.

In the words of the blurb, the following is perhaps Richmond's chief contention:

The literary fashions, courtly manners, and 'newfangled' women of the English Renaissance ... were less determined by Italian and classical influences than by the effects on English sensibilities and society of the French Reformation and religious wars.

In fact, however, very little is done to minimize the 'Italian and classical influences', since they are hardly discussed. Indeed, one of the major failings of the book is that, in its anxiety to promote awareness of things French, other factors shaping the English Renaissance are largely overlooked. Assuming, for example, that a new type of woman did emerge in the literature and society of sixteenth-century England, one would look for causes, not only in Italian and classical influences as well as the impact of France, but also—and surely primarily—in events

at home. The reigns of Henry, Mary, and Elizabeth offered plenty of religious and political turmoil which, rather than anything happening in France, can itself be seen as prompting a re-examination of traditional ways of thinking. Richmond is so preoccupied with the 'Frenchness' of Anne Boleyn, and, as he sees it, of Elizabeth, that he pays no attention to Mary at all. History is thus adjusted to the author's thesis, not, as would have been proper, the other way round. The figure of Mary is obviously the less welcome to Richmond because she does not stand for the values which he treasures: she does not correspond to his image of 'the modern woman', nor is she a Protestant. However, if Elizabeth is to be seen as important in furthering the cause of women, it is surely far more logical to impute part of her appeal to her being Mary's successor than to stress, as Richmond does, that she was Anne Boleyn's daughter.

Richmond's first and foremost heroine is Marguerite d'Angoulême, the sister of Francois I and the author of the *Heptameron*. He postulates that the notion of the modern woman was derived by Anne Boleyn from Marguerite, at whose court Anne was raised, and that the line of descent includes, for example, Shakespeare's comic heroines (on p. 92, Marguerite, Anne, and Rosalind are mentioned virtually in one breath).

This construct may seem superficially appealing, and indeed it is difficult to believe that it bears no relation to reality whatever. Nevertheless, the longer the facts are looked at, the fewer there are to support Richmond, and the more to contradict him. There is, for example, the question of chronology. Richmond has to rely on Anne's supposed significance the more because any *literary* influence of the *Heptameron* in England would have been an Elizabethan phenomenon. Direct influence at an early date is furthermore claimed to rest on such a magical event as Henry VIII's meeting with Francois I on the Field of the Cloth of Gold (1520). The reader who feels scepticism about this kind of 'evidence' will be the more alarmed when Richmond comes to compare, say, Anne Boleyn and Shakespeare's comic heroines. Not only are we not given any detailed studies, but what we are offered points at differences as strongly as resemblances. Richmond speaks approvingly of Anne's 'subtly calculated sexual exploitation of Wyatt' (p. 154) without realizing that readers who do not share his or Anne Boleyn's notions of feminism may feel, quite rightly, that the ideals and behaviour of Rosalind and Beatrice are altogether more liberated and humane. His reductive approach actually leads to some crass misreadings of Shakespeare. Thus, praising the kind of 'explicit, legal contract' (p. 49) that Marguerite and Anne saw as 'the only sexual relationship which does have some objective, permanent attributes', Richmond speaks condescendingly about 'the volatile lovers of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*' (p. 50) without pointing out that, in the end, Shakespeare supports Hermia against her despotic matchmaking father.

In fairness, though, one could and should also mention some of the good things in the book. At the very least, it is concerned with important matters, and constantly provokes thought. Some of the similarities between French and English culture which Richmond draws attention to are worth knowing. For example, I agree with him that, on the whole, Marot's negative opinion of Venice's materialistic, shallow, and insincere society appears to be shared by Shakespeare (cf. p. 137), although, as so often in this book, one wonders whether the resemblance is not one of parallel development rather than influence. Even so, Marot's view is illuminating. The same can be said, I feel, about many passages from Ronsard which take up much of the second part of Richmond's book, and which are sometimes astonishingly similar to parallels in English poets, notably Milton. Even here, however, there are excesses and jarring notes. For example, Richmond compares the beginning of Marvell's

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'The Definition of Love' with an extract from Ronsard without realizing that Marvell's cultivation of despair is far more radical, subtle, and original than Ronsard's 'the more I see my act to be despairing, the more I see my heart firm in hope' (p. 283).

What this book needs, above all, is intellectual discipline. It has the beginnings of a case which, unfortunately, is spoiled by the failure to avoid excessive, unsubstantiated, unconnected, and indiscriminate claims. In a sense, Richmond provides the reader with notes for a book that perhaps someone with a more rigorously scholarly and critical mind might actually have written. Most likely, the notes cannot be brought together into a coherent and persuasive framework. Several of them are nevertheless highly valuable for the insights or information they offer, and the very real defects of Richmond's study should not lead us to ignore its equally real merits.

JOOST DAALDER

Shakespeare Survey 34. Edited by STANLEY WELLS. Pp. 204. Cambridge: University Press, 1981. £18.50 net.

The main theme of this volume is 'Characterization in Shakespeare' and most of the contributions are addressed to the question posed straightforwardly by Kenneth Muir, 'what are the means by which Shakespeare creates characters who seem to be more lifelike than those of other dramatists?' The emphasis upon methods of dramatic presentation offers a very different approach from that tradition of psychological character-interpretation which reached its apogee with A. C. Bradley. The beginnings of that tradition are illuminated here in Brian Vickers' study of the process by which late eighteenth-century justifications of the characterization of Hamlet derived from the moral and aesthetic objections of neo-classical critics.

In coming to terms with the impression of lifelikeness, several contributors focus on the ways in which conflicting or contradictory aspects of characterization create a sense of complex individuality. Kenneth Muir, for instance, writes of 'the disparity between source and play, the disparity between what different characters say about each other, the contrast between metaphysical and psychological motives, the shattering of stereotypes'. This latter point is taken up by A. D. Nuttall who upholds Shakespeare's ability to subvert convention and present the natural, despite the tendency of modern criticism to find self-referential art everywhere in the plays. Acknowledging the formal self-consciousness of Shakespeare's early work, Nuttall draws an effective comparison between the formality of the Garden scene in *Richard II* and the Gloucestershire scenes in *2 Henry IV*, noting the broken, discontinuous, 'almost Chekhovian' mode in the later play and observing that 'with this fracturing of the more obtrusive symmetries comes an intuition of reality'. Discontinuities of another kind are discussed by Herbert Weil in his analysis of Shakespeare's manipulation of expectation followed by surprise to complicate an audience's perception of character.

The sense of autonomous personal identity in Shakespeare's characters is the subject of two complementary essays. Leo Salingar explores the quality of self-awareness and self-questioning which is conferred on the tragic heroes, making us 'feel completely that the speaker is a living person in his own mind, and, consequently, for us'. Salingar's perception of 'a gap between a character's image of himself and an image of a more complete humanity', a lack of consonance between the inward self and the office or role he must perform, raises the question of personal autonomy which Robert Weimann approaches from quite a different point of view. As Weimann sees it, the tension between individuality and social circumstance in the plays reflects 'that basic contradiction according to which the individual ultimately,

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