misinterpretation. Metrically there is no such feature as a 'half-stress', though stylistically there may be.

Even with the limited statistical evidence that is offered in a footnote, the claim that Langland made stylistic use of 'translinear' alliteration (with the last stress of the line alliterating with the following line) is dubious. It occurs, apparently, 455 times in 7,275 lines, that is once in 16. Since there are about 18 distinct alliterative sounds, this is the proportion to be expected if the matter were of no consequence to the poet. It might be argued that Langland consciously avoided it and that all examples are purposeful; that argument is not made, so perhaps the reader is being asked to admire a non-existent device. Rhyme is another feature that we are asked to admire. It seems to me likely that Langland, like other alliterative poets, consciously avoided rhyme; significantly, many of the examples of rhyme are only in the B Version. A reader brought up on traditions of rhymed verse may he prompted to agree that Christ's words offer 'one of the most beautiful and moving of Langland's rhymes':

I faught so, me thursteth yet, for mannes soule sake;
May no drynke me moiste, ne my thurst slake.

The trouble is that the C reviser inserts material between the two lines, so that the effect of the rhyme is lost. The line 'To be buxom at his biddynge his wil to fulfille' only has that non-alliterating (and rather displeasing?) internal rhyme in B; C has bone rather than wil.

The aim of this book, indeed, is not so much to provide a metrical analysis of Piers Plowman, but rather to show how metre and style act as the vehicle for meaning. Even where the metrical description is acceptable, however, the comments on the relation of style and meaning are often subjective and fanciful. To search for onomatopoeic effects in alliterative verse is a great temptation ('the extra s stave helps to create the desired atmosphere of balmy languor'), but this is to forget that the alliteration is structural and metrical. It is no belittlement of Langland to say that he is not Tennyson. An appreciation of the description of the cat catching the mice—'And overleep hem lighliche and laughte hem at his wilde'—is not enhanced by the conjuring up of claws and growls from the vowel sounds in this way: 'The thin front vowel of lighliche (enacting the leap) widens ominously into the broad back diphthong of laughte (imaging the spread of claw and jaw) with its accompanying change in the quality of the terminal spirant (from hiss to growl).'

I have concentrated unduly on points of disagreement. Both the first chapter on the poet's attitude to 'makers' and the last on word-play are subtle and penetrating, and the emphasis upon Langland's 'characteristic clerkly tone of gritty intellectuality' is much needed. I wait eagerly for the promised book on the metre of Piers Plowman, together with all its percentages and line-references.

T. TURVILLE-PETRE


The Book of Psalms was of the utmost importance to readers in the sixteenth century; it is therefore no less significant to those who want to understand that century today. But, as Dr Zim's learned and perceptive book amply demonstrates to those not already converted, both the Book of Psalms and the various metrical versions discussed by her are still of the greatest intrinsic interest to readers of the present. Quite rightly, Dr Zim is not primarily concerned with the theological value.
of the metrical psalms. She does not avoid questions of content, but she is not inclined towards unnecessary ideological battles. Rather, as her concern is with the worth of the poems as literature, she gently persuades us of their significance by discussing them in general human and artistic terms. This tactful approach serves her purpose well.

The informative introduction convincingly deals with three modern assumptions which frequently stand in the way of a just appreciation of the literature under discussion. Dr Zim does not agree with the view that the psalms were meant to combat the influence of the revival of classical learning (and thus paganism); she does not share the opinion that the expressions of feeling found in sixteenth-century psalm versions necessarily represent the personal experiences and feelings of the individual poet; and she is not willing to assume that translation is an inferior, non-creative activity. These are points of great significance to the reader of the metrical psalms. As for the first point, most readers now would probably agree with Dr Zim that 'We no longer regard the cultural history of the Renaissance as a battle between the old learning and the new "pagan" learning' (p. 4). The other two views are perhaps still clung to with more conviction, especially by readers influenced by the Romantic notion that a poem is only worth while if it expresses the true voice of feeling of the author.

Of all the poets discussed by Dr Zim, Wyatt is the one most frequently subjected to this approach. It is not at all uncharacteristic of modern critics to assume that Wyatt is on the whole derivative in his short poems, but 'makes it new' in such poems as the psalms where, it is held, he has the individualistic voice without which poetry cannot really exist. I agree with Dr Zim that there are two related misconceptions here: one is that we must look for a 'personal' note in the poems, and the other is that if we do not find that we must conclude that the poems are somehow disappointing. In a brave effort to attack both of these views at once, Dr Zim argues strongly for the position that Wyatt's psalms are not (and were not intended to be) an expression of Wyatt's private feelings. Her chapter on this author strikes me as the most innovative part of her book, and she makes her case well. She shows that it is quite unnecessary—indeed unfounded—to assume that the poems are personal, and that they are no less successful if read as a dramatic artefact.

I am persuaded that the reader should first of all read Wyatt's psalms as though they are not an expression of personal feeling, although in years past I was inclined towards the opposite view (see my edition of the *Collected Poems* for Oxford University Press, 1975). I never agreed with those who felt that the poems somehow *ought* to be personal in tone to be worth while. Nevertheless, and although I agree with Dr Zim's general objective, I cannot convince myself that Wyatt's David, in his version of the Penitential Psalms, is not in several respects remarkably like the poet himself. One cannot, and should not, try to 'prove' such a point. But it is a fact that all those who know Wyatt well have agreed that, no matter the merit of these psalms, they do reflect the author's own experience; the person of David is strikingly like that of Wyatt in so far as we can gain any impression of that from the other poems written by him and from other sources. I should prefer to agree with Dr Zim, as I think that Wyatt does get romanticized by his readers and as I do not believe that he is any the better for it; but I find it genuinely difficult to read the poems as though they are merely such objective creations as Dr Zim argues.

I think that Dr Zim compounds the difficulty by what she very justly argues concerning Surrey, who is viewed within the general context of the statement that 'Sixteenth-century commentators encouraged individuals to recognize representations of their own experiences and emotions in psalms, and to use them as models for personal prayer and meditation' (p. 80). While I do not quarrel with Dr Zim's reading

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of Surrey, I find it difficult to believe that we should forget such general statements about the significance of the psalms in the sixteenth century when we read Wyatt. Dr Zim seems to use her sense of the contemporary context a little selectively. It is a measure of the honesty and comprehensiveness of her book, however, that it enables one to use the evidence which she marshals in a way which she had not intended.

Apart from Wyatt and Surrey and their very different purposes as Dr Zim sees them, she identifies a group of writers of whom she says (p. 112) that 'the selection and treatment of psalms by writers of "holye songes" reflect a more altruistic concern for the spiritual needs of a wider audience'. This category includes Thomas Sternhold and others, and, although the chapter which is dedicated to them is worthy and necessary, it is not particularly exciting to the reader whose interests are above all literary and general.

The situation changes drastically when Dr Zim moves to Sidney, and his sister the Countess of Pembroke. As she mentions, too many critics have regarded Sidney's version of the psalms as merely clever; not only is there nothing contemptible about that cleverness as such, intellectually and artistically, but Sidney used his dazzling command of form in the service of significant content; indeed, it is greatly to Dr Zim's credit that the examples which she discusses never make one feel that Sidney's readers would be justified in separating some supposedly trivial form from what he has to say. It is no negative reflection on Sidney that the Countess, writing at a slightly lower technical level, more immediately and touchingly stands out as a human being who after her brother's death produces

\[
\text{the is dearest offrings of my hart} \\
\text{dissolv'd to Inke,} \\
\text{sadd Characters indeed of simple love.} \\
\text{(p. 185)}
\]

As Dr Zim deals with an important area much neglected by literary historians of the sixteenth century, and as she does so well, her book deserves to be in every important library, and to be consulted by all who want to be informed by her and to test out their own insights against hers.

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JOOST DAALDER


Professor William Empson was head of the Department of English Literature at the University of Sheffield in 1965 when I, an assistant lecturer, published a New Mermaid edition of Marlowe's Dr Faustus. My Introduction awakened Empson's interest in the play, its source, and its textual problems; he continued to be interested long after his retirement in 1971, projecting a book on Marlowe and certainly intending the present essay to be published, perhaps as an introduction or appendix to John Henry Jones's (not yet published) parallel texts edition of the English and German Faust-books. I wish I could report lively Sheffield discussions—but there were none, although at his request I foraged in the university library for early copies of Paracelsus. Nor is there much fascinating correspondence to be revealed: the present editor prints a letter in which Empson kindly promises not to cite me 'as the enemy, since many other people are still misled by Greg'; and I have an early (c.1972) epistle describing his initial reactions to Marlowe's source—'a shockingly silly book'.

Empson and I have never talked about Marlowe: Sir William respected (I think) my scholarship but distrusted my convictions; and I admired the creative energy of...