

Book review of Robert Ignatius Letellier. *The English Novel, 1660-1700: An Annotated Bibliography*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1997. xxxiv + 448pp. US\$85.00. ISBN 0-313-30368-1.

Scholarship on Restoration prose fiction is the rich, small farm lying in the shadowed foothills of the mountain of oaks and scrub of the eighteenth-century novel. And recent surveys of that farm have been incomplete. Neither Margaret Duggan's *English Literature and Backgrounds, 1600-1700* (1990) nor R.D. Lund's *Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature, 1660-1700* (1980) is strong in prose fiction, and R.D. Spector's excellent *Backgrounds to Restoration and Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (1991) views cultural more than literary contexts. Robert Ignatius Letellier had scanned the prose fiction acreage himself in *A Bibliography of the English Novel from the Restoration to the French Revolution* (1995), but the wide scope allowed only an aerial view of the field.

Now comes his magisterial five-part list: miscellaneous bibliographies; anthologies; general studies; individual authors, translations, and anonymous works (with primary checklists and annotated scholarship); and a selected chronological shortlist of prose fiction published between 1660 and 1700. End matter comprises an index of scholars and a subject and thematic index.

While full lists of the period's fiction can be found in Donald Wing's *Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England ... 1641-1700* (1945-51; revised 1994), Paul Salzman's *English Prose Fiction, 1558-1700* (1985), and Charles Mish's *English Prose Fiction, 1600-1700* (1952; revised 1967), Letellier's catalogue of the primary work is convenient and helpful as it notes the dates and page-lengths of the fiction, identifies its sub-types, and cites Wing et al. for further reference.

But the real power of this bibliography is in its culling of the scholarship and criticism for 151 authors and 118 anonymous works. The staple crops, of course, are Bunyan (177 items) and Behn (53), with a good yield in Margaret Cavendish (24), Congreve and John Dunton (18 each), and Mary Rowlandson (16). Letellier also lists scholarship on foreign authors whose English translations took root in the Restoration, chiefly D'Aulnoy, Scarron, Scudéry, and Cervantes. Throughout, besides books and articles, he cites foreign-language scholarship, notes, and dissertations. Wisely, he does not employ the overworked migrants of conventional introductory criticism.

Annotations of the scholarship are accurate and sensibly proportioned. With the on-line *MLA International Bibliography* reaching back only to 1963, Letellier's substantial annotations of such pioneering studies as, say, Frank Chandler on the literature of roguery (1907), Charlotte Morgan on the novel of manners (1911), A.J. Tiede on pre-Richardsonian fiction (1912-16), and Philip Gove on the imaginary voyage (1941) are a major service to graduate and undergraduate alike. Likewise, Letellier provides extended comment on crucial disputes of criticism, as seen in his annotation on the 1989-90 *Diacritics* debate on structuralism and the new historicism between Michael McKeon and William Warner. All critical entries merit perfectly accurate abstracts, many at paragraph length. Yet while all of the annotations are accurate, they are not evaluative and thus miss the opportunity to guide rushed students who desperately need a referee to call fouls and touchdowns.

Likewise the index, although long and detailed, misses the chance to group topics for ease of reference. Individual citations of primary works, for example, identify their genres, but the index fails to enumerate

them under, say, captions of "criminal biographies," "oriental tales," "scandalous chronicles," and so forth. The index also lists important topics, but keys them mainly to general studies and not to individual authors and works. "Structure" and "style," for example, get only two and one reference respectively, while "translation" gets one and "imagery" none. While numerous articles on individual authors treat these topics, the researcher has no high ground from which to see frequencies and trends in genres and themes, a lost view that might have conveyed the integrity of Restoration prose fiction at a glance.

Inevitably every bibliography has misses—and even gaps. Absent here are works on that truck garden of early English fiction, the picaresque: Alexander Blackburn's *Myth of the Picaro* (1979), Edward Friedman's *Anti-Heroine's Voice: Narrative Discourse and the Transformation of the Picaresque* (1987), Lars Hartveit's *Workings of the Picaresque in the British Novel* (1987), Stuart Miller's *The Picaresque Novel* (1967), Frederick Montoser's *The Picaresque Element in Western Literature* (1975), Alexander Parker's "The Picaresque Tradition in England and France" in *Literature and the Delinquent: The Picaresque Novel in Spain and Europe* (1967), Harry Sieber's *The Picaresque* (1977), Ulrich Wicks's *Picaresque Narrative, Picaresque Fictions* (1989), and Calhoun Winton's "Richard Head and the Origins of the Picaresque in England" in *The Picaresque: A Symposium on the Rogue's Tale* (1994).

Noting such ungleaned titles, one must as quickly note that the bibliographer harvests a thick field. And while every other scholar may aspire to praise, the bibliographer, like Samuel Johnson's lexicographer, can only hope to escape reproach. Regardless, Letellier's is a major reference work that will aid researchers at all levels. Most bibliographies have a short shelf-life, but this one should prove, as did Johnson's *Dictionary*, a capital exception.

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