This is a pre-copy-editing, author-produced PDF of a chapter forthcoming in *Beyond Aristotle's 'Poetics' in the Italian Renaissance: New Directions in Criticism*, ed. Bryan Brazeau, Bloomsbury Studies in the Aristotelian Tradition (London: Bloomsbury, in press). The collection has been assigned an ISBN (9781350078949) and is scheduled for publication on 16 April 2020 (link).

INVENTING A RENAISSANCE: MODERNITY, ALLEGORY, AND THE HISTORY OF LITERARY THEORY

Vladimir Brljak

I

When did European poetics emerge into modernity? When did the answers of Western thinkers to those perennial questions of what literature is, what purpose it serves, and to which sphere of human endeavour it belongs, begin to assume forms similar to our own? When did such categories as pleasure, emotion, or expression rise to the foreground of poetic theory? When did the notions now routinely designated by such phrases as 'aesthetic autonomy', 'free play of imagination', or 'willing suspension of disbelief' receive their earliest literary-theoretical articulations? When was 'imaginative' literature, as we still say when we want to make the distinction unambiguously clear, first recognized as a form of art, distinct from such neighbouring domains as philosophy and rhetoric, or the more amorphous category of 'letters'? Locating and elucidating this watershed is of self-evident importance to historians of poetics and literary criticism, but is also of considerable significance in other corners of literary studies and beyond, in the history of aesthetics and indeed the humanities at large, being a vital element in our understanding of the wide and complex range of phenomena falling under the rubric of 'modernity'. It is therefore no surprise that the question has exercised numerous scholars in a variety of disciplines and subdisciplinary specializations, and that they have, collectively, provided us with a fairly conclusive answer: namely, the modern understanding of art in general, and imaginative literature in particular, emerges in or around the eighteenth century—certainly not much earlier than 1700 and not much later than 1800.

Of course, as soon as a claim of this magnitude is made, a litany of caveats is in order. Details continue to be debated. Attempts to further narrow the date have been inconclusive. In the 1900s, George Saintsbury placed the divide at 'the meeting of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or a little later, or much later, as the genius of different countries and persons would have it'.[1] In the 1950s, scholars who, in spite of major differences in emphasis, assigned a decisive importance to the advent of Romanticism, inclined to the early decades of the nineteenth century.[2] In the 1970s, the philologically oriented research of René Wellek, centring on the changing meanings of *literature* and other associated terms, pointed to a mid-eighteenth-century date.[3] In the 1990s, Richard Terry argued that 'the elementary idea of literature'—'the category or "space" of literature' as distinct from non-literature, apart from any further 'definitional theories that might happen to get mapped on to'—is detectable behind certain usages of such terms as *belles lettres* or *polite learning*, along with the older *poetry* and *poesy*, perhaps already by the 1700s.[4] Still more recently, Paul Guyer—in a history of general aesthetics but on the basis of examples specifically from the literary sphere—argues for a similarly early date of *c*.1709–20, with 'grumblings' already in the later seventeenth century.[5] In part, this oscillation is due to problems intrinsic to theorizing specifically poetic rather than broadly aesthetic modernity: theorizing the least 'pure' of the arts, whose medium is most 'contaminated' by non-artistic usage. In part, it also has to do with the fact that much of this scholarship does not adequately draw the key distinction between poetics or literary theory and the much wider category of literary criticism, and then also between explicit and implicit poetics: actual instances of literary-theoretical reflection as opposed to reconstructions based on literary and literary-critical practice, which, however valuable in their own right, should not be confused with, or substituted for, the former.

A draft of this chapter was discussed in the Workshop in Poetics at Stanford University on 10 April 2018: I am grateful to Roland Greene, Nicholas Jenkins, and Melih Levi for inviting me to present, Radhika Koul for responding, and everyone else who contributed to the conversation on that occasion.

[1] *A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe from the Earliest Texts to the Present Day*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1900–04), 3:10.

[2] M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953); Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (London: Chatto, 1958).

[3] 'The Attack on Literature', *The American Scholar* 42 (1972–73): 27–42; 'Literature and Its Cognates', in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas … ,* ed. Philip P. Wiener, 5 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1973–74), 2:81–89; 'What Is Literature?', in *What Is Literature?*, ed. Paul Hernadi, 16–23 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.

[4] 'The Eighteenth-Century Invention of English Literature: A Truism Revisited', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 19 (1996): 47–62, p. 47.

[5] *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1:6–8.

Taking a step back, however, it is clear that these variations all fall comfortably within the bounds of a 'long' eighteenth century, refining rather than supplanting the received view. It is, of course, possible to relativize this by altering the scale on which the problem is viewed. We can zoom out to a point where such a notion of modernity will begin to seem arbitrarily limited or zoom in until everything before the later twentieth century becomes ancient. Any idea of literature, let alone any sustained reflection on this idea, can be legitimately described as modern if viewed against the millennia of oral tradition that preceded it. At the other end of the spectrum, we will find books like M. A. R. Habib's *Modern Literary Criticism and Theory: A History*, opening with a two-page summary of 'formative' developments from classical antiquity to 1900 AD.[6] Between these extremes, other potential watersheds come into view, each with its own set of ancients and moderns, and among them we look for the scale most appropriate to the problem at hand. Acknowledging that any scale is ultimately relative, collective efforts of several generations of scholars strongly indicate that the perspective adopted by the advocates of the consensus view, as well as its most compelling challengers, is adequately suited to the subject of inquiry. We largely agree, in other words, that modern occidental poetics emerges at some point between 1500 and 1800. We disagree on when precisely within this window it emerges, but comparison and contrast with pre-1500 and post-1800 periods shows that we are at least looking in the right place.

Relating to this problem of scale is that of dynamic. Could it be that poetic modernity had already been won and lost long before this time, and that we are not dealing with a historically delimited phenomenon but one potentially arising in any, or at least more than one, historical period? Did not Aristotle argue that 'correct standards in poetry are not identical with those in politics or in any other particular art', a statement recently described as 'the most explicit claim for poetic autonomy in antiquity'?[7] Yet Aristotle's views, if perhaps not unique, were by all accounts exceptional: they do not seem to have exercised much influence until the rediscovery of the *Poetics* at the end of the fifteenth century, and even then they continued to be conflated with doctrines now recognized as un- and even anti-Aristotelian for centuries to come. Fast-forwarding to the seventeenth century, we find

[6] *Modern Literary Criticism and Theory: A History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 3–4.

[7] *The 'Poetics' of Aristotle: Translation and Commentary*, ed. and trans. Stephen Halliwell (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 61 (1460b); Andrew Ford, 'Literary Criticism and the Poet's Autonomy', in *A Companion to Ancient Aesthetics*, ed. Penelope Murray and Pierre Destrée (Chichester: Blackwell, 2015), 143–57, p. 147.

Francis Bacon repeating and surpassing Aristotle's achievement: breaking with the traditional definitions and classifications, aligning his 'poesy' with the positively reevaluated faculty of the imagination, and elevating it to the top of his tree of knowledge, on equal terms with history and philosophy.[8] Yet the earliest reception of Bacon's work was as abortive as that of the *Poetics* appears to have been: no new school of Baconian literary theory arose, and even those critics who respond to his publications betray fundamental misunderstandings of his views. Thus we return to the question of scale: yes, isolated instances of poetic (proto)modernity have occurred before 1700 AD, but only from this time onward have such views met with any level of widespread acceptance.

At the same time, the fact that it took us millennia to catch up with Aristotle, and centuries to catch up with Bacon, raises the question of whether we might again depart from this trajectory. Only a generation ago it was evidently very easy to believe that precisely this was happening or had indeed already happened. Notions of postmodernity and postmodernism arose, accompanied by expressions of post-aesthetic and post-literary sentiments of varied emphasis and complexity. 'Significantly in recent years', Raymond Williams could write by 1976, '*literature* and *literary*, though they still have effective currency in post-C18 senses, have been increasingly challenged, on what is conventionally their own ground, by concepts of *writing* and *communication* which seek to recover the most active and general senses which the extreme specialization has seemed to exclude'.[9] Alternatively, the modern notion could still be accepted, indeed with renewed fervour and in its most radical form, provided the underlying historical framework was manipulated into ideologically acceptable configurations. '"[L]iterature"', wrote Michel Foucault, 'as it was constituted and so designated on the threshold of the modern age, manifests, at a time when it was least expected, the reappearance, of the living being of language'.[10] Elsewhere, this being had been wiped out by the Enlightenment,

> And yet, throughout the nineteenth century, and right up to our own day—from Hölderlin to Mallarmé and on to Antonin Artaud—literature achieved autonomous existence, and separated itself from all other language with a deep scission, only by forming a sort of 'counter-discourse', and by finding its way back from the

[8] *The Twoo Bookes … Of the proficience and aduancement of Learning, diuine and humane …* (London: [Purfoot and Creede] for Tomes, 1605), Ee1v–3v; *Opera … , tomvs primvs: Qui continet De Dignitate & Augmentis Scientiarum Libros IX …* (London: Haviland, 1623), P2r–S1r.

[9] *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1976), 154.

[10] *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, [trans. Alan Sheridan,] (1970; repr. London: Routledge, 2002), 48.

representative or signifying function of language to this raw being that had been forgotten since the sixteenth century.

Here, in a textbook instance of the 'antimodernist' manoeuvre, as diagnosed in Jürgen Habermas's classic essay, the modern idea of literature is fully embraced as long as it is construed as a reappearance rather than an appearance—as long as it is not acknowledged as an actual product of a fallen modernity but an anomalous survival from a prelapsarian premodernity, and at the same time an intimation of a paradisiacal postmodernity just beyond reach, to be inaugurated by some cataclysmic event 'of which we can at the moment do no more than sense the possibility'.[11] Others still lost their way entirely. Adrian Marino might be replying to Foucault when he writes that 'The notion accredited in contemporary (particularly French) criticism—that the idea of literature in its "present-day sense" (What sense may that be? Can "literature" be limited to one sense in our day and age?) only emerged in the nineteenth century—is completely mistaken'.[12] But a history of an idea that cannot be limited simply cannot be written: all notions are equally correct and equally mistaken, and we are left with infinite accumulation of data without a grounding hypothesis around which this data could meaningfully organize—with, precisely, a *Biography* (rather than a history) *of 'The Idea of Literature'* (in scare quotes).

Today, however, as these enthusiasms are subsiding, it is clear that the eighteenth century consensus still holds. This includes, and has always included, most comprehensive histories of literary criticism. Saintsbury received the consensus fully formed from still earlier scholars, of whom more below, and although harder to identify due to the dispersal of the argument over multiple volumes, the same overall perspective continues to govern the work of J. W. H. Atkins.[13] Wellek too found 'The middle of the 18th century … a meaningful place to start' his *History of Modern Criticism*, 'as then the neoclassical system of doctrines,

---

[11] Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity: An Unfinished Project', trans. Nicholas Walker, in *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity: Critical Essays on 'The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity'*, ed. Maurizio Passerin d'Entreves and Seyla Benhabib (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997), 38–58, p. 43; Foucault, *Order*, 442.

[12] *The Biography of 'The Idea of Literature': From Antiquity to the Baroque*, trans. Virgil Stanciu and Charles M. Carlton (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), xi.

[13] See J. W. H. Atkins, *Literary Criticism in Antiquity: A Sketch of Its Development*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934); *English Literary Criticism: The Medieval Phase* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943); *English Literary Criticism: The Renascence* (London: Methuen, 1943); and esp. *English Literary Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries*. London: Methuen, 1951), v. The earlier series of studies by Baldwin is unfinished and therefore inconclusive in this respect: see Charles Sears Baldwin, *Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic …* (New York: Macmillan, 1924); *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic …* (New York: Macmillan, 1928); *Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice … ,* ed. Donald Lemen Clark (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939).

established since the Renaissance, begins to disintegrate', whereas 'To describe the changes within that system between 1500 and 1750 seems to me largely an antiquarian task, unrelated to the problems of our day'.[14] By this time, the influence of the more radical currents of twentieth-century literary theory is making itself felt, yet the consensus still stands. The case of the Wimsatt-Brooks *Short History* is instructive: even here, in a programmatically ahistorical history of the subject, occasional slips of the New Critics' periodizing unconscious show that the received view still underwrites the narrative. The book's central premise is that of 'the continuity and real community of human experience through the ages'—including 'continuity and intelligibility in the history of literary argument', where 'Plato has a bearing on Croce and Freud, and vice versa'—yet its summary still divides into the ancient and medieval, Renaissance and neoclassical, and Romantic to contemporary periods.[15] More recently, comparable statements of qualified acceptance are found in the comprehensive accounts by Richard Harland, M. A. R. Habib, Gary Day, and, notionally at least, Pelagia Goulimari, as well as non-comprehensive studies, reference works, and anthologies too numerous to be systematically surveyed here.[16]

There is, however—to bring the litany to a close and proceed to the main subject of the present study—one field of literary and intellectual history where the eighteenth century consensus does not hold: Renaissance studies, and specifically, the study of Renaissance poetics and literary criticism. Unlike most of their colleagues in literary studies and beyond, scholars in this field, beginning with Joel Elias Spingarn and his 1899 *History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*, have argued that poetic modernity arises already in the Renaissance period, usually dated to between the fourteenth and sixteenth century in the precocious case of Italy, with variable amounts of 'delay' in other, especially northern, European countries. This, moreover, is not just any claim or even one of the major claims in this field, but its central, defining hypothesis, which Spingarn's book was specifically written to uphold, and which his successors have continued to reproduce to this day. And yet, although this thesis radically contradicts the eighteenth century consensus, scholarship on

---

[14] *A History of Modern Criticism*, 8 vols. (London: Cape, 1955–86 [vols. 1–6]; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991–92 [vols. 7–8]), 1:v.

[15] William K. Wimsatt Jr. and Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (New York: Knopf, 1957), vii–ix, 723–31.

[16] Richard Harland, *Literary Theory from Plato to Barthes: An Introductory History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 1–2, 30, 37, 48, 55, 244–46; M. A. R. Habib, *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 357; Gary Day, *Literary Criticism: A New History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 157; Pelagia Goulimari, *Literary Criticism and Theory: From Plato to Postcolonialism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 102.

both sides has almost entirely failed to address this discrepancy. Neither have historians of Renaissance poetics openly contested the consensus, nor have their views been challenged by its adherents. For the most part, each faction has simply continued to reproduce its narrative, and the limited interaction between period-specializations within literary studies, and between literary studies and other disciplines with overlapping interests, has enabled these narratives to cohabit the relevant institutional spaces without being submitted to genuine critical scrutiny.

The ensuing pages seek to disturb this undeclared peace by surveying the scholarship on Renaissance poetics and literary criticism—mostly Anglophone, and mostly concerned with the English corpus, but with considerable implications for other national traditions—and by focusing on one issue in particular, namely the systematic suppression of allegorical poetics in this scholarship. This emphasis on allegory will perhaps strike some readers as arbitrary, but allegory is not one problem among others. The current model of the history of Renaissance literary criticism was forged precisely at the moment when the radically anti-allegorical impulse in post-Romantic aesthetics intersected with the Burckhardtian account of the Renaissance as the origin of Western modernity, giving rise to a powerful historiographical narrative in which allegory, understood as the epitome of poetic and aesthetic premodernity, is relegated to the redefined and repositioned Middle Ages, and evacuated from a correspondingly redefined and repositioned Renaissance. Although now generally discarded in contemporary allegory studies, this decline-of-allegory narrative continues to exert an influence in other domains, and in the historiography of Renaissance poetics and literary criticism this influence has been particularly strong. In structuring their accounts of the history of Renaissance literary criticism as Burckhardtian decline-of-allegory narratives, Spingarn and his successors have seriously impaired our understanding of the subject, while also rendering their research incompatible with parallel work elsewhere in literary studies and beyond. This is an unproductive state of affairs, it needs to end, and the present study hopes to contribute to this cause.

II

As a distinct development within the broader purview of English literary history, interest in the history of literary criticism emerges in the later seventeenth century. This in itself presents major evidence in favour of the eighteenth century consensus, as it reflects the institutionalization of literary-critical practice underway at this time, which in turn reflects

the emergent stages of a modern notion of imaginative literature, separable from such neighbouring domains as philosophy, rhetoric, or 'letters'.[17] Initially, this interest is confined to the post-Restoration period and knowledge of pre-Restoration materials is perfunctory at best. '[T]ill of late years', Thomas Rymer writes in 1674, '*England* was as free from Criticks, as it is from *Wolves*', with the single exception of Ben Jonson, who 'had all the Critical learning to himself'.[18] The beginnings of modern criticism are related to the revival of classical learning, but the idea of the Renaissance as a period in its history, in anything like its now-familiar form, is non-existent. In 1711, Alexander Pope's *Essay on Criticism* posits a three-part scheme comprising classical antiquity, the '*second* Deluge' of the Middle Ages, and the restoration of classical criticism, of which Girolamo Vida is the earliest named Italian representative, while in 'the *Northern World*' this third period is delayed by well over a century—until Boileau in France, and Wentworth Dillon in England.[19] To Pope, then, the critical Middle Ages lasted essentially until the Restoration, and in this he is representative of the period's opinion in general: when they 'looked back on the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries', eighteenth-century English authors 'saw not continuity but a break', and 'by marking the *terminus ad quem* of the previous age' they 'marked the *terminus ad quo* of their own'.[20]

By the latter part of the century, this three-part scheme is evolving into a four-part one. Samuel Johnson identifies John Dryden as 'the father of English criticism' and his essay *Of Dramatick Poesie* as 'the first regular and valuable treatise on the art of writing' in the language, but also mentions that 'Two *Arts of English Poetry* were written in the days of Elizabeth by Webb and Puttenham, … and a few hints had been given by Jonson and Cowley'.[21] This remains broadly Pope's scheme but 'the days of Elizabeth' have now appeared on the horizon, and although still medieval they are no longer entirely void of interest. Also, with the grouping of Ben Jonson with Abraham Cowley rather than with William Webbe and George Puttenham, a fourth period has emerged—an early modern

---

[17] Cf. Michael Gavin, *The Invention of English Criticism, 1560–1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 2, ascribing the heterogeneity of 1650–1760 English criticism precisely to the fact that '"literature" had not yet consolidated into a unitary object of inquiry'.

[18] 'The Preface of the Translator', in *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie* … , by René Rapin, trans. Thomas Rymer, (London: Herringman, 1674), A3r–b2v, sig. A3v.

[19] *An Essay on Criticism* (London: Lewis, 1711), E5v–F1v.

[20] Jack Lynch, *The Age of Elizabeth in the Age of Johnson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), vi.

[21] *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* … , ed. Roger Lonsdale, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 2006), 1:118–19.

interim between the premodernity of the Elizabethans and the full modernity of Dryden. Around this time, Joseph Warton authors what would seem to be the first separate publication in England strictly concerned with the subject: an edition of Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* together with the relevant extracts from Jonson's *Discoveries*. Warton explicitly acknowledges the novelty of such a work: 'The Public has paid, of late, so much attention to our *old Poets*, that it has been imagined a perusal of some of our *old Critics* also may be found equally agreeable', Sidney and Jonson being 'the two earliest in our language that deserve much attention'.[22] Commentary is limited to a single paragraph, of interest mostly for its historical significance but not devoid of insight either.[23] The edition is also illustrative of the bibliographical bias which shaped the formative work on the subject, influencing all subsequent scholarship. In England, topics belonging to the sphere of literary criticism are almost invariably raised sporadically, in the most heterogeneous array of works, until the 1570s. This largely remains so even after this date, but beginning with George Gascoigne's *Notes* of 1575, English criticism becomes bibliographically visible in the form of vernacular essays and treatises specifically devoted to the subject. Consequently, once an interest in the subject appears, it is inevitably such works that first receive notice, especially those by major figures like Sidney and Jonson.

The effect of this bibliographical bias is evident in the earliest accounts of the subject, beginning, it would seem, with the two-page excursus in Edmond Malone's 1800 life of Dryden.[24] Besides those of Gascoigne, Sidney, Puttenham, Webbe, and Jonson, Malone mentions the works of Thomas Campion, Samuel Daniel, and Edmund Bolton: all separate publications or at least separate items within larger works. Commentary is again minimal and no fine historical distinctions are drawn, but it is worth noting, in the light of later developments, that Malone fails to mention any publications on the subject between Bolton's *Hypercritica* and Dryden's *Of Dramatick Poesie*. This is not a deliberate omission—had Malone been aware of any comparable works between Bolton and Dryden, these would have been included[25]—yet it inadvertently creates the impression of the Gascoigne-to-Bolton

---

[22] *Sir Philip Sydney's Defence of Poetry. And, Observations on Poetry and Eloquence, from the Discoveries of Ben Jonson*, ed. Joseph Warton (London: J., Robinson, and Walter, 1787), a2r.

[23] Cf. Micha Lazarus, 'Sidney's Greek Poetics', *Studies in Philology* 112 (2015): 504–36, p. 506.

[24] John Dryden, *The Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works* … , ed. Edmond Malone, 3 vols. (London: Baldwin for Cadell and Davies, 1800), 1.1:58–60.

[25] This is also shown by the insertion, in Malone's own interleaved copy of his work, of a sentence on the 'few critical strictures found' in Davenant's and Hobbes' essays occasioned by Davenant's *Gondibert*: see Bodleian Library, Mal. E. 61; William Davenant and Thomas Hobbes, *A Discourse upon Gondibert … With an Answer to it* … (Paris: Guillemot, 1650). On the *c*.1621 composition of Bolton's *Hypercritica*, see Thomas H. Blackburn,

stretch as a coherent, delimited unit in the history of the subject. Seven years later, a longer account appears, this time as a separate chapter, in a work by the miscellaneous writer and translator William Beloe.[26] Apparently unfamiliar with Malone's passage, Beloe notes that the suggestion for compiling such an account came from the antiquary George Chalmers, who also supplied him with most of the materials and whose 'communications were so ample and so satisfactory, that little has been left … except to methodize and arrange them'. The list includes all the works mentioned by Malone except Gascoigne and Jonson, but adds the treatises of James VI/I and John Harington. Like Malone, Beloe can find no comparable works between Bolton and Dryden, and although he uses no literary-historical terms whatsoever, nor excludes the possibility that there is relevant pre-Restoration material yet to be recovered, the resulting impression of 'a long interval of time before we come to any treatise on the subject of English Poetry' perpetuates the tendency already seen with Malone.

Beloe's list may have been the blueprint for the first anthology of early English criticism, the *Ancient Critical Essays* of Joseph Haslewood: except for three additions—Gascoigne, Francis Meres, and the *Letters* on versification exchanged by Edmund Spenser and Gabriel Harvey—Haslewood's selection is simply Beloe's list in anthologized form. Beloe's caveats, however, have been forgotten and Haslewood is reading new implications into this corpus. '[A]lthough few in number', he writes, 'Such a body of early criticism as these tracts collectively present … is not any where to be found. Independent of rarity, intrinsic value may justly entitle this volume, although a humble reprint, to range with those of the Elizabethan æra'.[27] This is no longer simple antiquarianism. What began as a self-confessedly random assemblage, with Malone listing such works as he was aware of at the time, or Beloe's antiquarian friends supplying him with such titles as happened to be available to them, has now become a 'body' of work, an 'Elizabethan' body of work, and an Elizabethan body of work of 'intrinsic' rather than merely historical value. Haslewood further notes that he is unable to find any relevant publications prior to Gascoigne except such 'notices upon the poets scattered through the works of Ascham, Eliot, Wilson, and others', indicative of 'the imperfect state of criticism of that age'.[28] Finally, he explains that his original intention was 'to have printed uniformly all the Essays upon Poetry to the time of

---

'The Date and Evolution of Edmund Bolton's *Hypercritica*', *Studies in Philology* 63 (1966): 196–202—Malone and other early scholars date it to the 1610s.

[26] *Anecdotes of Literature and Scarce Books*, 6 vols. (London: for Rivington, 1807–12), 1:229–38.

[27] *Ancient Critical Essays upon English Poets and Poesy*, 2 vols. (London: Triphook, 1811–15), 2:xxii.

[28] Ibid., 2:xxiii.

Dryden', but that he was defeated by the difficulty of the task. Like Beloe, he does not claim that the pre-Gascoigne or post-Bolton decades are void of interest—elsewhere he had, for example, already printed extracts from Henry Reynolds's *Mythomystes*[29]—but by failing to add material from these decades, he further strengthens the impression inadvertently created by his predecessors.

After lists, chapters, extracts, editions, and now anthologies, the next milestone in the field's development is a sustained history of the subject. Such a work was envisioned at least as early as 1737, when Elizabeth Cooper announced that the sequel to her *Muses Library* would include 'some Account of the Progress of Criticism in *England*; from Sir *Philip Sidney*, the Art of *English* Poesy (written by Mr. *Puttenham*, a Gentleman Pensioner to Queen *Elizabeth*:) Sir *John Harrington*, *Ben Johnson*, &c'.[30] Unfortunately, the work never materialized, nor did, some decades later, Samuel Johnson's plan for a 'History of Criticism, as it relates to judging of authours, from Aristotle to the present age. An account of the rise and improvements of the art; of the different opinions of authours; ancient and modern'.[31] Midway through the nineteenth century, John Wilson's *Specimens of the British Critics*—originally published serially in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* under the pseudonym 'Christopher North'—would seem to constitute the first book-length study in the language, although one still far short of a genuine history. Even in conception, the rambling essays collected under this title are but 'an irregular history of Criticism in this island', and in execution they are much less, limited in coverage to Dryden and Pope and concerned largely with critical rather than metacritical inquiry.[32] *Blackwood's* readers are invited 'to take a look along with us at the choice critics of other days, waked by our potent voice from the long-gathering dust', but 'other days' means 'one longish stride backwards of some hundred and fifty years or so', beyond which lies 'the darkness of antiquity'.[33] The four-period scheme is retained but the early modern stretch is extended up to Pope. The Elizabethan epoch remains the last of the premodern rather than the first of the modern ages: 'With Elizabeth the splendor of the feudal and chivalrous ages for England finally sets. A world expires, and ere

[29] See H[enry] R[eynolds], *Mythomystes* … , in *The British Bibliographer*, ed. Egerton Brydges and Joseph Haslewood, 4 vols. (London: Triphook, 1810–14), 4:373–79.

[30] *The Muses Library* … (London: Wilcox et al., 1737), xvi.

[31] Joseph Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* … , 2 vols. (London: Baldwin for Dilly, 1791), 2:557n3.

[32] *Specimens of the British Critics* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1846), 57.

[33] Ibid., 15.

long a new world rises.'[34] This is the neoclassical world of Jonson, Dryden, and Pope—a world closer to but not quite yet Wilson's—and the final divide, between this early modernity and modernity proper, comes with Joseph Addison's essays on the *Pleasures of the Imagination* of 1712.[35]

Another development to be noted at this point is the anomalous growth of interest in Sidney's *Defence*. Although most of the Elizabethan essays and treatises were printed by Haslewood, and several received separate editions later in the century, the *Defence* is a special case in that it has remained widely available from its original publication to the present day.[36] Other factors contributing to this unique status included its superior stylistic quality, Sidney's literary and biographical significance, and the fact that, taken out of context, some of its passages—notably the famous description of the poet who refuses to accept the 'brazen' world of nature, replacing it with the 'golden' world of poetic creation—could be construed as Romantic ahead of their time.[37] All this conspires to make Sidney the first literary critic of his age to be seen as modern, and to the extent to which they engage in such judgments, his Victorian editors are unanimous in this verdict. Arber emphasizes 'Sidney's use of the word Poet and its modern acceptation'; Flügel portrays him England's 'earliest and most significant *aesthete* (in the Schillerian sense)'; to Cook, the treatise presents 'a link between the soundest theory of ancient times and the romantic production of the modern era'; and for Shuckburgh, most of it is 'as applicable now as when Sidney penned' it.[38] But even if Sidney is modern, his age emphatically is not. To be modern, Sidney must be ahead of his time, a harbinger of a later epoch rather than a representative of his own.

The commentary of Sidney's early editors also anticipates a related development, soon to assume a major role: the suppression of allegory. Allegory, it is still worth emphasizing, is an essential element in Sidney's poetics, and in this the *Defence* is entirely

---

[34] Ibid., 112.

[35] Ibid., 95, 157.

[36] After the initial editions of 1595, the *Defence* was included in the 1598 expanded edition of the *Arcadia* (twenty-three printings between 1599 and 1674), while the eighteenth century could consult in the collected edition of John Henley (single reprint in Dublin in 1739), as well as a separate edition of a bare text printed in Glasgow, followed by Warton's, and at least six more in the nineteenth century. For references, see *Sir Philip Sidney World Bibliography*, ed. Donald Stump et al., http://bibs.slu.edu/sidney.

[37] *'An Apology for Poetry' (or 'The Defence of Poesy')*, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd, 3rd ed., rev. R. W. Maslen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 84–85.

[38] *Apologie for Poetrie*, ed. Edward Arber (Birmingham: 34 Wheeleys Road, 1868), 8; *Sir Philip Sidney's Astrophel and Stella und Defence of Poesie ...* , ed. Ewald Flügel (Halle: Niemeyer, 1889), xlix: 'der früheste und bedeutendste *Ästhetiker* (im Schiller'schen Sinne)'; *'The Defense of Poesy' …* , ed. Albert S. Cook (Boston: Ginn, 1890), v; *An Apologie for Poetrie*, ed. Evelyn S. Shuckburgh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891), xxxi.

typical of the poetic theory of his day.[39] By the nineteenth century, however, allegory is widely considered as an outdated aesthetic and hermeneutic doctrine, if not the very debasement and antithesis of art. This anti-allegorical sentiment begins to emerge already in the seventeenth century, grows in the course of the eighteenth, and eventually receives articulate theoretical expression in Romantic and post-Romantic aesthetics of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Along the way, modern anti-allegorism also acquires a historical dimension and a former 'age of allegory' emerges in literary history. This age of allegory is effectively identified with the Middle Ages, but not as we now know them: it begins in the earliest stages of English literary history, culminates in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and only then enters a phase of decline, lingering well into the eighteenth century.[40] There is thus both a growing hostility to allegory and a recognition that a taste for allegorical literature and art was now a thing of the past, yet one looks in vain for any statement that would separate the Renaissance, as currently understood, from this past. None of this poses any problem for historians of literary criticism as long as they do not go looking for modernity before the Restoration, yet once Sidney is made an exception to this rule, his endorsement of the doctrine increasingly understood as the very antithesis of this modernity become a substantial concern. At this stage, however, dealing with a single treatise rather than an entire corpus, and a single author rather than an entire age, the solution is simple: the relevant passages are simply omitted from discussion and either unaccompanied by annotation or annotated in a way which fails to acknowledge any implications for Sidney's own poetic theory.

All of these developments—the emergence of the Elizabethan corpus, the dating of critical modernity to the post-Restoration period, the growing and increasingly historicized hostility towards allegory, and the anomalous proto-modern role attributed to Sidney's *Defence*, premised on the suppression of the allegorical element in the treatise—come together in what is to my knowledge the first formal and comprehensive history of English literary criticism, and also the first doctoral dissertation by a woman published by Yale

[39] See Sidney, *'Apology'*, ed. Shepherd, 82, 92, 97, 103, 106, 116; cf. Kenneth Borris, *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature: Heroic Form in Sidney, Spenser, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 110–14.

[40] E.g., Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser* (London: Dodsley and Fletcher, 1754), Gg2r–Hh4r; Wilson, *Specimens*, 160–64. For a fuller account, see Vladimir Brljak, 'The Age of Allegory', *Studies in Philology* 114 (2017): 697–719.

University: Laura Johnson Wylie's 1894 *Studies in the Evolution of English Criticism*.[41] Wylie's treatment of the 1500–1660 period synthesizes the tendencies delineated above, with three important innovations. Firstly, it is one of the earliest instances of the term *Renaissance* being employed in this context, although Wylie's is still the older, pre-Burckhardtian notion of the revival of classical learning, with an admixture of Matthew Arnold's 'movement', rather than a comprehensive period in cultural, literary, or literary-critical history.[42] Jonson is 'the great Classic dramatist of the English Renaissance' not because, but despite the fact that 'he wrote under the very shadow of the Elizabethan literature', and while the rise of English criticism is attributed to the prevalence of 'Renaissance' tendencies, this moment is dated to the post-Restoration period.[43] Secondly, Wylie revises the transitional four-part periodization into its now-familiar, three-part shape, where the seventeenth century is dismembered between a 'long' Elizabethan period and a 'long' eighteenth century. Thirdly, and most importantly, by her day any differences between Pope and Addison, or between them and Dryden at one end and Johnson at the other, paled in comparison to the sum difference between their age and the age, now clearly discernible, of Wordsworth and Coleridge. The latter alone is modern. '[B]etween the new criticism' of the Romantics 'and the great thinkers of the eighteenth century' lies 'a complete break', 'an impassable chasm of interest and sympathy'.[44] Of any modernity to be found in still earlier periods there can obviously be no discussion whatsoever, except of course for Sidney's *Defence*, which is afforded its now-customary transhistorical role—it is 'the poetry rather than the art or theory of criticism', in which 'Sidney had spoken to the fine spirits of all ages'—but only on the condition that its appeals to allegory and other signal premodern doctrines are entirely suppressed.[45]

[41] *Studies in the Evolution of English Criticism* … (Boston: Ginn, 1894). On Wylie, see Suzanne Bordelon, *A Feminist Legacy: The Rhetoric and Pedagogy of Gertrude Buck* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2007).

[42] See Wylie, *Studies*, 1, 4, 59, 67. Cf. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (London: Smith, Elder, 1869), 159–66.

[43] *Studies*, 1–2, 4, 13–14.

[44] Ibid., 110–12.

[45] Ibid., 13.

III

The contrast between the diffusely essayistic mid-century manner of Wilson and the focused and methodical exposition of Wylie's and other late-century works is striking.[46] With these publications, the history of literary criticism fully emerges as a specialized field within general literary history. In other respects, however, these books were dated almost on publication, for by this time a new narrative of poetic and aesthetic modernity, retaining and indeed intensifying the hostility towards allegory, while fundamentally altering the underlying historiographical framework, had already emerged on the continent and was just about to make its full impact in the Anglo-American sphere. 'The Middle Ages were essentially the ages of allegory', wrote Jacob Burckhardt with axiomatic clarity in his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, the book which consolidated and popularized, if it did not entirely invent, a new understanding of the Renaissance as a comprehensive period in European cultural history, and one no longer standing at the end of the premodern but at the beginning of the modern phase of that history—the Renaissance as 'the leader of the modern ages'.[47] Here again allegory was not one problem among many. Burckhardt had to find a way to reconcile his paradigmatically Romantic distaste for allegorical art with the paradigmatically anti-Romantic thesis of his book, and the virtually inevitable solution, once these parameters were in place, was to quarantine allegory to the new, foreshortened Middle Ages. If the Middle Ages were the age of the collective, the age in which 'Man was conscious of himself … only through some general category', then it is only natural for that age to express itself in the art of universals, just as it is natural for the new age of the individual to express itself in the art of particulars.[48] Accordingly, any presence of allegory in the Renaissance is now to be explained as a residuum of the Middle Ages rather than a genuine aspect of the period.

What we now know as Renaissance literary criticism came into being when the earlier work on the subject was reconfigured in terms of the Burckhardtian paradigm, a feat

---

[46] A similarly focused approach, although limited to the theory of versification, appears already in Felix E. Schelling, *Poetic and Verse Criticism of the Reign of Elizabeth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1891). Close on the heels of Wylie's book followed the 1896 anthology by Vaughan, where the exact same scheme is adopted: see *English Literary Criticism*, ed. C. E. Vaughan (London: Blackie, 1896), esp. xii–xiii, xix–xxvi, xxvi–xxvii, lxv.

[47] *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, [trans. S. G. C. Middlemore] (1878; repr. London: Phaidon, 1995), 262, 364.

[48] Ibid., 87.

performed almost singlehandedly by Joel Elias Spingarn in his 1899 *History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*, effectively his doctoral dissertation from Columbia University's newly formed Department of Comparative Literature.[49] By this date, all the elements were there, waiting to be integrated into a coherent narrative by this young and passionately idealist scholar, who would later in his life pursue progressive political causes with the same commitment with which he, between twenty-one and twenty-four years of age, pursued his quest for the 'birth of modern criticism'.[50] This, rather than any intrinsic interest in the period, was the driving impulse behind the *History* and indeed all of Spingarn's scholarly work. The Renaissance, according to the newest Burckhardtian coordinates, was where the origins of Spingarn's own aesthetic modernity were supposed to lie, and from where they were yet to be excavated. This was a fully conscious, explicitly stated, and methodically executed agenda: 'The influence of the Italian Renaissance in the development of modern science, philosophy, art, and creative literature has been for a long time the subject of much study. It has been my more modest task to trace the indebtedness of the modern world to Italy in the domain of literary criticism; and I trust that I have shown the Renaissance influence to be as great in this as in the other realms of study.'[51]

With Spingarn, the suppression of allegory, originally patented for the modernizing of Sidney's *Defence*, is reconfigured in Burckhardtian parameters and pursued on a grand scale. If the Middle Ages regarded poetry as a vassal of philosophy and theology, allegory is the very means by which this vassalage was exacted: 'while perhaps justifying poetry from the standpoint of ethics and divinity, [allegory] gives it no place as an independent art; thus considered, poetry becomes merely a popularized form of theology'.[52] Accordingly, allegory becomes the litmus test of poetic premodernity and the progress of poetic theory becomes

---

[49] *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance, with Special Reference to the Influence of Italy in the Formation and Development of Modern Classicism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1899), vii–viii. One major precursor is Karl Borinski, *Die Poetik der Renaissance und der Anfänge der literarischen Kritik in Deutschland* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1886). Spingarn knew the book and would have found there a precedent for some key elements in his *History*, notably the adoption of the term *Renaissance* and the idea of a balance between classicist and anti-classicist impulses. What he did not find there, however, was the Burckhardtian configuration of the allegory-modernity nexus. For Borinski, allegory is not an anomaly—an anti-aesthetic aberration of the Christian Middle Ages—but, 'so to speak, the aesthetic Ur-Idea of mankind', continually present since antiquity onwards; see Borinski, *Poetik*, 65 ('sozusagen die ästhetische Uridee der Menschheit'), and cf. his *Die Antike in Poetik und Kunsttheorie* … , ed. Richard Newald (vol. 2), 2 vols. (Lepizig: Dieterich, 1914–24), 1:21–28. On Spingarn, see Marshall Van Deusen, *J. E. Spingarn* (New York: Twayne, 1971) and B. Joyce Ross, *J. E. Spingarn and the Rise of the NAACP, 1911–1939* (New York: Atheneum, 1972).

[50] *History*, vi–vii.

[51] Ibid., vi.

[52] Ibid., 8.

measurable in degrees of its abandonment of the doctrine. Yet however coherent in theory, the decline-of-allegory narrative was bound to fail in practice, for as any objective inquiry must concede, allegorical poetics is virtually omnipresent in the very materials onto which this narrative was to be mapped. Consequently, Spingarn's and most subsequent accounts cannot proceed very far before running into major conceptual and chronological obstacles. A cultural historian like Burckhardt could afford to be highly selective in his treatment of the period's literary and literary-critical output and could thus get away with greatly under-representing the extent to which it is informed by allegory. A literary historian like John Addington Symonds already finds 'the allegorical heresy' much more widespread, but can still evade it by appealing to the supposedly orthodox literary practice of the age.[53] Although 'The contemporary theory of æsthetics demanded allegory', Dante the poet knows better than Dante the critic, for 'No metaphysical sophistication, no allegory, no scholastic mysticism, can … cloud a poet's vision'.[54] Boccaccio 'repeated current theories about … the dignity of allegory', but he had little influence on Boccaccio, whose work 'showed how little he had appropriated these ideas'.[55] No such loophole is open to the historian of poetics, however, and immediately after describing allegory as the quintessential reflection of the medieval hostility towards imaginative literature, Spingarn must concede that the doctrine was not only central to the poetical views of the early humanists, but that it 'did indeed continue throughout the Renaissance', and that 'This theory of poetic art, one of the commonplaces of the age, may be described as the great legacy of the Middle Ages to Renaissance criticism'.[56]

Thus Spingarn finds himself torn between two irreconcilable variables, seeking to affirm modernity for Renaissance criticism in terms fundamentally incompatible with the doctrine of allegory, while at the same time acknowledging that this doctrine was 'almost universally accepted by Renaissance writers'.[57] But how can this be? How can Renaissance poetics stay modern while almost universally accepting a doctrine defined as the very essence of poetical premodernity? The answer, of course, is that it cannot—not without major concessions in one's understanding of what, and especially when, the Renaissance was. Ultimately, relegating allegory to the Middle Ages means that its presence in postmedieval poetics needs to be suppressed and negotiated by a whole arsenal of evasive manoeuvres,

---

[53] *Renaissance in Italy: Italian Literature*, 2 vols. (London: Smith, Elder, 1881), 1:81.

[54] Ibid., 1:54.

[55] Ibid., 1:81–87.

[56] *History*, 9, 261–62.

[57] Ibid., 263.

some combination of which is encountered in most subsequent treatments of the subject: suppression and exclusion of texts or parts of texts—the original and still the most efficient tactic—but now also conceptual and/or temporal displacement (in order to make it free of allegory, the 'Renaissance' is redefined and/or chronologically repositioned), understatement ('Renaissance' critics do appeal to allegory, but this is an inessential and increasingly irrelevant element in their arguments), and relativization ('Renaissance' critics appeal to allegory but they do not really mean it, or the allegory to which they appeal is not the same kind as that of the Middle Ages, or their theoretical statements are found to be contradicted by their own literary practice, and so on).

The final piece in this puzzle was Aristotle's *Poetics* and here the influence of S. H. Butcher's 1895 study of the treatise, published just as Spingarn was beginning his graduate studies, played a key role.[58] Butcher broke with the 'Pseudo-Aristotelian', moralist-neoclassicist interpretations that had dominated the work's reception since its rediscovery at the end of the fifteenth century, recovering from it an essentially modern theory of poetry, resonant with the proto-Romantic position of Bacon and the fully Romantic positions of Goethe and Coleridge.[59] This included explicit repudiation of the moralized Pseudo-Aristotle in general and of individual Pseudo-Aristotelian doctrines in particular, such as the conflation of Aristotle's notion of the poetic universal with allegory: a major weapon in the Pseudo-Aristotelian's arsenal, encountered at least as late as the 1670s.[60] To Butcher's Aristotle, as to Butcher himself and many post-Romantic thinkers of his day, the end of poetry and the fine arts is 'pleasure', or more precisely, 'aesthetic enjoyment proper', namely such as 'proceeds from an emotional rather than from an intellectual source'.[61] Consequently, poetry and allegory are mutually exclusive categories: Aristotle's poetic universal 'does not imply that a general idea shall be embodied in a particular example—that is the method of allegory rather than that of poetry—but that the particular case shall be generalized by artistic treatment',

[58] S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art …* (London: Macmillan, 1895). Spingarn's acknowledgments in *History*, vii–viii, indicate that he was corresponding with Butcher already during his doctoral studies.

[59] Butcher, *Theory*, 174, 181–84; cf. Weinberg, 'From Aristotle to Pseudo-Aristotle', *Comparative Literature* 5 (1953): 97–104.

[60] See, e.g., René Le Bossu's *Treatise*, in *Monsieur Bossv's Treatise of the Epick Poem …* (London: for Bennet, 1695), B2v: 'in the *Epopea*, according to *Aristotle*, let the Names be what they will, yet the *Persons* and the *Actions* are *Feign'd, Allegorical, and Vniversal*; not *Historical* and *Singular*'.

[61] *Theory*, 189

and ‘it is in the main the same thought which runs through Aristotle, Goethe, and Coleridge’.[62]

Construed in Butcher’s terms, the recovered *Poetics* seemed to offer an ideal example of the Renaissance narrative. Salvaged from the darkness of the Middle Ages, this all but extinguished torch of poetic modernity is now finally passed from classical antiquity to its modern rebirth. This is the final premise, with which everything falls into place. With the recovered *Poetics*, it becomes possible to defend literature—the ‘justification of imaginative literature’ being the ‘first’ and ‘fundamental’ goal of Renaissance criticism—on aesthetic rather than moral grounds, and thus without recourse to allegory.[63] There is a price to be paid here, but Spingarn is willing to pay it. The high criteria of aesthetic modernity announced in the book’s opening sentences must give way to the more modest cause of neoclassicist ‘rationalism’, and the critical Renaissance must be postponed to the recovery and dissemination of the *Poetics*. And even then, the *Poetics* can only lay ‘the foundation of modern criticism’, which cannot reach maturity until it replaces the rule of an authority, even if that authority is Aristotle, with the rule of ‘reason’.[64] Here Spingarn’s account can finally link up with the larger Burckhardtian narrative, for this rationalist classicism can now be presented as a facet of that same ‘liberation of human reason’ which resulted in ‘the growth of the sciences and arts, and in the reaction against mediæval sacerdotalism and dogma’. [65] The final touch comes with the claim that Renaissance criticism contains ‘the germs of romantic as well as classical criticism’, and the integration of this ‘romantic’ element—essentially amounting to poetry’s freedom to venture beyond the bounds of probability and verisimilitude, but ignoring, as originally with Sidney, its allegorical corollary[66]—into the ultimate ideal of ‘imaginative reason’. Thus, ‘according as the reason or the imagination predominates in Renaissance literature, there results neo-classicism or romanticism, while the most perfect art finds a reconciliation of both elements in the imaginative reason’.[67] It is in this sense, and this sense only, that Spingarn can at long last declare that ‘the theory of

---

[62] Ibid., 181–84.

[63] Spingarn, *History*, 3.

[64] Ibid., 145.

[65] Ibid., 147.

[66] See, e.g., Borris, *Allegory*, 35–36. This is another position that retains currency well into the seventeenth century: see Edward Phillips, *Theatrum Poetarum* … (London: Smith, 1675), **6r, requiring ‘proper Allegorie’ in a heroic poem, ‘for what ever is pertinently said by way of *Allegorie* is Morally though not Historically true’.

[67] Spingarn, *History*, 155.

poetry, as enunciated by the Italians of the sixteenth century, has not diminished in value, but has continued to pervade the finer minds of men from that time to this'.[68]

In the end, then, we do get a nominally Renaissance poetics, and one superficially purged of allegory, but at what cost? Spingarn must sacrifice not only Petrarch and Boccaccio, but the entire Quattrocento and even the first half of the Cinquecento. In his own words, the earliest Italian editions of the *Poetics*—Giorgio Valla's Latin translation of 1498 and the 1508 Greek text in the Aldine *Rhetores Graeci*—had 'scarcely any immediate influence on literary criticism'.[69] Thus Renaissance criticism must be postponed until Alessandro de' Pazzi's Latin translation of 1536, for only 'from this time, the influence of the Aristotelian canons becomes manifest in critical literature'.[70] But again, this is only the foundation, and there remains the final step of replacing the authority of Aristotle with the authority of reason. Spingarn cites the appeal in a 1587 work by Jason Denores to 'reason and Aristotle's *Poetics,* which is indeed founded on naught save reason', and adds: 'This is as far as Italian criticism ever went. It was the function of neo-classicism in France, as will be seen, to show that such a phrase as "reason *and* Aristotle" is a contradiction in itself, that the Aristotelian canons and reason are ultimately reducible to the same thing'.[71] The process is completed by Boileau, whose strictures against the use of Christian themes are taken to be the culmination of that 'combined effect of humanism, essentially pagan, and rationalism, essentially sceptical', that produced the 'irreligious character of neo-classic art'.[72] The year is 1674. The real agenda of Spingarn's book—elimination of allegory by any means necessary—has argued its nominal subject, Renaissance literary criticism, out of existence.

The French and English chapters then repeat this pattern with some minor variations. Thus the narrative stumbles when Spingarn is unable to find any Aristotelian influence on French criticism before the final third of the sixteenth century, and fully formed neoclassicist doctrine before the beginning of the seventeenth—'Excepting, of course, Scaliger', an Italian, and even then 'it was not until the very end of the century that he held the dictatorial position afterward accorded to him'.[73] '[T]here was, one might almost say, little critical theorizing in

[68] Ibid., 148.

[69] Ibid., 17.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., 151.

[72] Ibid. 154.

[73] Ibid., 184–89.

the French Renaissance'.[74] To be sure, there was plenty of critical allegorizing, as exemplified by a generous extract from Ronsard, but that is of no use.[75] Still, what is one to conclude—that French Renaissance criticism does not begin until some decades after the Pléiade, or worse yet, until the seventeenth century? The only solution is to relax the Aristotelian criterion to the point of meaninglessness and present the beginning of French Renaissance criticism as the singlehanded achievement of Joachim du Bellay's *Defence and Illustration of the French Language*—'In no other country of Europe is the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance so clearly marked as it is in France by this single book'—even though the *Defense* meets the Aristotelian criterion only in the most superficial manner, by virtue of containing the earliest French reference to the *Poetics*, a reference which, as Spingarn himself notes, shows 'no evidence whatsoever' of direct acquaintance with Aristotle's treatise, 'of whose contents [du Bellay] knew little or nothing'.[76] Elsewhere, we read on the same page that the *Defence* marks the beginning of 'modern criticism in France' and that it is 'not in any true sense a work of literary criticism at all'.[77]

The situation with England was different in that it required neither this ironically un-Aristotelian intervention of a *deus ex machina*, nor such messy amputations as that of the pre-Pazzi period in the case of Italy. Here the analogous result could be achieved almost effortlessly, for the English dynastic periodization, with its long-established notion of the reign of Elizabeth I as a national golden age, was uniquely suited to the purpose. A novel and foreign concept in Anglophone literary history of the later nineteenth century, Burckhardt's Renaissance was quickly assimilated to what seemed its obvious native analogue.[78] In the history of literary criticism, the impetus for this assimilation was exceptionally strong. In other domains, the usual Renaissance criteria—classical learning, art and literature drawing on classical models, the printing press, geographical exploration, volatile social circumstances comparable to those to which Burckhardt attributed to the emergence of individualism among the Italian elites—were all present by the early sixteenth century, some of them considerably earlier. Yet when one looked for English Renaissance poetics and

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., 193.

[76] Ibid., 171, 184.

[77] Ibid., 177.

[78] John Hale, *England and the Italian Renaissance: The Growth of Interest in Its History and Art*, 4th ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 110, quotes Symonds's diary entry of 5 April 1866—'the English Renaissance, the Elizabethan Age'—as the earliest instance of this rebranding.

literary criticism, there seemed to be very little of it until the 1570s, whereas from that point on, right on cue, Haslewood's *Essays* were there for the taking. All Spingarn had to do was to conflate, in the opening sentence of his English chapter, 'Elizabethan' with 'English Renaissance' criticism, and there it was, stretching from Gascoigne to Bolton, and easily expandable forward, to Milton, and backward, to the relevant passages in 'early Tudor' documents. The starring role is again Pseudo-Sidney's: he is England's first Aristotelian, hence England's first anti-allegorist, hence England's first critical modern. In his analysis of the *Defence,* Spingarn predictably fails to cite any of its multiple appeals to allegory, acknowledging them only later on, in a summary statement of the decline narrative: the allegorical element is 'minimized' in Sidney's treatise and its 'death-knell' is rung by Bacon, who is thereby 'foreshadowing the development of classicism, for from the time of Ben Jonson the allegorical mode of interpreting poetry ceased to have any effect on literary criticism'.[79] This flatly contradicts Spingarn's own earlier claim, quoted above, that allegory persisted 'throughout the Renaissance' and was 'one of the commonplaces of the age', but this contradiction must be suffered if there is to be such a thing as English Renaissance poetics, or at least one which conforms to the Burckhardtian notion of the period.

Three years later, Spingarn's account was effectively reaffirmed in the second volume of Saintsbury's *History,* an episode which calls for some comment since, unlike Spingarn, Saintsbury was no Burckhardtian. On the contrary, in his view medieval achievements in literary practice take 'equal rank as a whole with those of classical and those of modern times', while it is classicism, seen as one unbroken development stretching from the early sixteenth to the late eighteenth century, that takes on the role of the middle age, the degenerative interlude between two healthy and productive literary epochs.[80] Accordingly, Saintsbury's overall framework is still that of Wylie and Vaughan: 'Modern Criticism' comes only after the 'End of Eighteenth-Century Orthodoxy'. Furthermore, Saintsbury's criticism of Spingarn's work—both explicit, of Spingarn's negative assessment of the Middle Ages, and implicit, addressing 'our newest Neo-Classics'[81]—leads to the first and unfortunately still the only genuine polemic on the subject. The title of Spingarn's response, 'The Origins of Modern Criticism', precisely identifies the issue at stake. Predictably, he finds Saintsbury's views 'aggressively romantic', yet what the exchange ultimately shows is that their

[79] *History,* 177.

[80] *A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe from the Earliest Texts to the Present Day*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1900–04), 1:469.

[81] Ibid., 2:7–8, 2:35.

differences were really a matter of perspective and emphasis rather than truly incompatible conceptions of aesthetic modernity.[82] Now if not before, Spingarn must have finally seen his 'modern classicism' for what it really was: a fragile and ultimately untenable compromise between the same principles of modern aesthetics shared by his adversary, the Burckhardtian theory of the Renaissance, and the sobering reality of the materials onto which these principles and this theory were to be projected. Although Spingarn tries to save face by presenting himself as the greater scholar, meticulously cataloguing minor errors and oversights in Saintsbury's treatment of the period, his article is quite explicitly a statement of capitulation with regard to the principal issue at stake: 'Imitation, theory, law; wit, reason, taste—each in its turn became a guiding principle of criticism, until with the romantic movement all were superseded by the concept of the creative imagination.'[83]

That Spingarn realized the significance of this concession is clear from the fact that he included a revised version of this article as a new conclusion to the 1905 Italian translation of his *History*, and then also the 1908 revised edition and all subsequent impressions of the original. Indeed, he made the point still more emphatic by adding another sentence to the one just quoted, and making the resulting passage the very last words of the book:

> Imitation, theory, law; wit, reason, taste,—each in its turn became a guiding principle of criticism, until with the romantic movement all were superseded by the concept of the creative imagination. The first three represent, as it were, the stages through which Renaissance poetics passed in the process of complete codification; the last three represent the stages of its decline and death.[84]

Spingarn continued to repudiate his original thesis in his later work. 'The Greeks', he writes in the important 1910 lecture on 'The New Criticism',

> conceived of Literature, not as an inevitable expression of creative power, but as a reasoned 'imitation' or re-shaping of the materials of life … . The Romans conceived of Literature as a noble art, intended (though under the guise of pleasure) to inspire men with high ideals of life. The classicists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries accepted this view in the main … . The eighteenth century complicated the course of Criticism by the introduction of vague and novel criteria, such as 'imagination,'

---

[82] 'The Origins of Modern Criticism', *Modern Philology* 1 (1904): 477–96, p. 482.

[83] 'Origins', 496. See also his review of Saintsbury's *History*: 'Saintsbury's History of Criticism', *The Nation*, 15 January 1903.

[84] *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908), 330; cf. *La critica letteraria nel Rinascimento* … , trans. Antonio Fusco (Bari: Gius, 1905), 328.

> ‘sentiment,’ and ‘taste.’ But with the Romantic Movement there developed the new idea which coordinates all Criticism in the nineteenth century.[85]

By this point, the quest for origins, back on course after its Burckhardtian detour, was almost complete. In 1908–09 appeared Spingarn’s edition of the *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, followed by one of the critical writings of William Temple—although already printed in the *Essays*, these merit a separate edition as the statements of England’s first proto-Romantic.[86] Two notes from the late 1900s show him searching for the origin of the notion of ‘art for art’s sake’.[87] Finally, between 1909 and *c*.1912–13, Spingarn edited the *Literary Essays* of Goethe, whose ideas he elsewhere describes as the ‘the guiding star … of all modern criticism’.[88] With this, the scholarly output of the man for whom the Renaissance was only a means to an end—and who did not publish a word on the subject after the 1899 *History*, except for the polemic occasioned by the book, and revisions prompted by that polemic—had run its course. Spingarn’s work now turns to essayistic and critical writing, and while this turn certainly has to do with his infamous dismissal from Columbia in March 1911, a more considered impression is that the latter was an effect rather than a cause—that the ‘New Criticism’ lecture is the real turning point, that Spingarn was essentially done with academia by this date regardless of the events that followed, and that these were perhaps little more than the inevitable institutional reflex of key intellectual positions he had adopted by this date.[89] Yet the damage was done: the final sentences of the revised editions of the

---

[85] *The New Criticism* … (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), 10–11.

[86] *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1908–09); *Sir William Temple’s Essays on Ancient & Modern Learning and On Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1909), iv–v.

[87] ‘Art for Art’s Sake: A Query’, *Modern Language Notes* 22 (1907): 263; ‘L’Art pour l’Art’, *Modern Language Notes* 25 (1910): 95.

[88] *Goethe’s Literary Essays* (New York: Harcourt, 1921), 291; *New Criticism*, 16–17.

[89] For example, Spingarn’s categorical dismissal of moral criticism—‘We have done with all moral judgement of Literature’—correlates with his conduct in the case of the classicist Henry Thurston Peck, fired from Columbia later that year over a moral issue, a breach of promise in marriage. Spingarn initiated a resolution whereby the Faculty of Philosophy undertook ‘to place on record its sense of [Peck’s] academic services’, to be strictly distinguished, as he later clarified, from his ‘personal or non-academic conduct’. Whether or not this played a part in Spingarn’s own firing—as he plausibly affirmed and the administration less plausibly denied—his initiative is telling. Details in his correspondence with Butler—the unconcealed sarcasm of Butler’s ‘hope’ that Spingarn will continue his career ‘as a productive scholar in the field of literary criticism in which you have already made so substantial a beginning’, or Spingarn’s own mention of ‘differences of literary and scholarly ideals between my colleagues and myself’—suggest that the lecture had a still more direct relation to the whole affair. It is further indicative that Spingarn ‘never sought another teaching position, although he undoubtedly could have secured a professorship at any number of first-rate institutions. In fact, after an initial period of bitterness he expressed a relief at having been freed from the narrow confines of the university … . Nor did time bring regret; in 1936, he held a cocktail party to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of his departure from the university’. See Spingarn, *New Criticism*, 26; Nicholas Murray Butler and J. E. Spingarn, *A Question of Academic Freedom* … (New York: for Distribution among the Alumni, 1911), 16, 18; Ross, *Spingarn*, 9.

History were hardly sufficient to negate the argument explicitly announced at its beginning and systematically pursued over the intervening 330 pages.

Turning back to Spingarn's adversary, we find that, for all his aggressive Romanticism, Saintsbury's chapters on the Renaissance amount to a faithful replica of Spingarn's *History*, including his treatment of allegory. This is surprising at first, as Saintsbury's treatment of ancient and medieval criticism contains multiple and emphatic expressions of his deep distaste for allegorical poetics, and also states explicitly that the ancient '*sacra fames* … for Allegory … was not in the least checked by the Renaissance, though the sauce of what it glutted itself on was somewhat altered'.[90] If so, why do allegory's appearances suddenly become much sparser in Saintsbury's second, Renaissance-neoclassical volume—where he glosses over its presence even in some cases where Spingarn had actually acknowledged it[91]—to then disappear altogether with the onset of modern criticism in the third? There is, however, a logic behind this, and if fact Spingarn's problem—how to erase allegory from that historical period in which one wishes to locate the origin of one's own critical modernity—is also Saintsbury's problem, yet Spingarn's solution is unavailable. Instead of a chronological, Saintsbury must therefore opt for a conceptual adjustment: a definition of literary criticism as concerned chiefly with the 'form' rather than the 'matter' of literature, and the resulting conviction that allegory 'has only to do with literary criticism in the sense that it is, and always has been, a very great degrader thereof, inclining it to be busy with matter instead of form'.[92] This is a crucial gambit, setting up one of the work's central arguments, namely that medieval literary theory is next to non-existent and that the Middle Ages' success in literary practice is directly consequent on their lack of interest in theorizing this practice, whereas the post-1500 explosion of neoclassicist theory strangled the literary production of that epoch. Thus it is precisely Saintsbury's Romantic medievalism that saves—*de facto* if not *de iure*—the modernity of his Renaissance. If medieval literature is an outburst of natural genius unbridled by critical constraints, this can only be if allegory is excluded from the definition of criticism, yet the same principle must then be maintained in the rest of the book, and consequently, although Saintsbury nominally acknowledges allegory's persistence beyond the Middle Ages, and categorically denies modernity to

[90] *History*, 1:448.

[91] See Spingarn, *History*, 8, 9–10, 30, 34, 193, 261, 267, 176; cf. Saintsbury, *History*, 1:456, 2:42–46, 2:66, 2:119–26, 2:148–51, 2:170–76.

[92] *History*, 1:11.

Renaissance criticism, his account of the 1500–1700 period contains nothing that would contradict Spingarn's account.

IV

By the early 1900s, Spingarn had thus created, and Spingarn and Saintsbury had between them consolidated, the canonical and still dominant conception of English Renaissance literary criticism. Chronologically, it extends from Gascoigne's *Notes* to the Restoration, plus some overflow on each side, to catch some of the pre-Gascoigne material in the earlier sixteenth century, and the relevant statements of Milton and Hobbes in the later seventeenth. Teleologically, it represents the beginning of English poetical and literary-critical modernity, whose progress is measurable in degrees of its supposed hostility to allegory, which is not a genuine expression of the period's poetic and aesthetic sensibilities but an atavism inherited from the Middle Ages. Any exceptions can now only prove the rule, as when Spingarn prints Reynolds's heavily pro-allegorical *Mythomystes*, but only to distinguish 'this perverse work' from the straight neoclassicist path trod by Sidney, Jonson, and Dryden.[93]

Most subsequent studies offer variations on this basic pattern, including Bernard Weinberg's widely influential *History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, additionally interesting here for being a deliberate 'experiment in writing intellectual history' according to the doctrines of the so-called Chicago Aristotelianism, especially R. S. Crane's ideas about 'history … without a thesis'.[94] If anywhere, then, it is here that we might hope for an account that will not be trying to fit the materials to any preconceived historiographical scheme and indeed Weinberg assures his readers that his approach is determined exclusively 'by the nature of the materials' in question.[95] In practice, however, it is easy to see that the book is governed by two powerful, interrelated, and rigorously executed theses. The first is

---

[93] *Essays*, 1:xxi.

[94] Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, 1 vol. in 2, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), vii–viii; R. S. Crane, *The Idea of the Humanities* … , 2 vols. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), 2:174. Cf. René Wellek, 'Reply to Bernard Weinberg's Review of My *History of Modern Criticism*', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 30 (1969): 281–82. For representative Spingarnian studies until Weinberg, see Guy Andrew Thompson, *Elizabethan Criticism of Poetry* … (Menasha: The Collegiate Press, 1914); Elizabeth J. Sweeting, *Early Tudor Criticism: Linguistic and Literary* (1940; repr. New York: Russell, 1964); Atkins, *Renascence*. The older paradigm retains some currency into the early decades of the twentieth century, expiring with such publications as James Routh's *Rise of Classical English Criticism* … (New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1915).

[95] Weinberg, *History*, ix.

stated openly in the Preface, where Weinberg explains that his method of discerning 'the main intellectual traditions of the century as they related to literary criticism' will be 'to distinguish and identify them as developments and continuations of three great critical positions of the classical past: those of Plato, Aristotle, and Horace'.[96] In this, Weinberg is closely following his sources, however unwilling he may be to acknowledge them. In the Preface, he briefly mentions only three predecessors—Spingarn, Ciro Trabalza, and Marvin T. Herrick—and later adds that his study contains 'virtually no secondary bibliography', for he has 'chosen to discuss works themselves rather than the interpretation of those works by others'.[97] He has, however, certainly read his Saintsbury, who is particularly explicit on this point ('The main texts and patterns of the critics of the Italian Renaissance were three—the *Ars Poetica* of Horace, the *Poetics* of Aristotle, and the various Platonic places dealing with poetry'), and who is himself summarizing the more discursive exposition of the same idea in Spingarn's *History*.[98]

The consequences for the book's treatment of allegory are obvious: when encountered, it is not to be treated as a 'great critical position' but an auxiliary concern at most—if not simply as a 'failure' or an 'inconsistency'[99]—and it is no surprise to find it omitted from Weinberg's discussions of a number of important and even major texts. This 'misleadingly incidental' treatment of allegory has already been criticized by Kenneth Borris and further examination amply confirms his judgment.[100] Of the nearly two hundred authors discussed in Weinberg's study, only about a quarter are noted to endorse the doctrine, whether in general, or in relation to a particular genre or work. The figure is suspiciously low and even the most cursory review reveals that in addition to those of Viperano and Fornari, mentioned by Borris, Weinberg omits allegory from his accounts of the works of Badius, Parassio, Fracastoro, Minturno, Segni, and Capriano. Of the thirteen works classified as the 'new arts of poetry'—'general treatises that attempt to present a total conception of the art rather than to discuss an individual point or to elucidate some phase of ancient doctrine'[101]—nine embrace allegory to at least some degree. Nor is there any discernible pattern of decline. Commenting on a 1586 work by Lorenzo Pariguolo, Weinberg notes that this critic's appeal

[96] Ibid., viii.

[97] Ibid., vii, x.

[98] Saintsbury, *History*, 2:213; Spingarn, *History*, 18–23.

[99] Weinberg, *History*, viii.

[100] *Allegory*, 260n11–12, 264n29.

[101] Weinberg, *History*, 715.

to allegory 'repeats one of the essential arguments in the early defenses of poetry' and thus 'returns to the traditions of the beginning of the century'.[102] Yet Weinberg's intuition of allegory as 'early' is disproved by his own index—even without additions, the works listed in the entry for *allegory* are evenly distributed throughout the century.

The second of Weinberg's theses is the classic Burckhardtian one, mapping a teleology of modernity onto the medieval-Renaissance divide. Unlike the first, however, it is never openly stated, for it is precisely such histories with theses that a Chicago Aristotelian seeks to avoid, yet is betrayed by slips scattered among Weinberg's indefatigable analyses—slips which predictably have to do with allegory. Thus we read that the defence of poetry by the Horatian critics partly 'consists in the allegorical interpretation of poetry, where again both a renewed Platonism and a continued medievalism enter into the sum of "Horatian" ideas', and that the 'old medieval justification by allegory still serves as an auxiliary to the discussion of the utilitarian ends of poetry'.[103] This identification of allegory with the Middle Ages—a thesis by any, let alone Chicago-Aristotelian, standards—is matched by an equally revealing comment on the prominence of allegorical poetics in the 1564 commentary on Horace's *Ars poetica* by Francesco Filippi Pedemonte, said to demonstrate that this critic's 'whole conception of the ends of poetry is unaffected by his study and his citation of Aristotle'.[104] This is the reason, precisely as it was with Spingarn, for pushing the emergence of 'Renaissance' criticism not only to the Cinquecento, but to Pazzi's translation of 1536.[105] Ultimately, the conviction that history can be written without a thesis leads the historian only into unconsciously adopting the most conventional of theses, and once set into action Weinberg's experiment unerringly reproduces Spingarn's scheme. A history of Renaissance criticism might be what the title promises, yet when the question of periodisation is tackled directly, Weinberg can speak of the Renaissance only without the capital 'R', or in quotation marks, or as disintegrated into phases:

> I have given to the term 'Renaissance' a highly restricted meaning: I have limited it to the sixteenth century, except for those few cases in which I have found it necessary to trace a movement back into the Quattrocento. Here again, the decision was

[102] Ibid., 621.

[103] Ibid., 109, 198. Here of course Weinberg ignores Horace's allegorical or at least rationalist interpretation of the legends of Orpheus and Amphion, through which—along with the general Pseudo-Horatian chorus of *dulce et utile*—the *Ars poetica* connects to the allegorical tradition, and on which sixteenth- and seventeenth-century critics draw with an almost formulaic consistency: allegory must be a medieval rather than a classical doctrine.

[104] Ibid., 115.

[105] Ibid., 367.

> determined by the nature of the materials. The Cinquecento was the century of major development and full realization, both in poetic theory and in practical criticism; the Quattrocento, for all its overwhelming importance in other phases of the Renaissance, provided only a minor impetus in the domain of literary criticism, and the Seicento did little more than repeat and reorder the ideas of the preceding century. By 1600, the renaissance in criticism had run its full course.[106]

The only escape route is the one paved by Spingarn: pushing the 'Renaissance' forward to the assimilation of the *Poetics*, relegating allegory to the thereby extended 'Middle Ages', and suppressing and relativizing its presence in the resulting corpus. Finally, in Weinberg's edition of the Italian *Trattati*, the term is dropped entirely, along with any attempt at historical contextualization, with a thesis or without: the operative term is now simply the 'Cinquecento' and conspicuously absent is a foreword, afterword, or any other kind of comprehensive editorial paratext.[107]

Of Weinberg's influence there is no better example than Concetta Carestia Greenfield's *Humanist and Scholastic Poetics, 1250–1500,* surveying the work of fifteen Italian critics of the stated period. Attention to such scholars as Paul Oskar Kristeller, Ernst Robert Curtius, and Jean Seznec makes Greenfield's the first major study to operate on the premise of continuity rather than rupture between medieval and postmedieval tradition, which has numerous important repercussions, particularly in the role assigned to allegory. Thus she criticizes 'the nineteenth-century prejudice that allegory was a medieval invention rejected by humanists, who turned to a nonallegorical antiquity', as well as the views of 'Late Crocean aestheticians like Spingarn', who 'have read the humanist emphasis on "form" as an emphasis on beauty and pleasure for its own sake', a position which 'does not find support in humanist poetics'.[108] On the contrary, while scriptural allegorism is essential to both scholastic and humanist modes of thought, secular allegorism is a specifically humanist cause and indeed the 'central issue' in the humanist-scholastic debate.[109] Accordingly, the received configuration of the allegory-modernity nexus is turned on its head. It is scholasticism, emerging with the recovery of the Aristotelian corpus, that presents a novelty in the intellectual landscape, while humanism retains 'the general scheme of medieval culture

---

[106] Ibid., ix.

[107] *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, 4 vols. (Bari: Laterza, 1970–74).

[108] *Humanist and Scholastic Poetics, 1250–1500* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1981), 32.

[109] Ibid., 28

against the contemporary attempt of the scholastic culture to supersede it'; it is scholasticism, in accordance with Aquinas' dictum that 'In no science invented by humans … can be found anything but the literal sense', that dismisses secular allegorism, while humanism champions it.[110]

All this would seem to hack right at the root of Spingarnian orthodoxy, but there is another major influence on Greenfield's thesis which pulls in the opposite direction, namely that of the two imposing tomes of Weinberg's *History*, and ultimately it is this influence that shapes the book's overall conceptual and historical framework.[111] Not even Kristeller, who contributes a Foreword to Greenfield's book, can withstand it. Greenfield frequently cites Kristeller's *Renaissance Thought*, where the Renaissance is defined as 'that period of Western European history which extends approximately from 1300 to 1600, without any preconceptions as to the characteristics or merits of that period, or of those periods preceding and following it'.[112] The obvious objections to the latter portion of this statement can be passed over here—what is important is that Kristeller, like most other scholars, sees the Renaissance as lasting roughly from the fourteenth through the sixteenth century, and accordingly, in his Foreword, he designates the period covered in Greenfield's book as that of 'the later Middle Ages and the early Renaissance'.[113] In Greenfield's own Preface, however, we meet with a crucially different formulation: 'While the history of literary criticism in the Renaissance has been written several times, practically no work has been devoted to humanist poetics, that is, to the development of a theory of poetry from Petrarch to Pontano'.[114]

This is no slip. The distinction between 'humanist' and 'Renaissance' is consistently maintained throughout the book, since defining its subject as 'Renaissance' or even 'early Renaissance' would mean open conflict with Weinberg and the whole canonical conception of the subject. It would raise some very awkward questions, not least that of the fate of allegory in the post-1500 period. How did an issue that had been of 'central' importance for

---

[110] Ibid., 20, 51.

[111] A trivial but striking indicator of the depth of this influence is found in Greenfield's Preface, where what she evidently thinks of as her own sentences turn out to be almost verbatim reproductions of Weinberg's. See Greenfield, *Poetics*, 12–13: 'I have not followed any author through his career or any concept through the century'; 'What I have said about each text does not represent the totality of its contents'; 'I present them [the translations included in the study] with the usual modesty of the translator'. Cf. Weinberg, *History*, viii– x: 'I have not sought to follow any author through his career or any term and concept through the century'; 'what I have said about any individual text is not intended to represent the totality of its contents'; 'I present these translations with the usual reservations of the translator'.

[112] Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper, 1961), 3–4.

[113] Greenfield, *Poetics*, 9.

[114] Ibid., 11

two and a half centuries become irrelevant virtually overnight? It would make one think twice about Weinberg's dismissal of the Quattrocento as having 'provided only a minor impetus in the domain of literary criticism', and consequently of his whole conception of 'Renaissance' criticism.[115] Does it make more sense to find Italian Renaissance criticism practiced in the period to which that term customarily applies, or to make it begin almost at the point at which the Italian Renaissance, as commonly understood, ends? There would also be implications for other national traditions. Does it make sense to begin the history of English Renaissance criticism in the 1570s, more than a century after the earliest stirrings of English humanism, and many decades after Erasmus and Colet? By dropping the curtain at 1500 and excising a word from her vocabulary, Greenfield avoids such questions, but thereby also forfeits the chance to make a more significant intervention into the canonical account of the subject.

While the achievements of either Weinberg's *History* or Greenfield's *Poetics* are not to be disputed, the latter should serve as a warning against uncritical reception of the former. A more recent example of such reception is the Introduction to the *Renaissance* volume in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, in which Glyn P. Norton, in true Weinbergian fashion, fails to mention a single one of his numerous predecessors until the last paragraph, where, in 'One final coda', he showers praise on Weinberg: 'The luminosity of his scholarship has not dimmed over the years and, as this volume attests, continues to invigorate critical dialogue and bring us back to fundamental theoretical issues about great writing.'[116] And yet, while Weinberg's influence on Norton is certainly clear—Renaissance criticism breathes an 'air of modernity', the chaste marriage of Philology and Protestantism ends the depraved *ménage à quatre* of medieval exegesis, and so on[117]—his volume attests no such thing. Already in the second chapter, Michel Jeanneret's on 'Renaissance Exegesis', we read that 'Allegorical reading was particularly active in Italy, where (there being no gap between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance) it continued well into the sixteenth century'.[118] Norton promotes Erasmus to a 'chief' position among his imaginary Renaissance anti-allegorists, yet Jeanneret's chapter, as well as Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle's, remind us that Erasmus was in fact a fervent advocate of both scriptural and non-scriptural allegorism.[119] Norton fails to

[115] *History*, ix.

[116] *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: The Renaissance*, ed. Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 21.

[117] Ibid., 4, 8.

[118] Ibid., 37.

[119] Ibid., 4, 40, 48–49.

mention the heresy even in relation to the Neoplatonists, a connection which multiple chapters go on to discuss, including Michael J. B. Allen's, emphasizing allegory as 'the new key to the validity of poetry in the Platonic republic'.[120] Furthermore, even as this mutiny unfolds between the covers of his volume, Norton's views are also contradicted by neighbouring titles in the series, whose editors broadly accept the consensus view, consigning the so-called 'Renaissance' to the premodern phase of literary thought.[121]

The same patterns and tensions punctuate the major anthologies of the corpus. To G. Gregory Smith, Spingarn's 'modern classicism', oxymoronic as most would have found it already in 1899, was wholly obsolete, but even as he sets a new tone by noting 'the modern dislike of the classical elements in the essays', he retains the rest of Spingarn's scheme, including the decline-of-allegory narrative.[122] Fast-forwarding to Brian Vickers's *English Renaissance Literary Criticism*, expressly intended to replace Smith's *Essays* as the standard reference work on the subject, we find not merely continuity but radicalization, with Vickers's antipathy towards allegory, combined with his sympathy for rhetoric, and his quixotic insistence that the culture of Renaissance England was 'a truly homogeneous culture, in which theory and practice interlocked', resulting in a particularly thorough campaign of anti-allegorical whitewashing.[123] There is thus room in the 672 pages of Vickers's collection for 36 items, including a host of minor documents, many of which represent literary criticism only in the broadest sense of that term, but not for even the briefest extract from Thomas Lodge's reply to Stephen Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse*, Reynolds's *Mythomystes*, or Kenelm Digby's *Observations on the … Faery Queen*, to mention only three very important works—the first defence of poetry in the English language, the chief English specimen of Neoplatonic poetics, and one of the earliest sustained and self-contained close readings of a piece of English literature—respectively printed by Smith, Spingarn, and Tayler, and all heavily allegorical in approach.[124] In a programmatically

[120] Ibid., 37, 67, 91–92, 153, 162, 204, 439.

[121] *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: The Eighteenth Century*, ed. H. B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 7; *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Romanticism*, ed. Marshall Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1.

[122] *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1904), 1:xii, 1:xxiv–xxv.

[123] See *Appropriating Shakespeare: Contemporary Critical Quarrels* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 372–416; *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998); *English Renaissance Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), vii.

[124] See *Essays*, ed. Smith; *Essays*, ed. Spingarn; *Literary Criticism in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Edward W. Tayler (New York: Knopf, 1967).

'comprehensive' anthology, these are glaring, patently intentional omissions, explicable only in terms of the wider agenda outlined above.[125]

V

Given the critical thrust of these analyses, it is perhaps now worth emphasizing what should be obvious enough, namely that the works discussed above do not represent the whole of the scholarship on the subject, which includes numerous valuable contributions by several generations of scholars. The focus has been almost exclusively on the major histories and anthologies, attempting a comprehensive account of the subject, and even from these there is much to be learned regardless of the biases that I have tried to bring to light. Spingarn and his successors went to work under the influence of the established historical conception of the Renaissance, expecting to find an analogous state of affairs in their chosen field of study. When they could not find it in the period as commonly understood—fourteenth through sixteenth century in Italy, with variable amounts of 'transalpine delay'—they were forced to resort to measures which distorted the notion almost beyond recognition. But this is, emphatically, not to say that all these scholars were simply in the wrong. In fact, their collective failure to produce a coherent account of the subject is a rather conclusive success, proving that they did not blindly impose their premises on their materials, and that they did not simply bow to the logic of general cultural history when this logic threatened to obscure specifically literary-historical developments. It is not for lack of able pens that a viable history of Renaissance poetics has not yet been written, but because of a conceptual impasse at the very heart of that subject. A viable history of Renaissance poetics has not yet been because it cannot be written, since the very concept of the Renaissance, as first formulated in

[125] Appeals to allegory are also omitted from Vickers's extracts from the works of Wilson and Puttenham, as are the examples of allegorical meanings in Harington's *Apologie*. Harington's view—distinguishing between a literal and allegorical sense, and subdividing the latter into moral, philosophical, and religious—is designated as 'medieval', in contrast to that of 'Renaissance scholars (notably Erasmus)', who 'rejected this scheme, usually preserving only the moral sense'. Ironically, one of the sources for such 'medieval' schemes most influential with Harington and his contemporaries was precisely Erasmus's *De copia*, where four senses are distinguished—'historical' (i.e. rationalist or euhemerist), 'theological', 'physical', and 'moral'—with the proviso that 'Quite often there is a mixture of more than one type'. The sole mention of allegory in Vickers's Introduction follows directly on a nod back to Spingarn: 'In the Middle Ages, … only those works of literature were valued that had an explicitly moral and educational function, or could be given one retrospectively by allegorical interpretation'. In this same passage, Vickers goes on to write that 'Two outstanding early humanists confronted medieval enmity with well-argued defences, Giovanni Boccaccio in *De genealogia deorum* … , and Coluccio Salutati in *De laboribus Herculis*'—as if these were not themselves allegorical in approach. See Vickers, *Criticism*, 47, 309n11; Desiderius Erasmus, *Literary and Educational Writings*, ed. Craig R. Thompson et al., 7 vols. in 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978–89), 1:610–13.

reference to the spheres of classical learning and the fine arts, and subsequently expanded into a whole-scale cultural epoch said to represent the emergence of Western modernity, was formed without taking into account a substantial portion of the literary and literary-critical materials produced in the period it is supposed to cover. Therefore these materials will remain a foreign body in any study that does not run away from the evidence, and will keep returning to haunt anyone who, unconvinced by the present analysis, decides to take another swing at the same impossible task.

Allegory, as I have tried to show, is the chief among these revenants. Historians stage rushed funerals of this arch-nemesis of modern aesthetics, but from its uneasy grave allegory is still pulling the strings. Suppressed as an increasingly irrelevant medieval atavism, it revenges itself by making this suppression the true burden—spoken or unspoken, conscious or unconscious—of the canonical accounts of the subject. It is allegory that drove Spingarn to delay Renaissance criticism to the dissemination of Aristotle's *Poetics*, and it is allegory that has made Spingarn's successors retain his framework, even after it was conclusively repudiated by Spingarn himself. It is allegory that has led these Burckhardtians to postpone their Renaissances almost to the point where Burckhardt's ends, envelop them in scare quotes, dissect them into phases, refine them out of existence. Consequently, the way forward consists largely in acknowledging the integral place of allegorical poetics in the period's literary thought, which will inevitably result in a major revision of its place in the broader historical framework. Another imperative is a more rigorous distinction between poetics and literary criticism. It is clear that the 1570s introduce a more institutionalized and self-conscious stage in English literary criticism, a phenomenon certainly worthy of the ample attention it has received. Yet it is precisely this unprecedented richness of the period's overall critical output that has impoverished our understanding of its developments, or lack thereof, in poetic theory proper. However commendable in themselves, the efforts of historians and editors to encompass the totality of the period's critical activity have tended to obscure the situation with the narrower but decisive question of theoretical fundamentals, even as their claims for the emergence of poetic modernity in this period have been based, as they must, precisely on arguments relating to these fundamentals. To advance on the present state of the field, future work must carefully disentangle the familiar accounts of the consolidation of a national literary tradition, the rise of the vernacular, the development of prosody, the introduction of continental influences, the institutionalization of the critic, and any number of other subjects, however important in their own right, from its account of the period's

elementary literary theory—if only so they can then be re-entangled in more coherent and insightful ways.

In doing so, historians of 1500–1700 poetics would be making a vital contribution not only to their own field but the wider, cross-disciplinary attempt to understand the history of Western poetic and aesthetic thought, and especially the key question of the transition from the premodern to the modern stage of that history. At present, work on this question is paralyzed by at least four irreconcilable tendencies: the eighteenth century consensus, which remains the dominant but by no means universally accepted position; the scholarship in the Burckhardt-Spingarn-Weinberg tradition, dating the watershed to the Renaissance period; the tendency, emerging in the early twentieth century, to redraw the line at a significantly later date, around 1900 or even 1960;[126] and the never-sleeping lure of ahistoricism, bent on flattening such narratives into 'traditions', 'conversations', and the like.[127] Each of the four positions contradicts the other three. At some point between roughly 1500 and 1950 there either occurred or did not occur a major watershed in Western literary theory, and if it did occur—which eliminates the fourth position—then it matters greatly whether it occurred in the sixteenth, eighteenth, or twentieth century, as these dates obviously entail very different and ultimately irreconcilable explanations of the phenomenon.

But there is, at the bottom of all this, a still more pressing question—that of where one locates one's own poetic and aesthetic self in this history. In an appendix to his edition of Goethe, Spingarn recalls how its manuscript, 'virtually completed' by 1912–13, came to be

> mislaid among some old papers, and when it was recovered the European War was at its height. Never again, it then seemed, could I regard my work with the same disinterested temper in which it was begun, for what was recovered was no longer a manuscript but a ghost, no longer a book but a strange spirit returned from an all too irrecoverable past. When I re-read these words from the lips of the one who had spent his life 'with spirits god-like mild,' and related them to our new and altered world, I understood once more how man forever fashions history to his own meaning, and how it has not life except such as is given to it by his creative mind.[128]

---

[126] For an early example, see Richard Green Moulton, *The Modern Study of Literature: An Introduction to Literary Theory and Interpretation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1915).

[127] Most recently in James Seaton's *Literary Criticism from Plato to Postmodernism: The Humanistic Alternative* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1–2, where the history of literary theory is 'a continuing conversation among three traditions', namely the 'Platonic', 'Neoplatonic', and 'Aristotelian or humanistic'.

[128] Goethe, *Essays*, 291.

Surely Spingarn eventually came to see how the same was true of his *History*, the star-crossed *juvenilium* which he effectively disowned within five years of its publication, but which has nevertheless continued to shape the scholarship on the subject. Yet if Spingarn fashioned the history of 1500–1700 literary thought to his own meaning, at least he did so because he felt passionately about this meaning—about those paradigmatically modern and anti-allegorical 'Newer Ideals of Criticism' he championed in the 1910 lecture—and at least these same ideals eventually led him to doubt and ultimately discard his original thesis. The question for us, then, is what ideals of our own, or absence thereof, drive us to reproduce his account? If we continue to fashion history to our own meanings, and there are no histories without theses, what are our meanings and our theses? To move 'beyond Aristotle's *Poetics*', as this collection invites us to do—which is really to say, beyond Weinberg, which effectively means beyond Spingarn, and consequently, as always, beyond Burckhardt—the field must meaningfully engage with this fundamental question and must be ready to follow wherever such engagement may take it, regardless of the institutional resistance it is certain to encounter in its path.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrams, M. H. *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1953.

Aristotle. *The 'Poetics' of Aristotle: Translation and Commentary*. Ed. and trans. Stephen Halliwell. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987.

Arnold, Matthew. *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*. London: Smith, Elder, 1869.

Atkins, J. W. H. *English Literary Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries*. London: Methuen, 1951.

Atkins, J. W. H. *English Literary Criticism: The Medieval Phase*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943.

Atkins, J. W. H. *English Literary Criticism: The Renascence*. London: Methuen, 1943.

Atkins, J. W. H. *Literary Criticism in Antiquity: A Sketch of Its Development*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934.

Bacon, Francis. *Opera … , tomvs primvs: Qui continet De Dignitate & Augmentis Scientiarum Libros IX …* . London: Haviland, 1623.

Bacon, Francis. *The Twoo Bookes … Of the proficience and aduancement of Learning, diuine and humane …* . London: [Purfoot and Creede] for Tomes, 1605.

Baldwin, Charles Sears. *Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic, Interpreted from Representative Works*. New York: Macmillan, 1924.

Baldwin, Charles Sears. *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic (to 1400), Interpreted from Representative Works*. New York: Macmillan, 1928.

Baldwin, Charles Sears. *Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice: Classicism in the Rhetoric and Poetic of Italy, France, and England 1400–1600*. Ed. Donald Lemen Clark. New York: Columbia University Press, 1939.

Beloe, William. *Anecdotes of Literature and Scarce Books*. 6 vols. London: for Rivington, 1807–12.

Blackburn, Thomas H. 'The Date and Evolution of Edmund Bolton's *Hypercritica*.' *Studies in Philology* 63 (1966): 196–202.

Bordelon, Suzanne. *A Feminist Legacy: The Rhetoric and Pedagogy of Gertrude Buck*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2007.

Borinski, Karl. *Die Antike in Poetik und Kunsttheorie von Ausgang des Klassischen*

Altertums bis auf Goethe under Wilhelm von Humboldt. Ed. Richard Newald (vol. 2). 2 vols. Lepizig: Dieterich, 1914–24.

Borinski, Karl. *Die Poetik der Renaissance und der Anfänge der literarischen Kritik in Deutschland*. Berlin: Weidmann, 1886.

Borris, Kenneth. *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature: Heroic Form in Sidney, Spenser, and Milton*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Le Bossu, René. *Treatise of the Epick Poem … .* In *Monsieur Bossv's Treatise of the Epick Poem … To which are Added, An Essay upon Satyr, by Monsieur D'Acier; and A Treatise upon Pastorals, by Monsieur Fontanelle*, by René Le Bossu, André Dacier, and Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle. Trans. W. J. London: for Bennet, 1695.

Boswell, Joseph. *The Life of Samuel Johnson … .* 2 vols. London: Baldwin for Dilly, 1791.

Brown, Marshall, ed. *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Romanticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Brljak, Vladimir. 'The Age of Allegory.' *Studies in Philology* 114 (2017): 697–719.

Burckhardt, Jacob. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. [Trans. S. G. C. Middlemore.] 1878; repr. London: Phaidon, 1995.

Butcher, S. H. *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art with a Critical Text and a Translation of the Poetics*. London: Macmillan, 1895.

Butler, Nicholas Murray, and J. E. Spingarn. *A Question of Academic Freedom, Being the Official Correspondence between Nicholas Murray Butler … and J. E. Spingarn … During the Academic Year 1910–1911 with Other Documents*. New York: for Distribution among the Alumni, 1911.

Cooper, Elizabeth. *The Muses Library; Or a Series of English Poetry, from the Saxons, to the Reign of King Charles II … .* London: Wilcox et al., 1737.

Crane, R. S. *The Idea of the Humanities, and Other Essays Critical and Historical*. 2 vols. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Davenant, William, and Thomas Hobbes. *A Discourse upon Gondibert … With an Answer to it … .* Paris: Guillemot, 1650.

Day, Gary. *Literary Criticism: A New History*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.

Dryden, John. *The Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works … .* Ed. Edmond Malone. 3 vols. London: Baldwin for Cadell and Davies, 1800.

Erasmus, Desiderius. *Literary and Educational Writings*. Ed. Craig R. Thompson et al. 7 vols in 4. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978–89.

Ford, Andrew. 'Literary Criticism and the Poet's Autonomy.' In *A Companion to Ancient*

Aesthetics, ed. Penelope Murray and Pierre Destrée, 143–57. Chichester: Blackwell, 2015.

Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. [Trans. Alan Sheridan.] 1970; repr. London: Routledge, 2002.

Gavin, Michael. *The Invention of English Criticism, 1560–1760*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang (von). *Goethe's Literary Essays*. Ed. Joel Elias Spingarn. New York: Harcourt, 1921.

Goulimari, Pelagia. *Literary Criticism and Theory: From Plato to Postcolonialism*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2015.

Greenfield, Concetta Carestia. *Humanist and Scholastic Poetics, 1250–1500*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1981.

Guyer, Paul. *A History of Modern Aesthetics*. 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Habermas, Jürgen. 'Modernity: An Unfinished Project.' Trans. Nicholas Walker. In *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity: Critical Essays on 'The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity'*, ed. Maurizio Passerin d'Entreves and Seyla Benhabib, 38–58. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997.

Habib, M. A. R. *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.

Habib, M. A. R. *Modern Literary Criticism and Theory: A History*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008.

Hale, John. *England and the Italian Renaissance: The Growth of Interest in Its History and Art*. 4th ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.

Harland, Richard. *Literary Theory from Plato to Barthes: An Introductory History*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999.

Haslewood, Joseph, ed. *Ancient Critical Essays upon English Poets and Poesy*. 2 vols. London: Triphook, 1811–15.

Johnson, Samuel. *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets; with Critical Observations on Their Works*. Ed. Roger Lonsdale. 4 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 2006.

Kristeller, Paul Oskar. *Renaissance Thought*. Rev. ed. New York: Harper, 1961.

Lazarus, Micha. 'Sidney's Greek Poetics.' *Studies in Philology* 112 (2015): 504–36.

Lynch, Jack. *The Age of Elizabeth in the Age of Johnson*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Marino, Adrian. *The Biography of 'The Idea of Literature': From Antiquity to the Baroque*.

Trans. Virgil Stanciu and Charles M. Carlton. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.

Moulton, Richard Green. *The Modern Study of Literature: An Introduction to Literary Theory and Interpretation*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1915.

Nisbet, H. B., and Claude Rawson, eds. *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: The Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Norton, Glyn P., ed. *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: The Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Phillips, Edward. *Theatrum Poetarum, or A Compleat Collection of the Poets … Together with a Prefatory Discourse of the Poets and Poetry in Generall*. London: Smith, 1675.

Pope, Alexander. *An Essay on Criticism*. London: Lewis, 1711.

R[eynolds], H[enry]. *Mythomystes … .* In *The British Bibliographer*, ed. Egerton Brydges and Joseph Haslewood, 4 vols, 4:373–79. London: Triphook, 1810–14.

Ross, B. Joyce. *J. E. Spingarn and the Rise of the NAACP, 1911–1939*. New York: Atheneum, 1972.

Routh, James. *The Rise of Classical English Criticism: A History of the Canons of English Literary Taste and Rhetorical Doctrines, from the Beginning of English Criticism to the Death of Dryden*. New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1915.

Rymer, Thomas. 'The Preface of the Translator.' In *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie … ,* by René Rapin, trans. Thomas Rymer, A3r–b2v. London: Herringman, 1674.

Saintsbury, George. *A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe from the Earliest Texts to the Present Day*. 3 vols. Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1900–04.

Schelling, Felix E. *Poetic and Verse Criticism of the Reign of Elizabeth*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1891.

Seaton, James. *Literary Criticism from Plato to Postmodernism: The Humanistic Alternative*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Sidney, Philip. *Apologie for Poetrie*. Ed. Edward Arber. Birmingham: 34 Wheeleys Road, 1868.

Sidney, Philip. *An Apologie for Poetrie*. Ed. Evelyn S. Shuckburgh. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891.

Sidney, Philip. *'An Apology for Poetry' (or 'The Defence of Poesy')*. Ed. Geoffrey Shepherd. 3rd ed. Rev. R. W. Maslen. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.

Sidney, Philip. *'The Defense of Poesy', Otherwise Known as 'An Apology for Poetry.'* Ed.

Albert S. Cook. Boston: Ginn, 1890.

Sidney, Philip. *Sir Philip Sidney's Astrophel and Stella und Defence of Poesie nach den ältesten Ausgaben mit einer Einleituweng über Sidney's Leben und Werke herausgegeben*. Ed. Ewald Flügel. Halle: Niemeyer, 1889.

Sidney, Philip, and Ben Jonson. *Sir Philip Sydney's Defence of Poetry. And, Observations on Poetry and Eloquence, from the Discoveries of Ben Jonson*. Ed. Joseph Warton. London: J., Robinson, and Walter, 1787.

Smith, G. Gregory, ed. *Elizabethan Critical Essays*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1904.

Spingarn, Joel Elias. *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance, with Special Reference to the Influence of Italy in the Formation and Development of Modern Classicism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1899.

Spingarn, Joel Elias. 'Saintsbury's History of Criticism.' *The Nation*, 15 January 1903.

Spingarn, Joel Elias. 'The Origins of Modern Criticism.' *Modern Philology* 1 (1904): 477–96.

Spingarn, Joel Elias. *La critica letteraria nel Rinascimento: Saggio sulle origini dello spirito classico nella letteratura moderna*. Trans. Antonio Fusco. Bari: Gius, 1905.

Spingarn, Joel Elias. 'Art for Art's Sake: A Query.' *Modern Language Notes* 22 (1907): 263.

Spingarn, Joel Elias. *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*. 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1908.

Spingarn, Joel Elias, ed. *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1908–09.

Spingarn, Joel Elias. 'L'Art pour l'Art.' *Modern Language Notes* 25 (1910): 95.

Spingarn, Joel Elias. *The New Criticism: A Lecture Delivered at Columbia University, March 9, 1910*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1911.

Stump, Donald, et al., eds. *Sir Philip Sidney World Bibliography*. http://bibs.slu.edu/sidney.

Sweeting, Elizabeth J. *Early Tudor Criticism: Linguistic and Literary*. 1940; repr. New York: Russell, 1964.

Symonds, John Addington. *Renaissance in Italy: Italian Literature*. 2 vols. London: Smith, Elder, 1881.

Tayler, Edward W., ed. *Literary Criticism in Seventeenth-Century England*. New York: Knopf, 1967.

Temple, William. *Sir William Temple's Essays on Ancient & Modern Learning and On Poetry*. Ed. Joel Elias Spingarn. Oxford: Clarendon, 1909.

Terry, Richard. 'The Eighteenth-Century Invention of English Literature: A Truism

Revisited.' *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 19 (1996): 47–62.

Thompson, Guy Andrew. *Elizabethan Criticism of Poetry* … . Menasha: The Collegiate Press, 1914.

Van Deusen, Marshall. *J. E. Spingarn*. New York: Twayne, 1971.

Vaughan, C. E., ed. *English Literary Criticism*. London: Blackie, 1896.

Vickers, Brian. *Appropriating Shakespeare: Contemporary Critical Quarrels*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

Vickers, Brian. *In Defence of Rhetoric*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998.

Vickers, Brian, ed. *English Renaissance Literary Criticism*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1999.

Warton, Thomas. *Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser*. London: Dodsley and Fletcher, 1754.

Weinberg, Bernard. 'From Aristotle to Pseudo-Aristotle.' *Comparative Literature* 5 (1953): 97–104.

Weinberg, Bernard. *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*. 1 vol. in 2. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Weinberg, Bernard, ed. *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*. 4 vols. Bari: Laterza, 1970–74.

Wellek, René. 'The Attack on Literature.' *The American Scholar* 42 (1972–73): 27–42.

Wellek, René. *A History of Modern Criticism*. 8 vols. London: Cape, 1955–86 (vols 1–6); New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991–92 (vols 7–8).

Wellek, René. 'Literature and Its Cognates.' In *Dictionary*, ed. Wiener, 2:81–89.

Wellek, René. 'Reply to Bernard Weinberg's Review of My *History of Modern Criticism*.' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 30 (1969): 281–82.

Wellek, René. 'What Is Literature?' In *What Is Literature?*, ed. Paul Hernadi, 16–23. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.

Wiener, Philip P., ed. *Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas*. 5 vols. New York: Scribner, 1973–74.

Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society, 1780–1950*. London: Chatto, 1958.

Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. London: Fontana, 1976.

Wilson, John. *Specimens of the British Critics*. Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1846.

Wimsatt, William K., Jr., and Cleanth Brooks. *Literary Criticism: A Short History*. New York: Knopf, 1957.

Wylie, Laura Johnson. *Studies in the Evolution of English Criticism* … . Boston: Ginn, 1894.