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Edward Pechter

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DRYDEN'S CLASSICAL THEORY OF LITERATURE

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TO JOSEPHINE MILES

PREFACE

Since the Introduction says what this book is about, I limit myself here to acknowledgments.

Anyone who writes about Dryden has a solid, continuing tradition of critical discussion to help him. There are four books directly relevant to this one, Huntley's monograph on the *Essay*, Aden's *Dictionary*, Jensen's *Glossary* and Hume's survey. Many books of different kinds consider Dryden's critical theory indirectly or in part, including histories of literary taste, studies of Dryden's drama and studies of his poetry. The most helpful of these have found their way into the text or notes below, as have the most useful (as I think) of the many articles on Dryden.

Volumes of the California edition of Dryden's *Works* have been appearing slowly during the period in which I have been working on this book. My indebtedness to it (especially to Volume 17, *Prose, 1688–1691*, edited by Monk, *et al.*) is substantial, though I haven't changed my critical apparatus to reflect it. Thus, most of my quotations from Dryden's prose are taken from Walter P. Ker's edition, though I've gone to George Watson's more recent edition for material not included in Ker's. I cite page numbers to both editions parenthetically in the text, specifying only Watson's. When I indicate the date for an essay, I have relied upon the chronological table in Aden's *Dictionary*. In punctuating the titles of Dryden's essays there is no clear rule for the use of italics or inverted commas or neither. Rather than facing a series of minor crises in deciding each case, I have chosen to use italics throughout. This seems most consistent with my tendency to view the essays on their own

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PREFACE

rather than as prefaces to other works. From this tendency follows a further decision which may seem more arbitrary and which is not even strictly correct – namely, to withhold inverted commas from the name of the work prefaced. Thus, for example, not the *Preface to 'Annus Mirabilis'* but the *Preface to Annus Mirabilis*. I find this convenient, and I do not see how any confusion can result.

Moving from books to people: This study had its distant beginnings at the University of California at Berkeley. My thanks there to Paul Alpers and Stanley Fish for encouraging the work, to Alvin Eustis for valuable leads and suggestions, and to Donald Friedman for his continual reminders that sloppy prose meant sloppy thought. I can't list all my colleagues and friends here at Concordia University who listened and talked to me about Dryden over the past few years, but they know who they are. Roger Bird made available to me his manuscript study of Dryden's medieval translations. Eyvind Ronquist read part of the manuscript, eliminating some egregious gaffes and restraining some of my over-ambitious speculations about classicism by means of his much more substantial knowledge. The late Neil Compton and Sid Lamb, who were chairmen here during the years this book was written, both encouraged me more than I had any right to expect. I needed that encouragement, and I miss them both.

Mr G. J. Pocock read the manuscript in its final drafts, and the book is better throughout as a result of his suggestions. A generous grant from the Canada Council for 1970–71 facilitated much of my research. For generous support of a different kind over the past few years, my gratitude goes to Lesley Wynne Pechter.

The dedication simply smiles in passing at debts too many and deep for me to specify.

E. P.

October 1974