

Adams, Robert, Ikon: John Milton and the Modern Critics (Cornell: N.Y.) 1955

p. 112 But Empson's comments have been treated very much like Bentley's emendations, as a faux pas with just enough oblique cleverness attached so that one had better be careful.

p. 113 But Empson has written on Bentley, who wrote on Milton; he is, like Bentley, a challenging and rewarding critic because of his faults as well as his virtues, for he is equally rich in both. Most critics allow us to feel safe in one quarter or another; with Empson, anything can happen. Far from being supersubtle, he is wild but willing; he will cheerfully commit twenty absurdities for a change at one insight. To read Empson hard is always useful and pleasant because his mistakes are as much fun as his perceptions. To read him any less critically than he reads his text is to invite disaster. For he is one of those guides to the wax-

p.114 works who are so vehement and profuse that they end by overwhelming both the exhibits and the visitors.