Reviews

Hunt, Tony, ed. *Les paraboles maistre Alain en françoys*. Modern Humanities Research Association Critical Texts 2. London: MHRA, 2005. iv-178 p.

The master in question is Alain de Lille or Alanus ab Insulis (1115/28 to 1203), rector of the University of Paris and author of *De planctu naturæ*, the *Anticlaudianus*, and an early, very popular school text, the *Liber parabolarum* (also called *Doctrinale minus* or *Parvum doctrinale*; ed. Migne, *Patrologia latina*) in which sententious comparisons generate (originally implicit) moral maxims:

> Sus de sorde levat, saltem dum colligit escas;
> Cur nunquam surgit sorde volutus homo? (Ch. I, nr. 3)
>
> The pig gets up to eat of the filth in which it lay;
> Why does a man covered in sin not raise himself up?

The six chapters of the *Liber* (here 158-78) are constructed in units of two, four, six, eight, ten, and twelve verses and constitute, formally and thematically, an important addition to the Auctores octo morales, the consecrated corpus of medieval educational texts.

Alain's work is of particular significance for Middle French parœmiological and didactic literature because of its fourfold French vernacularization: 1. a partial translation with Anglo-Norman prose paraphrases (MS. London, Lambeth Palace Library 371 [late 13th cent.], ff. 130va-134ra); 2. the *Proverbez d'Alain*, perhaps by a certain Thomas Maillet (MS. Paris, BNF f. fr. 12478 [15th cent.], ff. 249r-268r); 3. an anonymous translation, *Les paraboles maistre Alain en françoys*, printed by Antoine Vérard in Paris on 20 March 1492 (100 folios); 4. a reprint of Vérard's version by Denis Janot in Paris, "au premier pilier de la grand sale du palays" (1534 or 1535). Hunt has edited Vérard's book, using Janot's reprint as a control text (variants from the latter 119-24; rejected Vérard readings 118). In accordance with the pedagogical objective of the *Paraboles*, the translator has made the maxims explicit, and commentaries of uncertain origins (see 7) have been added :

> [Sub molli pastore capit lanam lupus; et grex
> Incustoditus dilaceratur eo. (I, 16)]
>
> Soubz mol pasteur, paresceux, negligent,
> Laine prent leu, l'aigneau tue sans garde;
> [maxim]
> Ainsi perit l'Ennemi mainte gent
> Soubz mol pasteur, paresceux, negligent.
>
> [Commentary]
> Tout bon pasteur doit estre diligent
> Envers les siens, car, ainsi qu'om regarde,
> Soubz mol pasteur, paresceux, negligent,
> Laine prent leu, l'aigneau tue sans garde.

It takes Hunt some nineteen pages (22-41) to give a detailed account of the translator's poetic virtuosity: there are 249 isometric stanzas of varying lengths (from quatrains to douzains) and with 32 different rhyme schemes (22-35), the rhymes themselves being "for the most part unadventurous" (40). Hunt also discusses cæsura, hyper- and hypometric lines, diaresis and synæresis, and enjambement. The translator's language is discussed on pages 17-22 and 42-46.

In keeping with a relatively recent trend in the editing of old texts, Hunt observes closely Vérard's layout of the three texts (Latin parabola, French translation, French commentary) he set and printed; the pattern throughout is: two woodcuts side by side, commentary, translation with the Latin original printed alongside. "The fidelity of the vernacular rendering may thus be easily tested [...] our reading of the transla[tion] is preceded by the commentary which ensures that the didactic import of the [translation] is well understood first. [...] This sequence [...] thus serves the interests of all three participants: Ala[i]n, his translator, and the reader" (6-7).

The modern reader is slightly less privileged as it was perhaps impractical to imitate Vérard's layout in the present edition, which means that the rejection of the Latin original to the end of the book makes for tiresome page-turning. The 252 woodcuts at least need not be missed, since perhaps as many as 197 have simply been adopted and adapted from the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles* (4-5); here only the frontispiece, which depicts the translator presenting his work to Charles VIII, has been reproduced.

Copious notes (125-49), a glossary (150-56), and an index of proper names (157) complete this fine edition which meets in all respects the criteria set out by the series' editorial board (www.criticaltexts.mhra.org.uk): to provide critical editions of lesser-known literary texts (from all periods and in the major European languages) prepared by leading academics (179). (The first title in the series was *Odilon Redon: Écrits*, by Claire Moran [2005].)

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Werner, Stephen. *The Comic Philosophes. Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Sade*. Birmingham : Summa Publications, 2002. 136 p.

Dans cet essai, Stephen Werner se donne pour but l'étude « [of] philosophe comic irony as it evolved from the early manner of Montesquieu and Voltaire into a later style consonant with Diderot and Sade » (p. 5). Chez les deux premiers philosophes, l'ironie resterait encore tributaire de "l'ordre et de la mesure classique", alors que les œuvres de Diderot ou Sade seraient informées, « driven by irony as a problematizing rather than conclusive mode and a view of comedy as ambiguous and open-minded » (p. 125). Autant est-on convaincu de la justesse de cette proposition – il y a bien eu en effet évolution puis rupture dans le "style philosophique" à mesure que le siècle s'avance, Sade parvenant, comme l'avait notamment déjà souligné Michel Foucault, au bout du discours et de la pensée classiques, à leur limite; autant cependant la démonstration que Stephen Werner entreprend de nous donner nous laisse quelque peu sur notre faim. Cela sans doute d'abord par un manque de fermeté terminologique, ce qu'il désigne comme "philosophe comic irony" recouvrant en fait toute une variété de stratégies, procédés ou genres comiques, et s'étendant même à différents modes de pensée et d'écriture fondés sur la dualité et les effets de relation, la mise en perspective, la distanciation, l'inversion, le dialogisme, voir la maïeutique. Cela aussi en raison de la manière dont l'auteur choisit de mener son étude.

Quatre chapitres, chacun consacré à un auteur : Montesquieu ("serene comedy"), Voltaire ("le comique atroce"), Diderot ("socratic comedy"), and Sade ("indifferent irony"), mais dans chaque chapitre, au lieu de s'attacher à un approfondissement des différentes catégories annoncées (certaines d'ailleurs assez réductrices notamment dans le cas de Voltaire), l'auteur entreprend au contraire une réinterprétation d'un choix d'œuvres de chaque auteur en fonction d'un présupposé : la plupart des œuvres majeures du 18e siècle, serait le lieu d'une bataille, « the battle [...] between irony as governed by restraint and decorum, and irony as connected with uncertainty of the 'romantic' » (p. 5).

La relecture de ces œuvres conduit Stephen Werner à s'aventurer sur différents chemins, souvent d'ailleurs intéressants en eux-mêmes, mais qui au lieu de concourir à démontrer l'hypothèse de départ, en distrait. L'argumentation de la thèse initiale se dissout dans l'analyse des œuvres. De nouvelles perspectives sont cependant suggérées, même si elles ne suffisent pas vraiment à rendre compte d'œuvres aussi riches et complexes que, par exemple, la *Religieuse*, le *Neveu de Rameau* ou le *Rêve de d'Alembert*. En s'interrogeant sur *La Religieuse* comme exemple de "gothic comedy"(« The interplay of the comic and the mournful [...] Diderot's version of the black comedy », p. 73), ou sur le *Neveu de Rameau* comme exemple de "socratic comedy" (« Socratic perspective is the secret to the *œuvre* », p. 125), Stephen Werner appelle notamment l'attention sur le rôle de Diderot dans l'histoire et l'évolution des conceptions esthétiques dans la seconde moitié du 18e siècle.

Dans la bibliographie, certes sélective, proposée à la fin du livre, on s'étonne de ne pas retrouver deux études à notre avis essentielles au sujet traité, l'essai brillant et décapant de Philippe Roger, *Sade. La Philosophie dans le pressoir*, dans lequelle la part de "gaieté" dans l'oeuvre de Sade, de cette ironie sadienne qui fait suite à "l'ironique insolence" de Voltaire et de Diderot, était déjà soulignée; ou l'un des livres incontournables pour toute réflexion sur l'ironie, l'essai éponyme de Vladémir Jankelevitch publié pour la première fois en 1964. Ce dernier s'interrogeait d'ailleurs déjà sur l'évolution des formes et des fonctions de l'ironie : « Mais pourquoi l'ironie, qui fut principe de lucidité, de self-contrôle et de détachement super-conscient, s'est-elle mise, chez les Romantiques, à célébrer l'orgie du chaos et la grande bacchanale de la confusion? » (*L'Ironie*. Paris : 1972, p. 152). La réponse à cette question reste sans doute bien à trouver dans la transformation des modes de pensée et d'expression au cours du 18e siècle, comme dans les différents facteurs qui ont permis, favorisé ou provoqué cette mutation.

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Marvick, Louis. *Waking the Face That No One Is: A Study in the Musical Context of Symbolist Poetics*. Rodopi: Amsterdam; New York, NY., 2004. 132 p.

Le titre de l'ouvrage de Marvick s'inspire d'un passage de Mallarmé sur la musique où Mallarmé prétend que la musique est comme « la face de l'idée » qui, elle (l'idée), est élargie vers l'obscur (p. 26). Le sous-titre de l'ouvrage, « étude du contexte musical de la poétique symboliste », indique mieux le contenu de l'ouvrage, mais il reste lui aussi un peu vague car dans cet ouvrage il s'agit surtout de la notion de représentation en musique, terme que Marvick semble vouloir éviter.

L'ouvrage de Marvick est en cinq parties qui traitent, dans l'ordre, d'une comparaison des idées de Wagner et de Mallarmé sur la musique, de la représentation en musique surtout, du « symbolisme » de deux pièces de théâtre (*Axël* de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et *Pelléas et Mélisande* de Maeterlinck), de la notion de synesthésie dans l'œuvre de René Ghil, et de la notion d'apocalypse chez le poète Mallarmé et le compositeur Scriabin. L'ouvrage comprend une bibliographie de dix pages et un index des noms. Il est bien recherché et présente des points intéressants. Il est clair et concis dans sa présentation, mais en un sens la concision même de l'ouvrage représente une faiblesse car certaines parties de l'ouvrage et certaines affirmations de l'auteur semblent mériter des développements plus importants.

Or, le sujet de l'ouvrage est difficile car les rapports ou les correspondances entre différentes formes artistiques semblent toujours résister aux efforts des chercheurs pour

les préciser. La période symboliste en littérature française semble attirer l'auteur de cet ouvrage parce que les symbolistes s'intéressent justement aux rapports entre les formes artistiques et au « mystère » de l'essence des choses. En plus, Marvick semble suivre, dans ce sens, les prédilections des auteurs dont il traite, ce qui explique pourquoi il évoque la musique et la théorie de Wagner dans un texte sur les symbolistes. Wagner a fait l'objet de plusieurs commentaires et études de la part des symbolistes et ses idées et ses œuvres ont eu une grande influence à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle. D'autres comparaisons sont pourtant moins évidentes. Après avoir comparé Wagner et Mallarmé, par exemple, Marvick met en parallèle le poète Mallarmé et le compositeur Scriabin parce que, paraît-il, ils s'opposent tous deux aux idées de Wagner sur la notion de l'unité de l'œuvre artistique. Là où Wagner voit les différents aspects de l'œuvre (musique, drame, texte, personnage) se fondre en une unité artistique, des artistes comme Mallarmé et Scriabin cherchent plutôt à faire abstraction des détails trop concrets ou réalistes pour laisser apparaître l'idée seule.

De même, le choix de drames à étudier au chapitre trois n'est pas expliqué. Le lecteur suppose alors que les pièces de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et de Maeterlinck illustrent bien le propos de Marvick. Ces deux auteurs, influencés par Wagner, ont lutté dans leurs compositions avec la représentation nécessaire d'une part, et le besoin de transcendance d'autre part. Au chapitre quatre on paraît changer de sujet car il n'est plus question de la représentation en musique en tant que telle. Il s'agit plutôt des théories de René Ghil sur la correspondance des couleurs et des voyelles. Et le lecteur de se demander alors pourquoi le chapitre quatre fait partie de l'ouvrage de Marvick, surtout étant donné que Marvick lui-même ne semble pas accorder de l'importance aux théories de Ghil. Et au chapitre 5 il est question de la notion d'apocalypse dans *Le Livre* de Mallarmé et le *Mysterium* de Scriabin. Il paraît que la notion d'apocalypse appartient en quelque sens au symbolisme. D'après Marvick, il s'agit en effet d'un aspect de l'esthétique symboliste (p. 105).

Mais c'est dans la perspective de l'ensemble que la concision de l'ouvrage semble en constituer une faiblesse. Marvick parle, par exemple, de « l'esthétique symboliste », mais il n'explique pas vraiment ce qu'il entend par ce terme. Il est vrai qu'il fait l'analyse de différents ouvrages « symbolistes », mais il ne cherche pas à élaborer ce que pourrait être cette esthétique. Il mentionne aussi la « doctrine symboliste » mais il ne présente pas cette « doctrine » sauf pour dire que selon les symbolistes l'activité « esthétique a l'essence pour but » (p. 111) – formule qui pourrait s'appliquer à bien des écoles – et pour noter que pour certains intuitifs le rapport entre la couleur et le son est le souvenir d'une unité originelle au delà des sens physiques (p. xx). Ce n'est pourtant pas clair que tous les symbolistes aient partagé ce point de vue. Qui plus est, Marvick prétend présenter un argument selon lequel un morceau de musique peut représenter tous les points de vue possibles car il n'en représente aucun de façon nécessaire. C'est-à-dire que chaque auditeur est libre de voir représenter ce qu'il veut par la musique. Pour représenter sa pensée, Marvick utilise la figure d'un cercle dont le centre est partout et la circonférence nulle part – la figure est d'Empédocle (p. 83) – mais c'est moins un argument que Marvick développe que ce n'est une affirmation de sa part, affirmation qui d'ailleurs semble infirmer quelque peu ses efforts pour traiter justement de la représentation en musique.

Dans la mesure où l'ouvrage de Marvick nous présente une analyse d'œuvres artistiques où les rapports entre la musique et la représentation figurent dans les intentions des artistes, il s'agit d'une lecture intéressante, d'autant plus que la notion de représentation était centrale pour les symbolistes. Dans ce sens, l'ouvrage de Marvick semble se diriger au coeur de leurs préoccupations. Mais somme toute on a l'impression qu'il existe un certain décousu entre les différentes parties de l'ouvrage, et on n'est pas

étonné de lire dans la préface que plusieurs parties de l'ouvrage ont déjà fait l'objet de publications sous forme d'article, notamment les chapitres quatre et cinq.

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Pugh, Anthony R. *The Growth of A la recherche du temps perdu: a chronological examination of Proust's manuscripts from 1909 to 1914.* Volume I: 1909-1911 (376 p.). Volume II: 1911-1914 (825 p.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.

Quiconque s'intéresse à la génèse complexe d'*A la recherche du temps perdu,* la grande oeuvre en polypier de Marcel Proust, trouvera dans les deux volumes d'Anthony Pugh intitulés en anglais *The Growth of A la recherche du temps perdu* ample matière à revisiter l'oeuvre de l'écrivain. L'objectif de cette étude consiste à débrouiller plus en profondeur l'écheveau des unités individuelles, pour parodier les propos de Pugh dans son introduction, afin de mettre à jour la nature immanente d'un texte en période d'intense gestation. Dans sa conclusion, Pugh reprend le contraste du programmatique et de l'immanent, déjà introduit par Marion Schmid dans *Processes of Literary Creation* (1998) Dans cet examen chronologique des manuscrits de Proust écrits entre 1909 et 1914, Pugh, en grand textologue, révèle un talent sûr de détective littéraire infatigable pour traduire des remarques de Falconer dans son préambule.

Ecrire le dédale de l'oeuvre notamment à partir du labyrinthe des cahiers, des divers manuscripts dactilographiés et de la correspondance, de tous les avant-textes, ressuscite l'exercice de Borges de reconstruire la bibliothèque de Babel ou le registre central dans l'oeuvre de Saramago. Et pourtant, de même que dans Babel et toujours d'après Borges, la librairie imaginaire est illimitée quoique périodique. La répétition du même désordre devient elle-même ordre, dans une nouvelle sphère où le chaos a du sens et par le biais duquel on pourra retrouver la grande unité perdue de l'oeuvre. Pugh s'attache lui-même à restituer l'ordre du chaos ordinal. L'on peut de fort droit appliquer aux travaux de Pugh les remarques capitales que Proust fit au sujet de l'acte psychologique original, celui de la lecture: elle constitue selon Proust (*Pastiches et mélanges*) une "incitatrice dont les clefs magiques nous ouvrent au fond de nous-mêmes la porte des demeures où nous n'aurions pas su pénétrer. . ." En composant cette étude le lecteur a vite le sentiment que Pugh est muni d'un jeu de clefs extraordinaire.

La lecture quoique fructueuse n'entraîne pas pour autant même chez les plus avides spécialistes et autres familiers une lecture ininterrompue et fluide. Le lecteur devra procéder lentement et respecter les intermittences de Proust l'écrivain, où le rythme de la progression narrative procède souvent de manière cyclique ou même cyclothymique et nerveuse. Mais de plus, comme Pugh le souligne ailleurs dans son introduction, chaque cycle contient lui-même deux ou trois différents mouvements par un jeu constant d'inclusion à la manière d'un palimpseste. A la fin, toutes les parties sont converties en une même substance, ces unités sont finalement devenues réfléchissantes, tout ce qui était différent a été converti et absorbé, pour parodier Proust lui-même commentant le style de Flaubert.

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Mauriac, François. *Thérèse Desqueyroux*. Translated by Raymond N. MacKenzie. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield [A Sheed & Ward Book], 2005. pp. 145.

In the very first chapter, the reader is struck in the course of two sentences by the talent and the weakness of the latest English translator of François Mauriac's 1927 novel *Thérèse Desqueyroux*. Thérèse leaving the court house thinks of her grand mother Julie Bellade whose disappearance from the family's photo albums foreshadows for Thérèse her own ultimate fate. Quite inexplicably, MacKenzie calls the grand mother not Julie Bellade but Ballade. Yet in the same passage, he masterfully translates Mauriac's description of this mysterious woman whose name he does not get quite right as Thérèse tries to imagine "le visage inconnu de Julie Bellade, sa grand-mère maternelle—inconnue," that is, "the face of Julie Ballade [sic], the face she had never seen of the grandmother she had never known" (29). MacKenzie nicely varies the participles "seen" and "known" while retaining the repetition of "inconnu/inconnue" by repeating the adverb "never." For some reason, he has suppressed the idea of the maternal relationship between Thérèse and Julie Bellade.

Were the only errors those related to proper names, either modified in spelling or printed without their required accents—Vilmeja for Vilméja, Pedemay for Pédemay (unpronounceable in French with two unaccented e's separated by only a single consonant) and ditto for writing Azevedo for Azévédo—one might have been able to laud MacKenzie's new translation. (He does always give Thérèse both of her accents). And even the translator's being snared by well-known French/English linguistic traps caused by what grammar books usually call "false friends" or "faux amis," that is, words which ought not be transliterated, does not happen too frequently. But, of course, errors like these should not have occurred: "prétendre" is not "to pretend," as MacKenzie renders it (page 31), but "to claim;" calling Azévédo "délicat" does not mean he is "delicate" (51) but rather "fussy" or "proper." Madame de la Trave says she will not "kiss" ("embrasser") Thérèse; she does not say as MacKenzie writes: "Don't ask me to embrace her" (111). Thérèse does not, in fact, want to "assist at the altar" (81) during one of the curate's weekday Masses, but only "be present at" or "attend" ("assister à sa messe"). And as she attends Sunday Mass with Bernard and her mother-in-law, separated from the rest of the congregation by a pillar, what she sees before her is not the "choir" (100). Mauriac wrote: "En face d'elle, il n'y avait que le choeur," that is, "Before her, there was only the sanctuary."

Absolutely incomprehensible is MacKenzie's decision to begin the thirteenth and final chapter of the novel with "One cold morning in March" (118) to translate Mauriac's "Un matin chaud de mars." It was clearly a warm March day. Likewise translating a description of Thérèse's father which reads "Cet anticlérical se montrait volontiers puribond" as "He was a nonbeliever and anticlerical, but always moderate and chaste" (66) erroneously equates French anticlericalism with non-belief by adding the gratuitous and unjustified noun "nonbeliever."

Throughout this latest translation of Mauriac's short novel—the first since Gerard Hopkin's 1947 version—there are a number of quite awkward English renderings of Mauriac's French original. And while infelicitous, these translation mishaps are not egregious errors. We will come to those soon enough. Instead of calling Thérèse a "young homebody," MacKenzie translates "enfant ménagère" bizarrely as "a child housewife" (45). The image is disturbingly comic. Bernard's pulse is described as "high" (37) rather than as "racing" which seems to be the correct English usage for the pulse, described in French as "agité." When Bernard, near the end of the novel, says that "La vie de garçon a du bon, d'ailleurs" he is not talking about "a man's life" (93), as

MacKenzie writes, but rather "the single life or the bachelor's life" he is about to resume once separated from Thérèse. Thérèse does not describe her sequestration at Argelouse as "this unending agony" (98) but as "these interminable death throes," a phrase which better conveys the meaning of Mauriac's "cette agonie interminable" and correctly reflects the eponymous heroine's wish for death. The awkwardness of the English "People become more endurable when we know we'll be leaving them" (116) is evident even before checking to see that the original is "insupportables" and knowing that "bearable" is what people are, when they are not unbearable.

At least four passages about Bernard, where MacKenzie takes liberties or simply misconstrues the French text, detract from the full picture of Thérèse Desqueyroux's husband who is the victim of her poisoning attempts. During their honeymoon stop in Paris, Bernard comments on the priceyness of the Rhine wine they drink at dinner in the Bois de Boulogne. In the original, he exclaims: "Pristi, ils ne le donnent pas." Yet rather than translating the shock of this well-to-do provincial aghast at Parisian prices as "Geezus! They're not giving it away." MacKenzie somehow manages to construe the sentence as meaning "Back home, you can't get this" (53). To preserve the undercurrent of anti-Semitism running through the novel, MacKenzie ought to have handled Bernard's remark about Azévédo that "Tous les Juifs se valent" not as the unfinished declaration "All Jews together are worth. . . (54), but as a bigoted "Jews, they're all the same."

The narrator notes, as Thérèse approaches Argelouse to confront Bernard as her trial for attempted murder ends for want of sufficient evidence, that she ought to recall how brutally Bernard had treated Anne who, like Thérèse, went against the interests of the family. Yet MacKenzie writes that "Thérèse was wrong to seek the memory of what had passed between brother and sister" (78). Mauriac did not write that at all, but "Thérèse a tort de chasser le souvenir. . . ." ("Thérèse was wrong to dismiss the memory. . . "). Finally, the full significance of Bernard's walking behind the priest in the Corpus Christi procession is lost when the translator writes that "Bernard was almost the only one walking behind the canopy" (83). Bernard, according to Mauriac, was "presque le seul homme" (almost the only man), in this rural society where men often avoid religious duties, doing his duty with hypocritical ostentation.

Some of the novel's passages get quite jumbled as they cross the Franco-American linguistic divide. Of three examples, I will save the most jumbled for last. Bernard's mother suggests to her husband Victor de la Trave that they take Anne away with them on a trip to separate her from Azévédo with whom she has become infatuated. Mauriac has M. de la Trave react to the idea this way: "Oh! un voyage avec nous. . . Rien, rien!" répondait-il à sa femme qui, un peu sourde, l'interrogeait. "Qu'est-ce que tu as dit?" which MacKenzie reads as "Oh! A trip with us—no never!" His wife, a little deaf, asked, "What did you say?" (59). The "no never" followed by the period for "Rien, rien" makes M. de la Trave much less of a doormat than Mauriac makes him in the original, where he simply mutters: "Oh! A trip with us. . . Nothing, nothing!" he said to his wife who, because she was a bit deaf, asked, "What did you say?"

Mac Kenzie's translation also suggests that Bernard and Thérèse live in separate houses as Thérèse goes ahead with her plans to do what the family wants to end Anne's liaison with Azévédo. MacKenzie writes this indecipherable sentence: "Bernard had agreed to stay not with her but at Thérèse's house, which was more comfortable" (64). Mauriac's quite clear statement is that "Bernard avait consenti à ne pas habiter sa maison, mais celle de Thérèse, plus confortable" ("Bernard had agreed to live not in his house but in Thérèse's which was more comfortable").

Finally, Thérèse's drole reflections on Anne's future with her fiancé, the stiff and unattractive Deguilhem, gets totally lost in a translation meltdown. According to Mauriac, Thérèse thinks this: "Anne oubliera son adolescence contre la mienne, les

caresses de Jean Azvédédo, dès le premier vagissement du marmot que va lui faire ce gnome, sans même enlever sa jaquette." Rather than saying, as Thérèse does, that "Anne will forget her youth with Thérèse and Azévédo's caresses as soon as she hears the first cry of the kid that this gnome will give her, without even taking off his coat," MacKenzie writes this howler: "Ann will forget her adolescence, and mine, and the caresses of Jean Azevedo, the minute she hears the first wails of her little gnome, more quickly than taking off her coat" (113).

Other passages too lose the full import of their meaning in the new English version. The soon-to-be wed Thérèse feels what she thinks is a sense of peace but which the narrator sees as "l'engourissement de ce reptile dans son sein." The powerful and ominous image of this "torpor of the serpent in her breast" becomes for MacKenzie disconnected from Thérèse when he calls it "the torpor of this reptile in its skin" (46). At her wedding, Thérèse is chagrined to see Anne smiling, for according to Thérèse they are that very night to be separated permanently and most profoundly because of Thérèse's impending loss of her virginity when she will become like all other married women of her class. According to MacKenzie "Thérèse was going to join the troops of those who have served" (47). Mauriac's word "troupeau," that is "herd," expresses much better Thérèse's view of the docile uniformity of married women.

The key moment of the novel after which Thérèse begins the slow poisoning of Bernard is translated to convey the exact opposite of what Mauriac wrote. Thérèse sees Bernard drinking a double dose of his arsenic-based Fowler drops but, in a heat induced stupor, she does not think of saying anything at all to warn him. "Il avale d'un coup le remède sans qu'abrutie de chaleur, Thérèse ait songé à l'avertir qu'il a doublé sa dose habituelle." MacKenzie's version says this: "Thérèse thought of warning him that he had doubled his usual dose, while he went on to drink it all off at one gulp" (84).

The themes of religion and sexuality pervade this novel. MacKenzie duly notes their importance in his Introduction, where, it must be said, he overstates the role of religion in calling Mauriac's novel "saturated in a deep, searching Catholicism" (3). He adds that "a repressed lesbianism. . . survives into the novel's final form, though it is no longer the single key to [Thérèse's] character, and perhaps not even among the more important ones" (3-4). Lesbianism, however, *is* an important key to her character but, as we shall see, MacKenzie's misreadings obscure and thus negate its role.

In his translation, MacKenzie fails to translate one short phrase which shows that Thérèse Desqueyroux, just before her attempt at suicide, makes an unmistakable act of faith. Unsure that death will lead to nothingness, she formulates a prayer in which she takes a leap of faith, as hypothetical "si" gives way to the believer's "puisque" and "il" becomes a reverential "Il":

> *S'il existe* cet Etre (et elle revoit, en un bref instant, la Fête-Dieu accablante, l'homme solitaire écrasé sous une chape d'or, et, cette chose qu'il porte des deux mains, et ces lèvres qui remuent, et cet air de douleur); *puisqu'Il existe*, qu'Il détourne la main criminelle avant que ce soit trop tard; —et si c'est sa volonté qu'une pauvre âme aveugle franchisse le passage, puisse-t-Il, du moins, accueillir avec amour ce monstre, sa créature. (my emphases)

MacKenzie not only fails to use the small letter/capital letter shift (il > Il so that he > He), but he fails to translate the crucial phrase "puisqu'Il existe" ("since He exists") at all, thus changing the entire nature of Thérèse's prayer. All MacKenzie writes is:

> If He [sic] exists, the Being (and she saw again the oppressive Corpus Christi procession, the solitary man crushed under the cope of gold, and the thing he carried in his two hands, and his moving lips, and that air of sorrow)—[*words missing here*] then let Him stop my criminal hand before it's too late. And if

> it's His will that a poor blind soul crosses through this passageway, may He at least receive this monster, His creature, with love. (99)

Early in the novel, Thérèse tries to explain why she ever married Bernard. One of her reasons, she says, was her desire to become a part of Bernard's bourgeois family: "'elle se casait'; elle entrait dans un ordre." Now there are two problems with the way MacKenzie handles these reasons. He writes that "'she settled down,' she entered into an order of life" (45). "She settled down" is a fine rendition of "elle se casait" but when Thérèse uses the very same expression in her final conversation with Bernard, the translator changes the translation so that she now says she was happy "to tie the knot" (122). Repetition of key phrases is crucial in this novel and certainly Thérèse's formulaic explanation for marrying needs to be repeated verbatim. Furthermore, to translate "un ordre" as "an order of life" seems strange. Mauriac is surely playing on the idea of a religious order with rules and strictures and discipline. These are aspects of family life that one part of Thérèse's personality was seeking. "An order of life" hardly suggests any of this, if it means or suggests anything at all.

The major and most egregious flaw in this new translation of *Thérèse Desqueyroux* involves those passages which reveal the nature of Therèse's sexual fantasies. Not one of the love objects in any of these reveries is gender specific. MacKenzie mistranslates these passages and by so doing makes Thérèse's thoughts heterosexual. They are not! And it is the ambiguous nature of her sexual fantasies which, along with her extravagant attachment to Anne, suggest a latent homosexuality and explain, in part at least, the enigma that is Thérèse. The first two of these imaginings occur during successive confrontations in the garden at Saint-Clair between Thérèse and Anne de la Trave, her husband's half-sister, with whom Thérèse has been intimate since childhood and whose amorous liaison with Jean Azévédo she has recently decided to frustrate. Reacting to Anne's inability to describe clearly Azévédo's personality, Thérèse muses on the effect passion would have on her own powers of observation and description: "Moi, songeait Thérèse, la passion me rendrait plus lucide; rien ne m'échapperait de l'être dont j'aurais envie." While there is nothing particularly unusual about Thérèse's use here of "l'être," ("the being") upon reflection, "le garçon" ("the boy"), which she uses several sentences earlier to refer to Azévédo, or "l'homme" ("the man") might be felt in this context to be *le mot juste*. While one instance of the use of the noun "être" could be explained as a stylistic avoidance of the banal, its systematic use to the absolute exclusion of any sexually precise noun is worth noting. So it is, in a second garden conversation following hard upon the first, that Thérèse, who has begun to arouse Anne's anxiety about Azévédo's commitment to her, reflects:

> Qu'il doit être doux de répéter un nom, un prénom qui désigne *un certain être* auquel on est lié par le coeur étroitement! La seule pensée qu'*il* est vivant, qu'*il* respire, qu'*il* s'endort, le soir, la tête sur *son* bras replié, qu'*il* s'éveille à l'aube, que *son* jeune corps déplace la brume. . . . (my emphases)

Much later during her long sequestration at Argelouse she fills her time with daydreams of other lives she might lead. She sees herself in Paris declining a young man's repeated invitations to dine, for her evenings are never free, and with reason:

> *Un être* était dans sa vie grâce auquel tout le reste du monde lui paraissait insignifiant; *quelqu'un* que personne de son cercle ne connaissait; *une créature* très humble, très obscure; mais toute l'existence de Thérèse tournait autour de ce soleil visible pour son seul regard, et dont sa chair seule connaissait la chaleur. Paris grondait comme le vent dans les pins. Ce corps contre son corps,

> aussi léger qu'*il* fût, l'empêchait de respirer; mais elle aimait mieux perdre le souffle que *l'*éloigner. (my emphases)

A mere five paragraphs farther on, she conjures up another scene. In this one too, her lover—now described simply with the indefinite "quelqu'un" ("someone")—is again sexually undifferentiated:

> Thérèse, assise, reposait sa tête contre une épaule, se levait à l'appel de la cloche pour le repas, entrait dans la charmille noire et *quelqu'un* marchait à ses côtés qui soudain l'entourait des deux bras, l'attirait. (my emphasis)

It is quite startling that in the heretofore standard English translation of the novel by Gerard Hopkins, first published in 1947 and entitled *Thérèse* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux [Noonday paperback edition], 1972), the first three of these incontrovertibly ambiguous passages are systematically resolved. The ambiguous "être" is made male:

> 'Passion,' thought Thérèse, 'would make me clearer sighted. I should take note of every detail in the *man* whom I desired.' (51, my emphasis)

> How sweet it must be to say a name over and over, the pet name of the *man* to whom one's heart is tightly bound!—merely to think *he* is alive and breathing; that *he* sleeps at night with *his* head upon *his* arm, and wakes at dawn; that *his* young body plunges through the morning mist. . . . (53, my emphases)

> Someone was in her life who made the rest of the world seem meaningless: someone completely unknown to the rest of her circle, someone very obscure and very humble. But her whole existence revolved about this sun which she alone could see, the heat of which she only could feel upon her flesh. Paris rumbled like the sound of the wind in the pines. The sensation of her companion's body pressed against her own, light though the contact was, hindered her breathing. But rather than push *him* away she would stop breathing altogether. (109, my emphasis)

MacKenzie, who handles the first quote better than his 1947 predecessor, writes this:

> For me, thought Thérèse, passion would make me more, not less lucid. If I desired someone, not one detail would escape me. (61)

In the second, he falters and, like Hopkins, resolves "il" and "son" which refer to "être" as "he" and "his:"

> How sweet it would be to repeat someone's name, a first name that designated a certain person to whose heart one was intimately tied! One's only thought being that *he* lived, that *he* breathed, that *he* slept that night *his* head resting on *his* bent arm, that *he'd* awaken at dawn, that *his* young body's movements would displace the fog. . . . (63 my emphases)

In the third passage, "il" and the object pronoun "l'" refer to "corps," yet MacKenzie translates them as masculine. He even begins the sentence, not with "This body" ("Ce corps"), but "His body:"

> His body against hers, so light, took her breath away; but she would rather lose her breath entirely than be away from him. (104, my emphases; the last words should, of course, read ". . . rather than *push* it away.")

And finally, while Hopkins kept his translation of the final passage gender neutral, MacKenzie does not:

> Thérèse, sitting up, rested her head on *his* shoulder and arose when the clock sounded for dinner, entering into the shady arbor, and someone walking alongside her, suddenly put *his* arm around her, drawing her close. (106, my emphases)

The pattern of ambiguity in the French original—albeit subtle in context—can hardly be accidental or without import. It is, in fact, highly significant and suggestive, for in the sexual realm, as in the motivational, Thérèse, it seems clear, is incapable of absolute honesty with herself. A repressed lesbianism, patently clear in the French original, is subverted in the newest English translation. It is as if the translator was playing at duplicating Maurice Chevalier-style English: "This car, she is very nice." But instead of the quaint Gallic flavor of the cabaret singer, MacKenzie's distortions transform and falsify the very personality of Mauriac's heroine.

When one critic, in his blurb on the back cover of the new MacKenzie translation of *Thérèse Desqueyroux*, states glowingly that "A new generation of readers in the English-speaking world will be able to have a direct, lively, and utterly reliable interaction with Mauriac's great novel," one has to wonder whether the writer who offers such a testimonial has bothered to read the translation he calls "utterly reliable." It is, alas, very far from reliable.

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Frances M. Edge. *Vercors: Le Silence de la mer*. London: Grant & Cutler Ltd., 2004. 86p.

This slim volume is one of a growing number of brief introductory studies published by Grant & Cutler in their series *Critical Guides to French Texts* (www.grantandcutler.com). A primary objective of this collection is to introduce important works of French literature to interested readers, and with this in mind the critical perspective adopted is usually quite traditional, often with a detailed consideration of the genesis of the work in question followed by a close reading of the text. In this instance the first part of the guide (the 38 pages after the introduction) is concerned with the "Context of Publication," and the remaining 27 pages, in part two, with a literary discussion of "Facets of the Text."

While to some it might appear that these numbers should be reversed, the historical circumstances surrounding the composition and initial publication of *Le Silence de la mer* are so full of incident and engrossing – and so relevant to the plot of the novella itself – that the author is justified in her detailed discussion of Jean Bruller's early career as an illustrator, his social and political views, and the personal experiences during the German occupation of his country which first inspired this story and led to his choice of Vercors as a *nom de plume*. His complicated war-time association with the bookseller and member of the Resistance Pierre de Lescure is also described, as is their foundation together of the clandestine publishing house which has long outlasted the occupation, *Les Editions de Minuit*. The mixed reception the novella received when it was first published secretly on 20 February 1942 is also considered: hailed by de Gaulle and reprinted in London for distribution in occupied France, it was condemned by others as the work of an *agent provocateur* for its suspiciously elegant binding and overly sympathetic portrait of a German officer; and in the time that lapsed between the completion of the work (during the summer of 1941) and its distribution in print, the German occupation had become so exacting and brutal that the example of passive resistance which lies at the heart of the story was deemed to be hopelessly inadequate.

Why this story has nevertheless continued to attract readers to the present day – it is still available as a *Livre de Poche classique* – is the question that Dr. Edge proceeds to

answer in the second part of her study through a consideration of the literary merit of the work which, as she convincingly demonstrates, is not inconsiderable. Central to the character of this novella is Vercors' particular manipulation of the narrative voice: the reflective old uncle who dispassionately records details of the formal (but increasingly revealing) evening visits that the cultivated German officer billeted in his house pays him and his young niece is *not* an omniscient narrator. Like Joseph Conrad whom he so much admired, Vercors has constructed "an artistry of suggestion, clues, ambiguity, in which meaning is conveyed and secrets are betrayed by gestures, facial expressions, and silences" (Edge, 54). It is ultimately the responsibility of the reader to determine the significance of these actions and the depth of the emotion which lies behind them, masked as it is by the rigid self-control that the three characters maintain almost throughout. This deceptive calm, of course, was what inspired the title of the work: "la mer, ... si calme et silencieuse sous le ciel bleu, n'en dissimule pas moins la mêlée des bêtes dans les profondeurs, qui s'entre-déchirent, s'entre-dévorent" (Vercors quoted by Edge, 79). Also discussed in this second section of the study are those particular aspects of the style which, given the limits imposed by the brevity of the novella and the perspective of the narrative voice, make an especial contribution to this story's ultimate impact: the maximal suspense achieved through the expression of time, the constant emphasis on visual description (details of colour, shape, posture, movement), the suggestive use of simile and metaphor subtly to enrich the principal themes, and the evocative description of sound in this story where the near complete silence of the narrator and his niece is evidence of their patriotic protest... and the beginning of a battle of wills.

This slim volume is concluded with a useful four-page bibliography. Vercors wrote more than one story, and readers interested in them as well should not neglect two other interesting guides published in the recent past: William Kidd's *'Le Silence de la mer' et autres récits: a critical introduction to the wartime writing* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow French & German Publications, 1991), and Jean-Pierre Cresseaux's *Le Silence de la mer* (Paris: Ellipses [Résonances], 1999), both of which extend the discussion beyond the author's most celebrated work. All on its own, however, this well-written study by Frances Edge provides a thorough introduction to Vercors and his *oeuvre de circonstance* which is still read today, not only because the story is so engaging, but because its essential drama and ambiguity reflects the social and political climate of France herself during those dark and distant years.

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Holland, Michael. *Ionesco: La Cantatrice Chauve* and *Les Chaises.* Critical Guides to French Texts 133. London: Grant & Cutler LTD, 2004. 86 p.

In his analysis of Ionesco's *La Cantatrice Chauve* and *Les Chaises*, Michael Holland situates these two well known plays in their literary and historical contexts, and then shows how they broke new theatrical ground through their manipulation of language. Although Holland does make some interesting observations, his book, which is part of the Grant & Cutler's "Critical Approaches to French Texts" series, occasionally falls into generalizations, and does not avail itself of various critical approaches that would have been useful to his analysis.

In his introduction, Holland links Ionesco to the nineteenth century, claiming, "The individual who finally emerged as a dramatist in 1950 was someone whose emotional circumstances were exactly analogous to those that I have described as typical of writers of that period" (12). While it is interesting to consider the playwright's psychological

motivations for his work, Holland's brief resume of the Zeitgeist of the late 1800s is too vague, as is his summary of Ionesco's relationship to other literary movements of early twentieth century. His distinctions among silence as a nineteenth-century phenomenon, meaninglessness as symptomatic of Dada, and language "breakdown" as unique to Ionesco seem too simple, particularly in light of dramatic authors like Jarry's *Ubu* or even Genet's *Notre Dame des Fleurs*, which preceded Ionesco and whose word games involve all three categories.

Holland's reconsideration of *La Cantatrice's* structure into ten sequences based around language, rather then eleven scenes based around the action of the play, is novel and logical, although it does mean that he gives short shrift to the play's didascalia. (This is often problem with analyses of theatre as literature, which tend to regard scenic indications as merely "supporting" the dialogue, instead of meriting equal consideration.) Unfortunately, however, Holland seems to see the text exclusively through his linguistically focused lens. He argues that the breakdown of language is at the service of an "explosive theatrical experience," and that this is achieved by "setting language adrift from its mooring" (29). He frequently gives examples of instances in the play "where no more sense can be made," citing for example impossibility of having numerous characters called "Bobby Watson," or the lack of distinction between the "poireaux" and the "onignons" in Mrs. Smith's soup (32 and 29, respectively). Contrary to his assertion, however, these and other moments in Ionesco's texts are not devoid of sense; they instead point out the slippery nature of language, since it is indeed possible to have more than one person called Bobby Watson, and since, to a gourmand at least, a soup can have too many leeks and not enough onions. Although if interpreted literally, the language itself may not seem to make sense, Ionesco is commenting upon certain moeurs (like the fungibility of names, or the specificity of ingredients), and also about language's unstable relationship to the things that it designates. He is pointing out the difference between the sign and the signifier, which of course naturally calls to mind the study of semiotics. Holland never brings up Saussure, Derrida or any other theorists in his essay, even though he some of what he describes and some of the vocabulary that he uses seem to make direct reference to their work.

The second half of Holland's book is devoted to his analysis of *Les Chaises*. He differentiates this play from *La Cantatrice* by saying that "language will not be smashed to smithereens this time, but left to disintegrate and fade. Emotion, instead of being confined within separate individuals, will be brought out into the open and involve others" (58). Although this implied opposition of language and action ignores the communicative possibilities of both broken down language and the metaphorical chairs, Holland's analysis is convincing, if over-insistent on the tragic emotional content of the play. (He claims that both this work and indeed "all of Ionesco's theatre [...] is not funny, and is not meant to be funny" (16), which takes into account neither Freudian or Bergsonian definitions of humor, nor the interpretive possibilities afforded by a play's *mise en scène*.)

Michael Holland's reading of Ionesco's plays constructs a narrative arc that begins with the works' literary and historical origins and continues through their relationship to each other. There are, however, instances where the author seems to have read almost "too closely," thereby ignoring other equally plausible interpretations that actually spring to mind from his descriptions of the text. He also seems to disregard work done by other literary critics that would further refine his analysis. The absence of other theories does not lend his text a simplicity that would make it appropriate for a lay audience, however, because it lacks the *points de repère* that might be useful to a reader who was less familiar with Ionesco's work.

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Hart, Kevin and Geoffrey H. Hartman, eds. *The power of contestation: perspectives on Maurice Blanchot.* Baltimore: The Johns Hhopkins University Press. Baltimore: 2004. (222 p.)

Y compris pour ce rare lecteur déjà initié aux écrits de Maurice Blanchot, tant son obscure oeuvre romanesque que sa réflexion théorique sur la nature profonde de l'art où écrire signifie essentiellement mourir dans un espace intérieur qui se situe "en dehors du royaume du Jour" d'après Levinas, cette collection érudite d'essais réunis par Kevin Hart et Geoffrey H. Hartman est indispensable. Ce livre permettra de mieux saisir le parcours complexe de l'écrivain: la question du pouvoir de la contestation dans l'expérience d'un "ne pas", le non-positif de la pensée blanchotienne. Cette compilation originale regroupe huit critiques de perspective différente mais conduit sous l'égide d'une même démarche, tel orphées à la recherche d'une eurydice. Le volume commence par une brillante étude liminaire attribuée aux deux mêmes éditeurs. A la suite du *Sur Maurice Blanchot* de Emmanuel Levinas ou d'ouvrages subséquents par Françoise Collin, Chantal Michel et encore Michael Holland et Kevin Hart, ces essais écrits en anglais donnent un regard original et fort pénétrant sur Maurice Blanchot. Le fil conducteur sera dès lors l'image ou plutôt l'expérience de la contestation, ici du langage et de ses formes littéraires. Aux dires même de Maurice Blanchot écrivain de *Thomas l'obscur*: "Il y a, pour tout ouvrage, une infinité de variantes possibles . . . entre la figure et ce qui est ou s'en croit le centre, l'on a raison de ne pas distinguer, chaque fois que la figure complète n'exprime elle-même que la recherche de cet imaginaire.", pour définir l'ambiguïté profonde de la vie et de la mort de son persomage en termes spatiaux, la problématique du "il" et du "je" en plein carnage narratif. La littérature pour Blanchot est bien un exercice fondé sur la différence, d'où la grande influence que celui-ci exerça sur la critique moderne, et la reconnaissance de Georges Bataille chez qui l'on trouve aussi ce manifeste de la contestation. Ce sens de la contestation ira plus loin que la simple poursuite d'un conflit ou en somme d'un système oppositionnel, mais dans le sens plus problématique et philosophique de la *litis contestatio*, la question du témoin comme tiers d'après Derrida. Il s'agit là d'une critique soutenue engagée par le langage sur le langage, d'un projet qui revêt tant chez Bataille que Blanchot l'allure d'une révolution qui commence par l'expérience intérieure du je sais qu'un homme ne saura jamais rien.

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Amanieux, Laureline. *Amélie Nothomb: L'Éternelle affamée.* Paris Albin Michel, 2005. 366 p.

Voici le premier ouvrage critique en français entièrement consacré à l'oeuvre et la personne d'Amélie Nothomb. Auteur d'origine belge, née en 1967, Nothomb est relativement bien connue au grand public français en raison du succès commercial de ses livres, mais l'analyse de son oeuvre n'est qu'à ses débuts. La présente étude de Laureline Amanieux vient donc poser une des premières pierres à l'édifice que sera la critique littéraire nothombienne en consolidant certains savoirs et en ouvrant d'autres pistes de lecture pour de futurs chercheurs.

L'Éternelle affamée examine les oeuvres de Nothomb de son premier roman, *Hygiène de l'assassin* (1992), jusqu'à son plus récent, *Biographie de la faim* (2004), en passant par des nouvelles peu connues et un nombre impressionnant d'interviews avec

l'auteur, dont plusieurs avec Amanieux elle-même. Puisque Nothomb a publié plusieurs livres d'inspiration autobiographique qui mettent en scène différents moments de sa vie, Amanieux structure son étude autour d'un examen de l'évolution de la personne et des personnages nothombiens dans le temps -de la petite enfance jusqu'à la maturité- tout en approfondissant les questions éminemment pertinentes à la compréhension de son oeuvre: le dédoublement, la culpabilité, les relations entre le beau et le laid, la nourriture et le corps. *L'Éternelle affamée* se compose ainsi de quatre parties. "Le Temps de l'innocence" examine l'univers japonais et chinois de l'écrivain, la venue au langage, et retrace aussi la généalogie belge de Nothomb avec d'amples propos recueillis auprès de sa mère et son père diplomate. "Le Temps de la culpabilité" souligne la fin de l'enfance, l'isolement psychologique et la lutte avec le corps. "Le Temps de la reconstruction" interroge la notion d'amitié, les influences littéraires et philosophiques de l'oeuvre, et fournit des détails précieux sur le mode d'écrire nothombien. Dans la quatrième partie, "Le Salut par les mots", Amanieux situe l'oeuvre, son succès et ses critiques dans un contexte français et international.

Cet ouvrage, où se mêle sciemment biographie, réflexion philosophique et réception critique, ne s'adresse pas uniquement à un public universitaire. À la différence d'un ouvrage à but scientifique unique, *L'Éternelle affamée* cherche à entretenir un rapport avec un public plus populaire, lequel a légitimement envie d'entendre surtout l'auteur discourir sur son écriture. Pourtant, c'est précisément le public universitaire qui trouvera dans *L'Éternelle affamée* – et dans sa riche bibliographie – de quoi nourrir ses recherches pour des années à venir.

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Pautrot, Jean-Louis, and Christian Allègre, eds. *Pascal Quignard, ou le noyau incommunicable. Etudes françaises* 40.2. Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2004. 136 p.

Brouillette, Marc André, ed. *Le Corps des mots. Lectures de Jean Tortel. Etudes françaises* 40.3. Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2004. 175 p.

Full of new insights into two major French writers, these two special issues do their subjects proud. In many ways Tortel and Quignard followed opposite trajectories insofar as Quignard's essays and stories are increasingly cited in the press and by scholars, whereas Tortel remained until his death in 1993 one of France's highly respected yet little-known poets (outside his faithful circle of readers and friends that included Ponge and Guillevic). However, despite his growing reputation, Quignard is still not widely understood, just as Tortel's work calls out for a broader public. The issues of *Etudes françaises* devoted to the two writers go a long way towards correcting these oversights by unearthing what is original and far-reaching in their books: Tortel's combining the body's sympathy for rhythms with its proximity to natural life, Quignard's attempts at giving voice to what all languages presupposed throughout the course of human history but could only distort as illusion. Both authors offer timely reminders of the fact that thoughts are always embodied, and that to understand them fully one must reunite them with the precise gestures used to express them.

Jean-Louis Pautrot has composed a model dossier on a contemporary writer. It opens with a short original text by Quignard, "La Métayère de Rodez," whose sparse yet incisive comments on "le noyau incommunicable" that haunts a 1777 legal deposition made in Rodez not only give the dossier its title but also tie the subsequent articles to a common quest: how can one characterize Quignard's voluminous work when the author

explicitly denies the capacity of his words (or anyone else's) to communicate what motivates great art? Bruno Blankeman looks for an answer in Quignard's use of the *petit traité*, a hybrid prose form that collects forgetten commonplace thoughts from the past, while juxtaposing and interpreting their dissonance. Contrary to the encyclopedic pretensions of large treatises, these *petit traités* explode all attempts to systematize and instead point to a basic obscurity of thought in action. Dominique Viart continues in a similar vein by examining the dialogue that Quignard sets up between different critical theories and types of narration such as legends, novels or folk-tales. The latter's fascination for early cultures leads him to sketch an archaeology of pre-rational drives that calls out to the modern reader. In her richly detailed discussion of Quignard's fictional narratives, Chantal Lapeyre-Desmaison examines the ways in which these works borrow certain terms from Lacanian psychoanalysis only to contest the primacy that such a theory gave to the symbolic. Her discussion of the ways in which certain objects and images disrupt the flow of thought by being a trace (or *agalma*) of a lost reality show Quignard's plots to clothe deeper, important insights. By examining the role of music in works ranging from the novel *Tous les matins du monde* to the essay *La Leçon de musique*, Jean-Louis Pautrot demonstrates Quignard's debt to Lévi-Strauss who had used music as the basis for his materialist definition of myth. Music, argues Pautrot, is Quignard's prime model for art since it advances no project but instead teaches us to listen to ourselves transfixed by a timeless trace. In the dossier's final essay Dominique Rabaté examines the author's preference for arts of persuasion over philosophy, and for singular facts over broad truths. The interview between Quignard and Pautrot that closes the volume illustrates this preference since the author deftly avoids such terms as "writer," "corpus," or "the human condition" and instead redirects our thinking towards the importance of reading over writing or of gender distinctions that occur in novels but not in fables or tales (where subjectivity is absent).

Marc André Brouillette's special issue on Tortel is a gold mine for any researcher of contemporary poetry written in French. Complementing Vincent Charles Lambert's 14-page bibliography of the poet's works and of criticism devoted to them are five stimulating and richly-documented studies of Tortel's writings on space, perception and verse. A long article by Nicholas Castin examines the importance of gardens as they appear throughout the poet's work, but especially in *Limites du corps*, underlining the fact that senses other than sight channel the earthy contact conveyed by the poems. Digging into the earth is echoed in Tortel's claim that new verse rhythms overturn and constantly rejuvinate our word patterns, as Suzanne Nash points out. Her article draws an important comparison between such rhythm-work, that rejects the idealist notion of inspiration, and the concept of "musicisme" that Jean Royère proposed in 1933, around the time when Tortel published his first poems. Marc André Brouillette's close reading of *Le Discours des yeux* that appeared in 1982 clarifies the important insights of Tortel's essay that predated better-known works such as Bernard Noël's *Journal du regard*. It also pinpoints the highly crafted exchange between seeing bodies and turning what one sees into verbal matter. Catherine Soulier focusses on "Spirale interne" and "La boîte noire" (from 1979 and 1983 respectively) to show that, with age and failing eyesight, Tortel turned his curiosity inwards in order to better comprehend "la batterie des organes." A continuity is thus traced between the poet-archaeologist's scrutiny of the earth, or its gardens, and his later self-examination. Jean-Luc Steinmetz reveals another dimension to the garden conceit by showing the influence of Mallarmé's "Prose (pour des Esseintes)" on works such as *Le Trottoir de trèfle* or Tortel's journal *Ratures des jours*. The extensive bibliograhy by V.C. Lambert underscores the importance of Tortel's work for understanding both the central role played by the *Cahiers du Sud* in mid-20th century French literary life and the materialist strain underpinning much post-surrealist French

poetry. Indeed the complete volume of *Le Corps des mots* is on a par with the special issues of *Action poétique* and *Europe* devoted to the poet's work and that appeared before his death.

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Carrière, Marie. *Writing in the Feminine in French and English Canada: A Question of Ethics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. 243 p.

Carrière's study of Canadian women writers centres on an intriguing and linguistically complex corpus, as two of these authors write in French, Nicole Brossard and France Théoret; two others in English, Di Brandt and Erin Mouré; and one, Lola Lemire Tostevin, writes in both French and English. Carrière focuses on texts by these women, as they all have several underlying common points: they have been influenced by postmodernism and poststructuralism; they incorporate a discourse centred on the female body, language, and intersubjectivity; and they are given to what Carrière refers to as a "self-conscious exploration and inscription of a distinctly feminist poetics" (4), in that their texts concern theories of both sexual difference and the maternal. Using an approach situated within literary and ethical studies, Carrière concentrates on the question of femininst ethics, which she defines as "the attempt to think female and maternal alterity, and relations between and among the sexes, outside the totality and assimilation of the self-same" (4).

This book is divided into four main sections, the first being a survey of both writing in the feminine, and critical literature by Irigaray, Lévinas and Ricœur. In Chapter one, the author explores the evolution of writing in the feminine as a literary phenomenon, comparing and contrasting its development in both French and English Canada. She traces the traditions on which it is based and its influences, as well critical theories and discussions by authors such as Derrida, which are crucial to an understanding of writing in the feminine. The author situates writing in the feminine within contemporary socio-political debates and notes that while *l'écriture au féminin* has played a major role within Quebec literature, writing in the feminine has gained only marginal status in English Canada. Chapter two, a discussion of theories relevant to an ethics of alterity, will be of great interest to scholars of literary theory and ethics. In the context of this study, Carrière notes that the definition of feminist ethics which she uses is based on Lévinas' post-humanist theories of the other, Ricœur's relational ethics, and Irigaray's ethics of sexual difference. She goes on to further explore these theories, as well as others by Kristeva and Lacan, applying them to a feminist ethics context, thus solidly setting the groundwork for the literary analyses which follow in subsequent chapters. She contends that an ethical concept of the other is a key element in interrelations, in language and in the writing process, and that a conscious theorizing of female selfhood and female alterity, which includes the mother-daughter relationship, is indispensable to any definition of writing in the feminine.

Having broadly explored the theoretical basis of writing in the feminine, Carrière moves on in Parts two and three to an individual analysis of each author, focusing her attention on the mother-daughter relationship as well as representations of the maternal other. Part two is dedicated to a reading of the mother-daughter relationship in works by Brossard (*L'amèr, ou le chapitre effrité*), Brandt (*Wild Mother Dancing, Questions I asked my mother*) and Théoret (*Bloody Mary, Une voix pour Odile, Nécessairement putain, Vertiges, Entre raison et déraison*), a relationship which she relates to Ricœur's theory of similitude. This mother-daughter relationship is ultimately based on love for the other, and Carrière contends that the (m)other is both a condition for selfhood and a

necessary element of the writing process. Through her reading of Brandt, the author extends this mother-daughter ethics to the broader realm of relationships between women in general, and she notes, referencing Irigaray and Kristeva, that for love between women to exist, women must love themselves as mothers.

In Part three, Carrière continues her exploration of maternalism as she considers the notion of « Mothertongues » in works by Mouré ("Poetry, Memory and the Polis," *Furious*, *Sheepish Beauty, Cilvilian Love*, *Domestic Fuel*) and Tostevin (*Color of her Speech*, *Double Standards*), highlighting the authors' complex approach to language and the maternal other within the context of Kristeva's semiotics and of Derrida's grammatology. In Chapter six, Carrière discusses Mouré's ethics of alterity in a Derridean context; she notes that the (m)other is central to Mouré's poetics and insists on the importance of the relationship between self, other, and language. Carrière also applies Derridean theory to Tostevin's writings and as she studies the notion of textual otherness and maternalism, underscores what she terms as Tostevin's "double discursivity" (116), since Tostevin, a French-Canadian, writes not only in her French mothertongue, but in English as well. Carrière thus posits bilingualism as being related to a poetics of alterity since it is from this discursive difference that the maternal other emerges in Tostevin's work.

Part four, entitled "Beyond Ethics," is a comparative study of relational ethics in the works of these five authors. While these writers attempt to put a relational ethics into practice, Carrière also points out moments when this concept fails. In the first chapter of Part four, she looks at female subjectivity and alterity in Théoret and Tostevin, and the second chapter concerns Brandt, Mouré and Brossard. Carrière examines various manifestations of relational ethics and points out the contradictions and complexities inherent in an ethics of intersubjectivity, in language, and in the writing process itself. Of particular interest is the fact that she regards relational ethics in these women's writings with a critical eye, as she not only signals the advantages and stronger points within relational ethics, but also notes the aspects in which ethics break down and fail for these writers, such as when a text (Brossard's *Le Désert mauve*, for example) proposes a feminist project which in the end turns out to be an impossible task.

Returning in her conclusion to the socio-political context noted in the introduction, Carrière reiterates her argument that the figure and reconfigurations of the maternal other offered by these five authors serve to challenge patriarchal and hierarchical constructs and to provide alternative viewpoints, based on a maternal model of relational ethics. Yet, far from considering these authors as having triumphed in their struggles against patriarchy, Carrière cautiously points out that although significant progress has been made by means of feminist writing, there are still battles to be fought and won, as evidenced by the efforts of women writers who continue to offer alternatives to the established order, as well as by the conflicts and tensions inherent within women's writing itself.

Although Carrière remains faithful to the original language of the texts she studies and quotes French-Canadian writers in French, this could potentially be a limiting factor in terms of accessibility for anglophone scholars of Quebec writers Brossard and Theoret, a difficulty which translations, provided in the endnotes, could serve to avoid. Nevertheless, Carrière's work is an astute, in-depth study of contemporary Canadian writing in the feminine, and is a solid contribution not only to the fields of Canadian and women's studies, but also to the ongoing dialogue between ethics and literature.

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