de cette "race", de même son attachement à ce continent était aussi idéologique, culturel" (26).

Une fois la découverte de l'Afrique et de la négritude faite à travers cette sorte de voyage initiatique en Europe, s'ouvrait la voie vers le voyage de retour marqué du sceau de la réparation et quelque peu stimulé par des circonstances d'ordre familial: "Lilyan choisit de revenir en Afrique parce qu'elle aimait ce continent. […] C'était "une vieille Congolaise, une fille de l'équateur, des forêts" (89). Gounongbé ajoute: "L'ont poussée vers ce continent après son séjour d'enfant, les soucis conjugaux, certainement ses recherches qui lui ouvraient les portes des universités africaines naissantes. Elle eut envie de participer à ce mouvement d'émancipation des Africains pour une nouvelle Afrique" (ibid.).

Le projet d'une "nouvelle Afrique", une "Afrique indépendante", celle d'un "avenir meilleur", une Afrique "libre, forte, digne, organisée," une Afrique "plus importante qu'un individu, plus importante qu'un enfant, plus importante qu'un mari, qu'un parent", (128) allait porter L. Kesteloot dans quatre pays: le Cameroun, le Mali, la Côte d'Ivoire, le Sénégal. À chaque choix ses renoncements, ce retour en Afrique coupait L. Kesteloot de sa famille dont elle ne partagera qu'à distance diverses épreuves, d'où le "complexe de culpabilité" qui l'accompagnera jusqu'à ses derniers jours. Et pour ajouter à l'amertume, ce sentiment d'échec: "Elle s'était donné cette mission de participer à une amélioration, à un bonheur africain, à une harmonie africaine. Puisque ces vœux ne se réalisaient pas, elle estimait donc avoir échoué" (128). Elle s'expliquait ainsi: "Mon échec est corrélatif à l'échec de la société africaine" (ibid.).

Échec ou tout simplement réalité des limitations de l'individu par rapport à certaines tâches, en l'occurrence celle de réparer, dans un parcours personnel, ce que des siècles d'esclavage et de colonisation ont contribué à détruire, une seule vérité s'impose. Le parcours de L. Kesteloot est bien à la mesure de ses vœux: "Elle aimerait bien qu'on retienne d'elle qu'elle avait été une pionnière […], découvreuse, défricheuse de nouveaux chemins, celle qui a creusé un sillon dans le domaine de la littérature africaine, écrite, puis orale…" (124). La lecture du livre d'Ari Gounongbé démontre clairement cette vérité. Aux curieux de découvrir sous tous ses angles le portrait de celle que certains surnommaient "la *pasionaria* de la négritude" (42), *Lilyan Kesteloot, Femme au cœur de la négritude* est le livre à lire.

Philippe Basabose *Memorial University*

***

Chalvon-Demersay, Sabine. *Le troisième souffle. Parentés et sexualités dans les adaptations télévisées*. Paris : Presses des Mines, Collection Sciences sociales, 2021. 252 p.

Sabine Chalvon-Demersay's fascinating book is a work of sociology and media history that often also doubles as an astute commentary of several 19th century popular novels: Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, Alexandre Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo* and Paul Feval's *Le Bossu* (*The Hunchback*). Fundamentally, this is a book about adaptation as critique, premised on the idea that each new adaptation is grounded in a critical reevaluation of, and an active engagement with, the original text. Chalvon-Demersay examines the profound transformations in family and parental structures that started in the early to mid-70s: the push for gender equality and the decline of "institutional" or "traditional" family ties – in other words, the liberalization and the liberation of the family unit (11). She is interested in how these major cultural, social and legal changes are reflected in adaptations of classic works of French fiction broadcast on television between the early 1970s and the early 2000s. The book attempts to reconstruct the logic of these

adaptations – in other words, the way in which screenwriters, directors and even actors reframed iconic characters to fit these new cultural contexts.

The book's introduction offers a thorough analysis of the "tension […] between what is plausible and what is acceptable" (12), in the context of a media format that has long been regarded as a pedagogical tool, particularly in the case of European, state-funded channels. The author explores the degree to which such adaptations both explore and promote these reconfigured family and gender roles – in other words, the degree to which television reacts to, and creates, social change.

The three selected literary works (with additional, shorter discussions of other texts, like Sue's *Mysteries of Paris*) are "novels of recognition" – stories whose hero, in pursuit of vengeance, conceals his true identity, builds himself a new genealogy and social status, only to reveal the truth in the end. At the same time, these protagonists also form highly unconventional, "elective" families. At their centre we find the relationship between a young girl and a much older man (Jean Valjean and Cosette, the Count of Monte-Cristo and Haydée, Aurore de Nevers and the Chevalier Lagardère) – a relationship that is initially presented as paternal but later reframed as erotic. They are also, finally, works that have been adapted multiple times (seven, in the case of *Les Misérables*). Chalvon-Demersay is thus able to pursue the logic of their transformations over the decades, and the tension between "what is acceptable from a moral perspective and what makes sense from a logical perspective" (21) Her analysis conceives of fiction (whether written or filmed) as being in a perpetual state of flux – a "transformative rather than conservative dimension." (21)

The first chapter establish a genealogy of these "novels of recognition," starting in the 1830s. It traces the creation of a protean, "bipolar" (27) hero who disappears for years and resurfaces, disguised, resourceful and vengeful. In his picaresque trajectory, he traverses all social strata in a "labyrinthine" (26) urban landscape – almost always Paris – populated by a mysterious underworld and crisscrossed by secret passages. After 1848, and the arrival of the Second Empire, this type of serialized fiction turns from revolutionary to conservative – the effect of ascendant bourgeois values and a devaluation of popular literature led in particular by Sainte-Beuve. But the question of identity and heritage remains crucial – a consequence, the book argues, of the advent of democratic institutions, which create "the need to trust the anonymous" (29).

By the 20th century however, such themes don't resonate much with the public, and televisual adaptations need to rethink the overall relevance of the original texts. Chalvon-Demersay proposes a transition from themes of identification (Who is the hero?) to themes of choice (What will the hero choose? Who will choose the hero?). Such a transition necessitates a rethinking of the characters' "moral polarity" (32), centered particularly on reframing the value of spousal fidelity – a theme that the novels valued greatly, but which contemporary adaptations largely distrust. The results, as the book's brilliant analysis of the three adaptations of *The Count of Monte Cristo* shows, can sometimes present an odd form of morality.

Chapter 2 is a concise, but precisely detailed, history of televisual adaptations of 19th century works between 1954 and the early 2000s. This is a richly rendered panorama of French television history, sprinkled with colourful details and augmented by invaluable contributions from creators and actors. This history traces the gradual emphasis on sexuality at the expense of the theme of recognition. Some of this emphasis is attributable to the difficulty of concealing the identity of the star actor: Gerard Depardieu as Edmond Dantès, for example, will be instantly recognizable as the Count of Monte Cristo. On another level however, the book argues that, within a society where the only ties that matter are elective, identification alone is insufficient (71). It is still necessary to ensure that the rediscovered hero still fits one's expectations.

As a proxy for these elective ties, sexuality becomes central to these adaptations, but, in turn, it needs to be separated from the incestuous or pedophilic overtones of the original texts' focus on the relationship between a young girl and a paternal, older man. The second part of the book traces this process, across three chapters – each dedicated to a detailed analysis of Hugo, Dumas and Féval's novels.

Of these books, *Les Misérables*, whose seven adaptations are examined in Chapter 4 presents perhaps the fewest difficulties. The book's multiple major characters and its overtly political focus make it remarkably pliable. Chalvon-Demersay discusses how the aftermath of the 1968 student movement and the gradual defunding of the ORTF explain Marcel Bluwal's vision of his 1972 adaptation as a story of failures – a story in which only the characters who successfully assimilate into the bourgeois class (Cosette, Marius) survive, while the revolutionary characters (primarily Valjean) die. Therefore, Valjean's ambivalent feelings for the grown-up Cosette can be elided or at the very least, pushed into the background. In essence, the book proposes *Les Misérables* and its many adaptations as exemplary of the tensions between the works' original intent and its reinterpretation.

Chapter 5 is devoted to *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and its treatment of the books' most problematic aspects: Haydée, the young Greco-Turkish girl that the Count buys at a slave market and with whom he eventually leaves the story, and Dantès' relentlessly cruel vengeance, which results in numerous gruesome deaths (including that of a child). If Haydée is simply eliminated altogether as a character, these adaptations also propose the final reunion of Edmond and his ex-fiancée, Mercédès, by reevaluating the book's view of fidelity, and by softening somewhat the Count's murderous spree. Mercédès and Edmond are given the chance to choose themselves again – a crucial option in the elective society of the late 20th century where, with the weakening of older forms of marriage, based in fidelity and permanence, partners must perpetually re-evaluate and re-negotiate their relationship (84). Such an ending, however, generates its own moral questions, as Mercédès unquestioningly and enthusiastically chooses to reunite with the man who has just murdered her husband.

Finally, Chapter 6 examines two adaptations of Féval's *Le Bossu* – a text which originally ends with the marriage between the protagonist, Lagardère, and Aurore, the young girl whose life he had saved when she was an infant and whom he has raised and protected ever since. "The spectre of incest" (as the chapter is titled) informs contemporary readings of the text: if the hero is to remain "positive" – at least in the sense we give to the term in the 20th century – the original marriage is no longer possible, because the power dynamic between the two characters means that Aurore cannot consent, even as an adult. The focus on sexuality has shifted from its liberating aspects that the 1970s favoured to its predatory dimensions – of significantly more concern in the 2000s.

Maria Ionita *Toronto Metropolitan University*

***

Granier, Caroline. *En quête d'héroïnes*. Cœuvres-et-Valsery : Ressouvenances, 2022. 153 p.

Est révolu le temps où le héros d'un polar était exclusivement un homme ; aujourd'hui, ce genre littéraire n'est plus réservé à la gent masculine et depuis quelques décennies, les héroïnes s'y font de plus en plus nombreuses pour le plus grand plaisir des lectrices (et lecteurs) qui peuvent s'identifier à elles. Parmi ces individus férus d'aventures d'enquêtrices, on compte l'écrivaine Caroline Granier, qui propose avec son livre intitulé *En quête d'héroïnes* de faire découvrir au lecteur cent une femmes investigatrices qui, sous la plume d'écrivains de France comme d'ailleurs et toutes aussi différentes les unes que les