

révolte. La réussite est à ce prix, et Barrès appelait ça, “l’éducation de la volonté” »<sup>1</sup>), pour trouver que la valeur littéraire (éventuelle) ou historique (indéniable) de ces écrits ne compense pas toujours leur portée et leur fonction politique. On sera donc excusé si, au bout de ces centaines de pages de propagande incessante et nauséuse, on demeure encore convaincu de la justesse essentielle du jugement catégorique que portait sur elle Ezra Pound.

Vittorio Frigerio

Dalhousie University

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Mole, Gary D. *Voices of Pain, Cries of Silence. Francophone Jewish Poetry of the Shoah, 1939-2008*. New York: Peter Lang, 2024. 307 p.

Gary D. Mole analyzes a corpus of over forty Francophone Jewish poets, from Western and Eastern Europe, Quebec, North Africa, and the Middle East in various historical, social, and political contexts. Although “Poetry of the Shoah” has been an established field of academic research since the 1980s, the existence of French-language poetry has been completely ignored in the major anthologies of Holocaust Poetry: “In France or the Francophone world, such anthologies are either inexistent or, if they do exist, contain mainly poems translated into French from other languages.” (2)

All in all, the poems selected in the Mole’s anthology were written in French, and their Jewish authors wrote them either during or after the war. The book’s scope and content are broad and constitute a groundbreaking study. Beyond serving as a social function and mirroring an historical survey, the “notions of voicing pain and crying silence [encapsulate] some of the many contradictory positions assumed and challenged by Francophone Jewish poetry in relation to the Shoah.” (7) From this perspective, poetry fills in lacunae in the historical record and “facilitates modes of discourse that denote the psychological and political, ethical and aesthetic consequences of the calamity without laying claim to experiencing or comprehending it in its totality.” (9)

Theoretical considerations include the problematics of representation (the relation between language, reality, aesthetics, and ethics) and Robert Antelme’s comment on how concentration camp poetry was able to represent the “truth” of the camps (as opposed to the supposed photographic objectivity of prose accounts), which Mole contrasts with Adorno’s remark that “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.”

The critical paradigms that inspire the book include the concepts of postmemory writing (Marianne Hirsch), secondary witnessing (Dominick LaCapra and Dora Apel, among others); proxy-witnessing (Robert Jay Lifton and Susan Gubar); received history and the vicarious past (James Young); and awkward poetics (Antony Rowland).” To these paradigms, Gary D. Mole also considers Colin Davis’s concept of “traumatic hermeneutics.” Ultimately, Mole underscores the fact that “no one single critical paradigm can be adopted or adapted to cover the diversity of poetry written over a seventy-year period constituting an incredibly heterogeneous corpus.” (15)

Considering the diversity of the material discussed, the author opts for a broad chronological approach from 1939 to the new millennium. The volume unfolds from the point of view of authorship, focusing on each individual author’s personal, aesthetic and/or ethical intentions, “the very real persons whose lives, deaths, and writing intersected and intersect still with the Shoah.” (17)

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1 Kolney, Fernand. « Carnet du guérillero. » *Les Hommes du Jour*, no. 248, 19 octobre 1912.

Chapter 1 (“The Jewish Poetry of Resistance: 1939–1946”) begins with a satirical pamphlet of anti-Nazi poems by Isaac D. Knafo: “O Sacripants Abjects, Sagouins Abominables/Saligauds Accomplis et Sanglants Aboyeurs [...]” (23). The poems included in this chapter call for intellectual, spiritual, and armed resistance.

Chapter 2 (“Shock, Accusation, Commemoration: 1946–1956”) offers introspection and retrospection on Jewish persecution in the immediate post-war period. Disillusioned, angry, and accusatory, the poets offer little hope or redemptive perspective (Benjamin Goriely, Arnold Mandel, Pierre Morhange). The chapter concludes with poets from outside the European theater of the war including Marcel Chalom and Raphael Levy (Ryvel) who writes in “Flore infernale”: “Dans le jardin maudit des supplices d’Hitler/Il est de sombres fleurs vénéneuses de chair [...]” (101)

Chapter 3 (Intermezzo: 1960–1964) reflects the relative paucity of poetic texts published in French on the Shoah during the period. It notably discusses the volume by Raph Feigelson, former Auschwitz deportee, and Michel Salomon, Dachau survivor, who writes in “Hier et demain”: “Nous sommes venus les mains vides/Avec la peur de nos souvenirs/L’oubli de notre détresse/Nous verse les poisons de paix.” (125)

Chapter 4 (“Memory and Anti-Shoah Denial: 1970–1996”) focuses on the rise of revisionism and what Mole calls the “poetry of chrestomathy”. He discusses poems written during deportation (Pierre Creange, Sophie D. Rubinstain-Virolleaud, Sylvain Kaufmann), after the war by non-deportees (Moshe Macchias, Anne Quesemand, Lydie Blumenthal), and explores the theme of the absence of God in Jacques Taraboulos, and Jacques Eladan’s “Éclipse”: “Quand la terre fut enveloppée par la nuit/Vers quels confins du ciel, ô Dieu, tu t’es enfui? [...] Où étais-tu créateur sourd et défaillant ?” (166)

The final section of Chapter 4 centers upon poets Mole characterizes as traumatized children (among them Guta Tyrangiel Benezra, Albert Pesses, and Pierre Katz). The latter perceives in the poem “Auschwitz”: “[...] le grand soleil blanc/Les limites impossibles des impossibles douleurs [...]” (215). Chapter 5 (Poetry at the Turn of the Millenium: 2001-2008) discusses in four separate sections six volumes of poetry of the Shoah by Francophone Jewish authors published since the turn of the millennium.

The outcome of years of research on Francophone Jewish Poetry of the Shoah, Gary Mole’s volume represents an extraordinary achievement. He successfully highlights what was written and published over the last eighty years on the subject without pretending to exhaustivity. “No overview of any literary corpus on a particular theme or subject can be exhaustive.” (283) He masterfully demonstrates how the canon of “Holocaust Poetry” is incomplete without the inclusion of Francophone Jewish poetry.

Éric Touya de Marenne

Clemson University

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Bastard, Joël. *Les couvertures contemporaines suivi de Le principe souterrain*. Paris : Gallimard, 2024. 183 p.

Après son *Journal de la contre-clef* (2023) – avec sa prose narrative racontant les moments, rencontres, scènes et réflexions d’un séjour en 2007 comme artiste en résidence au château de Latour sur Sorgues – *Les couvertures contemporaines* de Joël Bastard change de mode, de vitesse, de perspective et d’intention, comme le suggère le titre de la première des treize courtes suites non contextualisées de la première des deux parties du recueil : *Les prétextes se bousculent dans l’usine à papier* (11). Certes, on peut y voir une espèce de journal, mais l’œil se braque plutôt sur les mouvements de l’esprit, le pourquoi de l’écrit, ce que celui-ci