Book Reviews

Sylviane Albertan-Coppola. *L'abbé Nicolas-Sylvestre Bergier (1718-1790): Des Monts-Jura à Versailles, le parcours d'un apologiste du XVIII^e siècle*. Les Dix-huitième siècles 128. Paris : Honoré Champion, 2010. 328 p.

Nicolas-Sylvestre Bergier stands head and shoulders above the hundred or so other apologists who published defenses of the Catholic faith in France during the eighteenth century. This is the judgment rendered by contemporary Church authorities, who promoted Bergier through the ranks from an obscure pastorate to a post at the court in Versailles. It is also the judgment of Sylviane Albertan-Coppola in this lucid and balanced volume, the first book-length study of Bergier's major writings; she is well placed to write this intellectual biography, having already contributed to the growing awareness of the importance of apologetic writing in the late eighteenth century through an impressive body of scholarship. The person who emerges from it is an erudite scholar who studied the writings of the philosophes in detail, and argued against them with great sophistication. This very brief summary of his career might suggest that Bergier was a cunning and ambitious cleric of the Ancien régime. To the contrary: through extensive references to his correspondence and other sources, Albertan-Coppola depicts a priest of deep personal faith, one who took seriously the pastoral duties of a country parish for seventeen years and who seems sincere in his expression of a preference for a simpler life in Flangebouche to the rituals and pomp of the court.

Bergier seemed at first poised to make his literary name through prize-winning essays on history and eloquence submitted to the Académie de Besançon and a book on historical linguistics. But for years the studious abbé had taken voluminous notes on enemies of the Catholic faith and turned easily to apologetics after these early projects. His first target was Rousseau. In *Le Déisme refuté par lui-même, ou Examen des principes d'incrédulité répandus dans les divers ouvrages de Rousseau* (1765), Bergier displays considerable dialectical skill in searching out contradictions, particularly in *Emile*, and in doing so begins to develop his own theological perspective on such controversial points as the salvation of the unbaptized. Albertan-Coppola concludes that Bergier argues well here but simply did not understand the doubts of a Rousseau groping for theological clarity.

The next work, *La Certitude des preuves du christianisme, ou réfutation de l' « Examen critique des apologistes de la religion chrétienne »* (1767), demonstrates the extensive erudition that would be deployed in all his writings. It is also notable for Bergier's use of modern scientific knowledge and historical methodology to buttress arguments aimed at validating the miracles recounted in Scripture, which he intended to validate Christianity itself. Major works that followed included the *Examen du materialisme, ou refutation du « Système de la nature »* (1771). The apologist is astute in calling on deist philosophes to support his arguments against d'Holbach. Bergier takes aim at all aspects of d'Holbach's materialism. He denies that humans generally direct their passions rationally and presents materialism as a false personification of nature, a means of depriving humans of spiritual consolation, and a destroyer of social virtues. Albertan-Coppola concludes in this case that Bergier and d'Holbach were talking at cross-purposes – clearly the case where two completely different metaphysical interpretations of the world were in play. Bergier had formed cordial relationships with several philosophes, including Diderot. Publication of the *Examen* brought an end to these interactions.

In a series of letters, Bergier also undertook a formal refutation of Voltaire. In Albertan-Coppola's terms, this was a David-Goliath encounter (she does not, however,

go as far as the historical allusion might have allowed and declare David/Bergier the winner). The themes of the exchanges were intolerance, the interpretation and reliability of Scripture, and the role of religion in society. The fundamental difference between the two writers lay in the deism of the one and the dogma-based religion of the other. Albertan-Coppola demonstrates convincingly that the decisive factor was the different conceptions of philosophical certainty held by each of the disputants: for Voltaire, mathematical or physical certainty sufficed; for Bergier, moral certainty had to be included.

The last work of Bergier published during his life was the *Dictionnaire de théologie* (1788-1790), three volumes written for the vast *Encyclopédie méthodique*. The *Dictionnaire* incorporated much of his *Traité historique et dogmatique de la vraie religion* (1779) and was intended to correct doctrinal and other errors in the *Encyclopédie* and to add material as Bergier judged appropriate. In the process he also developed in a final form theological views of his own that are present in earlier works. Albertan-Coppola concentrates on three major points. On grace, Bergier differed, with considerable circumspection, from Church authorities on the plight of the unbaptized. On intolerance, however, Bergier is completely in agreement with the eighteenth-century Church in treating this attitude as a virtue. And on natural religion, Bergier simply denies the possibility of treating this belief as a religion. The *Dictionnaire*, which was re-edited and reprinted more than fifty times, exercised great influence on nineteenth-century theology.

A useful appendix of rare items (mainly archival correspondence) and an extensive bibliography complete the book. Bergier's writings can be a minefield for the historian of ideas more sympathetic to the thought of the philosophes than to the defenses of their opponents; Albertan-Coppola negotiates the terrain admirably well and succeeds in presenting an impartial and scholarly account of this participant in the Enlightenment – certainly not one of the philosophes, but sharing many of their emphases, especially that on reasoned arguments.

Kathleen Hardesty Doig *Georgia State University*

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Harsanyi, Doina Pasca. *Lessons from America: Liberal French Nobles in Exile, 1793-1798*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2010. ISBN 978-0-271-03637-3. 204 p.

This study follows a small group of French émigrés who fled the Terror and found a temporary safe haven in what was then the capital of the United States, Philadelphia. Most of them were aristocrats who had participated in the early stages of the Revolutionary period. As members of the club des Feuillants, as constitutional monarchists, and as representatives of political liberalism, they faced imprisonment or execution if they remained in France. After Thermidor and the establishment of the Directoire, they gradually returned home, seeking to once again play a role as political moderates. Doina Pasca Harsanyi builds on her account of the trans-Atlantic journeys of these émigrés, providing an examination of how the nascent American experiment in the establishment of stable democratic institutions was perceived in France during and after the Revolution. In Philadelphia, this group of defeated former revolutionaries met at the unassuming bookstore of Moreau de Saint-Méry, an unlikely setting for "liberal nobles" who were more accustomed to Parisian salons: "At the Estates General of May 1789, La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, Beaumetz, Blacons, and Noailles represented the nobility, Talleyrand the high clergy" (2). For his part, Moreau—who was known, among other things, for his contributions to the historiography of Haiti and for his opposition to the abolition of slavery in the French colonies of the Caribbean—had been elected by the

third estate. These French exiles were not seeking to settle permanently in the United States, nor were they initially drawn to an American social or political model: "The ex-Constituents remained attached to France's political future and took their sojourn in America as a waiting room for the real life they expected to make for themselves back in France" (115). Having scrutinized their letters and diaries, Harsanyi depicts them as remaining focused the continuing events of French Revolution and on the parts they had played in it: "Making sense of this unique experience became the main preoccupation of liberal nobles in exile" (21).

Nevertheless, the need to understand the unlikely course the French Revolution had taken naturally led these liberal nobles to consider how the American Revolution had led to a novel and apparently orderly form of government. Seeking an end to the Revolutionary upheavals in France, they sought parallels in the nation in which they had somewhat accidentally arrived: "the French émigrés could easily identify political similarities between the Federalist/Democratic-Republican contest in the United States and the Feuillant/Jacobin struggle at home" (84). In social terms, as Harsanyi makes clear, their aristocratic background largely determined the exiles' observations on American society, producing stereotypical commentaries about Americans' love of money and lack of interest in intellectual matters: "Moreau drew the same link between money (and the desire to make a lot of it) and the intellectual mediocrity of American life" (64). Harsanyi also studies the trans-Atlantic diplomatic exchanges of the period, and in particular the clumsy and counterproductive attempts of the first French Ambassador of the French Republic, Edmond Genêt, to persuade the first American government, led by George Washington, to enter into an alliance with France against Great Britain.

Lessons from America is a well-researched, wide-ranging study, that uses a relatively minor subset of émigrés from the Revolutionary period (many more of whom, of course, preferred to stay in Great Britain) to explore broader questions about the development of modern liberal theory in France, and about the degree of influence exerted by the American political experiment. Its main weakness is in the linkage it attempts to establish between the group of liberal nobles who returned from the United States and the liberal thinkers (such as Constant, Staël, and later Tocqueville) who emerged during the post-revolutionary period—or what Harsanyi calls in her concluding chapter "waiting for Tocqueville." There may well have been significant intellectual cross-fertilization between the returning émigrés who were nourished by their American experience and the new generation of French liberals who were looking for ways to establish stable institutions without returning to monarchical absolutism, but these few pages do not convincingly provide such a conclusion.

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Sutherland, D.M.G. *Murder in Aubagne: Lynching, Law, and Justice during the French Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. xvii + 316 p.

Sutherland turns his initially narrow investigation of a brutal murder in a small town in the south of France into a broader study of collective violence and "popular justice" in the context of the Revolutionary period. While the effects of the Terror are amply documented in Paris and in certain parts of the provinces (Lyon, la Vendée), the author of *Murder in Aubagne* shines an unexpected light on the series of massacres and revenge killings that swept a part of France which does not seem to be a likely spot for political upheavals. In his preface, Sutherland elaborates on the hybrid nature of his book, "from microhistory to something more like the traditional regional monograph" (xi), which requires him to keep shifting from his examination of the events in Aubagne to those in

neighboring towns and cities (especially Marseille), while taking into account the sharply fluctuating fortunes of Jacobinism at the national level. Due to its multiple levels of analysis, this book could be described as the interweaving of three distinct historical narratives. In part, it is a detailed social study that relies on tax records to identify the occupations of those who belonged to the local Jacobin and anti-Jacobin factions (the data is summarized in the Appendix [293-300]). Another part is more straightforward political history, with Aubagne as a microcosm for the wider factional infighting that constantly threatened to tear the country apart. The dreariest part of the book, surprisingly, is found in the accumulated *récits* of politically-motivated murders and massacres, often followed by ritualistic mutilations and displays of cadavers (these gruesome practices are partly explained in a section entitled "The Anthropology of Vigilante Justice" [114-17]). Unfortunately, the local versions of violent vigilantism, from large-scale prison massacres to the hanging of individual victims from lampposts, appear to have reflected what was occurring at the national level.

The lynchings of Jacobins in 1795 were often delayed reprisals for the slaughter of anti-Jacobins that had taken place before Thermidor, some of which had taken the form of expeditious executions ordered by Revolutionary courts. Sutherland convincingly argues that the waves of revenge killings were partly due to the incapacity (real and perceived) of post-Thermidorian local courts to fairly apportion blame and administer punishment. Members of the faction that had suffered from previous lynchings thus felt justified in carrying out their own brand of popular justice. Since legal institutions were not proceeding with sufficient celerity, the anti-Jacobins who had suffered during the Terror clamored for and resorted to a form of "démocratie directe" that ironically resembled the justification for swift executions previously invoked by the Jacobins: "In the mind of its apologists, direct justice was legitimate because it was an emanation of popular sovereignty" (257). René Girard's theory of "violence mimétique" could have been usefully applied to the analysis of this cycle of violence, during which the two main factions, successively producing the Terror and the White Terror, increasingly sounded and acted alike.

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Feilla, Cecilia A. *La Tribu indienne, ou, Edouard et Stellina*. The Modern Humanities Research Association, 2006.

En cette fin du 18^{e} siècle, l'exotisme est éclairé par les théories d'économie politique. Grâce à l'abbé de Raynal, la perspective sur l'Indien s'est radicalement déplacée : désormais la lumière éclaire autant l'étranger dans sa radicale altérité que l'Européen jetant son regard intéressé sur ces populations. En fin de compte, les *Lettres persanes* décrivaient deux civilisations séparées qui certes se servaient mutuellement de miroir, mais ne se mêlaient que le temps fortuit d'une rencontre sans lendemain. Il en bien autrement quelques décennies plus tard. L'exotisme de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre est empreint de tragédie non pas par une fatalité liée à des vices individuels, mais bien par les ravages du capitalisme marchand.

A cet égard, Paul et Virginie est bien le parent de *La tribu indienne*. Au-delà du fait que les deux romans se déroulent dans le lointain Océan Indien et que, plus profondément, elles renvoient à une sensibilité romantique, ce qui unit Bernardin de Saint-Pierre et Lucien Bonaparte est la donne économique. Celle-ci est davantage présente dans *La tribu indienne*, car c'est bien elle, sorte de Dieu caché, qui préside à la destinée des personnages : l'appât du gain qui caractérise Edouard lui est en quelque sorte transmis par son père et il ne faut blâmer que cet esprit calculateur pour la fin tragique de Stellina.

Cecilia A. Feilla nous donne donc une nouvelle édition d'un texte important pour l'histoire sociale. Elle a de plus intégré au roman les gravures qui l'accompagnaient à l'origine et qui, au 19e siècle, vont circuler séparément du texte. L'appareil critique est modeste et les notes de l'éditrice, placées en fin de texte, auraient gagné à être élaborées. Le plus souvent, elles se contentent de préciser le sens d'un mot (par exemple « le brahmine »). En revanche, l' « introduction », éclaire remarquablement bien la genèse du texte de Bonaparte et le situe dans l'histoire des sensibilités. *La tribu indienne* apparaît ainsi comme un roman à la charnière de deux époques. Situé entre les Lumières et le romantisme, il permet de mesurer les changements de goût et de mode littéraires. En ce sens, cette édition moderne d'un texte autrement voué à l'oubli peut intéresser aussi bien le spécialiste de notre « long 18e siècle », que les étudiants des cycles supérieurs, voire du premier cycle.

Oubli inexplicable, le nom de Lucien Bonaparte n'apparaît pas sur la première de couverture.

Armelle St-Martin *University of Manitoba*

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Martin, Morag. *Selling Beauty: Cosmetics, Commerce, and French Society, 1750-1830*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2009. 228 p.

Morag Martin's historical study of cosmetics in the latter part of the Eighteenth Century and into the Napoleon Restoration of the Nineteenth Century not only enlightens any novice researcher by providing a sound historical overview of beautification products, the work also slides nicely into more complex issues, examining the role of gender, gender control, femininity, masculinity, commerce, consumerism, class, fashion, market, citizenship, and advertisement. Her study closely presents a world of cosmetics, of make-up paint, of perfumery, and of rouge to relay who wore it, what they wore, for which reasons they wore it, and to some degree, how they wore it. By focusing on the theme of eighteenth-century cosmetics, Martin hijacks dominant beliefs – proliferated by movies, websites, comical recreations, and fashion blogs – that the time period looked as it did in a Sofia Coppola movie. Instead she shows how the cosmetics of the elite were gradually democratized for anyone whose pocketbook or credit could bear the purchase. In this regard, the Revolution permitted the bourgeoisie and lower social classes to appear just as the elite had looked in the Old Regime when cosmetics were limited to the wealthy. Martin claims that a growth of cosmetics consumers instigated a commercial revolution, one focusing on products, as well as their proliferation, production, and advertisement.

Everyone participated in some regard, whether as elite merchants or street sellers, to the "consumer revolution" (43) represented by the explosion of store windows and "actual shops" (48). Women, now considered "good consumers" (133), had before them a wealth of choices of products, of brands, of stores, and of prices, making women buyers no longer at the "mercy of the shopkeeper" (67). Women could know the ingredients used in the products and could make enlightened choices based on advertisement, cost, scientific information, doctoral approvals, and government patent stamps.

On tall hair and heavily painted faces, Martin develops her thesis that such a fashion of cosmetics in the aristocracy waned in the latter half of the Eighteenth Century to become its opposite, a signifier of women's inherent unseemliness. For example, heavily white-washed faces, intense rouges, obscurely placed black dots, and scented hair powders were no longer considered the fashion and were seen by others as required necessities for covering up the disease-infected body (102). Consequently, the natural look "preached by Rousseau" (122) became more and more the fashion and although women still adorned their faces with make-up, less of it, and more natural in tone, was

considered a respectable aesthetic (123). Paradoxically, paints were to create artificially the look *au naturel*. Heavy paints previously *à la mode* slowly became *démodé* as they gave way to medical and public discourses on the safety of using noxious chemicals in fard. Now having public knowledge about the chemical dangers of cosmetic products, women who chose to continue wearing dangerous compounds on their faces, despite medical information based on science, became socially stained as having an indelectable character and were believed to have "unspoken faults" (81) in need of public concealment. She shows how in various *affiches* the same negative discourses against the moral and sinful pretense of wearing cosmetics were rightfully diverted, if not ignored, to highlight the product, its hygienic status, and its medical safety for the hopeful consumer.

Martin concludes that "the folly of fashion" (153) was not simply a feminine preoccupation. Rather, men painted themselves for social acceptance just as women had been doing. The strong appeal for masculine virility in post-revolutionary France and in the beginning of the Romantic era, however, had men further pulled in to issues of vanity (164-72). With the loss of the wig and hair powder, both representative of Old Regime ideals, men's lack of hair or bald dome were unacceptable signs of "degeneration and impotence" (173) and were seen socially as abhorrent consequences of bad health, illness, and much to their dismay, masturbation or syphilis (165). Vanity products for hair loss (greases, potions, pommades, toupees) became fashionable among men and even though false, the fabricated *coiffe* had to pass as natural, real hair since artifice and deception were still stigmatized. Men's vanity at toilette was kept personal and secretive often "publicly denied" (170) for fear of appearing socially, sexually, and financially unsuccessful.

Martin's work focuses on what Cissie Fairchilds dubbed "populuxe" goods that are "cheap copies of luxury goods aimed at the urban working classes" (3). By disseminating previously unaffordable products from the elite to the bourgeois and to the working class, cosmetics mark a 'populuxe' of French society, which in turn signifies a larger market of consumerism, product competition, and thus a nascent "culture of advertising" (4) during the Eighteenth Century. In such a market, the populus could have products of luxury. Thus, the inability of recognizing class signifiers (dress, make-up, purchases, *coiffe*) created a social confusion in which the elite were indistinguishable from the bourgeois and the working class. Martin reveals how in the Eighteenth Century, cosmetics not only reveal one's class; they also conceal it.

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Sonn, Richard D. *Sex, Violence, and the Avant-Garde: Anarchism in Interwar France*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2010. ISBN 978-0-271-03663-2. 259 p.

Richard Sonn previously examined anarchism in France during what is generally considered to be its glory days, the Belle Époque (*Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France*, UP of Nebraska, 1989). In *Sex, Violence, and the Avant-Garde*, he again considers the various facets of the anarchist movement, in this case during a period when it was arguably in decline, when the Communist Party largely supplanted it as the most visible and influential left-wing revolutionary organization. Sonn's main argument is that French anarchists did not merely sink into irrelevance after the end of the First World War. Since their penchant for political violence (and especially political assassination) had been generally counterproductive during the prewar era, many anarchists, particularly those called individualists, shifted their focus to ethical issues, such as sexual freedom, naturism, vegetarianism, avant-garde cultural movements, and,

strangely enough, eugenics. In a very (post)modern transition, the personal thus became the political.

While demonstrations, calls for general strikes, and the perspective of a violent revolution had not totally disappeared, French anarchists were clearly looking for other ways to transform their society. However, the first two chapters of Sonn's study are devoted to the little-known case of Germaine Berton, who in 1923 planned to assassinate Léon Daudet, a prominent leader of the extreme-right-wing *Action Française*. Berton was unable to approach Daudet, and instead shot and killed another high-ranking member of the party. Surprisingly, the professed anarchist and self-confessed assassin was acquitted of all charges a few months later, in no small part because she was a young woman who was deemed to be emotionally disturbed. The case was further complicated by the suicide, in front of the prison where Berton was being held, of Daudet's teenage son, Philippe, who apparently admired Berton, and who may have been infatuated with her. While the two rebels, a young female assassin and an even younger suicidal male, apparently never met, their intertwined fates evoke not just morbid romanticism but also, in Sonn's analysis, "one small episode in the ongoing saga of family, nation, and authority" (71).

The author transitions from this tale of sublimated sex and real violence to the links between anarchism and surrealism and to the quest for "utopian bodies," in the form of personal liberation. Sonn details the phases of the fascination that André Breton and other surrealists felt toward the more libertarian aspects of anarchism—which did not prevent many of them from joining (and in some cases remaining in) the strictly-regimented Communist Party. Similarly, the author's thorough investigation of "anarchist sexual politics" illuminates how some anarchists could evolve from advocacy of birth-control (a highly-charged political issue in the context of the post-World War I obsession with *la natalité*) in the name of personal freedom to an interest in neo-Malthusianism and eugenics as a means of social improvement. A second, shorter section of *Sex, Violence, and the Avant-Garde* is devoted to foreign influences on French anarchists, such as the influx of Russian, often Jewish, political activists after the Russian Revolution. As for the United States, the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927 had the effect of briefly energizing the anarchist movement as a whole in France. The brief concluding section of this book, entitled "The Renewal of Anarchism," links counter-culture social movements of the 1960s to the anarchist militants of the 1890s and 1920s. Sonn thus reinforces the general characterization of anarchism, provided throughout most of his study, as an outburst of youthful rebellion, rather than a serious political ideology.

There is the customary minor issue of the occasional typographical error: "Ecole supérieure professionale" (42); "Paul Elouard" (59); "Elegies internationaux" (164). More surprisingly, in light of the author's meticulous research, some faulty translations are found in this book: "electoral lists" for "la lice électorale" (35); "denuded" for "dénué" (54); "crimes of common law" for "crimes de droit commun" (82). Overall, Sonn has produced a detailed investigation of the ideological and sometimes personal issues that divided the various anarchist groups during what would later be called the interwar period. He is less successful in his attempts to demonstrate that anarchism was anything more than a marginal phenomenon.

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Vallier, Jean. *C'était Marguerite Duras- 1946-1996*, tome 2. Paris: Fayard, 2010. 966 p.

Quatre ans après la parution de la première partie de sa biographie consacrée à Marguerite Duras, Jean Vallier publie le second et dernier tome très attendu de son

ambitieux travail. Composé de quatorze chapitres extrêmement documentés, l'ouvrage expose les moments-clés de la vie de Duras, durant un demi-siècle (de 1946 à sa mort), et décrit minutieusement la genèse de ses œuvres (textuelles et filmiques), leur contexte historique et personnel, ainsi que les étapes, succès et aléas de leur production et réception.

Dans la première moitié du livre, où l'évocation des relations familiales, amicales et conjugales de l'écrivaine demeure importante, la mission démystificatrice de Vallier, entamée dans le volume antérieur, se poursuit, ponctuée de mises en garde récurrentes, à l'adresse des exégètes et lecteurs durassiens, contre les déclarations intempestives et les extrapolations romanesques de l'écrivaine. Confrontant certains écrits à teneur autobiographique : *Un Barrage contre le Pacifique* (1950), *Des Journées entières dans les arbres* (1954), etc., à la « réalité », Vallier tente de départager construction littéraire et vérité, afin de donner une version plus fidèle des faits, qui l'occupent entièrement. De même qu'il rectifiait précédemment la misère de l'enfance indochinoise de Duras et la fougue de sa passion pour son amant chinois, il nuance dans le présent ouvrage l'histoire désastreuse et la représentation peu flatteuse de la mère, sa spoliation par l'administration coloniale française, sa richesse et son avarice ou sa préférence pour le frère aîné, Pierre Donnadieu. Frère diabolisé par l'écrivaine, dont il retrace le véritable parcours, jusque-là inconnu du public, et brosse un portrait plus pitoyable que pervers.

Parallèlement à la restitution plus authentique de la parentèle durassienne et de ses déconvenues, Vallier décrit abondamment les activités des divers membres du « Groupe de la rue Saint-Benoît » (Robert Antelme, Maurice Blanchot, Dionys Mascolo, Edgar Morin, etc.), dont l'existence, comme ensemble uni, serait, selon ses investigations, une « invention » *a posteriori* de Dionys Mascolo (66). Les développements sur les engagements intellectuels et politiques de l'écrivaine et de son entourage, de la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale aux événements de Mai 68, sont détaillés et fort intéressants, surtout lorsqu'ils abordent leurs relations passionnelles, complexes et fluctuantes au communisme. Au sein de cette effervescence militante, les frasques et infidélités des uns et des autres ne sont pas épargnées. Vallier dévoile même quelques points délicats, telle la liaison de Dionys Mascolo avec « la veuve du gestapiste Delval » (51) et le fils qu'il en a eu. Paternité dont Duras n'aurait jamais rien su. Mais c'est à la relation tumultueuse entre l'écrivaine et Gérard Jarlot qu'il accorde le plus de place, allant jusqu'à y voir un impact –bénéfique– sur sa production, à partir de *Moderato cantabile* (1958). L'état de crise provoqué par cette passion marquant « une étape majeure » dans « sa carrière d'écrivain » (393).

Les incursions dans le domaine privé et la volonté d'écorner la légende durassienne s'estompent à partir du neuvième chapitre qui aborde la fin des années soixante. La mère disparue, le groupe d'intellectuels pivotant autour de Duras se délitant, les liaisons amoureuses de l'écrivaine, vieillissante, se raréfiant (jusqu'à celle avec Yann Andréa) et son succès croissant, la seconde moitié de l'ouvrage est presque uniquement dévolue au parcours professionnel de l'auteure et à son évolution artistique. De ses créations cinématographiques à ses chroniques journalistiques, de son théâtre drolatique à ses récits poétiques, de ses personnages insondables à la popularité de *L'Amant*, tous les traits et aspects qui en font progressivement une figure emblématique, médiatique et unique des lettres et du cinéma, y sont parcourus.

On ne peut que louer le travail de Vallier, fruit d'années de recherche dans les archives de l'IMEC, le fonds Jean Mascolo, les bibliothèques, les maisons d'édition, ainsi que de multiples entretiens de proches de Duras et de nombreuses lectures d'ouvrages contemporains à la vie de l'écrivaine, et qui l'éclairent : *Journaux* de Queneau, textes de Claude Roy ou d'Edgar Morin, etc. L'abondante correspondance privée, d'ordre familial et professionnel, que Vallier divulgue, est particulièrement intéressante, en ce qu'elle expose notamment la part maudite de la création : échecs de projets, difficultés

financières, mésententes, fragilité psychologique. Si la place accordée à la réception des œuvres de Duras dans la presse est importante et si les témoignages de ses liens, plus ou moins houleux, avec ses éditeurs et producteurs foisonnent, les études critiques citées sont, elles, conformément au genre de l'ouvrage, beaucoup plus rares. Aucune analyse esthétique, sinon superficielle, n'intervient sous la plume de Vallier et sa connaissance des recherches durassiennes semble réduite, voire obsolète. On ne trouve pas non plus de révélations vraiment surprenantes sur l'écrivaine, tout au plus quelques épisodes peu connus de sa vie, telle sa longue amitié avec Joseph Losey et Sonia Orwell (dernière épouse de l'écrivain britannique), sa collaboration, même éphémère, avec Anaïs Nin et ses séjours à Cuba et en Iran dans les années soixante. Le livre de Vallier ne donne donc pas une vision neuve de Duras, mais il offre un excellent panorama de sa longue carrière et constitue, à ce jour, l'ouvrage d'ensemble le plus complet et le plus précis sur sa vie et son œuvre.

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Reid, Victoria, *André Gide and Curiosity* . Faux Titre 340. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009. 316pp. ill.

This interdisciplinary study interprets Andre Gide's (1869-1951) productive and long life in the light of psychoanalytic insights. Specifically, Reid applies concepts developed by Melanie Klein not only to Gide's literary work (minus the dramatic pieces) but his voluminous journals, travel writing, correspondence, the memories and commentary of others including the standard critical literature. While autobiographically inspired writing is particularly relevant here, a wealth of material has been considered. Many of the footnotes might easily have been integrated into the text, while, at the same time, many marginalia offer analogies as tenuous as those produced by train of consciousness. For illustrations, the book contains two photographs of works by Henry Moore, notably the *Mother and Child* of 1953, a sculpture of a large child on the mother's lap, seemingly about to bite into the protruding breast. A glossary of psychoanalytic terms, the bibliography, and the index complete the study.

The glossary is a necessity. The title of Reid's book, in fact, does not prepare the reader for the extent of its strong psychoanalytical dynamic. Although Reid dwells on the tenets of the Kleinian system, the lay reader may also require supplementary background information. In contrast to other psychoanalytical schools, Klein situated the deepest roots of personal relationship with the world not in the oedipal triad familiar from Freud but in a primary "object relation" established and evolving between infant and mother. Klein identified an innate aggressive drive to mastery (sadism), a destructive paranoid-schizoid period, a subsequent "depressive" state in which the child tries to compensate for its guilt, and methods of reparation and defense which protect both child and mother. Scopophilia, (desire for and pleasure in seeing) and epistemophilia (desire for and pleasure in acquiring knowledge), two major components of curiosity, become important manifestations of the depressive state, which is considered by Klein to be the most life-affirming and creative principle.

In addition, Klein is widely recognized for pioneering the pre-verbal psychoanalysis of children as young as two years of age through a controversial "play technique", wherein play is deemed to be symbolic of unconscious thoughts and feelings and interpreted like talk analysis in adults. If one views the activity of writing as equivalent to play, it is by no means far-fetched to psychoanalyze someone on the basis of all available information although the functional difference between art and life is perhaps reduced in the process. Obviously the relationship of Gide with his mother is paramount, Gide's "disinterest" in women, according to Reid, being its outcome. Much emphasis is

placed on understanding early or intimate parts of Gide's life where the search for meaning leaves significant scope to the therapist/critic's interpretation.

Apparently not all psychoanalysts would agree that Kleinian doctrine provides a good fit for understanding Gide. With a nod to years of bitter feuds between factions of psychoanalysts, Reid admits in a footnote that Lucey regards Kleinian concepts, classically heterosexual in their derivation from Freud, unsuitable for analysis of the homosexual Gide (p76, note 177). Reid rebuts this objection with an opinion by Hinshelwood, who divests Klein of her Freudian heritage more explicitly than Klein herself.

Without entering into the ongoing debates, I found Reid's literary scholarship impressive. Especially Gide's passion for spying the author, avatars of himself, at work is presented with much subtlety. Self-reflexive verbal pronouncements of the writer or artist cannot be taken at face value by those who wish to illuminate unconscious patterns in an aesthetic framework. Often the writers themselves distrust their conscious motivations. As for Gide, he might well have encouraged us to be *disponible* to the curious adventure Reid proposes.

What is certain is that Gide's curiosity, both in a passive and in an active sense, is well worth studying. Rare are the writers whose attitude is fueled by an equally insatiable hunger to experience the world. Klaus Mann called Gide's "la pointe extrême de la curiosité de l'esprit." Moreover, experiencing the world, and simultaneously or subsequently sharing his response to interest, intrigue, move, entertain, shock, enthrall or tantalize others was Gide's vocation in his own estimation, as Reid amply demonstrates. When inert and listless he felt that something was terribly wrong. He declared a strong kinship with Goethe, who engaged in similarly passionate universalist pursuits.

Reid divides the subject into three parts: sexual, scientific, and writerly curiosity. This tripartite division is somewhat arbitrary because, as has been noted many times, curiosity of any sort is charged with sexuality and we are reminded of Freud's opinion that sublimated sexuality reemerges powerfully to motivate research as well as artistic creation. Nonetheless, the separate chapters provide a useful scaffold. In a tacit challenge to Descartes, physical and spiritual spheres are also intertwined. This characteristic would seem to make Reid's project all the more plausible, since the web of psychoanalytical understanding encompasses the whole of Gide's conscious and subconscious endeavors. One might add that Reid appears to share at least some measure of Gide's defining characteristic - epistemophilia - in that she has degrees in French, German, and EU policy-making, and, to judge by the cover's nature photography, seems to have more than a passing acquaintance with the fauna that so fascinated Gide. However, despite the potential fit of the project's parameters, I have misgivings about its execution.

For many readers the author Gide is a pied piper, a magician, a kind of guru, whose Dionysian excesses mimic religious ecstasy: "Ne souhaite pas, Nathanaël, trouver Dieu ailleurs que partout", intones Ménalque at the beginning of *Les Nourritures terrestres*. Gide's cool rationality, on the other hand, is equally hard to distinguish from exhibitionism. Nonetheless, his literary qualities were rarely put in doubt. Charisma, however, does not survive the psychoanalyst's couch where not only fervor and risk-taking, but also the myriad shades of irony, are reduced to symptoms. By offering explanations, Reid seems to refuse to enter into Gide's game, but what is more serious, in attempting to account for the breadth, depth and variability of Gide's pursuits, Reid implicitly claims near-omniscience into motivations which are highly problematical.

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Lonergan, David, resp. *Paroles d'Acadie : anthologie de la littérature acadienne (1958-2009)*. Coll. Agora. Sudbury : Éditions Prise de parole, 2010. 447 p.

En fallait-il une autre ? Puisque Lonergan ne les nomme pas toutes, rappelons que *Paroles d'Acadie* suit de près l'anthologie de Thibodeau (2009) qui était précédée, elle, des collections de Kolboom / Mann[1] (pp. 357-790 sur 1013 p., 2005), Leblanc / Beausoleil (1999), Cogswell / Elder (bilingue en 2 vol., 1990), Després / Paratte (bilingue en 2 vol., 1985), Maillet / Leblanc / Émont (1979, réimpr. 1992) et Nepveu / Shouldice (dans *Ellipse* 16, bilingue, 1974). Huitième du genre en moins de quarante ans, l'anthologie de Lonergan se distingue pourtant de la plupart des autres en ne se limitant pas à la seule poésie (y figurent aussi le roman et le théâtre) et rappelle ainsi le monument fondateur (630 p.) de Maillet *et al.*, à cette différence capitale près qu'elle ne fait plus remonter la littérature acadienne jusqu'à Marc Lescarbot et le dix-septième siècle.

Quelle est donc la mise à jour de la prose en Acadie depuis Maillet *et al.* qui justifierait une nouvelle anthologie et qu'est-ce qui s'est passé en 1958 ? Lonergan ne le dit pas, faisant naître la littérature acadienne moderne plutôt en 1972, année de la fondation des Éditions d'Acadie (depuis disparues) et de leur premier livre, *Cri de terre* de Raymond Guy LeBlanc. La mémoire a retenu et la bibliographie confirme 1958 comme l'année charnière où parurent *Pointe-aux-Coques* d'Antonine Maillet et *Silences à nourrir de sang* de Ronald Després. Lonergan ne documentera qu'en poésie la période de « l'accession à la modernité » allant de 1958 à 1971 (année de *La Sagouine*), ne présentant que deux textes en prose d'avant 1972. Pour la deuxième et troisième décennie (1972-1989), ses sélections ne coïncident avec Maillet *et al.* (1979 et 1992) que deux fois : « Le recensement » d'Antonine Maillet et, heureuse reprise, un extrait du *Djibou* de Laval Goupil ; il augmente le fonds Maillet *et al.* de cinq nouveaux textes. En ce qui concerne le reste des choix pour les années 1970 et, évidemment, pour les décennies suivantes, il entre en concurrence avec Kolboom / Mann qu'il « suit », sans doute sans le savoir, non moins de onze fois, de *Pélagie-la-Charrette* (1979) à *Bloupe* (Jean Babineau, 1993). Il est regrettable que sur une cinquantaine de textes, neuf seulement soient tirés de pièces de théâtre, dont la dernière en date, *Le filet : une tragédie maritime* de Marcel-Romain Thériault (2009). Le survol qu'offre Lonergan des romancières[2] et dramaturges élargit dans une certaine mesure le champ des textes en prose disponibles en anthologie, sans que l'actualisation du corpus néglige entièrement celles qui ont fondé la modernité acadienne. Toute anthologiste a droit à la subjectivité comme chaque critique a droit à la sienne. À ce titre, admettons que le « trou noir » dans lequel était tombée la prose acadienne après 1979 aurait pu être comblé davantage et que certaines omissions paraissent d'autant plus étonnantes. Celle, par exemple, de *La Mariecomo* de Régis Brun dont l'usage d'un certain parler acadien ne dérange plus et qui a su inventer une structure romanesque savamment orchestrée. On regrette également l'absence de Dyane Léger romancière qui éveilla la scène littéraire avec deux ouvrages-choc. Et il manque des extraits de *Moncton mantra* de Gérald Leblanc et des nombreux livres de Serge Patrice Thibodeau. D'autre part, c'est l'impossibilité légale de reproduire qui aura privé le public de quelques pages de l'œuvre considérable de Jacques Savoie, à commencer par la belle fable rappelant Jackie Vautour, *Raconte-moi Massabielle*. Lonergan a bien fait de protéger de l'oubli Jules Boudreau, Germaine Comeau, Christiane Saint-Pierre et d'autres et de privilégier Herménégilde Chiasson, France Daigle et Jean Babineau. Toujours est-il que la part de la prose, comparée à celle réservée à la poésie, n'est pas suffisante pour

[1] *Akadien […]*, Heidelberg, Synchron Publishers (<www.synchron-publishers.com>).

[2] Le cas échéant, le féminin grammatical désigne les deux genres sexuels.

rattraper le terrain perdu depuis 1979. Peut-être faudra-t-il un jour publier une anthologie de rien d'autre que la prose.

Quant à la production poétique, *Paroles d'Acadie* doit se mesurer par rapport à l'anthologie de Thibodeau. Il s'en démarque en n'incluant ni les deux prêtres Landry et Lanteigne nés avant 1900 et dont les recueils parurent quelques années avant 1958, ni les plus jeunes nés après 1979 (Mathieu Gallant et Sarah M. Brideau) ; d'autre part, il semble l'imiter, car sur les quarante-cinq poètes qui figurent entre ces dates chez Thibodeau, vingt-quatre se retrouvent chez lui (qui en a vingt-neuf au total). La convergence s'avère évidemment bien moindre pour ce qui est du choix des textes : Lonergan n'en répète que quinze, les iconiques et incontournables comme « Cri de terre » ou « Eugénie Melanson » ou « Éloge du chiac ». Ce qui a été retenu et omis obéit forcément à des critères personnels et il serait oisif de s'y attarder tant que sont représentées la multiplicité des voix, la variabilité des styles et la place de chaque poème dans la mosaïque littéraire du pays, ce qui est pertinemment le cas. Mais les lectures que propose Lonergan, aussi nouvelles et nombreuses soient-elles, ne font en fin de compte qu'empiéter sur l'espace de la prose et confirmer le projet poétique national déjà documenté dans les anthologies précédentes.

Paroles d'Acadie est un ouvrage sans Table des matières, sans squelette immédiatement apparent qui le structure ou le divise en époques ou mouvements ou thèmes. C'est seulement dans la Préface, une sorte de bibliographie narrée et commentée (13-40), que l'ensemble de la littérature est ordonné en cinq parties dûment titrées. Quant aux textes choisis, il appert qu'ils se suivent selon un principe organisateur essentiellement chronologique ; à la lectrice alors d'insérer tel ou tel extrait dans la grille précédemment établie. Lonergan lui facilite la tâche avec de brèves notices bio-bibliographiques pour chaque auteure, avec des indications précises de sources et de dates pour chaque extrait et avec une longue bibliographie des œuvres donnée dans l'ordre alphabétique des auteures (421-45).

Fallait-il donc publier cette autre anthologie ? Pourquoi pas ? Lonergan, dramaturge, biographe, conteur et infatigable chroniqueur culturel, connaît assez les mille histoires du quotidien créateur en Acadie sans pour autant perdre de vue la grande Histoire de cette « petite » littérature (F. Paré) qu'il résume ici par son choix de textes mémorables ou qui méritent de le devenir.

Concluons en notant que depuis la disparition des Éditions d'Acadie un nombre non négligeable de livres acadiens paraissent ou se vendent dans cette autre « petite » communauté, la franco-ontarienne[3]. Au chapitre de la colonisation culturelle, main-mise de qui sur qui ? À suivre.

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Courtemanche, Gil. *Un lézard au Congo*. Paris : Denoël, 2010. 181 p.

Dans son troisième roman, Gil Courtemanche nous entraîne à nouveau en Afrique par le truchement d'un narrateur, Claude Tremblay, qui n'est pas sans quelques ressemblances avec celui qui témoignait des horreurs commises au Rwanda dans *Un dimanche à la piscine à Kigali* (Boréal, 2000). Ce Québécois de trente-cinq ans, analyste politique à la cour pénale de La Haye, enquête depuis trois ans sur un criminel de guerre congolais, Thomas Kabanga (patronyme légèrement modifié de Thomas Lubanga). Il a accumulé contre lui d'accablantes pièces à conviction qui prouvent ses forfaits et son rôle majeur dans la conscription et l'enrôlement forcé d'enfants. Aussi, lorsque s'ouvre son procès, le juriste pense-t-il l'affaire entendue et la condamnation du coupable inéluctable. Mais

[3] Voir <http://www.livres-disques.ca/prise_parole/home/index.cfm>.

Kabanga est relâché à la suite d'un vice de procédure. La vie de Tremblay va alors basculer. Déçu par la justice aléatoire des institutions internationales, ainsi que par une terre d'adoption, la Hollande, « le plus civilisé des pays barbares » (86), où il ne s'est jamais vraiment senti à l'aise, il entreprend pour la première fois un voyage en Afrique, dans la petite ville de Bunia, pour traquer personnellement Kabanga.

Les premiers chapitres de l'ouvrage livrent une réflexion amère sur la vie du protagoniste et sur la distance qui l'a peu à peu séparé d'un entourage conventionnel et bourgeois, qui ne l'a jamais compris. Obsédé par le désir de faire respecter le droit, hanté par les destins brisés des enfants soldats, Tremblay semble paradoxalement prisonnier d'une mission altruiste qui l'éloigne des autres. Aussi, lorsqu'il s'envole pour Bunia en compagnie de Myriam, une collègue somalienne dont il s'est épris, le lecteur a-t-il l'impression qu'une page ratée de son existence se tourne et que le roman proprement dit, de même que la véritable enquête, commence. Et sans doute le narrateur le croit-il lui-même. Mais dans la petite ville africaine où il débarque, règnent l'opacité, la peur, le désir de vengeance et la corruption. Le même Tremblay déboussolé ne peut que s'enfoncer dans ses désillusions et assister impuissant au spectacle de sa défaite. Son « couple » se délite et ses idéaux de justice s'étiolent. Les tête-à-tête véhéments qu'il avait imaginés, dans l'ombre de son bureau, avec Kabanga, se muent en conversations de bar débonnaires avec un criminel devenu pasteur. Faute d'être le brillant défenseur d'enfants martyrisés, il ne pourra que devenir l'avocat éphémère et désabusé d'un bourreau dont il n'empêchera pas la mort expéditive. Il devra quitter l'Afrique au terme d'un voyage infructueux que ne l'aura mené que de la Haye à la haine. De nulle part, toujours en porte-à-faux, étranger perpétuel par amour de l'humanité, son seul compagnon de débâcle est un lézard nommé Marcel, qu'il emporte avec lui dans un exil breton, où il dépérira. Emblème ambivalent, ce petit reptile paresseux et discret, également synonyme, dans la langue française, de difficulté, donne un titre ironique à une relation désenchantée.

Dix ans après *Un dimanche*, roman éclatant et terrible qui nous introduisait brutalement dans la sauvagerie du génocide et dans le feu de l'action, ce récit, qui se déroule dans la période floue d'après les exactions, est tout à la fois plus sobre et plus pesant. Le cheminement confus et difficile de son protagoniste solitaire en fait l'antithèse d'une grande fresque politico-guerrière. Aucun haut fait ne s'y produit, aucune solidarité ne s'y révèle, aucune destinée ne s'y accomplit, aucune bataille ne s'y gagne. Engagement et nobles causes sont malmenés, mal perçus, mal conclus. Seule la litanie des jeunes victimes, qui déchirent le récit de leurs témoignages poignants, perturbent la langueur d'une quête qui n'aboutira pas. Par ce récit économe, dénué d'aventures, d'héroïsme et de triomphe, Courtemanche enfonce son lecteur dans un quotidien incertain, précaire, voire absurde où prévaut l'image d'une humaine condition navrante et d'une civilisation incapable d'affronter les démons de son temps. Aussi, même fictif, cet ouvrage, né d'une expérience personnelle, est-il davantage la chronique d'un échec qu'un récit de guerre. A travers un idéaliste devenu, au fil des pages, un antihéros malheureux, il livre un constat sans concession sur l'impossibilité de la justice moderne à combattre la barbarie. Même s'il s'agit d'une plongée dans l'imaginaire, même si le vrai Lubanga, depuis, a dû comparaître devant un tribunal, le lecteur retire de ce récit une profonde impression de malaise. Sans résilience ni résolution, ouvert sur un projet humanitaire ambitieux mais clos sur un souhait intime empreint d'une grande tristesse : « Je ne veux pas mourir seul » (181), il s'en dégage avant tout des relents de frustration et de culpabilité.

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