

Reviews

Chaurand, Jacques. *Les parlars et les hommes*. 2 vol. Éd. Marie-Rose Simoni-Aurembou et Marianne Mulon. Paris : Société française d'onomastique, 1992. 767 + 511 pp.

Jacques Chaurand is probably best known for two works: *Introduction à l'histoire de la dialectologie française* (1972) and *Introduction à l'histoire du vocabulaire français* (1977). *Les parlars et les hommes* is a large collection of articles written by Jacques Chaurand during his long and distinguished career. It was published in commemoration of his elevation to the status of emeritus professor at the University of Paris-Nord-Villetanneuse.

Friends, former students and colleagues chose to pay tribute to Chaurand by selecting and publishing seventy-two studies, written by Chaurand during the course of his career. These articles cover a wide range of topics, representative of his contribution to a large variety of fields: onomastics, linguistics, medieval studies, modern French language and literature, etymology, and dialectology. We are indebted to the co-editors for a number of reasons. First of all, while most of the chapters in these two volumes had been previously published, many appeared in periodicals that are not readily available today, particularly in North America. As a result, many important studies were unavailable, if not unknown, to scholars outside of France. Secondly, many of these articles were updated and expanded before being reprinted here. Thirdly, the editors have also added a number of previously unpublished studies. The result is a fitting monument to the scholarship of this distinguished scholar.

The breadth of Chaurand's research interests is reflected by the organization of the material. The first volume is divided into three parts. The first part, dealing with medieval studies, is largely literary in nature. It includes six articles on Guibert de Nogent, five on Chrétien de Troyes, and seven on subjects ranging from Cistercian sermons to medieval education in northern France. The second part deals with both literature and linguistics. It focuses on dialectology in the Picardy and Champagne regions of France. The third part, "Toponomie et histoire du paysage," deals with onomastics and, in particular, the study of place names across France. The article "Hydronymie d'un marais : le marais de la Souche" is of particular interest because of the thoroughness with which the author has analysed his subject. It is fifty-three pages long and serves as a model to students interested in linguistic atlases and similar studies.

The second volume begins with a section on French language and discourse. Fourteen articles cover subjects ranging from the history of vocabulary and a study of the word "gothic" in the works of Chateaubriand, to a study of the adjectives "plaine de" and "vuide de" in the fifteenth century. The second part deals with the history of the French language and with language historians from the twelfth century to the present. The final section is a collection of five articles which do not really fit the categories mentioned above. Of particular interest to Canadian scholars is the article "Le conte de la Baleine Blanche tiré de *Pélagie-la-Charrette*." Chaurand, basing his study on the theories of Greimas, examines linguistic phenomena of the text of this tale, in order to demonstrate the extent to which narrative techniques distinguish the tale within the novel from the larger text.

We are left with the impression of a scholar with very wide interests, whose research is probing and whose style of writing is clear, succinct and, mercifully, jargon-free, contrary to many of his young imitators in the generation of scholars which follows. The editors might have done well to consider the inclusion of a

biographical article at the beginning of the work, in which the reader might have been properly introduced to the career and achievements of Jacques Chaurand. While his contributions are well known to his friends and colleagues, they are not apparent to all potential readers of this collection.

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Brody, Jules. *Nouvelles lectures de Montaigne*. Études montaignistes 15. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1994. 193 p.

This is the second book on Montaigne by the eminent American scholar who has published extensively since the 1950's on French literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His earlier book on Montaigne, entitled *Lectures de Montaigne*, was published in 1982 by French Forum. The introduction and first two chapters are revised from versions previously published, but the last four chapters in this stimulating book represent new scholarly contributions.

Brody's basic thesis is that we should avoid the temptation of reading the *Essais* purely as an autobiographical work in which Montaigne systematically presents his reflections on his life and temperament and on philosophical and political topics. He argues quite persuasively that such a rigidly autobiographical approach to the *Essais* does not enable critics to explain thoroughly the presence or relevance of the many Latin quotations and apparent digressions in the three books. In a clear effort to avoid a thematic reading of Montaigne's masterpiece, Brody proposes "philological readings" for several famous chapters, including "De l'expérience" (III, 13) and "Du repentir" (III, 2), but also for several unjustly neglected chapters, including "Du démentir" (II, 18) and "De l'art de conférer" (III, 8). Brody defines the term "philological reading" as a method for analyzing the meaning of specific terms in context, in relation to other uses by Montaigne of the same or similar words in the same chapter, but also in relation to the Latin quotations that form an integral part of the *Essais*. His analysis of the different levels of meaning for the key terms "entière" and "forme" in Montaigne's well-known comment: "Chaque homme porte la forme entière de l'humaine condition" ("Du repentir"), is brilliant and shows us that this remark is especially relevant in a chapter in which Montaigne argues against repentance. Montaigne's argument, which goes against the long tradition of repentance within the Catholic Church to which he belonged, is that because every person possesses the full range of human strengths and weaknesses, each of us should remain faithful to his or her own understanding of "l'humaine condition."

Brody's analysis of Montaigne's chapter "De l'art de conférer" both as a monologue with himself and as a dialogue with the many classical writers cited in this chapter, is equally astute. Brody has a solid knowledge of classical literature and this makes him sensitive to the very subtle ways by which Montaigne defined his own positions in relation to similar ideas expressed by such great thinkers of the classical and patristic era as Cicero, Seneca, Socrates, and St. Augustine. The lengthy bibliography in this book demonstrates that Brody is well acquainted with the works of the most creative modern Montaigne critics. The depth of his scholarship is impressive. Although his chapters on "Du démentir" and a most curious final chapter entitled "Les oreilles de Montaigne" contain too much critical jargon for this reviewer's tastes, this minor blemish does not diminish the significance of Brody's most recent contribution to Montaigne scholarship.

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Forsyth, Elliott. *La tragédie française de Jodelle à Corneille (1553-1640) : le thème de la vengeance*. Éd. revue et augmentée. Paris : Honoré Champion, 1993. xxix + 484 p.

Publié pour la première fois en 1962, le volume V de la collection « Études et essais sur la Renaissance » vient de reparaitre tel quel, encadré d'une préface commentant des textes publiés depuis 1961 et d'un « Supplément » bibliographique.

En 412 pages, Forsyth explore les origines et fluctuations de la vengeance comme fait social et anthropologique dans une partie du monde occidental, et suit leurs traces dans les tragédies françaises de la Renaissance. Utile pour l'histoire littéraire, ce survol de la vengeance (dans les traditions françaises médiévales, les interprétations de la Bible au XVI^e siècle, les traditions de la Grèce antique et de trois pays d'Europe) présente donc des discussions sur les rapports entre l'individu, la collectivité et les pouvoirs. Selon le temps et l'espace, la vengeance (individuelle, collective, légalisée ou divine) change de signification, blâmée ou reconnue comme passion, réparation, nécessité ou trahison dans ses relations aux notions de justice, réputation, honneur, autorité humaine ou divinisée.

Les références idéologiques de ce texte et les questions qu'il pose pourraient servir de repères pour observer l'élaboration, à l'âge classique, d'un pouvoir royal qui a renforcé et exploité la structure hiérarchique de la forteresse patriarcale. Pour les chercheurs des vingt dernières années, habitués aux discours anthropologiques et féministes de Said, Laqueur et Torgovnick par exemple, le langage de Forsyth apparaîtra comme un retour aux implications des canons traditionnels. La préface pertinente et honnête de 1993 ne parvient pas à redresser, pour les années 1990, un discours parfaitement respectable en 1962.

Dans sa nouvelle préface, l'auteur, citant les quatre constructions du « baroque » dégagées par Jacquot (hégémonie de la monarchie et de l'Église ; thème macabre et passionnel ; thème de la métamorphose / illusion ; analyse stylistique d'oppositions) précise que son étude se réfère à la deuxième et à la quatrième constructions. Deux idées centrales résultent de sa lecture de cent ans de « vengeance » dans la tragédie française (1553-1640). Parmi les influences qui ont façonné les pièces de la Renaissance, la forme sénèqueenne est restée prépondérante jusqu'à ce que Hardy, Tristan l'Hermitte, Garnier et enfin Corneille s'en « libèrent » pour « établir un théâtre tragique qui sera authentiquement français » (409). Dans les tragédies précornéliennes, le thème de la vengeance, utilisé d'abord comme décoration ou ressort de l'intrigue, a pu servir d'instrument didactique pour exposer les questions brûlantes sur la perversion des tyrans (1572), ou alimenter la délectation macabre. Il aboutit plus tard en France qu'en Angleterre au complexe sentiment du « dilemme » qui est l'intériorisation par un individu (le « héros tragique ») du conflit qui existait jusque là entre des forces séparées.

Historiens et critiques littéraires peuvent envisager avec profit les questions thématiques liant vengeance et dilemme de « l'Âge baroque » à « l'Âge classique ». Utiliser le signe « vengeance » comme éclairage conducteur dans l'étude des tragédies de 1553 à 1640 permet d'y considérer divers héritages culturels et les répercussions des événements sociaux contemporains. Il faut apprécier le livre de Forsyth pour son érudition (liste bibliographique des tragédies), son idée sur l'importance de Sénèque en dramaturgie française et sa recherche sur l'histoire fascinante de la vengeance.

Marie-José Arey

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Despland, Michel. *Reading an Erased Code: Romantic Religion and Literary Aesthetics in France*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994. 222 p.

Each of the five chapters of Despland's book is devoted to a specific writer (Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Nodier, Vigny and Nerval). These chapters were originally published as separate articles in various journals, and have been rewritten with an introduction and a conclusion for this book. One always suspects, when embarking on a text of this kind, that it will turn out to be disjointed and annoyingly diffuse. The reader need have no such fear in this instance. Despland has done an admirable job of linking together his five writers, both in the chapters that study them individually, and especially in the introduction and conclusion.

The common thread that Despland chooses to study is the attitude of these five men to religious experience. He uses their readings of the Bible to define a shift in the writer's relationship to religion that became apparent with the romantics. The goal is not, however, to prove that literature in the nineteenth century simply and directly presented itself as a replacement for traditional religious belief. What actually happened, Despland argues, is that literary aesthetics and new literary practices among the romantics changed current relationships between literature and religion. Faith in scripture as a narrative of "real" historical events and "facts" gave way to a literary reading of Scripture that emphasised the impact made on the reader by the spirit of its most powerful pages.

This shift was not limited to any one national literature. Despland picks out those elements specific to France, and, in his examination of individual writers, he is careful to distinguish their attitudes from similar ones in English and German texts. He explains very carefully the factors that contributed towards a particularly French approach, such as the classical tradition in France, the role of salons in the eighteenth century, the revoking of the Edict of Nantes, and, of course, the French Revolution.

There is obviously no room here to analyse Despland's discussion of individual writers, so suffice it to say that it is done with clarity and authority. He chooses to focus on the aesthetics of each writer's approach to scripture: Rousseau's use of autobiographical narrative and his insistence that "the real me [...] is a religious me" (10); Chateaubriand's use of fiction inserted within a religious treatise; Vigny's experiment with narrative within narratives; the use of fantastic motifs by Nodier; Nerval's attempt to introduce encounters both with foreign civilizations and his own periods of madness.

This is not an easy book to write, for, in addition to analysing the particular contributions and aesthetics of the five writers studied, it has to place them in a much broader and complex intellectual and literary history. Consequently, a lot of ground has to be covered, particularly in the introduction and conclusion, since it is here that the threads are drawn together. Not surprisingly, these two sections of the book are especially dense. Yet they are written clearly and attractively. Despland guides the reader with great aplomb through a maze in which many writers would simply have lost themselves, and their reader. He has produced a book that is scholarly without being pedantic, erudite yet very readable.

David J. Bond

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Pasco, Allan H. *Allusion: A Literary Graft*. Theory/Culture. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994. 247 p.

This cohesive and lucidly argued study explores the manner in which allusion functions as a literary device, enriching the reading experience. In an introduction that establishes a firm critical base for the readings to follow, Pasco uses the botanical analogy of the graft to portray the essentially metaphorical relationship created when an alluding text evokes and uses another text: "The two texts—plant and implant, stock and scion—bond to make a new creation, different from either of the component texts, quite different from what the text would have been without the external material, and, in addition, distinct from what exists outside the work in hand" (6). Such a metaphoric combination, giving rise in the reader's mind to "an image that is distinct from any one of its constituent terms" (13), allows the author to differentiate between allusion and what he perceives as the two other principal categories of intertextuality: imitation which is foremost an attempt to echo previous success, and opposition which emphasizes difference and disparateness. Pasco thus offers a precisely nuanced definition for allusion as a textual strategy, and a necessarily compacted overview within which the device can be helpfully situated in relation to others.

The following seven chapters consider, in order of increasing complexity, examples of "the three-pronged relationship of text, external text, and metaphorical combination" (15) which, for Pasco, characterizes within literature the allusive event. In his readings, which focus on writers of the nineteenth and twentieth century, the author examines how the merging of two texts, resulting in something quite different from either one of them, may be used as a device to communicate to the reader a meaning of central importance in the literary work. Thus, in the case of Barbey d'Aureville's "Le rideau cramoisi," Pasco demonstrates how, by means of numerous parallels, the tale told by the Viscount de Brassard recalls certain fundamental elements of Stendhal's *Le rouge et le noir*, eliciting, through such conjunction, something additional: "the theme of satanism, which is nowhere referred to explicitly" (68). From the relatively straightforward patterns of allusion attributed to works by Flaubert, Anouilh and Barbey, Pasco moves on to deal with Proust's "allusive complex," "oppositional allusion" in Giraudoux, Gide and Balzac, what he terms "allusive oxymoron" in Zola's *La faute de l'abbé Mouret*, and finally the more problematic permutations of allusion present in works by Sartre and Robbe-Grillet. His insistent emphasis on function, his consistent highlighting of a metaphoric "third term or synthesis" (160) within individual works, his breadth of example and measured application—all of these qualities ensure a study which furthers our understanding not only of allusion itself but of the literary works discussed in relation to the device. As the author progresses from one allusive pattern to the next, he reiterates allusion's essential relationship, sets forth various models as developments of a single common thread, and in this way provides a consequent and eminently accessible path of enquiry. At the same time, he respects the integrity of the specific texts he uses as examples, considers the pronouncements of other critics, and thus advances a reading which builds upon and, on occasion, challenges previous views of these texts (for example, he argues that, in Flaubert's "Un cœur simple," the network of parallel allusions to the New Testament does not allow an ironic interpretation of Félicité's deathbed vision of the parrot).

Whether or not his interpretations are fully espoused, Pasco's work will appeal to both student and teacher alike. Recognizing "the infinitely expansible potential of intertextuality" (3) and the theoretical challenge this entails, he has chosen but one aspect of the subject, attempted to make firm and pertinent distinctions while

maintaining a rigorous focus, and, in so doing, generated greater insight into the whole. His study also remains, in more general terms, a celebration of the act of reading, of the role assigned to the reader—for, as he argues, it is only in the reader's mind that the metaphoric conjunction proper to allusion can reach full literary fruition.

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Redonnet, Marie. *Candy Story*. Trans. Alexandra Quinn. European Women Writers Series. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995. 99 p.

Candy Story is the fourth novel by Marie Redonnet to appear in this series, testimony to the author's important place on the French literary scene and to the increasing interest in her work in North America. Translations of three previous novels, *Hôtel Splendid*, *Forever Valley* and *Rose Mellie Rose*, were published in 1994 (see *Dalhousie French Studies* 33 [1995]:156-57).

Candy Story is resonant with the haunting and somehow disturbing images familiar to readers of Redonnet. These images seem to tap directly into unconscious wellsprings, evoking nebulous, ill-defined emotional responses, leaving impressions of a world that seems familiar because it is situated in a precise geographic locale (Paris and environs). Yet at the same time the landscape is distinctly, insistently, resiliently unfamiliar. This persistent sense of unfamiliarity is created in part by a prose style scrubbed of lyrical or rhetorical elements. Most often described as minimalist, Redonnet's language could also be qualified as antipoetic, reduced as it is to its most essential elements. Reminiscent of fairytales and legends, the extreme simplicity of Redonnet's style is countered by accumulated layers of detail. This is not detail in any Robbe-Grilletian sense; instead, her style has been more accurately compared to Beckett's, to whom Redonnet acknowledges a significant debt, but has found its own unique and unforgettable inflexions. Redonnet's insistence on barely different names is a recurrent narrative tactic. In *Candy Story*, we are launched again into a wild vortex of doubling and consequently almost lose sight of any traditional narrative chronology. Any sense of individual character is confounded by the maze of names that resemble each other to the point of being virtually indistinguishable: Line, Lize, Lenz, Lind, Li, Lina, Lisa. The geography blends in the same manner: Mells-le-Château, Mills-le-Pont, Sise, Sise City. Every spatial configuration, every character, every narrative event provides an opportunity to display the endless repetitive yet fascinating links in a progressively indecipherable chain. It serves to emphasize the rigorous continuity and perpetual metamorphoses of history.

The story of the main character's (Mia) inability to write begins optimistically enough with an exchange of gifts and the potential for a new beginning. Twenty-one chapters take the reader from the first day of summer vacation, which is also Mia's and her mother Ma's birthday, to the end three months later, on the first day of autumn. A series of disappointments, deaths and losses adds dark overtones to the narrative as Mia attempts to deal with the disasters that assail her. Any potential for transcendental experience or renewal is short-lived or rendered impossible by the inescapable weight of history and the inevitability of illness and death. Mia's search for a solution to her writer's block plays itself out against a backdrop where even those characters involved in some unfathomable nefarious political plot are always writing. As with Redonnet's previous novels, writing and inscription are a major

theme as numerous characters attempt to leave some kind of record of their lives through art, memoirs, poetry. Mia becomes the recipient of this often illegible legacy. The mysterious plot involving the mayor of Rore and his hired assassin will provide the material for Mia's second book, *Candy Story*, but at the cost of many lives and most notably that of her lover Kell. Because it comes at such a heavy price, any sense of satisfaction or resolution is precluded. Mia is set adrift in an existential void, no longer connected to the past and uncertain as to the future.

Jeannette Gaudet

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