

BOOK REVIEWS

'CHRISTOPHER FELLING. *Literary Texts and the Greek Historian*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. Pp. x +338. £65.00 cloth; £17.99 paper.

Classical historians to judge by more recent publications are beginning to look like rabbits caught in headlights, with a choice between remaining frozen in a dangerous position or scattering to seek more promising if obscure pasture. Conference proceedings are filled with new insights and prospects for "exploration," and publishers enthuse over approaches which bear suspicious resemblance to escape hatches into communication studies. This book explains that it is one of a series providing "an introduction to the problems and methods involved in the study of ancient history." (D. Potter's *Literary Texts and the Roman Historian* has already appeared.) It "takes a series of extended test cases, and discusses how we should and should not try to exploit the texts." It "concentrates on Athens in the second half of the fifth century." It "suggests new ways in which literary criticism can illuminate the society from which these texts sprang." Pelling tries valiantly to do all these things, but in the end it still looks like the same old philological-historical-philosophical-tragical commentary we remember from our youth, and piquant globs of LitCrit parmesan are not going to disguise so easily the fare beneath. The book is indeed a series of extended discussions of specific classical texts. There would be other ways of tackling the issues posed by the title, and Pelling, a trained philologist, feels he is an outsider "for good or ill" (Preface) in taking some examples to discuss methodological issue about "historical truth," and he deals with oratory, history, tragedy, comedy, feminist readings, shining his lamp into the dark corners of lying rhetoric and masculine chauvinism. Each section of some ancient author is discussed, sometimes with shorter excerpts cited in translation, but the reader is supposed to be familiar with the texts, and sometimes with the arguments too; scholarly arguments on various sides are weighed, balanced, and found wanting as appropriate. Pelling is learned and he is open-minded; he has tried here and there to see the advantages for Greek historiography of some of the modern theories applied to it, rightly or wrongly. One feels that he must be excellent in running a seminar, eager to see and demonstrate as many sides of a problem as he

possible can, unwilling to go for the single explanation, in the best traditions of the Oxford tutorial.

First therefore, this book is no introduction. After forty years teaching classics, I still sometimes had difficulty in following the arguments about passages whose interpretation has been debated for hundreds of years; the ideal would-be student of ancient history armed with dubious Greek and Latin, even more dubious French German and Italian would have great trouble with this material. Since the book eschews anything but English it presumably addresses an even more embryonic academic stage. I fear that Felling's strategy must limit its already limited appeal to a very few students of an older generation, or a PhD student of classical history at a good university, or maybe his own seminar students. This review is no place to discuss further the complex arguments about these often over-discussed passages. I should instead recommend students of historiography to read a good commentary to a historian or orator where they would find enough discussion of the interpretations possible. Students of history these days will seldom be advanced students of Euripidean scholarship as well. They should rather know what Ephorus or Polybius or Lucian thought of history before they tackle performance criticism. Here they will not find any guide to classical historiography.

Secondly, does it really make much pedagogical sense to deal with orators, historians and drama, but not with what is peculiarly important for the ancient historian, epigraphy? Classical historians check their texts against the control of inscriptions, where they have them; but epigraphers know that what is on a public stone has the same interpretive problems as a text, and it is in a sense a literary text for public consumption. Why not tell us that when we check the text of Thucydides against the epigraphic record, we find puzzling anomalies? First historians need to control their texts against epigraphy and archaeology; only then can they turn to the *Quellenforschung* that Felling seems to love, but never discusses in the abstract. This book does indeed have the title of "Literary Texts and the Greek Historian" but no one today thinks of "the (modern) Greek historian" as operating solely as a literary critic. Here is the problem writ large. Felling knows that a historian is looking for facts and what was done, said and thought; but he writes as if historians should behave like literary critics, and be happy if they can determine that this or that was a piece of good and moral writing, even if it is a pack of lies. That frankly is not his mandate.

What is it? The scholar of the ancient world knows, e.g., that every single fact we are told about the poet Euripides is false; this amounts to a staggering amount of fiction. Greeks were good, indeed too good, at inventing history. He quotes Finley's now slightly antiquated maxim that we underestimate their capacity to lie and believe lies (47). In these more cynical times, it is rightly said that any outright statement of fact by an Athenian orator is false. They lied easily in public, and enjoyed it. We should expect it. We know their rhetoric, formal and informal, and Greek literature can be a wasteland of mendacity for the historian. Now we read Felling's summation of this rhetorical bent: "no fact is interpretation-free" (6). What he means is that no "statement" is interpretation free. Every fact is arguably interpretation free, or it is not a fact. Even at this level Felling mixes his categories, because he thinks of history as texts only, and putting "facts" in inverted commas only obscures the problem further. If we are going to talk of method and theory, we have to be more precise than this. He argues that the Greek writers geared their works to what the audience wanted to hear and that this is a plus for us, because we can then deduce what the audience wanted to hear (but in fact this strategy would need severe modification); it is a minus "when we come to disentangle what really happened," i.e. for the historian. We can't do too much about the second apparently, but the first point is one that recurs throughout the book; we may not get the facts but we are fortunate that we can work out what ancient Greeks thought ("reconstructing mentalities," or, as he calls this, *more Gallico*, 37). We should, he suggests, concentrate on that, for it is rewarding and interesting. (At this point I remembered Oscar Wilde's bon mot: the ancient historians gave us delightful fiction in the form of fact, while the modern novelist gives us dull facts under the guise of fiction.) So, for example, we can rescue the good Plutarch from charges of historical incompetence by concentrating on his "ethical focus" (47). "Plutarch," we are even instructed, "can sensitize us to new reading strategies" (60). All very well, but we thought we were looking for history, and facts, not the morality of Platonizing country gentlemen.

If the reader tries to follow this train of thought as it chugs along, he will discover himself shunted into odd sidings, for Felling, always ready to question his own assumptions, seems to discover as we proceed that this cheerful enjoyment of Greek mendacity is not such an easy concept after all. "The audience" that listens to rhetoric in the lawcourts or ecclesia or theatre turns out to have different ideas, and different reactions, because it consists of different people. He does not indeed resurrect "ideal spectators," but

celebrates their diversity: "We have found questions about the audience more illuminating than questions about the playwright's views" (162). By page 186, things are getting tricky: "Many will have been disillusioned...", "many must have felt...", "[m]any though would have nothing but distaste...", and so on. After asserting the shocked reaction of the audience to Euripides' *Medea*, he ponders: "Let us take three imaginary members of the audience..." (199) but apparently none of them is shocked, since A is dismissive, B is thoughtful and C is pleased. By page 226 he is ready to distinguish three more possible spectators, and assign views to them, but then reflects that any one of these may be of two minds, or even three... As we reach our destination with his audience now in deconstructed tatters, he has reached the conclusion that we should "resist reduction to 'the Audience think that'..." (247). Indeed; but along the road we seem to have lost his audience and their "mentality" altogether. It is no easy matter to talk about collective behaviour or thinking, and we needed to have this clarified at the beginning, before it was made a cardinal justification for hunting for history.

So: was the audience of *Medea* shocked? Felling is certain it collectively was, but "how it was shocked is more difficult to say" (199). Alas, it is impossible to say if it was shocked at all. I personally was not there, but I do not see it being shocked. Perhaps a collective response was that you can expect weird foreign witches without workpermits to say wierd things. I am sorry to say that I do not trust Felling's judgement as to what is generally believed in Athens; his own civilized reasonableness betrays him. For Felling, tragedy can be seen as an oblique method for investigating (= exploring!) moral sensibilities, indeed he feels it is uniquely able to help us (183). Is this true? Can one not rather say that since not a single member of the audience was in danger of marrying their mother and also killing their father, their response, no matter how complex, could only have been: Thank God that this has nothing to do with me? Felling's attempt to shift the historical investigation to the mentality of the audience is fraught with problems he will not face. He should have stuck with the mendacity. But he will have none of it, and resorts to a lateral arabesque.

"We are on firmer ground when we talk not of the audience but of the 'constructed' audience" (197). No, we are not; we are not on the ground at all, but trapped in a bunch of air quotes. The *Orestes* of Euripides was the most popular play of antiquity. For Felling it is written by a disillusioned playwright for a disillusioned audience, and points to "a pessimistic realism" to "a fragmented distinctionless ungoverned world." This is the worthless

Geistesgeschichte of postwar Germany, quaintly updated in English. Felling has managed to read the most excitingly dramatic play of antiquity looking for morals and mentality, and found only the gloomy Karl Reinhardt. The participants in the play are not "appalling" (184), except perhaps to Felling, who obviously would no more want them in his common room than a bunch of escaped convicts, but they are in fact very Greek youthful heros and heroines triumphant over their enemies. No amount of history can be deduced from some texts. If you cannot learn about the U.K. economy from Monty Python's cheese or parrot shops, it is not an advance to argue that the historian can at least learn about UK fragmented realism from the same sources. By page 246 we sense a certain quaking in the subsoil: "*In some cases we are on fairly secure ground most clearly when asking [NB: not answering; we are still exploring] what the audience must be taking for granted if they are not going to be bemused...*" Well, yes; but that does not deny that in most cases we have no idea what the audience (some of..., most of..., bits of...) take for granted, or even if they (some of..., most of..., bits of...) are meant to be bewildered. Felling is getting ready to retreat.

Felling's writing is redolent of decent self-doubt, of anxious compromise, of openendedness. It cripples him by page 227: "There are limits surely on how far laws can be bent for rhetorical purposes." But these limits "may be more elastic than we would think..." What does this mean? There are limits but we have no idea what they are. Let us be honest. There are in reality no limits we can use, apply, recognize. We are almost helpless when faced with the ruthless mendacity of ancient rhetoric. "The historian should not ignore the difficulties..., but equally need not decide which view to take" (245). We know this convoluted language of reasonableness from innumerable articles: "It would be hypersceptical to deny....," "It would not be an unreasonable assumption to suppose...." Felling likes to sit gamely on all possible fences, no matter how uncomfortable the position; but he is after all not a historian, who has to fish or cut bait. His self-doubt extends to the arguments at his disposal. He is most unhappy about an argument he calls oddly "Poirot" on page 35; he defines it as: giving *an* explanation, but not *the* explanation. This means a great deal to him, and occurs throughout the book. Poirot seems to be actually William of Ockham and his razor in disguise. On page 65 the razor is flourished : "It is uneconomical to posit an unknown predecessor." But by page 246 William's methods have been deemed too radical: "we cannot be sure that the simplest, most literal explanation is the right one." We do not expect consistency from people who want to see every side of a question, and are

unwilling to commit to a conclusion. *Ex pede Herculem*. You will know the Oxford classics man by his arguments.

For Felling at the head of his seminar table, plausibility is power (252). Enthymemata live. "Yet it is hard to believe..." is a central argument (77). "There is growing scholarly consensus," which turns into "the consensus view is likely to be the best" (75); we are happiest when we have company. The rhetoric of genteel reasonableness overwhelms the reader, who longs for direction, clarity, lucidity in the morass; surely some of the views he records are simply untenable twaddle? Zeitlin's wilder ideas could be a target for an elegantly witty surgical strike over the port, one might hope. But no, Felling can only manage "reservations," immediately qualified by "there is no need to deny the value ... of much of her arguments." But, all the same, "[t]he Other is not so Other as all that" (219). As all what? The same apparently as on page 187: "This is a democracy which did not find an aristocratic world as alienating as all that...." As alienating as what? And what of "modern theory" and its alleged benefits? We do not need Foucault to tell us that "tragedy asks good questions" (248), or Goldhill to teach that the erotic life has no easy answers. We especially will find it unhelpful to be told that Herodotus is dialogic, with the added "according to Bakhtin" in case we did not know. What we need to know, embarrassing though it be, is how to extract truth from a bunch of mendacious Greeks. But Felling will not be forced off his perch into such vulgarity. "The choice of arguments can still normally be a reasonable one," he worries as he draws to a close on page 251: "...the best they can do; that is all the strategy of this book demands. But sometimes the best is not good enough." This is a book that Canon Chasuble would appreciate. (WILLIAM J. SLATER, MCMASTER UNIVERSITY)

'VALERIA FINUCCI and KEVIN BROWNEE, eds. *Generation and Degeneration: Tropes of Reproduction in Literature and History from Antiquity to Early Modern Europe*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2001. Pp. 327. US \$89.95 cloth, \$25.95 paper.

Charged with the rather onerous task of unifying ten strikingly distinctive essays, Valeria Finucci claims that *Generation and Degeneration* is about "discourses that inform constructions of genealogies, whether we speak of genealogy in the biological sense of procreation and reproduction or in the metaphorical sense of heritage and cultural patrimony" (1). The book's

weakness is its failure to clarify the links — beyond a shared terminology — between the biological and metaphorical discourses or the particular ways in which the latter draw upon or derive from the former. After learning a considerable amount early on about the science underlying cultural attitudes toward reproduction in pre-modern Europe, readers will likely be surprised by the relatively abstract treatments of genealogy in the second half of the book. Nevertheless, the quality of each of the essays makes the discontinuities between them happily bearable.

Predictably, the diverse range of approaches represented in the collection also proves to be one of its most appealing aspects. Investigating reproductive tropes from the fifth century B. C. to the nineteenth century, in such places as Greece, Rome, Egypt, Spain, and England, and in documents as varied as medical tracts, plays, and theological treatises, *Generation and Degeneration* is interdisciplinary in the best sense of the term. Researchers interested in the pre-modern body will find it a useful, even indispensable, contribution to an expanding sub-field inspired by such scholars as Caroline Walker Bynum, Thomas Laqueur, Gail Kern Paster, and most recently, Michael Schoenfeldt. The book is organized into four sections: "Theories of Reproduction," "Boundaries of Sex and Gender," "Female Genealogies," and "The Politics of Inheritance." Essays in the first section demonstrate the degree to which theological interpretations and literary tropes of reproduction were directly influenced by contemporary theories of reproduction. Elizabeth Clark focuses on the ongoing debate over original sin between Augustine and his frequent rival, Julian of Eclanum. Augustine's view of concupiscence suggested that lust was a result of the fall. Had Adam and Eve not sinned, they would have had sexual intercourse to procreate, "but they would not have been disturbed by the tussle between spirit and flesh" (21). In a series of impressively systematic counter-arguments, Julian exposed the absence of any biological authority for Augustine's view, labeling him a "new-fangled scientist" (40). Since according to contemporary medical theory seed was formed through sexual desire, Julian stressed that Adam and Eve would have experienced a moderate sort of lust even in Eden. Clark convincingly demonstrates Augustine's somewhat unsuccessful attempts to "shift the grounds of argument from biology to theology" (24), showcasing a fascinating early example of science at war with theology.

Finucci reads Clorinda — the white daughter of Ethiopian parents in Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* — in the context of contemporary beliefs regarding maternal monstrosity. While Renaissance biologists might have

explained the birth of a girl according to the logic that the father's seed was too weak to "perfect" the child, most deviations from the "ideal" offspring were blamed on the mother, especially her overactive imagination. Finucci discusses accounts of monstrous births, including stories of mothers who bore hairy children because they looked at pictures of St. John wrapped in bearskins (55) or black children because they encountered black servants during pregnancy (57). Indeed, Clorinda's mother spends far too much time staring at the white virgin, Sabra, in a painting of St. George and the dragon. Clorinda is monstrous not *because* of her white skin but because, *in spite* of her skin and female body, she is neither Christian nor feminine. *Gerusalemme liberata* remedies the problem of Clorinda's hidden blackness through the story of her eventual feminization and conversion to Christianity.

Essays in section two focus on biological aberrations that threatened standard categories of sex and gender. Dale B. Martin looks at the problem of menstruating men in Greco-Roman society. If masculinity was marked by self-control, bodily hardness, and a manly gait, among other characteristics, then how could such phenomena as nose bleeds and hemorrhoids — perceived as forms of menstruation — be accommodated? Focusing on such contradictions in Greco-Roman definitions of masculinity, Martin reasons that "it was precisely the contradictions... that enabled... [masculinity] to function so efficiently" (83). The fact that one could be male but not manly ensured that masculinity was primarily the luxury of those upper-class men who could afford a physician to regulate their proper bodily functions.

Gianna Pomata looks at male menstruation from the perspective of medical practitioners in the Renaissance. Whereas Martin speculates that male menstruation must have been at least potentially effeminizing in the Greco-Roman world, Pomata sees "no connection between male bleeding and effeminacy" in the early modern period (119). In fact, most contemporaries praised periodic episodes of male bleeding as necessary evacuations of corrupt bodily humors. Such views were nothing less than extraordinary since they upheld female menstruation as the model for the body's natural healing process: "notwithstanding the asserted superiority of the male, it was in fact the female that was exemplary from a therapeutic point of view" (138).

In "The Psychomorphology of the Clitoris," Valerie Traub locates the emergence of "modern" discourses of lesbianism in sixteenth-century accounts of tribadism ("an early modern antecedent to lesbianism" [155]). Such accounts highlighted the clitoris as a site of a female pleasure outside of male control (154). This spatial metonymy between body part and erotic

identity/desire, Traub argues, was crucial to Freud's understanding of clitoral (homosexual) desire as an immature stage in the natural female progression to vaginal (heterosexual) desire. By locating the formation of such metonymies in the Renaissance, Traub counters Laqueur's claim that homosexual emerged after the dissolution of the one-sex model in the eighteenth century. The essay concludes with Traub's explicit rejection of discourses of same-sex desire that presume "the commensurability of body parts to erotic desires and practices, whether presented in spatial or temporal terms" (156-57).

Marina Scordilis Brownlee's account of Maria de Zayas as subversive writer opens section three, "Female Genealogies." The essay focuses on empowering seventeenth-century associations of Zayas with historical "mothers" such as Sappho and various sibyl figures, "laconic female prophets] with an ability to see beyond the civic chaos of a given period and a desire to offer guidance" (190). Zayas's sensational tales of male-female relations are written to signal the decay of the Spanish Empire. Although Finucci informs us in the introduction that essays in this section rely upon a metaphorical definition of "genealogy" — "as a way for women to create a literary and political lineage and break out of the strictures of their worlds" (9), it is often difficult to tell how such "genealogies" differ from the sort of diachronic intertextual relations made famous by Harold Bloom and kept up to date by such scholars as Richard Helgerson and Patrick Cheney.¹ Despite the essay's persuasiveness, the sort of "genealogy" it proposes differs from that presented in the first half of the book.

When Maureen Quilligan examines Elizabeth I's empowering construction of an incestuous genealogy, she is on firmer ground because of Elizabeth's actual, controversial lineage. In other words, Elizabeth's creation of a metaphorical genealogy matters precisely because of her biological one. The eleven-year old princess, Quilligan argues, translates Marguerite de Navarre's *Le Miroir de l'âme pecheresse*, a text banned in France for its incestuous

1 I am referring to the psychological *agon* of writers and their literary fathers, famously theorized in Bloom's book, *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973). Richard Helgerson is one of several scholars who has focused on the manner in which Renaissance writers imitated classical ones in order to authorize their writings (see both *Self-Crannied Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System*, 1983 and *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*, 1992). More recently, Patrick Cheney has demonstrated Christopher Marlowe's imitation of Ovid as a form of counter-nationhood, a strategic authorial move that could just as easily be described as the construction of an empowering genealogy (see *Marlowe's Counterfeit Profession: Ovid, Spenser, Counter-Nationhood*, 1997).

themes, in order to build connections between her, Marguerite, and Katherine Parr, the author and "mother" to whom she dedicated the translation. Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII had divorced Catherine of Aragon on the grounds that she had been married to his brother, Arthur; he then had the nerve to marry the younger sister — Anne Boleyn — of his former lover: "Elizabeth was the daughter of this tainted union ... [and] she was always haunted by an unspoken specter of incest" (213). Quilligan shows how Elizabeth *uses* her tainted lineage, and the idea of incest specifically, to remain unmarried and autonomous, a "most spectacularly scandalous halt in the traffic in women" (214).

Essays in the final section, "The Politics of Inheritance," explore male constructions of empowering genealogies. In what may be the volume's most informative piece, Nancy G. Siraisi discusses sixteenth-century Italian references to ancient Egyptian medical practices, which served to establish a complete genealogy of the discipline (235) and challenge the widely accepted tenets of Galenism (248). Often perceptions of Egyptian medicine were tainted by Orientalist connotations of magic (254), and Egyptian medical advances were typically attributed to luck rather than intellectual rigor (239-40). Such attitudes reveal the darker side of Italian curiosity about Egyptian practices: "The context for this knowledge was Venetian interest, political and economic as well as cultural, in eastern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern affairs" (261). Siraisi's essay is a useful reminder, for researchers of early modern medicine and physiology, of the importance of looking beyond the influence of Galen and Paracelsus.

Focusing on three medieval Italian masterpieces — Brunette Latini's *II Tesoretto*, the anonymous *II Fiore*, and Dante's *Commedia* — Kevin Brownlee argues that authors attempting to justify the Italian vernacular were burdened by their immediate past; more specifically, he emphasizes their need to confront the cultural dominance of French among the Romance vernaculars of Europe, a position represented most clearly by the vernacular masterpiece, *Roman de la Rose*. Each of these writers succeeds, Brownlee persuasively argues, by implicitly evoking the French father-text while systematically suppressing explicit recognition of it, and establishing, in its place, an authorizing classical, Latin text. (Ironically, Brownlee implicitly evokes Harold Bloom's Oedipal model of influence while suppressing explicit recognition of it, raising more questions about the volume's vague employment of the term "genealogy").

The final essay by Peter Stallybrass considers the manner in which even non-corporeal beings were imagined to establish a lineage through their

material remains. The ritual passing of the deceased father's armor to the eldest son in aristocratic families ensured that in spite of the body's frailty and impermanence, memory of the father would be preserved in the tough and relatively permanent metal that shaped the armor. Stallybrass contends that the implications of such practices were played out metaphorically on the Renaissance stage, where the clothing of ghosts served both to reveal the dead father's identity and materialize his memory: "The ghosts of the English Renaissance theater can be seen as the logical extension of the material remains (rings, scarves, handkerchiefs, jewels, shoes) that are so frequently staged" (288). Although Stallybrass modestly characterizes his argument as "mundane" (288), no short review can do justice to the complexity of this piece, which, among other things, offers a provocative interpretation of King Hamlet's ghost. By the time we finish *Generation and Degeneration*, we will have moved a long way from biologically grounded questions about prelapsarian reproduction and male menstruation. Nevertheless, Stallybrass's essay seems like an appropriate finale because it represents the sort of insightful and original scholarship that distinguishes all of the essays in this important new volume. (GREGORY COLON SEMENZA, UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT)

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'ALISON WILLIAMS. *Tricksters and Pranksters. Roguery in French and German Literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*. Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, 2000. Pp. 236. EUR 46, US \$60.00.

Tricksters and Pranksters is divided into seven chapters including the introduction plus a conclusion. The titles of the chapters indicate the breadth of the treatment: "Women Tricksters," "The Clergy and Trickery," "Foxes

and Trickery: *Le Roman de Renart* and *Reinhart Fuchs*" "Outlaws as Tricksters and Pranksters," "Eulenspiegel," and "Panurge."

Although I felt initially that the author's attempt to distinguish between the terms "trickster" and "prankster" was simply a pedantic exercise, I was quickly convinced of the usefulness of the distinction. Even though the individuals designated by these labels commit similar kinds of actions, it is the goal of the action that is different. A trickster's goal is "to achieve material gain or psychological victory using wit and deception." On the other hand, a prankster is essentially an actor who performs for an audience without expecting or receiving any reward other than that of providing a spectacle (pp. 1-2). While most of the players in these works are tricksters, Eulenspiegel, Panurge, and Eustace the Monk at the beginning of his career are pranksters since they demonstrate more interest in the pure entertainment that disorder brings.

The actions of both the trickster and the prankster are determined by the cultural boundaries that they consistently challenge. Their behavior would not be notable if limits did not exist, and by defying these limits, they confirm the presence and importance of cultural norms.

Williams studies the prankster and trickster with reference to mythology and primitive religion, the medieval carnival, and theories about the humor of cruelty. She has thoroughly researched existing criticism on these subjects and incorporates the comments of numerous scholars into her text. The carnival was a period of temporary social disorder when the normal hierarchy was disturbed and could be a joyful time only because of the assurance that order would soon be restored. The audience can be secure enough in this framework to enjoy complicity with the transgressor and actually hope for his/her success.

Williams uses the theories of Bergson and Freud to examine the humor, in particular, the humor of cruelty, associated with tricksters and pranksters. Bergson has shown that in order for the members of an audience to laugh, they must not feel any emotion toward the comic victim. To this end, these targets are one-dimensional and do not possess the basic human traits of flexibility and alertness that would permit them to be aware of the coming trick or prank.

The *fabliaux*, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, and the Schwanke contain stories of female tricksters (not pranksters) who succeed in deceiving their husbands in a world temporarily turned upside down. The large number of tales depicting deceptive women and women who work together to deceive men

indicates the popularity of the subject. The husbands thus duped are not presented as figures to be pitied but as perfect examples of Bergson's unthinking, rigid, inflexible comic targets whose wives commit adultery under their very noses and often with their complicity.

The *fabliaux* and the Schwanke present the established hierarchy of the church in much the same way as the established hierarchy of husband and wife but with the added dimensions of spirituality and theatricality. Priestly robes contribute the element of disguise to provide another method of dupery. Husband, wives, and priests form a triangle of potential adultery, humiliation, and deception that can be played out in numerous ways, all of which elicit laughter from an audience whose emotions have not been engaged by the players and who know that the normal hierarchy will soon be restored. Similar plots can be found in Der Strieker's *Pfaffe Amis*, and in Philipp Frankfurter's *Der Pfarer vom Kalenberg* but with a more didactic dimension than found in the *fabliaux* and the Schwanke. These works conclude with a restoration of order that results in an approach that is morally conservative rather than simply amusing.

The foxes in the *Roman de Renart* and *Reinhard Fuchs* practice trickery through language and disguise but with different results. Renart elicits laughter and a carnivalesque satisfaction from his audience while Reinhard's trickery in similar episodes results in a more reflective and sober mood. In both cases, the foxes seek a reward of some sort, most often food or the humiliation of an enemy. The audience appreciates their intelligence and their ability to operate at the limits or just over the boundaries of propriety and rejoice in their victims' fall due simply to their stupidity or naivete. The spirit of the *fab/zaux* and Schwanke is present in the tales of both foxes as husbands and the hierarchy of the church become dupes to wives and clever animals. Reinhard Fuchs, however, does not aim to create laughter or entertain, as does Renart, but to warn of the dire consequences of defying conventions. The carnival atmosphere is by nature temporary, and the inherent social inversions disappear as soon as the carnival ends. Therefore, the basic structure of society is not threatened by the inversions because the different elements remain in balance, and the tip to one side or the other is always temporary.

The accounts of the historical outlaws, Fouke Fitz Waryn and Eustace the Monk, in two semi-fictional works place them necessarily outside the boundaries of society. Using the same methods as Renart, Reinhard, the wives, and the priests, Fouke seeks to humiliate King John through his native wit and theatrical talent in an effort to restore order in a corrupt kingdom. Once

successful, unlike the other tricksters, Fouke is reintegrated into the feudal world and becomes a stable citizen.

Eustace the Monk or Wistasse le Moine adds an entirely different dimension to the world of tricksters and pranksters with his training in Toledo to cast spells. Initially, he acts as a prankster aiming simply to entertain, for example, by casting a spell on the wife of an innkeeper making her lift her skirts to reveal her lower body and also to make wine flow freely from a barrel. He turns his talents against Count Renaud in an attempt to clear his name and seek vengeance. Using disguise and deceptive language, Eustace successfully and humorously dupes the count without the kind of final reconciliation that Fouke was able to find.

The last two chapters treat Eulenspiegel and Panurge, two characters from sixteenth-century fiction. Eulenspiegel is the first member of the peasant class to be presented in this book as a trickster or prankster and the first to have a thorough presentation of his early life. He is seen as "an instrument of social satire against the corruption of the nobility" (159) and exists not so much to make the audience laugh as to criticize society. As with the other German texts, Herman Bote's Eulenspiegel has a didactic purpose not found in the French texts.

Panurge by his name from the *Greekpanourgos* is associated immediately with craftiness and trickery. Rabelais joyously incorporates obscenity into his text and uses the spirit of the carnival as a stage for Panurge's actions. His quick wit and sense of fun recall *the fabliaux* and Renart in his ability to make his audience laugh at his antics that support the solidity of social conventions while transgressing them.

I find it disappointing that Williams did not choose to include Tristan in her study. He fits closely the pattern of the trickster in his attempts to enjoy the company of Iseut through the use of disguise, the manipulation of language, and deception of the king by convincing him that he does not see what he thinks he sees.

Unfortunately, Williams has selected not to translate into English the numerous citations in Modern and Old French, Modern and Old German, and Italian. Of course, it is possible to read the book without the knowledge of all these languages, but the majority of scholars will be unable to completely appreciate her message since very few are familiar with all these languages. Two elements of style impede a smooth reading of this text. First, the large number of passive verbs becomes a distraction to the attentive reader. Second, the nuts and bolts of the outline are too evident. The constant use of

such phrases as the following weaken the presentation: "It can be established immediately that..." (90); "... to be considered below" (109); "the following discussion will demonstrate..." (122); "The subject of the present study will be..." (126); "...will be a subject for later discussion" (143). Such expressions occur on nearly every page and distract the reader from the content.

Another disturbing feature is the occasional sentence that is simply not logical. For example, "As a small child he (Eulenspiegel) is shown mixing with other children, a point which at this stage may not appear particularly noteworthy, but which does mark a contrast to his later professed dislike of children" (147). Probably most adults who dislike children mixed regularly with them when young since they didn't have a choice.

Despite these shortcomings, I find this book very useful to anyone teaching or writing about any of the texts that Williams examines. She provides insights into medieval culture and the audiences that enjoyed the stories of tricksters and pranksters. In addition, the presence of an index as well as the organization of her extensive bibliography (which is divided into sections that reflect the subjects of the chapters) facilitate the consultation of her ideas and sources.

All in all, Williams has presented to the scholarly world a responsible piece of research that teachers and scholars of medieval and Renaissance French and German literature will find to be a valuable tool. (DEBORAH NELSON-CAMPBELL, RICE UNIVERSITY)

BRENDA DEAN SCHILDGEN. *Pagans, Tartars, Moslems and Jews in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001. Pp. xiii + 183. US \$59.95 cloth.

In her conclusion Schildgen observes:

Chaucer lived when the unity of the western Latin world was in the process of collapsing, and the nation-state that would eventually produce the modern secular state was forming. Today, for the first time since the fourteenth century, a new structure to create European unity is emerging that similarly challenges national and cultural assumptions about boundaries, identities and shared ethics. (121)

I quote this passage because it is representative of the tortured and unhelpful parallels that seem to be this book's chief way of developing its discussion.

Anyone who can see an analogy between the late twentieth century development of the European union and "the unity of the western Latin world" (what "unity" would that be, one wonders) and its "process of collapsing" (when did this "process" start? Or finish?), is capable of leading the reader to places it would be better not to go.

The tide raises hopes that are wholly beyond the author's capacity to deliver. An examination of the literary, historical and cultural implications of representing non-Christian peoples in Chaucer could be a rewarding subject. But in Professor Schildgen's hands it is rendered bereft of all fruitful potential. We are offered a series of brief studies of those Canterbury Tales which Schildgen feels contain significant non-Christian elements: the Knight's and Squire's, Man of Law's, Wife of Bath's and Franklin's, Prioress's and Monk's and Second Nun's Tales. Schildgen establishes her literary and historical credentials early on:

Geoffrey Chaucer, whether the author or narrator of the *Canterbury Tales*, adopts the "compiler" role in this discourse environment, and although the compilation shares features with the encyclopaediae[.»V], which include many diverse matters culled from many authoritative sources, it is indeed not like Vincent of Beauvais's thirteenth-century encyclopedia. (3)

This is indeed so. It is perhaps fortunate that Schildgen is not much troubled by the distant past. She is much more concerned with the theoretical present. Whether the theorists she cites (Jürgen Habermas figures largely) as providing a basis for her work can be held responsible for her arguments is a matter beyond a reviewer's concern. But they cannot be said to have materially helped her to advance her arguments since they seem to have led her to view that prove, almost invariably, to be wholly misguided.

The most enigmatic chapter is that dealing with "Rash Promises, Oaths and Pre-Christian Britain in the Wife of Bath's and the Franklin's Tales" (69-92). Neither tale can be located securely in any of the specified categories of Schildgen's tide. She affirms that they take place "before the hegemony of Christian Latin culture" (69). This moves the goalposts of the discussion from any possible interest in matters of cultural representation to some non-specific sense of the past as in some way "other." Both tales are, of course, concerned with matters to do with magic and its relationship to the individual will. The world of the Wife of Bath's "queynte fantasye" is primarily that of Arthurian romance, a form which assumes a Christian frame of reference (the hag's discussion of "gentilesse" includes, for example, invocation of "Jhesus, hevene

kyng" [III, 1181]). Nor can the Franklin's invocation of a modesty topos with classical reference (V, 721-6) be seen as an evocation of "Roman pagan values" (74), but of medieval rhetorical forms of reference (as the most cursory acquaintance with, for example, Curtius' *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, would have shown).

If this chapter seems irrelevant to any larger argumentative design this book might have had, then others more directly concerned with its ostensible subject offer little enlightenment. The first two chapters deal with the Knight's and Squire's Tales ("Pagan Philosophical Perspectives: A Knight and a Squire"; "Fortune, the Stars, and the Pagan Gods in the Knight's and Squire's Tales"). We are told that these Tales "explore pagan philosophical views" (13). This view leads not to Chaucer's poems but to a summary account of medieval views of Stoicism and Epicureanism. The argumentational strategies here are best indicated when we get to the fourteenth century.

Further evidence of Chaucer's direct knowledge of Seneca is suggested by the late fourteenth-century manuscript of Seneca's *Declamations*, with a commentary by Nicholas Trivet, now in the British Library, but originally at York. Also, although it includes accounts of all the ancient poets, the longest section of Thomas Walsingham's *Prohemium poetarum* is devoted to Seneca's tragedies... its existence is a powerful witness to monastic interest in pagan antiquity, philosophy, and literature in fourteenth-century England. (20)

There has been no previous evidence of Chaucer's direct knowledge of Seneca. If the unique manuscript of Trivet's commentary was originally at York one is keen to know how it might have found its way to Chaucer in London (or is the point wholly irrelevant?). And while Walsingham's work may indicate monastic interest in the asserted matters Chaucer was not a monk. The mustering of "evidence" is no more than the loose stringing together of factoids on an associative principle.

Schildgen does not think well of Chaucer's Knight or of his tale. The narrator in the General Prologue, she believes, "undercuts the worthynesse" of the knight and his career (25), but offers little evidence to support her view. She is probably wise since there are indications that her grasp of Middle English is sufficiently wanting as to make any of her assertions dubious. Consider this passage from her discussion of the Knight's Tale:

Theseus has been amply praised by critics for his ethical superiority. The Knight says that he is the epitome of "wisdom," the Stoic Virtue and "chivalrie" (I, 865).

. . Yet he rides under the banner of "Mars" (1,975) and, like Mars, uses conquest as his governing policy. . . He disciplines the uncivilized, turning free women into wives and political pawns (I, 877-83). (29)

None of these assertions is correct. The Knight does not say that he "is the epitome of 'wisdom'" but that "with his wisdom and his chivalrie, / He conquered al the regne of Femenye" (I,865-66); he does not use "conquest as his governing policy"; the only military activity he undertakes in the Tale's main action is to redress (at their request) the injustices done to the Theban women; nor does he turn "free women into wives and political pawns." The allusion is presumably to Theseus' victory over the Amazons and his marriage to Hippolyta (I, 866-84). Since she hardly figures in the subsequent narrative, to see her as a "political pawn" seems, like much else here, highly tendentious.

This is not to say that the Tale does not represent a pagan culture. It would be hard for it to do otherwise given its subject matter. But Schildgen is less interested in the nature of that representation than in its philosophical underpinning. The Knight is linked in ways that are more iterative than evidential to "Stoic philosophy" (28, 32, 33) or "Stoic conviction," or "Stoic determinism" or "Stoic beliefs" (28) or "a Stoic spirit" (29) or "a Stoic rational order" (30). There are clearly passages in the Tale that articulate stoic, of not Stoic, views. But my impression is that very often they have less to do with Stoicism in any classical philosophical sense and much more to do with Chaucer's appropriations from Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, in, for example, Theseus's final speech (1,2987-3089), but also elsewhere in the Tale.

The Man of Law's Tale offers Schildgen the opportunity to "deliberate on how Chaucer ... distinguishes the non-Christian East and West from the Latin West" (49) through his treatment of Islam. The treatment of this subject is obviously quite unsympathetic, serving mainly as a contrast to highlight Constance's Christian heroism. Somehow, this contrast is seen as "political allegory" rather than a means of demonstrating spiritual affirmation. "Constance is an allegorical figure, just as the two opposed sides, Syria and Britain, are made to represent "other" and "Christian." Whether Constance is an allegorical figure has proved open to considerable critical debate and the issue is not resolved by confident assertion. And while it may be expedient to try to reduce poetic narrative to compassably pedestrian form the contrast between pagan and Christian worlds inheres, of course, in Chaucer's source, Nicholas Trivet, an aspect of his narrative that is barely mentioned. The pagans, both Islamic and British, have to be there to demonstrate Constance's

potency: the representation of the pagans themselves is entirely conditioned by this constraint, not by any notions of allegory.

The Prioress and the Monk's Tales form the subject of another chapter. Chaucer's alleged "anti-semitism" in the former Tale has been the subject of extended debate. Schildgen complains that historically "Jews were still protected by the law and were entitled to fair treatment. Nonetheless, the law as clearly overlooked in this case in the interests of revenge" (103). Such simple-minded historicism cannot profitably enhance discussion. Undoubtedly, the Prioress is permitted to place excessive stress on the punishment of the Jews (in a number of analogues they were permitted to repent and convert). And the final analogy with the fate of Hugh of Lincoln "slayn ... but a litel while ago (VII, 684-86) — actually in 1255 — may reasonably seem strangely gratuitous if the Tale is divorced from its teller or from the larger strategies of affective piety Chaucer employs in the Tale. But there is no exploration of either that relationship nor of the specific historical and cultural contexts in which the tale may have been produced, particularly the arguments of Sumner Ferris who links the Tale's occasion to a visit by Richard II to Lincoln in 1387 (see *Chaucer Review*, 15 [1981], 295-321) — a discussion not cited in the bibliography.

The brief discussion of the Monk's Tale seems to attempt to see it wholly in historiographical terms, in which he is identified as adopting a "chaos theory of history" (108); it ignores any discussion of the philosophic implications of *de casibus* tragedy as articulated by the Monk, so brilliantly discussed by R. E. Kaske (*ELH*, 24 [1957], 249-68) — again, not in the bibliography.

The final chapter examines Chaucer's only saint's life, The Second Nun's Tale. It is not only the heroine who is tortured here. Martyrdom, which many have assumed is the act of dying for the Christian faith (at least in the Second Nun's Tale) is actually "a rejection of conventional social values and showcases people who refuse all normative worldly desires in favor of a nonnegotiable truth that stands as an absolute critique of the established or hegemonic values of the world as constructed socially or politically" (112). Anyone who believes that martyrdom is designed to "showcase" anything seems crucially disqualified from writing on the subject. Perhaps mercifully for her readers, Schildgen tries to say very little about the Tale. We are told that

In returning to the golden age of Christianity, a past that celebrates Christian martyrdom and the arduous path of early Christians, Chaucer's conservative tale distances this ideal from the corruptions and decline of the present. (120)

There is no evidence presented for this view, and it would be hard to know where it might be found. Hagiography had such an extended tradition in England by the end of the fourteenth century that it is not possible to see why Chaucer's choice of the form should be inherently political in its significance.

But the observation is typical of the lack of secure historical or critical sense in this book. At times, by no means secure inference is elevated to the status of fact. Some illustrations from the Introduction: it is by no means sure that "Deschamps sent a copy of his works to Geoffrey Chaucer" (1); it is possible to doubt that Chaucer translated the Knight's Tale in 1382 (4), since a version of it is mentioned in the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women and since no certain internal evidence for dating exists; to assert that "Chaucer's pilgrims represent ... contemporary England" (8) is at best highly tendentious; a number of critics have argued compellingly that they don't — that the omissions from the social spectrum are as significant as those that are included.

In other respects the argument functions through inert strategies rather than through argumentation. If a phrase is worth using, it sometimes seems it is worth using to death. Thus the proliferation of references to the "green world," or "'green' world" of the Wife of Bath's Tale (I count at least fourteen occurrences of the phrase between pages 71-74), a degree of reiteration not helped by the total irrelevance of the term. A more widespread tendency is the injection of names into the argument in ways that contribute nothing to an understanding of Chaucer's poetry: "Orosius's theory of providential history adapted Livy's historical theory that made Rome's destiny rule the world" (93). One might get away with that in an undergraduate lecture, but it seems not worth the trouble in scholarly writing especially since it is (again) irrelevant. Or a propos of the Man of Law's Tale: "In the late Middle Ages, political allegory was being used in the most authoritative circles, as evidenced in Clement VI's political collations [?] or in Dante's *De Monarchia* in the discussion of the two swords of Luke XIX" (53). Names, not knowledge, are displayed in ways that contribute to the larger inertness of the book's gestures towards argumentation.

We live in an age when it often seems depressingly easy to get a book published, however silly or meretricious its arguments. It is a pity that Professor Schildgen has chosen to add to the number of such books, and even more regrettable that the University of Florida Press should have assisted her. (A. S. G. EDWARDS, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA)

MARIA ALZIRO SEIXO, ed. *Travel Writing and Cultural Memory*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. EUR 55, US \$71.00.

The collection of essays in *Travel Writing and Cultural Memory* are wide-ranging, exploring travel narratives from the Classical period to the modern era, examining the writing of authors of various nationalities and their various destinations, and exploring as well the general nature of travel and travel writing. The work will hold particular interest for those interested in Portuguese authors and texts, as much of the collection focuses on this national tradition. A more general concern is a consideration of the genre of travel writing itself, and several of the essays contend with the problem of defining this particular genre — what it might encompass or exclude, what it typically addresses, and the various sub-genres which belong to the broader category of travel narratives. The collection reveals, ultimately, the difficulty of defining just what constitutes travel. For, while some authors define it as necessitating, at its most basic, physical displacement resulting in a narrative relating the observations and experiences encountered during travel, others insist that all is travel; that is, that travel encompasses any form of displacement: writing, believing, or just plain being. This is particularly the argument of the opening essay by Salah Stetie, "Geographic et theologie du voyage," who states that "l'essence du voyage est a l'origine ontologique" (7). But he goes on to equate travel particularly with writing: "Le fait d'ecrire, intrinsequement parlant, est lui aussi voyage. On part, avec en main, la plume qui trave sur le papier, on s'arrete pour respirer et reflechir, on repart a nouveau, on s'arrete une fois de plus, toujours plume en main, comme s'accomplissent les diverses etapes d'une peregrination" (8).

But perhaps the most revealing and suggestive essays in the collection ponder more pointed issues. In his "Voyages of Discovery and the Critique of European Civilization," for example, Walter F. Veit explores the connection between travel and critique — Montaigne's "Of Cannibals" being perhaps the quintessential example — and asserts the importance of the type of critique which is leveled via comparison to other cultures and their institutions for protests and revolutions which occurred in Europe. And several essays, namely Wladimir Kryszewski's "Voyages modernes et postmodernes: mythe ou realites des déplacements cognitifs," John Boening's "Into Thin Air: the Ocean Voyage in the Travel Writings of Graham Greene," Fernando Cristovao's "Le voyage dans la litterature de voyage," and Jean-Marc Moura's "Memoire culturelle et voyage touristique. Reflexions sur

les figurations littéraires du voyageur et du touriste" examine the crucial issue of travel in the age of post-modernity. These essays question the role of the travel narrative in the age of "post-discovery" (Krysinski), examine the way in which jet travel has erased precisely the kind of travel which gives rise to the possibilities of imaginative and creative writing about travel, and ponder the way in which the triumph of tourism, too, has reduced the imaginative quality of much travel narratives (Boening and Cristovao). Moura, in his turn, discusses the way in which the banality of tourism has modified the travel narrative and contemplates the possibilities for a post-touristic literature, the "post-touriste" being that individual who "acceptant l'inauthenticité et le caractère reproductible de l'expérience touristique" is able to transform with jubilation that very inauthenticity into a transitory way of life typical of our contemporary experience (280). The distinction between travel and travel narratives seen to belong to a world of the past, and tourism and tourist discourse, whose banality and pseudo-experiences are part and parcel of our present day existence, is made to some degree in the spirit of lament at an experience which is no longer possible today. But there is also the suggested possibility that tourism, facilitated by air travel, might have a value which was unavailable in the past: "One of the chief merits of flying," Boening quotes Graham Greene as saying, "is that it affords sudden and astonishing contrasts" (211).

Given the important function that these essays propose travel performs in our culture today and has performed in our culture in the past, the continuation of this critical, imaginative, and informative genre appears indeed important to consider. While the essays on the post-modern aspect of travel posit some possibilities — schematically, either that the post-modern era represents the end of travel writing, or that it might give rise to a new kind of post-modern form of conveying the experience of displacement or pseudo-displacement which tourism affords — there is here, not unexpectedly, no real consensus or conclusion. But together the various works — interesting in their own right for the periods and texts they examine — reveal the real need to think about the role of travel in shaping our world and our imaginations. If the definition of the genre somehow eludes this collection as a whole, this work nonetheless posits the more important issue of travel's centrality to cultural memory and its importance and relevance to contemporary life. (Yael Rachel Schlick, Queen's University)

*ELENA GLAZOV-CORRIGAN. *Mandel'shtam's Poetics: A Challenge to Postmodernism*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2000. CDN \$48.00 cloth.

"Do Mandel'shtam's observations on poetry make a substantial contribution to poetics?" (5), asks Elena Glazov-Corrigan in her introduction. She then sets out to show — forcefully, determinedly and ultimately, convincingly — that Mandel'shtam's seemingly "erratic," "impressionistic" (6) and metaphorical writings on poetry, when subjected to an appropriately tailored critical scrutiny, do indeed reveal a theoretical thinker of the first order. The approach she chooses is a chronological examination of the changes in Mandel'shtam's use of metaphor in his theoretical writings.

Her book is undoubtedly welcome and necessary. As both Glazov-Corrigan and the author of the foreword, Russian scholar Sergei Averintsev, note, Mandel'shtam's theoretical prose has, in the past, been examined for the most part in view of its potential to elucidate Mandel'shtam's brilliant and exceedingly difficult poetry, rather than for its own sake. Moreover, Mandel'shtam's tragic silencing and death at the hands of the Soviet state have seen to it that his potential contributions to poetics, even were they to be adequately grasped by his readers, were forcibly removed from intellectual circulation for the greater part of the 20th century.

After the foreword, a very brief (but well-done) biographical note and the author's introduction, four short chapters are devoted to various aspects of Mandel'shtam's poetics primarily through the end of the 1920s (roughly the first 20 years of his writing on poetry). Each of chapters 2, 3, and 4 also contains a final segment introducing Mandel'shtam's approach to the same problem in the poetics of the 1930s, further reducing the portion of the book devoted to the early Mandel'shtam. The much longer fifth chapter, which is the conceptual heart of the book, analyzes Mandel'shtam's "mature" theoretical position as expressed in the works of the early 1930s, while a final, equally substantial chapter/conclusion discusses the theoretical implications of Mandel'shtam's poetics and his place in the landscape of 20th-century literary theory.

In the first chapter, "Meaning and Blank: The First Decade of Mandel'shtam's Poetics," Glazov-Corrigan traces Mandel'shtam's development of a theory of oscillating presence and absence, meaning and blank, as a generative principle in poetry, through what she sees as a theoretical crisis in "Pushkin and Skriabin" (1915-1919?). In chapter 2,

Glazov-Corrigan discusses Mandel'shtam's evolving understanding of the nature of the word, delineating four primary metaphors, the word as stone, the word as inner and outer reality, the word as space, and the word as journey into the patterns of communication. Her discussion of the word as space (1925), based on a series of theatrical essays, some written during Mandel'shtam's five-year silence as poet, is particularly enlightening, as are later segments devoted to the transformation of Mandel'shtam's poetics of the 1920s into his poetics of the 1930s. In chapter 3, Glazov-Corrigan discusses the hypnotic power of poetry; in chapter 4 Mandel'shtam's theories in regard to the participation of the reader/addressee.

Chapter 5 is clearly the focus of the book's creative and hermeneutical energy. Narrowing her field of vision, the author proceeds, to great effect, with a careful analysis of the first six chapters (of eleven) of Mandel'shtam's single most important essay of the 1930s, "Conversation about Dante," using two other roughly contemporary essays for support. Throughout the chapter, Glazov-Corrigan argues that, for Mandel'shtam of the 1930s, writing and reading are deeply intertwined and in fact follow the same dynamic stages of development. The writing-reading process is defined not by any particular theoretical stance, but by a series of landscapes and consciousnesses in relation to the text and addressee. In this transformative and, for the reader, ultimately evasive quest for meaning is the essence of poetry. Glazov-Corrigan's reading of "Conversation about Dante" is thoughtful, daring and convincing. Her emphasis on a chronology of the reading process is initially off-putting (in light of Mandel'shtam's well-known predilection for compacting and unifying images of time, as well as a lack of any direct acknowledgement in the text), but ultimately well-founded. For what Glazov-Corrigan is tracing in "Conversation about Dante" is not so much a poetics as a mythopoetics of the writing-reading process, convincingly correlated to the stages of Dante's own journey, as well as the history of science, and simultaneously representing a necessarily Enean *training* in the culture of poetic reading. A chart at the end of the chapter outlines the complexities of the many parallel levels of this process.

Among the highlights of the final chapter are the author's discussion of Mandel'shtam and Formalism — a model of clarity, simplicity and precision — and her treatment of approaches to intertextuality in postmodernism, which amounts to a lucid critique of Barthes, Kristeva and Bloom and a defense of Mandel'shtam's potential contributions. Mandel'shtam's poetics, as a corrective to postmodernism, effects a freeing of meaning without a loss

of meaning or authorial voice. Additional far-reaching implications derive from Glazov-Corrigan's convincing demonstration of Mandel'shtam's preemptive departure from Roman Jakobson's now almost universal tripartite model of communication (Addresser-Message-Addressee). In Mandel'shtam, reader and writer are at the highest level co-explorers and co-conductors (musical, that is) of the poetic text. The difference between them is that while both are focused on receptivity, it is only the writer who can actually catch the wave-impulse (poetry as "calligraphy" of a scribe sitting before the "most... impatient dictator" [Mandel'shtam, cited in Glazov-Corrigan 139]). For the reader, the author, never quite apprehensible, blends with but does not disappear entirely into the similarly unstoppable wave-text.

Glazov-Corrigan's study is not without some weaknesses, particularly in the early chapters. In large part, this is related to a ideological approach, which accords Mandel'shtam's "Conversation about Dante" the place of "mature" poetics and implicitly devalues Mandel'shtam's "unsatisfactory" earlier attempts. If Glazov-Corrigan is rightly sensitive to the most muted and tentative hints in her reading of Mandel'shtam's last pieces, her reading of his very earliest essays is, at times, unfairly reductionist. In reading "The Morning of Acmeism" (1913?) and "Francois Villon" (1910), she replaces Mandel'shtam's "word as such" with an entirely material word as thing. This sleight of hand leads her to opine that for Mandel'shtam, "the quickest way to steal a chicken is to write a poem about it" (29) — surely an ungenerous reading of Mandel'shtam's poignant image of the Francois Villon of the *Testaments*. This same misguided materialism leads Glazov-Corrigan to see a "logical contradiction" in "The Morning of Acmeism" between the cathedral/poem's "divine physiology" and "the inanimate solidity of stone" (15). In this reader's understanding, however, the paradox of the dynamism of seemingly inanimate stone (the 'miraculous' mechanics of stones/words suspending themselves in a groined arch) is one of the central tenets of the essay.

Glazov-Corrigan's teleological bias also leads her to underestimate the extent to which later developments are present in Mandel'shtam's earliest writings: for instance, the deactivation of the antithesis of form and content already present in "The Morning of Acmeism" in the discussion of logos as form; or the way in which the highly mature vision of the reader in posterity in "On the Interlocutor" (1913) is not contradicted by the essays of the twenties (60), but rather underlies the vision of the poet as a dead star, light years in the oast of the future understanding reader at the conclusion of "The Thrust" (1923). This is not to say that "Conversation about Dante" does not

represent a radical breakthrough and paradigm shift in terms of an open-ended, fluid poetics. However, even this radical shift is hinted at in the earlier "Notes on Chenier" (published 1922) ("Maybe Chenier does not have one poetics, but several, in different periods or, rather, minutes of poetic consciousness") or maybe even in Mandel'shtam's earliest essay, "Francois Villon": "...what is more mobile, more fluid — a Gothic cathedral or an ocean wave?" (O. E. Mandel'shtam, *Sobranie sochinenii v 4-kh tomakh* [Moscow: Terra, 1991], II, 299, 308).

In addition, in "Meaning and Blank," Glazov-Corrigan makes much of chronology in order to argue for a growing crisis in Mandel'shtam's poetics. However, she conflates an unknown article announced for publication in 1914 (but never published) with one written on the same topic in 1922 ("Notes on Chenier"). (As noted by the scrupulous editors of *Kamen'* [Leningrad: Nauka, 1990] in explaining their decision not to include this article among Mandel'shtam's early essays, all stages in the development of the manuscript are collected in the Mandel'shtam Archive and drafted in the poet's wife's hand, making an identification with the earlier article highly problematic [331]). This late article is presented by the author as the most triumphant early statement of meaning and blank, predating, rather than following Mandel'shtam's supposed discovery of the inadequacies of such a stance.

Glazov-Corrigan's reading of "Pushkin and Skriabin" as crisis text also raises questions, despite some fascinating new connections made by the author. In her introduction to "Meaning and Blank," she comments on the "sense of loss, and even despair, of 'Pushkin and Skriabin,' in which there is so profound an impasse that one may question whether Mandel'shtam ever completed it and suggest instead that the fragments which he published in the 1928 edition were the original form of the essay" (13). For this reader, however, it is difficult to acknowledge *despair* in an article which asserts Mandel'shtam's faith in the hidden and forgotten but nonetheless unshakeable redemption; "so profound an impasse" in an article which is so profoundly generative in terms of Mandel'shtam's poetry (granted that Glazov-Corrigan of necessity excludes Mandel'shtam's poetry from her study). In addition, it seems to me unjustified to suggest on the basis of the incomplete manuscript fragments we have, often ending and beginning not in mid-concept but in mid-phrase, that Mandel'shtam never completed the article — particularly given his widow's reports that he read a version as a lecture, considered it in 1921 the most important of everything he had written, lamented finding *approximately half of it* (the scattered manuscript pages we have) and searched

for years for the copy he had given to S. P. Kablukov before the latter died. Nor were any fragments of "Pushkin and Scriabin" published in the 1928 edition of *On Poetry* or at all during the poet's lifetime.

Glazov-Corrigan's book is beautifully written, lovingly published, and carefully proof-read (with one exception, a series of incorrect page numbers in reference to the Russian edition of Mandel'shtam's writings). Scholarship is good, although there is perhaps a tendency to move too quickly to dismiss previous studies of Mandel'shtam in which the scholars' stances move beyond structuralist criticism (as with Gregory Freidin and Clare Cavanagh [112,114]). Despite any shortcomings of Glazov-Corrigan's book, however, particularly its final two long chapters present a compelling and highly original vision of Mandel'shtam's poetics. The first-rate chapter on "Conversation about Dante" is a boon to all readers of Mandel'shtam's poetry of the 1930s. Finally, as an invitation to read Mandel'shtam's theoretical writings for the non-Russian reader, and as an insertion of Mandel'shtam's humanistically warmed, but open-ended poetics of the 1930s into productive debate with current poststructuralist approaches to poetry, Glazov-Corrigan's book is invaluable. (STUART GOLDBERG, DAVIDSON COLLEGE)

*J. BROOKS BOUSON. *quiet as it's kept: Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison*. By J. Brooks Bouson. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000. Pp. 277. US \$22.95 paper.

Toni Morrison cannot be charged, at least in her fiction, with defending African Americans' innocence and victimhood, as Terry O'Quinn has so clearly demonstrated in *The Crime of Innocence in the Fiction of Toni Morrison* (1989). More often, Morrison has been accused of focusing too much on the misfits and the crimes and misdemeanors in African America. Beginning with the publication of her first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), and continuing through her most recent novel, *Paradise* (1998), Morrison has directed her gaze toward what some consider the unseemly and seamy side of African American lives. Despite such "complaints," Morrison continues to attract a large and diverse readership. But to focus on the negative in Morrison's fiction without paying attention to the counter narratives within the discrete texts is to miss totally the fullness of her vision. What has frequently been misunderstood is Morrison's use of such unflattering details, that is, her refusal to sentimentalize and romanticize the African American experience. Replete with family

violence such as incest (*The Bluest Eye*), filicide (*Sula*), infanticide (*Beloved*), rape and self-mutilation (*Paradise*), and other forms of violence, Morrison's novels seem, on first reading, to invite a voyeuristic journey through African America. Although many readers hone in on the so-called "negative" aspects of Morrison's oeuvre, few critics, if any, insist that Morrison is committed to a single-minded approach to African American life. In *quiet as it's kept: Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison*, J. Brooks Bouson revisits these scenes of violence with the goal of exposing the shame and "anti-shame" induced by the trauma of racism, which she reads as the underlying cause of much of the familial and intraracial violence among African Americans. Drawing upon recent theories of shame and trauma, Bouson contends that Morrison overburdens her fiction with shame and trauma: "Intent on representing painful race matters in her novels, Morrison repeatedly, if not obsessively, stages scenes of inter- and intraracial violence and shaming in her fiction" (18). Bouson further claims that Morrison's fiction is "mired in shame" (4) and that, through an "insistent aestheticizing of shame and violence," Morrison attempts, in a "reactive desire[J] to cover up or repair the racial wounds she has exposed" (5). Bouson pulls from Morrison's novels what she (Bouson) reads as moments that reveal the interconnectedness of shame, trauma, and race — moments in which shame induced by race/racism often induces shamelessness and/or pain. For Bouson, Morrison's commitment to the complexity of African American lives, both the positive and the negative — mostly negative — is an obsessive preoccupation. Such claims deflect from Morrison's complex fiction because Bouson's critical discourse — which should and sometimes does open up Morrison's varied strategies for exposing racism and its concomitant effects — delimits and detracts from Morrison's fictional intentions. Most Morrison readers would agree that *The Bluest Eye* is "a complicated shame drama" and "a trauma narrative" (25), but Bouson's argument is both excessive and overdetermined. Consider Bouson's descriptions of the ill Claudia as a "shame-sensitive daughter" (32); of Pecola, who "suffers from an extreme and destructive form of chronic shame-vulnerability and shame-anxiety" (33) which so annoys Claudia MacTeer who would rather see her adopt "a defiant anti-shame posture" (31); of Cholly's "oppositionally defined and shameless identity" (35). One finds synonyms or appropriate substitutes for shame all too rare in *quiet as it's kept*, but when they do appear, they sometimes miss the mark. For example, when Bouson describes Cholly's "chronic state of humiliated fury," one is thrown off base by the placement of the word "humiliated." In other

words, is Cholly furious because he has been humiliated? Or is he humiliated by his fury? This may seem like nit-picking, but it does call attention to the kinds of language traps we encounter in *quiet as it's kept*.

To a large extent, *quiet as it's kept* is an excessive preoccupation with a discourse of shame that overshadows and sometimes confuses the broader, more complex issues that lead to pain and shame. For example, Bouson argues that Sula's self-fashioning is a reaction to shame and embarrassment, rather than a resistance to domination and tradition. Regarding the rebellious, self-absorbed, self-defined Sula, Bouson — contrary to prevailing views — asserts that Sula "recalls the racist construction of the sexually promiscuous 'bad' black Jezebel, a shaming stereotype," or the "hypersexed" and "debased" African American female (47-48). Bouson writes that Eva Peace is a "shamed-wife" who counters her shame with "a shamefaced withdrawal to protect against further humiliation" by moving to an upstairs room and becoming "an arrogant, contemptuous woman who rids herself of her own shame by shaming others" (58). *quiet as it's kept* continues in this vain, by calling attention to its meta-discourse of shame, which unfortunately directs the reader's focus from its critical project. The following illustrates what I mean: *Tar Baby*, according to Bouson, "openly invokes racist stereotypes and makes extensive use of the shaming discourse of dirt and defilement" (103) and subverts its own project of prompting readers to question whether it is Jadine, who denies her "essential femaleness," or the night women, who flaunt their "femaleness, that should be judged the most most 'shameful'" (123). What is problematic here, of course, is Bouson's reading of these characters as shameful. Does the narrative suggest shame, or does it imply two ways of reading these women's breasts — the eroticized (Jadine's) versus the nurturing (the women's). Somewhat baffling is Bouson's statement that *Beloved*, like Morrison's earlier novels, enacts "shame-shame and shame-rage feeling traps" (such as Milkman's "shame-shame feeling trap," which is countered by his pride in his ancestry [93]), that it "shames the white shamer" (137), and that Sethe's pride in her wedding dress is more than "youthful pride": it is a sign that she is "implicitly shamed [and] objectified as the racial and sexual Other" (139).

Clearly, Bouson is committed to Morrison's project of "[illuminat]ing the impact of shame and trauma on the African American experience," but it is highly questionable whether *quiet as it's kept* effectively illuminates this project. In other words, do Morrison's texts yield such shame to the extent that Bouson claims, or is Bouson unyielding in an *idée fixe* which she bends to produce a desired result? What is missing from *quiet as it's kept* is a self-critique

— not of methodology, but of discourse. For this reader, the book is overburdened by a discourse that makes untenable its claims regarding Morrison's novels.

That said, Bouson does define her critical terminology. The problem is not the critical discourse, but the manner in which it is applied to Morrison's fiction.

quiet as it's kept has its strength: Bouson's gesture at shifting the focus from causation (racism) to effect (shame and trauma) — most especially shame — extends the critical discussion of Morrison's novels. Bouson is to be commended for her decision to search for yet another framework for interpreting Morrison's engagement with the relationship between race/racism and the individual's efforts to counter and/or triumph over it. (LUCILLE P. FULTZ, RICE UNIVERSITY)

*ANDERS PETTERSSON. *Verbal Art: A Philosophy of Literature and Literary Experience*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000. Pp. 373. CDN \$85.00 cloth, \$32.95 paper.

Verbal Art raises some of the most fundamental questions that underpin literary criticism and, more generally, the very act of reading literature: What makes literature "literary," or a specific kind of discourse? From the point of view of its craft, what are its aesthetic strategies? From the point of view of its audience, what kind of enjoyment and information does it produce? And perhaps most crucially, how are the answers to these two questions interrelated? In its comprehensive analysis of the cognitive, epistemological and aesthetic strategies of literature, *Verbal Art* does not merely provoke critics to consider such questions, but also provides elegant and compelling answers to them.

Pettersson begins by outlining the cognitive or psychological elements of literature and the experience of reading. If literature provokes thought and excites emotions and the imagination, he suggests, it is because it engages four kinds of psychological processes: 1) human motivation; 2) mental processing of perceptions; 3) experiences and mental representations; and 4) emotions. (19) After explaining in some detail the physiological dimensions of thought, the author proceeds to distinguish the way human beings process experiences (both mentally and emotionally) from the way we process the more abstract conceptual representations we encounter in literature. By describing the

cognitive and emotive distinctions readers may experience between the perceptions of reality and of representation, Pettersson already begins to outline what is specifically "aesthetic" about our experience of literature.

Separating reality from representation, or simply put, events and things from words on a page, does not, however, disclose the specifically literal dimensions of those words. In the next few chapters, the author proceeds to define the specificity of literature. Performing close readings of several literary works, including John Updike's "Pygmalion," Pettersson suggests that there is something particularly rich and complex about the literary text. A literary work, by contrast to a non-literary text, "may well arouse complex positive feelings that are difficult to describe, not relatively unequivocal feelings easily characterized and explained" (45). In not being confined to argument or committed to a singular world-view, the literary text reveals a fictional work that stimulates multiple emotions and points of identification in its readers.

While being unique (concrete), complex and multiple, Pettersson suggests that a literary work also has elements that render it universal: which is to say, that make it appear as a kind of repository of wisdom about human experience. "In reading a literary work which really appeals to us, we perceive it as possessing an aesthetic aura of some kind, an almost magical radiation of significance," he explains. "The work, and the realities described in the work, are (typically) concrete and particular" (51). The author calls a "concrete universal" this combination of singularity (or that which makes each work of art inimitable in a Kantian sense) and the seeming universality (or openness to identification) that characterizes literature. While proposing what might seem as an idealist model of aesthetic experience, Pettersson does not deny literature's socio-economic influences and contingencies. In his discussion, Kant plausibly coexists with Bourdieu, as the author suggests that cultural processes that determine cultural value — publishing firms, printing houses, reviews, journals, criticism — do not in any way contradict the specific ways in which we identify in literature fundamental and uniquely expressed aspects of the human condition. It would have been helpful to see more specifically how the two dimensions of art, the socio-economic and the aesthetic, interact and which is more central in determining artistic value.

The next question readers might ask, and which Pettersson addresses, is what makes the act of reading so rich and complex? Relying upon and enhancing theories of communication, Pettersson explains that literature, by contrast to "factual" or informational texts, does not assume a one-to-one correspondence between representation and reality. In other words, literature

does not convey a fact, nor offer a message or point of view. On the contrary, "the author communicates thoughts by producing physical objects or having them produced...and initiates production of further copies..." (107). Rather than aiming at the transparent transmission of an intentional message about reality, literature invites a multiplicity of interpretations. Which is not to say that literature does not make any truth claims, but that even such claims assume a uniquely open form and function in literature.

To explain this function further, Pettersson relies upon pragmatics and speech-act theory. He demonstrates that even when literature makes statements about reality, such statements assume a secondary role both in its form of representation (which lends itself to textual play) and in readers' creative interpretations. "The central function of literature," Pettersson argues, "is simply not that of imparting information" (130). Although literature's main role is rarely didactic, it seems nonetheless that readers have much to learn from their encounter with literary works. For in stimulating cognitive and emotive processes of identification with the fictional world and its characters, literature leads us to constantly ask ourselves what we learned about life; what the characters tell us about human identity; as well as encouraging us to generate creative interpretations of the text (147).

Last but not least, literature allows us to enjoy beauty in a Humean sense that correlates pleasure with the structure of representation. Whether we perceive that pleasure in a traditional sense, as an enjoyment of the beauty and elegance of art, or through a contemporary psychoanalytic lens, as a way in which our unconscious gains satisfaction from the fulfillment of the fantasies stimulated by reading, the result is the same: the aesthetic experience is pleasurable and enriching. But what are the underlying causes of such pleasure? Pettersson dismisses strictly formalist answers to this question which maintain that the formal order of literary structures satisfies biological needs. He explains, "In this book I have assumed, instead, that literature caters, in some more or less complex way, to human needs familiar from other contexts in life" (280).

Literature thus stimulates thought and emotions about human life, and satisfies our curiosity in a mediated way, such that "cognitive processing on the reader's part normally intervenes between the communicative content and the satisfaction of the need" (280-81). Rather than believing that aesthetic responses are immediate and biological, Pettersson regards the literary experience as a way of fulfilling many other, perhaps more fundamental needs, including emotional experience and identification; the play of fantasy and imagination; and the desire to comprehend life. In his view, literature therefore both autonomous and instrumental: autonomous, because it distinct from any other forms of textuality; instrumental, because it serves multitude of other, more primary functions.

Turning the literary experience from many relevant perspectives and

examining it from several critical vantage points, *Verbal Art* offers us wonderfully comprehensive and original aesthetic theory that explains the specificity of literature. What is perhaps most valuable about Pettersson's contribution to aesthetic theory is the fact that it shows a deep familiarity with the most influential schools of thought that have addressed the questions he poses, while at the same time considering their models in an independent way that appears intuitive only by virtue of its simplicity and elegance. (CLAUDIA MOSCOVICI, BOSTON UNIVERSITY)