

BOOK REVIEWS

*YVES CHEVREL. *Comparative Literature Today: Methods and Perspectives*. Trans. Farida Elizabeth Dahab. Kirksville: The Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1994. Pp. 111. US \$34.50

Because it was initially published in French as part of the *Que sais-je?* series, this revised version of the French original in English — translated by Farida Elizabeth Dahab of the State University of California at Long Beach and prefaced by Gerald Gillespie of Stanford University — to the methods and perspectives of Comparative Literature today is compact, and seeks to encompass essentials. This, of course, demands decisions in presenting to a wide public a discipline traditionally difficult to define. Yves Chevrel's first decision is to begin, so to say, at the beginning, that is, with a chapter on "The Foreign Work": an off-putting, even controversial, but realistic expression, since every culture perceives itself in terms of an "inside" and an "outside." The very definition of what is foreign brings in its wake a host of implications about bringing closer, and even privileging the enjoyment and study of texts initially unfamiliar to a given readership. This in turn brings about the topic of translation, the infinite variety of the forms it takes, and inevitably, theories of translation and comparative stylistics, since languages, "related as they may be, will nevertheless structure the universe in different ways" (7); the concept of linguistic and cultural spaces interrelating in world literature; and that of a "comparatist concept of reading," aware both of processes of assimilation and differentiation.

The chapter devoted to "The makings of a comparatist literary historiography" manages to encapsulate the changes which have occurred over decades in the relationship between literary history and comparative literature (and even literary studies at large). Yves Chevrel acknowledges the extent to which comparative literature no longer can be coextensive with comparative literary history, especially if the latter consists of studies of "rapports de fait," binary relations, sources and influences. But he also affirms the development of a newer and stronger comparative literary history as exemplified by the *Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages* series. Such studies are conceived in terms of relationships of works rather than authors; they encompass phenomena of reception; they flexibly combine synchrony and diachrony so that attention can be focussed at length on "cultural presents" cutting across chronological spans; they periodize according to mentalities rather than political events; they do not universalize at random; they can be centred upon a genre or its poetics; or upon trends, or movements; or again upon the history of reception (stressing active

transformation), which has replaced that of influence (stressing passive absorption). The history of critical theory, of translation, of theatrical performance, are either inscribed in comparative literary history, or relate to it dialectically, depending on the eye of the observer.

In his treatment of literary myth Yves Chevreton begins with an inventory of thematological studies of well-known myths, figures, motifs; yet, soon, he delves into questions such as that of the in-depth relationship between myth and literature as manifestations of imagination; and that of the method of study myths require. Is it their remarkable intercultural recurrence that matters, and the interpreter's faithfulness to the details of the recurrence? or is it the propensity of the human mind to consciously or unconsciously project its adventures into narratives? Then — having already shown as a matter of practice that comparative literature has a wealth of territories of its own and others that it shares — Yves Chevreton tackles the crucial problem of all present-day literary studies, that of the frontiers of literature: to what extent and from what perspective oral, popular, children's literature, as well as "paraliterature" in all its forms, fall within or without an encompassing concept of literature; and how literature communicates with non-verbal art forms.

Obviously, in the author's view, literariness does exist since the last chapter, "Towards a comparatist poetics?," necessarily presupposes it. The "scientific description of literary systems" also presupposes that texts functionally relate to one another, although every text has characteristics of its own. Poetry has intimate links with the particular features of natural languages; but the comparative spirit looks for equivalences among poetic systems, even when it comes to Eastern and Western poetics. For example: does Jakobson's definition of poetics hold for all poetics of the world? Are the structures narratology so convincingly demonstrates universal? And does gender divide poetics?

Having given the reader so many opportunities to raise fundamental questions with regard to Comparative Literature, the author does not take the ultimate step which would be to theoretically evaluate comparability; instead, faithful to the picture of Comparative Literature as a practice, which the book has consistently upheld, he ventures a couple of glimpses into the future of comparative studies. These will remain interdependent with studies of literature in one language or group of languages. They will continue to situate themselves at "intersections," to probe the very nature of literature the answer to which remains suspended between specificity and non-specificity of the literary text among other texts; and they will develop an ethics of their own.

Two substantial papers are appended to *Comparative Literature Today*. One of these examines the methodological value of "the literary year," a rich and complex but theoretically problematic tool (Marc Angenot's 1889 was not yet available). The other examines the city in several twentieth-century novels, a locus with which the individual tends to live in conflict rather than in harmony

but which call upon the individual to enter into relationship with it, competes with the individual for being the central character, and symbolizes the need for communication. The translation reads well, despite an occasional inexactitude. (EVA KUSHNER, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO).

*LUCIA HELENA VIANNA, ed. *Anais do IV Seminario Nacional "Mulher e Literatura."* Niteroi et Rio de Janeiro, 26 a 28 de agosto de 1991, Niteroi: Coordenacao de Pos-graduacao em Letras da Universidade Federal Fluminense 1992. *Annales du Colloque Femme et littérature*. Pp. 272.

Un IV^e Colloque national sur le thème *La Femme et la littérature* a eu lieu à Niteroi et Rio de Janeiro au Brésil du 26 au 28 Août 1991 et les Actes, incluant vingt-six communications, ont été publiés dans un recueil l'année suivante sous les auspices de l'Association brésilienne de Littérature comparée, de l'Institut des Lettres de l'Université Fédérale Fluminense et le Centre Interdisciplinaire d'Études contemporaines de l'Université Fédérale de Rio de Janeiro. Les textes sont majoritairement en portugais (en outre, on y retrouve un article en espagnol, un en français et un en anglais). C'est le bilan d'une rencontre interdisciplinaire de chercheurs et chercheuses surtout en provenance du Brésil, mais également de l'Argentine, du Mexique, des États-Unis et du Québec à partir d'un questionnement sur la littérature et le féminisme, dont l'approche est historique et sociologique, la littérature et le féminin, dont l'orientation est psychanalytique, et la littérature et la femme, celle-ci considérée en tant qu'auteur ou personnage.

Or, bien que ces études s'appuient largement sur la réalité socio-culturelle sud-américaine, la condition féminine est également appréhendée ailleurs, par exemple dans la culture islamique du Maghreb avec la symbolique du voile, dans la littérature québécoise et acadienne, dans la poésie haïtienne, de même que dans l'autobiographie de Marguerite Duras, ou par le biais d'un roman portugais contemporain, également dans les écrits théoriques sur le féminisme de Elizabeth Wright et Toril Moi.

L'orientation générale du volume est nettement politique, elle est basée sur un discours critique qui dénonce le patriarcat et l'oppression des femmes. Bien qu'elles soient reliées à des contextes particuliers, les réflexions demeurent universelles et portent essentiellement sur les problèmes de discrimination, de répression et d'assujettissement des femmes par rapport à leur rôle dans la société ou à leur représentation dans l'art. Les catégories utiles à l'analyse sont le genre (gender, "gênero"), et conjointement l'identité sexuelle et la race, de même que la classe et la nation. A cet égard, les images stéréotypées qui sont relevées dans l'oeuvre du poète baroque brésilien Gregorio de Matos e Guerra au XVII^e siècle par Raimunda Bedacee sont éclairantes sur la classification hiérarchisée des femmes, blanches, noires persécutées par l'esclavage, mulâtres, comme objets de satire dans cette poésie. L'infériorité de la femme (subjugée par le pouvoir masculin) est ici liée à sa nature fragile, instable, capricieuse, "dissolue," mot

privilegié par Gregorio. Divers types sont abordés, d'une part, la religieuse, la vierge, d'autre part, la prostituée, la sorcière. Toutes sont nivelées dans une satire dont les critères de jugement de la femme sont établis dans une optique masculine misogyne et raciste qui a pour conséquence la représentation littéraire avilissante et dégradante de la femme, qui perdure jusqu'à Jorge Amado. Dans la même optique, l'étude de Valéria Lamego met en relief des types de femme brésilienne dans l'écriture de Machado de Assis et Joaquim Manoel de Macedo de même que dans la peinture du XIX^e siècle, par exemple, des tableaux qui explicitent le modèle de la servitude féminine et de la supériorité masculine, justifié par les discours institutionnalisés de la famille et de l'éducation: De nouveau, l'image de la vierge pure, la canonisation de la femme comme "reine du foyer," modèle de silence et de chasteté, celle-ci n'ayant pas sa place en dehors de la maison. Cette dernière image prépondérante dans l'iconographie féminine brésilienne pourrait tout aussi bien être transposée au Québec ou en Angleterre à la même époque; on se souvient qu'elle subira d'ailleurs un peu plus tard les attaques foudroyantes de Virginia Woolf dans son discours sur les carrières féminines. L'auteur cerna également l'image de la morte dans la peinture au milieu du XIX^e siècle, femmes couchées, fatiguées, indolentes, renforçant le stéréotype de la femme fragile, d'une nature malade. Ces représentations sont associées à une sensualité morbide.

À l'inverse de la femme-mère ou soumise, s'impose dans l'étude de Margareth Rago "le pouvoir de la prostituée dans l'Histoire et la littérature," particulièrement dans les romans des années vingt, tel que ceux de Oswald de Andrade. Une polarisation s'établit entre les "femmes fatales," dont la séduction est destructive, opérant la ruine et la castration des hommes et les femmes victimes du destin. Cependant, dans la construction du stéréotype de la prostituée dévorante qui mène l'amant à sa chute, le personnage diabolique a une double nature, à la fois puissante et passive, sadique et fragile, offrant un mélange de perversion et de bonté. L'auteur montre également les représentations multiples de la prostituée, également dans des romans féminins qui font valoir son émancipation sexuelle, l'univers érotisé de la commercialisation du corps, l'expérience urbaine des flux désirants qui s'oppose à la vie domestique de la campagne et au monde aseptisé des relations conjugales et familiales.

On retrouve cette dialectique de la fermeture et de l'ouverture dans quelques articles du recueil. Bernadette Velloso Porto indique pertinemment que les personnages féminins ont une relation symbolique avec leur milieu, elle s'intéresse aux territoires du féminin (au Canada) en tant que "poétique de l'enracinement et de la mobilité," chez des auteures tel que Nicole Brossard, Anne Hébert, Suzanne Jacob, Gabrielle Roy, en illustrant la figuration spatiale: chambre, jardin, chemins, etc., articulant brillamment le désir qui s'y conjugue, également dans sa lecture de *Pélagie-la-charrette* de Antonine Maillet, la charrette étant perçue ici comme l'espace creux des virtualités, espèce d'arche de

Noé.

Dans le poème haïtien *Choukoun* d'Oswald Durand que Maximilien Laroche analyse, la femme est présentée comme traîtresse, préférant le riche amant étranger au compatriote amoureux mais pauvre, qui fait figure de dominé, à l'opposé du "malandro" brésilien (dans la pièce de Chico Buarque) qui maintient son pouvoir sur la femme. Laroche se réfère à une étude de Berlioz traitant des images féminines dans la samba ainsi que de la base socio-économique des rapports amoureux, et il fait des distinctions avec la société haïtienne. Cependant, dans la dernière partie de son analyse sur la valeur marchande des partenaires amoureux, où l'auteur utilise la théorie de l'anthropologie culturelle et du cannibalisme, il manque ce point de vue féministe que l'on retrouve dans les autres textes du volume qui dénoncerait et condamnerait cette anthropophagie imaginaire où la femme est une valeur d'échange sous prétexte d'érotisation, "la femme considérée comme repas, mets délectable" (157) écrit Laroche qui semble entériner ce point de vue puisqu'on ne retrouve aucune critique qui viendrait remettre en question ce processus dévorant, qui sous-tend une violence dont la femme fait généralement les frais. Ceci est présenté par surcroît comme un modèle perpétuel, engrené dans le rouage d'un patriarcat considéré ici comme naturel avec la caution de la métaphore qui associe l'acte d'amour au fait de manger. Voici la conclusion auquel M. Laroche arrive: "La femme que nous rêvons de manger sera, comme cette société, à la mesure de notre idéal. Ainsi l'image, pour l'homme haïtien, de la femme haïtienne, quelle qu'elle ait pu être, dans le discours lyrique ou la fiction de repas de ce mâle haïtien, sera toujours forcément fonction du cannibalisme auquel cet homme se laissera condamner ou de la gastronomie dont il voudra se gratifier" (157). C'est de ce lieu même que la critique féministe pourrait enclencher un discours sur les politiques sexuelles ("sexual politics" selon l'expression de Kate Millett). Pour la communauté mâle à laquelle l'énonciation "nous" (citée plus haut) renvoie, la femme n'est plus qu'objet à dévorer. Sur ce sujet, voir aussi la mythologie du Chaperon rouge dans les contes respectifs de Perrault, de Jacques Ferron et de Guimarães Rosa, analysée par Euridice Figueiredo dans l'article "Chapeuzinho vermelho: a nova velha estória," celui-ci étant perçu comme un personnage ambigu, innocent et fasciné par les mystères de la sexualité du loup.

Heureusement, il y a aussi le contrepoint d'une réévaluation des canons de l'histoire littéraire avec des lectures déconstructionnistes, par exemple avec l'Autre opprimée, mais cette fois comme sujet dans le discours occidental. Dans "A mulher invisível" (La femme invisible), Maria Consuelo Cunha Campos met en lumière l'impact du genre et de la race dans l'autobiographie d'une femme noire, *Incidents dans la vie d'une esclave*, par Harriet A. Jacobs, morte en 1897, un espace textuel entre le documentaire et la fiction. Le récit permet l'émergence d'une conscience politique abolitionniste et féministe et s'inscrit dans la lutte pour les droits civils des Noirs en Amérique du Nord. Le Je mémorialiste des

femmes est aussi abordé par Maria José Motta Viana dans son article sur les "Mémoires féminines" au Brésil, dont les premiers textes remontent à 1893 et 1895 et sont des modèles d'humilité et d'abnégation. L'auteur indique que l'identité féminine, avec la psychanalyse freudienne ou d'autres discours, est définie par l'imaginaire masculin avec des caractéristiques attribuées à la féminité et considérées comme naturelles dans une civilisation phallogratique, telles que la passivité, la soumission, la fragilité, plus d'émotivité et moins de rationalité. Dans les Mémoires des femmes, on retrouve l'incorporation de ces valeurs et une censure interne, plus inconsciente et plus impérieuse selon elle, que les mécanismes de censure externe. La recherche porte donc sur un travail d'auto-inscription de la femme brésilienne du point de vue de ses émotions et de ses expériences, l'institution d'un sujet-femme et non strict objet du désir de l'autre, dans un contexte socio-culturel précis, et sans être le reflet d'un miroir qui lui est imposé. En écho avec ceci, un article sur Clarice Lispector par Clarisse Fukelman insiste précisément sur la conquête du Je dans lequel l'Absolu se réalise, insérée ici dans une matrice romantique valorisant le rôle de la fantaisie et de l'imagination. L'analyse remplace la vision lispectorienne dans une tradition mystique: vie intérieure, méditation, contact avec la nature, expérience du vide, rédemption. Également, la réflexion d'Elizabeth Marchant sur le discours critique de Lucia Miguel Pereira, fascinée elle-même par les expériences des femmes et leur présence dans les textes littéraires, s'avère intéressante.

Mais, lors de ce Colloque, s'impose surtout une discussion, nécessaire je dirais, sur l'expression "écriture féminine" par exemple, dans l'excellent article "Para além do sexo da escrita" de Lucia Castello Branco, spécialiste en Littérature comparée à L'Université Fédérale du Minas Gerais au Brésil. Cet article très percutant fait bien la part des choses, critiquant une vision divisionniste et réductrice de l'écriture, une lecture sexualisante étant restrictive dit-elle, à savoir que le "féminin" ne se réfère pas exclusivement à la femme. Elle discute ce que l'on entend par "féminin": relatif aux femmes, produit par des femmes, ou modalisé d'une certaine façon comme autre voix, autre ton, autre lieu. Elle se réfère à l'écrivain Guimarães Rosa qui rencontre aussi certains critères. Le féminin n'est pas la femme, mais entre en relation avec elle. Le féminin est le non-masculin, mais ne s'y oppose pas. L'auteur se sert d'une lithographie de Escher, *Verbum* (1942, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) pour illustrer les intersections entre masculin et féminin et les confusions d'identité. Bien que ces deux entités ne s'opposent pas, ne se distinguent pas, il n'y a pas de symétrie entre elles. L'auteur, avec raison, met en évidence les ambiguïtés et obscurités des relations entre le féminin et l'écriture. D'autres études sur la littérature et le féminin (celles de Palacios et Laia) ne font que reprendre à leur compte certaines formules psychanalytiques lacaniennes sans aucun apport original.

Deux articles affirment l'écriture comme activité érotique, c'est-à-dire comme

force créatrice. Sylvia Perlingeiro Paixao dans "A sombra de Eros" met en évidence la répression du corps dans la poésie du XIX^e siècle, et montre l'évolution des années 60 à 90, la relation entre le corps et la parole, en introduisant dans son texte des témoignages d'écrivaines. On voit comment l'hédonisme rencontre aussi la douleur, l'absence de l'autre. Le corps est divisé entre le manque et la complétude. L'auteur conclut en disant que la poésie féminine brésilienne aujourd'hui fait état d'un érotisme décentré, une polyvalence diffuse de jouissance qui extrapole les limites du corps et elle souhaite que le féminin devienne de plus en plus non-marqué, neutre et indéterminé. Dans l'article qui clôture le volume, c'est l'écriture de Hilda Hilst (*O caderno rosa de Lori Lamby*, Sao Paulo, 1990) qui sert d'exemple pour illustrer le plaisir sexuel et scriptural. Les mots ont de la saveur, de l'humour, du grotesque, on y retrouve une passion ludique du langage. L'on accède ici à un autre type de discours féminin que tous ceux qui nous ont été présentés avant. Il faut souligner aussi l'analyse très stimulante du texte (par Teresa Cristina Cerdeira da Silva) *Guilhermina* de l'écrivain Mario Claudio, publié à Lisbonne en 1986, axée sur l'étude d'un personnage féminin qui rompt avec les canons culturels d'une société patriarcale. C'est une biographie qui se constitue comme un roman: narrateur dédoublé, journal intime et histoire racontée. Il y a une relation constante entre la musique et la parole de la violoncelliste, une crise de l'identité et des frontières du genre discursif.

En dernière instance, l'on mentionnera la réflexion de Norberto Freyre sur la femme et la science, à partir des ouvrages de Isabelle Stengers (qui a travaillé avec Prigogine), Judith Schlanger et Evelyn Fox Keller. Il est particulièrement question ici du travail scientifique en biologie de Barbara McClintok qui ne sera reconnu que quarante ans plus tard. Elle a été critiquée à propos de la méthode qu'elle a utilisée pour se rapprocher de son objet. Pour elle, il n'y avait pas d'universel, de généralisation en terme de classes et types, mais son objet le "grain de maïs" dans le particulier, elle établissait une relation intime avec chaque grain. I. Stengers a émis l'hypothèse que c'était peut-être une façon de faire de la science au féminin. On constate qu'il n'est pas naturel d'être un homme ou une femme, c'est une construction (culturelle) d'être, et ce questionnement féminin sur le particulier est d'autant plus pertinent. Et en effet, les nombreuses études qui nous sont offertes dans ce recueil brésilien nous obligent à prendre en considération les manifestations multiples de la production artistique qui ne peuvent se superposer les unes aux autres car elles sont éminemment singulières. Ces investigations sont autant d'entrées dans ce monde diversifié de la femme et la littérature, et elles doivent absolument être poursuivies. (ELÈNE CLICHE, UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL)

*LAURA QUINNEY. *Literary Power and the Criteria of Truth*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995. Pp. xx, 183. US \$34.95.

Two hypotheses may, or should, present themselves to readers of *Literary Power and the Criteria of Truth*. One is that figuration, the use of rhetorical figures and tropes, is inherent in verbal expression and is not merely artistic embellishment. The other is that literature is not truth. The second, and more important, hypothesis holds that the equation of literature and truth derives from a fallacious assumption that literature, through sublimity or efficacious mimesis, or both, propels readers toward an experience of the grim truth of meaningless human mortality. Literature productive of this effect constitutes what Quinney calls the tragic paradigm: the matrix of literary power, "the idea that the truth must take a tragic form and corroboration or institution by means of literary pathos" (xvi). Isak Dinesen had expressed the postulate in *Out of Africa* (1937): "The true aristocracy and the true proletariat of the world are both in understanding with tragedy. To them it is the fundamental principle of God, and the key — the minor key — to existence. They differ in this way from the bourgeoisie of all classes, who deny tragedy, who will not tolerate it, and to whom the word of tragedy means in itself unpleasantness" (P.?). Quinney takes issue, not with the paradigmatic attitude summarized by Dinesen, but with the notion that the "fundamental principle" has its basis in veracity: she denies that the tragic sublime is invested with the truth of existence.

She effectively attaches literary power and the criteria of truth to the concept of the sublime, which in "Longinian" origin (as hupsoi) included, as sources, the process of intellection (noesis) with, or sometimes without, the experience of emotion (pathos). The rest, which is to say the other three sources of the sublime (figures, intrinsically elevated diction, and the total effect of verbal quality and elevation), is construction. Interest in the sublime as intellection, pathos, and construction saw its renaissance in the eighteenth century, cresting in the theoretical approaches of Burke and Kant, which concentrated on the literary equivalents of height and physical grandeur. The subsequent Romantic sublime mapped out idealistic ranges of dark untenability. In the twentieth century, concerted research into the eighteenth-century sublime (e.g., Samuel Monk's *The Sublime*, 1935) gave way, during the 1980's, to the re-fashioning of the concept in the context of modern post-ism (poststructuralism, postmodernism, deconstructionism, and the like). Quinney's provocative study eludes the meshes of presumptuous critical theory and challenges both the "Longinian" concept and its variations in later traditions. She focuses upon its contributing to literature a power that conditions the literary world to an arbitrary acceptance of literature as truth, a truth that, sublimely bleak and ultimately grim, is couched in a tragic paradigm: the mimesis of meaninglessness.

She finds noetic direction in the skeptical and humorous but finally sad

language-game apophthegms of Ludwig Wittgenstein, pathos in the tragic melancholy of Simone Weil and Samuel Johnson, and tension in Shelley's attempts to desentimentalize his idealism and live by it too, along with figural language (e.g., antithesis, metaphor, metastasis, simile, *et al.*) as an instrument with which these writers intensify the tragic paradigm.

To turn to *Literary Power and the Criteria of Truth* from other twentieth-century concentrations on the sublime is to be refreshed by straight talk and perhaps to be inspired with a determination to re-read Shelley and Wittgenstein. The two chapters on Shelley, in particular, constitute a renewal of that criticism in depth which seemed to have been superseded by theoretical obscurantism. Shelley, it is convincingly argued, "sought to separate literary power from its association with tragic sense. As part of this project, he sought specifically to reinvent the sublime in an erotic but still denaturalizing and passionate mode" (105). The argument includes a clarification of Paul de Man's "Shelley Disfigured" as saying, in effect and beyond its "negative knowledge," that Shelley's "The Triumph of Life" performs a "rigorous demystification of all his earlier work."

Quinney maintains a creditable distance from the obscurantist theoreticians, bringing them in only now and then to point out expertly what they are actually attempting to say. Where would-be deconstructionists, for example, take thousands of words to assert that nothing can be textually asserted, that words are "denegative" and self-destructive (or self-consumptive, like Erysichthonian signifiers), Quinney, accepting Wittgenstein's analysis of words as a language-game, gives words their due as affects, positing what they can and cannot do. What they can do is to generate artistic power. What they cannot do, but, she insists, have long been accredited with doing, is to translate this power into the revelation of truth; here she is in accord with a prime tenet of deconstructionism. She goes on to observe that this power-translation has been taken as axiomatic in the context of the sublime, wherein the ostensibly revealed truth is the grim reality of mortality in an existence that is void of absolute meaning.

She examines the artistic constructions of words by which Aeschylus, Weil, Dr. Johnson, Shelley, and *ipso non volente* Wittgenstein attain to the expression of this "truth." One might say that this amounts to an architectonics of the Reluctant Sublime. By contrast the obscurantist theoreticians remove the substructure of affective words and flit about in an axiomatic sublime which dispenses imperfect expressions of itself. See, for example, Jean-François Lyotard's *Leçons sur l'analytique du sublime* (1991), in which sections 23-29 of the second book of Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* is subjected to the concept of a "differend of feeling" and a "feeling of differend"; or the essays in *Du Sublime* by Jean-François Courtine and seven others, the group of essays being directed by the book's editor, Jeffrey S. Librett, toward an amalgamation of at least Kant and Heidegger, with one of the essays — the best of them,

actually, written by Louis Lavin — mentioning "Longinus" only in passing and concerned, not with the sublime, but, like Victor Hugo, with architecture and language; or, quite outclassed by the Lyotard and Librett texts, which have a firm Kantian ambience, *The Textual Sublime: Deconstruction and its Differences* (1990), edited by Hugh J. Silverman and Gary E. Aylesworth, who, with sixteen other essayists, navigate Derrida and de Man, one of them explicating de Man's view of Dionysos, in part, as follows: "Mistaking an aporia for a hymen, Dionysos puts his character into the reproductive organs of time and appearance, and so risks losing his fetishized [sic] identity." (ROY ARTHUR SWANSON, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE)

*JAMES J. PAXSON. *The Poetics of Personification*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Pp. 210. US \$49.95

Paxson's book is concerned primarily with characters or narrative agents — central to numerous medieval and renaissance narratives — who are the embodiment (objectification, substantialization) of conceptual entities such as classes, ideas, faculties of the mind, thoughts and feelings, vices and virtues, but also of types of speech acts (prayers, complaints), values, institutions, or fields of knowledge (philosophy, religion). The main focus (chs. 3-6) is accordingly narratological: a description of the types of personification-characters one encounters in these texts, their interrelations with other kinds of narrative agents occurring in the same story worlds (segregation or integration), their ontological status within the story worlds (belonging to the frame world, to the primary story world, to a secondary one such as a fictional individual's dream world, or occurring in a scene represented in a painting or sculpture), and their relations to the respective narrators and modes of narration (first or third person). The thematization or foregrounding in these texts of the very process of generation of personification-characters (the self-reflexive or meta-narrative dimension) also comes for close scrutiny. Paxson sets out in detail the various aspects of the attendant word/world tension: the oscillation between the rhetorical and referential uses of language, between personification as a mere rhetorical ornament and as a world creating process; the hesitation between personification-characters as givens of the story world and as artistic devices or products of an ongoing activity of poetic invention (121-22, 133, 164-65). In a wider context, the book further discusses the origins and general cognitive significance of personification as "master trope"; the specifically verbal and wider semiotic and cognitive mechanisms that give rise to personification in the first place; and, rather inconclusively, the relation between personification and other semiotic, especially hermeneutic, procedures dominant in medieval literature, such as allegory/allegoresis, prefiguration and typification (chs. 1-2, Conclusion and *passim*).

The author proves quite convincingly two general theses. First, that works in

which personification-characters are central manifest all the intricacies and ambiguities, ontological and narratorial, one usually associates with narrative works of later periods. Second, the generation of personification narratives can be understood in a much more precise and enlightening manner than hitherto done by placing it within a larger context of basic lexical, semantic and cognitive transfer mechanisms. The narratological aspects of personification-narratives, discussed in chs. 3-6, are quite interesting in their own right, but do not reveal any phenomena which cannot be encountered in at least some other kinds of narrative as well. This part of the book is hence of interest primarily to those students of the four authors whose works are discussed in detail (Prudentius, Chaucer, Langland, and Spenser) who are looking for an up to date narratological analysis of these works. The second claim, on the other hand, is associated with significant new insights on a specific long standing issue and is probably of interest to a wider audience. It will therefore serve as the main focus of what follows.

There are in principle two complementary routes to an understanding of the mechanisms of personification: the linguistic-rhetorical and the philosophical-ontological. A two thousand years plus rhetorical tradition understands personification loosely as the giving of a human face or identity to something not human, usually abstract, such as Truth, Folly or Time (1). The enabling mechanism of this transfer is a lexical deviation, whereby an abstract noun is usually coupled with a verb or adjective associated with concrete spatio-temporal features, for example, "fortune smiled on him" or "danger was looming on the horizon." Quite simply, this is "an animation of a noun that is abstract" (30), based, like all metaphorical processes, on the violation of a grammatical rule (30). This process can be described more precisely as the violation of selectional restrictions governing the combination of lexemes. Time and fortune, for example, would have among their lexical features [-spatial], while smile or loom large, on the other hand, would obviously have the [+spatial] one. The resultant deviant collocation, phrase or sentence is traditionally referred to as a lexical or semantic trope, a rhetorical figure embodying an improper linguistic usage and leading potentially to a change in the standard literal meaning of one or more words. One can stop at this point and have personification as mere local ornamentation on the level of discourse, a micro-stylistic figure of speech. And indeed, most personifications one encounters in ordinary discourse do not go beyond this function. In some discourses, however, two further semantic processes occur, involving the literalization and further expansion of the initial lexical transfer. The literalization process takes the predicate expression at face value, thereby converting what is normally understood in this context as a mere analogy (e.g., smile upon=be favourable to) into a first order fact of the discourse world created by the text. Subsequently, Fortune too is reinterpreted as [+spatial], and is now literally a female human figure who can smile upon a given fictional character. The general abstract noun is correspondingly treated within the text as

a direct referring expression. In other words, the abstract-category term "fortune" is now employed as a proper name (=the referring expression par excellence) which picks out a specific unique individual within the space time frame of the story world. Once the abstract entity (not "quantity," as Paxson erroneously refers to it) is treated as a spatio-temporal human like individual, more attributes can be ascribed to it, pertaining to all aspects of human existence: physical looks (especially face), speech, behaviour, interaction with other human individuals as well as objects, a life history, and an inner life or psychology (perceptual, cognitive, emotive, and volitional). The abstraction has by now been embodied, im-personated and turned into a full fledged personification figure, one of the major actants or narrative agents of the story world, the "what" of the discourse. The choice of attributes ascribable to the resultant personification figure is not completely free though. As Paxson demonstrates in his discussion of Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, the physical features and activities attributed to the personified vices and virtues in their respective battle scenes are based on general abstract considerations governing the replacement of paganism by Christianity.

A two level process is thus at work in all personification narratives: the abstract is initially humanised and given concrete features, but these features in turn hark back to and are governed by the originary abstract, ideological entity. The intended didactic function of the personification narratives Paxson is dealing with serves as a further motivation for this ideological constraint. When the relevant text world is static, consisting of an extended description, we are dealing with personification figures simpliciter. When the world is temporal and dynamic, involving activities and changes of state, that is, when it is a world of fabulation rendered by means of a narrative or dramatic text (masque, morality play, mystery play), we are dealing with personification characters. The movement of personification from discourse to story we have just traced can be described as the road leading from lexical deviation to story-world creation. The study of this process begins with the analysis of a linguistic mechanism and ends up with a phenomenology of the story worlds and types of agents for which this mechanism serves as the initial trigger.

But personification is not an exclusively linguistic process. Personification figures or characters can be identified in painting, sculpture, cartoons and silent movies as well. The linguistic mechanisms outlined above are therefore only one particular mode of personification generation, one special case of a wider semiotic process. Moreover: our ability to translate personification figures from one language to another and from one medium to another also suggests that a more fundamental cognitive or conceptual process underlies all of these transfer phenomena. The general mechanism in question is that of inter-categorical transfer, or "category mistake" in Gilbert Ryle's term. While Paxson does not employ either of these terms, this is clearly what is at stake in his detailed taxonomy of personification figures (ch. 2). Human cultures in general and

philosophical systems in particular include some cognitive map of the universe, its basic ontological domains (43), orders, levels or kinds, based on some basic binary distinctions. Several such wide spread distinctions are between individual and class (e.g., one person and mankind), sets and sub-sets, corporeal and non-corporeal (individual objects in space and time vs. ideas), animate and inanimate, human and non-human (or, more specifically, man vs. animal), social and biological, and so on. While these distinctions do not form a unified hierarchical tree, they do offer a grid of basic parameters, with some overlaps, for the location of any entity whatsoever. Any instance where items from one category are treated as if they were literally items from another category involves category transfer. One can thus imagine treating a social organization as a human body (Coriolanus), turning an abstraction into a geographical location (*paysage moralisé*), converting ideas or people into animals (animification), and, most importantly, translating any non-corporeal entity into a physical one (objectification, hypostatization, substantialization), and translating any non-human entity into a character that has human form (anthropomorphi-zation). Personification as a cognitive process can now be defined as the intersection of these last two ontological transfers. In a word, personification characters are "anthropomorphised abstractions who enjoy the power of human speech" (82). Note that turning an abstraction into a physical entity implies a radical adjustment of basic ontological categories, and hence a radically non-realistic story world. Once this cognitive process has occurred, the resultant personification figure can be manifested in texts both verbal and non-verbal, descriptive and narrative. But in all cases personification is like a sign with its two correlated aspects: the personifier (a standardised human narrative agent) and the personified (an abstract entity) (40-43). In verbal texts, the general semiotic transfer is manifested, as already indicated, by the turning of an abstract class term (a noun such as "hope" or an adjective such as "faithful") into a (capitalized) proper name, sometimes a complex one consisting of a whole adjectival or nominal phrase. Paxson distinguishes in fact no less than seven such nominational varieties (58-62). In visual art the process is less immediate: an iconographic or emblematic code must be at work, linking an abstract concept with a visual human figure of a particular makeup which is to be considered as its personification. For example, death as a hooded skeletal figure with a scythe, justice as a blindfolded woman, and so on. In renaissance and baroque emblem books such visible agents and the concrete action scenes in which they are portrayed are accompanied by verbal inscriptions announcing the underlying abstract theme, for example, "the triumph of hope over death." These inscriptions thus make it absolutely clear to the viewer that s/he is viewing a personification figure/scene; in other words, that the picture is to be decoded in an allegorical manner, and further indicate the specific theme or idea personified.

While the creation of personification characters is by no means a universal

literary phenomenon, it is still wide spread, and has persisted over a long period of time. According to Paxson, it may be viewed as a master trope or paradigmatic instance of satisfying some basic human cognitive needs. One of them is the need to make the abstract and intellectual — philosophical, ethical, or whatever — more immediate or phenomenal in terms of human experience, to translate the ontologically separate into the present and time-bound (157, 166). In even more general terms, personification is a clear instance of the basic poetic desire for linguistic and cognitive renewal, for making things new, for "freshness of sensation," for a revitalization of mental contents through casting them into a new and initially unfamiliar mould. Personification shares this quality with all metaphorical transfers, and with all processes involving the creation of radically non-realistic, metaphorical worlds (169, 100-01). But, as with metaphor, here too what starts as "uplifting" ends up as something familiar, exhausted and deprived of perceptibility once it has become familiar and routinely employed. Historically speaking, medieval personification narratives may have grown out of the exegetic model of allegoresis. Initially, exegetes of the story of the original fall (Genesis 2-3) defined, say, Adam as reason and Eve as sensuality. But at some point they may have decided to engage in independent fabulation and write narratives in which Reason and Sensuality themselves are turned into individual actants with actions and situations which need no longer be linked to those of Adam and Eve.

Paxson's study is of relevance, significance and value for readers from at least three areas: those interested in the poetics and hermeneutics of medieval narrative (of which personification narrative is a subset); those interested in the different structures of narrative worlds in general; and those interested in the transition from discourse to story, that is, in the linguistic and cognitive processes leading from word to imaginary world. But the book is regrettably not without its flaws. First, it tries to do too much, and often loses its focus by switching repeatedly between questions of traditional rhetorical analysis, medieval exegesis and hermeneutics, style, cognition, narration, the narrated world, and so on. On the other hand, the fascinating questions of the personification/allegory distinction and of personification in visual media are touched upon on and off but never adequately discussed. In fact, the book as a whole suffers from a sustained hesitation between two separate goals: providing a multi-faceted, near exhaustive, description of a limited corpus and providing a general poetics of personification, which draws on selected, pertinent aspects of a number of works to illustrate its wider claims. Second, and far more unsettling, is the author's apparent desire to leave no fashionable current theoretical term unused, or at least unmentioned. We thus have side by side de Man's obscure oracular pronouncements on the nature of allegory; Samuel Levin's theory of metaphorical worlds; structuralist narratology (Genette); some (semi-intuitive) uses of fictional worlds semantics; Bakhtin; deconstruction and Derrida; Bachelard, Poulet and phenomenology in general; Gestalt psychology and psychoanalysis; and, in the Conclusion, some musings along the lines of feminism and cultural materialism. Some sentences

or even whole passages are almost unreadable due to this oversaturation of terms, many of which are themselves obscure, metaphorical or based on word plays to begin with.

The author obviously knows his material and has some important original insights to offer. Why then all this overlay? And besides, can one really employ in the same breath radically different, even incommensurable, paradigms of theorizing? To this reader, the book looks like an intelligent and perceptive argument, which I have tried to summarize above, on which layers of trendy terms have been superimposed to make it look more general, "profound," "cutting edge," "relevant," or whatever. But the true result is that intelligibility is reduced, the line of argument gets obscured, and specific insights tend to disappear among universalist speculation. Medievalists are often worried nowadays that their work will not get any wider attention. But making it clear from the outset that they are using the famous alterity of medieval texts to enrich our understanding of general linguistic, cognitive or literary processes, and then adhering to one current theoretical paradigm seems to me the far better strategy. Let us hope that Paxson's next book will maintain all the strengths revealed in this one — his first — while managing to shake off its excesses. (URI MARGOLIN, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

*DIETRICH KRUSCHE. *Leseerfahrung und Lesergespräch*. München: Iudicium, 1995. ISBN 3-89129-259-7. Pp. 237. DM 36.00, ÖS 281.00, SFr 36.00

For evident reasons, this book on intercultural relations in literature should be meat and drink to Comparatists. As the book's introduction points out, it deals both with constants and variance in intercultural reading. Its underlying model is that of the dialogue between texts from different cultures on the one hand, and textual characteristics and readers' experiences on the other. Much of the innovation of Krusche's approach comes from a theoretical reflection on the interaction between the two dialogues, linked to some concrete illustrations of this interaction.

Part I, "Text and Experience," opens with a chapter on delight (Genuss) as an individual and cultural phenomenon, starting from an analysis of Plato's *Symposium* up to its position in present-day reading. Chapter 2 takes Gadamer's hermeneutics as a starting point to outline the kind of personal experiences readers may undergo. Insofar as they confront texts from different cultures, however, they may easily overlook (or indeed be unaware of) indirect generic markers, and thus "miss" an experience that members of the other culture are familiar with. Chapter 3 presents a re-reading of literary texts from the former DDR. The result of this rereading in historical perspective shows literary texts to carry optimal social functions when they avoid contamination by contemporary centres of power or influence. The final chapter of this part brings the historical analysis one step further by locating the writing practice in a sociological

perspective. From a quantitative point of view, literature is said to be highly productive (in the sense that ever more books are produced), but qualitatively it seems as if literature is involved in an inward movement, as if the writing is done "for its own sake" (83).

Part II analyzes the impact of textual structure upon the reading experience. The hypothesis advanced by Krusche is that reading processes are monitored especially by textual elements that relate to the text's spatio-temporal world, such as deictic expressions. It is words such as "I," "here," "this," and "now" that allow readers to identify with the text's content, even if that content belongs to another culture. Sure, a tension may arise between the two, aptly referred to by Krusche as the "subjektbezogene Vorstellungsraum" (subject-bound imaginative space), and the "kontextbezogene Kulturraum" (context-bound cultural space) (111). The kind of tension that is involved (and that is also at work at the aesthetic level) is then illustrated in an analysis of Gottfried Keller's *Pantkratz der Schmoller*, taking up most of the subsequent chapter. The final chapter of this part confronts the Japanese *haiku* with its European reception history, a process in which the original genre underwent several significant alterations.

Part III deals with cultural differences as "Vermittlungsdistanz." First, the perceptive and structural qualities of German language (especially its tolerance of formidable consonant clusters and its preference for syntactic bracketing) are discussed in the light of their aesthetic operation ("Wirkung"). The next chapter describes the feelings of resistance Japanese students of German literature experience when reading German texts *aloud*. As Krusche shows, it is precisely the qualities of German phonology that renders their reading aloud anti-aesthetic in the perception of Japanese students. In this sense, the chapter provides examples of how the reading of texts in a foreign language may be done in such a way that the exercise contributes to the relevance of intercultural studies, an issue further elaborated in chapter 3. The final chapter contains some general (mostly currently fashionable) reflections.

As this short overview of the book's content makes clear, there is much in Krusche's book that Comparatists may find interesting or stimulating. It is not without shortcomings however. Some errors are strange, for instance the misspelling of surnames, such as Roman Jakobson's ("Jacobsen") and John Searle's ("Searl"). On a more general level, the book may be seen as an attempt to link intercultural matters to reading experiences, and clearly this is the author's field of speciality; see also D. Krusche and A. Wierlacher, eds. *Hermeneutik der Fremde*. München: Ludicium, 1990 and D. Krusche, *Literatur und Fremde. Zur Hermeneutik kulturräumlicher Distanz*. München: Ludicium, 1993). The attempt is interesting, but one would have hoped that it would go further than the traditional hermeneutic methods allow. As it is, Krusche is engaged in asserting things about reading experiences solely on the basis of his own readings. This is not to discredit these experiences, of course, but it may be expected that

introspection is not the best guide in trying to describe reading experiences. For one thing, our intuitions about ourselves may betray us. When it comes to generalizing his ideas beyond his own reading processes, however, Krusche's ideas are to be treated for what they are: hypotheses, based on a one-person sample. The one moment when Krusche is aware of this frightfully limited perspective is in chapter 1 of Part III, where he deals with the experiences of Japanese readers of German literary texts (though the observations and their analysis are treated somewhat impressionistically.) Precisely because this topic of intercultural reading experiences is so important, one would like to see more reliable data and a somewhat more rigorous methodology in analyzing them. Hermeneutics may be a fine thing in some respects, but it is a limited instrument for studying complex relationships in the real world. (WILL VAN PEER, UNIVERSITY OF MÜNCHEN)

*LASSNER, JACOB. *Demonizing the Queen of Sheba: Boundaries of Gender and Culture in Postbiblical Judaism and Medieval Islam*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993. Pp. xv+281. ISBN 0-226-46915-8. US \$19.95 paper.

Jewish and Muslim stories of the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon, the author of this book argues, may be seen as a paradigm of woman's challenge to male authority, to which she must ultimately submit. But can we make such tales the basis for an analysis of "female experience and consciousness" in Near Eastern cultures (x), or see them as reflecting real situations rather than as literary constructs? Lassner is well aware of the pitfalls of reconstructing social attitudes from literary sources, but he does not escape them entirely. His interest in the story as an example of cultural borrowing tends to obscure the argument that both Jewish and Muslim writers "transmuted the 'historic' Queen of Sheba, a clever and politically astute sovereign, into a demonic force seeking to dissolve all boundaries of gender" (1). The book thus combines two approaches in what is not always a successful blend.

The Biblical account of the queen's visit (1 Kings 10: 1-13) is terse in the extreme: she comes bearing gifts, tests Solomon with (unspecified) riddles (which he readily answers), is humbled by his majesty, praises him, and returns to her own land. Postbiblical accounts elaborate on the riddles ("linked to the natural order of things and the question of identity," 12-13) and introduce Solomon's own test: brought into his glass court, and thinking his throne is standing upon water, the queen raises her robe to reveal hairy legs — a sign of "unnatural" masculinity — the removal of this hair makes her acceptable to Solomon, and signals the restoration of order. All accounts stress the queen's recognition of Solomon's dominance; some, in addition, state either that she refuses to marry and bear children, or that she bears a child who will ultimately destroy the kingdom of Israel. Comparing these stories with others which depict Biblical

women as demonic and dangerous females, Lassner concludes that they reveal the "terrifying fear that has gripped men and women alike in traditional societies of the Near East: that is, left to their own devices, dangerous female creatures would change the nature of the universe as we know it" (34).

The Koran (Sura 27: 15-44) describes the conversion of the sun-worshipping queen to the true faith of the One God, Allah; it includes the story of the glass court and of the queen's disclosing her ankles (which are not described). This elliptical account, Lassner observes, seems as if it "were torn out of a larger tale known to contemporary audiences but beyond our grasp" (42). But whether we see the present form of the Koranic text as the product of loose editing or as deliberately and carefully crafted in its present form, it is undoubtedly the case that (as John Wansbrough argues in his *Quranic Studies*) the Prophet's audience (especially the Jewish community of Medina) were well acquainted with prophetic legends, and not necessarily through texts, with which Lassner seems overly concerned as he deals with a society in which cultural transmission was largely oral.

In his effort to unravel the various strands of Jewish and Muslim tradition, Lassner focuses on the story of Solomon and Sheba (known as Bilqis) in the *Legends of the Prophets* by Ahmad ibn Muhammad Thaqlabi (d. 1035), one rich in elaborate detail. Briefly, the half-human Bilqis (her father was ruler of Yemen, her mother one of the *jinn*) achieves rule by marrying, then slaying, the king her people have chosen instead of her, and whom they wish to depose because of his corruption. She bids her people worship the sun; Solomon sends her a letter urging her to convert; she sends him gifts, which he disdains. At last she visits him, waits upon him in the glass court (revealing her hairy ankles), and tests him with riddles; the last being that he tell her about the nature of his God. This Solomon cannot do; but God rescues him by erasing the past so that everyone forgets the question. Confessing Solomon's superiority, the queen accepts his guidance and is converted. After this, say some authorities, Solomon married her (after removal of the offensive ankle hair with a depilatory invented by the "jinn"), and that she continued to rule over Yemen; others assert that she was married to a ruler who was then placed over her kingdom.

Lassner identifies two major concerns in Thaqlabi's account: a "broad concern for an orderly universe ... that embraces anxiety-provoking issues of gender," and "the need to Islamize that concern when it is encountered in non-Muslim settings, such as the Jewish sources" (64). Solomon exerts male superiority (and guarantees order) by subduing both the dark forces of creation (the non-human "jinn" and the satans) and the dangerous female. He is both divinely inspired prophet and ideal ruler; and appeals to historicity — how did Solomon avoid the political feuds endemic to later Islamic society? did readers "familiar with the role of the military in Islamic times" not wonder how he "managed to keep his own bizarre contingents subservient to him and at peace with one another?" (70-71) — seem

reductive.

The issue of "crossing gender boundaries" is more complex. To state that "the unity of the Yemen was shattered by female ambition" (73) is to ignore both the former king's presumptuous transgression in marrying a woman from the "jinn" and the corruption of the king murdered by Bilqis; these are no paragons of (male) rule, and the observation that "Regicide was not something medieval Muslims could easily defend" (76) misses the point. There are other cases of reductiveness and/or overreading. For example, the queen's palace is reminiscent not only of the Abbasid Round City of Baghdad (76-77), but of Solomon's Temple, and hence of the cosmic Plan itself. The test in the glass court (where Bilqis fails "to distinguish nature's handiwork from an artificial creation," 83) is designed to refute the accusation of the jealous "jinn" that she has a mule's hooves. The removal of her ankle hair with a depilatory rather than a blade (an authoritative "first" for a still customary procedure) provokes the question, "Might Thaqlabi's male audience have attributed her reluctance [to use a razor] to their fear of castration?" (84); but if, "In this reading of the text, blood is a sign of violation," the reading ignores the text, in which blood is neither shed nor mentioned.

Might we then posit a non-gendered reading of Thaqlabi in which his account presents both the proofs and the problematic of prophecy and kingship, in which the queen's conversion represents the union, in the true faith, of male and female principles, of prophecy and wisdom, in harmonious balance? Thaqlabi would not be the only medieval Muslim writer to see in such a union the symbol of a well-ordered universe.

Speculating on "what it is that makes [this] account a Muslim story" (88), Lassner argues that the issue of the queen's unbelief "shifts interest from the queen's challenge to natural order to Solomon's status as a practising Muslim" (93). References to Islamic law are invoked to explain why, for example, Solomon needed to possess the queen's throne before her conversion (his curiosity about her possessions, noted by many authorities, is dismissed, 95). He also perceives a deliberate agenda behind the Islamization of Jewish themes: "Whatever Muslims thought of things Jewish was directly linked with the need to legitimize their own beliefs and practices... the Jewish past could and did become part of a polemic against contemporary Jewry" (116). This seriously overstates the pervasiveness of the religious polemic that was conducted chiefly through accusations that both Jews and Christians had tampered with their own scriptures.

Thus, although Lassner castigates traditional scholarship for assuming "that the transmission of literary artifacts was consciously initiated and carefully programmed and ... that the artifacts themselves were always discernible to those borrowing them" (120), he himself often proceeds upon the same assumptions. Moreover, he relies heavily on the evidence of textual contacts (it is the presence of "actual rather than hypothetical texts to compare" that weights the evidence

in favour of borrowing from Jewish rather than Christian sources; a possible Abyssinian source is briefly dismissed (cf. 122-23), but we should note, as Lassner does not, that the Koranic word "sarh" which designates the glass court is an Abyssinian loan-word). Asking, "how did a Solomonic saga ... become part of Islamic tradition?" he answers: "The search for Jewish links to the Islamic story ought to begin with Arabic translations of older Hebrew or Aramaic texts" (124). But translation was certainly not the only means of providing access to the prophetic legends, any more than was literacy a necessary prerequisite (125-26). "Forced to conjecture" the possibility of oral transmission, Lassner admits that in such a case "the process of transmitting and absorbing Jewish cultural artifacts is likely to have been circuitous and ... it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible for modern scholars to retrace in detail" (127). He stresses the dangers of "distortion of the original account" (127) — as if there were some *Urtext* which ought to have been preserved intact. And while it is indeed true that "oral [or even written] prose tradition is susceptible to the mediating influences of multiple transmitters, each inscribing on the tale cultural/political agendas and rhetorical strategies" (127), greater attention should be paid to examining individual strategies and agendas rather than simply assuming that these reflect the group concerns and needs of an undifferentiated "community" (cf. 128, 132). "Islam" is neither as monolithic nor as gender-anxious as this study implies.

There is much in this book that is of value and interest, not least its coverage of a wide range of languages and traditions, and its appendixes with translations of the major accounts discussed. (One would have liked, however, to see some mention of later Persian treatments of Solomon and Sheba.) But despite its efforts both to unravel complex questions of cultural borrowing and to locate the book within the broader sphere of gender studies (157-60), its methodology remains, to put it bluntly, old-fashioned. A motif-based rather than a source-critical approach, availing itself of the abundant existing research on folkloric motifs and popular narratives, might have shed more light on problems that source criticism cannot address.

And there are some surprising (and, perhaps unwittingly, prejudiced) assumptions about women in medieval Islam. (We should note, moreover, that despite both the Prophet's condemnation of women rulers and the "message" of the queen's submission to Solomon's, women both could, and did, rule in their own right.) Why, for example, is Thaclabi's Bilqis said to be literate "unlike other women" (53)? Thaclabi merely states that she could read and write Arabic (and, to invoke historicity for a moment, medieval Muslim women were often highly educated). Why is Solomon's dismissal of the queen's riddles as the "fare of women chatting in the moonlight," in the eighteenth-century Yemenite version of Saadiyya Ben Joseph (which shows clear Arabic influence), interpreted as a cryptic reference to possible menstrual impurity (148-49), when it clearly refers to the connection between women and night-time storytelling entertainments

represented by that other determined queen, Scheherazade? While we may not know enough "about the actual position of women in medieval Islam" (160), we do (or should) know that they were not necessarily either powerless, illiterate, or impure. (JULIE SCOTT MEISAMI, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD)

*WILLIAM D. PADEN, ed. *The Future of the Middle Ages: Medieval Literature in the 1990's*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994. Pp. 233. US \$37.95, US \$17.95 paper.

The Future of the Middle Ages is a collection of seven papers delivered at a colloquium of the same name in 1990, a year in which philology drew itself into turmoil. The unrest, evident in this volume, bears on the problem of rethinking the history of the discipline and redrawing its frame of inquiry for the future. In its section headings, the book lays out a map of philology over time: "Philology in History," "Tradition and Innovation," and "New Directions." A fourth section, entitled "A Neophilological Album," displays photographs of some of the founding fathers of romance philology, Gaston Paris, Joseph Bédier, Menéndez Pelayo, and Menéndez Pidal. The Spanish philologists are the subject of an excellent essay by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (32-49) that examines the myth of national origins in Pelayo's work and the broader sense of national traditions found in Pidal and in the poetic modernism of García Lorca's generation. A picture of Lorca seated near the clock at Columbia University is included in the gallery of masters (portraits of Edward Ham and Alfred Foulet complete the group). On the heels of the philologists and modernist poet comes a reproduction of a fifth-century B.C. vase showing Procrustes, notorious in mythology — and lately in medieval studies — for stretching or mutilating travellers to the shape of his bed. Rupert T. Pickens's essay gauges the "polemic" nature of Bernard Cerquiglini's characterization (see his *Éloge de la variante*) of text editing as a procrustean adventure that began with Lachmann and persists more or less unchecked (56-60). After the Procrustes vase, the "visual experience" (Stephen G. Nichols 135) expands with images of manuscripts, medieval coins, contemporary architecture, the AT&T Building in New York and the Opéra de la Bastille in Paris. Blended together, the scenes of old and new monuments suggest that the discipline can still foster a sense of continuity with its past.

Pickens summons a type of "continuity" that has resonance with philologists who view themselves as carriers of a torch of "enduring values" (76-78). Nichols forges a line of continuity that cuts through the sweet memories of "collegiality" (Pickens) and takes the venter off the legendary club of gentlemen philologists. He ties philology's past to the present by connecting medievalists, immersed in "text editing and textual studies" (114), to the "material philology" or historicist approach of precursors from Roger Bacon to Auerbach (135-36); Nichols goes on to propose more analysis of "material culture," what he calls the "visual

properties" of manuscripts (131). His discussion concludes with a late manuscript of the *Roman de la rose* in which two series of illuminations (portraits of exemplary figures and castration scenes) bring the poetic text of earlier centuries into contact and confrontation with growing artistic licence and virtuosity.

Nichols's essay is remarkable in its attempt to lower the tone of debate, acrimonious at the time, between proponents and opponents of the new philology. The grouping of philologists of both stripes in one book, as William Paden explains in his introduction, provides a forum for "a range of attitudes" (x). Paden presents the "range of attitudes" as a clash over philology's past and future and traces the conflict to a spirit of rupture that grew out of "the events of May 1968" and "echoed across the Atlantic" (vii) in a special issue of *Speculum* (January 1990) devoted to the new philology and edited by Nichols. In *The Future of the Middle Ages*, Nichols's work follows articles by Pickens and Peter Dembowski that correct errors in the new philology and dispute as hopelessly incomplete historical accounts of the discipline that stop prematurely at Bédier or at Auerbach (55 and 79-80). But the charges founder in light of Nichols's argument that "philology's discontent" is apparent at many points in its history. Internal debate, then and now, stems from a conflicting definition of philology as "language study narrowly focused on textual study [and text editing] versus literary language as a manifestation of culture" (123). In this respect, the new philology storm, pitting manuscript culture against editorial practices, is a sign of the discipline's continuing "quarre!" with itself.

In the essays which tackle "new directions," Joan M. Ferrante and R. Howard Bloch look ahead to the possibilities for working in areas of cultural studies. Ferrante proposes "more of the same" (145) in what amounts to the collection's strongest statement in recognition of ongoing studies in gender, sexuality, music, law, and audience reception. Ferrante also calls for an enlarged "vision beyond national boundaries" (149), a suggestion Bloch echoes with reference to the promise offered by "the development of the European community" (172). "Economic unity" will make "nationalistic approaches" (Dembowski 87) obsolete and allow a consideration of "the universalizing aspects of medieval culture" (Bloch 172). Dembowski is right to trace the fortunes of medieval studies in France "from 1870 until the end of the Second World War" to "prevailing national feelings" (87). But "more of the same" risks await, if medievalists, sensitive at last to the nationalist tendencies of their predecessors, stake the future of the middle ages on international markets. (STEPHEN STEELE, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY)

*HART, JONATHAN, ed. *Imagining Culture: Essays in Early Modern History and Literature*. New York: Garland, 1996. Pp. 280. US \$37.00.

Postmodern pluralism finds many echoes in the Renaissance, whose culture appears increasingly as curious Babel, not light-carrying Thebes. The essays

collected in *Imagining Culture: Essays in Early Modern History and Literature* demonstrate the virtues of contemporary eclecticism. They provide a wide range of insights into a period whose breadth of literary experiment is nicely accentuated by the breadth of contemporary approaches to textuality. *Imagining Culture* brings to light a Renaissance as tentative as it was innovative. The essays are by and large both self-reflexive and bold in illuminating points of connection between early modernity, critical theory and postmodernity.

Jonathan Hart, in his introduction to *Imagining Culture*, describes the aspect of Renaissance sensibility which appeals most strongly to the twentieth century, and in particular the postmodern mind. "From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance a shift seems to be occurring from finding similarities between cultures to differences between them. A historical sense of discontinuity, as opposed to inherited patterns of continuity, developed during the early modern period" (9). Thus a Renaissance of breaks, revisions, shifts and adaptations comes to light, more self-questioning than self-aggrandising.

Appropriately enough, *Imagining Culture* opens with a meditation on the "uncertainty of purpose" at large in contemporary interdisciplinarity, namely historians' and anthropologists' borrowings from one another. Anthony Pagden traces the development of anthropology, beginning with early modern travel accounts, which were ethnographic rather than anthropological because they were concerned with classification and not the reasons for cultural difference. Anthropology proper began with colonization, which required a *rapprochement* of antithetical cultural norms. Out of the need to place the relationship between "them" and "us" in a coherent framework came the "History of Civilisation," which entailed a reshaping of anthropology in the light of universalising, evolutionary theories of history ("savage" cultures reflect our own culture in its earlier stages of development).

Pagden uses the example of anthropology's incorporation of history to underscore his own skepticism about contemporary interdisciplinary *bricolage*. "Successful trespassing" entails the wholesale transfiguration of a discipline. He points up the irony in Historical Anthropologists' exoticising — one might almost say orientalisising — our ancestors as "others." Scholars such as Robert Darnton borrow from the evolutionary theories of nineteenth-century anthropology but use them to antithetical purpose, for the basic aim of anthropology is to make different cultures commensurable rather than inscrutable. Pagden brilliantly illuminates the stress between disciplines which believe they are compatible but whose practitioners are often ill-informed about the roots of the methodologies they so gaily raid. He suggests that both history and anthropology are in a state of unresolved metamorphosis, but that the new, as-yet-undetermined social science will be distinguished by sensitivity to difference and a high degree of self-awareness about its own assumptions.

Where Pagden says the blurred boundaries of anthropology and history

presage a transformed social science, Jonathan Hart's essay on Renaissance historiography illuminates the bricolage involved in a new type of writing which inaugurated anthropology itself. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, André Thévet, and Richard Hakluyt's dedications and prefaces to their accounts of New World exploration claim proto-anthropological, eyewitness authority but also conflate it with the authority of second-hand, written sources. While Oviedo had been to the New World, Thévet exaggerated the extent of his travels so as to underline the authenticity of his account and Hakluyt, who had not been there at all, makes his travels in Europe stand in for the direct experience of New World voyaging. Each is suing for patronage by invoking the necessity for a national project of colonisation. Similarly, each "claims a first" (8) in filtering the truth of the New World, whether through observation or maps and travelogues. Hart's illumination of "this mixture of rhetorical and scientific history" (84) goes to the heart of the overlap between event, writing and "scientific" authority which continues to trouble history and anthropology. In particular, Hakluyt's preface to *The Principal Navigations of the English Nation* (1589) depends on a dialogue with and assimilation of Latin, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese accounts. His ambivalence about relying on foreign sources when he is supposed to be concentrating on the navigations of the English nation reflects a mix of doubt and openness that comes up in other essays in this volume.

Olga Zorzi Pugliese sets the *Dialogues* of Sperone Speroni in the context of twentieth-century theories of polyphony, pluralism and dialogism. She shows that Sperone defended the labyrinthine nature of the dialogue, which was a significant departure from older, pejorative ideas of the labyrinth, whose digressiveness was associated with the errancy (and error) of false philosophies and amorous desire. Sperone defends the mode of doubt villified in the Middle Ages. His description of the participatory chemistry of the dialogue, which ignites "sparks" of response in an active reader, describes "a kind of hermeneutic dialogue with the dialogic text" that resembles Hans-Georg Gadamer's theory of reading and reader response. Sperone further theorises the participatory chemistry of the dialogue as game and dance.

While Pugliese is right to demonstrate Sperone's notion of the dialogue as decentred, flexible and relatively free in its potential for voicing opinions that went against the grain of political and religious censorship in the Counter-Reformation, she does not mention the other, perhaps most salient, aspect of the genre. The author could use it as a mode of self-concealment, absolving himself of responsibility for his own words by presenting a multitude of opinions through his characters. Sperone is in fact rather flip about the dialogue. He writes that the author of dialogues does not go deeply into a subject but "circles around it as though *dancing*, with the result that he never teaches anything, for someone who does not know cannot teach, but he seems to know and teach, just like the young child who jumps and *dances* but does not yet know how to walk." If the author

does not really know anything then he cannot be held to task for what he writes.

The elusive, gestural quality of Sperone's dialogist recalls Stephen Greenblatt's "self-fashioning" Renaissance subjects who are all but determined by the structures of authority they seek to circumvent. Yet Eva Kushner in "The Emergence of the Paradoxical Self" presents a salutary argument against periodisations of "the self." Her point is simple and entirely relevant. How could Martin Luther have confronted the Diet of Worms — "I cannot and will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience" — in the absence of self "as source of knowledge and as moral origin" (42)? Kushner focusses on the resisting selves of reformers such as Luther and Jan Hus, and cites Montaigne, for whom the elusiveness of the psyche does not preclude a recognition that "*volonté* is the repository of the deepest self" (Tilde Sankovitch 54). Kushner reasserts the claims of singularity over the "depersonalising" postmodern culture of identity (55), while acknowledging the social constraints on liberty that made the Renaissance self paradoxical.

The "dialogue with the self, about the self and through the self" (128) comes up again in Sylvie Richards's "Speaking Politically Correct in the Feminine Voice: Examples from the *Decameron* and the *Heptameron*." Like the screened selves of Sir Thomas More in Greenblatt or Sperone Speroni in his dialogues, Boccaccio and Marguerite de Navarre present female narrators empowered by speech through the "filtering mask" (124) of embedded narrative hedged about by caveats and ellipses. Such masking is especially strong where the information imparted — as in tales about rape, or tales which emphasise a woman's authority over men — is sensitive. Marguerite de Navarre, whose central authorial consciousness is refracted through a multiplicity of narrators and narrative screens, absolves herself of direct responsibility in a way that recalls Sperone. But in doing so she displays an intricate, reflexive sense of self.

This sense of uncertainty at the level of style and authorial voice has clear points of connection with the postmodernist sensibility. The third section of *Imagining Culture* contains essays relating early modernity to modernity and postmodernity. Massimo Verdicchio is particularly stimulating on Ariosto's ironically undifferentiated "compendium of past literature as well as past history" in *Orlando Furioso*, which recalls the pastiche and omnipresent history of postmodernism. His irony, which "both undermines and uplifts all sentiments and characters equally" (159), gives the *Furioso* a depersonalised quality; modernist *avant la lettre*.

The cumulative effect of *Imagining Culture* is very postmodern in so far as rigid periodisations become less relevant than the sense that many historical pasts and futures may coexist within a discrete period or work. Rachel Schmidt's "Challenging the Order of the Sun in Góngora's *Soledades*" locates another sort of modernity in the Spanish poet from that of Ariosto. Góngora "was 'discovered' by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poets" (182). He provided

them with an image of the heroic poet, whose stylistic experiment and freedom flies arrogantly and romantically in the face of the authority of tradition. Yet Schmidt is right to point out that the avant-garde group of the "Ultraistas" in the twenties failed to see "any conception of the poet as politically compromised that may be present in Góngora's critique of the ambitions of empire, or the terribly ambiguous relationship of individual freedom to authority embedded in the images of the phoenix, Icarus, Phaethon and Daedalus in the *Soledades*."

Finally, essays by Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani on the multi-genred genre of the novella and by Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, paralleling twentieth-century uses of narrative theory to illuminate dramatic texts with Renaissance "insights into the affinities between narrative and dramatic theory" (185) illuminate early modern syncretism by finding its interface with that of twentieth-century thought.

Imagining Culture is a collection of essays which, appropriately for the Renaissance, reflects both the brilliant multivalency and the bewildering heterodoxy of contemporary "cultural studies." The sheer range of its subjects and methodologies and the high quality of its scholarship are suggestive of the many "New Worlds" open to those working in the Renaissance and the human sciences today. (KATY EMCK, LONDON)

*KLAUS L. BERGHAIN and REINHOLD GRIMM, eds. *Utopian Vision, Technological Innovation and Poetic Imagination*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1990. Pp. 130, 4 ill. DM 28.00

Berghain and Grimm's collection of essays on utopianism is of only limited use for the utopian scholar, and of virtually none for the Comparatist. Apparently, the notion of utopianism guiding this edition is so broad as to render the term almost meaningless. Merely half of the papers assembled here treat utopianism proper, the remainder dealing with sundry other subjects such as the concept of *Bildung* in German intellectual history (Vosskamp), the idea of extraterrestrial intelligence (Guthke), David Friedrich Strauß's philosophy (Coleman), and Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture (Menocal). This rather grandly titled but uneven book is therefore bound to disappoint.

Berghain's and Grimm's evident lack of editorial discretion in *Utopian Vision, Technological Innovation and Poetic Imagination* comes as a surprise. Both editors are well-known specialists in utopian literature and have in the past made important scholarly and editorial contributions to this field. *Deutsches utopisches Denken im 20. Jahrhundert*, co-edited by Grimm and Jost Hermand (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1974), and *Literarische Utopien von Morus bis zur Gegenwart* (Königstein: Athenäum, 1983), co-edited by Berghain and Ulrich Seeber, come to mind. In this latter publication Berghain has, *obiter dictum*, rather fervently argued against the "inflationäre Erweiterung und Ausdifferenzierung der Bedeutung [of the concept of utopianism]" (8). At least in the

present volume, Berghain has not practised what he preaches.

Suffice it then to review the essays in *Utopian Vision* which address literary utopianism in the stricter sense: Klaus Reichert's on Bacon, Salvatore Calomino's on Campanella, and Paul Alkon's on Mercier. I will not comment on Lars Gustafsson's "The Present as the Museum of the Future" (105-10), as it is a personal appreciation of H.G. Wells's works so trite that it borders on the ludicrous.

Reichert's "The Two Faces of Scientific Progress: Or Institution as Utopia" (11-28) is by far the most interesting essay in this book. Reichert focuses on some seemingly incidental details of Bacon's *Nova Atlantis* (1610) — e.g., the appended description of the museum of inventors and inventions, or Bacon's use of the apocryphal Gospel of Bartholomew — to trace their function for the overall ideational coherence of Bacon's utopia, especially for the notions of knowledge and progress as they unfold in the work (cf. 15, 17, and 28). While the general conclusions regarding Baconian thought presented here seem at times obvious — Bacon had, after all, already formulated the theory of knowledge integral to *Nova Atlantis* in his *Advancement of Learning* (1605) — Reichert's careful analysis of the relations between Bacon's general philosophical tenets and their expression in the utopian work is engaging indeed.

Calomino in "Mechanism, Diversity, and Social Progress: Emblems of Scientific Reality in Campanella's *La Città del Sole*" (29-41) ponders to which extent Campanella concedes personal freedom and (thus) change within his "mechanistic utopian structure," predictably concluding that "[individual] freedom ... remains collective" (41). Calomino's pragmatic approach to *Città* seems as futile as it is out-of-date. Previous scholarship (e.g., Peter Kuon, *Utopischer Entwurf und fiktionale Vermittlung*. Heidelberg: Winter, 1986) has clearly identified Campanella's counter-reformist text as a chiliastic allegory — a figurative rather than realistic mode — which requires an allegoresis not a literal reading.

Paul Alkon's undertakes in "The Paradox of Technology in Mercier's *L'An 2440*" (43-62) to discuss the significance of printing technology for Mercier's utopia — a subject inspired by the work of Gilles Lapouge (1982) on the (symbolic) affinities between utopian visions and the invention of the mechanical clock. Had Alkon in fact addressed this topic at some length, his essay would perhaps have made for arresting reading. Unfortunately, Alkon merely comments on Lapouge, reviews Everett C. Wilkie's research on the publishing history of *L'An 2440*, and recapitulates Mercier's utopia.

Overall, then, *Utopian Vision, Technological Innovation and Poetic Imagination* is a lacklustre volume which merits some attention, but only by readers interested in Campanella, Bacon, and Mercier. (ANNEGRET WIEMER, HALIFAX)

*MCALINDON, THOMAS. *Shakespeare's Tragic Cosmos*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Pp. 280. £45.00 hard cover, £12.95 paper.

Thomas McAlindon's focus on the "confounding contrariety" in Shakespeare's tragedies can be a useful teaching tool, particularly when juxtaposed with more recent feminist or cultural materialist accounts. While his methodology is historicist, this study — which complements his earlier *English Renaissance Tragedy* — clearly follows the traditional history-of-ideas approach, rather than any radical or (as he puts it) "great Cutting Edge," new historicist approach. Among such reasons, for classroom purposes its traditionally historicized thrust presents a conceptually solid, established field of Shakespeare scholarship from which newer, more culturally agile theories can be seen to vault, bounce, twirl, pirouette, and fly. Often, McAlindon's analyses of the tragedies illustrate neatly the differences between traditional and cutting-edge cultural readings. Yet, in what has become a rapidly reconfiguring critical milieu, *Shakespeare's Tragic Cosmos* manages to perform this function without losing its intellectual usefulness.

In *Shakespeare's Tragic Cosmos*, McAlindon situates Shakespeare's tragedies within a homegrown system of "harmonious contrarieties," rooted in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, and even Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*. This system of interacting opposites, based on a contrarious model of nature in Renaissance culture, follows a lateral pattern activated by nature's paradoxical forces of love and strife, which, he argues, goes beyond the by now (in)famous hierarchical model posited by Tillyardian critics as the Elizabethan "world view" (5). For Tillyard's account, McAlindon rightly says, is incomplete. To remedy this, however, he chooses not to look ahead, towards postmodernist or Marxist theories, but back to the ancients and pre-modern intellectual history. In place of theories belonging to late-twentieth-century perspectives, he offers a classical Empedoclean concept of the world as a system of concordant discord or discordant concord, a view taken up by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*, and popular among such medieval and Renaissance writers as Chaucer, Spenser, Machiavelli, and particularly, for McAlindon's purposes, Shakespeare, in the tragedies and tragical histories.

Beginning with an introductory chapter on the Elizabethan chaos-cosmos link, McAlindon locates the tragedies in a cosmologically-defined universal context. He argues that the subversive potential of a contrarious model, which countered ideological orthodoxies, militated against philosophical certainty, fostered dialectical, relativist and paradoxical modes of thought and expression. This Boethian notion of *concordia discors*, showing human nature swayed by love and strife, presented a singularly ambiguous system (yet unitary frame of reference), thus, in his view, answering the facts of experience and requirements of drama (especially tragedy) more effectively. In the context of this paradoxical model

based on the pre-modern cosmological tradition of a world created from intrinsic Chaos, McAlindon indicates what he maintains is the Shakespearean tragedies' "radical" confrontation of contradictory transhistorical forces: all such confronting directed at an Elizabethan audience literally surrounded by cosmic emblems and informed by a native literary tradition of contrarious nature. Eight more chapters follow, working from a medieval precursor — Chaucer's "tale of love and strife" in Chapter 2 — to subsequent chapters on *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

McAlindon's focus on the oppositional dynamics of *Romeo and Juliet* is achieved through the lens of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He argues that the romantic comedy (written at about the same time as the first love tragedy) demonstrates early in Shakespeare's career his creative engagement with Chaucer's tale. Both, says McAlindon, show an awareness "that the dividing line between comedy and tragedy is often as arbitrary in literature as it is uncertain in life" (25). And both, he maintains, are grounded on a natural philosophy which stresses opposites. Referring to the "darker side of the Theseus myth" which reverberates throughout *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, McAlindon traces Seneca's deeply symbolic tragedy *Hippolytus* in Shakespeare's "often hilarious" comedy (53). Citing Harold Brooks, he points out that from the labyrinthine-monster analogy to Helena's abandonment in obsessive love (like Phaedra), the comedy borrows extensively from the Senecan tragedy, evincing both an intertextuality and commingling of tragic with comic. Shakespeare consciously announces such in the second scene, when "having transposed a tragic heroine into a comic one, he now presents a 'company' of artisans (1.1.1) who are about to rehearse 'The most lamentable comedy and cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe' (lines 11-12)" (53). But McAlindon pursues the idea of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s genetic links with formal tragedy by considering the other acknowledged borrowings from Seneca's *Medea* and *Oedipus*, in addition to a kinship with Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* — often assigned to shared features such as supernatural agents who are onstage spectators of the action, and the play-within-a-play. This connection, he says, goes even deeper than these features, for the earlier play's tragic action is conceived as a comedy that unnaturally turns to tragedy. Other similarities include the tragic nature of the play within-a-play, together with the violent confusion of illusion with reality, and of marriage and funeral. Such "radical confusions," McAlindon shows, are Kyd's pioneering strategies, representing tragedy as a chaotic process of "violent contrariety" (54). He also links *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Spanish Tragedy* for their shared reflexivity, concluding that for each, form corresponds with a vision of the world "in which the distinction between polar opposites — and particularly between 'comedy' and 'tragedy,' happiness and misery — is a thoroughly unstable one" (54). McAlindon's own argument thus enacts a similar arcing motion to the *concordia discors* motif he finds in the

tragedies.

Subsequently, he moves on to demonstrate the links with *Romeo and Juliet*, indicating a critical consensus that they are the same play with different endings, the tragic tale in the comedy reminding the audience of an alternative ending, the exuberant comic exchanges of the Nurse and Mercutio in the tragedy keeping the first half of *Romeo and Juliet* boldly close to comedy. Seen from McAlindon's position, these generic combinations are consistent with the oppositional dynamics of Shakespearean tragedy. As such he sees the plays' underlying conception of an oppositional world grounded in a cosmology of Love and Strife, more prevalent in *Romeo and Juliet* than in any other of the early tragedies.

In his concluding chapter, McAlindon reads the tragic world of *Antony and Cleopatra* as one continually shaped by a "buoyant" spirit of comedy, "edged with satire" (220), but so natural to the play's environment that it frames Cleopatra's final suicide scene in a triumphant vision of nature's renewing powers, enacting the movement towards reintegration found later in the romances. He then goes on to point out that despite the play's extraordinary dearth of violence or evil, its autonomous lovers embodying a metamorphic world where change seems part of an inevitable but ultimately beneficial natural cycle, *Antony and Cleopatra* nevertheless has illuminating links with earlier tragedies. Focusing on the sexual relationship central to both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*, McAlindon connects the three tragedies through their "precarious" union of opposites and a similarly dichotomous structure reinforcing both natural and social contraries reflected in each play-world. In summary, he places the three love tragedies within a design animated by ideas of warring opposites common to all the other tragedies, but emphasizes that this unstable system of oppositions is rendered with a peculiar sharpness in the foregrounding of male-female relationships.

Arguing against the idea that *Antony and Cleopatra*'s treatment of death as apotheosis is an entirely new development, McAlindon finds this pattern evident in *Romeo and Juliet*, where a sense of great waste in the "glooming peace" at the end of the play combines with a victorious transcendence, their love affirmed eternally through the lovers' suicides. In this way, the early and late love tragedies are comparable: "In both tragedies, the world which the lovers abandon is infinitely poorer by their death, but it, like them, has achieved unity through loss; and it is enriched with an inspirational memory" (221). Yet, comparable though the tragedies may well be, such similarities also point up the later play's idiosyncratic distinction from the rest. Not only does the closing apotheosis distinguish *Antony and Cleopatra* with its continuation of the godlike dimension assumed throughout by the protagonists, but also the setting of this later play moves spatially far beyond an enclosed, miniature city-state of Verona divided in the much earlier love tragedy, to a "hyperbolised" global dimension that overflows the measure, its oppositions from East to West encompassing a world

of difference.

If *Antony and Cleopatra*'s drama about reckless imperial lovers seems to revitalise the medieval Fall of Princes tragedy, its copious references to Fortune show her not as a personification of blind chance (autonomous force or instrument of divine retribution), but as a preordained instrument of Fate: Antony knows that Fortune is with the ruthless Octavius, just as fate itself inevitably runs the historical process that advances Caesar, ushering in a preordained period of universal peace. McAlindon points out that Shakespeare reminds his audience of such historiographical commonplaces through Octavius's reference to "determined things" and "destiny" when reassuring his sister (3.6.83-4). This removes from the actual tragedy (but not from the drama) the ending of the triumvirate and placing of supreme power in the hands of Antony's rival, although Antony's death is "genuinely tragic" (222) and his character infinitely nobler than Caesar's. From a historicist viewpoint, both Antony and the action bear witness to the futility of divided rule, just as Octavia's ambiguous warning suggests the wars between the two rivals will "solder up the rift" (3.4.32) that has been dividing Rome for a century.

McAlindon connects this wider historical perspective with Fortune's wheel and the cycle of Nature, comparing the final tableau of age mourning youth's passing in *Romeo and Juliet* with *Antony and Cleopatra*'s inevitable reversal of this violently truncated cyclical pattern: in this tragedy of mature love, youth here fulfils the natural cycle, leaving the boy Caesar on stage to bury the lovers "wrinkled deep in time" (3.13.17). This "almost serene" conception of tragedy, then, with its glorious closing poetry of fading light and setting suns, proves to be a tragedy of "natural" Fortune, neither cruel mischance nor retributive providence, but a manifestation "of inevitable change in the cyclic order of history and nature" (223). This kind of tragedy McAlindon compares (briefly) with Yeats's "Lapis Lazuli" and considers (at some length) in relation to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Plutarch's "Of Isis and Osiris," each classical author in his view having contributed significantly to Shakespeare's imaginative construction of a world which somehow "connects Shakespearean tragedy and romance, so that each is potentially the other" (224). Again, this argument follows a similar trajectory to the idea of concordant discord or 'harmonious contrariety.' For reasons "textual, historical and literary-historical" McAlindon finally stresses that such connections uncover a form of intertextuality which demonstrates conclusively how Shakespeare's tragic contradictions should be construed as intrinsic to a single, ancient discourse whose governing principle is unity in contrariety and vice versa. If Shakespeare's tragic art is indeed thus informed by essentialist notions of a transhistorical human nature, as McAlindon claims, then we can see why he argues against postmodernist interpretations which (more theoretically stirring) discern the unstable, open-ended, clashing, or even polyphonic discourses in Shakespeare's tragic oeuvre. Herein McAlindon begs the question:

how far in actual practice does any degree of historicizing necessarily move that far away in form from the old New Criticism or unifying formal analysis? Thomas McAlindon states that his purpose is simply to identify Shakespeare's ideas (about conflict and contradiction) and the world model they constitute, but to do so, not in some combative polemic, rather by amending, correcting, confuting, confirming and refining other interpretations of the "intimate" rapport Shakespeare enjoyed with his contemporaries. Perhaps this catalogue of firmly pedagogical intentions demonstrates how McAlindon's own text can in turn serve as a starting point in classroom explorations of Shakespeare's discursive strategies, marking out the essentialism of an earlier era before discussion takes off in sweepingly (cosmically?) different directions. (ELIZABETH HOLLIS BERRY, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

*BÉLA KÖPECZI and ANDOR TARNAL, eds. *Laurus Austriaco-Hungarica: Literarische Gattungen und Politik in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó; Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988. Pp. xii + 300. No price.

This volume inaugurates a new series under the sponsorship of the Österreichisch-Ungarische Gemischte Kommission für Literaturwissenschaft.¹ In a dozen studies, fourteen scholars, principally Hungarians (publishing in German), examine mainly the cultural and political situation of the Magyar lands during the final phase of Turkish expansionism and its defeat. The lifting of the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683 and the retaking of Buda in 1686 marked a decisive shift whereby Austrian power was projected southeastward and the ground was laid for the later, often troubled Austro-Hungarian "symbiosis." The period from the reign of emperor Leopold I to that of Joseph I also coincided with the high Baroque in the Germanic world; however, the prior Hungarian experience of the Renaissance preconditioned the modes of cultural sharing during the subsequent joint Austro-Hungarian approach to the Enlightenment. The importance of these roots reaching back into sixteenth-century Italy is well-demonstrated in Sándor Iván Kovács's essay on the cultivation of the idyll in Hungarian poetry. Another important factor in the Austro-Hungarian "odd-couple" marriage was the fact that Hungary retained its stronger Protestant component, whereas the Hapsburg policy of re-Catholicizing the Austrian lands fully succeeded by 1700 in pushing out the Reformation influence which had been so powerful a century before. Extensive illustrations accompanying the

chapters add a pertinent dimension of late Baroque pictorial imagination and help bring this period to life.

Looking at the events and currents from several non-Austrian angles is a special strength of the volume. Markus Köbach explores the reactions by poets on the "enemy" (Moslem) side, as the great historical failure of their leaders and forces caused deep trauma in Ottoman society. By tracing the image of the Protestant prince Thököly in European literature, Béla Köpeczi illuminates the complicated skein of *Realpolitik* and religious and nationalistic cross-motivations that inspired alliances in the late seventeenth century. Ágnes R. Várkonyi compares Austrian and Hungarian thought on the strategy for repelling the Turk. Harriet Nemeskürty's chapter on the German hero, Duke Friedrich of Württemberg, and Martin C. Mandlmayr and Karl G. Vocelka's joint chapter on the retaking of Buda as mirrored in German broadsheets are balanced by Lajos Hopp's chapter on the growth of Hungarian publicity devoted to politics and national liberation.

Several chapters deal with the importance of Jesuit education and literature as forces permeating the length and breadth of the imperial realm. Géza Staud treats the representation of the Turkish wars on the Jesuit stage after the siege of 1683 — a topic that is relevant to the renaissance of interest in the order's broad influence on German theater. László Szörényi's chapter on Marian lyrics and Richárd Korzensky's on the Latin epigram illustrate interactive aspects of a dual sensibility that lingered rather late in the imperial territories: the international link through Latin (supporting cultivation of both classical knowledge and church-oriented values), and the native vernacular context. The last two sections of Korzensky's essay, turning to the "play" impulses in late seventeenth-century poetry, overlap in revealing ways with the long essay by István Kilián on Baroque figure poems in Latin and the vernacular tongues. Scholars interested in comparable practices in the North (e.g., in the Protestant Nuremberg circle) will appreciate how Kilián relates the principles of ingenuity, the Baroque delight in puzzles, games, numerology, and acrostics, and the age's emblematic imagination and technopagnia. Edit Haider and György Rózsa excavate another rich vein that branches off from this gallery in the huge mine of Baroque imagination. Their painstaking analysis of the "goose-game" presented to Joseph I as a child on the occasion of his being crowned king of Hungary — a symbol-laden, highly emblematic toy that commemorates the entire glory of the Austrian imperial mandate — serves as a fitting cap to the volume and the period under scrutiny. The arrangement of contributions succeeds in showing, through specific case studies, how ethnic, social, and artistic codes interlace in a complicated tapestry that deserves detailed appreciation. (GERALD GILLESPIE, STANFORD UNIVERSITY)

1 In one of our numerous changes in the editorial office, this book review most regrettably "fell through the cracks" and was only discovered, in a (proverbial) drawer, a week ago. We publish it now, very belatedly indeed, with sincere apologies to the author and to the editors and collaborators of the publication under scrutiny (Editor's Note).

*KAI-CHONG CHEUNG. *The Theme of Chastity in "Hau Ch'iu Chuan" and Parallel Western Fiction*. Series Euro-Sinica. Bern: Peter Lang, 1994. Pp. 180. SFr. 50.00

Amid the profusion of recent feminist rhetoric on sexual fantasy and initiation, dominant and submissive attitudes, the quest for female autonomy and identity, and awareness of the body, it is rare to encounter a scholarly book on the theme of chastity. Professor Kai-Chong Cheung has written a superb book on this theme in connection with the introduction of Chinese fiction to the Western world. She traces the circumstances of the translation into English of the scholar-beauty novel *Hau Ch'iu Chuan*, the first long work of Chinese fiction to be translated into any Western language. Important as this historical circumstance undoubtedly is, she reveals that the aesthetic and ideological attributes of the work are equally significant. These account in great measure for the astounding tributes paid to the work by major eighteenth-century critics and who are introduced or appraised for the first time in Cheung's book. *Hau Ch'iu Chuan* was edited by Thomas Percy and published in London on 14 November 1761 under the title *The Pleasing History*. This translation directly inspired Goethe to make his famous declaration that with this novel, *Weltliteratur* was at hand. He affirmed that the Chinese "think, act, and feel almost exactly like us, and we soon find that we are perfectly like them, excepting that all they do is more clear, more pure, and more decorous than with us" (*Conversation with Eckermann*, 1901: 173). Goethe's countryman Melchior Grimm expressed his opinion that "This helps us better to learn the genius and customs of the Chinese than everything Du Halde put together" (*Correspondance littéraire*, 1829: 5 156). At first Grimm suspected that the work was a literary hoax written by a European, so closely did it reflect contemporary sensibilities, but he felt that even if it were not genuine its author would be one of the greatest literary geniuses of all time: "He would have created a system of manners entirely foreign to Europe, a true system that holds together in all its parts" (*Correspondance littéraire*, 1829: 5 156). Cheung's elaboration on these aspects of the novel make her book especially valuable.

In addition to offering a complete bibliographical account of the introduction of *Hau Ch'iu Chuan* to the Western world and a linguistic comparison with later translations, Cheung provides a solid summary of the genre of the scholar-beauty romance, a sketch of the growth of sentimentalism in early English prose fiction, and a thorough analysis of the current of romantic sentimentalism endemic in the final quarter of the eighteenth century. In pursuing these topics she gives the outlines of her primary theme, that of feminine chastity. In three separate chapters, she compares the portrayal of chastity in the Chinese novel with the treatment of the theme in Richardson's *Clarissa*, Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and Manzoni's *I promessi sposi*. The chapter on Goldsmith has a number of new and fascinating insights. Goldsmith is the only one of the three

Europeans who is known to have read *Hau Ch'iu Chuan*, and there is even some possibility that it had an influence on *The Citizen of the World*. Goldsmith read Percy's translation of *Hau Ch'iu Chuan* while it was still in press. He remarked at that time in regard to Chinese letters in general (he had also read Voltaire's *L'Orphelin de la Chine*) that they do not contain "a single attempt to address the imagination, or influence the passions" (*Critical Review*, May 1759). From this circumstance, Cheung interprets the many parallels between *Hau Ch'iu Chuan* and Goldsmith's own fictional portrayal of chastity in *The Vicar of Wakefield* as evidence that Goldsmith consciously intended to present an attitude toward life and literature completely at odds with that in the Chinese novel. Whenever Goldsmith's attitudes are opposed to those in *Hau Ch'iu Chuan*, they are also antithetical to those in *Clarissa*.

Cheung devotes an entire chapter to the merging of sentimentalism and morality and she offers us a skilful analysis of Confucian elements in *Hau Ch'iu Chuan*. Although translations of the teachings of the Chinese sage had already been available in Europe for over a century, these had been read by theologians and scholars rather than the general reading public. Cheung shows that the scholar-beauty novel drew the attention of Western readers to the resemblances in moral norms and attitudes in China and Europe. Current scholars will be grateful for her parallel revelations concerning the aesthetic similarities in Chinese fiction and representative classics in the Western tradition. Cheung's book is a "must" for every East-West library. (PENG-HSIANG CHEN, SHIH-HSIN UNIVERSITY)

*VIJAY MISHRA. *The Gothic Sublime*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994. Pp. x + 332. US \$64.50 hard cover; US \$21.95 paper.

Le livre de Mishra est intéressant aussi bien parce qu'il fait place à l'analyse d'oeuvres que souvent les critiques négligent ou laissent dans l'ombre que parce qu'il offre une interprétation globale du gothique sous divers aspects originale et suggestive.

L'axe portant et le fil conducteur du travail de Mishra est constitué par le développement et l'approfondissement de la notion de "sublime," qui donne justement son titre au volume et que l'auteur, après avoir illustré — dans le premier chapitre — les différentes théorisations qui en ont été élaborées dans le passé, en particulier de la part de Burke, Kant, Schopenhauer, applique ensuite, de façon originale et efficace, à l'interprétation du gothique.

En vérité, plus que la conception burkénne, selon laquelle la source du sublime réside essentiellement dans l'objet qui suscite les sentiments et/ou les émotions de terreur, frayeur, etc., celles qui se prêtent le mieux à pénétrer et saisir les caractéristiques du sublime gothique sont, dans l'optique de Mishra, celles de Kant et de Schopenhauer. Le premier, en effet, déplace l'accent sur le sujet, ou en tout cas sur le rapport entre sujet et objet, sur la disproportion du

sujet par rapport à l'objet (ou du moins, à certains *objets*), et donc, en dernière analyse, sur la perception et la représentation de l'objet de la part du sujet (en posant ainsi la question, centrale — selon Mishra — dans le gothique, de la "presentation of the unrepresentable," 255); tandis que le second développe l'autre aspect du gothique, celui que Mishra indique par la formule "oceanic sublime," c'est-à-dire "the sublime as the dissolution of the self in death" (255).

En tout cas, c'est sur le problème — qui est à la fois "culturel," psychologique et artistique — de l'expression de l'inexprimable, de l'inimaginable, de l'inconcevable, que Mishra met décidément l'accent, en l'indiquant comme l'élément caractérisant essentiel du gothique, celui qui fait du gothique "one of the key texts of the sublime" (37) et, surtout, celui pour lequel, enfin, "the Gothic sublime may be read as a category of the postmodern" (43).

C'est justement en cela, dans l'association et dans l'étroite connexion entre gothique et postmoderne que le critique établit et repropose continuellement pendant tout son travail (et qui constitue comme un second et plus profond fil conducteur), que réside, en effet, le principal élément de nouveauté et d'originalité de l'essai.

Même sur un plan rhétorique (et à la fois structurel), la centralité et l'importance de cette thèse dans le discours de Mishra trouvent une confirmation, car les références explicites au postmoderne sont particulièrement accentuées dans les positions "stratégiques" du livre: au commencement ("In a remarkable echo of Lyotard's discovery of the 'logic' of postmodernism in the eighteenth-century theories of the sublime, the surrealists [in Montague Summer's argument] claimed to have found their precursor in the 'sublime' of the Gothic," 2), à la fin ("What one must do is to offer the Gothic sublime ... as an epistemological apparatus for the understanding of a cultural force field called the postmodern," 257) et dans les conclusions d'au moins six chapitres sur huit (y compris l'*Introduction*).

Mais une telle lecture actualisante du gothique, cette dilatation de sa portée au delà des limites temporelles propres au phénomène littéraire-culturel historiquement déterminé et cette attribution d'une valeur justement trans-historique et presque métahistorique (opération que Mishra cherche à légitimer théoriquement en s'appuyant sur des auteurs tels que Walter Benjamin — lu peut-être même à travers Terry Eagleton — avec ses réflexions sur "our capacity to blast open the 'continuum of history'" (45), ou encore Jürgen Habermas (45)), constitue certes d'une part la principale nouveauté du livre (comme, poliment, l'auteur même souligne plusieurs fois: "As far as I am aware, the Gothic has not been read systematically through a hermeneutic that effectively considers this form as an earlier moment of the postmodern" (17); "The conjuncture between the moment of the Gothic and our own postmodernity ... is something that has not been adequately theorized with reference to specific literary texts" (45)), mais risque d'autre part de paraître un peu trop hardie, sinon carrément arbitraire, et

d'en constituer ainsi en même temps le côté faible.

Déjà des énonciations relativement prudentes comme "the rhetoric of the Gothic sublime may be seen as somehow anticipating the postmodern" (20); "[the Gothic] is a genre of fissure and fracture, a kind of an antilanguage, which heralds and foreshadows the postmodern ... in this genre we recognize forms of textuality that constitute the postmodern" (54), ou des rapprochements "tendancieux" — entre gothique et postmoderne — comme ceux qui se trouvent dans les propositions suivantes: "Walpole puts into relief the whole question of what constitutes reality and how it is (or might be) represented. This question ... is at the very core of the Gothic sublime and postmodernism" (62-63); "The black hole, which surfaces in Piranesi's paintings ... or in Mary Shelley's feverish handwriting, takes us back to the essential problematic of the Gothic and the postmodern" (255), paraissent un peu forcés et, souvent, insuffisamment motivés; mais en tout cas des affirmations apodictiques comme celles-ci (qui en quelque sorte impliquent l'idée d'un gothique conçu comme catégorie justement métahistorique et, pour ainsi dire, universelle): "the Gothic sublime insinuates a postmodernity in its undermining of a realist economy of meaning" (25); "We find in it [i.e., *The Last Man* of Mary Shelley] such compulsive patterns, such a strong presence of the 'self and abyss' that it certainly prefigures the apocalyptic (nuclear) version of the postmodern sublime" (169); ou celle selon laquelle le même Piranesi, à son tour, "prefigures the postmodern tendencies of the Gothic" (59) (sans parler de la paradoxalité — d'ordre logique et temporel — à la fois — d'une assertion comme celle-ci: "In a deconstructive echo of the postmodern, the Gothic becomes a force field that intervenes into the continuum of history and blasts it open," 25), nous semblent franchement outrés; et il ne nous semble pas que les nombreuses citations de textes des théoriciens du postmoderne (en particulier, J.F. Lyotard et F. Jameson) à qui Mishra se réfère souvent, fournissent un soutien suffisant à de pareilles affirmations.

En fait, plutôt que les tendances "profondes" et les aspects plus ou moins cachés du gothique sur lesquels Mishra insiste, ce qui nous paraît vraiment *postmoderne*, dans tout cela, est précisément l'approche du critique et sa lecture excessivement actualisante. D'ailleurs, le même auteur paraît bien conscient du caractère "postmoderne" de sa méthode critique: "As postmodern readers aware of the 'existence' of a text in the interface between a dialectical process of historical determinations and reader actualizations, we construct appropriate heuristic models ... to read the text" (134).

De toute façon, la connexion entre sublime gothique et postmoderne (et l'utilisation en fonction herméneutique de cette catégorie) paraît dans l'ensemble plus plausible et persuasive dans le septième et dernier chapitre (et cette position confère en quelque sorte aux affirmations de l'auteur une portée d'ordre général et une valeur, pour ainsi dire, rétroactive), là où on lit que "postmodern problems of perception, representation, and subjectivity are emphatically anticipated in the

Gothic sublime ... it is the Gothic sublime (rather than the 'historical' sublime from Boileau's Longinus to Kant) that speaks to us across the historical divide. In other words, what the postmodern inherits is the sublime mediated by the Gothic's rendition of the absolutely great, the unrepresentable, as the self's own dissolution in and confrontation with death" (229); et, en termes encore plus nets et éclairissants (justement à la fin du livre), que "what one must do is to offer the Gothic sublime, rather than the purely Kantian sublime, as an epistemological apparatus for the understanding of a cultural force field called the postmodern. This is because in literature the Gothic sublime functions as a kind of a rupture in a 'genealogy' that signals the beginnings of interest in the problematic of representation and its failure..." (257).

Revue à la lumière de pareilles énonciations et mises au point, beaucoup d'autres affirmations précédentes peuvent acquérir un sens plus univoque et cohérent, à savoir que les théorisations sur le sublime, la littérature gothique et la postmodernité ont un élément (sinon un noyau) essentiel en commun, qui est en lien étroit avec le problème de l'expression et, plus particulièrement, de l'expression de ce qui n'est pas exprimable. C'est justement ce problème-ci (analysé lucidement — sur le plan de la spéculation philosophique — par Kant, à la fin du XVIII^e siècle, dans la *Critique du jugement*) que la narrative gothique — pour Mishra — élabore autonomement et transmet en héritage à notre civilisation postmoderne. En somme, pour le dire encore avec les mots de Mishra, "the postmodern trope of the sublime as a category that captures the disjunction between the idea and its representation ... has had its antecedent in the Gothic" (45).

Mais en tout cas la question du rapport entre l'idée et sa représentation et, plus en général, celles relatives aux "problems of perception, representation, and subjectivity" (comme, d'ailleurs, aussi celle plus circonscrite de la "presentation of what is unrepresentable," 226) sont des questions d'une si ample portée, non seulement esthétique mais "culturelle" au sens large, qu'il nous paraît réductif et, encore une fois, arbitraire, de les restreindre au seul domaine du postmoderne.

Pour le reste, le livre de Mishra se signale par l'originalité de la perspective d'ensemble. Plutôt que de s'étendre dans une analyse systématique de la myriade d'oeuvres appartenant (ou rattachables) au genre gothique (ou même seulement des principales) — ce qui aurait comporté inévitablement, au moins en partie, un remâchage de données et de jugements désormais acquis — le critique a préféré concentrer son attention sur quelques textes estimés emblématiques qui, à part celui qu'il appelle — intitulant ainsi le deuxième chapitre — *The precursor text* (suivant une notion élargie de "texte" qui comprend, dans ce cas-ci, outre *The Castle of Otranto* d'Horace Walpole, la tragédie du même auteur *The Mysterious Mother*, et même la réduction théâtrale du roman effectuée par Robert Jephson sous le titre *The Count of Narbonne*), sont le plus souvent l'oeuvre de "members of the Byron-Shelley circle" (95).

Ainsi, dans le troisième chapitre, intitulé *Gothic Fragments and Fragmented Gothics*, sont analysés *The Vampire* et *Ernestus Berchtold* du Dr. Polidori; le quatrième chapitre est consacré à *Caleb Williams* de William Godwin; le cinquième et le sixième respectivement à *The Last Man* et à *Frankenstein* de Mary Shelley. Aux autres romans, y compris la plupart de ceux qui sont traditionnellement considérés comme les plus grands "classiques" du genre gothique (*Valhek* de Beckford, *The Monk* de Lewis, *The Italian* de Ann Radcliffe, *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne* de Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Melmoth the Wanderer* de Maturin, *Pierre* de Melville), Mishra, en les considérant et en les traitant, dans leur ensemble, comme une expansion du "precursor text" (229), consacre seulement un rapide panorama dans le septième et dernier chapitre.

Le procédé critique le plus efficace est constitué par l'emploi combiné d'une clef de lecture "biographical" et d'une clef "intertextual" (158), permettant une vérification et une confirmation réciproques des résultats atteints au moyen de chacune des deux. D'une manière particulièrement systématique et valable, une telle méthode est employée à propos de Mary Shelley, à l'égard de laquelle Mishra affirme que "life invades fiction and fiction invades life" (114).

De toute façon, l'un des prix du travail de Mishra est constitué par le fait que le critique ne s'attarde guère sur les "classiques" (et désormais ressassés) lieux communs des études sur le gothique, tels que les stéréotypes du "vilain" et de la vierge persécutée, les différents degrés du surnaturel et sa typologie variée (surnaturel "expliqué" et surnaturel "accepté") ou la plus ou moins voilée polémique anticatholique sous-jacente à tant de narrative gothique, et, plus généralement, il ne se livre pas aux habituelles analyses et considérations inhérentes au contenu. En revanche, il pénètre avec ses sondes sous la surface des textes et réussit à mettre à jour des structures profondes de différents types et niveaux, en employant fructueusement les instruments conceptuels et d'enquête fournis non seulement par Freud, mais aussi, entre autres, par Lacan ou par Foucault.

Plus généralement, il y a tout un vaste tissu de références, de discussions, d'approfondissements et d'éclaircissements sur une grande variété de questions linguistiques, étimologiques, historiques et culturelles en général (à remarquer, en particulier, les nombreuses et pertinentes références à la culture indienne), qui sert de cadre et de fond à l'exposition des arguments principaux, et qui mérite d'être signalé et apprécié.

Dans l'ensemble, un travail valable et stimulant. (DOMENICO TANTERI, UNIVERSITÀ DI CATANIA)

*MARINA ALLEMANO. *Historical Portraits and Visions: From Walter Scott's Waverly to Michel Tournier's Le Roi des Aulnes and Thomas Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow*. New York: Garland, 1991. Pp. xv + 190. US \$50.00, later US \$20.00, now out-of-print.

This book effectively combines scholarly breadth and critical concision. It draws textual evidence and examples of theoretical positions principally from five literary streams (English-American, French, German, Italian, and Russian). Its materials are divided roughly half and half between the historical novel as it emerged from Romanticism to thrive in nineteenth-century Realism and the altered status of history and fiction in Postmodernism. The main title's broad analogies ("portraits" as against "visions") cover six types of novels outlined in tabular form at the close of chapter 3, at the exact mid-point of the volume. In Allemano's charting, the Renaissance to Enlightenment "quasi-historical" mode lays the groundwork for the "original" and "reflective" modes, which she analogizes to Hegelian notions of history "in itself" and "in and for itself." Between the "reflective" mode, exemplified by *Waverley*, and the "apocalyptic" mode, exemplified by narratives like *Le Roi des Aulnes* and *Gravity's Rainbow* that are "in, for and about themselves," Allemano situates the "philosophical" mode, so popular in the twentieth century and the "pseudohistorical" mode. She slights these two categories here, but in compensation gives full and careful attention to the "apocalyptic" mode, comprising the insistently self-referential fiction of the second half of the twentieth century. Her advantage in concentrating first on the "reflective" and then on the "apocalyptic" mode is that one of the most significant epochal tendencies in the skein of paradigm shifts in prose writing over the course of two centuries can largely be allowed to speak for itself.

After commanding enormous respect for Tournier and Pynchon in detailed, perceptive studies of their major books in the second half of her monograph, Allemano closes with an explanatory thesis that whets our appetite for a complementary volume. She reconfirms the succession of stylistic periods in a way that exhibits a high standard of critical honesty and adds substantial clarification. She neither privileges postmodernism, nor ignores the arguments raised about alleged moral failures of its anti-historicist stance. She admirably represents a wealth of formal and philosophical insights about the habits, processes, and structures involved in the reading and writing of narratives, conscientiously marks the diverse sources from which these contributions have accrued, and indeed confesses to some major transformations in her own assumptions on key matters under the tutelage of specific recent authors and thinkers. This is a respectful, never a dismissive, account of the finest imaginative accomplishments by major Postmodernist storytellers. We have the pleasure of following a real intellect, right down to Allemano's conclusion that

just as "the early Romantic novelist struggled to defamiliarize the conventions of the eighteenth-century quasi-historical romance," so the chief Postmodernists "succeeded in defamiliarizing the conventions of the historical 'portrait,'" but their epigones cannot maintain the crucial shock value of their "visions" of a broken world. More exciting still is the assertion that in the meantime "the historicist 'portrait' of both the Original and Reflective Modes is alive and well, becoming increasingly sophisticated" Moreover, Allemano hints, "Metahistorical texts of the Philosophical Mode might still prove to be the most fascinating category, including narratives that explore at once historical processes and the processes of knowing and writing history" (162).

Her book puts in our hands another strong corroboration of the findings by many Comparatists, such as the contributors to the international volume *Romantic Irony* (1988), that it was in Romanticism that the crucial break occurred which released the metaphysical potential of literary self-referentiality. The Romantic climate, conditioned by Idealist philosophy, the triumph of subjectivism, and the onmarching discovery of the unconscious, infiltrated and finally overwhelmed the rationalist defenses of historical consciousness, too. Chapter 1, looking at the opinions and practice of Cooper, Vigny, Mérimée, Arnim, and Manzoni, provides the backdrop. Allemano then illustrates the boundary zone of this happening at length in chapter 2, in her analysis of Scott's *Waverley*. She applies narrative and structuralist concepts from the basic toolkit of the past three decades in order to show Scott as allowing history and text to mirror each other as two kinds of process, as suggesting analogies between the technical features of writing a history and narrating a story, and as often emphasizing the authorial control of a fiction over its historical substance. His movement between the two registers and discourses of history and fiction, and his explicit prefatory or interpolated commentary on predicaments (e.g., problems of narrative point of view and authority), discovered in the attempt to create in the Romantic genres of the "romance" and "historical novel," cause his *Waverley* books to become a self-referential reflection on history. As Allemano says, "The life-support system of the reconstruction is extensive, and in the case of *Waverley*, it is left undisguised" (68).

Thus, though Allemano never makes these parallel points explicitly, no wall separates Romantic "fictional narratives dominated by historical references" (x) from the wilder kinds of self-referential narratives, flaunting their fictionality, that appeared one to two generations earlier (e.g., Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, Diderot's *Jacques le fataliste et son maître*, Brecht's *Godwi*, and so forth). As many Comparatists have established in the recent international volume *Romantic Drama* (1994), the crossing and dissolving of generic and discourse boundaries affected dramatic literature as profoundly as it did narrative in the Romantic decades. That fiction and history entered into a sometimes entangled dialogue in the Romantic moment should come as no surprise to European Comparatists. The

longer scholars examine Postmodernism, the more they come to discern some of its important ancestral traits in Romantic impulses and experiments. Allemano has given us a sound reading of certain of these telltale family resemblances. (GERALD GILLESPIE, STANFORD UNIVERSITY)

*WATANABE, NANCY ANN. *Beloved Image: The Drama of W.B. Yeats 1865-1939*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1995. Preface; intro.; appendix; biblio.; index. Pp. viii + 416. US \$62.50

This is a difficult and unpleasant review to write: difficult because it entails writing a book review of a text that is such an unfocused mixture of disparate things that it is neither a book nor a dissertation; unpleasant because it involves harsh criticism of an "independent scholar" (i.e., someone who does not have the consolation of a secure university career). It also involves criticism of the publisher for the practice of accepting typescripts that do not require changes (i.e., that do not have the benefit of professional copy editors making all manner of suggestions for improving the text).

In her preface, Watanabe claims that her book extends beyond existing criticism of Yeats by moving from the poet of "myth and tragedy" to an "analytical interpretation of plays by Yeats with emphasis on visual imagination" (i). Existing criticism of Yeats has, of course, tackled more than Yeats as poet of myth and tragedy. That aside, Watanabe's project would be very welcome and useful to other scholars of Yeats and of modernism in the fine arts if it had been followed through and delivered. Unfortunately, she sidetracks herself at every turn of the trail. Although we find Karen Dorn and Liam Miller in her bibliography, good secondary sources for Yeats and the visual aspects of staging his plays, we do not find any mention there or in the index of Gordon Craig, despite his friendship with Yeats, Yeats's knowledge of his designs and Yeats's use of the screens. Denis Babel's book on Craig would have been very useful for her project. Nor is Diaghilev mentioned or the designs of Bakst that had such an impact on theatre people, Yeats included. And what of Yeats's artist and designer colleagues? Charles Ricketts is not there, nor Robert Gregory, though Lady Gregory gets a solitary footnote! Hildo Krop who made masks for *The Only Jealousy* or *Fighting the Waves* (they could be used for either); Edmund Dulac who knew Yeats well and made masks and costumes for *At the Hawk's Well*; Norah McGuinness who designed costumes for *The Only Jealousy* clearly influenced by Bakst, and D. Travers Smith who designed the curtain for *Fighting the Waves* with an obvious debt to Japanese prints; William Morris as a designer (his one mention is as author) — none of these, to name just some of the obvious links to Yeats and the visual arts, gets a mention in the bibliography or the index. John Huston, Elizabeth Taylor, and Shelley Winters do!

This is a measure of the oddness and diversity of the text. There is no clearly focused argument, no pursuit of the stated theme to unravel the complex relations

between Yeats as poet, dramatist, and member of a family immersed in visual art and artists. It would be extremely interesting to find a book that thoroughly explored the question of Yeats's work at art school, the influence of his father, his brother, his sisters, and his many artist friends and acquaintances, let alone the numerous art works he saw in the homes and collections of friends, and in public galleries, not to mention the theatre designs he actually saw when he attended the performances in London, Paris and Ireland. Such a book would need a great deal of research into primary material and would also need to be lavishly illustrated. It would have to cope with the great difficulty of all theatre history: the ephemeral nature of theatre production and the unearthing of relics of past productions in private collections. Liam Miller's work is the best we have so far. Had Watanabe managed to write such a book, it would have been a wonderful addition to Yeats scholarship and aesthetics. It would also have doubtless been accepted without changes by the University Press of America and I am fairly certain that they would have lavishly illustrated it in black and white or even four colour separation work, had Watanabe paid for all permissions and all art work in the production of the book.

Since the text under review is not an achieved book, in my view, I shall not burden the reader with a detailed account of its arguments, perceptions, and major soup ladles of information of many different kinds. I shall merely illustrate its flashes of promise, oddnesses, and hilarious quirkiness by a few brief quotations. Perhaps a good discussion of Yeats and René Clair could ensue from Watanabe's interview that revealed Clair as a great admirer of Yeats's poetry, but she generalizes in what I can only call "graduate school-ese": "As in the plays of Yeats, the films of Clair evoke invisible truths which resonate with architectionic philosophical significance underneath the façade of external reality" (ii). One is tempted to reply, never mind the philosophy, what about the visual imagination? Isn't that what we're supposed to be exploring? The curious linking of totally different works together, sometimes making it seem as though Yeats were the author of both, sometimes has hilarious results: "In *A Full Moon in March*, the Swineherd's beheadment [sic] invokes both myth and reality. Similarly, the drowning of Alice Tripp in *A Place in the Sun* has legendary overtones" (iv). If we are coming up for air and gasping for breath, we have to swallow another wave of graduate school-ese, when we learn that "Drawing in one continuous intellectual motion vast arabesques touching upon very different domains, all existing in a kind of cosmic topological space in which all subsets are open sets and the union of subsets is an open set, Yeats asserts the existential and the eschatological significance of the human imagination...." (8). What a pity that the author of these words did not focus on theatrical sets. Later, we are informed with owlish earnestness that "Maeterlinck's dramas are susceptible to various interpretations, depending upon the critical perspective one chooses to take" (12). Yet in tracing connexions between Maeterlinck's plays and Yeats's,

Watanabe ignores the lucid and very astute drama criticism of Katharine Worth. This is a great pity, because she could have learned a lot about being specific instead of making vacuous generalisations of this order: "The power of modern drama derives from the evocation of multidimensional moods, of the abstract, yet strongly felt, essence of life" (13). I'm glad to have as an appendix Watanabe's translation of Mallarmé's *Hérodiade* but I can do without being told that the poem "... invokes part of a polynomial progression that derives from and integrates with cosmic centers and circumferences" and "... insinuates that artistic creation resembles the primordial creative act, and *therefore* [my italics], represents, on a cosmic level of consciousness, the rape of pure spirit" (20). Nor do I want to know that "During the English Renaissance, the flourishing of the arts and sciences reached a glorious apex in and around 1665" (26). Even less am I concerned that in *The King's Threshold*, "In portraying an epistemologically significant process of starvation, Yeats dexterously walks a poetic tightrope" (27). Only David Copperfield could pull off that trick. Good comic relief from all this is brought about by the author's habit of interspersing the chapters on Yeats with ones about groups of movies and their directors. The links with Yeats seen by the author tell us little about Yeats or his visual imagination.

My favourite chapter, though, is the one on *The Herne's Egg*, despite, or perhaps because of the fact that it is innocent of my own edition of the play. Here we have a straightforward delivery (worthy of good farce) of such lines as: "Yeats believed that virginity in marriage prolongs the lives of men and women," and "Decadent periods in the history of Western Hemisphere culture may very well be a recurrent reminder of tragic oversight" (250). I love the laugh-line about Attracta: "She presides over millions of eggs" (251). Little in Feydeau can match, "Symbolically, the Herne's loss of a leg suggests that Attracta's husband is phallusless, and yet sexually potent." Perhaps we could get the author to rewrite the Yeats play as a farce entitled *No Sex Please, We're Irish!* incorporating into its snappy dialogue such gems of information as the following, delivered deadpan of course:

Eugenics is directed toward the improvement of inherited traits of offspring through selective parentage. For instance, the supposed rape of Attracta by King Congal, who represents forces of dark mystery, does not actually occur. The rape is verbally asserted and then denied, so as to invoke concretely and physically the immaculate conception of a universalized redemption for all the people of the world. Conversely, the medical biotechnology of artificial insemination permits a sperm to be introduced to an egg without any contact between expectant parents. The union of sperm and egg inside of a test tube, *in vitro* (in glass), is portrayed in Yeats's play as being a modern occult magic. Human beings are metamorphically transformed into animals, which are often bred by genetic engineering. (257-58)

Watanabe, though, shows admirable concern for the emotional stability of the

British Royals; in a curious ignorance of chronology, despite her encyclopaedic knowledge of everything her book is *not* about, she asserts that in his 1938 play

Yeats has constructed a dramatic work of art which is based on an elaborate pattern of morally obfuscating blindness and widespread intellectual ignorance as to the mechanics of familial laws of genetic inheritance. Undoubtedly, Yeats was under a considerable strain, as he did not want to violate the taboo against voicing an opinion which was bound to bring unhappiness to Queen Victoria and the Royal family.... Queen Victoria's own marriage was an exceedingly happy one. In Scene V of *The Herne's Egg*, the mood of conjugal bliss is especially poignant when viewed in the light of Queen Victoria's dilemma, as Yeats probably perceived it. (261)

I only regret that we have no analysis of the Fool in Yeats's plays, though we do get the information that, "Without mentioning ... Victoria's status as a carrier of the genetically transmissible blood disorder of hemophilia, commonly called the bleeders' disease, Yeats has woven a metaphorically powerful web of meanings" (262). For these and a host of other comments I am very grateful to the author. The University of America Press, though, is culpable in not having employed a good copy editor who could surely have aided the author by recommending changes required for rendering the entire work into dramatic form. This would have given it maximum impact. (ANDREW PARKIN, CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG)

*ROBERT ELLIOT FOX. *Masters of the Drum: Black Lit/Oraures Across the Continuum*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995. Pp. 192. US \$49.95

The population growth among minority groups in the United States compared with that of the white population suggests that a largely Euro-America is being transformed into Meta-America. (54)

Robert Fox introduces his three part study of black literature by arguing that the chapters in his book are "gathered around the idea that black writers across the continuum respond to certain 'beats,' even if they do so in widely varying ways. These beats, and the responses they evoke, are not 'racial'; rather, they are psycho-socio-cultural" (11). Although promising, the drum metaphor fails to provide any coherence among the three sections of the study. Instead, "Wayfaring Roots" examines black American literature, "Vibration Positive," Caribbean and especially Caribbean women's writing, and "Set Your Mind to Africa," African authors. While informative, *Masters of the Drum* is also marked by an imbalance in the quality of the three sections, an abundance of poorly organised information, and a lack of editing that, at times, render the book confusing and the arguments difficult to follow.

The first section of the study, "Wayfaring Roots" is at once the most ambitious and the most jumbled. While attempting to link the rhythms found in

the works of several American writers to those of oral cultural practices such as voodoo, jazz, and hip hop, the author fails to develop a consistent method of syntactical and grammatical analysis. This failure reduces his study to a series of superficial, albeit interesting, comments on various works; comments that unfortunately only scratch the surface. Fox also tends to jump from hypothesis to hypothesis without much logical link or argument. In fact, as the pages of footnotes at the end of each chapter will testify, in the first two sections the author frequently substitutes a flood of information for a well-organised argument.

The second section, "Vibration Positive," while less innovative, is better developed. In it Fox argues that the hybrid language and history featured in Caribbean writing reflects the diasporatic existence of the region's inhabitants ("Derek Walcott: History as Dis-ease"). He then studies the rift between black male and female writers in the Caribbean ("Working toward the Light") and conducts an interview with Lorna Goodison. This last piece is especially interesting as Fox allows Goodison to explain her inspirations to the reader and to voice her concerns about American culture and society. Goodison discusses the influence of reggae and other oral forms on her poetry and examines the dilemma that faces any Caribbean writer who must choose between leaving home to live off their writing or remaining in their place of birth.

The third section of *Masters of the Drum*, however, is the most developed and easily accessible. The clarity with which Fox addresses Africa's various cultural dynamics may result from his eight year sojourn on the continent. The author studies the socio-historical reasons behind the alienation of Armah's protagonists in *Why Are We so Blest?*, discusses the role of theory in African literature and conducts a second interview, this time with Nuruddin Farah. These last two pieces are definitely the most stimulating in the book. In the ninth chapter "Theory and Its Discontents: An African Instance" Fox criticises Chidi Amuta for his work *The Theory of African Literature: Implications for Practical Criticism* in which Amuta disregards all theories other than those of stock Marxists. More disturbing still to Fox is Amuta's bibliography that contains primarily the "old war-horses" such as Marx, Trotsky, Lukacs, and Mao (148). This chapter clearly articulates the difficult relationship of certain African writers to Western theory. While some like Amuta attribute value only to those theories that will give them solid ground on which to stand and fight for national liberation, other authors reject theory, while still others embrace it in all its forms.

This debate regarding the role of theory in the study of African literature seems strangely familiar for it is also our debate. What is it we expect to gain from theory? Will it improve our socio-political lot? Or does it merely serve to deepen our understanding of literature and culture? With regard to Africa, is theory yet another Western contraption to be imported and imposed, regardless

of its appropriateness to the African cultural environments? Fox makes his own position in the debate quite clear by arguing that "The struggle to liberate Africa from her tormentors, internal and external, will continue regardless; no theory of literature is going to impede or accelerate it. However, if we agree that literature is worthy of study, then let us study it in the most illuminating ways possible and drop the false notion that there is only one legitimate pedagogical or critical viewpoint" (153). At best, this comment is problematic and at worst insensitive. Do literature and theory not serve a cultural function? Do they not help us to understand ourselves and our society? Fox's argument would seem to play into the hands of those who view the arts and the humanities as frivolities to be cut in hard economic times.

Master of the Drum's final chapter in which Farah discusses African identity, language and the debate over writing in a non-African language, is extremely informative. Farah defends African women writers and argues that Africa will not be free until its women are free. Most interesting however is his critical but respectful discussion of works by Achebe, Ngugi, and Soyenka, and his observations on the popularity of African writers. He concludes his discussion with Fox with the observation that until people read novels because they like them and not because they are being studied in a course, African literature cannot bloom. *Master of the Drum* is worth picking up for this interview alone!

To conclude then, *Masters of the Drum* is, as the author admits, a transitional work, and as such lacks the coherence of a finished product. Fox's habit of going off in many directions is at once exiting and disappointing because while he never seems to argue any one point he opens many channels of exploration. Furthermore, the lack of any systematic theoretical base with which to measure the subversion of black writing by orature seems ironic coming from an author who argues so ardently for theory. Fox also avoids the origin versus diaspora debate that marks much post-colonial theory on Caribbean culture and identity (by authors such as Stuart Hall). Although Fox refers to the concept of origin the reader never knows where the author stands on this issue, a deficiency that further confuses his arguments. Too short for the amounts of information it contains, *Masters of the Drum* needs weeding so as to allow the strong arguments to stand out without being lost or choked by a clutter of interesting but less well developed hypothesis. (DANIELLE MILLER, UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL)

*PHILIPPE MENGUE. *Gilles Deleuze ou le système du multiple*. Paris: Éditions Kimé, 1995. Pp. 320. FF 180.00

Philippe Mengue's *Gilles Deleuze ou le système du multiple* provides not only an intelligent synthesis of the major strains in Deleuze's work, but also an elaborate discussion of the ways in which Deleuze's philosophy marks the beginning of a new epoch of thought. The aim of this new philosophy is not to discover the truth but to create concepts; it is not about "being," but about

"becoming." For Deleuze, philosophy is inseparable from multiplicity, pluralism and possibility. Everything is constituted of forces or relations of force which take the form of lines of escape. The ensuing *mobility* or *intensity* has to be understood within the context of a pluralism in which difference is not reduced to the same as is the case of idealist philosophies and Platonic metaphysics. The Deleuzian multiplicity, Mengue insists, "is not a Platonic multiplicity which ... presumes that things are multiple insofar as they exist as the shadow of a real idea" (34; all the quotations were translated by the author of the review). In reacting against binarism, Deleuze proposes to go beyond the spurious question of representation, namely the signifier/signified diad which has been the cornerstone of philosophy since Plato. The task of philosophy is not to search for unity but to think and experiment or, as Deleuze himself put it in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, "to create other possibilities of life" (22). Such a pluralism cannot be dissociated from the monism of life. The different forms thought are formed and deployed within life itself.

Behind the centrality of multiplicity in Deleuze's thought stands an affinity with empiricism — not so much as a doctrine that emphasizes the relationship between knowledge and material reality but as a theory that accentuates relations and events (which Deleuze refers to, in one of his major works, as "the logic of the sense"). This is what Deleuze finds most useful in Hume and Bergson — the search not for that *a priori* condition that makes experience possible, but the concrete conditions of experience. However, it is Nietzsche who has influenced Deleuze the most. Nietzsche's concern with multiplicity provided Deleuze with the conceptual framework for a philosophy of multiplicity. In fact, he furnished the whole ontological frame that enabled him to develop his own philosophy. At the same time, Mengue makes it clear that Deleuze's philosophy cannot be reduced to a Nietzschean perspective: "Not only did Deleuze clarify, develop, and reinforce what Nietzsche has often suggested, but has concretely and positively created this new, differential, and pluralistic form of thought which Nietzsche implied but never fully developed" (48).

By arguing for a 'logic' of difference" (57), Deleuze not only puts into question the essentialist claims of traditional philosophy (namely its emphasis on foundations, essences, and a priorities), but also does away with the question of the negative. Rather than binarism, dualities, opposites, and contraries he suggests multiplicities. More specifically, he proposes to deal with heterogeneous entities without recognizing the other of the same: "It is wrongly said (in Marxism in particular) that a society is defined by its contradictions. That is true only on the larger scale of things. From the viewpoint of micropolitics, society is defined by its lines of flight, which are molecular. There is always something that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organizations, the resonance apparatus, and the overcoding machine" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 216). For Deleuze, there is room neither for the negative nor for the dialectic. He rejects the type of logical,

ideal contradiction — which we find in its pure form in Hegelianism — because it reduces the complexity of the phenomena by presenting the different simply as the Janus-face of the same; that is by reducing the complexity of the social phenomena to the internal confrontation of a single meaning:

We no longer believe in the myth of the existence of fragments that, like pieces of an antique statue, are merely waiting for the last one to be turned up, so that they may all be glued back together to create a unity that is precisely the same as the original unity. We no longer believe in a primordial totality that once existed, or in a final totality that awaits us at some future date. We no longer believe in the dull gray outlines of a dreary, colorless dialectic of evolution, aimed at forming a harmonious whole out of heterogeneous bits by rounding off their rough edges. (*Anti-Oedipus* 42)

Given such an emphasis on multiplicity and heterogeneity, it is easy to misinterpret Deleuze's philosophy as non-systematic. Yet, what stands out in Deleuze's thought, according to Philippe Mengue, is precisely its systematicity. Deleuze does not refute the concept of totality altogether but a specific totality: "We no longer believe in a primordial totality that once existed, or in a final totality that awaits us at some future date. We believe only in totalities that are peripheral" (*Anti-Oedipus* 42). What defines this system is not its superior unity, but its field of immanence. "Immanence" is part of a rich repertoire of key terms or concept words (the most prominent being rhizome, intensity, deterritorialization, nomadology, and lines of escape) which Deleuze uses almost interchangeably to delineate an unevenly-constituted system that is defined less by its "essence" than by its "circumstances." The field of immanence Deleuze proposes "does not provide an all-encompassing concept; rather it is a space of coordination, or a field of interaction" (67). It is the process of continuous thinking — i.e., of creating concepts rather than analytically searching for an original meaning — that creates the system.

Mengue's book is commendable for its attempt to bring to the fore an aspect of Deleuze's thought which (perhaps because of its complexity) has not been sufficiently scrutinized and duly analyzed — Deleuze's critique of the total system. However, it fails to draw the full implications of the "radical immanence" (47) Deleuze delineates. A close examination of the capitalist field of immanence as presented in *Anti-Oedipus* can provide the basis for a critique of both Deleuze's project and Mengue's rendering of it. For Deleuze the strength of capitalism lies in the fact that its axiomatic is never saturated:

capitalism, through its process of production, produces an awesome schizophrenic accumulation of energy or charge, against which it brings all its vast powers of repression to bear, but which nonetheless counteracts, constantly inhibits this inherent tendency while at the same time allowing it free rein; it continually seeks to avoid reaching its limit while simultaneously tending towards that limit... Capitalism therefore liberates the flow of desire, but under the social conditions that define its limit and the possibility of its own

dissolution, so that it is constantly opposing with all its exasperated strength the movement that drives it toward the limit. (*Anti-Oedipus* 34-140)

For Deleuze, an unrestrained schizophrenic accumulation of energy is inconceivable because that would constitute the limit or absolute threshold of capitalism. A schizophrenic capitalism, in the full import of the term, can be posited only as an ideal and undesirable condition: "Schizophrenia is not the identity of capitalism, but on the contrary its difference, its divergence, and its death" (*Anti-Oedipus* 246). That is why capitalism functions not by fulfilling but countering and exorcising its limit. Capitalism is therefore caught between two investments; it exasperatingly oscillates between a "breakthrough" and a "breakdown" or, more pointedly, between a "schizophrenic pole" and a "paranoic pole." The capitalist tendency has no limit because it reproduces its limit by constantly displacing it. The logic of capitalism is such that every deterritorialization adumbrates a new reterritorialization:

capitalism ... both does and does not have an exterior limit: it has an exterior limit that is schizophrenia, that is, the absolute decoding of flows, but it functions only by pushing back and exorcising this limit. And it also has, yet does not have, interior limits: it has interior limits under the specific conditions of capitalist production and circulation, that is, in capital itself, but it functions only by reproducing and widening these limits and on an always vaster scale. (*Anti-Oedipus* 250)

In short, for Deleuze capitalism has an impassable limit.

Such an immanent axiomatic seems to invite the sort of deterministic reading for which there is certainly ample support in *Anti-Oedipus*:

The death of a social machine has never been heralded by a disharmony or a dysfunction; on the contrary, social machines make a habit of feeding on the contradictions they give rise to, on the crises they provoke, on the anxieties they engender, and on the infernal operations they regenerate. Capitalism has learned this, and has ceased doubting itself. ... No one has ever died from contradictions. And the more it breaks down, the more it schizophrenizes, the better it works, the American way. (151)

In another typical moment, Deleuze strongly defends his position: "which is the revolutionary path? Is there one? To withdraw from the world market as Samir Amin advises Third World countries to do.... To go still further, that is in the movement of the market, of decoding and deterritorialization?" (239). From the standpoint of the immanent axiomatic, the question here is rhetorical. The first alternative, as Deleuze characterizes it, is "a curious revival of the fascist 'economic' solution" (*Anti-Oedipus* 239). The second alternative — i.e., to further the deterritorialization of capitalism because the flow is not deterritorialized enough, and therefore not schizophrenic enough — is equally untenable because, in his view, schizophrenia is the "absolute limit" of society

while capitalism is only its "relative limit" (*Anti-Oedipus* 176). The problem then persists.

It thus appears that, in spite of his sophistication, Mengue remains insufficiently critical of Deleuze's project. The notion that capitalism is at once expansive and totalizing, but fundamentally unbalanced and driven by its internal contradictions highlights the dynamic character of the system but does not emphasize its transformation: "capitalism for its part has no exterior limit, but only an interior limit that is capital itself" (*Anti-Oedipus* 231). Such as it is, Deleuze's schizoanalytical project does not pay sufficient attention to the movement of history; it presents capitalism as a space from which nothing can free itself and a space which nothing can penetrate — i.e., a system that has no inside and no outside. For the Deleuzian model to be theoretically viable, it has to conceive of immanence not as a deterministic logic but as a creative logic; in fact it has to reconsider the concept of immanence altogether. The deployment of the system produces unpredictable conditions which call for a special attention not only to the reproduction of the system, but also the consequential movement of its elements. At least systems theory teaches us that the continuity of the system does not reside in its identity — which in this case is the universality of capitalism — but in the relation of its elements to their environment. Capitalism is an inherently unstable system which engenders a continuous interplay of its elements; this play of elements, however, is not without consequence — in attenuating its internal contradictions and replacing its elements, the system transforms itself. The system feeds, as it were, on its own problems, but in the process it evolves and changes. (MOHAMED ZAYANI, UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN)

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- *PATRICE PETRO, ed. *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. Pp. xiv + 314, ill. US \$35.00, US \$15.95 paper.

How do you read anthologies? Well, the first time I stumbled over *Fugitive Images, From Photography to Video* I read it the way one usually reads anthologies: preoccupied, selective, guided by the moment's interests. As a critic,

you put on quite another pair of glasses: you read from the beginning to the end, without taking your personal preferences into account. So there seems to be a build-in contradiction in the task of making a review of an anthology, because an anthology, as a *genre*, requires a reader quite different from the critic.

Fugitive Images is one out of a huge amount of similar books from recent years that deal with the omnipresent chimera, "Visual Culture." Like so many other books, *Fugitive Images* presents a part of the actual scientific investigations into the role of photography in modern visual culture. Compared to the well known "Histories of Photography," so popular in the 1950s and 60s (and well alive even today), these books present a sort of generalised contextualization of the photographic medium. Today we know that it is nonsense to try to write the medium's "own" history, because that will give us nothing more than a history of a certain technology. What is needed is a history (or even, as John Tagg has suggested, many *histories*) of the photographic image, and as it is known, images live their lives in a social, political, sexual, and psychological context and must be read in this context. All too many modernist "Histories of Photography" are really just the story of an "invention" (hence the usual stress on the year 1839). Today, researchers in the field try to focus on the photographic medium in its different contexts, and they emphasize the photographic image rather than the medium, although, of course, they know that the medium (even the medium's technical aspects) is part and parcel of the photographic image. To mention just a few of the titles from recent years: *Visual Culture*, *Vision in Context*, *Thinking Photography*, and *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture*. All of these titles suggest much the same concept as *Fugitive Images*, namely that the photographic image is really a rather fragile construction which must be contextualized; which must be thought and seen in connection with the surrounding culture by which it is at the same time formed and informed, and which it is itself forming.

The collection of essays in *Fugitive Images* originates from a conference held at the Centre for Twentieth Century Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1992 under the title *Visual Culture: Film/ Photography/History*. In the collection, however, the point of focus has changed from film to photography and its complex relationship with history, although some of the essays try to make connections between the two media. The book's 13 essays are placed under the following four thematic headlines: Anatomies of the Visible, Histories of Looking, Still and Moving Images, and Negativity and History. These rubrics point to a number of central themes in recent photographic theory, but they nevertheless seem a bit unnecessary and possessive. They seem to "lock" the singular essay into a specific frame of interpretation rather than to specify its point of view. Furthermore, several of the essays might easily have been put into another category. Take Linda Williams's excellent and lucid essay "Corporealized Observers: Visual Pornography and the 'Carnal Density' of Vision." It is not totally clear why this essay has been positioned under the heading "Anatomies

of the Visible," and not, for instance, under "Histories of Looking," or even "Still and Moving Images." Once this is said, it should be stated too, of course, that an anthology should not be judged by its list of content, but by the content itself, and *Fugitive Images* certainly does include several splendid essays — some of which are already included in the standard canon of the history and theory of photography and visual studies.

In her essay, Linda Williams offers us an interesting and stimulating revision of the feminist orthodox interpretation (or should one say, routine condemnation) of visual pornography. With reference to Jonathan Crary's book *Techniques of the Observer* Williams argues that photographic pornography is based on and constitutes gender positions much more unstable than the simple male/female, and active/passive opposition proposed by the traditionalists. Contrary to the feminist orthodoxies, which claim that the male subject performs dominating, phallic power by the act of looking on women through objectifying photographic technology, Williams argues that we should try not to mistake the penis for the phallus: what pornography shows us might actually not (necessarily) be the penis as phallus, but exactly the penis as penis! As such, Williams's essay becomes a defence for visual pleasure and a rejection of "Laura Mulvey's rousing conclusion to 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' calling for the destruction of visual pleasure..." (8). She also criticizes the so-called theories of the apparatus (Jean-Louis Baudry) for being too simple in their view of the spectator. Are the spectators of films and photographs really those passive subjects, burdened with bad ideologies, that the apparatus theories would have it? Following Crary, Williams speaks in favour of a more differentiated and "corporealized" spectator, and like Crary she prefers the term "observer" to "spectator" exactly because this term evokes something active, something creative, a figure playing with and actively taking part in the shaping of visual conventions.

Tom Gunning's amusing essay on nineteenth century spirit photography and phantom images exemplifies in a very palpable way the connections between the corporeal body and the photographic image. One should not expect a genre as airy as spirit photography to be concerned with the body, but Gunning shows us that this is precisely the case. He describes how "The process of materialization mines a photographic process. The woman medium retires into a dark chamber (camera obscura) and produces a double of herself which emerges into the light..." (56). Furthermore, "The medium herself became a sort of camera, her spiritual negativity bodying forth a positive image, as the human body behaves like an uncanny photomat, dispensing images from its orifices" (58). Perhaps the most surprising and advantageous of Gunning's points is his remark that these types of photographs seem to be *less*, not more, dependant on the authenticating, indexical status of the photographic technique than other types of images: "[r]ather than providing indexical evidence of the appearance of a spirit, [the

photograph] becomes a model for reduplication and the basis of recognition. A spiritualist leader, Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, declared the spirit photography was a creation by spiritual forces rather than a record of their appearance..." (65-66).

Taken as a whole, this downgrading of the importance of the index seems to be a general theme for the essays in *Fugitive Images*. The doubt or mistrust against the index has, of course, been haunting photographic theory right from the medium's invention back in the 1830s. Today, this mistrust seems to burst into flames once again because of the new, digital techniques, which perform a sort of "practical deconstruction" of the photographic index. The denigration of the index is treated, from different points of view, by a number of essays in the collection. Edward Buscombe, for instance, presents a classical, Foucault-inspired critical study of how the American landscape was "invented" by the early geological surveys, drawing on pictorial schemes inherited from the romantic painters and handed over first to the art photographers of late nineteenth century, afterwards to the film industry, where they became standard equipment in the westerns of, for example, Ford. Some find this kind of unveiling procedures banal; I find them extremely stimulating. Buscombe concludes that the capability to see "a landscape" (both the physical landscape and the photographed landscape) is a historical construction, not something natural: the purpose of the landscape is to-be-looked-at, it is a constructed or "invented" thing, and therefore an ideological and semantic construct rather than an indexical imprint.

Regis Durand, too, questions the status of the index in his essay "How to see (Photographically)," one of the most convincing of the collection's 13 essays. Durand's main point is that we must define photography on the basis of what is going on when we look at a photograph rather than on some technical aspect like the index. What kind of virtual circuits are being established between picture and beholder in the photographic experience? In critical dialogue with Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*, which can be read as a meditation on the hallucinatory aspects of the photographic medium, Durand proposes that we should rather turn our attention towards what he calls the "photographic thinking," and he claims that

The relation between photographic images and identifiable objects cannot ... be analysed with the help of concepts such as reference or index. And if those images are indeed of the order of the index, it is not because of the photographic process itself (of its "ontology"), which is geared, more than anything else, to the production of part-objects. Nor is it because of some "realism" inherent in the same process. It is rather because photography, within a fraction of an instant, makes those objects disappear and return. (147)

And later on in the same paragraph he plainly states that: "the explanation is to be found in the mental operations which take place, rather than in technology" (147). Durand is inspired by psychoanalysis and uses terms such as fetish, desire,

and lack in his attempt to sketch out these mental operations, which can be understood as the immediate context of any photographic image; that very context which is the beholder him- or herself.

One of the great advantages of Durand's essay is that it points to the very reasons for our century's engrossed interest in photography. Would it be too much to say that this century, about to run out, has been the Century of Photography? If this is so, then it must be because modern man has surrendered to an almost symbiotic alliance with this type of images. We have — willingly and with much joy, it should be noted — permitted photography to permeate our psychic economy. Our psyche has become photographic! Durand's essay points to *how* our psyche could be called photographic, but in doing so, it also indicates that we are now on our way out of the Century of Photography, into what has been prematurely labelled the post-photographic era. Is it only incidentally that many of the essays in this book are marked by a backward looking tone of pathos? I miss qualified and eye opening essays on what is actually happening on the contemporary visual scene. Unfortunately, the collection does not offer that kind of essay. What you get is a kaleidoscopic view back on a century which, like its darling image type, has been *fugitive*. (LARS KIEL BERTELSEN, UNIVERSITY OF AARHUS)