

and horror of the Indies validated and enriched the traveler/author, appealed to the curiosity and vanity of readers, and helped to mobilize support for the overarching colonial ambitions of France.

In the Conclusion Générale, Bedel recapitulates the most important points economically and powerfully. Literary representations of the Indies served the interests of “l’expansion commerciale française” (289). The set of literary strategies guiding representations of the Indies—at least until, in the eighteenth century, when Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron launched a more authentically ethnographic enterprise—aimed to “convaincre le lecteur sédentaire de l’importance d’établir un réseau commercial franco-indien” (289). A second, and complementary goal, was to establish the travel writer’s authorial prestigious identity in seventeenth-century literary circles. Bedel underlines the contemporary relevance of the study by asserting that certain elements of the conception of India and Indians studied in the book persist to this day among Westerners. Edward Said’s “orientalism” remains an obstacle to real acceptance of and respect for diversity.

Bedel’s book is extraordinarily valuable for its exhaustive scholarship and for its deep intellectual ambition and significance.

Charles Mazouer. *La Transcendance dans le théâtre français. Tome I. De l’origine aux Lumières*. Paris, Honoré Champion, 2021. 408 pp. €65.00. Review by GUY SPIELMANN, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY.

In the context of contemporary France, a country that takes very seriously the concept of *laïcité* (state secularism), an essay such as Mazouer’s could easily be mistaken as reactionary, or perhaps nostalgic, of a bygone era. However, the term *transcendance*—i.e., transcendence: “Of the Deity: The attribute of being above and independent of the universe (*OED*)—chosen for the title points to a much wider spectrum of inquiry: not just about the place of God in French drama, but rather about the way in which the theatrical experience engages with the mystery of human life, and therefore with the relationship between humans and a “greater power”—whatever it may be. This is why the book opens with a survey of ancient

Greek tragedy and not with the actual beginnings of drama in France at some point in the tenth century (the first recorded instance in 965 being a “trope,” the enactment during mass of a passage from the Gospels, known as *Quem Quaeritis*). Just as logically, this first volume encompasses the Enlightenment but only until the Revolution, which would radically reframe transcendence in an attempt to uncouple belief in a nondescript God (aka “the Supreme Being”) and obedience to organized religion, especially Roman Catholicism.

The short but dense first chapter (“*La source antique*,” 13–44) provides an indispensable introduction to the Pagan notion of a force governing the various mythological, anthropomorphized deities, who are immortal but not all-powerful. Works by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, but also by Plato, Seneca, and Epictetus are brought to bear in an effort to define the *fatum*, a force greater than the gods themselves, which eventually governs all human actions.

Chap. II (*Des dieux au Dieu des chrétiens*, 46–60) demonstrates how early Christian theologians, rather than rejecting this concept outright, recast it as “Providence,” which brought destiny into the realm of divine will, thus ushering a new era—roughly six centuries long—in which tragedy became essentially religious and serious drama only dealt with holy figures and episodes drawn from the Old (or, more rarely, New) Testament, putting God, Jesus and various saints squarely center stage (Chap. III: *Dieu sur la scène*, 61–108). The end of this period predictably coincides with the Reformation, which became a powerful current in France, resulting in half a century of civil war only brought to an end by the Edict of Nantes, guaranteeing freedom of religious practice in 1598. In the meantime, conflicting views on transcendence (Chap. IV, “*Le conflit des transcendances*,” 111–161) renewed the French (and French-language) approach to tragedy, leading to a somewhat ambiguous stance on the role of God in tragic events in the first great playwrights of record, notably Jodelle, Robert Garnier, and Montchrestien.

At that point, the Renaissance’s focus on ancient drama, regarded as the ultimate standard from the 16th century onwards, seriously complicated matters, Mazouer shows, by pitching several irreconcilable visions of transcendence against one another (Chap. V, “*Présence et effacement des transcendances*,” 165–310) and by raising the issue

of *le merveilleux* (that which appears supernatural or beyond rational explanation), a significant factor in stage plays of the period, often conveyed through machine-induced special effects. In his analyses of works by Tristan l'Hermite, Rotrou, Corneille, Molière, and Racine, Mazouer highlights the contradictions faced by the authors and their audiences in dealing simultaneously with conventional Christian transcendence, which by then had become somewhat risky, as the Church took a dim view of any stage treatment of religious topics, with pagan mythological *merveilleux*—almost indispensable in neo-classical tragedy, especially in Greek topics favored by Racine—and, for some, with the possibility of a complete absence of divine intervention: Molière, as a disciple of the philosopher Gassendi, was accused of being a *libertin*, even as he seemed to stay within Christian orthodoxy when literally sending Dom Juan to a fiery Hell as a finale of his 1665 comedy. This is the book's most substantial chapter, not surprisingly for anyone who knows Mazouer's previous work on the *classique* era of French drama, but also because the early modern period was a time of profound upheaval in terms of relationships between faith, religion, and public life.

The next unit (Chap. VI, "*L'éloignement de la transcendance*," 313–374) is thus predictably shorter mostly because, after the death of Louis XIV, who had pitched himself as a hero of the "true" Catholic faith, religion in public life was largely relegated to a formality, while leading intellectuals and authors either professed a prudent non-denominational creed (Voltaire), or barely concealed their materialism and atheism (Diderot), getting bolder as the century unfolded towards the Revolution of 1780–1799. Although dominant rationalism in the age of Enlightenment did not completely abolish transcendence, Mazouer concludes, it did considerably loosen the grip of Religion, and even of the sacred on the people of France, once considered as "the eldest daughter of the Church." Theater, then the most reliable barometer of public mood—in spite of censorship and multiple restrictions on what could be said and shown on stage—betrays this progressive but inexorable rejection of transcendence, which became marginal as a central motive in serious drama, four centuries after being its exclusive focus.

Yet, throughout his essay, Mazouer keeps pointing at the frequent ambiguities in the approach to transcendence, thus resisting a facile dualistic account of drama moving from the centrality of religion to its eventual sidelining. “A sort of metaphysical uncertainty” (*une sorte de flottement métaphysique*, 195) often characterized the stance of playwrights who in some cases regarded God as little more than a contrivance, or a way to legitimize a kind of morality that would have worked just as well in a secular context.

Despite its chronological order, this book is less a survey than an attempt to define transcendence in light of its manifestations in French stage plays and to demonstrate that it remained a central concern over a millennium, though envisioned from varied, sometimes contradictory viewpoints. Mazouer suggests that this was an inherent feature of dramaturgy, as opposed to other types of writing, at a time when the majority of the population was unable to read, and theater allowed for the greatest possible dissemination of ideas and presentation of debatable issues in front of a relatively large audience. It will be most interesting to see how Mazouer, in the second volume, will account for the evolution following the French Revolution towards mass education and a general decline in spirituality.

Vincent Grégoire. *Marie Guyart de l'Incarnation (1599-1672): Le singulier parcours d'une ursuline missionnaire de Tours à Québec*. Brussels: Peter Lang, 2022. 182 pp. \$45.95. Review by SUZANNE C. TOCZYSKI, SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY.

In this slim but impactful volume, Vincent Grégoire (Berry College) gives a stirring account of the life and apostolic ministry of the Ursuline nun Marie de l'Incarnation (*née* Marie Guyart), who was canonized in 2014 by Pope Francis, and who worked tirelessly for the education of young women, both indigenous and French-Canadian, in New France, in spite of and occasionally thanks to the obstacles she faced throughout her life. Volume 35 of *Etudes canadiennes*, Grégoire's work is one of only two in the multi-disciplinary series devoted to an individual writer, and the only one thus far that focuses on an early modern author. Parts of chapters II, III and V