

and the *comedia de capa y espada* toward a new avatar of the *comedia de figurón*. Ridiculous characters, monomaniacs, and burlesque situations increasingly occupied the stage to expose a society rendered vulnerable by the regencies and the Fronde. We can already see Molière coming, and before him Corneille's cynical early comedies. In Scarron, biting satire that questions the underpinnings of French social mores ultimately raises doubts about the capacity of language to represent reality.

In his own way, Scarron participated in a meta-theatrical trend whereby French dramatists shifted the focus of comedies from the quest for perfection in the social world portrayed onstage to a quest for perfection in the very processes of dramatic representation that construed that world. Tailoring the *comedia* to the unities, the *bienséances*, and the overarching criterion of verisimilitude left out much of what gave the Spanish art form its particular flavor. While Marchal-Weyl chides French dramatists for misunderstanding so much, her erudite approach consistently succeeds in bringing out the complexities of the similarities, differences, trends, and exceptions observable in this bilingual corpus of plays. Largely thanks to this important book, the significance of the dramaturgical dialectics between the *comedia* and early French comedy can no longer be underestimated.

Christophe Bourgeois. *Théologies poétiques de l'âge baroque: La Muse chrétienne (1570-1630)*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006. 864 pp. 130 €. Review by LEONARD MARSH, LE MOYNE COLLEGE.

The very title of this work captures the substance of a problematic perspective that never ceases to challenge literary critics of late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century French literature. In a period that witnesses simultaneously the cultivation of poetry as a vocation and the reaffirmation of faith, how does a poetic voice translate or give witness to religious experience? How can one conceptualize the relationship, if there is one, between the poet and the theologian as interpreter of the scriptures? In anthropomorphic terms, how does one conceptualize the Greek goddess of music and poetry as the Muse converted to Christianity? Are such phenomena identifiably characteristic of a period of time that one can call baroque, a term that straddles art and literature as sister arts and one that French literary historians do not find particularly

friendly? Bourgeois has addressed each of these questions with careful and meticulously researched analyses of the poetry of the better known Jean de la Ceppède, Jean de Sponde, and Agrippa d'Aubigné as well as that of some lesser known poets such as Pierre de Croix and Claude Hopil.

Taking his lead from the seminal work of Jean Rousset on the baroque, Bourgeois isolates the traditional characteristics of the baroque aesthetic, understanding them as the “visage particulier qu’a pris la rencontre entre le littéraire et le religieux” (13), and proposes to examine how these characteristics correspond to the literary production of certain poets, who personify the Christian Muse, between the years 1570 and 1630. Key to his examination is to “considérer chacun des poèmes étudiés comme la *reformulation* d’une parole donnée par la tradition chrétienne. Le langage poétique reformule le langage théologique” (25). In examining this reformulation he toggles binary topoi such as interior and exterior, sacred and profane, introspection and ostentation, and the subjectivity of personal religious experience as related to the objectivity of proclaimed dogma. Tensions such as these reveal the instability, movement and ornamentation characteristic of the baroque “visage particulier,” and the reader quickly becomes aware that Bourgeois’s own discursive style imitates the very rhetoric he is examining, as if by what Faguet termed “innutrition.”

Bourgeois dedicates Part I of his study to reconciling the sacred and the profane in the person of the poet. A sound and comprehensive explanation of the origins and development of secular humanism is balanced against the poet’s call to “*escrire Chrestienement*,” as he cites Henri Estienne (81). Here Bourgeois balances myth and fable by assiduously backtracking to the classical tradition of Greece and Rome before approaching the Italian humanists and then treating one important poet of his study, Jean de la Ceppède, whose *Théorèmes* Bourgeois considers a clear and constant example of the inclusion of mythological figures in the Christian poem. Bourgeois continues to put a face on the new Muse converted to Christianity by citing La Ceppède’s self-reflective preface in which the poet admits to having been seduced by the pagan Muse in his youth only to mature by unmasking and rejecting her. As is his wont throughout the book, Bourgeois establishes a relationship to an intertext, here to the conversion of Saint Augustine as it is modeled in his *Confessions*. The role of Saint Augustine as intertext is continually plumbed as Bourgeois proceeds to analyze Pierre de Croix’s *Miroir de l’amour divin*, seeing in it an example of the baroque tension between sacred and profane. Bour-

geois notes here that the *Miroir's* “deux diverses citez” as earthly and celestial cities is a direct borrowing from Saint Augustine’s *City of God*. A final adieu to the profane Muse closes Part I with an affirmation of divine love’s rapture replacing the experience of human love.

Part II is by far the most significant section of the work. Entitled “Figures de la Bible,” it examines how the rhetoric of biblical expression informs biblical exegesis as it is practiced by the poet. Questions of paraphrase, interpretation, imitation and rewriting place the scriptures as the primary intertext of the Christian Muse. Bourgeois has done enormous research here not only into La Ceppède, Pierre de Croix and Aubigné but also into several translations of the Bible, including the Bible Benoist and the Latin Vulgate. Several side-by-side comparisons make clear cases of borrowing and interpolation. Notable here is the manner in which Aubigné and Sponde are shown to have modeled their style on biblical psalms. In addition to exegesis, biblical commentary was also practiced by the Christian Muse. Bourgeois has dutifully included discussion on how the Christian Muse has offered commentary on the scriptures. Immediately coming to mind is the case of La Ceppède’s *Théorèmes*, in which some 520 sonnets that chronicle the passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ are accompanied by their discursive and perhaps even more copious commentaries. Bourgeois has certainly given these commentaries their due but they are far less treated than the sonnets themselves although they give ample evidence of scriptural exegesis.

Part III, entitled “Rhétorique de l’âme,” narrows the baroque question down to style. The key question here is how a poetic style specifically identified as baroque translates the lived experience of Christian life. Having taken his cue from Saint François de Sales’s letter to La Ceppède at the very beginning of his first chapter, Bourgeois again takes up the seventeenth-century saint’s injunction to apply one’s love of God to a practical life of moral Christian living. The saint’s *Introduction à la vie dévote* (1641) is the stepping stone in this part to a discussion of the current of devotion in the early seventeenth century. The questions of meditation and spiritual exercises as well as giving voice to the voice of God in the eloquence of preaching are seen as emanating from a certain devout alchemy by which the experience of God’s love is transformed into poetic expression. Thus, the mystical expression of Pierre de Croix’s *Miroir* and the oxymoronic “chant silencieux” of Claude Hopil’s

*Divins Élanements* are seen as poetic expressions of an inner reality of religious experience..

Part IV situates all that preceded in a historical perspective. Twentieth-century and earlier criticism, notably that of Jean-Pierre Camus (1584-1652), is brought to bear on Bourgeois's argument.

In sum, Bourgeois has set an enormous agenda in a volume that is more important as a resource for French devotional poetry of the period than as a work that answers convincingly the question of how the baroque aesthetic is expressed in that literature, if indeed it is. On the other hand, the reader is treated to a wide reaching array of intertexts, background material and textual explications that pepper the volume. It is easy to forget the author's original goal to show the integration of theology and rhetoric in the conversion of the Muse as he leads the reader along numerous paths. This book will be valuable to any researcher already familiar with the terminology of classical rhetoric, Tridentine theology, mystical literature, the sister arts, and the devotional poetry of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Michael Moriarty. *Fallen Nature, Fallen Selves: Early Modern French Thought II*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. xviii + 430 pp. \$110.00. Review by TODD JANKE, CLAYTON STATE UNIVERSITY.

Michael Moriarty's new book picks up where his last, *Early Modern French Thought: The Age of Suspicion*, left off, and we are treated to the same erudition, well-crafted arguments, thought-provoking explorations, and lucid prose. This time Moriarty aims to demonstrate that in the early modern period, French thinkers, including philosophers, theologians, poets, and playwrights, were developing what might be called a kind of proto-psychology—a study of human behavioral motivation with a pronounced focus on subjective interiority. He traces his theme from its roots in neo-Augustinian conceptions of original sin to the problematic nature of self-knowledge as explicated in the works of thinkers from Pascal to La Rochefoucauld. The book is wide-ranging in scope and firmly anchored in textual analysis from a variety of primary sources, drawing on philosophical, theological, and literary work from the early modern period. Like Moriarty's earlier book, *Fallen Nature, Fallen Selves* is a finely crafted, nuanced, and well-paced work of remarkable