

Labadie (1610-1674), Antoinette Bourignon (1610-1680), and Jeanne Guyon (1648-1717). The utopian wish to effectuate a pure correspondence between interiority and exteriority through the autobiographical text is shown to have been repeatedly frustrated from its outset. With print technology, which many mystics did their best to resist, the autobiographical text unavoidably escaped its author's interpretive control, becoming something dangerously "exterior"—subject to misreading and misappropriation, and, in some cases, leading to judicial persecution. Increasingly conscious of the "legal vulnerability of writing" (170), seventeenth-century mystics came to realize that the threat of alienation paradoxically accompanied any proposed "transparent" act of autobiography. In the last chapter, Paige returns to the Jesuit exorcist Jean-Joseph Surin (the spiritual director of Marie Baron), whose autobiography *Science expérimentale des choses de l'autre vie* (1663) recounts the bizarre story of his twenty-year struggle with aphasia and delirium, and, perhaps most importantly, his painful and acute sense of his own otherness. Writing privacy and difference—producing a book "about being different" (180)—raises particularly interesting questions regarding experience, form, and authority.

Eloquently incorporating literature, history and critical theory, Paige's *Being Interior* will have great appeal not only for seventeenth-century scholars, but also for avid readers of the early modern period and critics interested in the genealogy of the modern subject.

Andrew Calder. *The Fables of La Fontaine: Wisdom Brought Down to Earth*. Geneva: Droz, 2001. 224 pp. (cloth). Review by JOE JOHNSON, GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY.

There are more than a few ways to "read" and appreciate La Fontaine's *Fables*. A student might memorize these models of form and content for recitation and classroom study. Other readers might prefer to dissect their discourse, content, and intertextual or formal elements for insight concerning a Sun King's France or the

fabulist's poetics. Still other readers might prefer to savor the *Fables'* skillful distillation of seemingly timeless, practical wisdom with respect to the human condition. Such is the tack largely preferred by Andrew Calder in some sixteen, self-contained chapters of *The Fables of La Fontaine: Wisdom Brought Down to Earth*.

Calder, author of an earlier book and several articles about seventeenth-century writers or culture, sets the tone for his well-documented work in the opening chapter. Purporting to provide a "working definition of what a fable is"(17) and how to go about reading them, he takes up the case of the very first "fable choisie" in La Fontaine's collection, "La Cigale et la Fourmi," a text critics have traditionally considered as setting "the tone for the whole collection of the *Fables*"(23). Calder establishes the difficulty in attempting to assign any final meanings to La Fontaine's fables and persuasively argues the necessity of considering this fable's various lessons in the context of similar insights proffered by earlier Humanists.

Chapters 2 through 8 are primarily concerned with establishing this humanistic context. Calder begins by considering didactic, figurative genres such as fables and proverbs throughout the ages, looking to La Fontaine's models in antiquity, especially Aesop, Homer, and Socrates. Calder also links the comedic vein in La Fontaine to Ancient and Modern satiric writers such as Horace, Lucian, and Erasmus. Among specifically French models discussed in the fourth chapter, Calder includes both Montaigne and Rabelais, figures whose writings were in the Silenic mode, that is, carrying gems of wisdom under a sometimes crude, self-mocking exterior. Calder links this mode to La Fontaine, who worked with what had traditionally been considered a low poetic form, yet refined and polished it into something more. Moving on to consider matters of rhetoric and voice in the fifth chapter and self-knowledge in the sixth and seventh chapters, Calder concludes this section of the book with a consideration of how the comic perspective in La Fontaine's *Fables* exposes human foible.

From this point forward, the remaining chapters are even more self-contained. For example, the ninth chapter is concerned with reader response to the ethos style of oratory that La Fontaine employs to examine the quotidian flaws of human beings. The tenth chapter, meanwhile, considers questions of pathos in various fables, especially “Le Loup et l’Agneau,” one of the few fables Calder subjects to a close reading as he describes how readers may experience the unfolding of drama in the fable. The remaining six chapters are largely concerned with following various “patterns of thought”(16), as a sampling of chapter titles and subtitles will no doubt indicate: “Follow Nature,” “Desires and Fears,” and “Kings and Courts.”

Specialists in La Fontaine may be dissatisfied with such sections, for they do not examine particular fables in great depth. Take, for example, “Les deux Amis,” (book VIII, fable 11 in the *Fables*), a fable Calder discusses in the chapter 14 sub-heading “The Rarity of True Friendship.” He gives this particular fable only the briefest consideration, doing little more than synopsisizing the contents of a fable. Nonetheless, he does provide larger contexts to consider, such as other models of friendship, the dangers of friendship, and literary precedents for depictions of friendship—in short, grounds for further study on the matter if one wishes. With its copious cross-referencing to other fables and writers, Calder’s book is an excellent starting point for re-reading and researching La Fontaine’s *Fables*. As such, it will prove especially useful for undergraduates, for scholars wishing to consider La Fontaine in a larger humanistic context, and for those seeking a quick introduction to particular fables and their thematic connections with other fables and texts in the Lafontainian corpus.