

Jacques Le Brun. *La Jouissance et le trouble. Recherches sur la littérature chrétienne de l'Âge Classique*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2004. 635 pp. 22.00 Euros. Review by J. H. MAZAHERI, AUBURN UNIVERSITY.

This interesting, immense book is comprised of revised articles and papers previously published by Jacques Le Brun, whose works are well-known to seventeenth-century specialists. In his foreword, the critic states that he writes from a historian's viewpoint with methodology inspired by both Freud and Benveniste. The period he examines is mostly the reign of Louis XIV.

In Chapter I, the author explains that Catholicism as an institution is a new notion, born at the time of the Council of Trent and still meaning "universal" in the seventeenth century. It will not be completely established before the nineteenth century. The main point is that Catholicism is a religious system with different approaches to it, as is Protestantism. Chapter II is on religious and literary experiences. Le Brun states that with the decline of scholasticism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, two theologies develop: a positive theology, which is the work of the Humanists, based on the Bible, the Fathers and ecclesiastical history, and a mystic theology based on other documents and on experience. Loyola and Theresa of Avila are famous examples of the second kind. Le Brun points out that almost all important religious authors of the era took "mystic science" seriously, and he admires Brémond's psychological approach in *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux*; and Baruzi's textually-focused methodology. The mystic experience is first of all a writing one.

In Chapter III, on moral dilemmas, Le Brun reminds the reader of the importance Freud attached to Catholic "directeurs de conscience" and compares the collections of cases published in the seventeenth century with contemporary novels like *La Princesse de Clèves* and *Les Lettres de la religieuse portugaise*. The historian believes novels come to assume the role played by those collections, presenting similar cases, but in a fictional manner. Another path to the invention of the modern novel is the account of medical and religious cases, more popular in Protestant regions. With Charcot in psychiatric literature in the nineteenth century, Le Brun avers, the case account assumes almost a canonical form with Freud simply continuing this tradition.

Chapter IV is on devoutness in modern times. Le Brun starts with an etymological analysis of the notion of "voeu" as *votum*. He contends that it is Thomas Aquinas's conception of *devotio* that most influences seventeenth-

century religious writers such as François de Sales and Surin. Thus, one can observe the rise of a variety of writings on individual devotional experiences coinciding with criticisms of false devoutness throughout the century. Chapter V concerns Jerome Cardan's "Interpretation of Dreams," an important, yet neglected commentary on Synesius. Le Brun's emphasis is on Cardan's "*methodus*" and his "*ratio interpretandi*." A dream is a useful sign with a number of meanings which can be "rationally" interpreted. Cardan's work proves to be an important landmark situated between Artemidorus and Freud. In Chapter VI, on the famous controversy between Leibnitz and Bossuet concerning "heresy," Le Brun traces the history of this term from Augustine to Melchior Cano to contextualize the era's debates on the notion. Bossuet and Leibnitz both define "heresy" from a psychological standpoint. The former seems more conservative and less tolerant than the latter, but it is his view, nevertheless, that eventually prevails in the Catholic Church.

Chapter VII examines Henry Holden's contribution to the era's debates on faith in his *Divinae Fidei Analysis, seu De Fidei Christianae Resolutione* and his rationalist method and anti-Protestant approach. The main part of Holden's book consists in the discussion of different means to communicate divine truths by attaching greater importance to the Church's institutions and traditions rather than to Scripture or individual experience. In Chapter VIII, Le Brun shows how denominational controversies in the Renaissance prompt the development of universal principles to interpret Scripture. Thus is born the new "science" of Hermeneutics, thanks to the Lutheran theologian J. C. Dannhauer. It will be developed as a part of Logic by Descartes' German disciple, J. Clauberg, who applies it not only to interpreting sacred texts but also profane ones, a tradition later continued by Schleiermacher.

Chapter IX is on Richard Simon, his historical search for "religious truth," and his reflections on the obscurity of the Scriptures, as well as the meaning of the "original" text and the task of the critic. In conclusion, the latter must mostly rely on the tradition and the Church. Chapter X deals with the reception of Grotius' theology among Catholics in the second half of the century, especially with respect to his conception of the double meaning of prophecies. Those who defended or criticized the Dutch theologian for being a Socinian are well discussed.

Both Chapters XI and XII concern Madame Guyon. In the former, Le Brun first introduces the mystic author's biblical commentaries, reminds in

what circumstances she wrote them, and shows what the very act of writing about the Scripture meant to her. Afterwards, he expounds on her original method of interpretation, as well as her conception of the Bible as an “allégorie de l’intérieur.” The latter chapter concerns her idea of the power and knowledge of women. First, the author reminds the reader of Guyon’s considerable influence in Europe throughout the eighteenth-century. He then discusses her interpretations concerning female, Biblical characters. These fascinating women, she believed, had a special, mystical knowledge, which gave them power and authority. Le Brun concludes by pointing to Mme. Guyon’s apocalyptic and millennialist thought, drawing a parallel between her and Joachim of Flora.

Chapter XIII, “Preventive Censure and Religious Literature in France at the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century,” briefly relates the history of censorship beginning in 1563 through its increasing organization especially during the last two decades of Louis XIV’s reign under the leadership of the Abbé Bignon. Presenting quantitative data, Le Brun introduces some of the censors, usually doctors in theology. In the last part, the historian cites examples of censored books on religion and spirituality and the censors’ often conservative or political criteria, whereby Quietism, Jansenism, and Protestantism are condemned along with popular spirituality and superstition.

Chapter XIV et XV concern two Protestants. In the former, Le Brun introduces Pierre Jurieu’s spiritual works, discussing the famous pastor’s *Traité de la dévotion* (1675, 1678), which was well received by Protestants and Catholics alike and emphasizing Jurieu’s anti-mysticism. Although Jurieu disagrees with Quietism and Fénelon, he does not fail in his *Traité historique* to criticize Bossuet’s harsh attitude towards the latter. Discussing Jurieu’s other works, Le Brun concludes that the pastor’s criticism of mysticism was rather mitigated, hinting at a secret sympathy for persecuted mystics. Chapter XV describes the spirituality of another Protestant controversialist, theologian, and moralist, Jean Claude (1619-1687). In the first section, a reading of Claude’s posthumous works reveals a man who strongly believed in “knowledge,” the “acts,” and human reason. His thought “paradoxically” makes way for the religion of the “Lumières.” In the next section, Le Brun introduces Claude’s *Traité du péché contre le Saint-Esprit* and compares it with the works of other theologians from Augustine to Calvin. Le Brun then analyzes the theologian’s original interpretation of the “sin against the Holy Spirit,” his conception of faith

(“true” and “temporary”), and a belief that salvation should be sought without expectation of reward.

Chapter XVI is on Bossuet as a controversialist before he became the bishop of Meaux. Le Brun examines his method of converting “heretics,” as exemplified in the *Réfutation du Catéchisme du sieur Paul Ferry* (1655) and the *Exposition de la doctrine de l’Église catholique* (1668). Bossuet believed that a “simple exposition” of Catholicism was the best way to convert Protestants. This article also discusses the controversy between the Catholic theologian and Claude, as well as the *Traité de la communion sous les deux espèces* (1682), which is a kind of supplement to the *Exposition*.

Chapter XVII concerns the Lutheran mathematician and philosopher Leibnitz who was not only pious but had an immense religious culture, too. He believed that, in every church, denomination, or mystical movement, there were sincere people in pursuit of “pure love,” even though he criticized some for going astray or being superstitious. The critic contends that Leibnitz was somewhat prejudiced against the mystics and disliked the sects. He also mentions the philosopher’s affinity with the Jesuits and Bossuet and examines his rationalist conceptions of love, hope, charity, and piety.

In Chapter XVIII, with P. G. Antoine, we enter eighteenth-century spirituality. Le Brun briefly recounts the theologian’s life and main works and exposes his spirituality influenced by Ignatius Loyola. Father Antoine was the representative of the most rigorous trend among the Jesuits. Chapter XIX is on Quietism. Le Brun proposes first to examine the two kinds of criticism leveled at it: Quietism is considered by some as a “novelty” and by others as an “ancient” heresy. Now the Quietists believed themselves to be the heirs to an old spiritual tradition extending from Dionysius the Areopagite and Clement of Alexandria all the way to John of the Cross and François de Sales. Le Brun contends that whatever the seventeenth-century critics or apologists said, this mystic movement should be considered a “modern” phenomenon directed towards the future. Thus, one can notice its influence in the eighteenth century on German Pietists, English Methodists, and the Romantics.

Chapters XX, XXI, and XXII all concern Fénelon, the Quietist to whom the last part of the previous chapter was already devoted. In the first essay, Le Brun discusses the *Explication des Maximes des Saints* and Fénelon’s mysticism, especially with regard to the “soul’s two parts” and the notion of *culpa*. The title of the book *La Jouissance et le Trouble* is here explained as the “soul’s upper

and lower parts.” Regarding Jesus’ question, “Why have You forsaken me?” the critic pens a Freudian interpretation of Fénelon’s commentary—the “faute involontaire” being a *lapsus*. The second and third essays, taking again the theme of the “Son” and his death willed by the Father, concern *Telemachus*. Based on the manuscript’s variant versions and eliminated terms and passages, Le Brun offers another psychoanalytic interpretation of Fénelon’s masterpiece. In the following essay, the author discusses first the *Correspondence* between Fénelon and Mme. Guyon, and shows the progressive influence of the latter’s mysticism on the archbishop. “Trouble” is caused by reason and “desire,” Fénelon contends, and a spiritual life leading to peace consists in a progressive elimination of “desire.” Le Brun here looks into *Telemachus* as an educational work. As a duke’s private tutor, the moralist teaches his student how to live a spiritual Christian life and how to conceive of it as an “itinerary” to reach purification. Also, “paternity,” from a mythological/religious standpoint, is an important theme elaborated on by the critic. Ultimately, the novel is qualified as a mystical/mythical “fable” in which “image” plays a fundamental pedagogical role.

The final chapter is about the formation of a branch of history. At the end of the seventeenth century, one can observe the development of two kinds of religious literature: one focused around piety and the other interested in the establishment of history. In the first part, Le Brun examines how seventeenth-century authors deal with pagan myths and fables. He demonstrates how apologetic books on the origin of these “fables” by J. Selden, Vossius, and Huet, but also works by Le Clerc and Fontenelle, unintentionally laid the foundations of a new science, namely the history of religions. In the second part, the historian examines the gap that has been formed since the seventeenth century between the “origin” and the “originator.” Indeed, the origin of a text and authorship have proven to be difficult, complex issues. Le Brun concludes with Freud that the “originaire” is each time “eine Sache der Konstruktion.”

*La Jouissance et le trouble* is a rich, erudite, thought-provoking book replete with informative, scholarly footnotes. While helpful, the name index is incomplete and lacks such important names as Benveniste, de Certeau, Brémond, and Orcibal. Also, it would have been more convenient for the reader to have a bibliography at the back of the volume. All things considered, it is a pleasure to read.