

**Markovits, Rahul. Civiliser l'Europe : Politiques du théâtre français au XVIIIe siècle. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard (2014)**

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collaborative work that presents just a few outstanding essays surrounded by others that seem more like filler. Those who research serial thinking might not be inclined to read the whole volume, as details can be difficult to follow if one is not extremely familiar with the topic of a given chapter. However, such is to be expected for any collective volume that covers the evolution of a particular phenomenon over hundreds of years. In the final analysis, De Gendt, Montoya, and the contributors have achieved considerable success in their effort to enrich our understanding of serial thinking and the attempt to organize reality from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment.

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Markovits, Rahul. *Civiliser l'Europe : Politiques du théâtre français au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2014. 400 p.

Unlike the major cities of England or Spain, which had great national theatres of their own to draw upon, in the eighteenth century many capitals in central and eastern Europe especially invited troupes of French actors to perform the works of French dramatists. Beginning with La Dixmerie in 1765 and followed by such writers as Caraccioli (1777), Guizot (1828), Brunot (1917), Réau (1938), and more recently Fumaroli (*Quand l'Europe parlait français*, 2001), this has long been interpreted as evidence of the inherent superiority of French culture, its spontaneous appreciation proof of its intrinsic worth, its broad acceptance a sure sign of the progress of civilisation in Europe: « Être européen, être français, être du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, c'est tout un. [...] Cette équivalence à trois termes cristallise la signification du thème de « l'Europe française » où la francisation est l'équivalent du processus de civilisation » (13).

The author of this work, a professional historian, has chosen to focus on the theatre in its literary, social, and political dimensions because, for him, French plays appear to epitomise on their own everything able to make the “French way of life” appealing (19). While he does not, and indeed could not, dispute the presence of French players across the continent at this time, his objective in this study is to challenge the usual view of French cultural hegemony to which the ubiquity of actors from *l'hexagone* has so often been ascribed. After deep archival research into the documents concerning the performance of French plays abroad that still remain — the contracts, accountants' statements, repertory lists, playbills, relevant correspondence et al. — and the application of what he terms “une méthode contextuelle and pragmatique” (20), the author is able to concentrate on who requested French players in such capitals as Vienna, Parma, and Geneva and why, so to clarify the quite distinct reasons that led to their presence in these cities and the different ends to which they were put: in Vienna, for instance, under Kaunitz, they were introduced in part to facilitate the acquisition of *bon ton* and in this way to integrate the newer nobility (*Dienstadel*) into the highest social circles, while in Parma their presence can be linked to the attempt by its new Bourbon rulers to emulate the absolute rule of their French cousins. Together with Brussels and Hanover, the case of Geneva is considered in the second part of this monograph, where the author describes the movement from the soft power (*la puissance douce*) of French theatre abroad to its increasing use as an instrument of French foreign policy. In Geneva, the site of the quarrel over the theatre between Voltaire and the Calvinist consistory, d'Alembert and Rousseau, the admission of French actors — beginning only in 1782 — is viewed as evidence of French cultural imperialism. The last two chapters of the book discuss the changes in the mission of acculturation which took place during the French revolution and the empire, when the objective of such theatre was clearly to promote the social and linguistic integration of the French republic's many new subjects.

The author has based his arguments on extensive research undertaken in a considerable number of municipal and national archives across Europe, but a disappointment is the omission of the court of Russia, whose rulers and nobility were so attached to French culture that its influence easily lingered long enough for the first theatrical success of Alfred de Musset to take place in St. Petersburg in 1843. Readers interested more in French literature than in its cultural and political application may prefer to concentrate on the first part of this monograph, and on chapter 3 in particular, where the author discusses the different genres of French plays most frequently performed in various European cities, although this is also presented in summary in the useful series of annexes (tables 3 and 4) at the end of the volume. Informed and rich in detail throughout, at times, alas, also pedantic and diffuse, this provocative study offers a memorably revisionist view of the imposing presence of France on the stages of eighteenth-century Europe.

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St-Martin, Armelle (éd.). *Sade dans tous ses états. Deux cents ans de controverses*. Rouen : Presses Universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2017. 266 p.

This collection of essays (of uneven merit) examines a writer who, as Armelle St-Martin argues in the introduction: “fait irrémédiablement partie de notre paysage culturel” (10) in part because of his admission into the prestigious *Pléiade* (since 1989), as well as through the publication of texts in readily-available paperback editions (at least in France), and by the massive body of scholarly articles devoted to this “phénomène”(9). This volume acknowledges “l’intérêt littéraire et l’engouement populaire dont jouit présentement Sade” (10), while also admitting to the “répulsion” (10) Sade and his work provoke. In the Introduction Armelle St-Martin tries to square Sade’s status as a “champ fertile pour les études littéraires et philosophiques” with the notion that he is an “auteur dont la pensée est dangereuse” (11). This tension and an attempt to grapple with the “pensée dangereuse” (and, to a lesser extent, with the notion of repulsion) are the focus of many of the essays in this volume which examines how twentieth- and twenty-first-century writers and critics, in a world increasingly struggling to comprehend the human capacity for evil, reflect on (in the words of Jean-Pierre Dubost): “la légitimité morale d’une œuvre largement structurée par un double registre—le prêche d’immoralité et l’appel à passer à l’acte d’une part et l’exposition circonstanciée de l’acte de l’autre part” (167).

The volume starts with an excellent essay (“Sade et la peinture religieuse”) by Beatrice Didier, who returns to Sade’s texts to examine them through the lens of one of her centers of interest: “les représentations du sacré des Lumières au romantisme” (22). Her essay explores a paradox in Sade’s writings: although the author has a predilection for setting scenes of debauchery in “des couvents, des chapelles, [et] des églises” (22), there are few actual references to religious art in his works. Didier situates Sade’s evocation of religious painting within the context of materialist Enlightenment thought, contrasting Enlightenment writers’ purely aesthetic appreciation of religious art (emptied of its metaphysical content), with a Romantic drive to deploy the aesthetic power of religious art to “redonner au sacré un fondement métaphysique” (36).

Didier turns to “Laurence et Antonio” and “Eugénie de Franval,” from *Les Crimes de l’amour*, as well as Sade’s 1813 novel, *La Marquise de Gange*; turning to a footnote in Sade’s story “Laurence et Antonio,” she examines Sade’s reflections about religious painting, the relationship between the real and representation in painting, and the question of the hierarchy of the arts, which was “en plein bouleversement au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle” (26). Didier demonstrates the influence of an unlikely source—Chateaubriand’s *Génie du christianisme* (1802)—on *La Marquise de Gange*, a text that borrows from, and may