

demonstrates that both real and fictional *valentones* were not only proof of an ineffective law enforcement regime, but that their ability to escape prosecution also verified its arbitrary and unpredictable operation.

Chapters 4 and 5 switch, once again, to focus on real-life spectacles implemented by the nobility to exercise control. While chapter 4 directly confronts the misconception that criminal behavior occurred on the margins of society and investigates the attempted use of spectacle to demonstrate authority by figures like Count Puñoenrostro, chapter 5 reconsiders the infamous public execution of Don Rodrigo Calderón. Intended to signify the stamping out of corruption at court, Bergman details how Calderón co-opted imagery associated with religious spectacle to transform himself from negative exemplar to repentant hero and avoid vilification. For Bergman, Calderón's unexpected co-option marks the state's loss of the propaganda battle, proving that public spectacles designed to deter and entertain are not able to communicate any single or unequivocal message.

The final chapter builds on the wealth of existing scholarship on kingship in the *comedia*. Bergman agrees with current arguments that the institution of the monarchy remains unchallenged in theater but adds that how it operates and how it is depicted as operating is up for debate. Devoting his attention to *comedias* in which the king is presented as akin to the brawling *valentón* figure of chapter 3, he writes that the king-as-brawler is the apotheosis of the criminal baroque and in fact coheres with law enforcement frameworks as understood and experienced by the early modern audience.

Throughout the detailed and wide-ranging case studies of *The Criminal Baroque*, Bergman depicts an audience that is tolerant, if not altogether accepting, of criminality and aware of its pervasiveness in society. His argument systematically problematizes the dominant model of interpretation, established by José Antonio Maravall, that plainly casts theatrical displays as political propaganda designed to ensure civic obedience. Bergman, however, deftly teases out the intrinsic disruptive possibility of public spectacles and highlights how, for a socially aware audience, they hold the potential to entertain and to fascinate, but also to bring about political *desengaño*.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.280

Cartesian Poetics: The Art of Thinking. Andrea Gadberry.

Thinking Literature. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020. 198 pp. \$27.50.

This is a very welcome contribution coming from a comparatist to the much-neglected subject of the relationship between thought and poetry in Descartes. Here, the reader will not find an enquiry into the (few) texts in which Descartes speaks on poets or poetry. The aim of the book is indeed more ambitious: to retrace the implicit poetic structures and forms pervading Descartes's principal philosophical texts.

The author does not hide the originality and relevance of his method, which is more akin to lyric reading than to historicism, and which still focuses on early modern studies, but also concerns its results: these poetic structures and forms are seldom discussed or never noticed at all, in spite of a distinguished tradition of feminist and literary criticism interpreting Descartes's works (Kyoo Lee, Claudia Brodsky, Dalia Judovitz, R. Darren Gobert, and Hassan Melhey).

These poetic structures are basically four: riddles, love lyrics, elegies, and anagrams. Hence, the chapters of these works trace back to the four poetic structures, respectively: 1) the *fable* of the *Discours*; 2) the figure of the evil genius and the cogito in the Second Meditation, also considering *Les passions de l'âme*; 3) the meditator's reflection on his limits in the Fourth Meditation; 4) the Cartesian problem of the relationship between duration and time.

In some cases, Gadberry's objectives are achieved. According to the author, the analysis of the Fourth Meditation, in which the meditator encounters his own limitations in the form of a negative elegy, seems logically convincing. Here, the meditator questions himself five times repeatedly about the ultimate reasons for his limitations that fundamentally constitute the cause of the error, and he always does so in the lexical register of the *quaerol/conquero*.

Other analyses are less convincing, and sometimes one gets the impression that the search for implicit poetic structures is somewhat forced. This is the case with the analysis of the figure of the evil genius in light of the poetic genre of lyric poetry. Gadberry argues that what the meditator resists (the evil genius) is not just falsehood, but seduction, and the means by which he resists is the negation that destroys both the world and his body. In this view, the evil genius would be a seductor and the *ego* the object of desire, which denies itself and would interject according to the usual metonymy proper to the poetic piece known as blason. Here, the Cartesian text is led directly to Petrarch and the *ego* to Laura, who is everywhere and nowhere. Though brilliant, this reading presents many difficulties: in particular, the fact that the *ego* retreats from the genius by destroying the self as an object of desire may apply at the most to my body, but not to external bodies (the world), which nevertheless, are also the object of negation.

On the whole, one has the impression that Descartes's recourse to the poetic background may be more justifiably discernible than in the contexts where he undertakes to expound his philosophy in the wake of common-sense opinions. (In a certain sense, this is also noted by the author: the evil genius seems to be the best candidate to index a literary Descartes.) It is surprising that Gadberry does not mention Pierre La Brosse's *Corpus omnium veterum poetarum latinorum* (1603), cited in the *Olympica* and which Descartes most certainly used (in the Leuven edition of 1603), the consideration of which could perhaps even have supported some of Gadberry's own claims. Overall, however, I believe that after reading Gadberry's beautiful book,

one can no longer consider the possibility, according to the famous dictum attributed to Boileau, that Descartes “cut the throat of poetry.”

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.281

Un entrepreneur des lettres au xvii^e siècle: Donneau de Visé, de Molière au “Mercure galant.” Christophe Schuwey.

Lire le XVII^e siècle 69; Discours critique 2. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2020. 552 pp. €58.

Readers of Christophe Schuwey’s briskly written, densely documented study of Jean Donneau de Visé will encounter a seventeenth-century literary figure shaped more by commercial hustle than by the doctrines of French classicism. Informed by the work of Christian Jouhaud, Alain Viala, and the GRIHL collective on early modern publication, Schuwey argues convincingly for understanding Donneau de Visé as a literary entrepreneur whose offerings, including theater and theater criticism, literary compilations, and *Le Mercure galant*, characterize French literature of the late seventeenth century as a topical, publicly-responsive, and commercially-oriented media and entertainment product. From centering literary production around the unit of the modular, combinable *pièce* (piece), rather than the unitary work or book, to recasting the periodical *Mercure galant* as the principal cultural and political platform of Louis XIV’s reign (“la principale plateforme culturelle et politique du règne de Louis XIV”) (9), this ambitious study offers a dynamic and strikingly contemporary view of the literature and publishing practices of the *grand siècle*.

Part 1 expands concepts of early modern authorship to include Donneau de Visé as an exemplary, but by no means unique, figure of literary entrepreneurship who participates in the expansion and diversification of the literary public, literary formats, and the market for print and entertainment in late seventeenth-century France. Schuwey presents Donneau de Visé as a literary *fripier* (dealer in secondhand clothes), a cultural intermediary whose authorship is characterized by combining and refurbishing textual materials. Working through a series of case studies ranging from Donneau de Visé’s unauthorized edition of Molière’s *Le Cocu imaginaire* to his theater collaborations with Thomas Corneille, Schuwey highlights Donneau de Visé’s editorial innovations, promotion of theater criticism, and publicity-oriented plays. One of the contributions of this study, then, is to position Donneau de Visé as a central figure in early modern French theater and a key actor in the celebration of Molière through his work in marketing and publishing theater.

Schuwey’s emphasis on the capacities of print media combines with the appeal of news and the new as he foregrounds the innovations of Donneau de Visé’s *Nouvelles*