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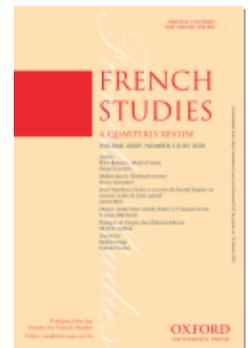
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*Un mousquetaire du journalisme: Alexandre Dumas* dir. by  
Sarah Mombert and Corinne Saminadayar-Perrin (review)

Edmund Birch

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inclut une section sur le ‘mythe de l’or’ chez Balzac. Ce mythe dépasse les nombreuses descriptions détaillées et bien connues de l’état de fortune — nécessairement fluctuant — de tant de personnages balzaciens. Vanoncini argue que la quête de l’or, ne se limitant pas au simple appât du gain, constitue chez Balzac ‘une problématique hautement complexe par ses implications philosophiques et socio-historiques’ (p. 279). En raison de la diversité des sujets abordés, ce livre intéressera de nombreux lecteurs de Balzac.

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*Un mousquetaire du journalisme: Alexandre Dumas.* Sous la direction de SARAH MOMBERT et CORINNE SAMINADAYAR-PERRIN. (Les Cahiers de la MSHE Ledoux, 37; Archives de l’imaginaire social, 7.) Besançon: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2019. 248 pp.

It can be something of a challenge, even for those researchers working on the writings of Alexandre Dumas *père*, to keep abreast of the scale and scope of his output. The reader is confronted by a bewildering array of texts (often of exceptional length), ranging from theatre to prose fiction. Critics continue to draw attention to lesser-known works and collaborations, with this excellent new volume on Dumas’s journalistic writings an invaluable addition to scholarship on the author of *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo*. As Sandrine Carvalhosa writes in the Conclusion to this volume: ‘La production journalistique d’Alexandre Dumas surprend par sa diversité et sa richesse’ (p. 179). And the point is borne out in the range of topics and texts explored over the course of the book. Contributors draw on (and have often made vital contributions to) a rich vein of francophone scholarship focused on the intersection of literature and journalism over the course of the nineteenth century, and associated with researchers such as Marie-Ève Thérénty, Alain Vaillant, and Guillaume Pinson. Throughout the collection, Dumas is placed in the context of nineteenth-century press history, as Corinne Saminadayar-Perrin explains in her engaging Introduction: ‘Sa trajectoire d’écrivain est connectée à la première ère médiatique de masse qu’ait connue la France, à l’émergence des proto-industries culturelles, aux reconfigurations successives du champ littéraire au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle’ (p. 7). Dumas’s career as novelist and dramatist is understood in the context of the numerous roles he adopted across a range of newspapers and periodicals: ‘La trajectoire de Dumas, indissociablement écrivain et journaliste, est celle d’un engagé volontaire dans le monde de la presse, où il occupa presque tous les postes: critique dramatique, chroniqueur, romancier, historien du contemporain, correspondant de guerre, mais aussi ciseleur de “nouvelles à la main” et intarissable causeur’ (p. 8). With such points in mind, the contributors range widely. One illuminating strand of discussion considers Dumas’s interest in the figure of Garibaldi, and in Italian politics and culture more broadly (with essays by Isabelle Safa and Alvio Patierno); yet there is space too for reflection on Dumas and ‘la littérature d’anticipation’ (Matthias Hausmann), and analysis of *Le Moustiquaire*, a parody of Dumas’s popular periodical *Le Mousquetaire* (Sarah Mombert). This is one of a number of compelling essays to evoke *Le Mousquetaire*, sitting alongside contributions from Maria Lúcia Dias Mendes and Julie Anselmini. A focus on French politics animates much of the volume, coming to the fore in the section devoted to Dumas and 1848. Much ink has been spilled on the significance of this moment in the cultural history of nineteenth-century France, and the essays collected here play a critical role in revealing the nature of Dumas’s movements and positions at this time. Vincent Robert, for example, offers a comparative analysis of Dumas’s journalistic production in 1848, linking the author of *Les Trois Mousquetaires* with Honoré

de Balzac, Eugène Sue, and George Sand. His essay, and the others published in this volume, will be of great interest to Dumas scholars, as well as to historians of the press and popular culture in France.

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*Le Langage des sources dans 'Les Trois Villes' d'Émile Zola: la dialectique de la foi et de la raison.*  
Par MARIE LAPIÈRE. (Romantisme et modernités, 184.) Paris: Honoré Champion, 2018. 548 pp.

Between late March and early June 1891, the journalist Jules Huret published a series of interviews with contemporary writers, as part of his 'Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire'. To these he posed the same leading questions: Was naturalism ill? Or dead, even? What, then, would replace it? While many bemoaned naturalism's dogged positivism, looking instead to the rise of symbolism and the psychological novel, Zola himself responded to Huret by suggesting that naturalism might be opened up, its theories loosened, so as to provide 'une peinture de la vérité plus large, plus complexe' (p. 18). Just one month after Huret's survey had appeared in book form (*Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire* (Paris: Charpentier, 1891)), Zola set down his first notes on what was to be his second novel cycle: *Les Trois Villes*, comprising *Lourdes* (1894), *Rome* (1896), and *Paris* (1898). In these, Zola took up the task he had set himself, confronting head on the Catholic revival at the *fin de siècle*, and the purported 'bankruptcy' of science, declared by the likes of Ferdinand Brunetière. Marie Lapière's book reconstructs these intellectual and ideological struggles with admirable clarity and rigour, her aim being to restore to each novel of Zola's trilogy a precise sense of its engagement with contemporary discourses and debates on matters of belief, socialism, anarchism, the divine, justice, and reason. By foregrounding the sources on which Zola drew in his preparation and writing (Jean-Martin Charcot, Gustave Boissarie, Francesco Nitti, Gabriel Tarde, *entre autres*), Lapière tracks in close detail — across his reading notes, preparatory dossiers, and finished novels — 'le processus d'un Zola lecteur à un Zola créateur' (p. 24), a dynamic which is shown to entail assimilation, reformulation, and often deconstruction. In an extension of the 'roman expérimental' that Zola theorized at the height of naturalism's cultural dominance, Lapière coins the term 'romans-expérience' (p. 365) to describe the author's method — namely, the trilogy's halting tests of dogma and faith, which are centred around Zola's doubting priest Pierre Froment, and the triumph of science over Catholicism that it ultimately rehearses. In turn, one of the significant virtues of this book is the close attention it devotes to the experimental interrogations and hesitations that attenuate the gradual hardening of Zola's own convictions. In this respect, Lapière's study represents a rich and nuanced contribution to what has, in recent years, become a significant corpus of genetic criticism on Zola. At times, however, the reader will feel that this substantial tome would have benefited from some tighter editing. The curious inclusion of article titles and publication details in the body of the text weighs down Lapière's otherwise readable prose; and principal points are relayed with a certain *redondance* that mimics Zola's own in these later novels. Those readers eager to delve deeper into Zola's penultimate, and relatively understudied, cycle will, however, find much to appreciate in Lapière's detailed, resourceful, and thorough presentation, which includes biographical notes on key contemporary figures, and summaries of the most relevant works and articles in Zola's library.

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