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Susan McClary, ed. *Structures of Feeling in Seventeenth-Century Cultural Expression*. UCLA Center Clark Library Series. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013. xiii + 382 pp. Illustrations, musical examples, notes, index. \$80.00. (cl.) ISBN 978-1-4426-4062-7.

Review by Rebecca Cypess, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

The seventeenth century has long been recognized as a liminal moment in European cultural history. It was an age of invention, of discovery, of artistic and scientific innovation. Leading writers of the period—Francis Bacon, René Descartes, and many others—developed systems to organize and evaluate knowledge of history and natural philosophy. Thinkers and practitioners working in music and visual art, in poetry and theater, in political and social sciences, grappled with these new realities and challenges. Paradoxically, perhaps, recognition of the limitations of human knowledge was central to the work of these revolutionary thinkers, many of whom expressed doubts about their capacity to perceive and understand the world.[1]

Just as the seventeenth century was a transitional moment in history, in which positivistic approaches to learning collided with the realization of how little was really known or knowable, the historiography of the seventeenth century now stands at a crossroads. In recognizing the limitations of human perception, seventeenth-century theorists such as Galileo set an example for contemporary scholarship. After all the work on seventeenth-century science and culture, what do we really know about the period? In recent years numerous studies have demonstrated the extent to which our conception of seventeenth-century history and ideas has been skewed by our modern perspective. In the search for the origins of empirical science and demonstrable progress in the arts, scholars have drawn their lines too sharply. As a liminal moment in history, the seventeenth century retained as many older traditions and pathways of thought as the new ones it introduced: science mixed with magic, theory with practice, positivism with superstition, discovery with fear.

In a series of provocative essays on an array of topics in seventeenth-century studies, *Structures of Feeling in Seventeenth-Century Cultural Expression* contributes to our understanding of the messiness of thought in early modern Europe. It is a testimony to Susan McClary's wide-ranging interests and her capacity to question and rethink systems of understanding that she has been able to curate this impressive collection. Although McClary associates the approaches in this book with postmodernism, postcolonialism, and poststructuralism (p. 5), by no means all of the chapters employ these methodologies. Historians of science and culture from an array of backgrounds and schools of thought will find the essays and ideas in this book of considerable interest.

Among the most important ideas laid out in McClary's introduction is the acceptance of evidence of historical systems of thought and emotion that lie outside of the written word. As McClary writes, "Some of the radical transformations of this period were explicitly acknowledged in verbal texts. Others, however, left their most vivid traces in cultural media—the visual arts, poetry, theatre, music, dance—that do not always explain their motivations in words. Instead, they manifest themselves through simulations of affective extremes, violations of traditional stylistic principles, or transgressions against officially sanctioned behaviors. So long as we demand verbal confirmation as evidence for historical

arguments, we will continue to neglect some of the most profound changes that have occurred within the development of European thought” (pp. 3–4).

As a scholar of music, McClary is no stranger to non-verbal evidence. Her contribution to the volume, an interpretation of a composition for solo harpsichord, the *Tombeau de M. Chambonnières* by the French composer Jean Henry d’Anglebert (1629–1691), considers the experience and expression of time in a genre designed to evoke the infinite. In order to understand the kinds of emotional responses that d’Anglebert’s composition might have called up in listeners of his day, McClary suggests that we need to reset our ears so that we hear this music on its own terms, rather than as an inferior predecessor to the teleological music of the eighteenth century.[2] Her discussion of the *Tombeau* is adept and convincing, and it represents an especially potent example of seventeenth-century French composers’ negotiation of *mesure* and *movement*, the terms that François Couperin used in the eighteenth century to distinguish between “the number and equality of the beats” and “the spirit and soul that it is necessary to add” to a performance (p. 321). But in general French music of this period avoids goal-oriented features of Italian music such as circle-of-fifths progressions, and McClary’s observations open the way for a new understanding of the conceptions of time in French solo and chamber music of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries beyond the circumscribed genre of the *tombeau*.

The other essay on French music, by Thomas Christensen, is among the most entertaining and informative in the volume. Exploring the “sound world” of the polymath Father Marin Mersenne, a notoriously quirky and difficult writer, Christensen elucidates the relationship between theory and practice—between ideas and sound—in seventeenth-century musical thought. Although Mersenne devoted ample space in his thousands of pages of writings to the traditional understanding of “music as a paradigm of seemingly proportion,” Christensen explicates the conflicts between this traditional notion of musical mathematics and the nascent “mechanistic model” informed by early modern science. For Mersenne, in contrast to earlier writers, sounding musical instruments participated in the formation of this new understanding. Situating Mersenne’s work in the context of rhetorical and academic learning of his age, Christensen shows how Mersenne sought to animate music theory with the sound of his own musical experimentation. Ultimately, Christensen posits, “It is this reconciliation of the spiritual universe of God with the corporeal world of man through the mediation of music theory” (p. 75) that informs Mersenne’s monumental treatise on music, the *Harmonie universelle*.

A third chapter dealing with early modern France is Sara E. Melzer’s contribution on French theories of colonization and their impact on French culture. Melzer argues that French writers projected emotional responses onto the natives of North America, justifying their colonial activities by reading the Amerindians as “voluntary” subjects of the French. She proposes further that French colonization shaped the emotions of those at home, as travelogues and other literature undertook to “alter the feelings of the French reading public and convince them that the civilized/savage boundaries would remain firm, protecting them from contamination” (p. 98). A significant difference between Melzer’s contribution and those of both McClary and Christensen emerges from the scope of their conclusions. Whereas McClary and Christensen employ their evidence to form larger ideas, they do not ascribe those ideas to an entire class or nation. Melzer’s thesis would be more convincing if she used her numerous fascinating examples to draw conclusions in a more circumscribed manner. General statements such as “To colonize meant to seduce” (p. 104) and “The Amerindians’ ‘voluntary subjection’ constituted the primary ground upon which the church and state legitimated their claim to possess the New World” (p. 106) draw such broad conclusions that they undermine her aim to introduce nuance into the historical discourse.

A post-colonialist approach appears, too, in Gary Tomlinson’s chapter on the “fear of singing” expressed by Spanish conquerors of the New World. Tomlinson points out the extent to which Spanish colonists and missionaries concerned themselves with the musical practices of the natives they encountered, and their resulting objectification and fear of those practices. They viewed native song as a manifestation of

devil worship, and, Tomlinson suggests, “singing, chanting, and other raisings of the voice...had a large role to play in opening out the new prospect of incorrigible difference” (p. 138). The “difference” inscribed in “raisings of the voice” also underlies the views expressed in English accounts of prophecy among New World sects, as Olivia Bloechl argues. She observes further that the English discourse on religious prophecy was influenced by encounters with Native Americans (p. 151).

Three chapters in *Structures of Feeling* are devoted to “Baroque Bodies.” Sarah Covington draws on theories of the carnivalesque to argue that public corporal punishments and torture in seventeenth-century England provided various kinds of opportunities for theatrical display. The state inflicted punishment in a grotesque manner with the expectation both of drawing a crowd and of deterring members of the crowd from transgressing the law in the future. Covington argues, however, that objects of state-inflicted punishment could also use the moments of death as an opportunity for martyrdom, thus wresting control of the theatricality from the state. Theatricality also lies at the heart of Kathryn A. Hoffmann’s essay on the fascination with “odd bodies” in the seventeenth century. The concept of the monstrous has been well documented in work by Lorraine J. Daston, Katharine Park, and others.[3] Hoffman’s contribution is the concept of the “itineraries of knowledge” that such curious bodies created—the travels of their caretakers and their would-be viewers. Such movements might be fruitfully connected to explorations of motion contained elsewhere in this volume, though these connections are left to the reader. Richard Rambuss’s article on the metaphysical poet Richard Cranshaw weaves a labyrinthine narrative around Cranshaw’s work “The Weeper,” an homage to Mary Magdalene and her tears. In his juxtaposition of textual analysis and contemporary cultural critique, Rambuss’s chapter perhaps elicits some of the shock that Cranshaw’s poem inspired in seventeenth-century readers. Part of the power of Cranshaw’s poetry, Rambuss argues, was its evocation of the “gross material world” at the expense of the “transcendently spiritual” (p. 262), and it is these bodily and material conceits that Rambuss seeks to embrace and legitimize as a component of seventeenth-century culture.

Four essays in this collection treat song and other forms of “heightened speech” from various perspectives. Opera was a new invention, inspired by accounts of fully sung drama in ancient Greece but enabled by thoroughly modern innovations in music. These included the development of the recitative style and the treble–bass polarity that came to dominate music of the early seventeenth century. Court-sponsored opera began in the years around 1600, but the first public opera was staged in Venice in 1637, thus making the multi-media display available as a site for the exploration of broad social and cultural concerns. Wendy Heller’s contribution to *Structures of Feeling* argues that opera provided an opening for the exploration of desire, sexual license, gender identity, and emotional expression. Pointing to operatic moments of metamorphosis inspired by Ovid and reworked over and over by librettists and composers of the seventeenth century as those that “experiment with the consequences of desire’s fluid identities” (p. 180), Heller suggests that desire forms “the source of all artistic and procreative inspiration” (p. 200). Louise K. Stein discusses the patronage of opera within the hybrid Spanish-Italian culture of Naples in the 1680s, showing how the particular interests and concerns of one patron, the Spanish viceroy the marquis de Heliche y del Carpio, shaped operatic production in that city. Stein is surely right to reject generalizations about Spanish motivations in artistic patronage. In providing nuance in her discussion of these motivations, she sheds light on the social, political, and indeed affective function of opera. In seeking an explanation for Carpio’s fascination with the genre, Stein writes, “In Carpio’s hierarchy of aesthetic and genre, opera and operatic music...were distinguished precisely by affective intensity and erotic overloading of passion” (p. 234). Stein and Heller thus agree that in the expressive language of early modern Europe, the multi-media spectacle of opera offered a locus of experimentation, creativity, and excess unavailable in other art forms.

Among the most successful and fascinating chapters in *Structures of Feeling* are the two with which the book opens, dealing with the interaction between science and affect in the early modern era. Daniel Garber’s contribution shows how the study of mechanics and motion in seventeenth-century science

influenced Spinoza's writings on the human passions. Like the science of mechanics, Spinoza's conception of the passions accounts for the change of our emotional states in the mind and body over time. I would point out that this idea of temporality in emotional states resonates with early modern theories of the visual arts, in which the challenge was to represent *moti* (both motions and emotions) in an inherently static medium.^[4] The chapter by Penelope Gouk unsettles the common conception of the "mechanical philosophy," which she demonstrates is overly simplistic. In her view, the specific kinds of metaphors used by natural philosophers for understanding the motions of the human body have a considerable impact on the nature of their understanding. Gouk focuses on metaphors that employ music, which, she argues, are suggestive because music "requires an intentional creator and a responsive listener" (p. 38) to act as participants in bodily mechanics and the production of emotions, a concept allows for the coexistence of religious, scientific, and neo-Platonist modes of thought. Her assessment of musical metaphors for mind-body interaction in the generations before and after Descartes is revealing and crucially important. In redrawing the historiographical and disciplinary lines in this area of inquiry, she seeks to understand how diverse strains of thought interacted and informed one another.

Many of the chapters in this collection focus on the juxtaposition of unlikely concepts and images, but Richard Leppert's contribution is especially articulate in calling attention to the problems of representation inherent in the early modern *paragone* of the senses and the arts. Discussing music-centered paintings by Dutch artists of the seventeenth century, Leppert notes the contradictions between the potential of musical instruments to create sound and the visual representations of those instruments—one-dimensional, symbolic, silent—in the painted artwork. A further contradiction lies in the temporality of music and its static representation on the canvas: "By freezing time, paintings suspend action and reaction, and in the process the viewer is both permitted and encouraged to imagine a permanence that does not exist" (p. 343). Leppert shows, ultimately, that consideration of these arts and their cultivation in the individual allows for the expression of that key early modern concept—the self—as it develops through time.

NOTES

[1] One example is Galileo, who, on one side relied on his eyes to take in his telescopic observations and his hands to create accurate drawings of them, but on the other recognized the diversity of explanations for a given occurrence in the natural world. See the discussion of Galileo's drawings in Horst Bredekamp, *Galilei der Künstler: Der Mond. Die Sonne. Die Hand* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2007). On his view of the limitations of sensory experience see the account of the "fable of sound" in Mario Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 301–3.

[2] The conception of teleology in music as a marker of "modernity" is laid out in Karol Berger, *Bach's Cycle, Mozart's Arrow: An Essay on the Origins of Musical Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). For an essay that explores the negotiation of time in early eighteenth-century music, unsettling some of Berger's analyses, see Bettina Varwig, "Metaphors of Time and Modernity in Bach," *The Journal of Musicology* 29, no. 2 (spring, 2012): 154–90.

[3] See, for example, Lorraine J. Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 2001).

[4] See, for example, the discussion of *moti* in the treatise on painting and sculpture by Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, in which the author compared the wondrous effects of the imitation of life through painting to those produced by the "strange conclusions of the Mathematical *motions*, recorded of those undoubted wise men, who made *Statuaes* to moove of their owne accord" ("ò quelle altre maravigliose, & stupende opere de' i moti Matematici, che si raccontano di quelli veramente savij antichi, di far muovere le figure

da se stesse).” Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura, et architettura...diviso in sette libri* (Milan: Paolo Gottardo Pontio for Pietro Tini, 1585), 106; trans. Richard Haydocke as Lomazzo, *Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Paintinge Carvinge & Buildinge written first in Italian by Jo: Paul Lomatius painter of Milan and Englished by R[ichard] H[aydocke] student in Physik* (Oxford: Ioseph Barnes for R[ichard] H[aydocke], 1598), 2:2.

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Rebecca Cypess
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
rebecca.cypess@rutgers.edu

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