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Jane Gilbert and Miranda Griffin, eds., *The Future of Medieval French: Essays in Honour of Sarah Kay*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2021. 402 pp. Illustrations, bibliographies, and index. $99.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN 9781843845959; $24.99 U.S. (pdf). ISBN 9781800101746; $24.99 U.S. (eb). ISBN 9781800101753.

Review by Daisy Delogu, University of Chicago.

Jane Gilbert and Miranda Griffin are to be commended for producing the most coherent and compellingly organized festschrift I have ever read, one which provides a model for such works. The unifying principle of the festschrift is of course a shared connection among contributors--typically drawn from the ranks of former students or colleagues--to the honoree of the volume. This is true of *The Futures of Medieval French: Essays in Honour of Sarah Kay*, but the editors have made extensive efforts to unify the volume in ways that substantiate the claims of the title, and the role of Kay in those futures.

Futures is divided into six sections, each including a set of essays that draw inspiration from, advance, and problematize the theses and contributions of one of Kay's major monographs.[1] This organization demonstrates the extraordinary breadth, richness, and sophistication of Kay's work, and its ongoing generative potential. A short introductory essay to each section (by, in order, Ruth Harvey, Jane Gilbert, Peggy McCracken, Nicolette Zeeman, Simon Gaunt, and Miranda Griffin) lays out the central claims of the monograph in question and introduces and connects the essays included in the section. Gilbert and Griffin have also written an introduction to the volume, while Gaunt and McCracken have provided an afterword. A general bibliography, list of manuscripts, bibliography of Kay's work, and index round out the volume. This wealth of framing material provides a critical focus to the work that ensures its capacity to function as a unified whole. Readers are much more likely to engage with the entire volume, or with relevant sections, than to isolate single essays. The volume also serves as an intellectual biography of Kay, and a history of her extraordinary scholarly career.

Some of the features of Kay's work that Gilbert and Griffin highlight in their introduction, and that find expression in the volume's essays, include the linguistic diversity of her sources (Occitan, Catalan, Italian, Old and Middle French, Latin); Kay's commitment to providing avenues for future work (for instance in the appendix to *Political Fictions*, which provides plot summaries of over thirty *chansons de geste*, or the seventeen appendices, including over 200 pages of material, to *Parrots and Nightingales*, which catalogue troubadour quotations) and to the accessibility of her scholarship (by always furnishing English translations of quoted material); her refusal to acknowledge a divide between critical theory and "traditional" scholarship; and her own deep and sustained engagement with philosophical and theoretical work. Gilbert and Griffin also discuss some of Kay's most important "manifestoes" (p. 3), review essays, coauthored works, coedited works, and her critical edition, demonstrating Kay's collaborations with a wide range of scholars, and her ever-expanding areas of critical engagement. The essays that follow--of impressively high quality--testify to the capacity of Kay's work to inspire further thinking and writing.

The opening section of the volume takes up, as did Kay in *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry*, questions of subjectivity, textual self-representation, and the impact of social, political, cultural, and textual context, with a particular focus on questions of gender. The essays in this section demonstrate, as Harvey notes, that "the rhetorical self emerges as relationally constituted" (p. 8). Bill Burgwinkle's provocative essay, "Third Gender Solace," develops Kay's notion of the *domna* as a third gender, reading poems by Raimbaut d'Aurenga and Arnaut Daniel through the lens of recent work in queer and trans studies to show the instability and uncertainty of objects and vectors of desire, and of the writing self. Gender, as Burgwinkle shows, operates along a messy, fluid, and overlapping continuum, articulated here through a technically rigorous and self-referential poetry fully legible only to those in the know. Miriam Cabré's "Troubadour Selves Under Debate" provides an analysis of rhetorical and historical selves as staged in debate poems, putting into question assumptions about the referential value of certain claims or accusations made in such poems. Reading across critical, linguistic, and lyric traditions, she takes seriously nobles' participation in lyric exchange and their use of lyric personae, unsettling received ideas about troubadour and jongleur social and poetic identities. Concluding this section is Helen Swift's "'Je tiens ma personne morte': Subjectivity in Fifteenth-Century Courtly Poetry," which thinks through subjectivity in narrative poetry along the axis of the organizational principles to be found in lyric anthologies, which include "multiple, composite subjectivities" (p. 49). Swift offers an outstanding reading of a lyric anthology, the *Jardin de plaisance*, and the processes, practice, and dynamics that attend the construction of (lyric) subject/s, often defined posthumously in relation to death.

Section two is organized around *The* Chansons de geste *in the Age of Romance*. Here Kay suggests that medieval romance operates according to the regime of the commodity while *chansons de geste* develop or illustrate what Kay calls a "poetics of the gift," in which the given (e.g., women, horses, lands) have opinions and room for maneuver, thereby allowing for a proliferation of viewpoints and narrative strands.[2] Charlie Samuelson, in "'He Wishes That Everyone Were Leprous Like Him': Infectious Counternarratives in *Ami and Amile*," carries out a provocative reading of *Ami and Amile* that brings canon law and social debates about marriage into dialogue with Bersani's queer theory to reveal a counternarrative that suggests how desire disfigures order. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne's "Feminism Plus: Sarah Kay's *The 'Chansons de Geste' in the Age of Romance*: Political Fictions and the 'Roman de Waldef'" takes up Kay's key insight concerning how women can generate counter-narratives in the *chanson de geste*, extending Kay's thinking to her own analysis of the *Roman de Waldef* to contest the cultural narrative that defines the Middle Ages as a period of misogyny in contrast and opposition to which our own era can emerge as one progressive and hospitable to women. Zrinka Stahuljak's thought-provoking essay, "Connected Literature: *Chansons de Geste*, Burgundian *Livres de Gestes*, and the Writing of Literary Theory Today," issues a call to medievalists to heed the potential for medieval literature to contribute to literary theory. How can Kay's book help us to write "world literary history" (p. 100), Stahuljak asks, proposing in reply her notion of "connected literature," one that is global in its connections and reach, and local in its situatedness. Stahuljak looks at inventories of the ducal library in order to rethink genre according to practice, and to define the library as a laboratory for innovation. Her fine-grained analysis of the future anterior provides a means of contesting the genealogical and teleological thinking of the nineteenth century, and perceiving the futurity in and of medieval works and their contexts.

The next section, on *Courtly Contradictions*, takes up medieval philosophy and modern psychoanalysis, moving between Augustinian and Aristotelian poles to explore ideas and instances of contradiction. In Kay's literary history, courtly literature displays a waning interest in resolution and an increased focus on tensions and sites of difference, as "the locus of contradiction shifts from the subject to the object" (p. 116). In "Finding Contradiction in Guiraut Riquier," Susan Boynton studies contradiction as a rhetorical framework in poetry and music by Riquier. The very word "trobar," which suggests finding something one has made, is itself a contradiction, and others ensue: reading/seeing; hearing/singing; oral/written; composition/performance. The poems Boynton examines stage contrasting points of view, and in compositional terms the rhymes are reversed, thereby shifting the relation between text and music. Joseph Johnson, in "At the Bleeding Edge of Courtly Love," makes productive use of the vocabulary and practices of computer science to propose possible ways of engaging with digitized manuscripts. Reading in between two technologies--codex and computer--transforms the experience and potentialities of reading, and Johnson invites us to read digital texts essentially, not accidentally (to use Aristotle's terms). The affordances of the digital--including close comparison across numerous manuscript witnesses, and the capacity to enlarge script--can uncover what Johnson terms a "paleographic unconscious" capable of shedding new light on familiar texts and episodes (p. 185). Virginie Greene, in "Logic, Meaning, and Imagination," explores the intimacy between logic and fiction, as well as their irreconcilable differences, using *Alice in Wonderland* as a case study. In a broad sense, logic might be understood as our ability to make sense of the world while fiction can be seen, following Kay, as a way of thinking. Contradiction is rooted in us, Greene asserts, and fiction's staging of nonsense paradoxically can provide a space in which to test and hone our ability to produce meaning.

Literature's capacity to talk back to philosophy remains at the heart of the next section, focused on *The Place of Thought*. Examining the (often allegorical) structures that shape meaning, Kay's work explores the tensions between individual and general forms of knowledge, and the ways in which texts think with place. In "Places of Thought: Environment, Perception, and Textual Identity in Medieval Vernacular Manuscript," Stephen Nichols contests the assumption that the verbal narrative is singular, and furthermore that it is the principle narrative agent within the context of the manuscript page. Focusing on all of the visual elements of the manuscript, Nichols offers nuanced and convincing analyses, and gives readers ideas to think with, notably those of the "manuscript matrix," defined as a "complex representational field" that appeals to multiple senses (p. 185), and the "literary stance," a domain-specific version of the "stance," which supposes the recognition of patterns within intentional systems grounded in systems of behaviors, beliefs, and desires (p. 191). Christine Bourgeois, in "The Disembodied Tongue; or, The Place of the Book in the *Livre de la Cité des Dames*," explores the metaphorical construction project that builds not a city but a text. Considering the overlap between saintly bodies and texts about saints, both of which are imbued with power, Bourgeois argues that the city becomes a literary object designed to inculcate in (female) readers a hermeneutic practice that will protect them from misogyny. In her fascinating essay "The Place of Pain: Confronting the Trauma and Complexity of Kingship in the Political Dream Narrative," Deborah McGrady deploys a range of methodologies (patterns of manuscript ownership, analysis of key terms, ideas drawn from environmental and trauma studies) to argue that the violence visited (allegorically) upon the king's body (figured as both landscape and kingdom) allows him to become one with his people, and potentially to overcome the cycle of violence in which the kingdom appears caught. Her discussions of nonlinear time and of the operations of allegory are particularly sensitive and give readers much to consider.

Section five turns to Kay's *Parrots and Nightingales*, which demonstrates that the troubadours are foundational for European lyric. The monograph explores the practices of citation and quotation, which Kay distinguishes from one another, defining the former as an allusive mode associated with nightingales (and troubadours) and the latter as a verbatim "parroting" often found in didactic works. Both forms involve the transmission of a kind of knowledge. Repetition is never self-identical for it is always reframed, and the futures generated by citation and quotation cannot be known in advance. All the authors in this section put into question the distinction between citation and quotation. In "Quoting Lyrics and Subjectivities in the *Chastelaine de Vergy*," Sophie Marnette examines the impact of a quotation from the Châtelain de Coucy imported into a dialogic romance that stages and thematizes secrets, lies, deception, and misunderstanding. Marnette shows how variations in *mise en page* (some manuscripts distinguish the quoted material while others incorporate it seamlessly), and the context of the quotation within a longer passage written in free indirect discourse, introduce uncertainty, complexity, and irony. Marnette's close attention to details of syntax and vocabulary to substantiate broader claims makes this article a valuable methodological model. Emily Kate Price, in "Troubadour Attachments," uses Bruno Latour and Actor Network Theory (ANT) to think about nonhuman actors (here, literary works and literary criticism) and their capacity to form and inspire attachments. By narrating transmission, *novas* care for, and carry forward, the works of the troubadours, inscribing them in new contexts and networks. The figure of the *joglar*, Price shows, is central to this practice of performance, (re)staging, and transmission. Simone Ventura's wonderful essay "Forms of Repetition: Sestinas in the Twenty-First Century," explores contemporary appropriations of a medieval form, the sestina, a metrically complex poem in which language and form are always at stake. Suggesting that we view sestinas as "revenants" (cf., Adorno), Ventura explores (meta)poetics and language, register and performance, dialogue, prosaic effects, and enjambement to show how repetition can make trouble.

The final set of articles take as their inspiration Kay's *Animal Skins*, a work that focuses on the materiality of the manuscript and uses the idea of the "suture" to explore the relationship between medium and content, and between human and nonhuman animals. Knowledge, Kay shows, is always grounded in the body/bodies. In "Between Skin(s), Between Faiths: Caesura, Animality, and Comedy in Thirteenth-Century Christian-Jewish Relations," James Simpson observes that in poetry the caesura both separates and joins the halves of a verse, dividing but not rupturing. With this idea in mind, Simpson explores other types of splitting (e.g., of parchment), layering (e.g., of verbal and material speech) and the tensions between poles that are at once connected and opposed (letter and voice, human and animal, oral and written). Furthermore, he shows how comic texts foreground the instability of recognition and incongruity, likeness and difference. Elizabeth Eva Leach, in "Rupturing Skin through the Power of *Vox*," proposes that we think about the sonic as another kind of suture. *Vox* is an emanation that reaches an audience, and the being producing it; it is both inside and outside the subject that generates it. Through analysis of specific animals and manuscript illuminations, Leach reveals the danger of *vox* to self or other, as well as the elusiveness of subjectivity, authority, and truth. Sharon Kinoshita's "Sheep, Elephants, and Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde*" discusses two very different animals that represent, respectively, the domestic and the exotic par excellence. In the *Devisement*, animals, depicted in the context of lived experience and existence (unlike the animals of bestiaries) and in a range of diverse local yet interconnected cultures, illuminate the rich diversity of the medieval world.

The volume concludes with an afterword that points to some of the most promising avenues for future work, including a return to philology, the ongoing expansion of theoretically informed interdisciplinary study, and further explorations of the potential of new technologies. Gaunt and McCracken underscore the imperative to continue to engage with questions of race and gender, and the need to take on the advantages offered by what is broadly called the digital humanities and to engage in and promote collaborative ventures, such as the present volume.

I close this review with a quote from the late and much-missed Simon Gaunt. Commenting on the rigor and substance of Kay's analyses, Gaunt remarks that "[t]hinking is vital, but so is evidence" (p. 230). What may seem like a self-evident sine qua non for scholarly work is too often in short supply. The articles in this volume, which combine to powerful effect theoretical sophistication with attention to detail and specificity, honor the scholar who has inspired them.

NOTES

[1] See the following of Sarah Kay's publications: *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry* (Cambridge UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), *The* Chansons de geste *in the Age of Romance: Political Fictions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), *Courtly Contradictions: The Emergence of the Literary Object in the Twelfth Century* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), *The Place of Thought: The Complexity of One in French Didactic Literature* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), *Parrots and Nightingales: Troubadour Quotations and the Development of European Poetry* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), and *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chicago IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2017).

[2] Kay, *The* Chansons de geste *in the Age of Romance*, p. 31.

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