Alice Hazard, *The Face and Faciality in Medieval French Literature, 1170-1390*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2021. 239 pp. Black-and-white illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. £75.00 U.K. (hb). ISBN 9781843845874; £19.99 U.K. (eb). ISBN 9781800101722.

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We look to faces in the hope of information about a person's identity, intentions, and emotions. But as Alice Hazard's wonderful book shows, the face more often than not proves to be a site of contradictions, and even now, in the era of facial recognition software, the face remains at the heart of uncertainties and debates about representation. Hazard's own interest here is the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, where a series of texts and images dwelled on the always partial and provisory status of the identities and recognitions that the face offers. Hazard contends that the face in French literary texts of this period needs to be apprehended not as a part of the anatomy, but rather philosophically as "a particular structure of thought" (p. 6) and as a set of functions which overlap with graphical or pictorial representations of physical faces, with other objects that play identifying roles, such as helmets and shields, and even with other body parts, including genitalia. Hazard's introduction briefly discusses the practice of physiognomy, the perfect example of the desire to find meaning in faces, but does not offer a reading of the understudied corpus of medieval physiognomic texts, nor does she engage at length with medieval anatomy, medicine or philosophies of the self. She opts instead for modern philosophy as the route for seeking new insight into the literary and visual culture of the face. Her range of philosophical engagements is broad and rich throughout, notably bringing in Jacques Lacan, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and Judith Butler in original and thoughtful ways, but Emmanuel Levinas, with his reading of the encounter with the face as a site of distance, provides the driving inspiration for the book. Drawing on Levinas, Hazard shows how literary faces are both real and conceptual and how they are expected to provide stable meaning within semiotic systems, yet always defy representation in some way, working as moments of otherness and remoteness.

Chapter one looks at twelfth- and thirteenth-century Arthurian verse romance, a corpus fascinated with questions of identity and recognition. Hazard elects to study texts about Gauvain, since he is a character who is often other to the hero, part of a meandering counter-narrative, and most importantly, frequently incognito but strongly compelled to name himself. Her first focus is the duel between Yvain and Gauvain at the end of Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain*. Hazard highlights the duel's Levinasian tones, arguing that "it is a suspension of the personal, a suspension of the mode by which the face of the other in front of me represents their identity, their history and my relation to them" (p. 46). The brilliance of Hazard's reading here lies in the close attention she pays to the lexicon used to describe the unfolding battle in terms of points of

contact between materials and bodies. Critics of medieval romance often skim over battle scenes to focus on other modes of interaction between characters, while historians of chivalry tend to mine such scenes for information about equipment and techniques. Instead, Hazard provides a way of doing justice to the linguistic dynamics of battles and their relationship to the broader themes of romances. In this scene, she argues, faces and helmets merge, as inside-outside dichotomies dissolve into a blur of limbs, armour and space, with meaning emerging fleetingly in moments of touch. Not only helmets but also shields form part of a "mobile network of faces that come in and out of focus, that are covered and uncovered, and that move in and out of contact with each other" (p. 53). The originality of the rest of the chapter lies in its widening of the discussion about romance beyond Chrétien, rather than in the interpretations themselves. Tackling the lesser-studied *Chevalier as deus espees* and *Vengeance Raguidel*, Hazard brings new contributions to critical reflection on the familiar themes of anonymity and recognition, notably in terms of the unequal distribution of information about identities among the characters in these works.

Chapter two provides an interesting swerve since the focus is not literary texts per se, but rather doodles of faces in the margins of manuscripts. Part of the material support of texts, these faces nonetheless occupy what Hazard terms an "ill-defined" (p. 90) physical and semiotic space within manuscripts. Unlike the faces found in historiated initials, these marginal faces are nonetheless attached to, and sometimes enclosed by letters. Hazard stresses that these faces are to be apprehended as such, not as merely images of faces, since graphic faces can evoke many of the same sensations as a real face. These disembodied faces go further than those of medieval romance in holding out--and frustrating--the hope of contact, of reaching the subjectivity or presence that they imply. Her examples come in the form of two fourteenth-century manuscripts containing different versions of the *Life and Miracles of St Louis*--Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France fr. 5716 and 13568--as well as manuscript fr. 343 of the same library, an Italian manuscript of post-Vulgate Arthurian texts. Drawing on ideas about the *sainte face*, the image of Christ's face that both represents and is him, part of a transcendent divine but a point of communication between the reader and the divine, Hazard argues that face doodles are both inscrutable and evocative, retaining iconic and mimetic features. Hazard's reading here furthers recent work by scholars stressing the corporeality of the manuscript medium. Shedding new light on an important element of the lively margins of codices, Hazard also engages with Laura Kendrick's argument that manuscript culture is driven by a desire to animate alphabetical writing and to reintegrate traces of the physical body. Hazard critiques Kendrick's tendency to separate letter (seen as dead) and drawing (seen as alive), showing instead how the two are constantly intertwined. Using Lacan to think about the non-coincidence of eye and gaze, Hazard argues that the effect is more unsettling than Kendrick allows for. There is no reassuring, living presence in these faces, only the haunting effect of being gazed upon. Thinking in psychoanalytical terms, Hazard settles on the conclusion that we are forced to confront the lack at the heart of our own subjectivity.

Chapter three turns to the *Roman de la Rose*, where the wall around the garden works as a facial surface since it is decorated with portraits of vices such as Hate, Avarice and Covetousness. The wall both undoes and maintains the inside/outside binary, since these vices are present in the garden in the mode of their very exclusion from it. The main character, Amant, desires to enter since he already knows what lies inside. Hazard builds here on critical readings by Sarah Kay and Sylvia Huot, notably, which hold that the lessons of the *Rose* come through irony, juxtaposition and deferral, and that the text toys with its own impossibility. The vices portrayed on the wall are interpreted insecurely by Amant, and ambiguities are then furthered in manuscript

miniatures where the vices are often beautiful and where artists found varying solutions to their status as both portraits and statues. The viewer's perspective in such images, sometimes rendered as a cut or opening in the wall that allows inside and outside to be seen at once, only adds to the beguiling play of boundaries and spaces. Hazard's readings of such miniatures bring a new twist to our knowledge of the complexities of *Rose* illuminations, which vary greatly across the manuscripts. Though this initial section of the *Rose* has been intently studied, especially for its fountain and crystals, Hazard contributes to the critical discussion by showing how the faces on the walls pose their own questions about subjectivity and interiority and revealing how images compound these complexities.

The final chapter extends Hazard's argument that faciality is not just about faces through consideration of the *fabliaux*, a genre of texts where the boundary between imagination and reality always seems insecure and where body parts are sites of epistemological uncertainty. Different elements of the human anatomy are repeatedly confused with one another and interchange functions, as critics of *fabliaux* have already noted, but Hazard brings to the fore the role of the face in such anatomical play. The face is reduced to its minimal forms in this corpus, notably in *Trubert*, which shows "how little is required to make a face where there isn't one" (p. 176). Hazard argues that, in *fabliaux* like *Du vit et de la coille* and *Do con, do vet et de la soriz*, genitalia take on the status of persons, deploying Judith Butler's ideas about speech and performativity in a fascinating reading of *Le Chevalier qui fist parler les cons*, where anatomical and linguistic fluidity combine. The knight is agent of the *cons'* speech since they must be called to speak each time. Butler sidesteps the idea that the right to speak always entails agency, to contend instead that speech is always contingent and that some part of speech always lies beyond our control; the genius of Hazard's reading here lies in her use of Butler to argue that the *fabliaux* are not just about smut and humour, but rather constitute a subtle meditation on the partial and derivative nature of embodied human intentionality. Hazard's conclusion takes her reflections into the arena of modern medievalism and the use of digital resources to access medieval manuscripts. Such tools, she argues, dismember manuscripts just as *fabliaux* protagonists gleefully chop up one another's bodies, posing questions about emotions, identities, and our modes of contact with the faces, gazes, and subjectivities of the past.

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