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Andrew Sobanet and Kylie Sago, eds., *Revisioning French Culture*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019. vii + 372 pp. Notes and index. £83.60 U.K. (hb). ISBN 9781789620207; £24.00 U.K. (pb). ISBN 9781802077445; £70.40 U.K. (eb). ISBN 9781789624366.

Review by Michael Kelly, University of Southampton.

This substantial volume, published in honor of Professor Lawrence D. Kritzman, demonstrates the high esteem in which he is held in both France and the United States, the broad range of his scholarship, and the depth of his influence on studies in French culture. The introductory essay by Andrew Sobanet sets out his achievements in the United States. These include an impressive body of research on French thought from Montaigne to Derrida and on many aspects of French literature. His wider influence is epitomized by his "signature venture" (p. 2) of the Institute of French Cultural Studies at Dartmouth College, his "landmark intellectual history" (p. 6), the *Columbia History of Twentieth-Century French Thought*, and the volumes of essays he edited, bringing together fresh thinking about French culture in its many guises. The collection of essays that are brought together in the present volume reflects the range and diversity of Professor Kritzman's own interests as well as the stature and distinction of the writers and scholars he inspired.

The first group of essays, "France in Perspective: The Hexagon, Francophonie, Europe" begins with a reflection by Pierre Nora on the metamorphosis in France's identity over the last thirty or forty years, from a national republican state to a more democratic ensemble of social identities. He concludes that this creates conflicts and new pressures for historians who now work "under the watchful eye of the living" and can find it difficult to take a distanced and unflinching view of the past (p. 30). Maurice Samuels examines the history of French universalism in the context of debates over Jewish emancipation in the late eighteenth century. He demonstrates that French universalism was at that time "not inherently opposed to minority particularity," and argues that "hard-line universalism" is a creature of the twentieth century (p. 44). Françoise Lionnet examines universalism in the controversy following publication of the manifesto "Pour une 'littérature-monde' en français" in *Le Monde* in March 2007. She discusses the proposed abolition of the concept of Francophonie and probes the ways in which the proposal reproduces old colonial paradigms. She suggests that retaining the concept of Francophonies in the plural would imply more "respect for and recognition of epistemological and ontological diversity" (p. 69). Julia Kristeva concludes this section by arguing that a European culture exists. She recognizes that it faces challenges, particularly from religious believers, but suggests that it is the basis for "a pluralistic identity: the multilingualism of the new European citizen" (p. 72).

The second group of essays is "Visions of the World Wars, or L'Histoire avec sa grande hache." Peter Brooks reflects on the death and destruction of the First World War. He compares the responses of Sigmund Freud and Marcel Proust, who respectively recognized the role of the death drive and sadism in the development of civilization. Susan Rubin Suleiman begins by noting the French have just one word, *étranger*, for both foreigners and strangers. Jews were the quintessential *étrangers* in European society, she argues, and examines how this is reflected in French society and its literary landscape between the two world wars. She asks whether Jews still have this status today, and who else may have acquired it. Gerald Prince examines the relationship between two Jewish writers: Bernard Frank and Patrick Modiano. In their conflicting ways, they exemplify the complexity of writers in the Jewish tradition, caught between singularity and universality. Barbara Will concludes the section by examining Samuel Beckett's decision to join the French Resistance. Not only was it an unusual decision for a foreigner, but it confronted him with a radically different kind of text, especially high-risk messages that were minimal and miniaturized. This experience drove the writer to a degree of economy and clarity in his post-war works as he groped towards expressing the unknowability of the world and its future.

The third section, "Refractions and Reflections," opens with Nelly Furman's analysis of Sarah Kofman's memoir, *Rue Ordener, rue Labat*, which evokes her experience as a "hidden child" (p. 136) during the Second World War, struggling with personal trauma and the conflict between her French and Jewish identities. She is caught between acceptance of her Frenchness and betrayal of her Jewishness, constantly reliving the pain of the Holocaust. Roxana Verona reflects on a family photo album from her childhood in Romania during the time of the Iron Curtain. She tries both to think back to the time the photos were taken and to place them in a montage that generates new understandings, setting them in the context of the life she has led and the relationship between her French and Romanian connections. Hélène Cixous concludes the section with a meditation on her own Jewish family connections from before the war. She begins with an uncle who travelled from his native Osnabrück to Jerusalem and back again. She revisits memories of Jewish family members in different parts of the world, mostly long dead, but one at least surprisingly alive. And she wonders how she can write about them and her own relationship to them.

The fourth section offers new views on French literature. R. Howard Bloch plunges the reader into the complexities of Mallarmé's poem "Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard." He demonstrates the poet's fascination for the English language with its rich alliterative resources, often rooted in Anglo-Saxon, and explores Mallarmé's anthropological ideas about language, which unlock some of the poem's more puzzling word order. Stephen G. Nichols turns to the medieval troubadours to examine Heidegger's suggestion that it is possible to probe the void between speech and text to retrieve a poetic voice, "a pure speaking" (p. 194). His extended reflection on language, philosophy and satire focuses on Peire d'Alvernha's poem "Cantarai d'Aquest Trobadors" ("I'll sing about these troubadours"). He shows how it manages the conflict between the high poetic register and the language of everyday life to which it nevertheless remains attached. Pierre Saint-Amand examines Rousseau's unique and eccentric engagement with the science of botany. Though he had a condescending attitude toward this "minor science" in his early career, he developed a great enthusiasm for it towards the end of his life, when it was linked to the nature of memory and the struggle against his declining faculties.

Albert Sonnenfeld examines Mallarmé's increasing preoccupation with cuisine in his later life. He valued it both for bodily sustenance and as a metaphor for his various other appetites, to the extent that his occasional verses often appear both as gifts and reflections on culinary gifts. Warren Motte concludes the section with an interrogation of Edmond Jabès's notion of the book. Jabès teases the reader with the prospect of being both outside the book and inside it and plays with different conceptions of what he might understand a book to be. Ultimately, the book is an ideal for him, "a chronicle of sustained desire and a product of aspiration" (p. 249).

The fifth section focuses on the nature of the subject. Georges Vigarello examines the ways in which internal senses have featured in the history of the subject in western thought. Reviewing a number of moralists and philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, he suggests that Diderot was one of the first to explore the idea of an internal sensibility, suggesting that sensations enable people to represent and calibrate the self. The theater of the self was then developed by nineteenth-century writers as a central theme of modernity. François Noudelmann asks, "What is a Posthumous Truth?" and explores the problematic relationship between a writer and their own afterlife. He explores several writers' attempts to control their legacy and concludes that "posthumous truth is an autofiction allowing one to live simultaneously in the present, the past, and the future" (p. 271). J. Hillis Miller then asks, "What Happens When I Read," and outlines a mode of reading that is informed by French theory and practice. He illustrates it with a reading of Tennyson's poem "Tithonus," informed by his own appropriation of French theorists like Barthes and Derrida. What happens in reading the poem is an awakening in imagination of a belief in a kind of real illusion.

The sixth and final section addresses philosophical debates. Souleymane Bachir Diagne examines the questions and controversies around the term "African Philosophy." He traces the history of the expression from the mid-twentieth century to the present, beginning with Father Tempel's study of the dynamic ontology of Bantu philosophy and ending with the development of a universal conception of *ubuntu* as the basis for truth and reconciliation. François Hartog interrogates attitudes to history in the post-war period, centered on the contrasting position adopted by Sartre and Camus. Where Sartre moved from the denial of history to an engagement to make history, he argues that Camus took the opposite route, ending in an aspiration to stop the world from unraveling. Étienne Balibar investigates the relationship between philosophy and contemporary reality through the concept of the event. He examines the legacy of Hegel and Heidegger, drawing on key texts by Althusser and Foucault, who "elaborated a form of contemporary reality as the object and objective of philosophy" (p. 323). Brian J. Reilly concludes the section by recognizing Lawrence Kritzman's contribution to opening French studies to a wide range of disciplines. He evokes the impact of disciplinary foreclosure on Jacques Derrida's attempted dialogue with the sciences and calls for a new sense of hospitality between the humanities and the sciences.

A brief final "Coda" to the volume presents letters from Pierre Nora and Julia Kristeva, which echo the warmth of feeling Lawrence Kritzman has inspired in many colleagues in France. The affection is also palpable in Andrew Sobanet's introduction and in several of the essays, most notably those by J. Hillis Miller and Brian J. Reilly, which are crafted as tributes from colleagues who have valued his friendship and mentorship. The majority of the essays are more self-contained and several of them are taken from previously published works, offered here as gifts to recognize the esteem in which their authors hold Professor Kritzman. Taken as a whole, this volume exhibits some of the breadth and diversity of inquiry that is now possible within the field

of French cultural studies. It ranges across the long established areas of literature and philosophy and takes deep dives into the history, identities, and cultures of the French-speaking world, with a close eye on the resonances and implications that challenge scholars in the United States and internationally.

Among the twenty-four essays, readers will find a rich trove of studies, many of which will delight specialists in particular aspects of France's literary or philosophical traditions. They will find the work of celebrated French authors, including Nora, Kristeva, Cixous, and Balibar, alongside that of distinguished American scholars. Many of the essays will also be helpful to students by addressing cross-cutting themes that are of broader concern on both sides of the Atlantic. For example, several essays reflect on the nature of history, its meaning or direction, and the increasingly uneasy role of the historian in confronting the past with the present. Several essays address fraught issues of universalism and particularism, where notions of culture, cultures, and identities figure heavily in social and political debate. Many of those issues are exemplified by the Jewish experience in France over several centuries, which is the subject of some of the most moving essays in this collection, probing the disarray of individuals and families, and the pain of writing about it. The volume does not purport to give a comprehensive view of French and Francophone studies, but it does fulfil the editor's aspiration to provide "timely reflections on the political and cultural crisis presently facing the West" (p. 7).

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