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Censure, autocensure et art d'écrire: de l'Antiquité Ã
nos jours (review)

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conceptual tools of postcolonial analysis ever since the publication of *Mille Plateaux* five years later. In the earlier text, Deleuze–Guattari remind readers that a ‘littérature mineure n’est pas celle d’une langue mineure, plutôt celle qu’une minorité fait dans une langue majeure’ (p. 29) and go on to identify three characteristics of such literature: ‘la déterritorialisation de la langue, le branchement de l’individuel sur l’immédiat-politique, l’agencement collectif d’énonciation’ (p. 33). The conception of ‘minor literature’ that emerges from the case study of Kafka is not one of any simple hierarchical configuration expressed as a binary (major/minor), but rather as a transversal revolutionary principle inhabiting the practice of literature and the interplay of plurilingualism within specific socio-political contexts.

As the title of Bertrand and Gauvin’s volume makes clear, the Deleuze–Guattari text provided the starting point from which they sought to extrapolate when organizing the Liège conference of 2001 comparing francophone literary production from Québec and Belgium. Quite naturally, individual contributions engage with the preoccupations and insights of Deleuze–Guattari in a more or less spasmodic manner and with varying degrees of intensity. Nor is there any *a priori* reason why engagement with their work on Kafka should be considered as a criterion for judging the quality of the texts in this book. Indeed, Gauvin’s own contribution begins with a critique of the way Deleuze and Guattari rather selectively exploited translations of Kafka when elaborating their own conceptual base. She goes on, through a series of ‘variations’ on the theme of literary minority, to provide telling insights into aspects of the ‘scénographie québécoise’, in particular, the pervasiveness of linguistic insecurity and the notion of ‘surconscience linguistique’. Equally impressive, this time as an introduction to the Belgian literary scene, is Jean-Marie Klinkenberg’s analysis of the centrifugal and centripetal strategies, which he argues are the common modes of response to the situation of linguistic dependency in which francophone Belgium finds itself. As one might expect of a volume originating from a conference, this is, in many ways, an uneven book. Numerically, far more contributions address the Quebec literary scene than the Belgian, and in terms of analytical quality there are a few pieces that disappoint. On the other hand, there are excellent contributions from, among others, Michel Biron on ‘l’écrivain liminaire’ and Pierre Halen who argues (through a critique of Godbout, Munro and Confiant) that many francophone writers ‘stage’ the periphery’s conflictual relationship with the centre within their narratives. Overall, this volume has a great deal to commend it: the vibrancy of the Quebec literary scene shines through and the invitation to approach francophone texts through the Deleuze–Guattari concept of linguistic deterritorialization is far from exhausted by the collective efforts of the contributors.

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Censure, autocensure et art d’écrire: de l’Antiquité à nos jours. Sous la direction de JACQUES DOMENECH. (Interventions). Brussels, Complexe, 2005. 376 pp. Pb €39.90

Censorship has created its own canon, and many of the usual suspects line up here: Sade, Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau, *Lolita* and *Emmanuelle*. Other

subjects include Aristotle in the thirteenth century, Erasmus, Molière's *Dom Juan* (a good essay by Olivier Bloch), La Fontaine, Leo Strauss's handling of Spinoza, Sartre's *La Nausée*, the *nouveau roman*, and, in Jean Emelina's entertaining contribution, the embarrassment caused to seventeenth-century scholarship by the rude bits of the bible. There are excursions to ancient Rome, eighteenth-century Basque country, Genovesi's Rome and Franco's Spain. The editor's Introduction and Conclusion strive to bind all this together, sometimes at the cost of overgeneralization: although he says, for instance, that censorship has always aimed to deny the very existence of the works it targets, the perverse attractions of the censored text must always have been as apparent to censors as to their victims and opponents; and, to consider only the example of the French Enlightenment, Domenech's home territory and the centre of the collection, something more complex than attempted obliteration characterized censorship towards the end of the Ancien Régime, with its ever more convoluted system of *privileges*, *permissions* and semi-official nods and winks.

Several of the best essays consider the 'art of writing'. Marie-Paule de Weerd-Pilorge argues against ahistorical notions of self-censorship in discussing Saint-Simon's *Mémoires*; Paule Adamy comes to see the Goncourts' *Journal* as a semi-literary space accommodating material that could not be published in plays and novels; and Huguette Krief, using a broad notion of self-censorship, examines the rhetorical and emotional shifts in Mme du Deffand's letters to Horace Walpole, who found her style too effusive and novelistic. 'En comparaison de vous' she concedes, 'je ne suis qu'une caillette, une diseuse de lieux communs' (the *caillette*, as urban readers of *FS* may have forgotten, is the abomasum or rennet-bag, the fourth stomach of ruminants). Yet the remark itself, like many others in the correspondence, is as eloquent as it is poignant ('Vous m'avez rendue poussière; je vous le pardonne, n'en parlons plus'), and her self-restraint and self-abasement appear at once painfully sincere and a triumph of epistolary art. I also enjoyed Jean-Marie Seillan's reading of abbé Bethléem's *Romans à lire et romans à proscrire* (first edition 1905, eleventh revised edition 1932). Bethléem called *Le Temps retrouvé* 'particulièrement répugnant', elaborated a singular typology of readers (distinctions must be drawn between 'petites jeunes filles', 'jeunes filles déjà grandes' and 'grandes jeunes filles'), and, in a peculiar display of verbal repetition compulsion, railed against René Maran, author of the Goncourt prize-winning *Batouala*: 'Issu de parents noirs, il est noir lui-même [no surprises there, but already some indication of where Bethléem's trauma may lie], et son roman, roman nègre, est consacré aux noirs'. Seillan is doubtless right to warn the scholar against the superficial pleasures of the *bétisier*, but it seems like poetic justice to take the censor's comments out of context in order to disparage them.

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Dramaturgies de l'ombre: actes du colloque organisé à Paris IV et Paris VII, 27 au 30 mars 2002. Sous la direction de FRANÇOISE LAVOCAT et FRANÇOIS LECERCLE. Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2005. 538 pp. Pb €25.00.

'Place à l'ombre' are the reported words of the *buissier* at the Comédie-française trying to get the actor playing the ghost in Voltaire's *Sémiramis* through the