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We met in Paris: Grace Frick and Her Life with Marguerite Yourcenar by Joan E. Howard (review)

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dans le chapitre suivant consacré au roman de Koulsy Lamko, *La Phalène des collines*.

La seconde partie de l'essai s'ouvre sur un chapitre dédié au long métrage de Claire Denis, *White Material*, coécrit avec Marie Ndiaye. Après quelques pages sur les modalités de cette collaboration artistique, l'analyse s'inspire des travaux de Judith Butler sur la vulnérabilité pour traiter la question de la guerre civile et la condition des enfants soldats africains dans le film. Le chapitre suivant aborde plus en avant la question du conflit individuel. Favre nous invite à lire le roman *Calomnies* de Linda Lê comme le lieu d'une tension dialectique entre diverses conceptions de la schizophrénie : force productive chez Deleuze et Guattari, symbole d'une fragmentation du sujet chez Ronald Laing. Le chapitre quatre s'intéresse à *Dakan*, « premier film africain [de langue française] à projeter sur l'écran une relation explicitement homosexuelle » (133) réalisé par le cinéaste guinéen Mohammed Camara. L'analyse d'un sujet de société encore largement tabou permet de renouveler le discours sur le genre en Afrique ; un discours principalement dominé par la question des femmes et de leur émancipation au détriment des sexualités marginales. Enfin, le dernier chapitre aborde la question des écritures de soi dans le contexte du récit de maladie. Isabelle Favre y examine le roman de Patrick Declerck, *Socrate dans la nuit*, sous l'angle de la cassure et de la faille ; autant d'avatars du conflit qui s'inscrivent en faux à la fois contre une conception bellétrienne de la littérature et contre le discours moralisant de la médecine moderne qui impose au patient le devoir de « se battre ».

Au demeurant, *Guerre et Paix* est un essai efficace qui fait montre d'une solide érudition. Isabelle Favre réussit le pari d'offrir un éclairage nouveau sur un thème assez largement débattu par la critique littéraire en l'abordant dans ses dimensions les plus diverses et parfois inattendues. Le lecteur appréciera cet éventail d'approches théoriques ainsi que les nombreux jeux d'échos et de renvois qui, d'un chapitre à l'autre, donnent à l'essai une belle cohésion d'ensemble. Ouvrage indispensable qui a non seulement le mérite de populariser certaines œuvres non canoniques, mais qui offre également de nouveaux outils conceptuels pour mieux appréhender les phénomènes de violence travaillant la création francophone contemporaine.

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Howard, Joan E. *We met in Paris: Grace Frick and Her Life with Marguerite Yourcenar*. University of Missouri Press, 2018. Pp 436. ISBN: 978-0-8262-2155-1. \$45.00 (cloth).

The latest publication of Joan E. Howard, who is currently a director of Marguerite Yourcenar's museum, Petite Plaisance in Northeast Harbor, is the result of her continued interest and research on Yourcenar's work and private life. However intensely present on the pages of this book, the French author is not the focus of the attention here; for the first time it is Grace Frick, Yourcenar's lifelong partner, who is in the spotlight. Frick's biography would not have been possible without featuring in some ways Yourcenar but Grace Frick has also appeared before in biographical texts on Yourcenar. Howard points out that Frick was often

portrayed in less than favorable light by Yourcenar's biographers; for example, Josyane Savigneau calls Grace a "controlling" and at the same time "peripheral figure" (XX) in Yourcenar's life. However, Howard's own research seems to prove otherwise. Her book is founded on the premise that Frick's earlier depictions were misconstrued and so she undertakes the difficult task of rectifying, or rather re-constructing, a more truthful and more exhaustive image of Yourcenar's partner.

There is relatively little known about Grace Frick's life before she met Yourcenar, but Howard's extensive research enables her to provide the reader with a rather complete (and complex) family history. Therefore, we get to know Grace Frick as a sensitive young girl, growing up in Kansas City under the care of her mother and her well-off relatives. Later on, Grace proves to be a very capable high school student with diverse interests and good sense of humour. She pursues higher education at Wellesley College, one of the most prestigious educational establishments for women at the time, where not only does she excel in all courses related to her areas of interest but also creates long-lasting friendships and connections. Before starting her PhD studies at Yale University, Grace Frick takes a break. She travels to Europe and works as an English instructor at Stephens College in Missouri where she develops her personal style of teaching. Howard observes that, by the time she meets Yourcenar, Grace Frick is already a mature, well-educated and independent woman, sensitive to issues regarding racial equality and women's rights.

After their initial encounter, Frick and Yourcenar's relationship grows fast, and in a little over a month, they leave for a memorable trip around southern Europe during which, as Howard suspects, they "make a pledge of love" (61) in Arezzo. In 1939, Yourcenar joins Frick in the United States. The first few years together are not easy. Grace accepts the position of a dean at Hartford Junior College where she proves to be a devoted educator, revolutionary in her approach to teaching and relentless in her efforts to serve and provide the best education possible to those who are in her care in spite of permanent lack of funds. Yourcenar assists Frick by teaching as a volunteer courses in French and Art History, while writing articles and taking on various other teaching obligations. Over the years their situation stabilizes, and the two companions live a socially rich, cultured and fulfilling life. They make plans for the future that also include the possibility of expanding their family by adopting a child, trusting each other with financial matters, travelling, supporting each other's interests and undertakings, and working together very closely on projects such as Yourcenar's novel, *Memoirs of Hadrian* (1951). As Howard notes: "Michèle Sarde has called *Hadrian* the couple's child, noting Frick's extraordinary role in the book's gestation" (162). Indeed, on this project, Grace serves as a first reader, editor, researcher and translator for which Yourcenar expresses later her wholehearted gratitude.

Howard beautifully weaves the story of a quite symbiotic, intimate, and intellectual relationship full of devotion on both sides, as both women played crucial roles in each other's lives. As a result, Howard successfully achieves her goal of reinterpreting the image of Grace Frick as a broadly appreciated translator, an equal partner, and perhaps more importantly, as a loving and accomplished person. This meticulously researched, and extremely detailed biography is generously illustrated by photos from various archives and supported by a great number of quotes from authentic documents such as private correspondence and Frick and Yourcenar's daybooks. Written with wit and humor, this biography on Grace Frick is simply captivating.

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Mallia, Marilyn. *Présence du roman gothique anglais dans les premiers romans de George Sand*. Classiques Garnier, 2018. Pp 281. ISBN: 978-2-406-07451-9. 36€ (paper).

George Sand's appropriation and reworking of the English Gothic novel constitute a series of techniques that the novelist employed to expose social issues and propose solutions corresponding to her ideals. Marilyn Mallia's monograph *Présence du roman gothique anglais dans les premiers romans de George Sand* investigates how Sand's use of gothic devices shaped her novels published between 1832 and 1843, which, in consequence, gave a breath of fresh air to the waning gothic genre. In a similar vein as Anne Radcliffe, Sand manipulates the Gothic genre to reveal and critique structural misogyny. Mallia examines how Sand reworked three aspects of the Gothic novel—the double, the Gothic journey, and the Gothic denouement of marriage or death—to engage with political issues and create autonomous female characters who struggle toward a legitimate position in society. Recognizing certain Gothic devices supporting a standstill in women's liberation from ideological constraints, Mallia is careful to avoid exaggerating the feminist (*avant la lettre*) traits in Sand's novels.

Shining light on the social construction of antipodal excesses, the Gothic double or *doppelgänger* allowed Sand to explore multiple facets constituting femininity, to create situations impossible for women under the Napoleonic Code, and to advocate for transgressive passions. In the novels Mallia studies, exceptionally ethereal or intransigent heroines never succeed in obtaining their objectives, thereby revealing the novelist's conception of a harmonious ideal of intelligent, active, sensual women.

Physical and geographical mobility are paramount for the heroines of Sand's early novels. Whereas numerous scholars have examined the Gothic sites in Sand's oeuvre, Mallia focuses on the Gothic nature of the protagonists' itineraries. Following Isabelle Naginski's lead, Mallia demonstrates how Sand combined generic markers of the rite-of-passage novel and the Gothic novel, particularly in *Consuelo*, through the obstacles overcome during formative journeys. These peripatetic quests for freedom or the power to act favor situations for Sand's