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his description of Mosaic law as "New" conflates it with the New Testament law of mercy when it should be classified as part of the "ealde riht." Although he tries to clarify the difference when he notes that the northern homeland would have been seen by the Anglo-Saxons as being under the governance of the "ealde riht," his often-repeated identification of salvation and migration tends to skew the definition. At any rate, Beowulf, in some ways a hero too visionary for his time, is forced to die under the old dispensation. His death destroys the fragile political geography of the north and marginalizes the Geats in history. In another example of specious reasoning, Howe states that the Anglo-Saxon poet chose a Geatish hero because the nation "had no role in the insular history of the Anglo-Saxons" (170) and there was no later Geatish conversion. The Geats died in Egypt, an apposite lesson to the Anglo-Saxons upon the value of their migration and concomitant conversion.

Howe's book does not lack value. When he has a text appropriate to his thesis, which he indeed finds in the Old English *Exodus*, his argument for the interconnection of migration and conversion as the defining elements of Anglo-Saxon cultural identity holds some probability. Despite his questionable use of supportive evidence, Howe has attempted the type of study that we should see more of in Anglo-Saxon literary scholarship. His focus upon geography as a force in a culture's cognitive ordering of its historical identity is brilliant, albeit poorly developed. *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* is not an exceptional piece of scholarship, but it may well be a central influence upon later works that are.

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**Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani**, *Montaigne: l'écriture de l'essai*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988. 269.

In its reflection on some of Montaigne's *Essais*, this book skillfully conjugates two approaches, either one of which could be deemed imperialist, reductive or damaging if it were not tempered by the other. The first of these approaches gives voice to Mathieu-Castellani's consummately perceptive eye, which can follow the pulsating veins of a text and trace their bodily networks with convincing virtuosity. Her performance as *suffisant lecteur* thus answers remarkably Jules Brody's philological precepts in his *Lectures de Montaigne* (Lexington, Ky.: French Forum, 1982), and dis-

plays the finest remarks which such a love of *logos* implies. The second approach, constantly substantiated by the first, exercises what can be described as a psychoanalytic phenomenology. Mathieu-Castellani makes timely and justified references to both Freud and Merleau-Ponty. She wields a technical vocabulary (cf. 194–197, her significant distinction, along Freudian lines, between idealization and sublimation) which bolsters our understanding and appreciation of Montaigne's text. This vocabulary never calls attention to itself, never hearkens to institutionalized polemics whose fashionable or political urgencies might scatter our energies away from our responsibilities as readers. It is always held to strict definitions clearly staking the territory of the critic's claims.

The first two chapters of the first part of the book, based on an analysis of the programmatic essay "De l'oisiveté" (Book I, Essay 8), focus on the importance of the fantastic or phantasmatic at the core of the self-portrait. By carefully tabulating the lexical strategies of "De l'oisiveté," Mathieu-Castellani gives a firm sense of its unfolding coherence, its rhetorical momentum rippling through and gathering weight from the materiality of the linguistic material. The remaining chapters of this first part explore, in literary, generic terms, the foundational coordinates of Montaigne's position as a writer operating in a tradition, in a body of written materials irremediably handed down to him and which he must use for his own purposes. Tradition, trade, treason or refusal to obey the strictures of authority: the critic shows how Montaigne faces these possibilities to carve out the atopic grounding of his aesthetic preferences. She makes valuable comments on the essay "Du jeune Caton" (I, 37), which organizes a contest between five Latin poets who had occasion to praise Cato of Utica. In her opinion this chapter attests to Montaigne's unique type of literary criticism, whose purely subjective aims impose as a "critère décisif les modifications psychophysiologiques, les transformations de l'état du sujet" (126). Such demands are intimately linked with the "sublime" as it is defined by the Pseudo-Longinus, and which more and more indirect evidence links to Montaigne's literary consciousness.

As a pointed example of Mathieu-Castellani's own philological and physiological acuteness, I wish to underline her comments (108–111) on the values of letters and of rhythms in microscopic units of the text. The letter *v*, for instance, binds *V-ertu* and *V-olupté*, *âme* and *corps*, prefiguring the major thematic concerns which will increasingly occupy the *Essais*. Its (inverted) phallic dimension also stresses the hidden *vir* in *vertu*, and the text exhibits a Cratyllic dimension which fully deserves the kind of commentary Mathieu-Castellani initiates. Indeed, the *Essais* constantly thrust forward their oral/aural and written materiality, a poetic self-consciousness

announcing the second part of the book, "Ecrire le corps." Here, Mathieu-Castellani begins with a careful shading of Montaigne's overlapping Stoic, Skeptic and "voluptuous" or "bodily" stances in "L'apologie de Raymond Sebond." She then addresses the third book of the *Essais*, delineating its allegiance to the body as the regulator of a meditative practice: with increasing consistency, this practice wishes to gain a soul fully respecting its bodily privileges and a body investing these privileges in a desired worldly transcendence. This body/soul dialectic is crucial for a clarification of the puzzling "coprographic" or excremental vision Montaigne has of his own writing, and the critic's Freudian expertise becomes an apt interpretive instrument.

The book culminates in an incisive discussion of "Sur des vers de Virgile" (III,5). Here, Mathieu-Castellani describes a Montaigne willing to show his phallus, weakened by age as it is, to all, and therefore to fly in the face of hypocritical customs which deny nature its unequivocal truths. At the same time, Montaigne resists this ethical willingness to reveal completely his secrets because of his perception that it is the voice of a law-giving Father which forces him to do so. Ever distrustful of the shackles of obligation, Montaigne thus adopts the *parole entrouverte* as the compromising strategy of an *écriture* which shows and hides at the same time. It is this mode, reminding us, in my opinion, of both Socrates and the phenomenological components of the Greek notion of *aletheia*, which grants these final essays their suggestive, seductive effectiveness working for their ever-renewed appeal to subsequent readers. Mathieu-Castellani elegantly evokes their characteristic rhetoric in her conclusion, which she tellingly entitles "Portrait d'un séducteur":

*Allécher l'appétit*, telle est la devise du Séducteur. Séduire, ce n'est pas aller vers l'autre, mais amener l'autre à soi, faire naître le désir de l'autre, et le conduire sur la voie qu'on lui trace insensiblement. (260)

It is this imperceptible but purposeful and persuasive road that she has subtly and very intelligently retraced.

I have only drawn the main lines of a thesis which, by paying attention to details and performing the readings it claims, never fails to be convincing and valuable. I should further mention Mathieu-Castellani's treatment of the small chapter "D'un enfant monstrueux" (II,30), which gives insights into Montaigne's own branding of his work as "grotesques et corps monstrueux." Her reading of the text, taking into account its chronologically determined strata, involves pitting an allegation to Augustine against

a citation of Cicero. I find her formula "Augustin, Cicéron: des lecteurs de Montaigne . . ." (233) extremely fortunate in bringing out the radically transgressive nature of the *Essais*' usage of ancient authorities, whether religious or profane. The text is indeed an "enfant monstrueux" which eats its parents to regurgitate them deformed not beyond recognition, but recognizable only through the deformities they exhibit vis-à-vis the normalizing power of Montaigne's discourse.

Mathieu-Castellani's style allows her to remain perfectly lucid in the midst of very subtle distinctions. She bolsters her views with few but essential references to the vast stretches of scholarship on Montaigne. Especially interesting is her frequent, if critical, homage to two books: Thibaudet's 1940 *Réflexions sur la littérature* (Paris: Gallimard) and his 1963 *Montaigne* (Paris: Gallimard), books many *montaignistes* have undoubtedly forgotten, but whose views, in Mathieu-Castellani's handling, seem quite sharp and up-to-date among the obsessively fashionable "body talk" which presently roars from all corners of academia. All in all, Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani is impressively capable in her pursuit of the crisis Montaigne's essays constantly stage. This crisis, which demands decision but never offers it, leaves us desiring more. The author of *Montaigne: l'écriture de l'essai* forcefully draws the decisive features of her own desires as an expert reader, a feat which, I believe, only the best readers and writers can achieve.

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