

BOOK REVIEWS

RYTHMES, POUVOIR, MONDIALISATION. By Pascal Michon. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2005. 467 p.

Pascal Michon's book is the third installment in his project of reconfiguring our understanding of modernity. His first book, *Eléments d'une histoire du sujet* (Kimé, 1999), challenged the reigning assumptions about how to theorize subjectivity across the premodern/modern divide. His second book, *Poétique d'une anti-anthropologie. L'Herméneutique de Gadamer* (Vrin, 2000), dissected the limits of Heidegger's and Gadamer's philosophies of language for exploring the linguistic diversity of historical communities. His new book introduces the idea of rhythm—social, corporeal, and linguistic—in order to give us new ways to articulate the ongoing transformations in our globalized world.

Michon begins with an overview of theories of globalization, concluding that although there is general consensus that the structures that gave the post-World War II West its stability are giving way to a new fluidity, the vocabulary for discussing these new modes of ordering is not adequate. Some studies speak of a movement from an individual/systemic model to a postmodern network. In this view, the world is “organized through assemblages of connections that are in constant mutation” (Boltanski and Chiapello qtd. in Michon 4-5). Others speak of the determining role of technology, whether in optimistic or pessimistic scenarios, but ignore the shaping forces of language and culture.¹ While acknowledging the insights these studies have had on the new network technologies, Michon maintains that we need “an approach that can recognize forms of movement of individuation” (14). He proposes that we go back before 1945 to the period of the first globalization, 1890-1940, and look at the work of a broad range of thinkers from anthropology, sociology, linguistics, and literary theory.² Michon probes these thinkers in order to develop the concept of rhythm, understood “as a complex temporal organization of processes by which psychic and collective individuals are produced” (17). This conception of rhythmic individuation “will permit us to articulate forms of micro power penetrating the body with the forms of macro political and state imperial forms” (14).

The argument develops through a series of detailed reconstructions of the work of each of these thinkers with regard to rhythm, each reconstruction progressively adding a new conceptual level. This mode of development requires patience from the reader, as Michon says upfront, but he wants to give complex examples that preserve the integrity of each figure's thought rather than subordinating their contributions to an overreaching thesis. Indeed, one of Michon's points is that we need to open new analytic avenues of research before developing a comprehensive response to globalization.

In the first chapter, he examines the work of Mauss and Evans-Pritchard on primitive societies—work often trapped in structuralist readings (see Lévi-Strauss and Dumont). Mauss's Eskimos have different modes of social articulation in the summer and winter. In the warm season, when the people are dispersed, they exhibit relatively autonomous forms

¹ Another strain of analysis (Anthony Giddens and Zygmunt Bauman) urges that we try to slow down these processes so that new forms of power can be realized.

² He deliberately sets aside the work of philosophers during the period, such as Bergson. After 1940, the idea of rhythm was largely abandoned by social science—for example, by various types of structuralism. There were exceptions, of course, such as Foucault's *Surveiller et punir*, which Michon cites.

of subjectivity, acting in an individualistic and almost secular way, but in winter they live in close interactive dependence with an intense religious life and collective legal norms. Evans-Pritchard, in his study of the Nuer, revealed that social movements are organized not only around seasonal movements of gathering and dispersion but by terms of alliance and conflict inside and outside the society (57). In recovering the work of these thinkers, Michon does not ignore their limitations—here, for instance, he acknowledges that Mauss and Evans-Pritchard remained under the sway of an evolutionary view of individuality and were thus drawn into sweeping, inaccurate generalizations (101)—but he also does not let methodological or empirical problems discredit their contributions.

From social rhythm, Michon moves to corporeal rhythm, analyzing the work of Granet on ancient Chinese society (*La Pensée chinoise*), a differentiated society where the political is separated and institutionalized rather than immanent, as in the previous examples. He concludes the chapter by showing how considering the work of Mauss, Evans-Pritchard, and Granet together permits us to investigate the relationship between the rhythms of individual and state power (94), comparing the work of these anthropologists with Ernst Kantorowicz's well-known study *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*: "Just like the first kings of ancient China, Western sovereigns became the organizers of space and time, as well as the regulators of the rhythms of the societies they dominated" (98).

Following these chapters on non-Western societies, Michon turns his attention to two social theorists who have analyzed the breakdown of traditional rhythms in the modern West: Gabriel Tarde, who focused on the role of media in creating arrhythmical publics (for example, *L'Opinion et la foule* [1901]) and Georg Simmel, who examined the ways that money began to separate the Western economy from its social embeddedness. Michon pursues the consequences of these changes in external rhythms on the psychic formation of the subject by turning to Freud's social writings (*Totem and Tabou*, *The Ego and the Id*), in which he develops how the concept of psychic rhythm is not binary but oscillatory (163). All of these thinkers sensed the political consequences of these rhythmic transformations. Freud, like Tarde and Simmel, concluded that the new fluidity following the disappearance of traditional rhythms could "offer increased individual liberty but also harbors great dangers for the stability and freedom of the society as a whole" (179). According to Michon, Freud saw that the more rapid and profound the change in rhythm "the greater will be the need for new rhythms and the greater will be the possibility that a power capable of giving them will impose itself" (183).

While this group of thinkers voiced politically conservative warnings about the loss of traditional rhythms (183-89), Ossip Mandelstam and Siegfried Kracauer, the next figures Michon treats, responded by addressing the utopian dimension of rhythm, looking to popular culture, such as gymnastics, dance, travel, jazz, and opera.³ Kracauer's dialectical reading of these phenomena enabled him to get beyond the opposition between the traditional rhythms of the past and the mechanical rhythms of modernity. For Kracauer, the changes in social rhythm reveal our radical historicity and our capacity to find new rhythms beyond the existing possibilities of liberal democracy and dictatorship (217). In his book on Offenbach, Kracauer shows how the operetta "was at the center of a new mode of managing political contradictions and the subjectification of the masses . . . From this point of view, the Second Empire prefigures the regimes which, in the twentieth century, will respond to the loss of rhythm by putting in place an absolute power supported by new rhythms of propaganda provided by film and radio" (291-92).

³ Michon is concerned principally with Mandelstam's "The State and Rhythm" (1920), which can be found in *Complete Prose and Letters* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979), and Kracauer's *Das Ornament der Masse* (1927) and *Jacques Offenbach und das Paris seiner Zeit* (1937).

To illustrate the next level of rhythmic complexity, language (*langage*), Michon draws on the work of Walter Benjamin and Victor Klemperer. Although Benjamin's research was built on the work of his predecessors in the 1920s, unlike previous sociologists Benjamin looked at technological apparatus not just as a prosthesis for communication but as a transformation in the forms of experience—for example, the desacralization of culture through mechanical reproduction. In his study of Baudelaire, Benjamin sketches the historical interaction between Baudelaire's reworking of traditional poetic rhythm and the "derhythming" of modern society (263). Baudelaire's poetry leaves the psychic depths of the Romantics in order to register the experience of "le choc" (260) through lexical incongruities, explosive allegories, and violations of metrical norms: "The bumps and collisions in Baudelaire's poetic discourse enable him simultaneously to register the grand socio-anthropological changes of his epoch and lay out a 'politics of art' opening up a life less governed by meter and more autonomous" (263). The prose poems register the fluidity and new liberties of the modern world (265).

Michon shows how these rhythmical resources afford new insight into totalitarianism, as we see in Victor Klemperer's study *The Language of the Third Reich LTI—Lingua Tertii Imperii: A Philologist's Notebook*. Klemperer's analysis distinguishes three rhythmic levels: "le culte," the gathering and "rhythming" of the masses in quasi-religious ceremonies; the new forms of eloquence used by the Third Reich; and what he identifies as the bodily rhythms of the sovereign (374). Klemperer's study complicates historiographical debates about the Third Reich. For instance, while Hannah Arendt speaks of the perpetrators of the Third Reich as atomized, lonely subjects who have lost a world, Daniel Goldhagen claims that, on the contrary, the Germans killed with pleasure (581). Both positions ignore the new forms of individuation discussed by Klemperer that brought the German people out of their malaise, even at the expense of their autonomy (390). For Klemperer, "The ideology [of the Third Reich] is immanent to their activities and linguistic interactions" (374).

Michon's point is that these lacuna in Arendt's and Goldhagen's discussions are symptomatic of the blind spots in social scientific theories that oscillate between individualism and holism: "Instead of positing the existence of a being antecedent to the movements that animate it, we must start from these movements in order to understand how these psychic and collective beings are formed" (422). An individual is thus "a body/language in continuous transformation," a transformation that "follows the social-historical forms shared by many others" (424). Individuals are chains of interaction that differ through time (423), whose processes of individuation take place on four levels: "the alternations of sociality, the oscillations of psyche, the mobility of the body, and the organization of discourse" (429). This definition of individuation means that "power—whether the macropower of the state, the power of Foucault's dispositifs, or the micropowers dispersed in multitudes—consists of organizing, controlling, and influencing these transformations" (424-25).

Michon's study of rhythm offers a grand vision of a neglected dimension of modern existence that is laid out through meticulous argumentative exposition. This extraordinary work will be of great interest to scholars in all areas of the humanities and social sciences.

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LOVE AND THE LAW IN CERVANTES. By Roberto González Echevarría. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2005. xx, 292 p.

Roberto González Echevarría asserts that "the organization of a modern state in Spain . . . created a discourse dealing with criminals and common people that writers found compelling" (xiv), suggesting that "It is in the context of this proliferation of laws, state control, and the pursuit, description, classification, and punishment of criminals that the modern novel emerges in the picaresque . . . In narrative fiction, plots will no longer be drawn from the literary or even the oral tradition but from legal cases or stories like them" (28-29). He argues persuasively that the keen interest of Cervantes and his contemporaries in legal issues is reflected in the fictions they created: "The disparity between the justice [Don Quixote] plans to dispense and the series of injuries, torts, and damages that he causes is crucial to understanding Part I of the *Quijote* . . . The pursuit and capture of the hidalgo, and the restitution made for some of the injuries and damages that he causes, organize the book" (61).

González Echevarría is especially interested in the multiple ways that the literature of the Spanish Golden Age reflects the relationship between love and the law. He observes that "in fiction the law dealt primarily with conflicts of love, a synecdoche for social strife and evolution," and in particular with what he calls "'unnarratable' stories, subtexts dealing with the uncanny and/or the horrible—the unlawful, in the deepest sense, because it includes the irrational foundations of law itself" (xiv). I do not understand why he calls *El casamiento engañoso* "a formless, unnarratable story" (206); it seems to me an elaboration of the tale of the trickster tricked.

Like David Quint in *Cervantes's Novel of Modern Times* and Carroll Johnson in *Cervantes and the Material World*, González Echevarría places Cervantes's works firmly in the context of Early Modern Europe. His book shares some of the virtues of these books as well as some of their anachronistic exaggerations. It may also be seen as a kind of mirror image of Natalie Zemon Davis's *Fiction in the Archives*, which examines the impact of literary conventions on sixteenth-century French pardon tales, and of James S. Amelang's study of artisan autobiography *The Flight of Icarus*, in which he notes that "many artisans turned to fictional or semi-fictional literary forms to chronicle their own experiences and sentiments" (39).

González Echevarría often draws attention to details that a reader of *Don Quixote* might miss, noting for example that "Legal writing specified, detailed, and individualized the deviants . . . it was a way of identifying that would allow apprehension, as when the officer of the Holy Brotherhood laboriously reads the description of Don Quijote contained in the warrant for his address, stopping after every word to look up and see if it matches a

trait of the knight's face" (30). His book, based on the DeVane Lectures at Yale he gave in 2002 and addressed to a general audience, treats a number of questions previously discussed only in Spanish; serious students of Cervantes will also find much to interest them, since González Echevarría's treatment is often based on older works and on articles in Spanish legal journals not found in most academic libraries.

González Echevarría's treatment of the complex legal issues involved in the interlocking stories centered on Cardenio and Dorotea in Part I of *Don Quixote* shows both the strength and some of the weaknesses of his approach. These stories, like the other interpolated stories in Part I, "involve unequal marriages and most of them contain violence of some sort. But although penal law looms over the episodes, the most developed legal aspect in them derives from testamentary law . . . Inheritance and marriage codes, both regulating succession, drive and constrain the characters; restitution and compensation cooperate to make whole what they damage in the process of channeling their desires" (94). González Echevarría explains the importance in these stories of the *mayorazgo* or entailed estate, noting that Cervantes's contemporaries "would have easily and immediately recognized all the testamentary conflicts involved in Don Fernando's actions, how the law impinges in his frantic love life" (103). However, he sometimes reads too much into Cervantes's text, asserting, for example, that Dorotea "represents undifferentiated, pure desire before the emergence of the law" (106), and speculating about what may happen to the characters after they disappear from Cervantes's text, forgetting that they are not real persons but fictional characters who have no existence beyond the words that describe them: "The stability of the unions sanctioned at Palomeque's inn is not very promising . . . Don Fernando may be about to marry into some financial substance, but he is still a *segundón*, so he may indeed go back to his old ways to assert his very masculinity" (110).

Some of González Echevarría's assertions may mislead readers unfamiliar with the works he discusses. Many Hispanists would not agree that "Lazarillo's tone is one of ironic self-exculpation: how, having the life that I have had, could I have turned out otherwise?" (56). González Echevarría's claim that Dulcinea "ranks among the great lady loves of Western literature: not just Beatrice but Helen, Circe, Dido, Laura and Molly Bloom" (36) fails to note that since Dulcinea exists only in Don Quixote's imagination we can know nothing of her feelings, unlike those of Dido or Molly—never mind that Circe, who turns Odysseus's companions into swine, is hardly anyone's "lady love." His interpretations often go far beyond anything stated in Cervantes's text, perhaps the most extreme example being his treatment of *El coloquio de los perros*, where he asserts that "The story of Berganza's life is the encoded—like a nightmare—account of Campozano's sordid life. Scipio's is the life he aspired to have . . . If told, Scipio's would be Campuzano's wish-fulfillment dream, which is perhaps why it is left untold" (209-10).

Readers unfamiliar with Spanish need to be warned that González Echevarría's etymologies are sometimes fanciful: for instance, the name Peralta in *El casamiento engañoso* is not "mildly ridiculous" nor does it mean "high pear" (202), and the word *casamiento* in the title of this novella does not conceal a pun "suggested by *casa* (house) and *miento* (I lie)" (205). Likewise, they should not be too ready to accept his statement that Dorotea's "name rhymes with Dulcinea . . . so there is something of a mirroring or echoing effect here, a version of what Don Quijote and Dulcinea's romance could have been" (101). Overall, the book deserved more rigorous copy-editing; many words are misused, many sentences ungrammatical.

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ABOUT FACE: GERMAN PHYSIOGNOMIC THOUGHT FROM LAVATER TO AUSCHWITZ. By Richard T. Gray. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004. 453 p.

In this informative and analytically reflective study, Richard Gray treats modern German physiognomics as a variant of the metaphysics of semiological transparency in the age of the split between public and private, the epoch in which all absolutes are privatized and inwardized, displaced into subjective interiority. Gray shows how, when it is mobilized as a resistance to—or disavowal of—the division of state and church called for by the Enlightenment, the semiological dimension of metaphysics (i.e., the old dream of transparent signification) gives rise to the panoptical discourse of modern physiognomics. For physiognomics is the attempt to read the private interior of the human being in order to make it public and, conversely, the struggle to impose collective identity and values on the individual interior. In modern physiognomics, the human body (seen as a transparent sign) becomes the privileged figure for the separation between public and private, state and religion, and therefore the elective site for the overcoming or disavowal of this separation. Further, in the trajectory Gray traces from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, biology gradually comes to supplement theology as the discourse of “life” qua spirit—and *Lebensphilosophie* “lives out” this development—so that the interior, hidden absolute gradually becomes the biological “essence” that is racial identity. (One important consequence is the transformation of religious anti-Semitism into racial anti-Semitism across the nineteenth century.) As a crucial component of this process, the physiognomic discourse on the spiritual meaning of the body, persistently attempting to deny or contest the division of state and church, tends toward the project—fully realized in Nazi Germany—of establishing the state on the basis of the religion of race, the bio-theological absolute of “blood” regarded as interior secret.

Gray details these developments from Johann Caspar Lavater in the late eighteenth century—in what he persuasively argues is “a direct intellectual-historical line” (340)—to the openly racist versions of physiognomy in the twentieth century, as epitomized by arguably the two most important race theorists in the Third Reich, Hans F.K. Günther and Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss. While his study finds a continuous development of the discourse since the eighteenth century, it also notes a particular focus on physiognomy in the late eighteenth century and during the Weimar period, both periods of extreme social change and widespread uncertainty about the grounds of social-national cohesion and continuity. In this way, Gray brings out the reactionary political dimension of modern physiognomic discourse in general.

But, as Gray shows, the ideologically unsavory tradition of physiognomy does not develop without contestation, nor without internal tensions and differentiations, from Georg Christoph Lichtenberg’s late-eighteenth-century critique of Lavater to August Sander’s early-twentieth-century photographic allegories of social class. Indeed, external and internal critiques overlap and often shade into one another. With persistent precision, Gray traces the history of these controversions and internal debates.

The main tension for both proponents and opponents of physiognomics is that between determinists and those who emphasize free will. The determinists claim that only the *fixed* characteristics of the body can tell us about the spiritual essence of an individual. Those who emphasize free will suggest that the *changeable* characteristics of the embodied self need to be considered either in addition to or instead of these fixed traits, if one wishes to gauge the self-determining spiritual or mental character of a particular human being. The sole emphasis on fixed traits of the body—above all, the skeleton and the skull—tends to go hand in (bony) hand with the notion that the spiritual character one pursues is a *stable*, eternally unchanging, deep essence. The emphasis on changeable characteristics—which can extend (depending on the thinker) from posture, facial lines,

or musculature to more evanescent or airy traits such as mental attitudes or habits of thought—tends to be allied with an interest in *dynamic* spiritual characteristics, a concern for the spiritual dimension as that of freedom and so of potential change.

Gray shows that the early critique of modern physiognomy in thinkers like Lichtenberg and G.W.F. Hegel privileges the dynamic features over the static ones. Within the world of physiognomic thought, Gray distinguishes two traditions based on their response to the question of whether or not one needs to consider the dynamic features in addition to the static ones. Gray's book traces the first of these traditions—the more determinist tradition of physicalist or materialist physiognomics—from Lavater through Franz Joseph Gall, Carl Gustav Carus, and Günther, and the second tradition—which he characterizes variously as humanist and as idealist—from Goethe through Ludwig Klages, Oswald Spengler, Rudolf Kassner, and Clauss. Both of these traditions, however, in the figures of Günther and Clauss, end up dovetailing neatly with the racist theories of Count Arthur Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain in order to play a major role in the constitution of Nazi dreams of racial purity and their nightmarish attempted realization. Even when dressed up as science, of course, racist ideologies bear idealistic traits; and, conversely, explicitly idealist racisms cannot dispense with a biologicistic point of reference.

Nonetheless, it is notable and instructive that the physicalist tradition ultimately carries the day under German fascism, as illustrated by the fact that Clauss finally finds himself—to his chagrin and evident surprise—ousted from the Nazi party, while Günther becomes its principal physiognomic theorist. Because the subjectivity of interiority implies its relativity and the impossibility of collectivizing it in the form of an objective absolute (*das Volk*), the Nazis finally link even German nationalist idealist physiognomics with nihilistic modernism. Subjectivity has to be exorcized from the National Socialist state religion of race. And the Jews of Europe—as representatives of an interiority that is not theopolitically recuperable—end up having to pay sacrificially the price for the arbitrariness or mere willfulness of all willing, for what one might call the *Willkürlichkeit des Willens* in general.

Having traced the trajectory of German physiognomics to its National Socialist culmination, Gray adds a conclusion in which, picking up on Benjamin's thesis about reproducible art, he reconsiders the physiognomic tradition from the standpoint of its inseparability from the "technological innovations" that "permit the replication of the human face and its multiple reproduction in exact copies" (333). In this very interesting chapter, however, Gray perhaps makes insufficiently explicit one of the more important implications of his discussion concerning technically reproducible art: namely, that the cult of the "face" in the discourse of physiognomy can be seen as a backlash against, a resistance to, and a disavowal of the implications of the very technologies of reproducibility that it puts to work. The physiognomic discourses attempt, that is, to restore the aura, the transcendent essence, to the mass individual, henceforth recuperated as "type." But not to every individual, not to every "type," as Gray clearly shows. The racist physiognomics of the "Nordic movement" that supports the Nazi enterprise makes the Jews responsible for this de-auraticization of the individual in modernity, while it makes the Aryan "type" into the embodiment of the auratic as such. The Aryan thus becomes the "type" of the "type"—the symbol of the immediate, symbolic unity of individual and collective that the shattering of the aura undoes. The racist physiognomics of the Germanic supremacists tries to sacrifice the Jews as (anti)symbols of anti-symbolic modernity, which would be the age in which the outside no longer reveals the inside, in which the collective *Stand* no longer interpenetrates organically with the private self, and difference inheres in all self-sameness.

Finally, how does this important recent book build upon, or otherwise relate to, Gray's prior scholarship? In his earlier book *Stations of the Divided Subject: Contestation and Ideological Legitimation in German Bourgeois Literature, 1770-1914* (Stanford: Stanford Univer-

sity Press, 1995), Gray traced the gradual hardening of the wall between public and private realms as registered in German literary history from Lessing to Kafka, such that ultimately “the bourgeois liberal subject affirms with joyous *amor fati* its aporetic cleavage into public agency and self-repressed private utopian reserve” (325). He concluded that book, in a gesture appropriate to its main argument, with a polemic against Richard Rorty’s notion of “liberal ironism” as articulated in the book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). In this polemic, he suggested that Rorty’s acknowledgement of the unbridgeable character of the rift between public and private was a mere capitulation, perhaps premature, to an unambiguously negative situation that might not, however, amount to an absolute necessity.

In contrast, Gray’s new book on physiognomics examines the vicissitudes of a major discourse meant from the start, as he rightly and explicitly argues, to overcome the public/private split. Here, he considers the flip side of the earlier book’s concern, and so retrospectively nuances the claims of that work. To be sure, the modern separation of public and private, such as it is—a separation that begins with the project of the separation of church and state and the relativization of class prejudices (*Standesvorurteile*) in Enlightenment tolerance-discourse—can be seen as a negative phenomenon insofar as it entails social alienation and tends to perpetuate social injustice by depoliticizing the subject. Nonetheless, radical attempts (like physiognomics and the racist politics it fueled) to overcome the separation of public and private, both in the past century and the current one, have tended to annihilate the private and, by a dialectical turn, to empty the public of any meaning whatsoever, to privatize it without reserve. In this sense, if one puts together the main critical warnings implied by each of Gray’s two main books since his early studies of Kafka, one ends up with the following dialectical tension: do not hastily submit to the division of public and private; do not precipitately attempt to overcome their division. Taken together, the two imperatives and the two books that imply them provide a useful point of departure for new articulations of the separations of public and private and/or state and church (in short, liberal modernity) in their metaphysical, political, ethical, aesthetic, and epistemological consequences.

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THE CLASH OF EMPIRES: THE INVENTION OF CHINA IN MODERN WORLD MAKING. By Lydia Liu. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004. 318 p.

In the euphoria of global communication, techno-scientific advance, and worldwide governance by law, the study of language and discourse is becoming increasingly detached from the rugged terrain of history and geopolitical confrontation. Rumor has it that nations and peoples around the world are moving toward a transparent, intersubjective language game or a legal framework. Like guests at a cocktail party, they savor tasty bites from diverse ethnic or cultural traditions. They exchange, borrow, and translate freely beyond inherited boundaries. But if history is any indication, this kind of talk masks the stark reality of the ongoing clash of geopolitical powers and sovereign wills. Lydia Liu goes back to the nineteenth-century history of imperial expansion in China to offer a historical lesson.

Working in the British Library and daily exposed to the news of Hong Kong's handover to the PRC in the summer of 1997, the author realized that the issue of empire and national sovereignty is as pressing today as in the past. Moving beyond her initial research on missionary translations of the Bible into Chinese, she seeks to show in this book how in the aftermath of the Opium War, the battle over words and translation carried as much weight as trade, domination, and conquest, and was fueled by conflicting claims of sovereign wills.

In a departure from the thesis of cultural clash, which has bedeviled the postmodern, postcolonial celebration of ethnic and cultural difference, this book's message is: what looks like law making or forging of agreement in cross-cultural encounters is far more than cultural or discursive. It is *realpolitik* all over again! Cultural or religious confrontations stem from conflicting claims over territory, juridical rights to markets, entitlement, and the recognition of sovereign power between states. Cultural clashes have little to do with some deep-seated primordial essence incompatible with other cultural essences. Rather, they arise from the encroaching power of one sovereign imperial state confronted with its redoubled, resistant mirror image. One sovereign power begets another: this is the stark reality of how the modern world of sovereign nation-states was made and is still being made.

Liu challenges the postmodern view that sees the self-determining sovereignty of a group, a community, or a state as archaic and obsolescent. This postmodern erasure of sovereign thinking—where the idea of sovereignty is dissolved into some ubiquitous yet absolutist space of empire—echoes Foucault's theory of an all-encompassing network of disciplinary technology, permeating all aspects of the social fabric, government, the body, and the unconscious. This view fuels the current talk of empire, transnationalism, and globalization. Deceptively, a neutral universal structure of knowledge, a positive system of legal codes, a semiotics of the sign, an empiricist social and political science, or a ground of commonality is imagined to preside over the life-and-death struggle of sovereign nation-states. The poststructuralist subject disappears into this whirlpool of factual positivities: it is no longer the autonomous subject endowed with sovereign desire and with the will power to make choice and decision. Decentered and dispersed, it is subjugated to the quasi-sovereign techno-scientific management structure; even its unconscious is structured like the language of the corporate media and empire. Likewise, the nation is no longer sovereign, because it is subjugated to the invisible hand of some supra-state or super capital, at the mercy of an empire that runs the affairs of a humanity stripped of its variegated histories and pasts.

A universal system, a modern-day Esperanto (read English), an international legal system, or a utopia of homogeneity is said to be promoting global flow and exchange. Against this disinterested machine—not a sovereign will but a sovereign machine—one cannot help asking this question: who supervises the godlike Supervisor, who runs the machine? If nobody does, it would seem that this universal system comes from nowhere. The truth, however, is that the sovereign interest and agenda of a hegemonic state are instituted and frozen into the law—international law. Partial self-interests now safely hide behind the scene of law and order, which occults the genesis of the hegemonic state's expansion, concealing the terrain of inequality, domination, and subjugation. The outwardly civilized document or system of signs occults the primal scene in which the signing of unequal treaties occurred at the gunpoint and within firing range of the gunboats in the nearby harbor.

This book demonstrates this thesis by exposing what has hidden behind the universal façade. Liu's analysis brings to light the unwieldy conflicts that have been haunting the reified surface of the instituted systems of law, signs, gift ritual, or grammar. Indeed, law

making was driven by unlawful desires. After the Introduction that maps out the theoretical approach, the author strives in the next two chapters to demonstrate the key issues linking imperial power to cross-cultural mistranslation. The international treaty after the Opium War instituted a ban against the Chinese character *yi*, because to the British ear the word sounds like “barbarian.” The ban had little to do with the word’s different etymologies, but derived from the clash of sovereign claims between the British imperialists and the Qing government’s equally universal, if more limited, aspirations. The loaded, contested sign *yi*/barbarian, what Liu calls the “supersign,” is revealed to be fraught with conflicting interests and practices: the Qing’s internal histories of differentiation and stratification of the native population, ethnic differences, diplomatic relations with outsiders, and British expansion in Asia. Throughout its history, the *yi* could be offensive or neutral or simply an expedient way of demarking a segment of the population. At times it could serve as an othering or marginalizing rhetoric. But in the nineteenth century, as the word got caught up in the power game of sovereign wills, war making and treaty making, a sea change occurred. As an “outcome of hostile encounters between the British and the Qing” (95), the sign tended to become reified over and above its diverse histories and etymologies and adopted a “standard” meaning. The fate of this sign is an allegory, writ large, of instances of “cultural” clash and hostilities, in law making, grammar formation, and ritualistic protocol. But the cultural and semiotic dimensions are more apparent than real. The controversy over the sign tells a story of nineteenth-century imperial rivalries in East Asia. As the British attempted to become the major power of influence in East Asia, the Qing regime tried to hold its ground. Mainstream historiography in the West, following the colonialist logic, tends to see the *yi*/barbarian and similar phenomena as signs of Chinese xenophobia or a closed-door mentality. Yet the sign was less a case of fear of foreigners than one of an aggressive expansionist agenda. In this light, the *yi*/barbarian, though contested and cleansed, became a self-fulfilling prophecy. If one has no barbarous intent, why would one fear a harmless word that could mean so many different things? Demeaning as the word might be, it cast a shadow on those who tried to avert its lethal gaze. This is why the treaty ban on the word was shortly followed by the barbarous burning and pillaging of the imperial palaces and the bloody sacking of the capital.

I think the chapter most relevant to today’s discussions of the possibility of a global normative framework is “Translating International Law.” In her account of the circumstances surrounding the translation of Henry Wheaton’s influential *Elements of International Law*, Liu notes the multiple roles played by the translator W.A.P. Martin. He was not just a writer, but also a diplomat, an evangelist, and a foot soldier of a conquering imperial power. Serving the national interest of the United States and Western nations, the transmission of international law presaged the “soft power” that justified dominating the world through a civilizing mission. Yet the irony in the aftermath of the Opium War revealed the dual nature of law making and war making: those who most vigorously promulgated the global norms were the first ones to violate them, while at the same time prohibiting others from claiming the law for self-protection.

This book seeks to demystify the neutral, normative aura surrounding the making of signs, international law, diplomatic protocols, semiotics, translation, and linguistics. While it may suffer from a lack of coherence due to its wide interdisciplinary sweep within the space of one book, the underlying logic is clear and compelling. It is a critique of the imperialist, arbitrary imposition of an overarching structure of knowledge on the globe. By exposing this structure to be partial, parochial, self-interested, and destructive, the book addresses the neglected themes of imperialism and colonialism rather than post-colonialism. The book is finally more a critique of cultural imperialism than a story of the invention of modern China, and the question of sovereignty refers not just to the Qing

imperialist ambition but also to the emergent, redoubled collective will against the will of the imperialist powers. Arguably, the active exercise of sovereignty by the Qing against the encroaching imperial powers was already on the way to a nationalistic, rather than imperial, sovereignty of modern China.

Overall, this is a well-documented, erudite, and provocative book that will appeal to wide audiences of humanists, comparatists, political theorists, and historians.

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MOROCCO BOUND: DISORIENTING AMERICA'S MAGHREB, FROM CASABLANCA TO THE MARRAKECH EXPRESS.

By Brian T. Edwards. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005. xv, 366 p.

Brian Edwards's *Morocco Bound* is a powerful meditation on the question of why the circulation of cultural representations matters. Focusing on the U.S.-Maghreb relation during the crucial years of 1942-1973, Edwards masterfully considers the way "the American encounter with the Maghreb matters to our understanding of public thinking about the role of the United States in the world after 1941 and the contested meanings of American national identity in the wake of that encounter" (10-11). At one level, the book provides telling snapshots of the representation of the Maghreb in U.S. cultural productions as well as in U.S. foreign relations and policies. At the same time, the argument explores the way Orientalist representations of the Maghreb interpolated American national identity by enabling Americans to find ways to understand the emergence of the U.S. as a global superpower and to re-imagine a world that was simultaneously based on and detached from British and French empires. Neither a cultural history nor a genealogical account of U.S. imperialism, *Morocco Bound* does not "assume an easy or transparent relationship between representations of the foreign in cultural production and the world of foreign relations" (9). Instead, it dwells on a series of exemplary moments in the history of cultural circulation between the U.S. and the Maghreb as a way of thinking about broader issues related to globalization, imperialism, and representation.

Crucial to understanding the way the U.S. re-organized the global order after WWII is the concept Edwards calls "global racial time"—an evolutionary notion of civilizational temporality that figures non-Europeans, especially Arabs, Africans, and Asians, at more primitive stages of development. Starting with Henry Luce's declaration of the twentieth century as the "American century," Edwards deftly delineates the way a distinctively American form of Orientalism emerges after WWII. While indebted to the large archive of French and British representations of the Orient, American Orientalism is marked by a particular form of cultural and historical amnesia that denies the importance of historical, religious, and linguistic precision in understanding and representing the world. Unlike its European counterpart, the study of American Orientalism is not merely an "engagement with a tradition of self-referential meaning making about 'the Orient'" but also an "encounter with worldliness itself" in that American representations of the foreign often address and engage "the complex geo-political order of the post-1941 period" (2-3).

Morocco Bound's methodology is an engaging and subtle example of what Edward Said

called “contrapuntal” analysis, a kind of reading that brings together seemingly unrelated texts and discrepant experiences in order to produce unlikely insights. Located at the interstices of American studies and postcolonial theory, *Morocco Bound* perceptively considers literary texts, anthropological works, journalistic articles, government documents, Hollywood movies, rock-and-roll songs, and even a cookbook to unmask structures of repression and amnesia in America’s relationship with the Maghreb. In Chapter 1, for example, Edwards reads Warner Brothers’ *Casablanca* against the Moroccan film *Al-Hubb fi al-Dar al-Baida* not only to critique the way that *Casablanca*, as the paradigmatic instance of “American Orientalism,” diverts our attention away from the Moroccan people by placing them in the “temporal lag of racial time,” but also to demonstrate the intricate ways in which *Al-Hubb* appropriates Hollywood’s stereotypical representation of the Maghreb to interrupt the narrative of American exceptionalism. Edwards’s juxtaposition of these cinematic representations brings into focus the transnational circulation of cultural products by highlighting the tendency in American cultural studies to view “the export of U.S. popular cultural production as simply unidirectional and unchallenged.” Similarly, in Chapter 5, Edwards juxtaposes the work of Jane Bowles to that of Maghrebi author Mohammed Mrabet to carve out a space of dialogue from which radical possibilities for transculturation and intersubjectivity may emerge. Edwards’s contrapuntal analyses of Bowles’s and Mrabet’s works shed light on the way literary productions in contact zones disrupt linear and monolithic notions of national literature and culture as well as challenge assumptions about the continuity of language and identity. Finally, in Chapter 6, Edwards offers an engaging study of what he calls “hippie Orientalism” through an investigation of a diverse and creatively composed archive that includes such disparate works as James Michener’s *The Drifters*, Ed Buryn’s North African guidebook, and Clifford Geertz’s and Paul Rabinow’s anthropological works on Morocco. His analysis convincingly demonstrates that shared tendencies among popular and academic representations of the region during the 1970s allowed liberal and radical-minded Americans who traveled in the region to avoid or overlook both the contemporary struggles of Moroccan youth and the urgent issues pertaining to the U.S. military engagement in Southeast Asia.

Edwards’s contrapuntal approach—which neither exoticizes Moroccan culture nor reduces the American-Maghrebi relationship to a Manichean structure—allows a more balanced and sophisticated understanding of both American involvement in the Maghreb and the cultural context in which it was inscribed. Such an approach helps to illuminate the complex ways in which cultural and aesthetic forms circulate transnationally, a circulation which “upsets a dichotomous and dichotomizing understanding of the relationship of culture to politics” (73).

In addition to offering fresh literary, theoretical, and political analyses, *Morocco Bound* is a remarkable scholarly intervention due to its particular discursive style. First, the book is remarkable in its attention to textual and historical detail. Whether he is studying “Tangierian literature,” Hollywood films, anthropological works, or *New Yorker* articles, Edwards accounts for their specific contexts and histories while remaining faithful to the demands of rigorous textual analysis. As such, *Morocco Bound* provides its readers with analyses that carefully map the overlapping relationships of aesthetics and politics, literature and society, always substantiating its literary, cultural, and political claims with concrete examples. Second, in contrast to the works of many young scholars, which can read like theoretical versions of *Heart of Darkness*—too many adjectives, too many qualifications, too many theoretical digressions, too many words in one sentence—*Morocco Bound* is a lucid text that clearly defines its critical terms, powerfully substantiates its theoretical claims, and often delights its readers with apt and insightful formulations. Third, in con-

trast to the works of many postcolonial theorists—including such distinguished thinkers as Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak—who sometimes may appear to link spuriously if not utterly conflate aesthetic expressions and political realities, Edwards is extremely careful in mapping the way artistic representations actually participate in such worldly matters as diplomatic relations, economic interests, and political institutions. His careful analysis of the overlapping of American political involvement and business interests in North Africa during the 1950s with aesthetic representations such as William Burroughs's *Naked Lunch* and Paul Bowles's *Sheltering Sky* is a case in point. Edwards reads *Sheltering Sky* against U.S. policy makers' perception of the Maghreb to show their shared premise, namely, "to think of U.S. presence in North Africa—and the developing world—in terms of American pioneering" (105). While attentive to the fact that "the disparity between the institutional location from which the novel and the foreign relations operate maintains a gulf between them in terms of material effect," Edwards carefully demonstrates the intricate "interplay of the foreign and the foreign policy" of the U.S. during the 1950s (101, 104).

Edwards's illuminating study of America's engagement with the Maghreb is a brilliant example of the kind of scholarship that is all too rare in the fields of postcolonialism and American studies. I have suggested elsewhere that postcolonial critics' focus on Europe's cultural and political hegemony has diverted attention from the need for a serious engagement with the complex and important question of U.S. imperialism in a new global order. *Morocco Bound* is an exemplary performance of what such an engagement might look like. Indeed, the book offers a seminal account of how aesthetic representations of the Maghreb participated in such a geopolitical shift. Moreover, several scholars of American studies, including Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease, have recently drawn critical attention to the "denial of empire" that seems to lie at the heart of much work in the field of American studies. *Morocco Bound* provides an illustrative instance of how such a critical gap may be filled, one which makes clear the high cost of leaving the cultural and political implications of this blind spot unquestioned.

More specifically, Edwards's scholarly intervention may be especially useful to American studies in exposing the predicament that monolingualism creates for scholars working in this field. As Edwards points out, a tendency to discourage multilingual work in American studies has created a problematic disjuncture between American studies and the fields of comparative literature and postcolonial theory. The failure to engage textually and linguistically with cultural texts such as Arabic literature, Edwards argues, is a significant "failure encouraged and authorized by reading practices that emerged from the cold war consensus," reading practices that have helped sustain American Orientalism and imperialism since WWII (12). Given its important critical interventions, *Morocco Bound* should be a required text for a broad range of readers and scholars in the fields of American studies, postcolonialism, comparative literature, and Middle Eastern studies.

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HITCHCOCK'S CRYPTONOMIES. By Tom Cohen. Volume 1: Secret Agents; Volume 2: War Machines. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005. 1284 p.; 300 p.

It is a curious but little-noted fact of film/literary history that around the same time that Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and others were declaring the “death of the author” the *auteur* designation was being used, with increasing frequency, to describe the movie director, particularly Hitchcock.¹ One might consider such an anomaly understandable insofar as the film director’s elevation to the status of *auteur* is surely figural, and so less a matter of the authority and authorship the aforementioned “death” was meant to decry. Nonetheless, it is one of the more obvious goals of Tom Cohen’s massive new study to move Hitchcock even further into the post-modern era than have earlier works by Žižek, Jameson, Deleuze, and others by exploding any atavistic tendency still remaining that would define, in a thematic or univocal way, the meaning of Hitchcock, his signature, or his works.

This is not to say that admiration for Hitchcock’s brilliance as a director is not readily apparent in Cohen’s exciting new work. It is just that words like “admiration” and “brilliance,” words which are mired in the logocentric tendencies of visual reification, occlude rather than illuminate the true greatness that is Hitchcock. In the beginning of Section Nine of *The Birth of Tragedy* (a work Cohen frequently invokes), Nietzsche puts forth a theory of “negative sunspots” that seems to describe Cohen’s hermeneutic model for understanding Hitchcock’s genius:

After an energetic attempt to focus on the sun we have, by way of remedy almost, dark spots before our eyes when we turn away. Conversely, the luminous images of the Sophoclean heroes—those Apollonian masks—are the necessary production of a deep look into the horror of nature; luminous spots, as it were, designed to cure an eye hurt by the ghastly night. (Trans. Golfing)

Nietzsche’s key deconstructive notion, that meaning is what is left over (an “after-image”) after we have looked directly into the “ghastly night” of the sun, both directly and indirectly informs Cohen’s notion of the necessarily double meaning of Hitchcock:

Every time Hitchcock evokes the double chase as a device (the “hero” chasing those who, in some variant, are chasing him, in an inverted and self-engorged structure), he begins by short-circuiting the hermeneutic model that the chase since Plato has represented; every time he invokes the cameo, the mimetic pretext of film and photography are suspended; every time a signature system fans out, linking scene to scene—that is, in every scene, every film—a precession of all orders of recognition is asserted. (1.245)

The trajectory of a “black sun” appears in both volumes of Cohen’s work, and while one can not trace its entire course here, attention must be paid both to this trope and to some of the allomorphs of this figure which are always part of Cohen’s readings, “which enter into a contract of accelerations and back loops and slow-motion replays, probing what can be called cryptonomic networks” (1.xx). Cohen notes that the black sun (an apt trope also for the black light-giving lens of the camera) makes its first appearance “in the marksmanship scene of the first *Man Who Knew Too Much*: a clay target, shot at, that appears as a black disk traversing the sky, a simulacrum sun, source of light yet already a mark, whole, or copy” (1.50), and perhaps its last appearance in the famous shot of the dead Marion’s opened iris, itself doubled by the shower drain into which her blood has conveniently poured. It is significant, Cohen suggests, that this first instance of the motif occurs in a film entitled *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, for “knowledge in excess of knowledge has no premise of recognition. It mutes, it blackmails, it erases and blanks out—it

¹ Roland Barthes’ famous essay dates from the same year, 1968, as Andrew Sarris’s “Notes on the *Auteur* Theory.” Foucault’s essay “What is an Author?” followed a year later. The initial declaration of the “auteur-theory” by André Bazin in *Cahiers du Cinema* dates from 1957.

must itself be taken out; it itself will do the taking out" (1.166). For Cohen, the black sun—harking back to Derrida's *White Mythology*—is the eclipse of meaning. The skeet disk that is artificially propelled across the sky and then shot at is a particularly apt symbol of this notion, because its movement, like that of cinema itself, is artificial, and because it is shot at and splintered into fragments—fractiles—of meaning which then permeate everywhere and nowhere: as Cohen notes, in the kaleidoscopic swirls of *Vertigo* and the fireworks of *To Catch a Thief*, to mention only two examples. *What is seen in Hitchcock is always occluded by what is seen in Hitchcock*:

"Knowing too much," if it does not imply the explosive trace chains of the mute image, entails the undoing of knowing as *eidein*, as sight . . . Knowing too much seems associated with something like the impossibility of knowing one's own "death." It is connected, in short, to a cognition of death but not of biological life, of a life that is an effect of an acryptophor, a cut, a hole within any solar or faux representational order; hence another point of the recurrence to the temple of sun worshippers as a front. (1.169, 172)

The last reference is to the false religious front of the assassins in *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, which Cohen also sees as "a figure for cinema's audience. Hitchcock's ticket buyers who come to the temple seeking a certain enlightenment, succor, solar promise. It marks a faux religious impulse of the cinemagoer, the ritual nature of the congregation, the fraud that the assassin-director conceals himself with the financial transaction that undergirds it, and so on" (1.175).

Connected to the "black sun" of eclipsed or occluded meaning in Hitchcock is the prevalence of what Cohen refers to as "O-men," zeroes (referring to the recent work of J. Hillis Miller) who/which, like the celebrated MacGuffin, represent "a placeholder over a non-site from which enumeration can be said to begin" (1.186). Such "O-men"—Uncle Charles ("O-akley"), Scottie in *Vertigo*, Roger O. Thornhill ("the 'O' stands for nothing") in *North by Northwest*, Blaney in *Frenzy*, and others—are "ciphers and couriers of something to come, something of which they know nothing and do not, in any case, arrive intact" (1.187). While this is obvious in the case of *North by Northwest*, it is also true of *Shadow of a Doubt*'s Uncle Charles, who is not, of course, the person his family in sunny Santa Rosa take him to be. There are (supposedly) no known photographs of him, and he was "never," according to his sister Emma, "the same" after his boyhood accident. Rather than trying to understand such O-figures in psychoanalytical terms, which might seem warranted given these characters' various pathologies and identity crises, Cohen insists that "the recurrence of a certain zero-effect has nothing to do with a 'character' or psychology" (1.187). They are to be understood, instead, as Derridean "specters," products of a "teletechnic" era whose meanings are never more than ghostly presences of a non-existent truth: "The O-men, on occasion or throughout postgendered, are one cipher for the voiding of epistemo-political programs" (1.192).

A related concern of Cohen's, throughout both volumes of his work, is with William Rothman's notion of a "bar series," which functions as a sort of "signature" throughout Hitchcock's work:

That is, a series of slashes or bars, what Rothman calls the bar series, white and black alternation, metronomic and paralleled by aural knocking, present in a row of teeth or banisters or train tracks, a movement that is none, a seriality of repetitions that folds back as prefigural, atomizing, a reduction to footsteps or traces into which all can be visually renetworked, present even in word names ("William," "Lil<a>," or "ill"). Rothman lets out of Pandora's box an *ill* that could alter assumptions about visibility or the graphematics of cinema. (2.4-5)

These "bars," the most famous aural equivalent being Bernard Hermann's strident violins in *Psycho*, can be interpreted in many ways, including obvious psychoanalytical referents to jails and *ill*-ness. But Cohen is more interested in the way that this bar series, begin-

ning (one must suppose) with the bar series of the material structure of film itself, explodes any unity of this supposedly visual medium with an écrituresque series of “teletechnic” marks and gaps that proceed like a thief of consciousness. Indeed, deliberately alluding to the “minor” Hitchcock film it is one of the goals of *Cryptonomies* to redeem (*To Catch a Thief*), “this signature and graphic notation is that of ‘cinema’ . . . It could mobilize wholly other networks, leaping between, preceding *like a cat*” (2.5; emphasis mine).

If, according to Cohen’s notion of this bar series, “all visibility, all networking, begins and ends with this cutting” (1.190), then the series is also linked to another of the recurrent patterns of Hitchcock’s films from *The Lodger* on, the violence directed against women, and especially the “marring” of blonde women. Cohen notes on numerous occasions the surprising frequency of M-names in Hitchcock and, more specifically, of Mar-names:

Marrakesh . . . incarnates, at least in name, an entire *Mar*-system in Hitchcock’s writing . . . *Marrakesh*, as a name, suggests an allographic domain of marring and marking, in Morocco, superimposed over rock or desert or an emptiness that can only generate metaphor, similes, the “familiar” to excess . . . A *Mar*-system implicitly invokes and disfigures the logics of maternity—of the *mère* or *mer* . . . (1.207-208)

Although Cohen consistently rejects the more obvious psychoanalytic interpretation of all these M-names (indeed, the context here seems distinctly Freudian: the film, which was Hitchcock’s only remake, emphasizes a mother’s anxiety over her kidnapped son), he does relate this notion of “marring” to the consistent pattern of Hitchcock’s violence against women, especially blondes:

She is Hitchcock’s white whale, whose serial negation in the Avenger’s system hyperbolizes the very narrative dependence on the $N + 1 + 1$. . . The murder of blondes sustains and repeats metaphysical programs, feeds this drive, names it at once and thoroughly in *The Lodger*, dislodges it with all its hyperbolic implications, sacrifices itself in its sacrificial drive. *The cinematic in Hitchcock is not “representational.”* (2.76; emphasis mine)

No psychoanalytical “Mother” this, but rather the aforementioned Western notion of truth-as-light, which must be occluded or denied because of the necessary fracturing of meaning that has always-already occurred and that will always-already, serially (as it were), occur again.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with Cohen’s distinctly deconstructive version of Hitchcock, which must be placed alongside the celebrated works of Chabrol, Rothman, Wood, Modleski, and Žižek, there is no question that one learns a great deal about Hitchcock after reading these two remarkably rich and rewarding volumes. Cohen’s “micrological” readings of the films are consistently penetrating and unique, although at times their very depth results in omissions or mistakes that might mislead the more simple-minded reader: for example, Cohen’s repeated puzzling assertions that *Vertigo*’s Madeleine “never existed as such, never was alive to begin with,” and his badly misquoted children’s rhyme from *Marnie*, which he uses as an epigraph to his chapter on that film. Such matters seem small, however, when taken in the larger context of the author’s characteristically “ferociously original” readings of a director who, if he is not (according to Cohen) an *auteur*, is only so because he is something, or someone, much greater.

CALL FOR PAPERS

boundary 2 issues a call for papers that produce a historical humanist critique of religions, especially faith-based or monotheistic religions. This call for papers rests on the assumption that a critical journal is by definition a secular project and neither legitimates religions nor aligns itself with them or their apparent secular derivatives.

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