

rupts the attempt to impose an imperial... is in this chapter a persuasive focus on... entory, which create a sense of chaos and... ngness and destroying even the pretence... Yee's fourth and final chapter, devoted to... wards a form of oppositional exotic writing... deliberately situates itself against the era... ng texts there is complex multiple voicing... p between language and power, here there... y from an indigenous perspective. The... European cultural discourses, which are... other point of view. Yee's articulate and... her four texts that might at first glance be... ections, yet it is far more than this. It also... ditate understanding of the gradual emer... a complex range of phenomena that will... se. Yee's vision has a structural coherence... that of the disrupted and disruptive texts... s a highly effective demonstration of the... up new possibilities for our reading of the

TIMOTHY UNWIN

*Charles Nodier 1808-1842*. Ed. by HENRI... 2008. 608 pp. €90. ISBN 978-2-7453-

between that of literary and linguistic... rbevy d'Aureville maintaining, uncontro... et il n'est que Charles Nodier, une jolie... arles Buet, *J. Barbey d'Aureville: impres...*... p. 54). His particular importance in the... oscured by his seemingly superficial fas... ticity. This negative view was reinforced... themselves and by the incompleteness of... o the problem posed by the comparative... volume form, researchers were for a long... microfilms of the newspapers to which... istic challenge of locating relevant items... ight volumes of Duckett's *Dictionnaire de*... ades the situation has gradually changed... inting of the (enlarged) 1828 edition of... s françaises (prefaced by a notable essay... and, more recently, with Jean-François

Jeanpillou's scholarly editions of the *Dictionnaire raisonné* (2008), the 1834 *Notions élémentaires de linguistique, ou histoire abrégée de la parole et de l'écriture* (2005), and the somewhat more literary 1828 *Questions de littérature légale: du plagiat, de la supposition d'auteurs, des supercheries qui ont rapport aux livres* (2003), all published by Droz (Geneva). With Henri de Vaultchier's admirably conceived, and impeccably presented, edition of Nodier's far-flung discussions of the principles and practice of dictionary-making, the latter activity can now be seen with unprecedented clarity to have come to dominate all others in which the author engaged. A simple reprint of Nodier's articles, essays, and reviews on the subject would have performed an inestimable service to students of the period, but Vaultchier, author of a trailblazing study entitled *Charles Nodier et la lexicographie française* (Paris: CNRS Didier-Érudition, 1984), brings to bear, in his introductory discussions and his richly documented footnotes, the full weight of his erudition, identifying both the intricacies and the importance of Nodier's sometimes elusive, if fundamentally conservative, stance. Moreover, he includes previously unpublished papers Nodier read before the Academy or the 'Commission du *Dictionnaire historique*' in the period 1836-39. The result is a volume of exceptional importance, not merely for historians of linguistics and lexicography, but also for literary scholars seeking to understand the satirical import of certain of Nodier's later fictions or mindful of the influence his views on language exerted on the creative imaginations of such younger contemporaries as Balzac.

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MICHAEL TILBY

*Portraits contemporains*. By SAINTE-BEUVE. Ed. by MICHEL BRIX. Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris-Sorbonne. 2008. 1853 pp. €50. ISBN 978-2-84050-586-0.

This hefty single paperback volume, the first re-edition of Sainte-Beuve's *Portraits contemporains* since the definitive five-volume Michel Lévy edition (Paris: 1869-71), halves the shelf-space of the original, while simultaneously providing a critical framework of introduction, a note on the establishment of the text, and numerous footnotes, listing publication details of the individual *portraits*, cross-referencing them to other Sainte-Beuve articles or to his correspondence, and clarifying contemporary and other allusions. This additional information, a clear testimony to the depth and rigour of Michel Brix's scholarship, is a welcome feature of the new edition, but the most interesting element in the critical apparatus is Brix's introduction. Though short (barely more than thirty pages), it builds an argument vigorously contesting the denigration of Sainte-Beuve by Proust (*Contre Sainte-Beuve* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954)), Malraux (*Les Voix du silence* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951)), and subsequently by *la nouvelle critique*, for what they see as Sainte-Beuve's self-serving preoccupation with second-rate writers, together with his *l'homme et l'œuvre* approach to their work. Brix counterattacks with a spirited defence, proposing a different vision of Sainte-Beuve as a clear-sighted and upright intellect, committed to a disinterested pursuit of literary excellence for the benefit both of

the individual authors and of the reading public. This argument has as its central focus the contentious relationship between Hugo and Sainte-Beuve, in which Sainte-Beuve has generally been considered the villain. In a judicious summary of the conflicting literary and personal agendas of the two men, supported by detailed footnoting of Sainte-Beuve's Hugo articles (pp. 357–58, 366, 367, 377–78, 633), Brix paints an alternative picture of Hugo's no-holds-barred search for commercial and literary success, and a distaste on Sainte-Beuve's part for the publicist role in which Hugo sought to cast him to the detriment, as Sainte-Beuve saw it, of critical and literary integrity. Given Sainte-Beuve's own undoubted aspirations to literary leadership (which Brix does acknowledge), not to mention his subsequent rallying to the Second Empire establishment, there is perhaps an element of over-compensation in Brix's argument. Nevertheless, he makes a convincing case for a positive re-evaluation of Sainte-Beuve as a perceptive critic in the *moraliste* mould, drawn less to the grandiose pronouncements of predestined poetic mission favoured by Lamartine, Hugo, or Vigny, than to the quieter talents of Chénier, the Lake poets, or female writers such as Madame Tastu or Madame Desbordes-Valmore, and sensitive both to the unforeseen changeabilities of human existence and to the intimate everyday concerns that weigh on the individual in modern society. The edition is a further welcome indication of a revival of interest in a major cultural figure of nineteenth-century France. Regrettably there is no separate critical bibliography, and regrettably also, under *Remerciements*, no mention of any scholar working outside France. Christopher Prendergast's book, *The Classic: Sainte-Beuve and the Nineteenth-Century Culture Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), may perhaps in any case have appeared after Brix's edition had gone to press, but Prendergast's account of the Sainte-Beuve of the later *Causeries du lundi* and *Nouveaux lundis* is an interesting complement and contrast to Brix's portrait.

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

RACHEL KILLICK

'*Surfacing*' the Politics of Desire: Literature, Feminism and Myth. By RAJESHWARI S. VALLURY. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2008. 234 pp. £42. ISBN 978-0-8020-9038-6.

Mythical narratives are not only to be found at the heart of many literary texts; they also structure much philosophical writing, as Rajeshwari Vallury shows in this study. The aim of the book is to contest the assumption that male-authored narratives deploy mythical patterns (specifically those of Oedipus, Pygmalion, and Narcissus) only in ways that are reductive, if not destructive, of female difference. This argument is made with reference to four literary texts from nineteenth-century France: Balzac's *Sarrasine* and *Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu* (1830 and 1831), Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835), and Maupassant's *Pierre et Jean* (1888). In its treatment of these works, '*Surfacing*' diverges significantly from current trends in nineteenth-century French studies in that it is resolutely ahistorical (to such an extent, indeed, that it does not even provide publication dates for its primary

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debate. The book's lack of  
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