

"Le silence des pères au principe du 'récit de filiation'" by Dominique Viart, who coined the term *récit de filiation* in 1996 and who has addressed other aspects of this question in other venues. He argues for a significant mutation in French literature between 1975 and 1984 during which texts focused more intently on realities beyond themselves, including the subject and his attempt to cope with issues of filiation, heritage, and flawed transmission. In this contribution he reflects on how some of these narratives marked by paternal silence can be viewed as attempts to reestablish frayed communal bonds. Although his is the final essay in the dossier, it might profitably be read first, to be followed by Laurent Demanze's article investigating how the valuation of autonomy in modern and post-modern culture has led to the creation of characters who choose fragments of their inherited past to establish their identity. In these narratives, family memory is selectively appropriated and assumed individually rather than collectively.

These two essays, broad in their reach, reflect on such writers as Pierre Michon, Annie Ernaux, Sylvie Germain, Jean Rouaud, Gérard Macé, Pierre Bergounioux, Michel Séonnet, Leïla Sebbar, Martine Sonnet, and Virginie Linhart, while the remaining articles focus on individual authors. Élisabeth Nardout-Lafarge addresses the links between past and present, the disappearance of traces, and the attempt to liquidate heritage in Richard Millet's *La gloire des Pythre*. Her discussion is equally attentive to the question of intertextual legacies and particularly to the Faulknerian resonances of the novel. Mathilde Barraband analyzes the narratives of Christian Prigent, particularly *Demain je meurs*. Prigent's writing melds fiction with autobiographical content, extending the reflection to a broader family configuration that includes father, mother, but also grandmother. Avoiding a linear, unidirectional representation of individual human stories, Prigent explores the need to denounce the father as a means of achieving identity. Martine-Emmanuelle Lapointe treats Réjean Ducharme's *Va savoir* as a "récit de recyclage" in which the reconstruction of a house becomes part of the reconstruction of a family heritage. The novel emerges as a reflection on "les économies de l'héritage" that can help to explain the narrator's relationship to both past and future.

At a time when young writers in Quebec associated with *La barre du jour* and *Les herbes rouges* were forcefully rejecting their ancestors, Victor-Lévy Beaulieu was insisting on reclaiming legacies, although of his own choosing and on his own terms. Michel Biron reflects on this peculiar stance that underlies a series of books Beaulieu wrote on literary giants, in particular those on Melville and Joyce, in which Beaulieu projects himself into the life of Melville, especially his drive to write in spite of failure, and becomes equally absorbed by Joyce who emerges as the author whose linguistic creativity most fascinates him. Biron's insight is that the most revealing pages in Beaulieu's literary essays are those in which he denounces the faults and failures of these writers only to identify more closely with them. The volume provides insights into a noteworthy development in contemporary writing in France and Quebec.

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LARROUX, GUY, et YVES REBOUL, éd. *Pierre Bergounioux*. Toulouse: PU du Mirail, 2009. ISBN 978-2-8107-0066-0. Pp. 196. 22 €.

By all accounts, Bergounioux, who began publishing in 1984, has until recently been more heard about and respected than actually read. As little as ten years

ago, Reboul and Larroux note in their excellent *avant-propos*, Bergounioux was accorded scant attention by the scholarly community. Consider the following reference to him in a literary dictionary: "normalien, agrégé de lettres," followed by a brief, perfunctory remark (6). The reason for this neglect may be as simple as Bergounioux's work failing to fall into a convenient category. His writing is often an uneasy amalgam of fiction and essay, of storytelling and philosophizing. Yet while this mixture would appear to hearken back to the Enlightenment tradition of the *conte philosophique* and Bergounioux is certainly an admirer of this tradition, the *philosophique* aspect of Bergounioux's *contes* owes more to Barthes and Foucault than to Diderot and Voltaire. For this writer, who prefers the Corrèze to l'Île-de-France (not a shrewd choice for a French author seeking recognition), history has no sense, no inherent progress, and the emergence of genius is usually a matter of chance. This does not mean he rejects the possibility of human betterment; rather his texts give the impression that what we hope for is not necessarily what we will get, and that when things do work out to our advantage, we should be cautious in explaining the causes of our good fortune. If Bergounioux has finally begun to attract attention in France, it is because his version of idealistic stoicism is starting to resonate with an expanding readership.

American readers unfamiliar with Bergounioux may wish to start with his recent work, *Une chambre en Hollande* (Verdier, 2009). This work lightly mixes together elements of biography, fiction, and philosophy to tell the story of Descartes's activities in Holland when he was writing his *Discours de la méthode*. As is the case with Bergounioux's other writings, the erudition is rich but discretely parceled out, and the "adventures" of Descartes, a man not normally known for escapades other than intellectual, are told with sly humor. To the extent this book has a thesis, it is that the barren Dutch landscape contributed greatly to the development of what might be termed the philosopher's "minimalist" method. The book is not, of course, a monograph on geography's effect on philosophy, but rather an illustration of the role of chance in human evolution as well as devolution. Also, to a lesser extent, but still typical of Bergounioux, the story demonstrates that there is no biography without speculation, without an element of fiction.

Admirers, new and old, will find much to be grateful for in this special issue of *Littératures*, devoted to Bergounioux. The volume features nine essays of high quality, plus an *avant-propos* dealing with the author's texts as well as his reading and working habits. There is also an extensive interview with him and two *inédits*. The latter will doubtless appear eventually in one of his *Carnets*, which constitute an important part of his oeuvre. In an excellent contribution, "Pourquoi lire le *Carnet de notes* de Pierre Bergounioux," Elisa Bricco describes what she terms *le charme*, *l'anti-charme*, and *le re-charme* of reading the *Carnets*: the pleasure of following a very self-conscious author in his daily activities, the confrontation with his tremendously disciplined solitude as well as the occasional *longueurs* any diary is bound to contain, and finally the variety of insights into the creative process these notes provide. It is a pleasure to learn that Bergounioux's stock is rising in France; this special issue of *Littératures* will only enhance his reputation abroad as well as at home.