

SPIVAK, GAYATRI. 1987. "Finding Feminist Readings: Dante and Yeats." In her *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, 15–29. New York & London: Methuen.

UTAKER, ARILD. 1974. "On the Binary Opposition." *Linguistics* 134: 73–93.

MENOCAL, MARÍA ROSA. *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987. Pp. xvii, 178.

When she was a graduate student, M. tells us, she first became interested in the etymology of *trobar*, *troubadour*, etc., and was surprised to find that suggestions that the words might have an Arabic origin were strongly resisted. The book under review does contain some discussion of this etymology, and also of a number of concrete areas in the field of comparative literature where influences from the Arabic-speaking world may have had some impact in the Romance West, but it does not set out to provide a definitive and systematic treatment of these matters. It tackles the metaproblem of why anyone proposing an Arabic solution to any difficulty in Romance linguistics or literature will find it extremely hard to persuade anybody to examine the arguments seriously. She contends that the trouble stems at a deep level from Europe's sense of its own identity, for that has been arrived at precisely by excluding that which is Arabic and Islamic. "The paradigm that to such a great extent established our own notions of what constituted the Middle Ages was partially formed in the immediate post-medieval period, which viewed itself as a renaissance—a rebirth, if we accept the implications of the terminology—following that moribund period" (4–5). The completion of this process, "the remainder of the myth, the crystallization of the concept of Europeanness and its ancestry, was largely spun out in the nineteenth century, and it played a critical role at this moment of high-pitched awareness of the particularity and superiority of Europe that came with the imperial and colonial experience and the post-Romantic experience with the Orient" (6). At this point M.'s thought is convergent with that of Edward Said, but she produces a further critique of the way that writer himself marginalizes Arabic culture in Spain in his much-discussed study entitled *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1978). "It is telling that in that wide-ranging and usually unsparing critical review of the discourse of Orientalism, there is virtually complete omission of both the phenomenon and the subsequent study of the history and culture of the Arabs in medieval Europe" (21). "Part of the myth he is attempting to demolish is ratified in his choice of texts and scholars, and his choice reflects the view that the real Europe is a Europe almost completely unaffected by hundreds of years of Arab domination" (22).

M.'s theoretical approach is thus extremely stimulating, and on some of the concrete topics which she chooses to discuss, she has perceptive things to say: her characterization of the *muwashshah*, for example, as "the poetry of a

society full of dialectically opposed cultural alternatives" (100). However, one must add that rarely is a subject tackled at sufficient length or in sufficient depth. Often we are simply given an outline of what a new approach might be: her brief treatment of the *Decameron*, for example ("the strong possibility of an interesting pattern" [140]), is altogether too superficial. But if in places the handling of practical criticism is disappointing, the lively way in which the general thesis is argued should serve the purpose of bringing out into the open the continuing process of suppression of truths about Islamic Spain.

There are a number of points of detail that give rise to puzzlement. At one point (112) M. shows she is well aware of the existence of *muwashshahas* with Arabic *kharjas*, but at another (95) she contrives to suggest that the *kharja* is always in Romance vernacular. Why is Lull's name spelt Llul; and is not, in any case, the "don Raimundo" in the context of Toledan translation the archbishop (d. 1152), and not Lull at all (137)? I confess to being baffled on that point, as I was by "the Alvaros," thus pluralized by M. (29).

I suspect, indeed I feel sure, that a number of those whose views are summarized by M., especially Alan Jones (see 19), may wish to qualify the positions ascribed to them, but space will not permit me to enter into such matters here.

Since these lines are being written in London, perhaps I should close by pointing out one quite minor error of fact. London is repeatedly mentioned by M. (43, 54, 122–25) in the same breath as Paris and Bologna as a center of studies where the new Arabic learning would be discussed. Now, of course, this sort of activity did not go on in the universities exclusively, but the mention of Paris and Bologna and the context make it clear that universities are what M. has in mind. But in the Middle Ages London had no *studium generale*, and indeed it was, to our shame, not until the 19th century that the capital belatedly acquired its own university.

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LACHET, CLAUDE. *La "Prise d'Orange", ou la parodie courtoise d'une épopée*. Nouvelle Bibliothèque du Moyen Age, 10. Paris: Champion, 1986. Pp. 239.

In 1868 the *Prise d'Orange* met with Léon Gautier's disfavor (1868: 364, n.), and it has been slow to recover. The poem is disconcerting because it transforms the epic hero William of Orange, elsewhere portrayed as the indomitable defender of the crown and of the Christian faith, from Guillaume Fierebrace to Guillaume l'Amiable, from William of the Mighty Arms to William the Lover (version A, vv. 1562–1563). Disguised as a Saracen, he enters the city of Orange with two companions in order to behold and win