

network (p. 194) where spectators construct ‘parcours’ among electronic traces (p. 197), illustrated by Lyotard’s 1985 museum exhibit *Les Immatériaux*. The *promeneur* or *flâneur* is ‘a governing trope’ (p. 10) for Diderot and cohort. In Chapter 1, the sublime — absent from volume title but crucial for Pierce’s analysis — is defined, with special reference to Edmund Burke, as the spectator’s reaction to the clash of ‘incommensurable’ systems or elements within landscape, art writing, or museum space. The second chapter analyses how Diderot deploys the sublime to emphasize the inadequacy of verbal descriptions of landscape. Pierce also associates the sublime with theatricality and connects Diderot’s interactive approach in the *Salons* to his remarks in *Le Paradoxe sur le comédien* about the conflicting demands of emotivity and objectivity. Chapter 3 evaluates Baudelaire’s sceptical reception of contemporary realistic landscapes — Courbet being the primary example — and his admiration, in the *Salon de 1859*, for Méryon’s more imaginative depictions of Paris. While explaining Baudelaire’s shift to cityscape in his prose poems, Pierce offers convincing readings of subverted landscape in ‘Le Gâteau’ and of ‘theatrical doubleness’ in ‘Une mort héroïque’ (pp. 139–40). In Chapter 4, Pierce discusses the Surrealist city as psychic milieu or ‘dreamscape’ (p. 149) governed by *hasard objectif*. This turn inwards towards ‘immateriality’ (p. 177) is mirrored in *Le Surréalisme et la peinture*, where Breton eschews description of paintings in favour of discourses elaborating Surrealist tenets. Likewise, Breton’s vistas of Tenerife in *L’Amour fou* celebrate the *point sublime* of the *Second Manifeste*, where consciousness and the unconscious fuse. The fifth chapter turns to Lyotard’s assertion that Diderot’s *Salons* anticipate postmodern rejection of master narratives. The sublime resurfaces in Lyotard’s *différend*, art objects becoming ‘artefacts’ that ‘bear witness to an unrepresentable content’ (p. 196). This inverted landscape that makes ‘no truth claim’ (p. 199) experiments with exhibition spaces constructed as fields of depersonalized acoustic and visual ‘signals’ (p. 197). The resulting ‘ontological dislocation’ (p. 210), or sublime incommensurability, ‘threatens to subsume the human spectator’ (p. 203). Pierce’s argument is occasionally unwieldy, especially in Chapter 1, which manoeuvres from Burke to Kant, Derrida, Michael Fried, Paul de Man, Fredric Jameson, and others. Overall, though, multidirectional plotting of landscape, the sublime, the promenade, theatricality, and immateriality reveals the similar aesthetic procedures or signatures underpinning the landscapes of Diderot and his intellectual progeny.

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*Translating the Perception of the Text: Literary Translation and Phenomenology*. By CLIVE SCOTT. (Legenda Main Series). Oxford: Legenda, 2012. xii + 196 pp.

In echoing Walter Benjamin’s disapproval of the view that a translation is intended for ‘readers who do not understand the original’ (p. 16), Clive Scott convincingly argues in favour of translation as a literary art that helps promote the language of the source text rather than seeks to provide substitutes for it. The importance of the acoustic, graphic, and grammatical specificity of the source language is celebrated as part of a process of ‘espousing difference as diversity’ (p. 9), while the bygone notion that meaning constitutes the main or sole object of translation is played down. Homophonic translation, as Scott suggests, should be ‘brought from the periphery to the centre of translation theory’ (p. 18). This implies drawing on Merleau-Ponty’s idea of the embodied experience of the world through language in order to arrive at ‘a phenomenological translation, or a translation designed to capture the phenomenology of reading’ (p. 17). It is not so much a question of seeking to render as accurately as possible the meaning of the source

text into another language, but rather of asking oneself ‘how we listen to a literary text, and, more particularly, how we “listen-to-translate”’ (p. 18). Scott’s approach is bound to raise a few eyebrows as it sets out to challenge a number of widespread presuppositions about translation, one of which is that translation caters for ‘those ignorant of the source language’ (p. 15). If the new phenomenological translation does not pretend or aspire to be a philosophy of consciousness, it nevertheless endeavours to prompt a radical ‘shift of emphasis from text to reading, from a translation of meaning to a translation of readerly perceptions and sensations’ (p. 20). The first part of Scott’s study assesses the relevance of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of perception for the practice of translation, aiming to incorporate the body among the expressive means through which we inhabit the world of our native tongue. As it becomes clear from the explanatory notes and ensuing practical analyses of translations from French and German into English (to which the entire second part of the volume is devoted), the author is less concerned with the reception studies aspects of ‘the English Baudelaire, or the English Rilke’, and more interested in the possibility of redefining translation as the process capable of delivering ‘the French Baudelaire, or German Rilke, as perceived by the contemporary English reader, leading to a mutual enrichment of both’ (p. 23). The problem with this otherwise thought-provoking and engaging argument is that it fails to question some of Scott’s own presuppositions such as aiming at the monolingual English readership while ignoring audiences of translations into minority languages whose demands may neither spring from monoglotism nor encourage any notions of ‘standardized language’. Another problem with his approach is that an English translator cannot possibly approximate the perception of the source text by a native speaker (the example of the French Baudelaire as compared to the English Baudelaire), so the new phenomenology of reading fails to question its ‘blind spot’ — that of the intended (French) readership of Baudelaire’s poems.

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*Usages des vies: le biographique hier et aujourd’hui (XVII<sup>e</sup>– XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle)*. Sous la direction de SARAH MOMBERT and MICHÈLE ROSELLINI. (Cribles, XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: essais de littérature). Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 2012. 383 pp.

It is a curious fact that collective studies of biography far outnumber single-author monographs, a phenomenon confirmed not only by the appearance of this latest volume but also by its own bibliography, which, though not exhaustive, lists almost three times as many collective titles as single-author ones. The reason for this fragmentation of approach may well be that, as Michèle Rosellini’s intelligent Introduction suggests, biography is an unusually plastic genre, ‘ouvert à l’hybridation, disponible à toutes les altérations et les métamorphoses que le récit de vie a assumé [sic]’ (p. 28). Being ‘fortement ancrée dans l’histoire’ (p. 12), biography calls for a pragmatic rather than a theoretical approach. It makes very good sense, then, to do as Rosellini proposes, and avoid seeking to establish a ‘poetics’ of biography or to treat it as a single and self-identical object, by paying attention instead to its various ‘uses’ as they emerge from the seventeenth century onwards. The thirteen essays illustrate the multiple ways in which biographical writing has been used across four centuries, from Mme Périer’s *Vie de Pascal*, the biographical portraits of Théophile de Viau and Mme de Villedieu, via Perrault’s *Hommes illustres*, Bayle’s *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, Voltaire’s biographies of Charles XII and Molière, La Harpe’s *Cours de littérature*, nineteenth-century scientism, Stendhal’s *Vie de Napoléon*, Chateaubriand’s *Vie de Rancé*, Lamartine’s *Biographies de gare*, the representation of Montesquieu in twentieth-century manuals of literature, and Kundera and contemporary fiction. Much of the material is relatively unfamiliar and for the most part the authors are experts in their subject area rather