

although not all recognize that his intention in publishing works such as *Les Règles de l'art* (1992) was to offer 'une provocation au travail et un programme de recherche' (p. 287) rather than a completed theoretical system. This leads, in the volume's weaker moments, to defensive posturing, and to readings that doggedly pursue the internal contradictions of particular texts without considering the practical possibilities enabled by the model they propose. The best essays, in contrast, extend the scope and reveal the limitations of Bourdieu's theory by putting it into practice. In this respect the essays of Anna Boschetti and Jérôme Meizoz are exemplary. Whilst Boschetti elaborates the effects of external processes on the differentiation of practices within the literary field, Meizoz offers a fascinating account of the transmission of symbolic capital, and of Bourdieu's role in the promotion and dissemination of his theory. What both authors thereby acknowledge is that 'Bourdieu était à l'affût de travaux qui pourraient apporter des éléments empiriques supplémentaires, de nature à faire progresser sa théorie, qu'il savait très généralisante' (p. 204).

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Jacques Rancière et la politique de l'esthétique. Edited by JÉRÔME GAME and ALIOCHA WALD LASOWSKI. Paris: Éditions des archives contemporaines, 2009. 178 pp. Pb €25.00.

There is, at the moment, a proliferation of publications by and on Jacques Rancière, and in particular on his unique way of thinking together the realms of politics and aesthetics. Readers are referred, most recently, to a review by Patrick Ffrench of an anglophone volume with almost the same title and preoccupations (see *French Studies*, 65 (2011), 126–27). Like that volume, the one here under review is also the product of a conference, in this case at the École Normale Supérieure in 2008; and like its anglophone counterpart, this volume leaves the last word to Rancière himself, in the form of an interview that is as lucid as it is engaging. Unlike the previous work, however, this collection is not helpfully subdivided into sections but presents disparate essays dealing with Rancière's contributions to the fields of literature, film, politics, and aesthetics, as well as bringing him into dialogue with pre-eminent near-contemporary French thinkers such as Badiou, Deleuze, Derrida, or Lyotard. There can be no doubt that Rancière's thought deserves the attention it is so prolifically receiving, yet the question as to why another such volume is necessary or desirable becomes difficult to avoid. Nevertheless, ultimately this is a most welcome addition to the growing canon of Rancière scholarship, for two principal reasons. First, perhaps because of the familiarity with the general tenets of Rancière's thought, as well as with the majority of his writings, that is quite rightly (given the proliferation already mentioned) more or less presumed, the essays in this volume tend to be involved, both critically and polemically, in depth as well as in range. This gives results that can sometimes be dense or too concerned with an author/participant's own philosophical agenda, but it can also produce, for example in the case of Véronique Bergen's formidable defence of Deleuze against Rancière, essays that combine polemics with a tangible critical engagement with both Rancière and his philosophical adversaries. The second reason, however, that this volume deserves its place among the many consecrated to Rancière, is more important and possibly more surprising. In essays such as Gabriel Rockhill's fascinating defence of Rancière's notion of democracy alongside a trenchant discussion of his worrying siding with reactionary stances over the 2005 riots, or Élie During's startling decision to focus on the question of 'accent' while bringing Rancière's work in dialogue with Derrida's *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre*, readers get more than a glimpse of why Rancière's thought can appear so vital in

contemporary discussions of aesthetics and politics. It is because such efforts bring Rancière almost violently out of context and into rich new grounds of argument and analysis that this volume deserves to be read. And it is because Rancière's thought remains so amenable to such treatments, having become not only an indisputable canonic reference in recent French philosophy but also a potent springboard from which surprising and exciting new thought can develop, that this will certainly not be the last volume dedicated to this seminal figure.

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Painting, Politics and the Struggle for the École de Paris, 1944–1964. By NATALIE ADAMSON. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009. xii + 318 pp., ill. Hb £70.00.

The 'École de Paris' is a fraught concept, involving problems of usage that differed within the French art milieu itself and how the epithet was perceived and discussed in Europe, Britain, and America. In fact there was no 'school' of artists as such, and the École's existence, death, or disappearance were constantly disputed, as this fascinating book makes clear. Of course, the term embraced sculptors from the cubist Lipchitz to figures dominant after 1945 such as Giacometti, but these are excluded from this study. Adamson discusses a post-1944 definition of 'a recently constructed tradition with a stitched-together relation to the sublime ideal of liberty' (p. 50), but this represses the racist pre-war heritage in which 'École de Paris' was a euphemism for a mainly Jewish influx of painters, from the realist Soutine to Modigliani, painter of nudes, or the abstract artist Otto Freundlich. Thus a starting point in 1944 is problematic not only regarding the 'new' École, but because of the depletion of the Paris art world via deportation and emigration, leaving a more *franco-français* concentration of artists and critics than conceivable in the heyday of Montparnasse. The complexity of École de Paris debates had a political base: the socialist inheritance of pre-war abstractionists fighting the mainly Trotskyist surrealists, the communist socialist realists, and the *informel* painters, whose work started as an existentialist émigré cry (Wols) yet developed into the royalist swashbucklings on canvas of a Georges Mathieu. 'Cold' geometric abstraction won out in the later 1950s, leading straight into 'Op' and kinetic art (a transition not discussed). There were the leaders — Picasso still — and a complex system of Salons extending through the year. Art magazines and daily or weekly columns proliferated — hence the viable *métier* of the art critic, with stars who launched styles and labels: Michel Tapié with his *art autre*, or Pierre Restany, dependent on the École de Paris as a *repoussoir* from which to launch his Nouveau Réaliste movement. Of course, constellations of galleries catered for different tastes, from those lingering from the Impressionist era (Bernheim-Jeune) or the 1930s (Jeanne Bucher), to the Galerie de France, born during the Occupation, or the Galerie Maeght, which dominated the scene in the postwar years. An artist's recognizable signature style dictated his selling power (Adamson does not address gender questions). While the debates now seem distant, their partisan energies are mirrored in this passionate microhistory: a counterpoint to the 'cleaned-up', simplified, and familiar saga of the Abstract Expressionists. The anxiety about a French tradition was as evident in the Fouquet-like palette of Maurice Estève's abstractions as in the Davidian realism of André Fougéron's miner-martyrs, and I would argue that Adamson should have elucidated the Catholic traditionalism of painters such as Alfred Manessier. An almost impossible task is handled here with superb attention to detail; yet colour complementaries or subtle gradations disappear in the small black and white illustrations. These do major disservice to an art whose unfashionable beauty is beginning to be rediscovered: from Pierre