being evident. The editor was obliged to select the base text without being sure of its status or that of the variants she lists.

The three religious poems are found only in printed editions, but in several different versions, and the editor has chosen what she believes to be the "best" text, although she corrects it upon occasion. At best, then, we are dealing with poems that may be by Brodeau, and in versions that may or may not resemble the author's original, and that present a hybrid text.

Notably lacking from this edition is any critical evaluation of the poems. Are they indeed worth publishing? The answer depends not only on one's evaluation of the poetry, but on one's point of view concerning its author.

Brodeau is an interesting figure, but his poetry is not very interesting. Pierre Jourda, the only other person besides Professor Tomlinson to take an interest in Brodeau, and whose article is an indispensable complement to this edition, nevertheless admits that his poetry is "froide et ennuyeuse" (p. 210), that he "n'a jamais rencontré de grande idée poétique" (p. 210), that he lacks originality in style, language and syntax (p. 213). Add this to the uncertainty regarding authenticity and the limited number of poems that may with any certainty be attributed to Brodeau, and what we have is not much, from an aesthetic point of view, with the exception of the *Louanges*.

We do have a fleshing-out of the period, the addition of another footnote to literary history in the person of this typical minor figure. The broad canvas of literary history contains many such secondary characters. Often they help us understand a period better than the major figures. So it is with Victor Brodeau. Professor Tomlinson's edition has the merit of giving us an insight into the literary activity of the early Renaissance in France, but her careful resurrection does not succeed in turning Brodeau into an important poet.

The edition includes a Bibliography, four Appendices, a Glossary, an Index of proper names, a Table of incipits and a list of abbreviations. It is relatively free of typographical errors.

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Lucien Febvre. *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*, translated by Beatrice Gottlieb. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1982. Pp. xxxii, 516. \$35.00.

Le Disciple de Pantagruel (Les Navigations de Panurge), éd. critique par Guy Demerson et Christiane Lauvergnot-Gagniere (Société des Textes Français Modernes). Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1982, Pp. lxxxiii, 98.

Lucien Febvre's masterpiece, although first published in 1942, is still the best introduction to Rabelais and the spiritual climate of early sixteenth-century France. Beatrice Gottlieb's expert and welcome translation is made all the more valuable by a knowledgeable and thoughtful introduction which places the founder of the *Annales* school and his work in the context of twentieth-century French historiography. Her English version has much of the conversational verve of the

original, whose tone was no less a reproach to Third Republic academic postures than its arguments. Only occasionally does she miss Febvre's savory colloquialisms. When Febvre writes of Julius Caesar Scaliger, "Le témoin n'est pas fameux," Gottlieb translates flatly, "This witness is not famous," when he means something like, "He's no star witness."

Febvre's study takes its impetus from Abel Lefranc's astonishing notion in his 1922 introduction to *Pantagruel*, that Rabelais was a good Third Republic *esprit fort*. The first third of *The Problem of Unbelief* minutely analyzes the contemporary documents that purportedly "proved" Rabelais's atheism. One hardly expects such detailed scholarly polemic to leave the pages of specialized journals, but apart from their pedantic relish, the value of these chapters is to create a picture of a certain provincial literary and intellectual milieu in which petty vanities and jealousies substitute for serious and substantive debate. Even so strange a figure as Guillaume Postel is put into a context in which he seems less atypical. And it is against this social anatomy of petty mediocrity that the larger views and achievements of Rabelais, Luther and Erasmus can be measured.

At the heart of Febvre's magisterial work is an alert reading of Rabelais's text in the light of narrative and theological traditions. Occasionally, Febvre's polemics *à tout prix* catches up with him. On the one hand, he argues that the resurrection of Epistemon in the *Pantagruel* has its harmless parallels in similar episodes in late medieval narrative, but, on the other hand, he observes that serious Reformation thinkers were questioning the validity of miracles, even Biblical ones. Rabelais's orthodoxy is here preserved, but at the cost of making him an intellectual lightweight. Might it not be that Rabelais was shrewd enough to play on popular literary modes so as to suggest theological positions that could not be expressed outright? Might not an absurd and laughable literal episode, in conjunction with other passages, yield a more thoughtful, philosophical sense? While Febvre, like M.A. Screech after him, is keen in his ability to distinguish the militant Lutheran note in Rabelais's pages from the more subtle Erasmian tone, he is content to place Rabelais in a historical context of influence rather than in a literary context where an author may freely choose the strategies by which he selects and educates his readers. While Febvre is indeed sensitive to the ambiguities of Erasmus's thought—"there is not one phrase . . . that is not susceptible of two interpretations thoroughly different in spirit"—nowhere does he entertain the possibility that Rabelais might have written a work that consciously mirrors the hermeneutical ambiguity one finds in Erasmus.

The last part of Febvre's work is the most audacious and speculative, for here the historian branches away from Rabelais and the Erasmian spirit to consider the very impossibility of unbelief in the sixteenth century. We are given a structuralist analysis *avant la lettre* of the assumptions and conditions that limited thought and behavior in the Renaissance: a society in which religious forms dominated human life from birth to death, a geocentric universe populated by demons, a *langue* whose syntax was severely restricted, and in a bold formulation, a conservative oral culture in which the ear was more important than the critical eye. Febvre's picture of a tight European society where great minds reach out to great minds, and of a world very much unlike our own is at once vivid and sufficiently strange that we are wisely enjoined of reading anachronistic modern attitudes back upon the past. But

for many reasons his argument is not convincing. "The spirit of free and critical inquiry stemming from the Renaissance" found in Erasmus along with "the spirit of respectful, trusting adherence to dogma" (p. 308) could easily become unmoored. If unbelief, whether in Christianity or the supernatural, is impossible in the century then it is difficult to account for Montaigne, not so much his use of ancient scepticism to attack religious dogmatism, but that, following Auerbach, a personal Christianity should be so far from Montaigne's acknowledged concerns. The issue does not seem to be belief or unbelief, but in the wake of Foucault, who is anticipated in Febvre's final pages, the identification of knowledge with interpretation and the role played by similitude in intellectual constructs.

Febvre himself speaks of *Le Disciple de Pantagruel* as "an insipid hodgepodge with nothing in it," and even its learned and meticulous editors speak of its "contes à dormir debout." Just as Febvre allows us to measure first-rate minds in all their force and complexity against third-rate poetasters, so *Le Disciple* provides a foil to Rabelais's narrative genius. The editors can be praised for the interesting things they have to say about literary mediocrity: the independence of constituent elements, characteristic of folklore; the absence of allegory and polemical nuance; the simple formulas of causality; the superficial borrowing of Rabelaisian nomenclature (as opposed to Rabelais's wholesale theft of folkloric material); the charming animation of objects, but a corresponding inability to represent character. While the author of *Le Disciple* and Rabelais read and borrow from each other, there can be no mistaking the difference between the "monument" and the "document." Whereas *Le Disciple*'s relation to the popular tradition is merely additive, Rabelais's wedding of the popular and learned traditions implies a liberating critical stance towards both. And yet, although the editors do not develop the point, they are surely right to point out that the elaboration of the Land of Cockaigne motif in their text is less innocent than it seems.

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Elisabeth Badinter. *L'amour en plus. Histoire de l'amour maternel, XVIIe – XVIIIe siècle*. Paris: Flammarion, 1980.

Il ne faudrait pas tomber dans le snobisme à rebours qui consiste à voir dans l'extrême popularité d'un livre, un indice de médiocrité. Et pourtant... La tentation est forte en ce qui concerne l'ouvrage dont le titre sur toutes les lèvres ces derniers mois, qui suscite débats, polémiques et prises de positions contradictoires et passionnés: *L'amour en plus* d'Elisabeth Badinter. Pourquoi tant de passion? Parce que l'auteur s'en prend à un des dogmes apparemment inaltérables de notre société: celui de la toute puissance de l'amour maternel. La thèse n'est pas neuve, et sans se dire féministes, de plus en plus nombreuses, les femmes montrent la fragilité et les aléas d'une prétendue vocation maternelle; de plus en plus conscientes des dangers de l'exclusivité féminine dans le domaine des soins des enfants et de leur éducation, elles en appellent à la participation des pères. C'est dans ce courant que prend place l'ouvrage d'E. Badinter: elle veut y nier l'existence de l'instinct