Jama (*op. cit.*, p. 263). Toute la question est là : sur quoi au juste se fonde cette « rationalité scientifique » dont on crédite le philosophe français ? Jointes à de telles contributions, les articles réunis dans le recueil des *Systèmes de pensée précartésiens* aident à élargir la perspective qui tend à resituer Descartes parmi les précartésiens, ceux-là mêmes que d'un point de vue prospectif on qualifierait d'anti-cartésiens ou de non-rationalistes.

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Malinconia ed allegrezza nel rinascimento. Ed. Luisa Rotondi Secchi Tarugi. Milan: Nuovi Orizzonti, 1999. Pp. 576.

As the title of this ambitious volume indicates, its thirty-six papers cover a very wide range of topics within the general rubric of Renaissance culture. The given subject allows for both general essays and highly specific analysis of certain poems or pictures. It is thus a work useful both to the student seeking a general introduction to the topic of melancholy in the Renaissance and to the scholar seeking pertinent treatments of specific issues.

The introductory paper by Lionello Sozzi introduces us to the general theme of the work, the oppositional and essential relationship between melancholy and joy, via the famous tag *bene vivere et laetari*. Sozzi begins with the *Nouvelles Récréations* of Des Périers but, mentioning numerous others, discusses the problem of what is *bene vivere* in the mind of Renaissance thinkers. Does *bene vivere et laetari* mean “live well and rejoice” or “live well to rejoice”? In the course of his analysis, Sozzi introduces several themes which will appear again and again in this volume. One is the notion of true happiness, derived from Christian scripture, as “gioiosa adesione al verbo divino,” something essentially belonging to a future and infinite world. With rare exceptions, the Renaissance seems not to have centered happiness in the fugitive pleasures of the present world. Yet there is a suggestion that the melancholy of present time is included, albeit changed and sublimated, within the notion of happiness. This essential paradox will in turn be examined in a number of specific contexts by a number of other scholars in this volume. It is by no means, however, used as a paradigm that would confine or restrict analysis, as is entirely appropriate for a subject that seems to have as many manifestations, as many contradictory conclusions, as there are Renaissance authors who mention or describe it.

Thus, for example, we learn from Peter G. Bietenholz that both Valla and Erasmus appear to have paired melancholy with a narrow Stoicism, which saw human nature as something to be suppressed and subjugated, and joy with the Epicurean acceptance of pleasure and human passions as part of nature. Yet both authors abandoned the pairing in favor of a Christian faith — in Erasmus' case, for the “madness of the cross,” an ecstasy which abandons and goes beyond the

dualism of melancholy versus joy. Ficino, on the other hand, as documented in several papers in this book, postulated melancholy as an essential condition of the glory of artistic and intellectual creativity, and he was not alone. Jean-Claude Ternaux, for example, illuminates how the idea of melancholy in Sannazaro's *Arcadia* is linked not only, as one might expect, with lost love, but with the problem the artist confronts in creation. Eva Kushner makes the important observation, in introducing her essay on Pontus du Tyard, that a melancholic personality was firmly appropriated by certain poets, so as effectively to detach the notion of melancholy from its medical origins and give it certain spiritual and aesthetic values. Kushner's essay is followed by one by George Hugo Tucker on Joachim du Bellay which seems to give ample demonstration of this very point, exploring how Du Bellay inverted seasonal metaphors in order to give a new value to his poetic persona. The use of melancholy as a feature of poetic innovation and even of textuality itself is explored further by Mark Davie in regard to Luigi Pulci, Caroline Sadighi in regard to Rabelais's laughter, Pierangela Adinolfi in regard to Marot, Josiane Rieu in regard to Maurice Scève, and in numerous other papers. Taken as a whole, these essays provide valuable insight not only into how a wide variety of Renaissance writers thought the human mind and emotions worked, but also into how they used these conclusions to enhance their poetic creation.

Other essays deal in more straightforward fashion with the lexicographical or medical-historical problems posed by the notion of melancholy. An entire sub-set of essays deals or attempts to deal with the perplexities posed by Albrecht Dürer's *Melancholia I*. It is unfortunate that these are not grouped together in the book, and unfortunate that Jean-Claude Margolin's paper is not placed first, as it most succinctly summarizes the issues surrounding the interpretation of this interesting engraving and should be read before the equally intriguing but more specialized studies of Alba Ceccarelli Pellegrino, Marco Bertozzi, and Anne Larue. It would be difficult to offer any summary of their conclusions: it seems that the interpretation of Panofsky and his colleagues is under assault but has not yet fallen.

Another unfortunate feature related to the Dürer engravings is the poor reproduction of the engraving in question, which sometimes makes it difficult for the reader to distinguish the features under discussion. In fact, for those concerned about such things, the book's presentation suffers in several ways. It would have been beneficial to have related subjects grouped more closely together, for ease of cross-reference, and equally beneficial to have some sort of preface or introduction that would attempt to summarize the diverse contents of this collection, giving the reader some sense of direction. The volume also suffers from poor copy-editing, which has resulted in some egregious typographical errors and even a transposed page. These small difficulties, however, do not detract much from a very interesting and useful collection, valuable not only to the specialist in questions of melancholy in the Renaissance, but also to anyone interested in the art, literature, and philosophy of the period.

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