



one can no longer consider the possibility, according to the famous dictum attributed to Boileau, that Descartes “cut the throat of poetry.”

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Un entrepreneur des lettres au xvii^e siècle: Donneau de Visé, de Molière au “Mercure galant.” Christophe Schuwey.

Lire le XVII^e siècle 69; Discours critique 2. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2020. 552 pp. €58.

Readers of Christophe Schuwey’s briskly written, densely documented study of Jean Donneau de Visé will encounter a seventeenth-century literary figure shaped more by commercial hustle than by the doctrines of French classicism. Informed by the work of Christian Jouhaud, Alain Viala, and the GRIHL collective on early modern publication, Schuwey argues convincingly for understanding Donneau de Visé as a literary entrepreneur whose offerings, including theater and theater criticism, literary compilations, and *Le Mercure galant*, characterize French literature of the late seventeenth century as a topical, publicly-responsive, and commercially-oriented media and entertainment product. From centering literary production around the unit of the modular, combinable *pièce* (piece), rather than the unitary work or book, to recasting the periodical *Mercure galant* as the principal cultural and political platform of Louis XIV’s reign (“la principale plateforme culturelle et politique du règne de Louis XIV”) (9), this ambitious study offers a dynamic and strikingly contemporary view of the literature and publishing practices of the *grand siècle*.

Part 1 expands concepts of early modern authorship to include Donneau de Visé as an exemplary, but by no means unique, figure of literary entrepreneurship who participates in the expansion and diversification of the literary public, literary formats, and the market for print and entertainment in late seventeenth-century France. Schuwey presents Donneau de Visé as a literary *fripier* (dealer in secondhand clothes), a cultural intermediary whose authorship is characterized by combining and refurbishing textual materials. Working through a series of case studies ranging from Donneau de Visé’s unauthorized edition of Molière’s *Le Cocu imaginaire* to his theater collaborations with Thomas Corneille, Schuwey highlights Donneau de Visé’s editorial innovations, promotion of theater criticism, and publicity-oriented plays. One of the contributions of this study, then, is to position Donneau de Visé as a central figure in early modern French theater and a key actor in the celebration of Molière through his work in marketing and publishing theater.

Schuwey’s emphasis on the capacities of print media combines with the appeal of news and the new as he foregrounds the innovations of Donneau de Visé’s *Nouvelles*

Nouvelles (1663), a varied compilation of topical stories, conversations, poems, theater news, and criticism. Schuwey puts this heterogeneous text on our scholarly map as Donneau de Visé's paradigmatic literary production, a platform for disseminating up-to-date content and commentary to a diversified public of readers. Turning to two other compilations, the *Nouvelles galantes, tragiques et comiques* and *L'Amour échappé* (both published in 1669), Schuwey analyzes these little-known works as virtual social spaces, gathering novellas and portraits that are informed by contemporary affairs and social topics.

Parts 2 and 3 extend Donneau de Visé's innovative literary and publishing practices to the work of his contemporaries, notably that of Marie-Catherine Desjardins (Madame de Villegieu), who appears throughout Schuwey's book, intriguingly, as a literary *entrepreneure* who crafts her career through similar strategies. Studying Donneau de Visé thus becomes a study of late seventeenth-century literary culture, characterized (part 2) by a fragmented process of literary production based on pieces that get circulated, commercialized, and assembled into the flexible media support of the book. Valorized notions of curiosity and trendy literary quarrels, including those around Corneille's *Sophonisbe* and Molière's *L'École des femmes* (part 3), demonstrate the literary world's fascination with the topical and the new (*l'actualité*). Compilation and contemporaneity, rather than integrality and timelessness, thus emerge as the key aspects of *grandsiècle* literature.

Figuring the *Mercurie galant* as the final realization of the innovative qualities of Donneau de Visé's literary entrepreneurship and publishing acumen, part 4 adds to a growing body of scholarship on this early periodical with an extensive study of its production, format, and contents. In contrast to what he presents as the modern separation of the book and the periodical press, Schuwey contextualizes the *Mercurie galant* within book history as a hybrid form: a "recueil périodique" (periodical compilation) (328). Through its periodicity, heterogeneity, and topicality, Donneau de Visé's *Mercurie galant* reconfigured notions of historiography, playing a major role in expanding while simultaneously controlling the diffusion and reception of military information to a broad audience. Building on Allison Stedman's presentation of the *Mercurie galant* as a textual social space, Schuwey shows that the periodical's collaborative nature expanded access not only to the cultural world of elite sociality and literary *galanterie* but also to the privileges of print and authorship. In Schuwey's analysis, the *Mercurie galant* stands as a synergetic historical project of Louis XIV's reign and a testament to the workings of the literary market in seventeenth-century France. The annexed biographical essay and clearly presented, comprehensive bibliography makes this study a vital reference tool for scholarship on Donneau de Visé and the *Mercurie galant*, as well as an important critical intervention for scholars of early modern literature, book history, theater, and print and media culture.

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