

House,” isolates the philosophical and visual qualities of both texts, culminating in a brilliantly dexterous analysis of insect, animal, and human eyes (159–63). Similarly, the final chapter of the book, devoted to Adam’s and Eve’s (and the serpent’s) “paradisaical labor” (169) in *Paradise Lost*, gives us an intriguing exploration of Miltonic indirection. At his best, then, Simon is a wonderfully acute (and sometimes very witty) reader and interpreter—his description of Milton’s serpent, who “drapes himself expansively across the garden; such is the birthright of snakes” (189), manages to convey both the sinister and the seductive quality of Milton’s creation, while it also hints at the unraveling of the future (fallen) history of both humans and serpents.

*Light without Heat* will gain deserving accolades as an innovative study of seventeenth-century literary and scientific writing. But it will also, I suspect, prompt some less generous responses. Some will be irritated by the author’s insistence on projecting himself into the forefront of the reader’s experience of the book, an insistence that Simon underlines when, in his introductory essay—and drawing attention to his practice of making regular use of the first-person plural (28), a stylistic tic that isn’t as unusual these days as he claims—he manages to occlude the rather more intrusive projection of the first-person singular. Others will find the immensely prolix, metatextual endnotes—one of which, a meditation on Heidegger, Derrida, de Man, and (inevitably) Frederic Jameson, manages to drift over almost two pages of text (221–23)—a source of annoyance. But, as an attempt at capturing and describing the shifting moods of reflection and observation that lie at the core of so much seventeenth-century writing, Simon has nevertheless written a deeply thought-provoking book.

Jonathan Sawday, *Saint Louis University*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2019.452

*La fantaisie philosophique à la renaissance*. Alice Vintennon.

Travaux d’Humanisme et Renaissance 581. Geneva: Droz, 2017. 574 pp. \$144.

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Alice Vintennon’s far-reaching and ambitious study touches on a number of topics that have come under more intense or renewed scrutiny in recent early modern scholarship, such as questions of mixed genres (and of genre in general), of allegory, of ludic and serious intentionality, and of rhetorical concerns (as in the triptych “fiction, verisimilitude, fact”). The dichotomy of the title, “philosophical fantasy,” sets the tone for the detailed investigations to follow, which focus on classical roots, especially Lucian of Samosatus; on Italian and French writers (Alberti, Ariosto, Folengo; Rabelais, Ronsard, Philippe d’Alcricpe); and on early modern and classical (Plato, Aristotle, Horace) theoretical treatises. These succinct indications suffice to show the merits of this book and its appeal to a wide variety of scholars in early modern studies. It is obviously inevitable, even in a massive study such as this, to leave blanks in even the most sweeping of investigations—blanks that some readers would

find to be gaping holes. It would have probably strengthened the book's solid thesis even more if more attention had been paid to Lucian's more theoretical writings (*Prometheus es* or *Bis accusatus* come to mind as prime examples), which focus on the main concerns of this study, or to Béroalde de Verville, whose *Moyen de parvenir* is unconvincingly excluded from the study despite what amounts to a crowning achievement of the fantastical dialogue via the shattering of conventional categories. While the critic's reasoning can be accepted, albeit reluctantly, in those cases, the absence of Verville's unmentioned *Voyage des Princes fortunés* is more difficult to accept, given the text's Lucianesque and Rabelaisian heritage and its status as a model philosophical fantasy. Finally, a more thorough discussion of satire within the context of the Horatian *uile dulci mixtum*, very much at the heart of the study, could have lent a more thorough background to many of Vintenon's highly engaging observations, in particular with regards to the notions of anti-dogmatism, perplexity, and reader reception. These few points take nothing away from the considerable merits of the study but rather indicate where further engagement with this fascinating topic might extend and complement the rich groundwork provided here.

One of the major strengths of the study is the discussion of fantastical writing in a poetic and rhetorical framework, particularly the widespread categories of *historia/argumentum/fabula*. Much critical attention has focused on the first two terms, and especially *argumentum* when it comes to the essential Horatian dichotomy *prodesse/delectare*. We are shown in a quite convincing fashion that the *fabula* is far more problematic than is conventionally admitted, which nuances its main purpose of "pure amusement," and thus aesthetic and intellectual inferiority. Similar work on *facetiae* has been done very recently, and the supposedly clear line between *argumentum* and *fabula* is blurred as a result, extending the early modern predilection for the concept of mixture to further concepts in the domains of rhetoric, epistemology, and hermeneutics. More's *Utopia* is a good example of the ambiguity that marks the theoretically sound distinction between the two rhetorical categories, an ambiguity that has come to the fore recently and is highlighted in the present study.

What seems at stake in such allegoric-philosophical fantasies, therefore, is the distinction between factual truth and truth of ideas, a dichotomy that is latent throughout Vintenon's work and underscores the inherent problematics of the aforementioned rhetorical categories. Alberti's transgressive fantasy in the *Momus*; Ariosto's resistance to conventional moralization and allegory (*Orlando furioso*); Folengo's polemical fantasy (*Le maccheronee*); Rabelais's play with erudition, parody, the grotesque, and monstrosity; Ronsard's ludic fantasy (*Les Saisons*); or d'Alcriste's unveiled fabrication of implausibility (*La Fabrique véridique*) provide detailed case studies of the issues sketched out above, constitute the first systematic examination of this important topic, and open new and fascinating venues for further scholarly exploration.

Bernd Renner, *Brooklyn College and The Graduate Center, CUNY*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2019.453