

national visions of community in Du Bartas's work, as he writes first for Jeanne d'Albret and then for the newly crowned Henri IV. Maynard situates Du Bartas's final poem, "Le Cantique d'Ivry," within the context of legitimizing Henri IV and demonstrates how the portrayal of Henri as a warrior nonetheless downplays violence and highlights Henri's capacity for toleration. Similarly, Maynard demonstrates how Garnier's *Henriade*, discussed in chapter 3, works to unify France, both through the characterization of an outside enemy, Spain, and through the representation of Henri's acts of forgiveness and clemency. The work of Cayet, the focus of chapter 4, allows the reader to appreciate another step in the construction of Henri IV's unified France. Maynard compares Cayet's *Heptaméron de la Navarride* to key passages from Virgil's *Aeneid* and *Eclogues* to highlight the depiction of a golden age that is dawning as Henri IV and Marie de' Medici marry and produce an heir.

In this journey across the work of five epic poets, Maynard not only provides ample evidence for the importance and the vitality of the French epic, but also provides a productive lens through which to consider these difficult, formative decades of French history. Beyond the very clear argument about the epic genre, however, further conclusions are left up to the reader, and the short final chapter leaves the reader wanting more. Written clearly with ample explanation for a nonspecialist, the book offers a textually grounded opportunity to contemplate the deep connections between war, religion, memory, place, and community.

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Senses of Style: Poetry before Interpretation. Jeff Dolven.
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Jeff Dolven's inspiring *Senses of Style: Poetry before Interpretation* is an utterly sui generis meditation on the rich but often suspiciously viewed subject of style. The book's initial point of departure is the improbable connection between the courtly Petrarchist Sir Thomas Wyatt and, some four hundred years later, the avant-garde writer Frank O'Hara. But while the two poets are never far from sight and, in fact, grow ever closer to each other as the study evolves, Dolven has in mind a different kind of book than what we usually find in studies either of influences and afterlives or of style. Neither linear in plot nor prescriptive in tone, *Senses of Style*—the plural usage plus the play on *sense* is crucial—is a series of micro-essays. Few are longer than a page. Many are an aphoristic sentence or two, reminding us at times, in their weighty perspicuity and venerable collectability, of both Wallace Stevens's *Adagia* and Erasmus's *Adages*. They vary in tone from the austere heights of academia ("If history-as-experience has a method" [167]) to a middle ground of reportage ("O'Hara looks out the window

and across the street at his fellow East Villagers" [170]) to a more intimate register ("Once in special" [93]), often a phrase from one of the poets. Part of the book's appeal is how smoothly it shifts gears.

The individual essays are composed—or placed or turned—around a set of time-honored debates about style, arranged in binary fashion, in chapters with alternating conjunctions: "Part and Whole," "Style v. Substance," "Art and Nature," "Style v. Aesthetics," "Individual and Group," "Style v. Interpretation," "Description and Judgment," and "Style v. Narrative." These are framed by shorter chapters on "Continuing," a master-mistress trope for how Dolven sees style functioning as a magic carpet of sorts, connecting like with like because there is a liking, a desire to imitate. The presence of Wyatt and O'Hara keeps these debates from becoming too airborne ("Form is vertical. Style is horizontal" [88]), as do the scholarly notes and hefty bibliography and the discriminating intelligence of a critic equally at home with Renaissance theories of rhetoric and the Henrician court as he is with art talk among the New York avant-garde. Although the essays have a degree of attractive whimsy in their titles, they are serious engagements—thought pieces—involving the paradox of a subject that is nearly invisible because it is (almost) everywhere. "Everything has a style, except nature," we're told in #202, "The Fourth Limit of Style: Nature." Then again, we're told the same thing about "Passion" (#321), "Action" (#310), and "God" (#357). The point is not that Dolven is being inconsistent or forgetful but rather each time raising anew an axiom to be thought—to be tried—again, from a different angle. Here he is on passion: "Everything has a style, except passion. Passion's extremity is another limit of style, how it feels wrong to speak of a style of rage or a style of grief. From an anthropological distance perhaps, a culture might be said to have such styles, relative to other cultures. But at anything like close range, to adopt a style of rage implies something less than rage. Rage and grief are the thorough passions, as Philip Fisher puts it: they cannot be mixed, as styles can; their focus on their object, present or absent, is singular. They refuse awareness of the plane of collation and comparison that style requires. Style, by contrast, is a matter of emotions, or of moods" (150).

Senses of Style is filled with curious moments like this, the whole being something of a cabinet of curiosities, in which much is said in little, and quietly invites a nod or shake of the head. Yes, this does help to explain Hamlet's strange tirade in Ophelia's grave; but, no, isn't there a style of grief? The book can be sampled in parts, but it gains from being read through. What *Senses of Style* cannot be is read quickly. Rather, it invites thoughtful savoring by all who care about reading and writing.

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