

première partie, une judicieuse histoire de ce que l'on appelle parfois le *déterminisme géographique*. Il démontre comment, depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'à nos jours, il est difficile de résister à l'envie de croire que les communautés humaines ont des caractères différents parce qu'elles occupent une place différentes à la surface de la Terre. Si on peut se gausser de ces théories qui souvent confinent à la caricature – théories des climats, des humeurs et bien d'autre encore –, il importe de remarquer, insiste Walter, que toutes ressassent la même obsession : expliquer les différences entre les communautés humaines en glissant, pour reprendre son expression, « du moral au spatial ». Or l'invention du paysage s'inscrit dans ce mouvement tout en complexifiant l'opération. Car si le paysage témoigne bien de l'association d'une communauté humaine et d'une portion de la surface terrestre, ce n'est pas parce que la seconde imprime sa marque sur la première, mais parce que les deux, mutuellement nécessaires l'une à l'autre, ont su unir leur destin. C'est ainsi que le paysage, avance Walter, devient, surtout au XIX^e siècle, une figure de la nation. À la fois représentation d'une *nature* et d'un *peuple*, le paysage ne confond pas bêtement les attributs de l'une et de l'autre, mais célèbre la grandeur du génie qui a su les marier. En rendant en quelque sorte l'esprit d'une nation visible à travers la nature, le paysage n'a pas manqué, montre Walter, d'être instrumentalisé à des fins patriotiques, autant dans l'Allemagne nazie qu'ailleurs en Europe, notamment en Suisse, pays que l'auteur connaît singulièrement bien. On comprend dès lors que le paysage est résolument moderne. D'une part, tout en cultivant encore l'idée d'une solidarité du « moral et du spatial », le paysage – le concept en soi plus que la chose – ouvre plus largement le champ de la raison pour expliquer ce qu'est une communauté humaine, quitte à concevoir, il est vrai, que le *peuple* soit la plus haute expression de cette dernière. D'autre part, le paysage offre aux nations des emblèmes utiles lorsque vient le temps de canaliser et de raviver le désir des individus de former un tout. Toutefois, se demande Walter, le paysage résistera-t-il à notre ère dite *postmoderne*, qui semble tant se plaire à le décoder, à le déconstruire? Si l'auteur pose la question, il ne s'aventure pas de ce côté, arrêtant prudemment son enquête au milieu du XX^e siècle. On ne doute, néanmoins, que le paysage, même en se dégageant de l'emprise de la nation, ne cessera pas de sitôt d'inspirer les êtres humains, qui semblent toujours espérer se reconnaître et se découvrir à travers ce que le monde leur donne à voir.

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WILSON, Bronwen — *The World in Venice: Print, the City and Early Modern Identity*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. Pp. 406.

For years considered a demotic art, prints were relegated to illuminating the popular side of life in contrast to the fine arts of painting and sculpture. Going well beyond this limitation, *The World in Venice* manages to give not only a rich discussion of late-sixteenth-century visual culture in Venice, but nothing less than an idea of how

Venetians negotiated their collective identity. Venetians, great traders and sitting at the crossroads of the world, pioneered how to “put one’s identity into perspective” (p. 256). Exposed regularly to Turks and other Easterners, they at the same time had to face their declining geopolitical power even as they sustained the “Myth of Venice”, the self-congratulatory idea that the stability of Venice’s oligarchic, republican institutions had insured its political stability. The result is a self-examined image of uniqueness, Venetian uniqueness and personal uniqueness, with a hint of modern subjectivity.

Print’s usefulness in this process lies in its ability to report, and this is what binds the four topics Bronwen Wilson investigates: printed maps, costume books, portrait books, and, for lack of a better term, prints of “news” (specifically, the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 and the Coronation of Dogressa Morosina Morosini Grimani in 1597). Because each must inscribe some likeness, they reveal deep similarities; turned toward Venice, they show a need to capture the uniqueness of Venice’s appearance, its dress, the visages of its citizens and their dependents, and finally the events that affected the city closely. Again, because Venetians are habituated to viewing the full variety of existence, they form prescient views of who they are and how they are different from others.

Wilson places her findings in scholarly debates over identity, particularly Greenblatt and Martin’s debate over whether early modern identity entailed more peripheral words and actions or interior sincerity. Tending to side more with Martin, Wilson suggests (p. 191) how the serialization of prints could contribute to a split between sincerity and prudence; in seeing the dissimulated appearance over and again amidst the great variety of other individuals and nations, it begs the question of what really defines the individual.

Venice is the mirror of the world, and the books and prints made in Venice reflect literally this centrality. In the case of printed maps, collected vigorously by the land-and island-holding Venetians, important negotiations of identity are played out (unlike in manuscript maps). Downplaying the typical discussion of the accuracy of Jacopo de Barbari’s map of Venice (and those of his imitators), Wilson notes how they instead homogenize the city, erase the maker, and thereby emphasize Venice’s lawful right to persist, like nature. This peculiarly Venetian erasure is explained through a comparison to Rosselli’s “chain map” of Florence (1482), which is somewhat tenuously linked more closely to embodied seeing via the autograph draftsman and plausible station point (Florence, unlike Venice, affords elevated views from hilltops).

Costume books order experience through allegory. Like a chorographic image of a city, costumes adequately stand for a city through physiognomic identification, as shown in Giuseppe Rosaccio’s map of Italy of 1607, which includes both city views and costumes. Costumes mark difference, but the stability-loving Venetians prided themselves on their “sartorial stability” (p. 71). As a cross-roads, Venice represents a microcosm of the larger world and yields its own subdivisions, including some anxiety about the slippery exchange between Venetian, Spaniard, Frenchman, Turk, or Jew. If stabilities are taken for granted, interesting gender divisions emerge: “In con-

trast to male figures, which are organized by profession (doge, senator, procurator), women are identified by their mental status (virgin, wife, widow)" (p. 97).

Portraits continue the search for particulars. A genre introduced in the late sixteenth century, the portrait book shows a scrupulous attention to repeating previous portraits. The physiognomic reading of individuals — an exposition of which is one of the best parts of the book — is also based on texts, but the portrait invites scrutiny and the fixation of trait in a form. A particularly important example is Wilson's discussion of the ethnicization of the Turk, in which "the craggy features" of a portrait copied after Paolo Giovio's originals in his museum in Como equate more "with their singularly predeaceous dispositions than with racial types" (p. 244). Her reflections are indeed important indications of what she calls a "prehistory of racism" in which she shows the tipping point for the identification of physiognomy and collective behaviour.

The way in which news was reported concealed anxiety about Venetian republicanism and aristocracy. Events like the Battle of Lepanto or the coronation of Dogaresa Morosina Morosini Grimani were "singular" and so lacked any conventions. Nevertheless, both provided opportunities to comment with prints on the lack of aristocracy of the Turks and to indulge in the full display of (otherwise unacceptable) aristocracy of the Dogaresa. Turks, "too familiar" to Venetians and only momentarily anathemized in Venice's participation in the Holy League, were ironically noted to lack classes, while the Dogaresa's coronation provided a handy occasion to exercise sartorial enthusiasm amidst sumptuary laws.

Wilson continually shows ways in which the old medieval model of the performativity of identity — as revealed in narrative processes like descriptions of illustrious men, depictions of processions, and sartorial customs — gives way to the inscription of identity in fixed forms. This is essentially a story of change, which makes Wilson's enframing theoretical expositions of allied problems of perspective, seeing, and subjectivity seem slightly out of place, for they concern fixed conditions. For Lacan's high postmodern model of subjectivity based on all-at-once self-recognition (the mirror stage), she exchanges Kaja Silverman's notions of proprioception and the constitution of identity through successive touching. The mixture of recognition through sampling is likened to the role of the repetition of prints in constituting Venetian identity. Rather than leaving this as just a suggestive analogy, however, it would be interesting to flesh out this dynamic process.

Furthermore, Wilson's turn toward Martin's idea of a core subjectivity in the early modern world also marks a turn in contemporary historiography away from Greenblatt's historicism. Her work shows precisely a turn toward a new kind of resemblance, which seems to suggest a critical strategy — for example, that of Barbara Maria Stafford — in which a contemporary critical theory of resemblance can appreciate an early modern resemblance. These are mere suggestions to raise when contemplating the impressive findings of this important study.

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