world stage with trade in sugar and tobacco, involves bypassing our evolutionary defenses and exploiting our genetic weaknesses. We are the animal who plays tricks on itself. Consumer culture is the trickster spirit incarnate.

McKibben makes a convincing case that we would be wise to favor sustained public debate about germline engineering and to exercise great caution about this immensely powerful and potentially disruptive technology. If, however, our society does go down the path of germline engineering, there is something to be said for having the rich, the well-educated and the self-loathing conduct the first experiments on their own children.

When the poet Edith Sitwell was a child in the 1890s she had a slight curvature of the spine. In her autobiography she tells how her father, Sir George Sitwell, who would tolerate no imperfections in his offspring, had her subjected to the best available medical treatment of the time. "The steel Bastille" was a metal contraption that encased young Edith's body and caused her excruciating pain. Only the rich could afford this particular torture or permit this particular childhood. It is not inconceivable that humanity will learn important lessons from the rich about the consequences of germline engineering, just as earlier generations learned from the cruel and useless medical treatments that premodern doctors inflicted on aristocrats and their children. Today most of what we need to learn is what not to do.

THE EDGE OF SURREALISM: A ROGER CAILLOIS READER

edited by Claudine Frank; translated by Claudine Frank and Camille Nash. Duke Univ. Press, Durham, NC, 2003. 423 pp. Trade, paper. ISBN: 0-8223-3056-3; 0-8223-3068-7.

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Roger Caillois holds a distinct place among French intellectuals between the two world wars and after the defeat of Fascism. First seen as a member of the Paris surrealists (1932–1934), he contributed to the then-vital discussion on the origins of myth by balancing his interest in poetry, as a project of being and a means of becoming, with a scientist's rationality through the lens of

biology. His attempt to bridge the distance between the two provided him with a particular view of how acute such a project is, given the values promoted by "poetry" and "biology," the traditions they stem from, and the variable confusions attending "rapprochement." That we are still prey to a general failure here, which Caillois could not extricate himself from, does not in the least diminish the urgent goal of divining the origins of myth, especially now that with technology's ever more attractive simulations the two are merging at last—and that the "absence of myth," a subject that compelled so much comment during Caillois's time, no longer matters.

I do not know what Caillois would have made of all this, save for returning perhaps to his analysis of biology as a basis for myth, eschewing much else as a detour, and his fascination with mimicry in the insect world—the subject of his influential 1937 text, *The Praying Mantis: From Biology to Psychoanalysis*—all in the service of an attempt to discern, as he puts it, a "lyrical ideogram" as an objective nexus where poetic thought and lucid reason intersect.

Caillois' combative spirit here also characterizes him, and our current interest in him, at least in terms of the world we know and our need for forceful intellects with wide-ranging passions free from careerism or institutional constraints—a freedom that Caillois advocated more in principle than in fact. But of course it was there, an animating force and a horizon toward which to turn as he did. In this regard, his break with surrealism as being overly "indulgent" on the side of poetry is also born from a desire to recast the movement's focus on myth and mythmaking: from its collective origins and orphic cast to its sectarian momentum, social economy and general phenomenology. It is here as well that we can chart his collaboration with George Bataille, his work with Michelle Leiris and Jean Paulhan, his arguments with Levi-Strauss, whether for good or ill, during and after the College of Sociology, which Caillois helped to form and sustain. Among his other accomplishments, I include *Les Lettres francaise*, which Caillois launched from his interwar exile in Argentina (1941–1947), and the magazine *Sur,* edited by Victoria Ocampo, in which he played a pivotal role, along with the UNESCO-sponsored "transdisciplinary" journal *Diogenes,* which he established as editor in 1952, and, of course, his books.

Thus has Claudine Frank given us a sampling of Caillois's texts in translation, the most complete in English so far, written over four decades, 1934 to 1978, along with informative introductions to each period, at times to each text. Indeed, I am indebted to Frank for the historic frames she provides despite her passing disputes with other commentators, which may be of interest to experts alone, and her sometime opacity.

I have mentioned myth, mythmaking and the absence of myth; I do so again. It is the ground Caillois believes to be his own, at least as far as his analyses take him. But as Caillois's thought matures, his sense of the poetic, its orphic heritage, and myth change. He comes to recuperate a type of formalism that reason embraces as an epitome of Western civilization and that Breton, for one, repudiates (see Breton's brilliant response to Caillois's thoughts on poetry in *Ars Poetica,* coauthored with Jean Shuster, which appears in the surrealist review *BIEF/Jonction surrealiste, No. 7, June 1959).*

Nor is this repudiation an abstract or literary affair. It focuses on the heart of a dispute that anthropology finally came to grips with and that Aime Cesaire targeted in his scorching critique of Caillois's defense of Western civilization, and the blind eye he turned to its murderous impulses, a critique I refer readers of Caillois to as a clarifying lens (see Cesaire's *Discourse on Colonialism,* first published in 1955 by *Editions Presence African,* republished in translation several times thereafter*).*

Who was Roger Caillois? Certainly, this book will help us draw the character. Will it also act as a mirror to the reader and the intellectual or poetic currents that resonate within him or her? That is another question. It is not a small one.

ELOQUENT IMAGES: WORD AND IMAGE IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA

edited by Mary E. Hocks and Michelle R. Kendrick. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, U.S.A., 2003. 376 pp., illus. Trade. ISBN: 0-262-08317-5.

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There is much to admire in Mary Hocks and Michelle Kendrick's *Eloquent Images: Word and Image in the Age*

of New Media—enough, in fact, to recommend it as a text for graduate courses and for use in scholarship. For one, the book looks at visual rhetoric from the perspective of many different fields, from rhetoric to new media to humanities computing to cognitive studies. Most of the essays are insightful and thoughtfully written. The issues raised surrounding visual rhetoric are topical and reveal points of contention among scholars and practitioners about what it is, how it functions in relation to verbal rhetoric, and how best to talk about and teach it.

The stated focus of the *book* is to explore "the current status of the 'eloquent image' by examining rhetorical and cultural uses of word and image, both historically and currently" (p. 1); of its *essays*, to mix "theory, critique, and practice to present the assumptions of an interdisciplinary array of artists, critics, and designers about the complex and often contradictory relations of word and image" (p. 2). The authors also provide not only "critiques [of] the dichotomous thinking that renders image as feminine and the word as masculine but also 'descriptions' of hypertext and hypermedia that 'reduce' them to 'purely formal kind of poetics and aesthetics' or 'one kind of theory' or 'any theory of communication isolated from production and rhetorical contexts'" (p. 2). It is a tall order, indeed, and the reason some scholars may not find the book, in its entirety, useful—the topics are so broad, and its voices are so frequently dissonant.

Two strong chapters lead off the first section, "Visual and Verbal Practices in New Media." First, Jay David Bolter looks at the way academe has responded to new media and provides a narrative about the way his department has come to understand it. His claim that media critics "are committing themselves to a particular perspective, in which the word is the privileged mode of representation and images are secondary and subsidiary" (p. 24) overlooks, however, N. Katherine Hayles's *Writing Machines*, which, balancing images and words, upturns such stereotypes about humanities-based scholarship. The second chapter, Anne Wysocki's essay "Seriously Visible," successfully critiques what can only be called Urban-Myths-About-Hypertext: (1) "that hypertextual documents are by their very structure supposed to encourage readers into more active and engaged relationships with texts and

thus with each other," and (2) that documents that "give more weight to their visual rather than their verbal components ought not to be taken seriously or ought to be relegated to children and the illiterate" (p. 37). Hers is the liveliest writing in the volume.

Part 2, "Historical Relationships between Word and Image," offers an insightful piece by Kevin LaGrandeur about how ancient rhetoricians Aristotle, Gorgias and Horace can help us "think about, to analyze the rhetorical dimensions of . . . images" (p. 117), while Matthew Kirschenbaum's "The Word as Image in an Age of Digital Reproduction" interrogates Stuart Moulthrop's claim that "the word is an image after all" (p. 137), from a rather limited perspective—he argues from the premise that the qualities of text that humanities computing scholars value and understand are the qualities that must be found in images and should be valued and understood by all other scholars (p. 149). The argument works this way: images are not texts because they do not behave as texts do for humanities computing experts.

Essays in Part 3, "Perception and Knowledge in Visual and Verbal Texts," explore visual rhetoric from the perspective of cognitive studies. The most satisfying comment, perhaps in the book, is made here by Nancy Barta-Smith and Danette DiMarco in "Same Difference: Evolving Conclusions about Textuality and Media." In challenging claims about the "shift from print to visual 'writing' with the advent of new media capabilities" (p. 159), they say that "we may find that the most revolutionary ideas about writing and new media emerge as mixtures of existing text, voice, and image, that is as evolving combinations rather than definitive conclusions about textuality and new media" (p. 175). At that moment, theirs are the voices of clarity.

The final section, "Identities and Cultures in Digital Design," includes essays relating to feminist and cultural studies and virtual reality. Of these, the articles by Gail Hawisher and Patricia Sullivan and by Ellen Strain and Gregory VanHoosier-Carey are the most useful to scholars.

In all, the book's polyvocal, complex approach to visual rhetoric makes for a good text to follow or supplant those like Nicholas Mirzoeff's *An Introduction to Visual Culture* and will animate a few scholars into energetic discussions about images and words, eloquent or not.

MASACCIO: *SAINT ANDREW AND THE PISA ALTARPIECE*

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The appearance of a man of outstanding creative talent is very often accompanied by that of another great artist at the same time and in the same part of the world so that the two can inspire and emulate each other. . . . How true this is we can see from the fact that in the same period Florence produced Filippo Brunelleschi, Donatello, Lorenzo Ghiberti, Paolo Uccello, and Masaccio, each of whom was an outstanding artist and through whose efforts the crude and clumsy style which had preserved up to that time was finally discarded.

—Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists* (2nd Ed., 1568)

Vasari's far-reaching biography of Italian artists *Le Vite de' più eccelenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani* (The Lives of the Most Eminent Italian Architects, Painters, and Sculptors), first published in 1550 (and revised in 1568), remains the principal source regarding his contemporaries and earlier Italian Renaissance artists. The extent of this biographer's influence is particularly revealing when we turn to an artist like Masaccio (1401–1428). Born Tommaso di Ser Giovanni di Mone Cassai, Masaccio (the name is generally translated as "Sloppy Tom") was so devoted to his work, according to Vasari, that "he refused to give any time to worldly causes, even in the way of dress." This comment provided the name history chose for him. Vasari's praise, on the other hand, laid the foundation for sources today that mention Masaccio as one of the first Italian painters to use the science of perspective to create the illusion of 3D space in paintings. Indeed his mastery of light and one-point perspective was so convincing for his time that scholars say it contributed to the development of the Florentine Renaissance style of painting. Sadly, Masaccio died mysteriously at the age of 27. We can only speculate on what he might have accomplished if he had survived to experiment with oil paint, a new technology that fascinated artists in the decades following his death.