

le *kairós* ou instant prégnant que l'A. assimile très justement à l'éloge du moment présent, tel qu'il apparaît explicitement dans *Les Bobémiens d'Andalousie*, pièce de théâtre de Potocki (1794).

Ce bel ouvrage présente donc un bilan scientifique largement positif et une avancée sensible pour les études littéraires et la connaissance de Jean Potocki. Au reste, celui-ci, dans une lettre de 1789 et une autre de la même époque, récemment retrouvée, se disait « *wan der Zegel* » : *Monsieur de La Voile*. Pouvait-il mieux manifester son esprit d'errance et donner raison à M. Haugen ?

*Dominique Triaire*

Markku Kekäläinen, *James Boswell's Urban Experience in Eighteenth-Century London* (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 2012). 186 pp.

James Boswell (1740–1795) was an eighteenth-century Londoner with a background in Scotland. He was the ninth Laird of Auchinleck and a lawyer, and the famous author of *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791). What makes him especially interesting to today's historians is his extensive life writing. His diaries are a unique source to eighteenth-century elite London life. The extensive nature of his writing has made Boswell one of the most thoroughly researched eighteenth-century British personalities.

Regardless of the vast scholarship on Boswell, Markku Kekäläinen's study on James Boswell's urban experience fills a gap in research as it takes a thorough look into the ways in which Boswell understood and experienced London. This is a cultural historical study which deepens our understanding of Boswell, who in Kekäläinen's interpretation, was as a man between two worlds: the seventeenth century as well as the eighteenth century. Boswell

encompassed parts of the sensibilities of both centuries.

Regardless of the fact that this is a doctoral dissertation, Kekäläinen is a long term Boswell expert, and in a way this book brings together his extensive understanding of his protagonist. It must be noted that Kekäläinen's book is not Boswell's biography. It is in fact as far removed from that as it possibly can be. This is a study of the ways in which Boswell experienced the metropolis and urban space, it is not about Boswell as a person. In fact, *James Boswell's Urban Experience* may be slightly tedious a read for a novice as this book is definitely written for the Boswell expert, as Kekäläinen for example fails to give biographical details on Boswell and gives very little information about his sources, the Boswell texts. If the reader is not a Boswell expert, it is impossible to grasp why Kekäläinen for example only uses printed sources. Without doubt, the sources could and should have been introduced to the reader properly. Boswell is one of the well-researched personalities of the eighteenth-century British culture but Kekäläinen's thorough and profound interpretation well deserves its place on all Boswell shelves.

For the experts, James Boswell was, and still is, a near cult figure, a man of two worlds: he was a great lover of London and yet, he came from the Scottish countryside. He was an urban man with many fitting epithets, a lawyer and scholar, author, diarist, correspondent, intellectual and libertine. Perhaps his libertinism has brought him the fame he has had, and strengthened his cult image. All these aspects of Boswell play a role in Kekäläinen's look at Boswell's urban experience. This urban experience is looked from various angles as it includes describing the nature of the city, the meaning of observation, the city as a source of ecstasy, luxury and spectacle. It also discusses the way in which a man was to be in a city as it discusses as the questions of authenticity, emulation and theatricality. The book ends with

a discussion of masquerade and libertinage. As can be seen from these viewpoints taken, Kekäläinen uses the term *urban* in an extremely wide sense which is slightly problematic. This is a compact study but at times the author discusses aspects such as sociability which the reader finds difficult to understand as specifically urban.

These themes divide the book into five chapters. The first discusses, as it is titled, “permanence and transitoriness”. The chapter admits that Boswell’s relation to the rural and to the urban by no means was simple. The countryside could be a source of great esthetic experience but the city “represented elegance and sophistication [...] it was the seat of whim and fancy, the realm of transitory sensations and multiple life forms.” (p. 31) Mentioning countryside, especially likeable is Kekäläinen’s discussion on Boswell’s feudal fancies, a chapter on the Boswell we who are more Boswell laymen tend to forget. Boswell indeed was a man who idealized not only the smoky city but also the romantic, foggy and crude Scotland and his home Auchinleck. Similarly interesting is his analysis of Boswell’s and his contemporaries understanding of the ways of moving around London. Boswell was like many of his contemporaries, a walker; walking was a method in which he often went to places and saw London but which especially importantly brought him various experiences between the lewd and the sublime. And yet, London brought great melancholy on him. Boswell’s relation to London was by no means simple or straightforwardly happy. At times he missed the peace Auchinleck and Scotland could offer him.

The second chapter, “Observation and ecstasy”, brings us to Boswell observing and the pleasures of the imagination. This chapter is far too short, as the topic is without doubt interesting. Some of the matters discussed, of course, do come up in other chapters, which does to some extent explains the shortness of

this chapter. Being an enormous metropolis London was a place which offered something for everyone; it was an endless parade of objects, lifestyles and values. Kekäläinen notes how “Boswell wrote how all the objects offered to the sense were the source of pleasure, and plenitude, variety and difference were strongly positive observations – without any overtone of fear, threat or losing the self.” (p. 81)

London as a source of endless luxury and spectacle is the topic of the third chapter which discusses the ways in which he was taken by London society. Here we take a trip to Germany as well, where Boswell was especially overwhelmed by the splendor of the court. This chapter also discusses the question of appearance, of foppery, of effeminacy and dignified exteriors. To Boswell’s experiences of spectacle can be added architecture and churches especially, and the chapter closes with sublime horrors, with Boswell’s “strange inclination to go and see the execution as usual.” (p. 122)

The fourth chapter delves into to the questions of authenticity and theatricality. Politeness, naturally, is an important concept here, and takes Kekäläinen to the courts of dissimulation. *Sprezzatura* was in its heart of the matter theatrical with its veiled messages. Honesty thus became an important topic of discussion but that too was complicated. Sociability could not always manage with honesty: the polite society rather survived on for example flattery.

Kekäläinen’s book ends with a short discussion on masquerade and libertinage which brings forth the London experience Boswell is often connected with. Even though Boswell was well familiar with the many sides of his idealized city, he did not remain so without remorse. His escapades included some experiences which had “grotesque and carnivalesque qualities” (p. 165).

As mentioned above, Kekäläinen argues that Boswell’s urban experience was built on two at least at first look rather distant ele-

ments: on the one hand he was immersed in Romantic sensibility, and on the other hand, he was a part of the early modern aristocratic value system. Thus, Boswell is for Kekäläinen a man between two very different sensibilities, he lived between early modern and modern, and he was a man with opposite features. In a way this is easy to agree with as one should consider that epochs or historical periods do not change with one snap, one decision or one text. We all probably live in many epochs, periods, and are immersed in various cultural influences which historians later will recognize important – or fail to notice at all.

As said, Kekäläinen's argumentation is of high quality, and he commands his Boswell throughout. If one would like to criticize this volume, the gaze would be directed towards the structure of the book. The introduction is rather long, and the second chapter on observation and ecstasy is too short. It could perhaps have been better to amalgamate this chapter to the others. I also feel that if Kekäläinen had taken gender as a tool, he would have been able to reach some interesting points in Boswell's urbanity: he, I believe, would be a prime target for the study of performative gender acts, something which Kekäläinen unfortunately does not address here. Boswell plays out the role of the man in very interesting ways and one hopes that Kekäläinen will return to Boswell from this perspective in his later work.

Regardless of these somewhat critical thoughts, Kekäläinen's book is a manifestation of his wide reading and thorough familiarity with Boswell. He does not fail to leave Boswell ambiguous; he accepts Boswell as he is, and will not force him into a form. Lucid and well written, *James Boswell's Urban Experience in Eighteenth-Century London* is an essential read to all eighteenth-century scholars as it offers an intriguing glimpse into the greatest of eighteenth-century European cities.

Marjo Kaartinen

Ingvild Hagen Kjørholt, *Voltaires verdensborgere: en studie av det franske 1700-tallets kosmopolitisme*, Doktoravhandling ved NTNU 2012: 173 (Trondheim: NTNU, Institutt for nordistikk og litteraturvitenskap, 2012). 256 s.

I denna litteraturvetenskapliga avhandling i vilken Ingvild Hagen Kjørholt sprider nytt ljus över 1700-talets kosmopolitism står Voltaire's texter i det analytiska centrum. Men samtidigt innehåller arbetet flera nya perspektiv på inte bara Voltaire utan även 1700-talskosmopolitismen liksom dess förhistoria i en fransk kontext. Det är ett mycket läsvärt arbete för den som intresserar sig för det politiska fältet i vid bemärkelse, ett fält där polis står i centrum. Inom detta arbetes ramar belyses även den nödvändiga relationen mellan kosmos, polites och patriotism.

Det är väl känt hur kosmopolitism efter kalla krigets slut åter vunnit en stark position på såväl den akademiska som den politiska och kulturella arenan. Kosmopolitism kan helt enkelt betyda en massa olika och inte alltid överensstämmande saker. I den stora vågen av kosmopolitismteori och kosmopolitismpraktik är det snarare regel än undantag att referera till såväl det stoicistiska tänkandet som kosmopoliten Immanuel Kant i Königsberg. Men kunskapen om det idéhistoriska tankegodset är inte alltid lika omfattande som refererandet till det. Kjørholt kartlägger, analyserar och problematiserar en blind fläck i kosmopolitismens idéhistoria genom att vända sig till historien alldeles före Kant och genom analys av en så pass välkänd och närmast söndertröskad författare som Voltaire. Hon kontextualiserar fransmannens texter och övertygar om den idémässiga utveckling han genomgår under sitt långa skriftställarskap. Samtidigt har forskningen inom exempelvis litteraturvetenskapen fortfarande präglats av den bild som tidigare forskning förmedlat. En viktig källa är Thomas J. Schlereths arbete från 1977, *The Cosmopolitan Ideal in Enlightenment Thought*, men