approach. Rather, its purpose is to show that a gap in the field is being filled.

The majority of articles look, rather unsurprisingly, at variable phonology (Boughton, pp. 7-22; Jamin, pp. 23-39; Pooley, pp. 40-63; Hornsby, pp. 64-81; Vernet & Trimaille, pp. 82-99; Armstrong, pp. 135-150). However, in a welcome break from phonology, Coveney (pp. 100-118) explores the problems of accounting for grammatical variation within the variationist methodology: if we say the same thing in different ways are we really saying the same thing? Coveney argues that the semantic and pragmatic dimensions are an intrinsic part of variation and that synonymy between variants is both an unrealistic and unnecessary condition for analysis. He claims that quantification is the only means of gauging linguistic change. Elsewhere, Fagyal's interesting contribution (pp. 119-134) looks at rhythm and pronunciation in speech and song, untangling myth from reality in terms of the common assumption that popular music may be a vector for change and at the same time touching on one of the issues for variationism: i.e. how do we account for change if features and meanings are shared? She argues that what innovation there is can be found not in the linguistic phenomena themselves, which are present elsewhere (rhythm, word-shortening), but in the ways these are applied.

Finally, then, and despite the feeling at times that we do not learn much that we did not know or could guess at already (with a few notable exceptions, e.g. Fagyal's contribution), this issue provides an up-to-date, empirically based and scholarly account of some aspects of sociolinguistic variation and change in French. It will enable the specialist reader to reacquaint him/herself with British variationists working on French and the student to see some recent case-studies. The presentation is good and the articles generally read well, although internal referencing could have been used to avoid excessive overlap.

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Etre et se connaître au XIXe siècle: Littérature et sciences humaines
JACKSON, J., RIGOLI, J. & SANGSUE, D. (eds)
Metropolis, 2006
252 pp., 22.50 euros, ISBN 2 88340 170 5

The essays collected in this stimulating volume centre on self-knowledge and identity in relation to the human sciences in nineteenth-century French literature. With the exception of Alain Corbin's prefatory comments and a study of memoir literature by Daniel Zanone, the contributions all focus on a single author. These are mostly familiar figures: Flaubert, Vigny, Stendhal, Amiel, and, in the one contribution from outside Francophonia, Freud. The only obscurity is one Antoine Charma, a professor of literature at Caen whose early efforts at dream analysis are the subject of an essay by Jacqueline Carroy.

For a collection of this kind, the essays are of uncommonly high quality, well-researched, elegantly written, and persuasively argued. Moreover, they offer a great deal of thematic cohesion. Daniel Sangsue's essay on Stendhal, Maxime Georgen's essay on Vigny, and Evelyne Ender's essay on Amiel, examine their respective authors' inevitably problematic efforts to establish a clear and stable self-understanding in their autobiographical

writings. Each man approached the issue from a different direction. Stendhal was inspired by the *idéologie* of Destutt de Tracy, Vigny by Saint-Simonism, and Amiel by German idealism. But all three men ran into similar difficulties, failing to achieve the kind of self-knowledge they so desired. Those essays focus on the authors themselves. Juan Rigoli's essay on Flaubert, by contrast, uses a short passage from *Bouvard et Pécuchet* as an entryway into an extended discussion of nineteenth-century physiology as a science of the self. The essay is brilliant, by itself worth the price of admission, though one must wonder if Flaubert is the best vantage point from which to understand physiology as a scientific discipline. Finally, John E. Jackson's short essay illustrates Freud's reliance on literary models in the early development of the Oedipal complex. As a study of a genre, Zanone's essay on memoir literature is the outlier here. However, anyone who has ever wondered about the extraordinary efflorescence of memoir literature and its sudden disappearance in the first half of the nineteenth century will find it deeply informative.

The difficulty of establishing a secure sense of self, arguably the major theme of the volume, will not surprise readers, especially in the light of recent studies that have shown that the 'bourgeois' self was much less stable than was once believed. Most of the essays in this volume, for instance, offer so many illustrations of what Jan Goldstein in *The Post-Revolutionary Self* (2005), has termed 'self-talk'. At the same time, however, they illustrate a point made in Goldstein's work but not pursued, that the sources of identity and self-knowledge were much more diverse than the Cousinian philosophy that is the subject of her book. These essays thus offer further evidence both of the problematic nature of the nineteenth-century self and of the wide diversity of sources and materials that nineteenth century men and, presumably, women drew on in their efforts to create and understand their sense of self and identity.

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The Fiction of Albert Camus: A Complex Simplicity
LONGSTAFFE, MOYA
Oxford and Bern, Peter Lang, 2007
300 pp., £34.50, ISBN 978 3 03910 304 1

'On ne pense que par images. Si tu veux être philosophe, écris des romans' (p. 20), advised Camus in 1936. Accordingly, Longstaffe's study ('Modern French Identities', volume 35) examines Camus' philosophy and its development in specific relation to his novels and short stories. Responding to Camus' statement in 1952 – 'Je ne crois pas, en ce qui me concerne, aux livres isolés' – Longstaffe aims to present Camus' fictional *œuvre* as '*un tout*', allowing each of his fictional works to 's'éclaire[r] par les autres' (p. 273). With most analyses of Camus' fiction centring on *L'Étranger* (1942) or *La Peste* (1947), the attention paid to Camus' less well-known works, in addition to this sensitive, totalising approach, distinguishes Longstaffe's book within the field.

A cyclical structure is attributed to Camus' fictional *œuvre*, in which Longstaffe sees a constant preoccupation with reconciling human mortality and happiness. Ambivalences and antitheses (of style, perspective and narrative technique)