

Roux, Marius. *The Substance and the Shadow*. Ed. Paul Smith. Trans. Dick Collins and Fiona Cox. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007.

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If Marius Roux is remembered today, it is because he was part of a group of friends, writers and artists who grew up together in Aix-en-Provence toward the middle of the nineteenth century. That group included Zola and Cézanne, as well as a number of lesser luminaries. Roux himself wrote a number of novels and other pieces, including *La Proie et l'ombre* in 1878, which Paul Smith presents here, in English translation, with a significant introduction and critical apparatus. The novel is quite obscure (Smith can locate only four copies – four more than I was able to find), and so its interest is clearly not in the impact it had on literature. Rather, it is worth taking up, Smith argues, because it “presents an image of Cézanne – in its central character, Germain Rambert – that the painter recognized, but that he was also keen to repudiate” (xii). That one would read the novel as a roman à clef is not surprising, but it is probably more rewarding in the end to read the novel for a view into the world of artists at the time, and especially for its insights into the changing role of art and the artist in the society of commodification. Smith’s introduction is very illuminating and nicely nuanced on this topic.

Roux’s novel itself is perfectly entertaining as a novel (and note I have read only the English). It is a bit sprawling and often loosely organized. The focalization shifts irregularly from Germain to his brother Philippe, to his lover Caro, as well as to others. The end is bald melodrama, not dissimilar to the ending of Zola’s *Le Rêve*, published ten years later. But the novel has nothing like the tight construction, dramatic force, and detailed analysis of *L’Œuvre*, which Zola published eight years later. Yet it fits into the tradition of Zola’s novel and of other artist novels, such as the Goncourts’ *Manette Salomon*, which Smith’s notes often refer to, quite helpfully, as points of comparison with Roux’s work.

Smith’s introduction and notes are well researched and very informative. Herein lies the prime interest in the volume. His discussion of Germain/Cézanne’s creation of his own persona and especially of his relationship to official success and to financial success is a very useful contribution to the discussion of what constitutes value in art within a capitalist society. Is there an intrinsic æsthetic value to a work of art, or is it merely a commodity like any other, subject to all the laws of economics? These questions were central at the time Cézanne and his contemporaries were producing, and indeed we continue to ask some of the same questions today. Is the *Mont Sainte-Victoire* really so good as to be worth \$83 million, as some recently expected it to fetch? (Apparently not, it sold for only \$38.5 million.) In both the introduction and in the text itself, Smith’s notes are extensive. Some of the longer notes in the introduction might have been worked into the main body, for easier reading. The notes in certain parts of the text itself are so long that one has the impression of reading simultaneously two texts meant to illuminate and illustrate each other. The notes are also well-researched and of much use to those interested in this period. The attention to the question of “tempérament” and “force” in the discourse of the time, for example, is quite informative. The appendix includes a summary of the novel by Huysmans and two letters, one from Cézanne, one, far more interesting, from Mallarmé, which mention the novel. This volume is well worth the time for those interested in Cézanne, Zola and his group, Impressionism and later movements grappling with many of the same issues, and the question of the value and place of art in our society.