
REVIEWS

Thomas A. DuBois. *Lyric, Meaning, and Audience in the Oral Tradition of Northern Europe*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006. 268p.

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“Will no one tell me what she sings?” quotes Thomas A. Dubois in *Lyric, Meaning and Audience in the Oral Tradition of Northern Europe* (1). What Dubois sets up with this quotation of Wordsworth’s “The Solitary Reaper,” is more than a question concerning interpretation of folk song; it becomes a questioning of the predominant ways scholars understand folk music and the cultures it springs from.

DuBois depicts scholarly interpretation of oral folk tradition (specifically folk song) as “a field that has privileged narrative genres—epic, ballad, legend, tale (36)—and that privileges foreign methods of interpretation, while relegating the original cultural significance of both the creative process and oral performance of folk lyrics to classifications of “simplistic.” This is not to say, however, that he rejects previous studies of oral traditions; in fact, his argument for a more diverse and hermeneutic understanding of lyric tradition stems from both functionalist and structuralist perspectives.

Perhaps the best example of DuBois’ functional and structural tendencies is his development of a triaxial system for comparing Northern European oral traditions with respect to generic, associative, and situational continuums. The generic axis allows scholars to evaluate a specific oral tradition based upon whether a given work relies on audience familiarity with either the lyrics’ content or context. His associative axis ranges between a lyric tradition’s use of personalization (or first-person narration) or attribution (third-person narration). DuBois’ final axis situates traditions according to whether they narrativize or proverbialize their content (2-4). This type of categorization and comparison leaves him solidly within the realm of functionalism and structuralism perspectives.

What makes DuBois different from previous functionalists and structuralists is his interest in what he refers to as “a wider reality: the complexity and nuance of meaning-making in oral tradition” (38). DuBois advocates a hermeneutic approach to understanding Northern European oral traditions. His approach necessitates research into how the cultures who performed and experienced

these traditions in order that each might be evaluated uniformly, based upon the cultural norms that generated them. In DuBois' system of evaluation, universal evaluation based upon on given set would be replaced by a uniform approach based upon individual cultural forms of evaluation relative to each tradition. DuBois then suggests that the triaxial system for comparison be used to compare each oral tradition, but only after placing them on the axes according to their cultural norms.

He expounds on this process throughout the book while examining oral traditions from medieval Scandinavia, Old England, Ireland (Chapter 2); the Sámi Joik, various Northern European funeral and wedding laments (Chapter 3); various Northern European hymns (Chapter 4); Shakespearean plays (Chapter 5); the Celts, the Finnish (Chapter 6); and even Contemporary Northern European Culture (Chapter 7).

Ending his book with an analogy from *Galaxy Quest*—using situational comedy about misunderstandings between human and alien cultures—DuBois explains that the interpretation of oral traditions has experienced similar hardships. His research and explication seem ample proof for his final point: unless “interpretive acts are brought up in open discussion, it is often difficult for individuals to see where their assumptions differ from those of the performers or audiences who produced or received the song in the first place” (244).

If there is one caveat to be made about his work, it is that Dubois' hermeneutic approach to understanding lyric traditions seems not to match up with the perhaps overly analytical triaxial system he devises to compare these traditions with one another. His complex system of axes for analytical analysis of lyrical traditions may allow for diversity in interpretation, but they seem overdone for the holistic underpinnings of his analytical methods. Aside from this, the book has much to offer and DuBois certainly has a well-developed sense of where structural and functional views of lyric meaning lose their efficacy, as well as concrete ideas about how holistic views can bolster these disciplines. ✱

Aleksandra Gruzinska, ed. *New Interpretations in the History of French Literature: From Marie de France to Beckett and Cioran*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008. 280p.

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Contrary to what the title may suggest, the aim of this book is not to offer new historical perspectives in French literary criticism. The editor, Aleksandra

Gruzinska, introduces this collection of essays as a “good-bye” present to William Hendrickson, a Palmes Académiques recipient and retiring Professor of French medieval literature at Arizona State University, on behalf of his colleagues and friends. The various articles on literature and the arts are written in English and in French, and organized in six chronological parts: Middle Ages, French Renaissance, French Enlightenment, French Romanticism, French Realism/Impressionism, and Modern Times. Both Samuel Beckett and E.M. Cioran are the subjects of multiple studies.

In his insightful forward, Professor Allan H. Pasco writes, “I would like to expand the focus somewhat and briefly discuss one of the major archetypes explored by the incorporated essays: masks. One third of the studies included in this book refer explicitly to masks, masking and unmasking” (i). This is particularly evident in Deborah Losse’s study of the Renaissance use of Latin as a mask behind which a deceitful clergy hid its ignorance and vices (33), and in Aleksandra Gruzinska’s essay on Antoine Pecquet, author of *Discours sur l’art de négocier* (1737) and *Pensées diverses sur l’homme* (1738), who learned first hand that no one, whatever his social status, could express himself freely at the court of Louis XV. His candid comments on the plight of the French people had him incarcerated for several years. Gruzinska rightly comments, “The greatest challenge that faces man in his social relationships is acquiring the skills needed to master the art of unmasking others. Pecquet’s desire to unmask is less related to the idea of betraying a man than to knowing him as he is” (47).

Another recurring theme throughout these essays seems to be the daunting task of the artist or writer as a creator, and the agonizing scrutiny that is applied to the work at every stage of the process, even after the creation of the final product. In his essay, “Rodin’s Favorite Failure: The Monument to Honoré de Balzac,” Anthony Lacy Gully describes Rodin’s relentless search for a “visual metaphor that would capture the essence of Balzac” (99) and his willingness to follow his instincts at the risk of being misunderstood or even ridiculed by his contemporaries. His statue, rejected by the Société Parisienne d’Hommes de Lettres, would not be exhibited until after the sculptor’s death.

Suzanne Bader Hendrickson analyzes the case of Beckett as translator of his own works, and the painstaking care required, since the translated version of the play—in this case *Endgame*—is in no way a copy of the original, but rather an interpretation and a new creation that completes the first work and forms a megatext with it (140).

In “Cioran lecteur de Cioran,” Liliana Nicorescu shows the Rumanian writer constantly questioning his own work, never satisfied with the outcome, and feeling

remorse for views that he had supported in his youth, and that he considered wrong later on in life. He wailed that the supreme punishment for a writer is to read and reread his written words. Other essays shed new light on the private character of artists such as George Sand and Gustave Flaubert, as revealed through their correspondence, and Jean Cocteau and André Gide, as they write about themselves, about their respective works, and about each other in their journals.

New Interpretations In the History of French Literature: From Marie de France to Beckett and Cioran covers a wide range of topics in a clear, accessible manner. This book will be of interest to anyone curious about French literature and art, and about the complex artists behind the works.✱

Deanne Williams. *The French Fetish from Chaucer to Shakespeare*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 283p.

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Englishness arises, in part, from English ideas about Frenchness and its value to the English people and their language. These ideas, according to Deanne Williams' *The French Fetish from Chaucer to Shakespeare*, can amount to a fetishization of the French and their language, even in periods, like Chaucer's, when the courtiers commonly spoke French and looked to French for literary models. By the time of Shakespeare, frenchified standards of taste are to be rejected as beneath English seriousness, and yet are still admired and copied because those same standards of taste are so tastefully French. So far, so familiar.

The usefulness of Williams' approach is apparent in her chapter on Chaucer where she moves beyond source studies, to the exploration of Chaucer's exploitation of Frenchness and his French models as a way to create a "counter-discourse" of the English author who deliberately misuses his sources in order to emulate them, but also to undermine them (21). In her treatment of the Ovidian material in the *Book of the Duchess*, Williams shows how Chaucer's text persistently turns away from the French tradition of spiritualized readings of Ovid in favor of a more "gross embodiment" that supplies a "paradigm for English literary reception and production that tends toward the physical and material, and moves away from the interpretative and the spiritual" (26). Williams makes a similar point with respect to the Prioress in the *Canterbury Tales* more pointedly in her examination of "fetis," a French borrowing that means finely made, but also can imply an over-cunning counterfeiting. Considering the term "fetis" as applied to the Prioress and then moving out to other French borrowings by the pilgrims, Williams

shows how consistently these borrowings serve, not to verify the aspirations to French elegance, but to fix the pilgrims more firmly in their provinciality, with its attendant materialism and cultural anxiety.

As *The French Fetish* moves toward consideration of Shakespeare's works, Williams takes a look at Caxton's publishing career, chiefly through an examination of his prefaces and finds these move, as do the times, toward a conscious diminution of the importance and prevalence of the Frenchness of the English literary tradition. With the prologue to *Eneydos*, Caxton "distances himself from his former relationship to France and moves toward a new (albeit shaky) confidence in the potential of 'comen termes,' of English literature and its language" (112). That same common language and culture, perhaps even if seen as barbarous, serve to define Englishness as a deriving from a history of "hard-nosed pragmatism" in Shakespeare's history plays, beginning with *Richard II*, with his clear love for his French queen and admiration for her more civilized court (181). Richard II is, then, rightly deposed in favor of an "English kingship ... does not lapse into degeneracy or tyranny" (181).

Williams' claims that Frenchness is a cultural well-spring for Englishness both in borrowing that demonstrates English need of French enlightenment and in a kind of abuse of the borrowed texts that yet asserts the value of Englishness as against the French model. From the model of borrowing entwined with misappropriation, she shows English literary texts and their publication moving toward a more citational use of Frenchness and French texts as an over-civilized, even effete, anti-model for Englishness. As such, things French are not abandoned or forgotten; they are over-ridden. Our own recent rejection of the French fry for the "freedom fry," however short-lived, shows a similar simultaneity of need for the French model and its hearty rejection. Williams' delight in the details of her texts moves her monograph beyond the familiarities of stereotypical cultural comparisons. *

Jaime Leños. *Piccolomini en Iberia: Influencias italianas en el génesis de la literatura sentimental española*. Potomac, MD: Scripta Humanistica, 2007. 191p.

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The intersection between literary and general history is both concrete and substantial, but as the historical record fades, connections become diaphanous and difficult to substantiate. Jaime Leños' contribution, a look at the sentimental

novel of Spain's fifteenth century, is a delightful investigation of that phenomenon as it scrutinizes how literature (the sentimental novel, in this case) and local history mesh, resulting in the birth of a genre. The author explores this genre's classical roots, a possible Italian incarnation, and its development as a literary tradition in Iberia. Leaños effectively argues that the 1444 publication by the Italian prelate, Eneas Piccolomini (who would eventually become Pope Pius II), of *Historia de duobus amantibus* (*HDA*) was the direct impetus behind the development of the sentimental novel in fifteenth-century Spain. The objective of his literary investigation is to analyze *HDA* as a link between the classical sources of the sentimental novel (mostly Ovid, but Virgil and others appear) and the first Spanish sentimental novel, *Siervo libre de amor* by Rodríguez del Padrón. Professor Leaños tackles the origins of the sentimental novel in Spain by meticulously retracing its origins in classical antiquity and linking these sources to the Italian prelate, a prolific writer and philosopher of Italy's fifteenth century.

The reconstruction of the socio-political milieu that spawned the sentimental novel in Spain includes a careful examination of the life of Piccolomini and how it intersected with fifteenth-century Spain and fellow cleric, Rodríguez del Padrón. Half biography and half literary history, Professor Leaños' work is both detailed and thoughtful as he reconstructs Piccolomini's life in Sienna and Rome. The author exhaustively and systematically reviews all of the previous literature surrounding the Italian writer and cleric, including letters, his writings, and biographies in order to explain the contents of Piccolomini's short novel. Later, by showing that Piccolomini and Rodríguez del Padrón knew each other, Leaños can suggest that *HDA* was an important source for shaping the sentimental novel in Spain. By focusing on a series of shared sources, structures, and motifs, the author builds a careful argument that the Spanish sentimental novel constitutes an independent genre that grew and flourished in Spain between 1444 and 1504, linking the demise of the novel with the death of Isabel of Castile.

The final objective of recounting all of this literary history seems to be the linking, by proximity, the life and work of Piccolomini with that of Rodríguez del Padrón. The author does show that they worked together and knew each other, and that the Spaniard recognizes Piccolomini at least once in his own work, *Siervo libre de amor*. The work by Rodríguez del Padrón is the symbolic, if not actual, inspiration for other sentimental novels that would be published in subsequent years. Professor Leaños lists the common structures that all sentimental novels share, using *HDA* as the benchmark for all of them. This comparison aids the reader in two significant ways: first, the reader receives an in-depth analysis of what comprises the sentimental genre from a structural viewpoint as Leaños

breaks down the larger structures of the novels into smaller pieces; second, the reader develops a greater understanding of the sentimental ethos promulgated by these novels.

Leaños organizes his study around the publication of *HDA* and its possible subsequent influence on the sentimental novel in Spain. Addressing the life and times of Piccolomini in the first chapter helps readers understand more easily the second chapter focused on the classical sources that influenced Piccolomini's writing. By combining both literary and European history, the author contextualizes the sentimental novel as a new phenomenon rather than merely an offshoot of the chivalric genre. This approach is both fresh and insightful since Leaños highlights major structural differences between the genres. By taking a fresh approach, the author sheds new light on an old genre, re-examining evidence to offer new insights into both the sentimental novel's structure and ethos. Thus, this critic avoids the pitfall of perpetuating longstanding interpretations that may lack both rigor and precision. *Piccolomini en Iberia* covers a very narrow period of Spanish and Italian history, but its author has exhausted the bibliography and his research is thorough and scrupulous. The book's accurate reconstruction of Spanish and Italian political and social avatars eventually shifts to literary interpretation as the author argues that *HDA* is the inspiration for *Siervo libre de amor* and the sentimental novels that followed. The nexus between literary history and general history thus allows the critic to speculate on the influence of *HDA* and Eneas Piccolomini on an entire genre of literature in the court of Spain's fifteenth-century Catholic monarchs. ✱

Gwyn Fox. *Subtle Subversions: Reading Golden Age Sonnets by Iberian Women*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008. 310p.

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In recent years, scholarship on Iberian women writers of the Golden Age has dramatically increased. However, while there have been numerous studies, editions, and translations of *comedias* and prose, early modern Iberian women's poetry has largely been ignored. Criticism has primarily been limited to religious and mystic poets, Saint Teresa of Avila in particular. Despite the publication of two excellent anthologies of early modern Iberian women's poetry, *Antología poética de escritoras de los siglos XVI y XVII* (1989) and *Tras el espejo la musa escribe: Lírica femenina de los Siglos de Oro* (1993), scholars have neglected the subject. For this reason, Gwyn Fox's *Subtle Subversions: Reading Golden Age Sonnets by Iberian Women* is a welcome addition to a growing body of scholarship on early modern Iberian

women. Fox's study remedies a key oversight in peninsular literary history and, along with the forthcoming essay collection *Studies on Women's Poetry of the Golden Age: Tras el espejo la musa escribe*, provides a foundational framework for students and scholars of Golden Age poetry. In a field that in the last few decades has seen the publication of a number of works on epic poetry, this study is also a welcome addition to scholarship on lyric poetry.

Subtle Subversions principally examines the sonnets of five Iberian poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán, Marcia Belisarda (Sor María de Santa Isabel), Leonor de la Cueva y Silva, and Sor Violante do Ceu (del Cielo). The author employs "Iberian" in the book's title instead of "Spanish" because of the inclusion of Sor Violante, although she primarily analyzes the Portuguese nun's poetic production in Spanish. Perhaps the most important feature of the volume is that it provides English translations of seventy-eight poems, the majority of which are translated here for the first time. Fox's translations of Ramírez de Guzmán's delightfully witty poems, which often rely on puns and wordplay, are particularly successful. With the possible exception of Sor Violante, these poets are largely unknown outside of Hispanic Studies and will now be more accessible to scholars of early modern literature.

As indicated by the title, Fox's book brings to light the "subtle subversions" enacted by these early modern sonneteers. These forms of subversion generally do not relate to the poetic practice of their more famous male contemporaries, who are not discussed at length. Instead, Fox primarily focuses on how women poets subverted patriarchal norms and the dominant representations of women in *comedias*, treatises, and conduct manuals. In Chapter 1, "Politics, Poetics, Patronage," the author deftly explores how Sor Violante established relationships with both Church and State and how Leonor de la Cueva advanced her family's reputation. Fox then offers what is perhaps the most provocative and original thesis of the book: "These [poems] provided opportunities to add personally to family honor, rather than to be viewed merely as the channel for masculine *hombria*, achieved through socially sanctioned marriage and motherhood" (71). Rather than being passive vessels of family honor, like the heroines of many *comedias*, Fox proposes that women could actively defend and enhance their family honor through poetry.

Fox also examines poems that address the principal role prescribed by conduct manuals and religious treatises: the dutiful wife and mother. Chapter 2, "Marriage, Motherhood, Patriarchy," provides a strong critical framework. The author's analysis of religious poetry often viewed solely under the rubric of "mysticism" to

illuminate the secular lives of women, a strategy employed in several chapters, is methodologically interesting and sometimes persuasive. Fox's assertion that women poets must have been critical of marriage since only one (Ramírez de Guzmán) wrote a poem celebrating marriage would have to be substantiated by examining more fully the production of peninsular epithalmia. Chapter 3, "Children and Siblings," fruitfully engages with a recent surge of scholarship on childhood in the early modern period. Fox questions texts on childhood and childrearing practices in early modern Europe that categorize the treatment of children as "little adults," with little affection shown towards them. Her initial reliance on religious poetry describing the relationship between the Virgin Mary and Jesus is by itself unconvincing. Nevertheless, her analysis of other poems to/about members of the poets' families in conjunction with her reading of legal discourse on childhood in the *Siete Partidas* makes for a solid argument.

Some of the deficiencies in this study come to light in Chapter 4, "Feminine Friendship," in which many of the arguments and poems from previous chapters resurface. Given the thematic and non-biographical framework of the study, the author should have more fully considered other poets and types of poetry. The introductory explanation and historical overview of the sonnet, which does not even mention Garcilaso de la Vega, never fully justify why the book is framed as a study of sonnets (10-12). Fox is forced to include many other types of poems that relate to the theme at hand but these are prefaced with clumsy apologies since they are not sonnets. Furthermore, her only justification seems to be the unnecessary idea that the study proves that women could be capable sonneteers (244). Chapter 4 contains a section on the colonial Mexican poet Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, but her abrupt inclusion seems largely the result of a dearth of sonnets. Fox mistakenly presents the sonnets to the Marchioness of Mancera as poems written to Sor Juana's principal patroness (the Countess of Paredes), a detail that also points to the lack of differentiation between patrons and friends. The juxtaposition of Sor Juana's epitaphs to a dead Vicereine, Ramírez de Guzmán's burlesque sonnets to male admirers, and Sor Violante's homoerotic poems dedicated to a patroness leads the reader to question Fox's rather broad definition of "friendship." Throughout this study, the focus on the intersection of literature and social practice is often debilitated by readings that emphasize the affective element of the works. In this chapter in particular, the author's repeated references to "genuine" feelings are unconvincing (184, 188). Attempting to interpret these poems in terms of post-Romantic conceptions is not only anachronistic, it transforms the women poets into the "emotional creatures" described in the very texts Fox claims they are subverting. This emphasis on sentimentality also leads the author to the

unsubstantiated claim that women poets wrote death poetry not to enter into literary culture but to express sincere grief (181).

Fox's study ends on a strong note by addressing two major strains of Golden Age literature, love poetry and mysticism, although a more complete discussion of scholarship on Iberian works in these traditions is warranted. Chapter 5, "Women's Love Sonnets," illustrates how the poets subvert the norms of Petrarchan love poetry. The final chapter, "Luisa de Carvajal," details how the poet's more active and physical engagement with the divine is at odds with the passive contemplative nature of Renaissance mysticism. This final chapter would have been enriched by including more details from Carvajal's letters, but the author leaves this task to future investigations (289). Fox's study will be of particular interest to scholars of the early modern period interested in gender/women's studies, lyric poetry, patronage, childhood and family history, and mysticism. *Subtle Subversions: Reading Golden Age Sonnets by Iberian Women* is a groundbreaking work that will surely influence future research and teaching of Golden Age literature. ✱

Wyman H. Herendeen. *William Camden: A Life in Context*. Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2007. 536p.

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The Elizabethan educator and antiquarian William Camden recently has enjoyed a surge in prominence within early modern studies as the hybrid approaches of cultural studies and materialist criticism have rediscovered Camden's interests in the historical vernacular languages of Britain: in the semiotics of topography, including urban topography; and in eclectic modes of historical representation as featured in his most important work *Britannia* (1586). Along with his fellow chronicler and chorographer John Stow, Camden's works frequently now are used to frame Elizabethan phenomena both literary and otherwise. Such prominence as an increasingly key context but not truly a subject, himself, is an important aspect of Camden's legacy, according to Wyman H. Herendeen, but Herendeen's new book, *William Camden: A Life in Context*, also seeks to change this perception in this first modern critical biography of Camden.

Herendeen's subtitle signals a key concept for this comprehensive study of Camden's life from childhood to death: the objective here is not simply a rehearsal of Camden's well-known place in intellectual history and English Renaissance letters, but instead a careful placing of Camden, at every phase of his long life, within the intricate and changing political, intellectual, religious, and cultural textures

of Elizabethan and Jacobean England. For Herendeen, drawing in part from the new readings of early modern culture and literary interplay that have themselves turned to Camden, the particularities of Camden's life, as much as any particular achievement, amplify the significance of his time: "we can study [Camden's and others'] achievement in terms of public office or publications, but unless we recognize where they have come from ... we are liable to ignore the individuals and also fail to see a salient aspect of a culture that enabled their success.... We can learn much from Camden, not just by studying the *Britannia* or the *Annals of Elizabeth*, but by examining the interplay of the material culture in which he lived and how it gave direction to his curriculum vitae" (5). In Herendeen's hands, Camden is revived as, if not truly a full subject, a marginal but significant figure whose life and life's contexts signpost the nuances of Elizabethan England more profoundly and robustly than any other in the period.

Accordingly, then, for such a "life" study, the book is divided into three sections: Part One: Prolepsis: Death, Youth, and Introduction; Part Two: Elizabethan Camden; Part Three: Jacobean Camden. Part One is perhaps most unusual in its focus on the pre-Westminster school and pre-*Britannia* Camden and its attempt to piece together from more limited material the conditions of Camden's childhood and early education at St. Paul's school. Here, Herendeen combines a historian's skill with knowledge of contemporary critical approaches to reflect on the potent semiotics of a London being literally and symbolically returned to Protestantism under the new queen Elizabeth for a young Londoner like Camden. Herendeen also discusses at length Camden's years at St. Paul's and provides a wonderfully nuanced reading of the ideological stakes of school curricula in the period that makes important distinctions between the two educational settings—St. Paul's and Westminster—that would shape Camden. Herendeen's intertwining of biographical detail on Camden with scholarship on Humanist education as well as on Henrician, Edwardian, and Elizabethan efforts to co-opt curricula for their own reform agendas suggests the particular value of his kind of contextual reading of Camden, as we can re-visit Humanist educational philosophy and Elizabethan reform politics through the more intimate lens of a specific life and the path these forces helped shape.

Throughout the book, Herendeen's contextualizing of Camden's life continues to offer some valuable new ways of understanding the period and its institutions as well as works like *Britannia* and their provenance from the contexts Camden inhabited. Camden's experiences at Oxford, for example, portray the powerful intersection of the political, religious, and intellectual in the period, with colleges and university officials influentially aligned with Puritan or recusant causes. In

Part Three, Camden's rise to prominence as herald and King of Arms is framed by Tudor interest in heraldry and the Elizabethan cult of chivalry. Herendeen makes an illuminating comparison between Camden's uses of this cult and Spenser's in *The Faerie Queene*. *William Camden: A Life in Context* offers Camden and his life as an importantly intimate, importantly alternate route for approaching Elizabethan culture and politics.

In short, there is much of value here, but a number of serious problems in the text affect its success. On a more minor but very puzzling level for a work of such evident scholarship, no bibliography is included. Endnotes appear after every section and provide some helpful reference, but the inclusion of a comprehensive bibliography seems called for and this reader, at least, found it an odd omission. Much more serious is a level of carelessness, both at the stylistic and the purely editorial level that is fatally distracting. Errors—found on every page—range from over-frequent and inaccurate comma usage to evident typos or misspellings and needless repetitions of words within the same sentence. Stylistically, the text is peppered throughout with scare quotes and regularly mis-used conjunctive adverbs such as “thus” and “however” to create frustratingly ponderous sentences. Throughout the text I found places where successive paragraphs all begin with the same word, frequently the conjunctive adverb “Thus,” an error in both style and proofreading not tolerated in undergraduate writing, much less a published monograph. It is not an exaggeration to say that the poor quality of this book's writing and editing almost completely undermines its scholarly contributions. Having read, appreciated, and regularly consulted Herendeen's prior work on Jonson and Camden I regret that such a timely, ambitious, and valuable project has been compromised in this way. I hope that Dr. Herendeen and his publisher will address these problems. ✱

Laura Doyle. *Freedom's Empire: Race and the Rise of the Novel in Atlantic Modernity, 1640-1940*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. 578p.

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Laura Doyle's project in *Freedom's Empire: Race and the Rise of the Novel in Atlantic Modernity, 1640-1940* is nothing short of upending the ways in which we have grown accustomed to reading, writing, and talking about the development of the English-language novel. It is an ambitious project, to say the least, and yet one in which Doyle is entirely successful. This is one of the most exciting literary studies' interventions I have encountered in a long time, and my guess is that it

will further alter the way in which we think about the seemingly discrete categories of the British and American novel. While scholars have come to acknowledge that these categories no longer hold, in the wake of the humanities' transnational turn, Doyle's regional transnationalist approach, as she terms it, goes further to painstakingly trace a print history that comprises a dialogue and endless exchange between Anglo, African, and American bodies, materials, and stories.

Doyle's study, which ranges over a 300-year period and yet somehow still manages to engage in close-reading—a practice that she refreshingly acknowledges sits at the very core of literary studies—unearths the particular rhetoric of freedom that the Atlantic world and its narratives have produced, revised and renegotiated since the early seventeenth century. She unearths the source of the Atlantic narrative in the bond between Saxonism and democratic ideas about liberty, both of which arose in the period of the English Civil War, and which depend upon the category of race for their force. Doyle traces this racialized rhetoric of freedom across the Atlantic to America, to discover that the “network of Puritan religio-political opposition to the Crown” (60-61) included Virginia, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, the West Indies, Bermuda Island, and Providence Island (32-35). The discourse of liberty in America, then, arose before the American Revolution, and as a product of transatlantic exchange.

According to Doyle, it is Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave*, one of the earliest print texts inflected with this liberty discourse, that begins the work of the Atlantic novel. Liberty narratives, like Behn's, follow a course of ruin—frequently located at the moment of a water crossing—and subsequent redemption, conceived as the subject's entry into modernity, and they thus allegorize the political and gendered violation at the heart of Atlantic modernity. The vexed entry of the Atlantic subject into modernity is figured as the swoon moment in these narratives; it is thus bodily ruin (for example, rape) that signals the traumatic birth of the reasoning citizen (or of the slave excluded from citizenship). Doyle boldly argues that the “figurational nexus of Atlantic ruin and liberty may be what most authorizes a reconstitution” of the novel in English, beyond its national boundaries. For the British and American novel share not only imagery, she writes, but also an imaginary, to do with race, sex, property, slavery, and print, all tied up with the “charge” of liberty (146).

The sweep of Doyle's study is necessarily vast, as she constructs a genealogy that extends to include, for example, Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (whose influence on the American novel, Doyle argues, has been overlooked), Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative of Olaudah, Gustavas Vassa, the African Written by Himself*, Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*, and Nella Larsen's *Quicksand*. Part One unearths and

analyzes both the sources and the interproduction (Trinh T. Minha's term) of the Atlantic world's vocabulary of freedom and race. Part Two turns to the eighteenth century, and the rise of the psychological novel. Doyle's readings of Defoe, Susanna Rowson, William Hill Brown, and Harriet Wilson clearly demonstrate the way in which the American and the British novel, with their shared racialized plot, formed together on the Atlantic. Parts Three and Four focus on the Anglo, American, and African Atlantic gothic and epic, respectively. Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland*, and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* are read as Atlantic liberty narratives that emphasize national and imperialist textual interests. In Part Five, the focus of which is the modernism of Nella Larsen and Virginia Woolf, Doyle draws out the heterosexist norm of the Atlantic narrative. In novels such as *The Voyage Out*, *The Waves*, and *To the Lighthouse*, with their drownings and water tropes, the transatlantic sexual swoon becomes a "drowning of all unraced, unbordered sexuality" (414) as Woolf seeks to represent an aberrant queer self. Thus, the Atlantic liberty narrative is not only a racialized narrative, but one that is also both heterosexist and homophobic.

The diachronic and transnational frame of *Freedom's Empire* is central to Doyle's method as she reminds us that the burden of history weighs heavily upon the concept and rhetoric of freedom; indeed, "the idea of freedom has itself enabled the growth of modern forms of oppression" (445). In a fine conclusion, Doyle states that we perhaps need to break free from the idea of freedom altogether, to replace it with something like *viability*, suggestive of capacity—freedom *to*—as well as of "*mutuality* and *collectivity*" (449). Doyle's book is indeed an important intervention and contribution to the fields of modernity, transatlanticism and transnationalism, liberalism, and race studies. As she herself writes, viewing the English-novel through this Atlantic lens, in this kind of regional-transnationalist approach, might "give heft to our account of global-transnational and diasporic histories" (453) and encourage us to think anew about the Atlantic as a disruptive contact zone. This is a remarkable book, one that I would encourage any scholar of the novel in English to make space for on his or her bookshelf. ✱

Denise Gigante, ed. *The Great Age of the English Essay: An Anthology*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008. 427p.

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There are many reasons why *The Great Age of the English Essay: An Anthology* has received, and will continue to receive, praise for its balance of utility and

entertainment. Denise Gigante introduces the collection by listing some of the reasons why the periodical essay deserves the attention of scholars and casual readers, particularly noting its unique historical influence on the novel, its contribution to contemporary literary criticism, and its significant rhetorical achievement that lends itself as an educational tool. The collection shows how each essayist uses the “pseudo-fictional space” (xv) of London to depict his or her own view of the urban literary community. This “Republic of Letters” includes both the “coffeehouse circuit” (xxv) and the private sphere, a context that relates to current cultural and urban studies as well as the fictive world of the novel. Similarly, the variety of this collection shows how each speaker’s persona is both fictional and realistic, drawing on experience and imagination. If these reasons do not motivate the reader, however, Gigante’s bold claim that “the periodical essay was the forerunner of modern literary studies” (xvii) should. This text is an excellent supplement to any individual’s literary knowledge.

Gigante includes both widely anthologized essays and those otherwise overlooked in the canon by writers better known in other genres. Although the editor allocates large chapters to Joseph Addison and Samuel Johnson, these authors remain subordinate to these authors as a whole. She chooses essays like *The Spectator* no. 1, the essay that establishes Addison’s urban persona, and *The Rambler* no. 4, in which Johnson discusses the moral consequences of the novel, to show how these essays self-consciously address issues still discussed in literary and cultural studies today. These earlier essays also inform the work of later essayists in the anthology such as James Boswell and Henry Mackenzie, individuals who reinterpret the role of the periodical essay to fit their own experiences and images of London and the literary celebrity.

By only loosely limiting the text’s scope to the long eighteenth century, the anthology shows how changes in literary interest and London life affected the genre. The text’s compilation of work by authors more often studied today for their Restoration dramas, novels, and their affiliation with the Romantic movement is a surprising reminder to us that reputations change throughout history. Richard Steele and Eliza Haywood, for example, two restoration playwrights, easily transition from the London stage to the urbane essay. Henry Fielding’s satirical *Covent Garden Journal* does not wholly depart from the style and purpose of his novels, claiming “to reform the manners and morals of the age” (162), and James Boswell’s *Hypocondriack* is particularly humorous to anyone who has read his *London Journal*. The anthology ends with Romantic essayists Charles Lamb and Thomas De Quincey, whose tones differ significantly from the other selections, but nevertheless remain consistent with the periodical essay form and the urban

literate. Gigante ends her collection with these writers because the “quarterlies and monthlies in which the Romantic essayists published gave way to the monthlies and weeklies of the Victorian era” (xxx), and consequently, the well known generic form of the novel. This collection of diverse periodical essayists provides a fresh representation of literary London.

The healthy balance between detail and summary justifies Cynthia Wall’s “pure reading pleasure” and James Engell’s claim that *The Great Age of the English Essay* accomplishes peerless “scope and variety.” Each chapter begins with a concise biography that relates the writer’s periodical to the London social scene, including the publication’s longevity and the number of issues. Gigante addresses the organizational problem of coauthors, such as Leigh Hunt and William Hazlitt’s *The Round Table*, while maintaining the “peculiar opportunity for an author to create a character” (xv) by briefly mentioning their collaboration in the biography as well as on the lengthy chronology at the end of the book. The timeline illustrates the relationship between essayists, but also places these on a timeline with important political events and the publications of other important literary work, such as Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. Gigante also limits the footnotes to textual citations, keeping the pages themselves free of distracting details. She instead provides a comprehensive glossary of places and terms at the end of the text. Although this anthology rather modestly argues its importance, Gigante justifiably claims that these essays include “some of the best moments English literary history” (xv). Overall, this collection is an invaluable resource for eighteenth century scholars, and certainly reestablishes the periodical essay as an accessible and entertaining literary genre. ✱

Peter Brooks. *Realist Vision*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005. 255p.

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Peter Brooks begins *Realist Vision* by outlining a project of breathtaking scope. This project will make the case for realism by aligning it with a universal human drive to comprehend the outer world through imitating its form, and will focus in particular on those nineteenth-century European realisms that center on urban life and visual apprehension of the world. It will present a survey of English and French literature beginning with Balzac, moving on through Dickens, Flaubert, Eliot, Zola, Gissing, James and Woolf, and adding for good measure a survey of French art from Courbet through the Impressionists. Finally it will take in modern trends both high and low, from nineteen-seventies photorealist painting to the

expressionist realism of Lucien Freud and the peculiar new form, both verisimilar and meticulously staged, of reality television.

All this would be quite a task for so slim a volume, and it is probably for the best that Brooks does not really attempt it. While he does call at every port listed above, the profusion of topics does not obscure that the focus of his inquiry remains centered, as in his previous work, on a particular current of fiction running from Balzac to Flaubert to James. In *The Melodramatic Imagination* (1976) and *Reading for the Plot* (1984), Brooks overlaid a mix of Barthesian semiotics and loosely applied psychoanalysis with an unusually sharp prose style and a fine eye for close reading. In these books he presented an influential theory of realist fiction as working out desire through the forward motion of plot, deploying patterns of concealment and discovery and calling for the interpretation of material things. To incorporate visual apprehension into this model is not a great stretch, and rather than construct an entirely new theory of vision in realist fiction, Brooks gives us a miscellany of individual readings loosely tied to his earlier work. Fortunately for the reader, these readings are so good that they hardly suffer from the lack of a strong thesis. This volume developed from a series of lectures given at Oxford and Yale, and even in book form it retains a colloquial feeling, with an informal tone and an abundance of local interest.

An eighteenth-century French engraving provides Brooks a striking introductory trope for realist vision: a cityscape appears from above, with the roofs removed from buildings so that the viewer can spy on what is happening within. The links are clear to famous, largely negative accounts of visuality—Foucault's panopticon, Mulvey on the male gaze—which Brooks acknowledges and discusses with perfect facility, but does not engage for long. He is less interested in praising or condemning visuality than simply exploring it, with pauses to appreciate particularly fine instances, as when he writes that Manet's *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère* might well be "the greatest painting of the nineteenth century," and goes on to provide a discussion of its ambiguities and perspectival tricks that might even justify the claim.

But interesting as Brooks is on painting, literature is still at the center of his inquiry, in particular the Balzacian mode of literature that he has spent his career exploring. His second chapter, "Balzac Invents the Nineteenth Century," presents Balzac as the originator and prime exemplar of realist vision, with his central trope of the theater divided between front and back stage, presenting social spectacle on one side and hidden causes on the other. Succeeding chapters find Brooks largely tracking variations on Balzac's theme. In some writers he highlights interesting failures of vision; Dickens, for example, sets out in *Hard Times* to document the

ghastly working conditions in Coketown yet somehow misses those lurid details from contemporary accounts that a naturalist like Zola would have seized on. For his part, Zola curiously deviates from his usual descriptive practice in treating the title character of *Nana*, in particular those visions of her nudity “whose force moved the world”; on reaching that source of energy which is the prime mover of the novel’s plot, the narrative vision repeatedly falters and gives way to distinctly un-naturalist flights of metaphor. And there is Flaubert, who so fascinates Brooks because of how hard he works to empty out the Balzacian model of meaning, reducing the world to a mass of details that pointedly signify nothing beyond themselves.

Among Brooks’ strengths is his ability to skirt the twin dangers of facile historical determinism and an equally blinkered ahistoricity. He takes writers and artists as sophisticated, conscious agents who nonetheless are bound to the circumstances of their times. As much as Dickens wants to confront the reality of Coketown, his novel shrinks from imagining the collective action that forms the only possibility of real social change; conversely, Balzac’s conservative and reactionary impulses lead him to present the contradictions of capitalism in that strong relief which has made him a favorite of Marxists for generations. Brooks is always alert to contradictions that go deeper than any simple polemic; indeed, by the end of the book he has described so many mutually contradictory realisms that it is not clear what it would mean to make realism’s case. Fortunately no defense seems needed. The old Platonic complaint against mimetic art, that it produces only debased and superficial copies of things, has resurged at various points in modern criticism, but at present it seems to have receded in favor of a more open and engaging focus on those polyvalent details and unexpected fault lines always to be found in artistic representations of the real. In this endeavor Brooks is among the best we have. ✱

Gary Scharnhorst, ed. *Mark Twain: The Complete Interviews*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006. 719p.

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In *Mark Twain: The Complete Interviews*, Gary Scharnhorst has edited a gem of a reference work for Twain scholars, students, and other interested parties. He claims its 258 interviews “fill a yawning gap in Twain studies” by providing an autobiographical resource distinct from Twain’s correspondence and published writings (ix). Indeed, the biographical material contained in the book offers a rich look at many aspects of Twain’s life. The interviews range from 1871 to 1910

and are presented chronologically. The book is divided into eleven sections, each with a very brief biographical introduction highlighting Twain's publications and personal events in the relevant period. Twenty-two photographs, many candid and unpublished, accent the text.

One of the most striking things about the interviews is the diversity of point of view they present, both in terms of the interviewer and the interviewee. Each interview is a remarkable conflation of the private and the public in terms of Twain's cultivated persona. Often the cultivated persona speaks first, as in his reply to an interviewer in Australia: "What are my ideas and impressions in coming to Australia? I don't know. I'm ready to adopt any that seem handy. I don't believe in going outside accepted views" (197). At times he steps outside his role as humorist to become surprisingly candid, as illustrated by this comment about Bret Harte: "I detest him, because I think his work is 'shoddy.' His forte is pathos which does not come out of a man's heart. He has no heart, except his name, and I consider he has produced nothing that is genuine" (202).

Equally striking is the pose of the interviewer. Some writers are all business, recounting only the questions and the answers, but others write more in the vein of the journalistic sketch, recording impressions of Twain's physical presence, mannerisms, and idiosyncrasies. The attention to Twain's moustache alone could fill a volume; it is described variously and, at times, enthusiastically: "a long black beard and a still longer moustache, which would be of phenomenal beauty were the beard not allowed to take the wind out of its sails" (70). Sometimes the interviewers rival Twain's penchant for witticism. For instance, the *Chicago Tribune* writer claims, "Mark Twain's literary fame is so great that it has somewhat cast into the shade his abilities as a smoker. He smokes like an artist" (88). Although each interview offers a slightly different point of view of Twain, in the aggregate they suggest much about how he carried himself and interacted with others.

The notes that accompany each interview make the interviews accessible for the average undergraduate while providing detail and bibliographic information for those more knowledgeable about Twain and his era. A minor quibble: the frequent notes that make reference to other notes force the reader to flip frequently through the book's 700 pages. While such a practice is understandable for long notes, in the case of short biographical sentences that occur frequently, the information might have been given again, especially since this book is more likely to be used as a reference work than as a book to be read straight through.

Upon meeting Twain during his around-the-world trip which would culminate in 1897's *Following the Equator*, the correspondent from the *Times of India* claims, "of all things possible with Mark Twain, there is one thing that is wholly impossible:

you cannot reproduce the man in any kind of representative embodiment which is afforded by the shallow resources of cold printing type” (273). While this writer’s point is valid, Scharnhorst’s collection goes a long way towards reconstructing how the media of Twain’s era presented him to the public. *Mark Twain: The Complete Interviews* is a fantastic reference for Twainians of all stripes. ✱

Myra Jehlan. *Five Fictions in Search of Truth*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008. 170p.

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Myra Jehlan’s *Five Fictions in Search Of Truth* reads like a novel. The title is no artificial echo of Pirandello’s famous play *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. The characters need the author to authenticate them. The novel as a genre is validated by truth or realism—or rather, by the problematization of truth. Within this play of problematization Jehlan perceives an active and conscious involvement of the author. Jehlan’s unique style of gradual unfolding, as she begins with authorial failures to uncover the seeds of success in fictional realism, holds the attention of the reader to the end.

It is axiomatic that the novel, in any form, pursues reality. Jehlan’s choice of authors, however, indicates that a simple thematic depiction of reality is not the end. The authors in question were not interested in the “whats” but in the “hows” of fictional depiction. All the authors from Proust, Flaubert, and Henry James to Nabokov favored a discourse on form and style. For them, and this is their point of consolidation, the concrete world posited as the referent to a more intense and concentrated truth the fiction is able to depict through its form and style. Jehlan dismisses the postmodern bias against formal principle. For Jehlan, form is inherently truth seeking. She chooses the works of Flaubert, Henry James, and Nobokov because they approached truth through the terrestrial path of formality.

Her prologue is a direct plunge into the sensuous world of phenomenal reality in the name of “a morsel of madeleine half-dissolved in a teaspoon of linden-tea”! Without much ado Jehlan drives home her point that it is the concrete world of sensuality that leads the author to an unpremeditated epiphany of truth. Along with Proust Jehlan rejects the Romantic concept of subjectivity in the perception of truth, and also the forward movement of the stream of consciousness. It is a sudden and direct plunge from some point of the concrete world to a Kantian intuition to discover the essence and beauty beyond. But this interior landscape is objective rather than subjective because it never forgets its origin in concrete

reality shared by mankind in general. Jehlan uses Proust's experience with his madeleine as her leitmotif. Her work is structurally well-rounded, for she invokes the same madeleine when she concludes at the end of her work.

Jehlan places her chosen authors in a dialogic relationship and we obtain a fresh insight into the architectonics of literary creativity. Her work is a rebuff to the postmodern dismissal of the authorial role. With the help of personal letters that the authors wrote to each other or their friends, their statements about each other, their mutual love and hate, ambitions and inspirations, confessions of failures, celebration of success and facts about their constant experiments, Jehlan is able to bring home the truth that any simplistic conclusion about literary creation would be sacrilegious. If their fictional characters are agential in their own right, so are the authors in constant dialogue with their works. If the narrator of the *Sacred Fount* proved to be a downright embarrassment to Henry James, it also foregrounded the truth that the failure was due to a lack of tone and style. James' next protagonist, Strether of *The Ambassadors*, brought aesthetic as well as moral fulfillment.

The dialogue is intertextual too. James' work is a critique of Flaubert's limitation, though ironically James takes off from the very ground that Flaubert had created, the ground of concrete reality. Nabokov in *Lolita* takes the argument a little further. As long as Humbert Humbert holds on to his sophisticated urban style, his hunger for carnal knowledge commands acceptability on both moral and aesthetic grounds. Jehlan shows how style is critical in the novel's ethical agenda. The moment H.H fails to hold on to his self-reflexive style, the writer withdraws from his side and he turns into a banal pedophile.

Five Fictions is an experiment in style too. Jehlan begins with *Salamambo*, a failure, but paradoxically a work of great stylistic beauty. What is the solution to this paradox? James' *Sacred Fount* is no answer. In fact, Flaubert's overzealousness for concrete reality is aped by James' narrator, but since his search was into the human mind, it lands him as well as James in a serious moral dilemma. James discovers the right path in Strether's aestheticism.

To make her point clear, Jehlan uses a meticulous New-Critical method to lead the readers into the inner intricacies and realities of the texts. She uses elaborate quotations both from the texts as well as letters, and often repeats them verbatim later in her discussion to highlight the ironies.

Jehlan's seemingly conclusive conclusion is open-ended. She had begun with Flaubert's failure and ends with *A Simple Heart*, "a work in which story and beauty, morality and irony are all supremely fulfilled." Flaubert has at last entered the inner-landscape, that too with his characteristic objectivity. But placed just after Jehlan's intellectually vibrating discussion on Nabokov's *Lolita*, we ask ourselves whether

reading a perfect novel is as interesting as reading a controversial failure. Novel-reading seems to be a more comprehensive activity. It is not an act of completion or complacency, but an activity that throws us in a whirlpool of dialogically related stances: the protagonist's, the author's, the reader's, the critic's the time's, and mankind's. Surprisingly, Jehlan has achieved this end using a language beyond the contemporary critical jargons. ✱

Joy Landeira, ed. *Una rosa para Ernestina. Ensayos en conmemoración del centenario de Ernestina de Champourcin*. Ferrol, Spain: Sociedad de Cultura Valle-Inclán, 2006. 204p.

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Una rosa para Ernestina consists of eight essays focusing on different aspects of the works of the Spanish poet Ernestina de Champourcin (1905-1999), a member of the poetic Generation of 1927 who has, according to editor Joy Landeira and the other contributors, received little critical attention, overshadowed by more famous contemporary male poets. Landeira provides an introduction and a chronology of Champourcin's life and works to set the critical essays in context, and she concludes with an extensive bibliography of the poet's works and critical articles and books about her. As Landeira points out in the introduction, Champourcin and Josefina de la Torre were the only two women included in Gerardo Diego's famous anthology *Poesía española (Contemporáneos)* of 1934. Yet, Champourcin, unlike the male poets Diego highlighted, received only passing critical attention. A possible contributing factor to Champourcin's omission from the canon was her exile to Mexico with her husband Juan José Domenchina, a member of the Republican government, after the Spanish Civil War ended in 1939. She published only a few poems in newspapers during her 33 years of exile in Latin America. Finally, these essays argue, Champourcin has begun to receive the critical attention her innovative and lyrical works deserve.

The first essay, "Una rosa para Ernestina" by Landeira traces Champourcin's use of the image of the rose throughout her poetic production. Landeira states, "La rosa que aquí emerge en un capullo de poesía adolescente más tarde florecerá en una de las imágenes más duraderas y polipétalas del jardín de recursos poéticos de Ernestina" (15-16). Arturo del Villar focuses his essay on Champourcin's poetry written during the Civil War, looking at her treatment of the conflict from the Republican perspective. He also discusses her one novel, *La casa de enfrente* (1936), and chapters from an unpublished memoir of the war titled *Mientras allí*

se muere. Asunción Horno-Delgado attempts to explain why Champourcin's work remained unstudied and unappreciated until recently. She examines a recurring theme she describes as "la presencia de una especial dinámica sexual en la poesía de Champourcin a través de la cual su voz poética reivindica espacios de otredad para la mujer contemporánea" (74). Perhaps, as Horno-Delgado suggests, Champourcin's early poetry espouses a view of female sexuality that made readers, primarily male, uncomfortable and unappreciative of her originality.

The collection's fourth essay by Janet Pérez examines Champourcin's love theme, which moves from human love in her early poetry to love of God in works produced in exile. Pérez hypothesizes that Champourcin's works have languished in obscurity in part because of her exile, and in part because her contemporaries viewed her poetic evolution as totally reflective of her husband's interests, a claim Pérez resoundingly refutes. Critic Douglas Benton focuses his critical assessment only on her religious poetry, produced in her later years, arguing that Champourcin's poetry is transtextual and polyglosemic, in dialogue with biblical texts as well as classical Spanish texts by Santa Teresa, San Juan de la Cruz, Luis de León, and others. Kathy McGregor's essay examines the function of memory in Champourcin's poetry, especially the corpus written in Mexico, contending that it bears testimony to the horrors of war and exile and still speaks powerfully to today's readers. In his complementary essay Curtis Wasson examines carefully Champourcin's presentation of the theme of exile, and he connects it to the philosophical poetry of Antonio Machado, a fellow supporter of the Second Republic who died in exile in France. The collection's final essay by Efraín E. Garza looks at light and shadow imagery in Champourcin's last two major collections, *Presencia a oscuras* (1952) and *Del vacío y sus dones* (1993), analyzing the imagery referenced in the titles and significant in all the poems. In the earlier volume, the poetic voice seeks divine illumination, "ciégame con tu luz" (166), while in the later work, perhaps due in part to the poet's failing eyesight, the poetic voice longs for the light, even as her spiritual sensitivity has sharpened.

This collection of essays examine a poetic production that, for a variety of reasons, has languished in obscurity, attempting to focus on Champourcin's work the critical attention it should have received long ago. The critics present detailed analyses of the works, giving close textual readings while also setting the works in their biographical and cultural context. This volume makes an important contribution to scholarship on Ernestina Champourcin and the Generation of 1927 and should be required reading for any scholar in this field. ✱

Jackson J. Benson. *The Ox-Bow Man: A Biography of Walter Van Tilburg Clark*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2004. 426p.

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There are two things that reading a biography about a writer should do: make one want to read or re-read that writer's work, and make one work harder on one's own writing. Jackson Benson's biography on Walter Van Tilburg Clark accomplishes these and more.

The book's cover photo and title, *Ox Bow Man*, draw in the reader to wonder: is he a cowboy, wrestler, writer, or wanderer? Walter Clark was a true westerner: talented storyteller, writer, artist, poet, musician, and hunter. Several chapter titles display a Frederick Jackson Turner-esque western movement and development along with Clark's constant return to Nevada: "From Maine to Nevada," "*The Ox-Bow Incident* and the Western Novel," "Writer of Stories, Poems and Letters," "Back to Nevada and *The Track of the Cat*," "From Iowa City to Omaha and to Columbia, Missouri," "The Move to Montana and Uncompleted Writing Projects," "Back to Nevada and Becoming Alf Doten." The reader can feel Clark packing and unpacking boxes of manuscript papers and books from his car.

Sometimes, Benson's writing is non-linear: an older Walter Clark reminisces about the changing west; his adult son relates how his dad taught high school English in Virginia City because they needed the money. Benson adeptly displays Clark's struggle with perfectionism, depression, and writer's block through letters to his wife and friends. However, Clark's joy of teaching from high school to graduate students hovers solidly as his compass, always ready to edge him forward to stability in his life.

Benson delicately unwraps examples of Clark's prose with excerpts from various works such as a short story, "Hook," to his most famous novel, *The Ox-Bow Incident*. His Robinson Jeffers-like philosophy of the human being as the intruder or despoiler is evident in much of Clark's writing. Indeed, Clark's acceptance of his own early death parallels the hawk's easy acceptance in the aforementioned short story. However, reading the many excerpts makes it difficult to understand Clark's inability to crack his frequent writing blocks that are always delaying his next big writing project. Additionally, Benson skirts the issue of Clark's incessant drinking being harmful to his craft, and the reader easily sees the self-harm his family and friends seem to ignore. Derogatory tales about him are absent from the biography.

I was first introduced to the Ox-Bow man while a high school student in Reno assigned to read his most famous novel, *The Ox-Bow Incident*, for Mrs. Mitchell's English class. I thought it unusual to study a live writer who even had a movie, and

I quickly realized his gifted western writing and stature as a favorite Nevada son. Of course, my opinion has grown stronger after reading about Clark's lofty work ethic and his gentle and worthwhile advice given to any level of writer or teacher. Most teachers and writers should enjoy reading Benson's book as it captures both the pleasure and pain of both professions.

Finally, it matters not to ascertain if Walter Van Tilburg Clark was indeed an alcoholic who negatively affected his career as a writer. The writing is what matters. Early in the book, Benson reports that Clark loved socializing, drinking, and talking to anyone about anything. And, Clark also saw this as a professional necessity for any writer. But, he also thought that it was very important not to force oneself to make mental or written notes of these acts for later use. "The memory will keep what matters" (41). Walter Clark's maxim most succinctly sums up what reading or writing anything is all about. ✱

Zoran Kuzmanovich and Gayla Diment, eds. *Approaches to Teaching Lolita*. New York: MLA, 2008. 190p.

Thomas H. Schaub, ed. *Approaches to Teaching Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 and Other Works*. New York: MLA, 2008. 195p.

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In the 1970s, as the MLA grew increasingly obsessed with post-structuralist theory and its imported ideas from Europe, arguably the strongest concern of many teachers of English and Foreign Languages across the country was the profession's skewed emphasis on disciplinary research and scholarship sometimes to the exclusion of consideration for the main mission: teaching the undergraduates. This emphasis was focused on monographs and articles but overlooked how this scholarship informed pedagogy and how students benefited from faculty research.

In response to this concern, in 1980 MLA began a series on "Approaches to Teaching World Literature" under the general editorship of Joseph Gibaldi with the principal objective "to collect within each volume different points of view on teaching specific literary work, a literary tradition, or a writer taught at the undergraduate level." Each volume serves as a "sourcebook of material, information and ideas on teaching the subject of the volume to undergraduates," as a practical supplement for teachers in the classroom. Each volume offers a section consisting of material such as chronology of the author's life and publications, biographical information, publication history and editions, study guide for students, reference guides and relevant web sites, information on available audiovisual aids such as films

and documentaries, and a bibliography. A second section consists of approaches to teaching the text organized according to themes, generic and cultural contexts, and theoretical perspectives.

Approaches to Teaching Lolita and *Approaches to Teaching Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 and Other Works*, are two long overdue volumes in this series. Both the novels are ranked high on the list of influential works of the twentieth century and their authors Vladimir Nabokov and Thomas Pynchon have gained cult status as writers of metafiction and experimental narrative. However, for various reasons—some cultural, others generic, and still others linguistic—teaching the two works at the undergraduate level presents, especially in lower level general education courses but even in upper level seminars, challenges that these volumes address.

The Nabokov volume, edited by Zoran Kuzmanovich and Gayla Diment, includes twenty-two essays under three group headings. The first group, “Teaching *Lolita* in Specific Courses,” includes essays on teaching *Lolita* in a general-education course, in a senior seminar, in a custom designed course on Ethics and Literature, in a semester-long course, and in a seminar on cultural studies. The second group of essays listed under “Literary, Generic and Cultural Contexts” offers ten essays based on comparative readings of the novel against works by authors such as Dostoevsky, Poe, and Pushkin; cultures such as the Russian and the American; and media such as print and film. The third group, “Philosophical, Ethical, and Ideological Approaches,” offers thematic analysis of topics such as misogyny, gender representation, theology, morality, and humor. The volume concludes with a list each of print resources and audiovisual materials.

The Pynchon volume, edited by Thomas H. Schaub, includes twenty essays under four group headings. The five essays in the first group trace “Literary Heritage, Influence, and Context,” focusing on topics such as the 1960s American culture, quest narratives and the tradition of American romance, and the influence of thinkers such as Sigmund Freud and Herbert Marcuse on Pynchon. Five more essays in the second group focus on pedagogy, with emphasis on themes such as science, humor, satire, race, and mythology, and on structural patterns such as the novel's de-centered gamesmanship. Six essays in the third group address Pynchon's use of “Empire, History, and Postmodern Space,” examining Pynchon's use of history and geography, of time and space, of fiction and metafiction, of ideology and historiography, and of cataclysmic events such as the holocaust. The final four essays under “Reading Practices” offer suggestions on strategies of reading Pynchon's work.

Kuzmanovich and Diment note in their preface to the Nabokov volume that although the novel's “particular mix of complex narrative strategies, ornate allusive

prose, and troublesome subject matter continues to produce outcries” when we teach *Lolita* in the college classroom, the “breadth and inventiveness of these essays make it clear that banishing *Lolita* or having it under a stone for a thousand years is no longer an option.” Similarly, Schaub points to the profession’s “current preoccupation with postcolonialism and the redefinition of American Studies” as a good rationale for the new focus on the politics and economic of modern social history that gives new relevance to Pynchon’s writing. Pynchon’s career as an author, Schaub notes, coincided with the civil rights movement within the country and with decolonization movements across the globe, rise of feminism in the west, and anti-war protests against American involvement in Vietnam.

Obviously, for different reasons both Nabokov and Pynchon are important figures of the twentieth-century mainstream American literary and intellectual history, and that makes it imperative that they will continue to be a part of the reassessment of our national history and culture and will occupy a space in our curriculum. These two volumes in the MLA “Approaches to Teaching” series will offer significant help to both teachers and students as we examine and understand a tumultuous period of American history. ✱

Christel N. Temple. *Literary Spaces: Introduction to Comparative Black Literature*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007. 628p.

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In *Literary Spaces: Introduction to Comparative Black Literature*, Christel Temple makes an ambitious attempt to clearly define the field of comparative Black literature and to reexamine the way Black texts are approached in the academic curriculum. According to Temple, this project is significant because “Comparative Black literature is a new academic field” (3) that has previously been an area of contestation and debate; scholars have never completely agreed on the parameters of this field, and some have even suggested that the discipline of comparative literature is dead or dying. Temple aggressively takes on both of these challenges in *Literary Spaces*, suggesting that this book is a “phase of [the] revitalization” (41) of comparative Black literature.

Temple’s book contains two introductory chapters, the first covering the history of the field she is seeking to reexamine and revitalize, and the second, titled “Comparative Analysis and Writing,” justifying her comparative methodology. The following eight chapters cover various influences, themes, and genres of Black literature. In chapters 3-10, Temple first offers her analysis of the subjects

covered in each chapter, and then she provides a wide variety of excerpts from Black authors. Her coverage is extensive and diverse. These samples serve the dual purpose of exemplifying the topics introduced in the chapter and offering the reader a glimpse of the truly global nature of the literature of Africa and the Black Diaspora. If demonstrating the variety and the far-reaching influence of Black literature were the only goal of the book, then there is no doubt that Temple has been successful.

The work, however, goes further, presenting the newcomer to the field of comparative literature with an understanding of the topic before he/she embarks on examining the literature included in the volume. In chapter 2, Temple first explains what she calls, “the art of comparative writing” (42) in a broad sense. She then builds on this foundation by discussing the categories of comparative Black literature and examining the disciplinary issues surrounding this field and Black studies in general. Finally, she offers suggestions for an African-centered literary analysis. Temple succinctly sums up her entire volume in chapter 2 as well: “While *Literary Spaces* can offer only a modest sampling of the literature of the Black world, it should be regarded as a prototype of the history, the culture, the character, the modes of expression, the ideologies, the points of reference, and the creative visions of the African world that cry out ... to be comparatively studied” (52).

The length of the work will certainly be the most prominent issue raised by critics of *Literary Spaces: Introduction to Comparative Black Literature*. However, considering the numerous tasks that Temple takes on and the broad representation of Black literature that she includes, the number of pages should not be surprising. For those interested in introducing themselves and their students to this remarkable and extremely important area of literature, this volume is a must, because it is both thorough and manageable. Temple is able to put into the hands of those who are not experts in the field a book that will introduce them to and interest them in the all-too-often overlooked field of Black literature. Her comparative approach is fully justified, since, as she points out, “the philosophy of comparative exercise is the understanding that there are commonalities, as well as differences, in author’s creative approaches to recording life phenomena through literature” (43). What better way is there to engage with a literary tradition that most people in the United States have very little previous knowledge of or experience with? Most importantly, however, with this work Temple accomplishes her goal of “[portraying] the ongoing struggles for agency by global populations that claim the continent of Africa as a source of identity and culture” (3). ✱

Kalenda C. Eaton. *Womanism, Literature and the Black Community, 1965-1980*. New York: Routledge, 2008. 107p.

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Kalenda Eaton's 2008 publication *Womanism, Literature and the Black Community, 1965-1980* is a clearly written argument for the power of Black women authors to envision change and provide possible paths out of oppression for the Black community in the era immediately following the Civil Rights movement. It is precisely this ability to envision, and the talent to share that vision through literature, that make illustrious Black women authors such as Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Toni Cade Bambara primary sources for Eaton's exposition. Far from mere adulation of these celebrated authors, however, Eaton offers two critical additions to contemporary Black politics: the inextricably interwoven historical events of African American political history as part of a continuum that must be recognized, and the development of a new term, Afro-Politico Womanism, to enable a positive reception of Black female activism from within the Black community.

The first is the assertion that Black political history is not only a series of singular events frozen in their places and times, but rather that these events are part of a continuum of a Black experience, one that ties the past inevitably to the present. Eaton includes her own text as part of this continuum, drawing from the highly revered Black male scholarship of Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Franz Fanon alongside the women authors she references. And, while the review of African American literature in terms of community building and revolutionary vision as a subject matter is a road well worn, Eaton breaks new ground by pointing to the political intervention of Black women authors within their narratives, and through their characters' actions, as a site for these processes at times more powerful than the directly political actions of the largely male-run Black Movement. Eaton rejects the idea that Black women activists have weakened the movement by emasculating Black males and posits instead that the everyday Black women who was pushed from the movements ranks of power have actually had more effect on the movement by performing their activism on an intimate familial and community level. These unsung women have harbored families and fostered communities while the political rhetorics of countering Black Nationalisms have actually had a divisive and stultifying effect. By reinserting women into the continuum of the black movement Eaton recognizes both the authors she analyzes and the women who these authors' female characters represent.

The second of Eaton's critical interventions is the use of Afro-Politico Womanism (APW) as a term to describe her unique stance, namely the historical and continued presence of Black female activism, often enacted far from the political stage, as central

to the maintenance of community and hence the Movement. Black Feminism does not work here as Black feminism is often regarded from within the Black community as a threat to unity. Even if this (false) threat is dismantled in the minds of the Black community, Black feminism cannot fulfill all of Eaton's criteria for APW. While feminism is largely considered a means of bringing about gender equity within a group, Eaton's APW requires that the actions of its activism be in service of all Black men and women with particular emphasis on the forgotten masses for whom Civil Rights were supposedly enacted. In her own words, "The female activists who support the Afro-Politico Womanist agenda 'step-up' to the task at hand while the appointed leadership is away debating the next course of action" (89).

The forgotten masses, as Eaton refers to them, are largely the impoverished and mainly southern African Americans who she feels the Black middle class has abandoned in their own financial and socially mobile escape. This is a theme Eaton refers to repeatedly throughout the text although she shies away from drawing distinctly class-based arguments. Instead Eaton finds that the disruption of Black history from within the Black community has resulted in a generational amnesia among middle-class Black Americans. This loss of history, argues Eaton, is the reason that the Black middle class does not return to the Black community (Eaton describes her use of the term community as directly related to the poor left behind) to use their newfound wealth and power to aid the Movement. Here Eaton may be a bit idealistic, attributing Black middle-class abandonment only to lack of historical connectivity when in fact the grind of poverty and the slow, tedious labor of movements may also lose out to the powerful seduction of personal comfort and freedom. This attractive lure may at times draw any human away from the struggle to release others from the bondages of racial, gendered, and/or financial oppressions.

If this slight, end excusable, idealism puts the reader on guard however, do not disregard this book just yet, for it is the power to envision alternate futures that this book is all about. In succeeding chapters on Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*, Alice Walker's *Meridian*, Toni Cade Bambara's *The Salt Eaters*, and Paule Marshall's *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People*, Eaton defines the various central characters as symbols of conflicting political agendas or factions in the Black Movement with "the protagonists function[ing] as repositories of possible solutions to the problems facing dying communities in the post-Civil Rights era" (87). It is this contribution of envisioned solutions that Eaton celebrates among the authors she reflects upon. It is the ability to envision a positive Afro-Politico Womanist agenda, an agenda that seeks commitment to community above all else, that makes Eaton's own work so engaging and necessary for the current times. ✱

Daniel Balderston and Francine Masiello, eds. *Approaches to Teaching Puig's Kiss of the Spider Woman*. New York: MLA, 2007. 169p.

ANA ISABEL CARBALLAL
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This is an excellent handbook on the work of Manuel Puig and in particular his novel *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1976). The instructors using it for their courses will find not only basic information regarding the historical contexts, the author's biography, and reading and writing backgrounds, but also a section for supplementary materials that may facilitate and enhance the organization of the class as well as its configuration.

The manual is divided into two parts: the first a very short review on the editions of the novel, the author, its historical context and background, and supplementary readings and audiovisual materials to assist student's comprehension. The second part, titled "Approaches," is a series of articles whose topics include narrative structure, reception, politics, cinema, and the issue of performance. This part comes preceded by an introduction written by the editors in which they discuss the novel and its relation with the literature of the Boom in Latin America. Balderston and Masiello contend that Puig's work is basically different from that of the Boom in refusing the use of a third-person narrator; encouraging the use of psychoanalysis, mass media elements, and movie techniques; and providing a vision of identities that does not relate so much to politics as to the individual himself.

After this introduction come thirteen articles that may be divided also between those that address the novel and its techniques and those that have a more decisive focus on the teaching aspects of the book. Among the first ones there is an essay transcribed from a lecture given by Ricardo Piglia in which the author speaks about some of the most revealing characteristics of the novel, those being the construction of the narration and the narrative voice and the use of techniques such as footnotes, the direct dialogue, and the impression of different layers of information, which help to disentangle the apparent conflict of the novel between reality and fiction, and the function of both characters. One, Arregui, acts as a woman and the other, Molina, as a revolutionary. Two voices appear, the one that tells and the other that listens.

In a very similar way, Richard Young also analyzes how the structure as well as its readership helps to convey meaning. The reader's role is, in Young's opinion, first to bridge the gap between the text and the footnotes of the novel, second to find out the possible deceptions in the novel that do not encompass only the contradictions between footnotes and text as much as the use of film and characters and the deception between the characters themselves, and third to give meaning to the novel since the reader must construct meaning for him or herself.

In a second section of the book, Poblete, Mudrovcic, and Amícola address in more depth the reception and reader's position. Poblete analyzes the identification of the subject concluding that is made up of multiple voices and social discourses, one of the purposes of the novel being that each character discovers his subjectivity in the other. Mudrovcic talks about Héctor Bavenco's adaptation of the novel to film and how this affected its reception, particularly those parts that were somewhat intertwined and did not stay true to the story: the drawback of the gay topic from the movie, the reduction of Molina's character complexities, and an emphasis in the role of Leni that displaces the main topic of the novel. Amícola analyzes the different levels of fusion in the narrative between listeners inside and readers outside, national boundaries between the United States and Germany with the narration of the movies *Cat People* and *Destiny*, a melding of speakers, and finally a combination of social ideas with literary form.

One of the most interesting sections in the book is the one that studies Puig's work from a political point of view. According to Juan Pablo Dabove, the study of *Kiss of the Spider Woman* is an excellent opportunity to revisit some of the most important topics pertaining Latin American culture and literature in the 20th century. Those topics are the feeling of defeat and decline of Latin American intellectuality, the cultural and economic globalization of the continent, the impact of neo-liberalism and the crush of revolutionary movements. José Maristany focuses on the relationship between Marxism and homosexuality, conveying how Puig's novel brings these two worlds together. Although the Left views homosexuality as a disease that should be eradicated, Puig contends that gender relationships are not easily clarified through a revolutionary perspective but in itself as part the traces of human sexuality.

The last two sections of the book are dedicated to the relationship between the novel, its reception and its adaptation to the big screen. Graciela Speranza considers Puig as a smuggler whose works always concern something else and bring into question the pedagogy of society and human relations. For David Oubiña, the adaptation of the novel to the film has shown the challenges of adapting a work that has so many ambiguous characters and situations. Levine assesses that both adaptations to theater and to film left the author somewhat disappointed, in spite of their success, due to the lack of freshness and the simplifications of topics that they supposed.

Three authors focus their articles a bit more on the teaching experience and students' reaction to the novel. Avelar recommends helping students avoid stereotypes, making them see how Molina is not the force of change but on the contrary the reestablishment of a *macho* view of society. Lucille Kerr provides

us with a structure regarding the teaching of the novel and how to approach the different instances in it; and Rosa Perelmuter addresses the different voices and particularly of the footnotes, revealing how they manipulate the view of the story.

In general this book offers outstanding materials beneficial to teach the Puig's work. The articles have been written by well-known experts in the field of Latin American Studies, and they offer a variety of approaches on how to analyze and what to consider important at the time of teaching Puig. Also very important are the historical and political contexts given at the beginning of the text and the extensive bibliographies of written and audiovisual materials. A feature to keep in mind is that the book does not offer so much methodologies and techniques on how to teach this work as ideas and concepts from the book that should be analyzed in class as part of the coursework. There is also a lack of projection towards the students. For instance, it could have been interesting to have questions students should answer after reading Puig's book, or an examination of the possible problems that students encounter when they are confronted with this work and possible ways to handle these challenges. Despite these recommendations, the book is an excellent resource to teach this author, and it encompasses all the approaches that the critics are using at this very moment. ✱

Lauren M.E. Goodlad and Michael Bibby, eds. *Goth: Undead Subculture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007. 442p.

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In their collection of essays aptly titled *Goth: Undead Subculture*, editors Lauren M. E. Goodlad and Michael Bibby bring forth a much needed tome that adds to the exploration of this topic on the academic level. While the two editors have established their roles as fine researchers and critical contributors to the study of two very different literary and political eras—Lauren Goodlad of the Victorian and Michael Bibby of the Vietnam era—they join forces to provide a rich pastiche of the study of this cultural phenomenon. The witty play on words in the subtitle sets the tone for the whole of the book: goth is indeed the subculture favoring allusions to the undead, but it is itself surviving pressure from mainstream and fellow subcultures and thus refuses to be pronounced dead and gone.

In their Introduction, Goodlad and Bibby highlight the evolution of the goth subculture, following its path from its first emergence on the tail of British punk in the late 1970s to its “mainstream diffusion” (8) in the 1980s and to

its subtle but persistent presence on the worldwide web into the twenty-first century. Furthermore, the editors convincingly argue how, though a subculture, goth proves to hail from a unique socio-economic position: followers come from well-established middle-class families and are often admired by members of the intelligentsia including college professors, and numerous practitioners eventually become scholars themselves, like some of the authors included in the book.

The twenty-two essays are grouped into six categories: Genders, Performances, Localities, Artifacts, Communities, and Practices. This categorization, however, does not necessarily mean rigid distinctions of themes but rather diverse approaches to the same representative works or phenomena within the subculture. As such, collectively they provide a nuanced exploration of goth's numerous dimensions. The arguments in the Genders segment make a compelling case for how goth's performativity intertwines with the ambivalence of gender and locality. Resistance is a governing feature of goth, and one representation of goths' resistance to the establishment is to explore the ambivalence of gender, so much so that one domineering tendency is to cater to the male experience of pain. Notably, Lauren Goodlad examines how a "desire for androgyny" (89) motivates male characters to explore their own physical pain and the emotional pain of the loss of loved ones in James O'Barr's *The Crow* and Jack Palahniuk's *Fight Club*, and argues that this has been one of the main characteristics of gothic narratives since the eighteenth century.

Just like punk, its predecessor, goth is a highly visible subculture. In the chapter Performances, the authors explore the impact of appearance on the personal level and from the inside of the subculture, as well as on the celebrity level in the case of David Bowie. One author denotes the intriguing irony of how gothic is a trend constantly and dynamically reinvented and reborn, yet in the context of the media, especially in fashion, a stereotypical view prevails of the gothic as style. While the clothing is ultimately black and the facial make-up pale or white, the costuming varies on a broad scale and represents a "form of play" (139).

Authors explore another dimension of goth's appearance in the next chapter, Localities. One article follows a "first-wave" music scene in Buffalo, NY; another discovers a global connection in Australia; while a third meticulously distinguishes between Southern gothic and goth placed in a Southern setting, as Anne Rice's *Interview with a Vampire*, among others. Ultimately, however, goth seems to be independent of place and represents its own world.

The four articles in the Artifacts chapter further dissect material representations of goth, some of which had been touched upon in Performances. Michael Bibby focuses on "how Joy Division's music, sound production, and promotional

packaging articulated a melancholia that became central to goth style” (236). He also concludes that what differentiates punk from goth is that while the former is satirical, the latter is straightforward in their historical approach. An interview with renowned fashion historian Valerie Steele offers brilliant insights into how, though self-proclaimed anti-fashion, goth is still, by definition, a fashion trend. Another essay muses over “remediation” in *Edward Scissorhands*, and the last one in this chapter illuminates how the title character in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* is perpetually romanticized by Hollywood productions as opposed to capturing the latent threat his character poses in the original novel.

The essays in the next chapter, *Communities*, advance enduring questions about the nature of individualism versus community within the goth subculture. One essay traces how an ultimately civic, republican world is created in *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*, another provides a personal account of the “Batcave” community in New York, while the last one discloses the results of extensive fieldwork done on how young Goths search for their individuality in the online community. In the final chapter, *Practices*, the essays explore gothic sexuality from young male masochism in Poppy Z Brite’s novels to fetishism and fetish play.

This pioneer collection of scholarly essays offers an excellent survey into the dynamically changing subculture that perpetually reinvents itself, probes the boundaries of mainstream culture, and resists seamless categorization. *Goth* is likely to become a well-utilized textbook for a wide range of courses in the humanities. ✱

Christine Wilkie-Stibbs. *The Outside Child In and Out of the Book*. New York: Routledge, 2008. 198p.

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In *The Outside Child In and Out of the Book*, Christine Wilkie-Stibbs, a professor at the University of Warwick UK, gives a view of both literary and real outsider children through the lens of this question: are there possible alternatives to the binary logic of insider-outsider? (3). Her goal is to “reimagine and revalue” the outsider, moving from a stereotypic cipher to a unique individual (3). More specifically, Wilkie-Stibbs, “seeks to dismantle geopolitical and biopolitical polarities, and to reinstate the proximal view as the knowledge base upon which to conjecture ‘the child’ as an unfinished heterogeneous, mutable, messy, unfixed, diverse, and complex project that simply dissolves the very possibility of outsidership as an ontological category” (19). She develops her argument even further by matching up real narratives in inset boxes with literary examples.

Wilkie-Stibbs starts her argument in the Preface where she lays out her socio-political agenda. She explains that her horror at the 2000 election of George Bush in and his desire to seek world domination for the United States compelled her to write *The Outside Child* (x).

In Chapter 1, she continues her concern with bio-, geo, and socio-politics. She introduces political and cultural theorists such as Judith Butler, Julia Kristeva, and Michel Foucault to undergird her work and to show the fallacy of the binary insider-outsider even though the current Western culture valorizes that dualism. She sorts the types of outsiders that she has found in her focus books and in social workers' documents, giving a chapter to each category: the displaced, the erased, the unattached, the abject, and the colonized. These child outsiders come from Australia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, England, Germany, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, United States, and Vietnam.

In each of the chapters after the first, Wilkie-Stibbs discusses the theories she will use to read the chapter's focus books, and then applies to those books. The type of child outsider that she discusses in Chapter 2 is the displaced who are refugees either in transit or already in their new country. The main character in Beverly Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth* experiences a change in status from middle class intellectual to one listed as "no language" because she cannot speak English. Jamal, in Morris Gleitzman's *Boy Overboard*, journeys from Afghanistan to Australia where he and his family are imprisoned in a detention center. In the next chapter, "Erased," she groups books about children who are outside the Western cultural norm because of a disability. The disabilities, both seen and unseen, represented in this chapter's focus books are Asperger's syndrome in Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, facial deformity in Robert Cormier's *Heroes*, and mental illness in Jacqueline Wilson's *The Illustrated Mum*. Chapter 4 considers the abject, those children reduced to the lowest existences. The abject, here used as a noun rather than adjective, are those who are existing in conditions that have rendered them voiceless, such as Anna in Johanna Reiss' *The Upstairs Room* and Tin in Sonya Hartnett's *Thursday Child*. In Chapter 5, the author brings together an array of books focused on children who are not attached to a family unit. She shows how orphans, foster children, and even the adopted are outsiders not only because of their lack of attachment but because they have no societal power. The focus books here are Katherine Paterson's *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, Cynthia Voigt's *Dacey's Song*, Sharon Creech's *Ruby Holler*, and Rachel Anderson's *The War Orphan*. Chapter 6 wraps up Wilkes-Stibbs' categories by considering colonized children. The colonized are those living in disputed territories, both racially and geographically. The first section of this chapter concerns racial divides and features

Malorie Blackman's *Noughts and Crosses* and Anne Provoost's *Falling*. The second section concerns children living in territories in which their families no longer can call their own, such as Palestine in Elizabeth Laird's *A Little Piece of Land* and Kurdistan in Laird's *Kiss the Dust*.

The strength of Wilkie-Stibbs' book is that she achieves her goal to reimagine and revalue the outsider. For this reader, the part of each chapter in which the author analyzes the children's literature was the most engaging and illuminating. Since most of the books have UK imprints and are unavailable in the US, Wilkie-Stibbs provides a much needed international perspective on the outsider in children's books.

The weaknesses of *The Outside Child* are in the editing and the writing. The editorial weakness concerns the page design, the bibliography, and the index. For example, the notes are listed by chapter number, but the headers are chapter names, causing a great deal of thumbing back and forth. Lack of contextual information in the inset boxes foils the purpose of the juxtaposition of reality and literal. Unlike other books in the Children's Literature and Culture Series, this volume does not have a separate list of the children's and young adult literature critiqued. Instead, readers must mine the bibliography to compile their own list. Finally, the index is incredibly weak because many entries are missing. For example, the entry "*The Upstairs Room*" gives two pages—79, 87—yet in reality, this book appears on pages 79-81 and 87-90, and the characters from that story also appear on pages 91 and 92. Besides, and probably more seriously, neither novelists nor theoreticians are listed.

The rhetorical weakness involves the lengthy sentences composed of multiple non-essential phrases keeping the sentence subject far away from the verb thus limiting immediate understanding. This writing also limits the audience to those able to wade through the cumbersome language.

The Outside Child In and Out of the Book has an audience in scholars of children's literature and childhood studies. Social work and counseling students will find it helpful because of the pairing of real and fictive narratives if they can wade through the jargon-heavy language. Librarians who use bibliotherapy will also find the information presented in this book useful as background knowledge. Ultimately, though, the most important audience will be those who want to contradict the view that children's literature is unsophisticated. ✱

Gao Xingjian. *The Case for Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007. 181p.

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The Case for Literature is a collection of the Nobel Laureate Gao Xingjian's theoretical and autobiographical essays concerning the function and modes of literature. The longest essay of the book is the introduction written by the translator Mabel Lee "Contextualizing 2000 Nobel Laureate Gao Xingjian," which shows that despite our best efforts to catch up with the latest discoveries of the Nobel Committee, we are still badly in need of such "contextualizations."

Most of these essays are (revised) reprints of speeches and lectures. This gives the book a distinctly *oral* character. Whether this oral character is a unique feature of this particular book is however, debatable, for as Gao explains in one of his essays, "auditory appeal" (88) is the single most important aspect of *all* his writings: "the tone and feel of the language are more important to me than the choice of words and the construction of sentences" (108). Gao even develops a special technique using a tape recorder and silent intonation to test the "musical quality" (109) of his writings. He insists that "Sound is inherent to language, whereas writing came later" (109), so he makes a conscious effort to "reacquaint" himself with the phonology of the language. What he discovers is that Chinese is particularly well-suited for a fluid, musical form of communication (which he calls "flow of language"), because in Chinese "the past, present and future, memory and imagination, feelings and reflections, reality, possibility and fantasy have no morphological indicators, but instead constitute direct speech of this instant" (115). Chinese can be written like music, without being limited to rhyme or tonal patterns. Gao's views regarding this "process of sustained actualization of language" (115) and regarding his related concept of "changing pronouns" constitute the most original insights of the book.

Unfortunately, readers of this particular collection of essays will not be able to enjoy this kind of musicality. This is all the more disappointing since Gao himself insists that although not every genre is as polyphonic as drama, language itself possesses a unique capacity to transcend its linearity, so that it only depends on the writer whether this type of polyphonic musicality is attained. The only trace of musicality one can detect here is the repetitive rhythm of these writings. On the one hand, these repetitions raise questions about the editorial practice, for the overlapping between these essays (and even between the introduction and the essays) is quite extensive. On the other hand, since Gao himself selected these essays for publication, these constant repetitions can also be seen as a rhetorical

strategy. From this latter perspective, *what* is repeated becomes important, too. The most frequently repeated statements include the following: “Literature is not simply a replica of reality” (43); “Literature remains an indispensable human activity” (79); “Literature basically has nothing to do with politics” (78); “Truth has always been the most fundamental criterion of literature” (49); the writer should therefore “flee” all types of collective moments (most importantly, those of politics and consumerism). If these statements seem like clichés it is because they are—at least to the Western reader. What is a cliché in one culture is of course not necessarily a cliché in another one, but most of these essays were clearly intended for a Western audience.

When one hears a cliché once or twice, one yawns; but when one hears (or reads) the same cliché a dozen times, one begins to wonder about the significance of the repetition. First, we need to consider the educative purpose of these repetitions, since most of these essays were intended as lectures and speeches. The essays do, indeed, contain a significant amount of educative explanations, such as Gao’s presentation of the basics of Chinese grammar (107), or his explanation of the situation of Chinese intellectuals in the 20th century (133). In many cases, these explanations dwindle into stereotypes, such as in the oft-repeated contrast between the “logical” West and the “spiritual” East. Still, if we consider this educative purpose, we could even think of Gao’s clichés as discussion-starters for introductory literature courses.

Seen from a less lofty perspective, however, these repetitions of clichés seem didactic and even political. Although Gao repeatedly expresses his “aversion to maxims and aphorisms” (93), most of his general principles regarding the function of literature are formulated as maxims: “The writer is neither the representative of his culture nor the spokesperson of his people” (74); “The testimonies of literature are often much more profound than those of history” (54), etc. Maxims, of course, only become dangerous when they are taken up by collective movements. Yet, such collective movements need not be collectivists, and if these theoretical essays find an audience, it is because Gao’s writings themselves have been embraced by the collective movement of individualism. ✱

Denis Donoghue. *On Eloquence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
208p.

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Denis Donoghue, distinguished professor at New York University, is on to something: he tracks down eloquence as a major literary quality—that elusive quality that takes a literary text to unexpected heights, and the reader right with it. Of course, Donoghue describes this more eloquently in *On Eloquence*, throughout which he keeps revisiting the definition of eloquence in such terms as “the dancing of speech” (2), “gratuitousness” (3) and “gratuity” (151), “audacities of diction and syntax” (20), “a factor added to life” (41), “the *sprezzatura* of sequence” (55), “the promise of another kind of happiness” (148). In mid-discussion, Donoghue pauses to consider the fluidity of the concept: “We must stop short of trying to define eloquence once for all” (46). While he continues to revisit the definition, his book is mainly a collection of a great number of selections from literary works that he considers eloquent. *On Eloquence* is engaging and thought-provoking; still, it seems to fall short because of problems with how it defines eloquence and how it proceeds.

On Eloquence provides the reader with a basic definition and, primarily as a result of the many examples, an intuition of what eloquence is. The definition, however, is problematic for two reasons. First, with all its redefinitions, it still remains on a basic level by merely designating the general category of eloquence as “akin to style” (41) and the distinguishing features of eloquence as being narrower and more literary than style (41), as well as being in contrast to rhetoric (3 and *passim*). Second and most important, the basic definition—“Eloquence, as distinct from rhetoric, has no aim” (3)—seems to be unstable. In the paragraph immediately before this basic definition, eloquence is equated with the “dancing of speech”—an evocative phrase on whose meaning the author elaborates eloquently: “the aim of a dance ... is to create and embody yet another form of life beyond the already known forms of it” (2). Of course, “aim” may have different meaning, but Donoghue does not address the issue, so there it is: we read that eloquence has both an aim and no aim. This is confusing rhetoric at best, and it matters because Donoghue has an aim: to convince his readers of the value of eloquence as he defines it as something intrinsic to literature.

The way in which *On Eloquence* presents its argument is both its strength and weakness. The book’s seven short chapters offer a great number of examples of eloquence. The range itself is impressive: Yeats’ “The Second Coming,” Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*, Robinson’s “The Mill,” Dickinson’s “I heard a Fly buzz—when I died,” and Virgil’s *Aeneid* all receive extended attention, and

shorter remarks on works by other authors—ranging from Melville, Joyce, and Eliot to Franz Kafka and Cormac McCarthy—are interposed. And that is all just in one chapter. The individual discussions are always stimulating and often, when tied to reflections about Donoghue's career, personal and engaging.

The abundance of short examples is likely to work in two directions. On the one hand, some readers are engaged and ready to contribute their own examples of "eloquent moments"; on the other, some readers are left wondering about wider contexts. At this point, a more nuanced definition of eloquence would have probably invited a pursuit of such wider contexts. In addition, the danger of reducing great literature to sound bytes is nowhere more evident than at the beginning of chapter 3 ("Song Without Words"), when Donoghue gives a little over a half page worth of short quotations to illustrate "the exuberance with which a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a line of verse presents itself as if it had broken free from its setting and declared its independence" (44).

The "as if it had broken free" of this (re)definition of eloquence contains two interconnected elements—the "as if" and the "broken free"—whose further exploration would have likely improved the book. The moment in which the reader becomes aware of the exuberance is the moment of freedom and pleasure, but it is only temporary, for the word or phrase has not really "broken free," but it is "as if" it had. Donoghue approaches this moment; he does not elaborate on how it works, although he comes close to it. We may speculate that the "eloquent moment" is an experience like suddenly seeing something in a different way after being pointed to certain connections that we had just not made before. Again, in the interplay of "as if" and "broken free," this play of words temporarily may remove us from the words, or even from cognitive language itself, to return us to the words a moment later. This understanding of the "eloquent moment" is similar to Donald Davidson's controversial theory of metaphor and, perhaps, not too far from Donoghue's view because he compares eloquence to metaphor (172) and to the potentially non-cognitive moment of "a painting that makes no claim for itself" (64). However, he does not elaborate; as a result, he convincingly evokes the result (the pleasure) of that moment but does not fully elucidate the process of eloquence.

The aspect of "breaking free" deserves particular attention. Donoghue argues that eloquence is "indifferent to contexts" (172). I would suggest that the eloquent moment suspends the context to open up text (and reader) for new and different contexts. Consequently, eloquence "means saying the right, beautiful, possible thing" (112) precisely because, I would argue, the eloquent moment is at once independent and aware of its consequences instead of existing "regardless of

consequences” (112). This attention to the fluidity of eloquence may help us decide whether or not some eloquent moments have aesthetic consequences and other moments also resonate with ethical and political consequences.

In several instances Donohue seems to be reaching beyond a strictly formal interpretation, for example, when he quotes Gadamer: “Every word causes the whole of the language to which it belongs to resonate and the whole of the view of the world” (94). Nevertheless, Donoghue stops short of applying such considerations systematically to the analysis of eloquence because he firmly believes the “turn to the political” would “neutralize pleasure” (Guillory, qtd. 40). This denies the possibility that the political itself is pleasurable or, at least, the teasing out of the political dimensions within the aesthetic structure of a text. Certainly, literature is “a gift to be enjoyed” (3), but it is legitimate and necessary to look into the mouth of that gift horse.

Donoghue continues in this book, according to a Yale UP press release, with his “long-term project to reclaim a disinterested appreciation of literature as literature.” How much this project limits his analysis is obvious because he does look beyond literature at times but does neither reconcile both views nor conclusively demonstrate why one view should be superior to the other. The book therefore remains hamstrung by the confusing basic definition of eloquence as having both an aim and no aim. This is still the case in the last chapter although Donoghue considers the pros and cons of eloquence as a literary category: “Martin Luther King’s ‘Letter from a Birmingham Jail’ is eloquent and directed toward action, to shame ‘the white moderates’ and the Christian Church in the South into coming forth for just a cause. But eloquence does not serve a purpose or an end in action” (147-148). *On Eloquence* is not likely to convince many readers who do not already share Donoghue’s view of literature. However, it is stimulating (both in the sense of pleasurable and irritating) and an invitation to engage the author’s ideas on eloquence in literature. ✱

David Davies. *Aesthetics and Literature*. London: Continuum, 2007. 212p.

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In this recent addition to its notable Aesthetics series, Continuum has released David Davies’ *Aesthetics and Literature*, a philosophical overview of the debates surrounding representation and knowledge in fictional prose. Complementing the series’ other works, such as *Aesthetics and Architecture* and *Aesthetics and Film*, Davies centers his survey on four areas of inquiry. First, he sketches ontological

questions: what constitutes a literary work as a demonstrable class? Second, he works through epistemological concerns: what, if anything, is “true” in fiction, and are there such things as “right” interpretations? Third, if fiction is by definition that which is not real, are the attendant emotions we feel when encountering texts then also not real, and, regardless, why do we seek out such often jarring emotions? Finally, he asks moral questions: does literary art have moral value, and if so, do we have certain obligations in limiting forms of expression that adversely affect our own moral deliberations?

As one might infer from these questions, the text’s title is somewhat misleading. Though it promises something encompassing, the text’s primary focus is on a single genre: fictional prose (though passing references are made to poetry, creative non-fiction, and drama). The choice to interrogate these notions of fictionality, however, is strategic as Davies admits early on, and this narrower focus allows him to drive to the center of the philosophical questions he has staked out.

An understanding of the philosophical nature of the book is absolutely necessary to understanding what this work is doing. Because *Aesthetics and Literature* is a philosophical tract in the analytic tradition—and one written for that audience as well—the effect of reading Davies’ book might be somewhat jarring for the scholar of literature who hasn’t much training or exposure to modern philosophical texts. Literary folk, more accustomed to interpreting texts and posing questions about the world and textuality, may find the insistent focus on the nuance of argumentation here potentially rigid and unsettling. To be sure, this is largely an issue of style and disciplinary rationality. And yet, despite Continuum’s describing on the back cover that the book is a “non-technical analysis,” *Aesthetics and Literature* remains highly specialized in both diction and method, even to this reviewer who has had no small amount of academic training in analytic philosophy. I cannot, to suggest one example, imagine that invoking the symbolic logic notation of the predicate calculus appeals much at all to the general audience Continuum seems to claim. We ought not, however, fault the author for what a marketing department has done with his work. Davies—rightly so, because of his own training and purpose here—operates at the meta-level of abstract ideas as they exist in logical principles, beyond, say, the interpretation of concrete narrative, save when moments of carefully contrived thought experiment (a kind of narrative, to be sure) might shed light on those principles. There are, in other words, no stories to follow here; Davies’ inquiry simply does not require narrative in the same way someone working in an English department might.

Clearly this is not an issue for the philosopher, whose job it is to operate at this level. At the same time, the Cartesian-like project here of questioning a

discipline's foundations can, at times, make for a study that is as difficult to parse as it is enlightening to see thoughtfully explained. This cognitive dissonance, we might call it, is a result of a difference of opinion about what we mean when we talk about literature. At times, the non-philosopher may feel as if she is reading an entirely different language. Indeed, Davies considers a number of issues that literary scholars take as given so that he might test the rationality of these same claims. Much of the first half of the book, for example, turns on the idea of an author's intentionality in creating art as playing a critical role in literary study. Plainly critics have a term for this interpretive misstep—the intentional fallacy—and it takes until page 70, and by invoking the well-known Borges story “Pierre Menard: Author of the *Quixote*,” to jettison authorial intent. Until the moment when Davies is able to make the case that the intentional fallacy is a reasonable response, however, the author's intentions lurk page-to-page as part of the book's argument, a persistent intellectual itch that cannot be scratched.

Perhaps more disturbing to literary critics is the notion of determinate meanings that runs through the text. Again, for much of the first half of the book, Davies entertains the possibility that an individual text presents a singular interpretive meaning that is determined by the author, an idea that flies in the face of the poststructuralist critique that celebrates textuality as the proliferation of meanings—perhaps *the* fundamental principle of contemporary criticism in the academy. What Davies cleverly does here, however, is to bring this assumption into question by positing the difference between a “text”—an artifact of writing divorced from the writer and her world—and a “work”—a concept that exists in relation to its historical and linguistic contexts and its journey from the author's mind into existence. Of course this account will never please everyone. Hard-line poststructuralists will deny any notion of authorial control of meaning (after all, the author is, allegedly, dead). All the same, the argument makes sense, and presents a kind of intellectual compromise that includes a nod at a possible proper integration of authorship into critique, as well as cultural and linguistic influence.

The second half of the book about emotion and the existence of characters is perhaps less interesting to the critic, though no less important from a philosophical standpoint. Here Davies does not present anything particularly damning about the practice of literary study that will keep critics up at night, if only because the conclusions here are not made hard and fast. Characters may or may not exist, epistemologically speaking, and the emotional responses to texts may or may not be genuine. While some scholars may make use of this section in deeply theoretical terms—as tools for critiquing postmodern fiction, say, or as a way of interpreting the *roman à clef*, real-world characters in fictional texts, and meta-

fiction—most will be content that characters in fiction exist enough to talk about in criticism without the need for knowing the technical reasons why such discussion is warranted.

To be clear, though, my dwelling on stylistic, audience, and utility concerns here is not to say that this book fails as a piece of scholarship. Indeed, though some less-interested literary scholars will find the book impenetrable—especially if this is a first encounter with the rigor and method of analytic philosophy—Davies’ project should nonetheless be praised. At first glance the book seems impossibly short to consider these broad and weighty topics. (To be sure, the final section on ethical concerns seems awkwardly truncated, more an afterthought or, more charitably, an invitation to further scholarship.) At the same time, Davies gives us verifiable proofs about some of the things we take for granted as literary scholars. In the end, *Aesthetics and Literature* functions as a concise, well-reasoned, carefully argued exploration of the basic assumptions of literary study, and will serve well those who are willing or disposed to put in the time.*

Tony Davies. *Humanism*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge, 2008. 168p.

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Tony Davies’ book, *Humanism*, is part of the series *The New Critical Idiom* published by Routledge. According to the editors, the aim of the series is to present both an “explanatory guide” and a “distinctive overview” of the proposed literary term. Davis is clear about what his book is supposed to be: “I have chosen to explore the *how* and *why* of the various humanisms, their instrumentality and intentionality, leaving the *what* to the lexicographers” (125-126).

First, to answer the question *how*, Davies weaves a narrative about how the many different kinds of humanist trends influenced, shaped, distorted each other. In this narrative, the history of humanism(s) becomes an intriguing game of “Chinese whispers” (92), where anti-humanists rely on humanist rhetorics, where medieval Muslim philosophers speak of Plato and Aristotle in the voices of Provençal Jews and German Latinists, and where early humanist “pioneers of the old” create “classical vernacular” languages in order to recreate the style of Cicero. What matters here is how the humanist language, ideals, assumptions, and sensitivities get passed on, adapted, and distorted in the “communality of linguistic exchange” (75). The key characters in this story are readers, translators, printers, lexicographers, and rhetoricians. Humanism, from this perspective, is mainly a question of language, and the players in this game of Chinese whispers form an “informal peripatetic

network” (70). This explains why Davies opts against a straightforward chronological narrative and presents, instead, all humanists from the twentieth century all the way to antiquity as members of the same convivial circle.

Second, to answer the question *why*, Davies weaves a narrative about why and to whom the meaning of humanism mattered. The same cosmic vagueness of the concept “humanism” which allowed the innocent game of Chinese whispers becomes in this second narrative a tool in the hands of those who wish to hijack the concept for their own purposes. This version of the history of humanism becomes a history of dominant discourses, where humanists sing of the beauty of liberty while celebrating their princes and dictators. Seen from this perspective, Qur’anic humanism, Romantic humanism, the humanism of Nazis, the humanism of posthuman cyberspace, the humanism of Confucian sages, liberal humanism, the civic humanism of Renaissance Italy, and various revolutionary humanisms all have one thing in common: they are all “imperial” (141) in the sense that they define the essential human being in terms of (and in the interest of) a dominant group. This is a story of how humanism suffocates while it liberates.

Both of these narratives unfold seamlessly into a grand vista, like a leprello, offering the reader the promised “overview.” Davies covers it all: humanism as an educational ideal, humanism as a register of the “human condition,” humanism as a secular religion, humanism as a philosophical, political, and even environmental concept. To readers well versed in the debates surrounding the term, Davies’ multi-layered narrative offers, indeed, a satisfying summary.

At the same time, this amazing array of “historical humanisms” and individual humanists may dizzy readers less familiar with Davies’ references. Although the book was conceived of as “an introductory guide,” a student just approaching the study of humanism may find Davies’ parallel references to Galileo, Gobineau, and Gorky highly challenging. Davies himself seems conscious of this ambiguity. On the one hand, he insists throughout the book that words such as “humanism” are not a matter for lexicography, that what matters “over and above what the word *means* in a particular context, is why and how that meaning *matters*” (6). On the other hand, Davies worries about the potential frustration of readers who expect a more “straightforwardly helpful” definition of the term (125), and decides to append a lexicographic study and a glossary. Luckily, this final “attempt to seize the elusive beast of definition by the tail” (126) is not very successful, for a reassuringly clear and technical definition of the word “humanism” would surely have ruined the book. Instead, Davies leaves us with the following refreshingly frustrating definition (taken from the Glossary): a “Humanist” is “A teacher and writer of books. A superman. A deluded wretch, deserving pity and contempt. None of the above. All of the above.” ❄

Elmer H. Antonsen. *Elements of German: Phonology and Morphology*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007. 152p.

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In the introduction to this slender volume, the author states his intention is to “improve the students’ knowledge and command of German, i.e., their ability to speak and write grammatically correct German,” and “to introduce students to the methods and tools of linguistic analysis” (1). While, at first glance, these dual goals might seem unattainable in such a short space, the author does indeed accomplish what he sets out to do and, with this book, makes an important contribution to the field of German language study.

Elements of German is intended for native speakers of English who are advanced undergraduate or beginning graduate students of German, and presupposes no background in linguistic theory on the part of the student readers. The structure of the book follows a predictable outline, much like what one would expect from an introductory linguistics textbook, from 1) an introduction to articulatory phonetics and a comparative phonetic analysis of German and English to 2) a brief phonemic analysis of German and 3) a discussion on derivational and inflectional morphology of German. As technical terminology is introduced, the author is careful to provide the German-language equivalent of each English term, thus giving the students important tools for continued research on German linguistics in German.

The first chapter, “Phonetics,” is by far the lengthiest of the three, comprising almost the first half of the book. Presentation of material and explanations in this section are clear and concise; each sound is introduced with an explanation of its articulation and with the corresponding symbol from the International Phonetic Alphabet. For the consonant system, each mode of articulation (i.e., stops, fricatives, affricates, etc.) is explained, and sounds within that mode are examined individually for each articulation point (i.e., bi-labial, labio-dental, dental, etc.). The discussion on the German vowel sounds is similarly well-organized, providing a thorough description of how position of tongue and lips, combined with location of articulation (front, mid, or back) as well as tenseness all combine to produce the sounds of the German vowel system.

The author devotes considerable attention to those areas of German phonetics that differ from English-language phonetics, notably the glottal stop, front-rounded vowels, and the importance of distinguishing vowels in German based on their quality of being tense or lax. To facilitate students’ understanding of what specific sounds in German actually sound like, examples of vowel sounds are taken from both various regional dialects of German and “North German standard,”

as well as from regional pronunciation of American and British English, where appropriate. Since there are no audio materials to accompany this volume, nor are there any publisher resources available, these references are most useful to those studying this volume without the assistance of a classroom instructor.

The follow-up exercises on phonetic transcription similarly follow a logical progression, beginning with reading a phonetic transcription in English, then transcription of a list of English words. This is followed by phonetic readings in standard German and Low German dialect, and by a German transcription exercise. The first chapter also covers a discussion on German orthography, including an explanation of some pertinent points about the 1996 German spelling reform. Finally, Chapter 1 concludes with another, lengthy, German transcription exercise that invites students to immediately put to use what they have learned so far.

The second chapter, “Phonemics,” is by far the shortest in the book. It is as though the author raced through the first portion of this chapter to begin his discussion of suprasegmental phonemes and orthography. In an introductory paragraph the author defines phonemes as “distinctive phonological units” and as a “distinctive sound unit” (67). The students are then immediately asked to identify minimal pairs from a list of words. While this exercise and particularly the follow-up questions to it are good learning tools, lacking a thorough introduction and an answer key to this exercise, this section will most certainly frustrate students who use this book on their own. Likewise, reference to allophones (72) without further explanation requires students to induce a fair amount of information about descriptive linguistics. Compared with the carefully prepared introduction and analysis of phonetics in Chapter 1, the lack of similar introduction to each new topic and the almost-cryptic explanations used in the second chapter are striking. A better introduction to the first section of Chapter 2 would help ease students’ transition into the new material, and could well help them understand earlier on in the chapter the importance of phonemic analysis for language comprehension.

The discussion on suprasegmental phonemes (77), however, is excellent. Indeed, the discussion in this section makes very clear to students the importance of phonemic analysis in understanding the German sound system, the importance of suprasegmental phonemes as carriers of meaning, and the close relationship between German phonemics and orthography. The concluding exercises in Chapter 2 are phonemic readings that include Rilke’s poem “Herbsttag.” The author’s caveat at the beginning of these exercises—“Remember, these texts are one person’s interpretation!” (86)—points out to students that phonemics, in particular the suprasegmentals, lend meaning to utterances and that “plain” orthography,

although containing conventions such as question marks and exclamation points, does not convey as much information as a phonemic representation of speech.

Chapter 3, “Morphology,” introduces just enough syntactic theory so that students understand the importance of inflectional morphology to word order and can easily differentiate it from derivational morphology. Similar to the clear structure evident in Chapter 1, this final chapter is well organized, clearly written, and contains pertinent examples. Students who are perplexed by the difference between Germanic roots and foreign bases, for example, will benefit from the discussion on stem formation in German. Likewise, the discussion on the history and derivation of weak nouns in Old and Middle High German takes the mystery out of contemporary German’s masculine weak nouns. For anybody who has struggled with adjective endings in German, it is rewarding to examine the difference between strong and weak endings from the point of view of morphological analysis. Simply stated, strong endings, which “indicate gender and case ... are inflectional” (117), and necessary in the absence of any determiner. Finally, the discussion on verb morphology reveals more regularity in the German verb system than is apparent from the orthographically-based analyses presented in most language textbooks. In particular, understanding the origins of the preterit-present verbs and the detailed presentation on classification of strong verbs reinforces for students just how regular the German verb system actually is. Chapter 3 concludes with a morphological analysis exercise that, as in the previous two chapters, invites students to immediately apply what they have learned.

Aside from a few anomalies in pagination and an occasional incorrect page heading, the current volume is exemplary in its attention to important detail within the text body. This reviewer can wholeheartedly recommend *Elements of German* to colleagues planning to teach a “Structure of the Language” course, or even as an ancillary text in an introductory linguistics class within a Germanic Languages curriculum. Certainly those of us who teach German language classes will find in this volume an excellent review of language structure that may well encourage us to re-examine how we teach certain concepts in our classrooms. ❄

Philip Holmes and Ian Hinchliffe. *Swedish: An Essential Grammar*. 2nd ed.
New York: Routledge, 2008. 243p.

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In the limited field of Swedish grammar books in English, *Swedish: An Essential Grammar* does a good job in explaining Swedish grammar to English-speakers. This book is divided into sixteen chapters that cover everything from pronunciation to word order and sentence structure. Each chapter is divided into sections such as “The Four Conjugations” in the Verb chapter. Then each section is divided into smaller sections such as “First Conjugation” under “The Four Conjugations” in Verbs. All of these sections are numbered, so they can be easily referred to later in the chapter or book.

The book does however have some problems that cause difficulties for the Swedish learner. The first problem is the reader needs to have a strong understanding of English grammar to understand some of the grammar that is not explained. An example is demonstrative pronouns. An easy-to-read chart is included but no explanation of what demonstrative pronouns are or how to use them. The second problem is the use of notes at the end of charts to explain important issues. The book has many, many charts that are clear to follow, but the authors place important grammar points, such how a word is used, in the notes and not in the general reading where the reader is more likely to find them.

The 2nd edition is an improvement over the 1st edition, particularly in the addition of English translations to all the Swedish sentences in the book. These new English translations also allow the Swedish learner to see how the English and Swedish match up, which is critical when confronting problem verbs in English. Another second change is the decrease in example words in the adjective section, which make the section easier to follow and use.

Overall, *Swedish: An Essential Grammar* is a good tool for learning Swedish grammar. It gives the information in a simple easy-to-read format with many charts. However, I would recommend using this book with Åke Viberg’s *Swedish Essentials of Grammar: A Practical Guide to the Mastery of Swedish*, which gives the learner the basic information and grammar that *Swedish: An Essential Grammar* leaves out. ✱

MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing. 3rd ed. New York: MLA, 2008. 336p.

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“Protocols” is the operative word used throughout the third edition of *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, whose official author is the MLA, and not Joseph Gibaldi, who wrote the second edition as well as versions two through six of *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, the undergraduate counterpart (the 7th edition of which is due in March 2009). Perhaps protocols are more lenient than “rules,” but the practical result is the same: MLA establishes academic norms and presentational format; and editors, professors, and graduate students are expected to be up-to-date on their most current iterations. Even if you loved an earlier edition, wrote your dissertation or first book using it, and had virtually everything committed to memory, the first (1985) or second (1998) editions are not collectible and no longer apply. The changes in the third edition are significant and will force researchers to alter their documentation methods, and, in the process, will encourage and enable them to publish more.

Often referred to as simply the “Style Manual,” the third edition of *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* is bound to raise some eyebrows and comments, not so much for what is in it but for what is not. In his preface, David G. Nicholls profiles the history of the volume and the most significant changes, due in large part to the ever-changing world of print versus electronic media. Get used to that print/electronic duality because from now on, every entry in bibliographies will end with the medium of publication, using the word “Print.” Or “Web. Date of Access.” Undoubtedly the biggest change from my vantage point is that web addresses (URLs) are no longer required, since they often change and are “long and complex” (212). For the professors among us who want to track down specific information accessed by our students in their term papers or chapters, this incomplete documentation fails to direct the reader to an exact location. It is one thing to acknowledge that the reference came from the Web on a certain day, and quite another to provide a URL address. Students are well-advised to download cited materials the day they are accessed in case an assiduous professor wants more complete proof.

Most changes—such as using one space instead of two after a period at the end of a sentence or preferring italicized rather than underlined titles—are direct, logical results of using computers instead of typewriters, and end up becoming habits. Do these little details really matter? Frankly, yes, more than many students and writers realize. Editors and their staffs expect clean, grammatically correct,

error-free copy, and do not have the time, patience, or resources to invest in massive editing or rewrites. Even in such simple things as letters of application or recommendation, it is obvious when a neophyte is unprepared, or even worse, when a long-time professor is out of touch with current methodology. It is easy to understand why editors, review boards, and committees quickly reject some manuscripts, or candidates, and just move on to the next one.

In addition to the protocols for preparing and documenting manuscripts, the chapters on scholarly publishing and legal issues offer excellent professional guidance for the entire process from placing the manuscript to the completed publication of an article or book. This is essential information that every graduate student and beginning professor should know when it comes time to get that all-important research agenda under way. One of the biggest favors you can do for your graduate students and young faculty beginning scholarly activity—and even for some of those rusty old-timers—is to encourage them to heed the newest edition of the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*.*





