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## REVIEWS

Reviews are published in alphabetical order according to the name of the author reviewed.

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David A. Davis. *World War I and Southern Modernism*. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 2018. 233p.

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After setting an icy tone with Robert Penn Warren’s epigraph, “World War I changed everything. It was a great shock to the whole country, but the war broke open a frozen culture like the southern world,” David A. Davis not only demonstrates how WWI cracked the South’s frozen culture, but convincingly delineates how it “played a pivotal role in the emergence of Modernism.” Both a cultural and literary phenomenon, Southern Modernism’s experimentation, awareness of rural versus urban discontinuity, critique of the past, and exposure to modernity characterize this unstoppable movement. No longer valorizing the “lost cause” of the civil war, the Southern Renaissance—or Renasence—between the two World Wars (1920-40) challenged established frigid and rigid social structures, particularly the treatment of African Americans and women, and the glacial expectations of cotton growing and poverty.

Combining literary technique with critical perspective, writers including Faulkner, both Fitzgeralds, Frances Newman, and Zora Neale Hurston observed the effects of modernity in the South and warmed to new ideas, technologies, social practices and divergent cultures. The key word to understanding Southern Modernism is *disruption*—disruption of the frozen culture, and disruption of literary tradition. After 1848, modernism ushered in an urban heat wave radiating from European capitals in Paris, London, Madrid and Vienna that sparked new perspectives and ignited a blaze of literary conflagration that reflected similar outbreaks and variants of urban modernism in Mexico and Latin America as well. Out of the nineteenth century’s smoldering and moldering cinders, modernity disrupted old forms and instigated new approaches. Futurist and vanguardist dictums to “make it new” kindled fresh attitudes in US urban centers from New York, to Chicago, to Detroit to California and even sprung to life in the South with the New Negro movement, the New Southern Woman, and the New Mechanical Order.

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The South's old ice age with its subordination of black Americans didn't just melt away. African American soldiers had defended their nation, and yet were expected to return to the same segregated and disenfranchised states they had left. The war incited a confrontational period for civil rights and for African American modernism—in particular, the Harlem Renaissance. Davis interprets three literary texts that fictionalize the experience of returning veterans. Victor R. Daly's *Not Only war: A Story of Two Great Conflicts* is the only novel written by a black American veteran. The titular conflicts are the war in France and the experience of being a Southern black. Walter White's *The Fire in the Flint* depicts racial violence, lynching, torching and murder in an attempt to illustrate social inequalities and promote civil rights. The exploitation of blacks and the effects of the war in *Home to Harlem*, by Claude McKay, one of Harlem's leading black radicals, profiles the international black experience of racial oppression. Some urban proximal sites of modernity like Harlem promised a cosmopolitan modernist space, but offered another sort of exile and fugitive experience. The freedom found in urban centers did not extend to the small towns and the South, revealing more hypocrisy and white supremacy, and the mandate to use writing as combat.

For women, too, the war disrupted domestic life and fragmented society. To mirror these changes, linear narrative gives way to fragmented, nonlinear experiments. Social changes and the instability of identity and female roles inspire women's modernist writing. The "New Southern Woman" displaces the archetypal nineteenth century Southern belle. A particularly astute reading of *Jonah's Gourd Vine* illuminates how Zora Neale Hurston conveys the sense of disruption and "whirling cacophony of wartime" through disjointed montage and disembodied voices.

By blending history, sociological profiles and literary textual analysis throughout *World War I and Southern Modernism*, David A. Davis upholds his clearly stated argument that World War I played "a pivotal role in the emergence of southern modernism." Factual evaluations of societal and economic sectors underscore the theme of disruption that begets modernism. WWI meant profitability, particularly in the South where President Woodrow Wilson supported factories that produced war implements and cotton for uniforms and bandages. Postwar mechanization disturbed the sleepy cotton economy, dehumanizing labor and destabilizing social structures. For some, such industrialization reinforced the need to resist modernity. For others, modernity brought a firestorm of change. Which came first? Modernity or

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modernism? In the South, there was enough social, cultural, economic and literary tinder to fuel the fires of both modernity and modernism. World War I, as Davis ably shows through well-read research and well-reasoned textual analysis, struck the first match.

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Estevão Rafael Fernandes and Barbara M. Arisi. *Gay Indians in Brazil: Untold Stories of the Colonization of Indigenous Sexualities*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2017. 70p.

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*Gay Indians in Brazil* is a decolonial critique of Iberian colonialism's imposed heteronormativity on Amerindian peoples in Brazil during and after colonization. Chapters 1 and 5 are, above all, a brief introduction and an epilogue. In the three central chapters, the authors underscore the repercussions up until the present day of Catholic and Eurocentric understandings of sexuality and of the degradation and massacres of peoples whose sexual lives fell outside of colonial norms.

In the chapter "Between the Cross and the Crown': Missionaries and Indigenous Sexuality," Fernandes and Arisi describe the historical, theological and legal aspects of the colonization of Amerindian sexualities. They analyze historical accounts of the first centuries of colonization of Brazil in which—through European and colonizing eyes—Amerindian sexualities were disciplined. Both in Iberia and Brazil, individuals whose sexual lives did not conform to norms of heterosexuality were called sodomites. After an instructive etymological explanation of the term and their conclusion that it initially referred primarily to "the idea of obedience under penalty of severe punishment of God" (14), the authors contend that the punishable aspect of sodomy came to shape the idea that any threats to the Iberian Peninsula's emerging States during the Late Middle Ages was to be punishable by death and was adopted by legislation. Indeed, as a threat to the very existence of the state and the Church, sodomites were ordered by royal law to be executed and were denigrated with labels that belonged to the semantic field of crimes against natural law. Indeed, most depictions of Amerindians made by Jesuit missionaries, who Christianized them up to the mid-eighteenth

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century, linked “savage” natives to sodomy, lust, polygamy, cannibalism, and debauchery. Such a bestial representation of Amerindians came from the Aristotelian notion of nature, as interpreted in a Christian framework by Aquinas. Here the notion of “Nature” entailed a hierarchy in which the male, portrayed as a rational and self-disciplined being, controls, dominates and protects the female, who is associated with uncontrollable passions, desires, and lust, among other similar signifiers. It is safe to say that Amerindians were placed alongside women at the bottom of the hierarchy. Regarding their Christianization and the resulting disciplining of the body, the book covers—although very briefly—the methodology of catechization by the Jesuits in Brazil. Their conversion method, based mainly on fear, was performed in special settlements.

The chapter “Becoming ‘Useful Citizens’: The Control Over Natives and Their Sexuality” covers the colonization of Amerindian sexualities from the mid-1750s, when the Jesuits were expelled from Portuguese colonies in America, until the proclamation of the Republic of Brazil in 1889. The authors approach the heterosexualization of Amerindian sexualities as part of a complex process that was interrelated with the racialization and the civilization of colonialism. Also, the colonial control of sexuality went beyond sexual practice; it pointed to colonial dynamics of power relations in marriage, kinship, and political alliances. After the expulsion of the Jesuits, Portugal’s emerging “enlightened despotism” looked for ways to optimize the Portuguese economy. Amerindian lands and labor gained a greater interest for the Crown who issued laws such as the *Directory of Indians*, in order to partially secularize native administration and to civilize the Amerindians. Additionally, the Crown advocated turning former missions into villages and implanting in them full-scale urban administration and taxes. Regarding the somewhat secularized civilizing of Amerindians, the laws dealt with replacing native housing practices and clothing with Western living and sartorial standards. Furthermore, they encouraged white settlements to occupy former missions and stimulated marriage between natives and Europeans. The authors contend that this type of initiative came from the Enlightenment model that held that human redemption could be obtained through education and by reason. In this way, during the first half of nineteenth century, regulatory legislation was issued in order to further “civilize” and colonize Amerindians, as in the 1845 *Regulation Mission*. It aimed at providing Amerindians with catechism, elementary education, and trade skills that reproduced patriarchal

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sexual divisions of work. In all, civilization entailed turning native peoples into “useful” and loyal vassals to the Crown. Moreover, starting in the decade of 1870, this secularized the notion of homosexuality by viewing it from a liberal rationality framework as a social pathology and it was considered a disease in Brazil until 1999.

Lastly, the brief chapter “Race, Sex, and Civilization: The Colonization of Indigenous Sexualities” explores the complex effects of the colonization of Amerindian sexualities throughout the nineteenth century. These legacies of colonialism, which have been studied aptly by Anibal Quijano (2000), could be seen in the new form that the idea of “sodomy” took in independent Brazil, describing a crime against natural law that presumably caused divine punishment and turned into a social and economic problem for Brazil. In its desire to foment the progress of the nation, the State took as its responsibility the control of its population and their labor force. It encouraged improvement of the races through miscegenation and—as we said before—considered homosexuality a disease to be eradicated. At the end of the nineteenth century the civilizing enterprise of the State defined a scientific perspective mainly related to race. In this way, racist and pseudo-scientific portrayals of Amerindians used new methodologies, such as craniometric research, to prove native peoples’ intellectual, physical and moral inferiority. Furthermore, the authors conjecture that Amerindians in Brazil were still forcibly “civilized” mainly due to their “Indianness,” homosexuality being just one signifier that belonged to a specific semantic field.

Despite the fact that some important ideological and socio-historical concepts and events, including 19th-century pseudo-science and the emergence of the Brazilian nation, are studied very superficially, this book critically approaches an aspect of colonialism that deserves further study. This historical and ideological genealogy of the colonization of Amerindian sexualities belongs in the same vein of research of some groundbreaking books such as Michael Horswell’s *Decolonizing the Sodomite* (2006) and Qwo-Li Driskill’s *Queer Indigenous Studies* (2011).

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Sergio R. Franco. *Autobiographical Writing in Latin America: Folds of the Self*. Translated by Andrew Asscheri. Amherst, New York: Cambria, 2017. 286p.

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Sergio R. Franco researches and writes about contemporary Latin American literature at Temple University and has published a new book: *Autobiographical Writing in Latin America: Folds of the Self*. The Spanish version, *Pliegues del yo*, was awarded a 2017 Premio Iberoamericano by the Latin American Studies Association. The author sees autobiography as inter-connected processes of self-writing, Western subjectivity, and the Latin American experience: “the social and ontological folds through which a person becomes who he or she is.”

He explores autobiography not only in its traditional genre as people telling their life stories, but also through modalities he refers to as “avatars” of the writing of the self: “causeries, diaries, memoirs, and reminiscences of various kinds.” For example, the causerie, from the French word for talk or chat, is a unique form of personal reflection, like the Latin American *tertulia*, with writers informally meeting and talking about their work, literary observations and experiences in open-ended, unfinished ways. We observe this in written form in *El Libro de los Embraces*, in which Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano tells curious stories about his own experiences and the people he encounters throughout Latin America, such as Fernando Silva, the director of a children’s hospital in Managua, Nicaragua, who was walking out of the hospital late at night on a Christmas Eve when he noticed that a sick boy near death was following him and reaching for his hand, then whispering up to him, “Tell someone . . . tell someone I’m here.”

Four essays or chapters develop this theoretically pluralistic analysis of Latin American autobiography. Chapter One questions why autobiographical discourse emerged in the continent, and why anyone would want to read another’s autobiography. To answer this question, Franco suggests that an audience base gradually increased, motivated by curiosity, aesthetic interest, or the longing for self-recognition when identifying with an author’s life story. He touches on the indigenous origins of Peru’s *Comentarios Reales*, stories told in the early 1600s by Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, the illegitimate son of a Spanish conqueror and royal Inca mother. Women including Sor

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Juana Inés de la Cruz of Mexico were also early contributors to the genre, disguising their complex self-expressions in confessional forms acceptable to the Church. Other possible reasons for the emergence of autobiographical writing include a return to individualism, the renewed importance of the author, opportunities to sell one's stories, contemporary narcissism, and the desire for self-examination.

The following chapter describes how autobiographies often dialogue with photography, using the example of a photograph on the dustjacket of *Vivir para contarla*, the autobiography of Gabriel García Márquez that depicts the highly successful and famous author as a sweet, innocent one-year old child. Consequently, readers may subconsciously transfer those qualities into their interpretations of the text of Marquez's story. Two other ways that photography combines with text produce meaning: by serving as a "supplement to writing" or as "a comparison between the photographic act and the act of writing." Chapter Three extensively reviews the "precocious autobiographies" of young Mexican writers, a unique project carried out from 1966-1968 for the purpose of getting new writers to narrate their lives in short texts. Chapter Four examines from multiple angles the famous diary of Peruvian Julio Ramón Ribeyro called *La tentación del fracaso* [*The temptation of failure*], and its varying purposes, topics, themes, and expressions. Ribeyro's diary becomes both a writer's notebook through which he experiments with many modalities of self-expression as well as a collection of life experiences and observations. As a result, the diary has become a unique literary product in its own right.

*Autobiographical Writing in Latin America: Folds of the Self* enhances our understanding both of autobiographical writing in the Latin American experience and of how the genre is influenced by authors, readers, and the forces of Western subjectivity. Missing from his research are the rich contributions of autobiographical Latino writers in the United States such as Francisco Jimenez and his series of America's Award winning books, beginning with *Cajas de Cartón* [*Cardboard Boxes*], often compared to *The Grapes of Wrath*, telling the stories of his elementary, high school, and college years as he and his family follow the agricultural circuit from Mexico through California, negotiating complications of language, culture, class, and the demands of an agribusiness economy. Jimenez helps us to appreciate, much as Franco describes in his anthological analysis of Latin American autobiography, how personal and social forces shaped the voice and identity of his understanding and self-writing.

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Wayne Franklin. *James Fenimore Cooper: The Later Years*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2017. 805 p.

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I don't think that I have enjoyed reviewing a work as much as Wayne Franklin's biography of James Fenimore Cooper. However, not to mislead my readers, I must admit that my enthusiasm stems from certain views I have about literary scholarship that they may not share. I like a study so dense and comprehensive that it will long remain a source for other scholars. *James Fenimore Cooper: The Later Years* is this kind of resource: the fruit of the biographer's access to papers that had not been widely available, it is comprehensively researched with over two hundred pages of lengthy footnotes, many worth reading in themselves (again, if like me, you enjoy that sort of thing).

Having made this recommendation, and in the spirit of full disclosure, I need to say that *The Later Years* is not a conventional biography but an intellectual biography that examines the author, his work, his sources and his era in terms of "material and economic conditions" (xii); personal details are subordinated to this thrust. When personal details appear—such as the names of people with whom he dealt—they reflect Franklin's interest in building up a mosaic of influences that might potentially affect Cooper's work rather than in theorizing about his personal life. And, admittedly, both volumes seek to convince the reader that, while underappreciated in the history of American literature, his texts set the cultural stage for later American literature. For Franklin, Cooper

. . . remains one of the most original yet most misunderstood figures in the history of American culture. Almost single-handedly in the 1820s, Cooper invented the key forms of American fiction—the Western, the sea tale, the Revolutionary romance—forms that set a suggestive agenda for subsequent writers, even for Hollywood and television. (xi)

Starting in 1826, when Cooper leaves America for Europe, the early part of the biography covers his polemical and political response to his European experience and a defense of "the virtues of modern republicanism."

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Consequently, Franklin's later political interpretations are solidly grounded in Cooper's inclinations and in the relevant history. For example, one lesser-known trilogy, the Littlepage tales, usually read for their charming portrait of life in the Dutch towns around Albany, ruminates on the Anti-Rent Wars in New York State (1839-1845). The Anti-Rent Wars were farmers' protests of the "leasehold in fee," a particular form of landholding that they believed kept them in "quasi-feudal subordination." Ultimately, the careful readings also allow a re-evaluation of Cooper's political stance on the American empire, his purported endorsement of an Anglophilic aristocracy, and his position on matters of race.

Such attention to the material and political conditions of his life makes this work not only a source about him but also a goldmine of information about many other aspects of American culture. For example, the coverage of his publication process will gladden the hearts of book historians since he is important to the history of American publishing. Starting in 1820 when he published his first novel, *Precaution*, at age 31 until his death in 1851, he wrote 32 novels, not including polemical and historical works: "in producing and shrewdly marketing fully 10 percent of all American novels in the 1820s, most of them best sellers, he made it possible for other aspiring writers to earn a living by their writings" (xi). Readers are able to follow the details of these extensive hands-on interactions with his publishers and with the dissemination and payment for his work. Not only is this material essential to the reevaluation of his influence on the culture, it paints a revealing portrait of the world of nineteenth-century publishing. Given his intricate involvement in all aspects of publication, readers will find it remarkable that he ever had the time to write anything. The chapter "Libels on Libels" adds to the density of Franklin's portrait by detailing Cooper's involvement in litigation (libel mostly) totaling sixteen separate actions against eight different newspapermen. The newspaper's assault was "unusual in its scope and intensity" as was the "range and vigor" of his response; this was a political battle in which Whigs hoped to pillory him for his Jacksonian affiliations (215). While following his legal drama, the reader sees some important personages in walk-on roles: Horace Greeley, of newspaper fame, is a political opponent, William H. Seward, later Lincoln's Secretary of State, appears as a lawyer opposing him and George Lippard, author of *The Quaker City*, writes fan mail about Cooper's court performances.

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There is no doubt that this is the definitive biography of Cooper. As I have suggested, it is essential reading not only for the scholar of the American novel but for anyone who wants a glimpse into America in the early nineteenth century.

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Ambroise Kom. *Université des Montagnes. Pour solde de tout compte*. Rouen: Éditions des Peuples Noirs, 2017. 190p.

JEAN-BLAISE SAMOU  
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Comment expliquer qu'après bientôt 60 ans d'indépendance politique, qu'ayant forgé un projet de développement endogène et l'ayant porté sur les fonds baptismaux, des Africains initiés à l'école occidentale et dont la réputation est incontestée dans leurs domaines respectifs du savoir, ne soient pas en mesure de piloter ce projet de manière rationnelle et productive sans fléchir à l'appel du ventre? Aucun esprit critique ne peut se pencher sur le drame qui se joue à l'Université des Montagnes (UdM) depuis ces cinq dernières années sans que cette interrogation ne revienne le hanter. Le dernier livre d'Ambroise Kom, *Université des Montagnes. Pour solde de tout compte* éclaire d'une lumière neuve la crise des valeurs que traverse cette institution dont il est à plus d'un égard l'initiateur. Sa réponse à cette question repose sur la thèse de la triple malédiction nègre, francophone et bamiléké qui passe en filigrane dans ses réflexions au sujet de son expérience à l'Université des Montagnes. Mais de quoi s'agit-il?

Entre 2015 et 2016, dans la presse comme sur certains plateaux de télévision au Cameroun et en ligne, des membres de l'équipe managériale de l'UdM se livrent à des joutes oratoires dans lesquelles ils revendiquent à cors et à cris la paternité de l'UdM, jetant l'opprobre sur leurs pairs, en l'occurrence Ambroise Kom, Hervé Mogto Tamnou, Henri Djoko, Armelle Cressent et quelques autres, qui sont régulièrement dépeints sous les traits les plus odieux. Alors que le vice-président de l'AED, l'architecte Yimgaing Moyo présente Ambroise Kom comme un vulgaire "voleur" qui veut "diriger l'UdM alors qu'il n'est qu'un littéraire", le président de l'UdM, Lazare Kaptué dans une mise au point publiée sur Camer.be le 26 décembre 2015 affirme quant à lui que M. Ambroise Kom a enseigné au Cameroun, au Maroc,

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au Canada, aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique uniquement dans le but d'amasser beaucoup d'argent. Pendant les années chaudes du projet UdM, ce dernier s'est réfugié aux USA pour amasser davantage de dollars. Quand en 2012, il s'est rendu compte que la tempête s'était apaisée et que l'UdM avait pour ainsi dire acquis ses lettres de noblesse, il est rentré au pays pour « gouverner » l'institution.

Si l'on en croit MM. Moyo et Kaptué, Ambroise Kom serait essentiellement mû par la quête matérielle et le pouvoir, alors qu'ils ont pour leur part sacrifié leurs vies à bâtir l'UdM. Il a fallu les prises de position courageuses et vibrantes du journaliste Benjamin Zebaze et des Professeurs Innocent Futchu et Hervé Tchumkam pour apporter un brin de lumière dans cet imbroglio. Pourtant, dans leurs sorties respectives, ni Yimgaing Moyo, ni Lazare Kaptué ne font référence à la genèse de l'UdM, épisode crucial qui les aurait confondus dans leurs machinations. *Université des Montagnes. Pour solde de tout compte* apporte une réponse claire à ceux qui voudraient comprendre les dessous réels de cette affaire, expliquant au passage les fondements de la déconfiture intellectuelle et managériale qui se produit en ce moment à l'Université des Montagnes.

S'énonçant comme une autofiction, le livre remonte aux origines du projet qui avait donné naissance à l'UdM. En 1987, après avoir diagnostiqué les problèmes qui minaient l'équilibre social et le développement harmonieux du Cameroun dans un article visionnaire – “Le Cameroun de Paul Biya, autopsie d'un chaos annoncé” –, Ambroise Kom avait alors rassemblé autour de lui un nombre d'intellectuels camerounais sous la bannière “Collectif Changer le Cameroun” (C3) qui s'était donné pour mission de “rédiger un livre blanc sur nos trente années d'indépendance” (74-75). C'est dans le cadre des travaux de ce collectif qui publia en tout quatre ouvrages entre 1990 et 1994 qu'Ambroise Kom, “au vu du chaos qui régnait alors sur le campus de l'Université de Yaoundé”, et s'inspirant du modèle nord-américain qu'il a côtoyé pendant plus de quinze ans, proposa de “créer une université [au Cameroun] et de la faire fonctionner correctement” (83). Il en proposa le nom “Université Libre des Montagnes”, qui mua plus tard pour devenir simplement “Université des Montagnes” (UdM), suivant une suggestion de Jean-Baptiste Yonkeu (85).

Mais “comment se fait-on éjecter d'une entreprise qu'on a soi-même créée?” Cette interrogation jadis soulevée par Steve Jobs, l'inventeur de Apple Computer, trouve son pendant tropical en Kom. Le drame qui se déroule

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à l'UdM est à l'image de celui qu'on observe à l'échelle camerounaise et africaine où, à peine propulsé à une position de pouvoir, chaque souverain joue de toutes les ficelles pour effacer les traces de ses prédécesseurs, s'enlisant ainsi dans le culte de la personnalité et de la totémisation. Aussi pourrait-on déduire que les manipulations qui ont conduit Lazare Kaptué et son équipe à éjecter Ambroise Kom relèvent simplement de ce que Innocent Futchu dans sa prise de position a appelé "stratégies d'appropriation" de l'AED-UdM par une équipe d'opportunistes qui n'avaient rien à voir au concept initial.

C'est dans cette perspective qu'Ambroise Kom aborde la question de savoir "à qui profite l'UdM" (123-36). Voici une institution au sein de laquelle les pères fondateurs, tous membres du C3 (ancêtre de l'AED) ne souhaitaient "ni plus ni moins que de mettre en pratique l'ambition affirmée dans leur manifeste *Changer le Cameroun. Pourquoi pas?* (126), à savoir: "tourner le dos à la bureaucratie improductive, à la filouterie, à la gabegie et à la gestion discrétionnaire et opaque qui plombaient l'avenir du pays (125). C'est d'ailleurs dans cette perspective que fut élaborée une charte qui énonce la philosophie fondatrice ainsi que le caractère d'initiative à but non lucratif de l'UdM. L'utopie était-elle surréaliste?

Toujours est-il que ce qui fait courir tant de personnes sur la colline de Banekane aujourd'hui c'est justement ce contre quoi la charte fut élaborée. Ambroise Kom en explique les rouages en des termes:

Inaptes à comprendre le rôle que pouvait jouer une institution d'avant-garde dans leur environnement et totalement fermés à ce que pouvait être une aventure à but non lucratif, nombre de bamilékes, hormis la diaspora, n'y ont vu qu'une opportunité d'affaire, quitte à tremper l'institution dans une sauce à leur goût [...] À y regarder de près, la rapacité rageuse de certains membres ordinaires de l'association n'était qu'un épiphénomène, étant donné le système de prédation que la poignée d'individus qui géraient l'institution au quotidien était en train d'instaurer sur le campus [...] L'UdM se retrouva ainsi avec un nombre d'employés totalement improductifs mais bénéficiant d'avantages inconsidérés, afin de nourrir les membres de son réseau [...] Comme on l'aura compris, l'UdM était devenue une structure ventriloque et népotiste, distribuant des prébendes, une structure en tous points semblable aux structures publiques ou parapubliques contre lesquelles elle s'était pourtant construite (128-34).

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Comme l'explique le Professeur Futcha, les déboires d'Ambroise Kom commencent au moment où ce dernier négocie et obtient auprès de l'Agence Française de Développement un prêt concessionnel de 5 milliards de francs CFA pour l'extension et la modernisation des infrastructures de l'UdM. Un prêt dont l'annonce "força tous les loups, pourrait-on dire, à sortir du bois [pour des] messes basses, des coups bas et des contre-coups qui se mirent à pleuvoir, publiquement ou non, à l'occasion du virage annoncé" (140). Au vu de ces développements, et au souvenir des allégations révélatrices de Lazare Kaptué qui reproche à Ambroise Kom d'être rentré au pays en 2012 avec l'intention secrète de "gouverner" l'UdM, on comprend que le malheur de ce dernier est "de trop ouvrir l'œil sur les réseaux de prédation en place", c'est-à-dire d'empêcher de piller en silence. Le témoignage d'Innocent Futcha lui valut d'être radié non seulement de l'AED, l'association porteuse de l'UdM, mais aussi d'être licencié de son poste d'enseignant à l'UdM.

Le lecteur se demande dès lors si l'UdM n'est "qu'une épicerie qui doit distribuer à manger à ceux qui se considèrent, à tort ou à raison comme des ayant-droits ou [s'il s'agit toujours] d'un projet de développement social et culturel au service de la jeunesse et du pays" (147). Le résultat de cette gestion à l'emporte-pièce est "une énorme gabegie qui, outre son coût financier, a un coût moral incalculable sur l'idée même de l'UdM. Ambroise Kom en conclut que "par-dessus tout, il est évident que ce qui était pensé comme une utopie collective a fait long feu, nos défauts 'culturels' et nos égos hypertrophiés nous ont encore rattrapés" (149). Et il ajoute : "la question ethnique risque d'être précisément le talon d'Achille du devenir de l'UdM" (160). Il invoque ainsi la thèse de "la malédiction bamiléké" selon laquelle, "dès qu'un groupe de bamilékes se réunissent pour initier un projet, il est courant que l'un d'entre eux trouve un moyen d'écarter les autres pour s'approprier l'initiative" (Benjamin Zébazé). Toutefois, au-delà des conséquences ravageuses de cette appropriation d'une entreprise de la société civile qui, s'entend, était initialement conçue pour n'appartenir pour ainsi dire à personne sinon au Collectif tout entier, que retenir de la chronique d'Ambroise Kom sur la déconfiture de l'UdM?

On n'a pas besoin du témoignage des élites intellectuelles aussi intègres que Fabien Eboussi Boulaga et Innocent Futcha, ou même de connaître personnellement Ambroise Kom – sa réputation le précède sur les cinq continents – pour percevoir que les accusations contenues dans la mise au point de Lazare Kaptué sont cousues de fil blanc. Au final, il ressort de

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toute cette tragédie une distinction nette entre les esprits petits et les grands hommes, ceux qui de manière narcissique ne pensent qu'à eux-mêmes, à leur pouvoir, leur argent, leur image; et ceux qui mettent la collectivité, le bien-être national au-dessus de tout. Le livre d'Ambroise Kom en donne un exemple. Il conçoit son récit dans l'optique de conjurer l'afro-pessimisme, afin que s'en inspire quiconque serait en quête d'une voie alternative de développement au profit du Cameroun.

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Elise Louviot. *Direct Speech in Beowulf and Other Old English Narrative Poems*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2016. 285p.

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What makes Elise Louviot essential reading is the power of her compelling analysis of a critical model that acknowledges the unique attributes of Direct Speech in Old English, especially in regard to *Beowulf* and its narrative cousins, *Genesis A*, *Guthlac A*, *Christ and Satan*, *Andreas*, *Juliana*, and *Elene*, but which time and again resorts to, and extrapolates from, interpretative assumptions that she regards as skewed towards a relatively recent, post-Enlightenment epistemology and a set of literary norms that she tags with telling monikers like “nowadays” (2), “present day” (15), “modern and postmodern” (197, 201), and, most often, “(post)modern” (67, 195, 197, 201, 213, 219) to remind us that our assessment of Old English Direct Speech has not changed qualitatively since Klaeber. Louviot argues that our former “grudging” (6) approval, which implied that *Beowulf* succeeded despite the weaknesses of its speeches, has given way to misguided praise for what really isn't there as in the case of the fourth edition of Klaeber's *Beowulf* and the *Fight at Finnsburg*: “The new version erases traces of the blame and reinforces the notion that there are many speeches expressing vivid individual emotions in the poem” (6). Like the “present day” scholarly consensus, the new edition of Klaeber simply reads into *Beowulf* all the norms and values of “(post)modern” narrative: “Not that the speeches are not good,” she says, “but their strength does not lie in their capacity to express individual emotions” (6).

Specifically, if we are agreed that Direct Speech in literature is a technique for “actualization” and as such “corresponds to a change from

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potentiality to actuality” in regard to the progress of the story and the speaker’s growth as signaled by “proximal deictic markers such as ‘here’, ‘now’, ‘you’, ‘I’, and ‘this’” (13), then Direct Speech in Old English would have all requisite markers but disappoint in regard to moving along the plot or fleshing out a character: “It seems that Old English poets do not value Direct Speech for its capacity to ‘further the action’ but rather as a privileged moment of reflection on the meaning of the action under way” (101). In regard to Direct Speech and character, she posits an entirely different motivation from modern authors, readers, and critics: “What the poet is creating is not a gallery of individual portraits, but a choreography, where every character’s position is significant not so much in itself as in its connection to others and to the whole, dynamic design” (158). Old English Direct Speech eschews “subjective, individualized” characterization in favor of what she calls “archetypal subjectivity” and “sharply defined roles” that make the characters “fit into a recognizable paradigm” (157).

In Louvriot’s view, even if today’s editors have convinced themselves that they see in *Beowulf* the values and aesthetic of “modern narratology” (199), they nonetheless remain unconscious adherents of Bakhtin’s critical model, which considers the medieval narrator to be overbearing and “dogmatic” (176). She reverses the Bakhtinian continuum between the monophonic past and the polyphonic present by assigning the “totalizing voice” and “single unified narrator, omniscient and omnipotent” not to early medieval narrators but to the “narrators of Victorian literature” (193). Indeed, her most telling analysis is the *tour de force* comparison of a tragically-revealing dialogue between Tess and Angel in Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* and the tragic irony we associate with Beowulf’s prayerful gratitude for the treasure he won with his life. We assume Beowulf is naïve. He cannot see that his sacrifice was pointless. But Louvriot feels we are doing it again: applying “(post)modern” values just as if we were reading a novel: “Certainly, a modern audience can read irony into the text if they assess the character’s behavior against modern values, but that does not prove that the text itself is ironic” (246). She offers a similar example from Eliot’s *Middlemarch* where we listen to Celia struggle to rationalize jewelry as a Christian value: “Yet behind the serious façade, one can easily perceive the gentle mocking of the narrator” (179). But for such to be true in Old English narrative, “...there must be a wish on the poet’s part to highlight the cruel discrepancy between an ideal fervently wished for but out of reach and a shameful reality” (233). Instead of this kind of

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all-powerful narrator who holds the reins and takes total responsibility for the story's meaning, Louviot sees Old English "narrators fluctuating between the *we* of collective tradition and an *I* whose reference is still elusive" (261). Both character and narrator remain "embryonic" (261) by comparison to their Victorian counterparts. Old English meaning is "PEOPLE-true" (109), dependent upon and derived from a culture in transition from oral to written transmission. In Old English, responsibility for meaning rests with an implied community, the real audience of any Direct Speech: "The performer is merely one link in a much greater chain of transmission and reception, and the same goes for the poet" (195).

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Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, Ben Sifuentes-Jáuregui and Marisa Belausteguigoitia. *Critical Terms in Caribbean and Latin American Thought: Historical and Institutional Trajectories*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 312p.

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This anthology covers a comprehensive variety of fundamental cultural, socio-political, and historical terms, concepts and ideologies that have shaped different aspects of the history of the Caribbean and Latin America from the invasion by Europeans until today. Divided into 12 chapters, each dealing with introductory and analytical critiques of a specific key concept, the first six chapters cover a range of keywords that originated in or theoretically point to the colonial period: indigenismo, americanismo, colonialism, criollismo/creolization, mestizaje, and transculturation. The last six are related to concepts that acquired a specific meaning following the independence processes of the nineteenth century: modernidad, nation, gender, queer sexualities, testimonio, and popular culture. Selected keywords are critiqued in this review.

Nelso Maldonado-Torres expounds "colonialism" by historically tracing its beginning and the consecutive periods in which it was re-configured and ideologically contested. His hemispheric overview of the processes undertaken by colonialism is divided into five main periods: the European invasion and colonization, the wars for independence, the Cold

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War and its impact on Latin America, post-Cold War and neoliberalism, and the formation of “massive resistance against neoliberalism” (68). Each of these periods provides the “colonialism” with a distinctive --although, relational--meaning. When the colonization period ended after bloody wars for independence, the new nations in the Americas went through different types of colonialism as each continued subjugating racial minorities and excluding most of them from the main spheres of power. For instance, the United States ended up marginalizing indigenous peoples and exploiting black slaves, and independent Latin American nations did not redeem the value of blackness--as the independent Haitians had done-- and anti-Amerindian racism still continued (71). Moreover, the lack of success in making Latin American countries as developed and powerful as European ones under the capitalist system led intellectuals to question their new inferior status. In the context of post-Cold War with the resulting condition of Latin American countries which were “in the dungeons of modernity” (67), concepts such as “dependency theory,” “internal colonialism,” “neocolonialism,” and “imperialism” started to be employed as a means to pinpoint the causes for their underdevelopment. This chapter aptly portrays how such ideologies underscored the political, economic, and ethnic-racial nature of a new facet of colonialism.

José F. Buscaglia-Salgado approaches the keyword “mestizaje,” which began racially and culturally in the colonial period, exclusively from its racial(ist) aspect, paying close attention to its manifestations in North as well as South America. He explains how racial differences were invented and codified by Spanish legislation as a means to profit from the free labor of the Amerindians and the slaves. To be sure, such a proslavery racist legislation was in fact an organizing ground rule of European/North Atlantic economic systems since early modernity. As an example of the keyword’s racist codification, the critic admonishes the current uses of the word “mestizaje” to mean “benign” forms of racial mixing (114). By still carrying its colonial meaning--that is, a descriptor of the offspring of a Spaniard and an Amerindian--, this keyword continues to refer to bi-racial individuals, excluding and silencing Afro- and Asian-populations in the Americas. The author opines that the silencing of such peoples could be explained due to the consideration of black people not only as slaves but as the “absolute other to the European Ideal man” in early modernity (115).

Graciela Montaldo approaches “modernidad” as category for four important movements of social and cultural changes--or epistemic ruptures--

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-in Latin America. The first one occurs at the turn of the nineteenth century and refers to the “modernizing change to state institutions, the discipline of subjectivities, and social conduct” (155). After Latin American nations acquired their independence and the post-Independence civil wars diminished, national states consolidated institutional regimes in order to strengthen economic and political transactions. Indeed, based on the economic order of capital, a new socio-political infrastructure consolidated along with formal democracy and education (the “letter” became a power tool) (156). The second movement is literary: *Modernismo* (1885-1915) with its essential aesthetic and cultural changes. In literary terms, the keyword refers to “the tension between tradition and modernity” (159) or the combination of both –fomented by mass cultural productions-- as a means to move forward in the finding of novel aesthetic appreciations. The third movement points to the cultural changes produced by the avant-garde, and lastly the fourth epistemic rupture was caused by the impact of postmodernism in Latin America.

Queer theory is regarded by Licia Fiol-Matta as a system of ideas that defiantly advocates for a revision--and a subversion--of normative categories of gender and sexuality and of the division of political individuals into majorities and minorities (221). Furthermore, this theory refers to a discourse of fluidity, specifically, of changing sexualities and genders over the course of a lifetime (218). The author tracks queer theory from its very beginnings in Latin America during the 1970s sexuality-based social movements. Also, the critic concisely analyses its initial theoretical development through important works of Latin American writers, especially Mexican essayist Carlos Monsiváis (a queer intellectual), and Argentine authors Manuel Puig and Néstor Perlongher (both queer thinkers). Contemporarily used as a theoretical and political tool to deal with the limits of identity politics, queer theory was primarily employed in literary and cultural studies through the decoding of queer strategies and readings of “the pose as a fundamental gesture” (222). More recently, however, it has been applied to a varied range of fields: archival research regarding the discursive and social beginnings of queer subjects, biopolitical analysis, the Latin American difference when it comes to queer peoples, the performative--and peculiarly Latin American-- phenomenon of *transloca*, Latino American analytics of queer women, among other fields.

This book has a few careless interpretations of historical and religious events. For instance, in Chapter 1, the author describes the 1550-1501 royally convened junta--commonly known as the Vadallolid Debate-- as being a

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debate about the humanity of the Amerindians. In reality, as Rolena Adorno has convincingly demonstrated, the assembly did not cover such a topic but mainly focused on issues regarding the capacity and right of the Amerindians to self-government and the Spanish Crown's right to govern them. Despite issues of this kind, this comprehensive anthology of keywords regarding different historical, political, cultural and literary processes and stages is a fundamental resource for students of Latin America and the Caribbean. It accompanies other novel approaches to Spanish American literature and culture, such as Thomas Ward's *Decolonizing Indigeneity* (2017).

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Liesl Olson. *Chicago Renaissance: Literature and Art in the Midwest Metropolis*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2017. 373p.

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The thesis of Liesl Olson's *Chicago Renaissance* is deceptively simple. She hopes to persuade readers that America's second city was no also-ran as a site for modernist artistic production during the first half of the twentieth century. But while H. L. Mencken famously backed Chicago against New York, the Midwest was otherwise seldom seen as even a complement to Gotham, and neither the hog-butcher capital in Carl Sandburg's poetry nor the regional heart of unrealized promise in Sherwood Anderson's prose seems aligned with the European centers of modernism, cities like Berlin, London, Paris, and Vienna. In this context, Olson's greatest achievement is in persuading readers to question, once more, what they know about Chicago. While her Midwest is never quite the hub of cultural exchange that she might imagine, she positions it far from the intellectual and spiritual margins of modernism, and Chicago emerges as anything but a creative backwater from which burgeoning modernists wished only to escape.

Merrily, Chicago at the *fin-de-siècle* embraced its industrial pedigree. The World's Fair of 1893, marking four hundred years since the arrival of Christopher Columbus on the continent, ushered in the cultural trappings of a modernity that met with the approval of even the business elite. Olson does not suggest that the patrons of modernism in Chicago were more accepting of difficult art than was, originally, the population at large, but their

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endorsement helped allow modernism to develop, there, beyond the constant scrutiny experienced in other large cities in the United States and Europe. While controversial works like Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) and Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906) brought attention to urban conditions, the more familiar structural features of these novels reassured their readers and signaled that art in the Midwest would develop with, and not in spite of, the interests of its audience.

As was the case elsewhere, Chicago's most interesting art in the early twentieth century was published in the little magazines. If the *Dial* showcased change and then declined in influence, the *Little Review* tore defiantly through the Midwest to Manhattan and, eventually, on to Europe, not in a gesture of defiance to its hometown but drawn always by the larger impulses that its editors first felt there. That leaves, of course, *Poetry* magazine, the Chicago institution, though Olson refuses to let its reputation flounder in the comfortable mediocrity that claimed the *Dial*. In her telling, its founder Harriet Monroe was not indecisive, as Ezra Pound asserted, but was in fact unwaveringly diverse in her tastes. She did not sample art with an undiscerning palate: she was committed to an openness that proved prescient, one that still challenges our readings of high modernism as a homogenous monolith. Olson demonstrates how Monroe's wanderlust, as well as her business, family, and social connections, took her to Asia, where she engaged genuinely with an aesthetic that resonated through modernism, outpacing the knowledge of this art pushed relentlessly forward by Pound himself.

While other editors took an uncompromising position, Monroe believed that her audience must be nurtured, and the modernism in *Poetry* was framed for accessibility, as generally was that of its home city. Chicago hosted the Armory Show in 1913, just weeks after it had its epoch-defining run in New York, and the Midwest exhibition attracted twice as many people. Though the art establishment was skeptical, it still packaged the show for Chicago as an initiative that was significant and, therefore, a worthwhile experience for its citizenry. The money that helped bankroll *Poetry*, drawn as always from the slaughterhouses and from heavy industry, proved also to be the twentieth-century cornerstone of museums and libraries across the city, institutions that also took a pioneering attitude. These were not the patrons of an American *risorgimento*, perhaps, but they were supporters in search of an art for the people, willing to seek it in the increasingly challenging forms of the modern.

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Art in Chicago influenced Ernest Hemingway through the 1920s, and Olson shows how his gritty aesthetic reflected back on the writing of the Midwest. More surprisingly, perhaps, is the reciprocal exchange between Gertrude Stein and Chicago, dating from her visit to the city in the 1930s. She influenced and was influenced by Richard Wright, and his larger achievement helped give rise to a flowing of modern art amongst African Americans in the city. This Chicago Black Renaissance was represented by Arna Bontemps, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Margaret Walker, presenting at last the opportunity for a distinctively Midwestern modernism to encourage greater experimentation and to embrace additional forms, like music and photography. It is, in fact, in the story of this later modernism in Chicago, one that was more durable than the art interrupted abroad by the Second World War, that Olson benefits from having framed for Chicago its distinctiveness. The contributions of African Americans to the Midwest's cultural scene is integrated fully with a modernism that sought to be inclusive and to engage its audience, a modernism that reflected truthfully life in an urban, industrial environment, and a modernism that, then, transcended place and captured the reality of the twentieth-century experience.

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Gary F. Simons and Charles D. Fennig, editors. *Ethnologue. Languages of Africa and Europe*. 20<sup>th</sup> Edition. Dallas, TX: SIL International Publications, 2017. 627p.

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*Ethnologue* is a unique resource that serves as a central clearinghouse of information about all known living languages. Its editors indicate that they do not collect the data themselves, but rather assemble it from a variety of sources which include reliably published data (such as census and other official published reports), as well as supplements from correspondents in the field. *Ethnologue* is updated and published on a yearly basis and not only appears in print (in three geographically-based volumes, each available for individual purchase), but is also accessible online at <https://www.ethnologue.com/> as a fully interactive platform and available via a variety of fee-structured

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memberships based on the needs of the user, ranging from personal to institutional use. The three print volumes include the *Languages of Africa and Europe*, the *Languages of the Americas and the Pacific*, and the *Languages of Asia*. The focus of this review is the most recent print version (20<sup>th</sup> edition, at the time of this writing) of the volume dedicated to the *Languages of Africa and Europe*.

In terms of content, *Ethnologue: Languages of Africa and Europe* consists of four parts, which when used together, allow for easy searching of the data. Part one, "Statistical Summaries," is an overview of the linguistic situation both globally and specifically to Africa and Europe, with tables of cumulative statistical data in terms of language names, number of speakers, language size, status, language family, and country where spoken. Part two, "Language Listings," is naturally the largest of the book's sections because it provides detailed information on each of the 2,474 languages that have been found and reported to exist in Africa and Europe combined. Part three "Language Maps" has been created from the data contained in the preceding section in order to provide a visual representation of the location of both languages and countries reported there. The final "Indexes" section offers three useful ways of locating information contained within the volume, namely, by 1) language name; 2) language code, or 3) country.

A unique feature of *Ethnologue* that I found to be particularly useful as a linguist for language comparisons among Romance languages is the inclusion of the results of lexical similarity tests between certain languages. Based on a set of standard word lists that are administered to speakers of the two language varieties being compared, *Ethnologue's* lexical similarity test determines the extent to which cognates between both languages are similar both in form and meaning (i.e., true cognates). The higher the score, with 1.00 being the highest, the greater lexical similarity is said to exist between the two varieties. Results of lexical similarity tests are reported for a number of Indo-European languages, allowing for lexical comparisons between say, English and French. It also allows for comparisons among the major Romance languages. For example, Spanish and Portuguese have an index of 0.89 in similarity, in other words, there is an 89% similarity between their lexicons. Similar tests for French and Italian yield the same score of 89%. Also interesting is the finding that Spanish and Italian only have an 82% similarity between them, suggesting that Italian is actually much closer to French than it is to Spanish, at least in terms of vocabulary. The downside of this feature

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is that lexical similarity coefficients do yet not exist for every possible pair of languages, and so, Neapolitan, for example, which has been declared by UNESCO only recently (in 2015) to be the second language of Italy, has not yet been evaluated in terms of its lexical similarity to other major European languages.

*Ethnologue* is updated once every year with new information as it is discovered, the twentieth edition alone having undergone 22,000 updates, according to the editors. Included with each update is a new tally of the total number of known living languages worldwide, which this twentieth edition reports to be 7,099. This is a great resource for any scholar who conducts research of a cross-linguistic nature, and can be useful to both graduate and undergraduate students, or anyone interested in comparative linguistic data on such topics as typology, language demographics, language planning, or language vitality. Perhaps better expressed by *Ethnologue's* own editors in their introduction, "...the information included in this volume...can be useful to linguists, translators, anthropologists, bilingual educators, language planners, government officials, aid workers, potential field investigators, missionaries, students, and others with language interests."

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J.R.R. Tolkien, translator. *Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary* together with *Sellic Spell*. Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt/Mariner Books, 2015. 425p.

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Christopher Tolkien's edition of his father's prose translation of *Beowulf* — culled from his lecture notes of the 1920s and '30s at Oxford — took maddeningly long to reach the marketplace. But it was worth the wait, and its value — a *must*-have for both scholar and student of Old English — is twofold: J.R.R. Tolkien's translation, while technically not in alliterative verse, nevertheless is a word-for-word translation that masterfully captures the rhythm and tone of the original poem with a powerful cadence, diction, and syntax which are somewhere between poetry and prose, not unlike Aelfric's 10<sup>th</sup> century *Catholic Homilies*. Tolkien delivers on this kind of prose-as-poetry, and we really don't need anything else (Christopher even numbers

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the lines). But the second reason is almost as important as the first: as an associate professor of English, committed every fall semester to a survey of Early English Literature, I appreciate the great leap forward that the addition of a significant critical apparatus to Tolkien's translation offers (and very inexpensive in trade paper) for 21<sup>st</sup> century proselytizing of both Tolkien and *Beowulf* (accordingly, Christopher cites both Tolkien's lines and those of Klaeber in the notes and commentary), not unlike what Tolkien did for *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* with the first (1925) and second (1968) editions he brought out with E.V. Gordon, reinforced by his modern translation that appeared in paperback along with *Pearl* and *Sir Orfeo* in the 1970s. And, clearly, Christopher meant for Tolkien's commentary to complement the famous essay *Beowulf: The Monster and the Critics*, given as an address to the British Academy and published in 1936.

In the commentary, Tolkien goes further than the *Monsters* essay and actually names the poet whose style, thought, and taste he believes most likely responsible for the poem's more obvious homiletic interpolations, and that culprit would either be Cynewulf, the Old English author of *Juliana* and *Elene*, or someone of his circle: "I think it is indeed likely enough that there are other 'Cynewulfian' touches of improvement in the text of *Beowulf*" (311). Tolkien's rationale here is compelling and tantalizing, specifically in regard to Hrothgar's homily where it speaks of the soul's guardian and temptation: "Why? Because at this point was the nearest point of contact between the two authors [the Cynewulfian scribe and the *Beowulf*-poet] and their thought" (311). The earliest smoking gun of Cynewulfian interpolation would be Grendel's scorn for Hrothgar's throne: "This is not only unsuitable (and obscure because its thought, which runs on 'grace' and damnation, is not really in harmony with the context) but easily detachable; and not only detachable, but its excision an obvious improvement in verse texture and sense" (311). Tolkien argues that the "leading idea" in the poem is a deliberate fusion of Christian and pagan: "The 'leading idea' is that noble pagans of the past who had not heard the Gospel knew of the existence of Almighty God, recognized him as 'good' and the giver of all good things; but were (by the Fall) still cut off from Him..." (170). In Tolkien's view, the *Beowulf*-poet does not subscribe to any doctrine that might have "consigned the heroes (northern or classical) to perdition" (171). But somehow, Tolkien notes, just such a condemnation briefly creeps into the poem, starting at line 180 (in Klaeber), perhaps by the hand of someone like Cynewulf.

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However, in regard to passages about Cain, Tolkien does not advance his suspicion of a Cynewulfian interpolator. The allusions to Cain offer the *Beowulf*-poet his opportunity to advance his “leading idea”: “The redemption of Christ might work backwards. But in the Harrowing of Hell why should not (say) Hrothgar be among the rescued too?” (160-61). This larger discussion of Tolkien’s “leading idea” comprises pages 158-86, 272-75, and 304-23 of the commentary. If the advanced student has internalized this discussion, he or she might be ready to examine Tolkien’s denser, original argument for the *Beowulf*-poet’s Christian/pagan “fusion” in the larger work from which Tolkien took the British Academy address, his *Beowulf and the Critics* (see Michael Drouot’s edition for MRTS).

My fellow instructors should be aware that Tolkien’s commentary grows suddenly thin and abruptly wraps up while the translation (which is complete) continues on; we are left with only cursory remarks about the dragon episode, which is a sore loss. But Christopher seems to anticipate our disappointment and compensates with Tolkien’s wonderful folk-tale version of the story, *Sellic Spell*. Here Tolkien offers his speculation on what kind of mythic material inspired the *Beowulf*-poet, and it reads like a story book. Comparison between Tolkien’s translation and his fairy version strongly implies the themes he doubtless felt most important in the larger poem. Notably, the fairy version offers no mention of a quasi-Christian God. Proto-Christian touches in Tolkien’s translation seem more obvious by comparison—a difference Tolkien may have meant for us to notice. We can see so much better now what might have attracted a Cynewulfian fascination—and umbrage for any hint of heterodoxy.