
REVIEWS

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

Jane Beal and Mark Bradshaw Busbee, eds. *Approaches to Teaching the Middle English Pearl*. New York: Modern Language Association, 2018. 262p.

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Jane Beal and Mark Bradshaw Busbee teamed up with eighteen other scholars to produce a rich volume of twenty-one essays on approaches to teaching and emphasizing the canonical poetic significance and sustaining historical relevance of the medieval English poem *Pearl*. Beal is an associate professor of English at the University of La Verne in southern California, and Busbee is professor and chair of the department of English at Samford University in Alabama, where he teaches medieval literature and writing.

The primary aim of *Approaches to Teaching the Middle English Pearl* is to anchor the Christian-based long poem within the context and literary culture of late-fourteenth century Europe, while also focusing on the challenges and rewards of teaching *Pearl* in today's college classroom, where a text's modern relevance to students is nearly an absolute. Faculty require effective pedagogical delivery to advance appropriate narrative interpretation skills and deeper acumen of critical writing among young scholars.

Therefore, Beal and Busbee's text is organized into two essential sections that include essays by medievalists and non-medievalists who hold valuable experience in teaching *Pearl* and other similar thematic and stylistic works composed by an anonymous author, who, most scholars agree, is the same poet that wrote *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Hence, the select essayists accent ways that readings and methodologies allow students to connect to the *Pearl*-poet and *Gawain*-poet through the unknown poet's other attributed works such as *Patience* and *Cleanness*; through the poetry of Chaucer, Gower, and Langland; in the poetic traditions set down by Europeans such as Dante and Boccaccio; and with a review of the narrative manners, verse language and verse structures established by a myriad of classical poets overtime--from Horace, Plato, Chaucer, and Margery Kempe to T. S. Eliot and J. R. R. Tolkien.

Specifically, nineteen essays in part 2, “Approaches,” address specific contexts and strategies for teaching *Pearl*. Part 1, “Materials,” introduces instructors to a treasure of resources and references for contemporary classroom use. Thus, together with Jane Beal and Mark Busbee’s nineteen-page introduction, this volume provides a fresh overview and robust assembly of foundational resources that are available for teaching the challenging poem, including editions, translations, and scholarship in print and on the Internet about the poem as well as *Pearl*’s historical context. Most helpful is that part 2 offers instructors tools for introducing students to critical issues associated with the poem, such as its authorship and plot, sources and analogues, structure and meaning, symbolism, language, and relation to other works of its time.

In addition, the contributors draw on interdisciplinary approaches, and their essays outline ways of teaching *Pearl* in a variety of classroom contexts, including performance. Notably, Elizabeth Harper’s essay reinforces why *Pearl* is a useful gateway into Middle English poetry as an upper-division survey course. Harper substantiates her claim by telling how reading and responding to the poem has enabled her students to “understand the culture of medieval England as sharing common experiences and existential questions with our own” and to learn about historical and cultural contexts (148). On a broader scale, Harper’s comparative approaches illustrate how the teaching of *Pearl* can allow students to understand themselves as culturally situated, and to see old texts not just as objects of analysis, but as works that bridge “the gulf of time, geographic distance, and cultural change” (148).

Because the essays highlight the historical approaches and contexts of *Pearl*, along with literary and theoretical approaches, comparative approaches, and specific classroom contexts, the moving, palatially allegorical *Pearl* is presented as an extraordinary middle English narrative poem that can serve as an invaluable door into the teaching of late medieval poetics, piety, paradoxes, divine and human will, cultural sameness and difference, social classes, human loss, games/strategy, and gendered anxieties – plus a multitude of other topics.

The well-organized volume concludes with an appendix of twenty-six study questions on *Pearl*, illustrations from the *Cotton Nero A.x* manuscript, notes on contributors, list of works cited, and an index. Its varied contents underline that teaching *Pearl* does not need to be limited to only English literature and literary criticism courses.

Sibylle Berg. *Wunderbare Jahre: Als wir noch die Welt bereisten*.
Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2016. 186p.

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Wunderbare Jahre: Als wir die Welt noch bereisten is the original German collection of nineteen previously published and newly revised essays by German/Swiss author Sibylle Berg, born in 1962 in Weimar, former East Germany, and now a Swiss citizen. Readers already familiar with Berg's numerous novels, plays, or regular columns in *Spiegel Online* are also familiar with her keen observational powers, ability to get to the essence of her subjects, compassion for others, concern for the current state of the world, and the cynicism that underlies many of her descriptions of it.

The present volume is no exception. It introduces Berg's unique style and critical commentary on an imperfect world. The cynical tone that readers of the original German, as well as of the more than 30 languages into which many of her works have been translated, have come to expect is clearly present from the beginning. The title *Wunderbare Jahre*, "Wonderful Years") and subtitle *Als wir noch die Welt bereisten* ("When we still Traveled the World") both suggest that there used to exist a make-believe "once-upon-a-time." Primarily White tourists from Western European and North America indulged in journeys to cities like Paris and Los Angeles, to major cultural events such as Bayreuth Wagnerian operas and the Cannes film festival, and to extraordinary adventures in exotic locations outside our first-world existence. Above all, these journeys kept us safe and aloof from the harsh reality of poverty, oppression, violence, and environmental degradation that had long been daily reality for so many. In contrast, Berg makes clear that for those who traveled with their eyes open and who sought to explore beyond the surface of tourist experiences of restaurants, museums, and main attractions, this fantasy world never truly existed. It is this "other" world, the reality behind the fantasy, into which Berg bids readers to accompany her.

From the beginning, Berg sets the tone, describing journeys to destinations both near and far. In the first paragraph of the introduction, the author invites us to bask in delightful memories of past journeys in a romanticized world, only to casually state that such memories have

merely been super-imposed on reality. She then abruptly reminds us of violence in the Paris metro, streets full of elderly homeless people, heavy traffic, and the smell of urine in the streets. On top of all that is a new addition to the tourist attractions—terror attacks. For tourists seeking the romantic past, there is no escape to a London populated by “friendly locals.” Even Italy, delightful Italy, has unemployment rates of over 40% for young people, and struggles to care for its own “Boat-People.” Never mind, Berg suggests, for television still offers these romanticized versions of travel with the added advantage that “we barely witness the disgust for the White tourists” [“den Ekel vor dem weißen Touristen sehen wir kaum”].

Thus, the reader is launched on a world-wide journey, criss-crossing the globe and traversing time on journeys most recent as 2014 and reaching as far back as 1994. Each essay is followed by one or more postscripts about further developments of affairs for the people, impacted cultures, and the natural environment since the article’s original publication. For example, the reader is taken to war-torn Kosovo in 1999 and hears an airport employee in Macedonia—two hours from the war zone—exclaiming, “Thank God that’s all far away.” The cynicism with which the author ends this essay is made more sobering by the postscript that explains how many active war zones there are in the world and how many refugees from these wars are now searching for safe havens.

The journey continues as Berg describes how the world stood still to witness the marriage of Prince Harry to Kate Middleton in a country where Muslim women are subject to Sharia law and systematically oppressed, abused, and discriminated against. Later, the reader travels to Bangladesh in 1994 and meets a woman whose life was worse than that of a common street dog and who was beaten to death by her husband. We learn just how little human lives, and in particular the lives of women, are valued in this country, which is nevertheless ranked the most gender-equal in South Asia. Only in 2016, when primarily foreigners were murdered in a terrorist attack, did the world take note of the violence.

On the high seas, Berg offers views not only of below-deck activities and the harsh reality of cruise ship employees who rarely are home with families, but also of the environmental destruction caused by ships navigating oceans so that a few mostly White people with means can be entertained. What easy targets these floating cities

might be for terrorists! Writing about a different journey on the seas, Berg includes a hair-raising tale of being taken hostage in February 2002 off the coast of Myanmar by Karen rebels fighting the military dictatorship in that country. Here she directly confronts the reader with the question of how these young men are able to retain their honor if they decide not to murder their captives. Instead of progress, by 2015 the situation had only deteriorated.

In Israel, a nursing home for destitute Holocaust survivors is run by Germans who lovingly care for their elderly residents in a region where the lives of survivors are still threatened, this time by bomb and gas attacks by Hezbollah. In the postscript to this essay, Berg compares Israel to the former GDR—both countries where people are cut off from the outside world, where walls separate people from each other, and freedom to travel is severely limited for specific groups. In Israel, on January 1st, it wasn't fireworks just twenty meters from Berg's apartment, but actual shots that emptied an entire magazine of an automatic weapon. This is reality, and with an ever-more conservative government with ever-greater influence of religion, she sees an ever-diminishing hope for peace in the Middle East. This ever-diminishing hope is also reflected in the final essay that takes us far into the Amazon jungle to illegal gold mines and miners, whose lives are driven by the dream of making it big as they toil for wealthy companies. Run-off from these mines includes arsenic, zinc, mercury, aluminum, and lead by-products carried directly into the ocean.

Wunderbare Jahre is not easy to digest, but it should be required reading for everyone who cares about the state of our world. An English-language translation would be a welcome addition to the growing English-language literature on environmental and social justice. After all, despite the collection's truly difficult topics and cynical tone, Berg suggests a positive red thread that ties these essays together: hope. So many of the impoverished and oppressed people the author meets continue day by day in hope of something better—in hope of making a change in their circumstances, in hope of effecting political change, in hope of having a future life that is better than the present one. Berg's final statement to her audience, "Ich wünsche Ihnen ein schönes Leben!" [I wish you a nice life!], may be the ultimate cynicism. Or is it? It is perhaps an expression of the author's hope for a better future for everyone.

Kevin Binfield and William J. Christmas, editors. *Teaching Laboring-Class British Literature of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. The Modern Language Association of America, 2018.

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College-level courses increasingly include literary works by 18th and 19th century laboring-class British writers. While major publishers (i.e. Broadview, Norton, and Wiley-Blackwell) are incorporating them in teaching anthologies for eighteenth and nineteenth century studies and the Romantic and Victorian periods, there remains no major classroom anthology devoted to these laboring-class writers. In the absence of an established laboring-class canon, teachers pursue diverse and eclectic methods to bring these voices into the classroom. In this new volume, Kevin Binfield and William J. Christmas have collected thirty-one essays by professors and scholars who discuss their methods and inspire new pathways.

The comprehensive introduction offers “a celebration” (19) of current means of bringing laboring-class writers into classrooms and stresses that “the key is to replace nostalgia with reflection” (3). In a time of growing awareness for diversity, equity, and inclusion, educators and students may be more comfortable engaging the topics of race, gender, and sexual orientation. These topics often are communicated as intrinsic characteristics deserving inclusion, while socioeconomic class may be perceived more as an external characteristic to be transcended by hard work and a strong ethic. Because of this, students, learning in the college environment where success and graduation are tied to socioeconomic improvement, frequently respond to laboring-class literature through a lens that distances personal nostalgia. Instructors are encouraged to guide them toward more critical, intellectual reflection.

The collection’s four major sections are all organized in rough chronological order: “Teaching Genres,” with six essays; “Teaching Selected Authors and Works,” with eight essays; “Pedagogical Strategies,” with eleven essays; and “Types of Courses,” with six essays. Binfield and Christmas ensured discussion on a range of literary genres, with nineteen total essays on poetry, ten on prose forms, and two on drama, a critical distribution that mirrors the creative distribution by

these laboring-class writers. Additionally, the collection's extensive final "Resources" section provides citations for finding primary texts, electronic sources, contextual aids, paintings, recordings, and sheet music, as well as annotations for the major databases *Laboring-Class Poets Online* and *Digital Miscellanies Index* to help scholars continue their engagement and course development.

This volume is a valuable asset to emerging and established instructors. Many will benefit from Moyra Haslett's essay on framing and questioning works and identities through course design, raising the stakes (and opportunities) of course and syllabus creation. Others will find useful Fiona Wilson's case study on teaching James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) as a work of experimental fiction to challenge students toward new insights, or Florence S. Boos's discussion of her course on the poetry of Victorian working-class women. Several contributors share experiences in pairing a more canonical writer with a lesser-known laboring-class writer, such as Cassandra Falke's pairing of William Wordsworth with Christopher Thomson under the theme of 'wandering,' and Stacey Floyd's pairing of Elizabeth Gaskell with Thomas Wheeler to teach Chartist fiction, providing new routes into working with these writers. For instructors who may already incorporate laboring-class literature, the nuanced discussion of Corey E. Andrews on teaching the Georgic poetry genre through laboring-class examples, as well as Anne Milne's application of a labor studies approach to poetry, could deepen one's existing engagement with these writers and periods.

Further, numerous contributors discuss how to include laboring-class works in courses beyond the upper-level literature seminar. Steven Epley shares his experience leading a service-learning course in rural Alabama that engaged eighteenth-century laboring-class poetry. Stephen C. Behrendt recounts his use of Romantic era laboring-class poetry to explore cultural archaeology. Vincent Caretta discusses teaching a cross-listed History and English course on Literature of the Early Black Atlantic. Numerous contributors, including Ellen L. O'Brien and Scarlet Bowen, share varieties of courses on literary production and marketplaces.

Rich in essays that offer tangible pedagogical techniques, the collection is far from a compilation of case studies. Mike Sanders includes a suggested course outline, research assignment guide, and one hundred recommended poems for teaching Chartist poets. Several

open-ended essays invite scholars and instructors of all levels to reflect on the significance and implications of laboring-class writers, from Bridget M. Keegan's reflection on pursuing a laboring-class transatlantic approach, to Sara Hackenberg's meditation on the joys and challenges of engaging nineteenth century popular narrative genres.

Modeling the turn from nostalgia to reflection, the contributors awaken their readers' zest to explore teaching laboring-class British writers from 1700 to 1900. Importantly, the volume provides not only this overarching stimulus but also an array of practical, tangible tools and techniques to support each instructor's journey into this diverse, wide-ranging, and growing field.

Jennifer Brady and Meredith L. Jeffers, editors. *Shifting Subjectivities in Contemporary Fiction and Film from Spain*. New Castle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2018. 233p.

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Históricamente, la literatura y el cine, cada uno con sus herramientas y alcances, han tomado parte muy activa en los devenires sociales y, para el caso de España, han sabido aprehender ese complejo mundo sociocultural ibérico en constante tensión. Los ensayistas en *Shifting Subjectivities in Contemporary Fiction and Film from Spain* nos ofrecen análisis detallados y bien entrelazados—tal como lo captaron las creaciones literarias y fílmicas—de esas realidades sociopolíticas, socioculturales y socioeconómicas vividas por la sociedad española pos-Franco.

El volumen está organizado y desarrollado con “lujo de detalles”, a tal punto que podemos sentirnos como testigos de las complejas realidades descritas y analizadas. La misma cubierta con *El pasillo* (2009), pintura de Golucho Ofón, nos da un “abrebocas” que muestra una mujer cuya expresión facial y corporal denotan sufrimiento y desesperanza, enfatizados por el espacio (uno de los temas explorados en varios de los ensayos) y la luz en los que ella se encuentra. Además, como parte de ese espacio gris, hay otros dos detalles llamativos: por un lado, esta mujer con un atuendo paupérrimo se encuentra sumida casi que entre cuatro paredes (o cuatro puertas), y su imagen se ve reflejada en un espejo ubicado a su lado; su imagen se ve opaca, borrosa y casi que ininteligible, tal como las voces silenciadas que claman ser escuchadas.

Antes de la tabla de contenidos, nos encontramos con otro “detallito” que llama poderosamente la atención: una cita textual de la escritora y periodista Rosa Montero (1951-): “No entiendo la vida sin libros ni literatura”. Precisamente, este otro “abrebocas” apropiado resalta el papel de la producción y crítica literarias en el análisis sociocultural. Enfocándonos en la estructura, vemos que está dividida en partes (cinco partes) y sub-partes (capítulos) organizadas alrededor de ejes temáticos. Proponemos que esta estructura, quizás no tan obvia para un lector desapercibido, enfatiza la complejidad de los temas tratados. Es decir, pareciera que hubiera cierta intención de armonizar forma y contenido.

La parte introductoria general nos ofrece una buena y bien armada mirada global de los contenidos y aproximaciones de cada uno de los ensayos y cómo estos apuntan al encuadre temático. En parte uno, el eje temático es “Representing Recovery in Post-Crisis Spain”. Christian Claesson, en “Precarious Narratives: Subjectivities in Rosario Izquierdo’s *Diario de campo* and Elvira Navarro’s *La trabajadora*”, nos informa de qué manera, y hasta el día de hoy, la colectividad social respondió a la crisis económica en 2008. De gran relevancia es la perenne relación controvertida entre literatura y política que, como bien sabemos, es eje central de los estudios literarios y socioculturales. En cada una de las cinco secciones, construye un entretejido tanto descriptivo—de las realidades socio-literarias presente en las dos novelas—como meta-literario de los aportes teóricos que validan su análisis, sobre todo en cuanto a la subjetividad, el espacio y la ciudad, la precariedad y el cuerpo. Claesson deja sentado que *Diario de campo* y *La trabajadora* son, sin duda, grandes documentos políticos.

En “Ghosts in the Present: The Haunting Voices of Contemporary Youth in Twenty-First-Century Spanish Film”, Graham Stefan Ignizio se enfoca en la representación de la juventud en dos filmes recientes: *Vivir es fácil con los ojos cerrados* (2013) y *La isla mínima* (2014). A través de un minucioso análisis (meta)filmico, Ignizio pone de manifiesto las maneras en las que la España contemporánea sigue siendo impactada por la crisis económica—cómo se siguen produciendo “fantasmas en y del siglo XXI”—en particular las nuevas generaciones. Tal como lo desglosa, son tres los ejes desarrollados: la yuxtaposición de la juventud española durante el régimen franquista (en particular en los 1960s), el período de transición a la democracia (1975-1980s) y la significancia de los efectos de la crisis económica de 2008.

Unos de los temas socioeconómicos de gran relevancia tienen que ver con el impacto del desempleo en la sociedad española, en general y, muy en particular, en la juventud y cómo es producto de la gran masa migratoria hacia los centros urbanos como Madrid y Barcelona. La juventud de Andalucía, muy concretamente, se vio mayormente afectada, al punto que su población constituye uno de los más altos índices de desempleo a nivel nacional, del cual se sigue recuperando lentamente. Ante tal crisis y con el acertado apoyo de críticos pertinentes, el autor desmenuza su análisis en aspectos sociales, económicos y políticos—tanto intra como extra diegéticamente—que siguen marcando la sociedad española.

La segunda parte, “Marginalized Texts and Identities”, explora las representaciones literarias de identidades marginadas, en particular vascas, en el contexto del exilio y la transcripción. Se abre con el capítulo 3, “Exile and Psychosis in Joseba Sarrionandia’s *Lagun Ixoztua*”, por Ibon Izurieta Otazua. Paralelamente al texto literario, propone que la identidad no es un constructo social estático ni unidimensional, sino que se encuentra en un constante *fluir* y cambio. Se arguye que la identidad vasca, y concretamente la que ha estado en exilio, puede recuperar y (re)afirmar su arsenal político de subalternos a través de la performance de la identidad, sin necesariamente tener que someterse a la norma tradicional o tradicionalista española. Izurieta nos recuerda que el tema (o el género) de la literatura del exilio en el caso de España se ha centrado, más que nada, en la literatura escrita por aquellos y aquellas que tuvieron que salir de España a raíz de la dictadura franquista.

Semejantemente, a través del uso de las transcripciones, Meredith Jeffers se centra en el tema de la identidad vasca en “Transcribing Loss: Kirmen Uribe’s *Bilbao-New York-Bilbao*”. Puesto que las transcripciones son primordiales en su estudio, de entrada, Jeffers nos advierte que la transcripción literaria sitúa el texto en nuevos contextos y lo inhibe o bloquea de existir otra vez de la misma manera de su original; es decir, se lleva a cabo una re-semantización bastante radical. Jeffers explora lo que significa, ha significado e incluso significará ser vasco. De manera interesante, nos aclara que esta transcripción literaria evita, en la medida de lo posible, referencias al régimen franquista y, en su lugar, el enfoque primordial es la crisis de identidad. En la primera sección, “Disappearance and Response”, Jeffers entretiene la conexión entre desaparición y respuesta que circundan el texto de Kirmen Uribe, con las nociones de simulacro, simulación e hiperrealidad, tal como

las ha propuesto Jean Baudrillard. Resulta altamente iluminador la conexión crítica de que la cultura moderna de los medios, el lenguaje, la ideología, la economía el capitalismo multinacional y la urbanización contribuyen a la “liquidación de todas las referencias”. Continuando el tema de la defensa de la identidad, en “Transcribing Loss”, los temas de la memoria y la enorme necesidad de preservar el lenguaje y la cultura vascos forman la esencia del análisis bastante detallado de la expresión literaria en *Bilbao-New York-Bilbao*.

Por su naturaleza y temática, la tercera parte, “Silenced/Silencing Subjectivities”, representa, quizás, el eje central de este compendio. El capítulo 5 con un título muy dicente “The Interplay of Female Voice(lessness) and Agency in the Face of Objectification, Commodification, and Fetishization in Carlos Vermut’s *Magical Girl* (2014)”, se centra en los asuntos de género, lo que significa ser español/a y la auto-conciencia en un mundo cada vez más cambiante. Partiendo de la premisa de que el director Vermut utiliza iconografía española contemporánea para denunciar el estado actual de España, Tobin Stanley ofrece una lectura feminista, cuyo argumento principal es cómo el cuerpo de la protagonista subvierte la objetivización, la violencia y la fetichización en un medio controlado por un sistema heteronormativo de valores patriarcales. Mediante una fuerte y reiterativa insistencia en deconstruir el mundo patriarcal español, divide su ensayo en doce partes. Sintomáticamente, entreteniendo descripción y análisis filmicos, Stanley trae a colación una serie de postulados teóricos en cuanto al género para darle validez a su lectura. Más allá de su énfasis en una lectura feminista (que bien podría catalogarse como *postfeminista*), enmarca su punto con otros subtemas de relevancia, tales como el contexto de la crisis económica, el consumismo y/o el mercantilismo deshumanizado(r), para lo cual se vale de estudios teóricos.

En “The Other (in) Silence: Transgressive Subjectivities and Emptied Spaces in Contemporary Literature and Film”, Barros Grela examina la reinante y compleja tensión entre ideología cultural y la producción de identidades, en lo cual ahonda poniendo en diálogo el terreno literario (la novela *Yoro* del 2015 de Marina Perezagua) y el terreno filmico (los filmes *Magical Girl* y *Caótica Ana*, de Carlos Vermut y Julio Medem respectivamente), que ofrecen una reescritura localizada del silencio; es decir resemantizan lo silenciado, lo inarticulado, y la retórica del silencio en el mundo español contemporáneo. Paralelamente, estos universos, el literario y los filmicos, se convierten en discursos de los

desposeídos y les ofrecen a los lectores y espectadores la oportunidad de distanciarse o desengancharse de los confines del lenguaje y, en su lugar, acercarse a o involucrarse en el silencio y en lo vacío, como una herramienta para problematizar los principios identitarios. De manera muy acertada, contextualiza su análisis del silencio y la represión a través de una mirada hacia el pasado reciente de la dictadura de Franco y, mediante un contrapunteo interesante de continuidad y ruptura, lo conecta hacia los confines socioculturales de la España de hoy. Enfatizando el motor central de su lectura, alejándose del terreno descriptivo—y más bien, centrándose en el plano analítico—Barros Grela sostiene de modo muy eficaz que, a nivel (extra)diegético o (meta)narrativo, el silencio se convierte (de manera muy activa) en una herramienta transgresora que se rebela contra los discursos y poderes de hegemonía sociocultural, llevando a la necesidad de buscar y producir espacios alternos o alternativos de performatividad.

Los ensayos enmarcados en la cuarta parte giran en torno al eje temático de la (re)formulación de relaciones, dentro de la cual se examina el tema de la identidad a través de nuevas perspectivas. A diferencia de las tres partes anteriores, ésta enfoca su mirada única y exclusivamente al análisis fílmico. Así, en “Schizophrenia, Sex, and Sentience: Familial (Dys)function as Identity Formation in *La Isla Interior* (2009), Heather Jerónimo estudia la tensión entre la individualidad y la familia española; en particular, se centra en cómo la transmisión multigeneracional de la memoria impacta la formación de la identidad. Describe cómo la familia es (re)presentada como un espacio de fragmentación tanto aislado como aislante. Mediante descripciones detalladas, a modo de *close reading*, nos lleva al interior del filme. Simultáneamente, un punto de gran prominencia es su discusión del concepto actual de familia en un país que no es inmune a los impactos de la globalización y que, cada vez más, lucha por distanciarse de las imposiciones institucionales de la época del franquismo, en general y en torno al concepto de familia, en particular, muy enraizado al Catolicismo Nacional. Entrelaza su propio *close reading* con anotaciones críticas de gran relevancia, ya sean en torno a teoría fílmica o sociocultural.

Amanda Eaton McMenamin con su “Almodovar’s Palimpsestous Bastards: Interserial Interpretations of Illegitimate Iberin Identities in *La mala educación* (2004), *Volver* (2006) y *La piel que habito* (2011) posiciona su mirada al interior del mundo cinematográfico de Pedro Almodovar y, mediante un análisis comparativo/contrastivo de estos tres icónicos

filmes, examina a profundidad la noción de casta o mala casta, enmarcada bajo el manto de la construcción de la identidad española, a través de conexiones espurias entre tres periodos históricos que podrían parecer disímiles entre sí: la España del Siglo de Oro, la España franquista y la España del siglo XXI. Alejándose de resúmenes diegéticos y teniendo muy presente el tema que la ocupa, se asegura de resaltar los puntos más significativos en cuanto a la presencia de lo que ella ha llamado “una lectura diferente: una interpretación interserial de identidades ibéricas ilegítimas”. Como punto básico y primordial, acudiendo a la Real Academia de la Lengua Española, deja sentada la precisión de los significados de términos clave, como “bastardo”, “castizo”, “pureza de sangre”, “hija de su madre”, “hijos espurios” e “hijo bastardo”, los cuales—atendiendo a la lectura de Eaton McMenamin—ya sea de manera explícita o implícita e independientemente de la época histórica, han estado presente en el discurrir sociopolítico o sociocultural de la península ibérica, de lo cual, el mundo almodovariano no se escapa. Entre otros, hay dos puntos salientes aquí: como se demuestra de modo insistente, derivada de *La piel que habito*, la simbología asociada al color de la “piel” y cómo, a su vez, esta ha sido un marcador sociocultural determinante a través de la historia de España.

El espacio social, literario y cinematográfico asociado a la construcción de género y a las luchas económicas y de poder, bajo el rótulo de “Spaces of Desire and Control”, se posiciona al centro del debate en la quinta y última parte. Por un lado, en su aparte “Desiring Bodies: Disorienting Texts and Spaces in Two Contemporary Literary Works by Juan José Millas”, Jennifer Brady investiga el recurrente tema del deseo en dos narrativas: *Dos mujeres en Praga* (2002) y *Cuentos de adúlteros desorientados* (2003). En particular, identifica el deseo como catalítico para examinar tanto el cuerpo físico como las nociones del “yo” identitario. Manifestada en la yuxtaposición de las descripciones de los textos literarios en sí y la integración teórica, Brady demuestra cómo el deseo se revela ya fuera como nostalgia, impulsos eróticos, neurosis o ansiedad, lo cual, inevitablemente, se encuentra anclado al lenguaje. El deseo es el motor que lo mueve todo. Dedicándole una parte al cuerpo y a ciertos fluidos corporales (como la saliva) como sitios o espacios de contención, concluye que el deseo, como mecanismo de la búsqueda del “yo”, anclado al cuerpo físico y al texto que uno desea escribir, es un continuo en las narrativas.

Finalmente, como se anticipó, el tema del espacio asociado a las

relaciones económicas y de poder constituye el eje del décimo capítulo. Conxita Domènech se centra en Barcelona y, acertadamente, titula su ensayo “The Barcelonian Bourgeoisie in Ruins: Jaume Balagueró’s *Mientras Duermes* (2011)”. Articula cómo Balagueró presenta una mirada a la construcción sociocultural del género y las relaciones de poder en la España contemporánea. Se arguye que si la mujer burguesa promulgó y ha gozado de cierta libertad feminista a los albores del siglo XXI, la misma mujer—consecuentemente—ha sido silenciada por los efectos de la crisis económica y la restauración simbólica del patriarcado. Se lee cierta insistencia a tres elementos constitutivos, dos claros y uno implícito: el espacio, el triunfo y el fracaso. Enfocándose en detalles de los espacios en Barcelona y del apartamento (aludiendo al “género del apartamento”), y haciendo referencias teóricas pertinentes, la autora escudriña cómo—ya fuera de maneras explícitas o de maneras sutiles—las relaciones de género y de poder socioeconómico se manifiestan y/o entran en tensión. Una vez más, el cuerpo—tanto el cuerpo físico como el cuerpo social—cobra relevancia en conexión con el tema espacial. De modo muy convincente, Domènech sostiene que, de hecho, el cuerpo es la primera experiencia que se apodera del espacio y, como tal, el espacio se organiza y se entiende en relación al cuerpo. Más aun, el cuerpo femenino, en contraste o en complementariedad con el masculino, tal como se los representa en el filme de Balagueró, son contrastados con otras expresiones filmicas, tal es el caso de Almodóvar y su *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* (1988). A modo de conclusión, siguiendo a Derrida, mantiene que la arquitectura, entendida como el orden del espacio, constituye, a su vez, el orden de las relaciones sociales.

Mediante un sofisticado entramado tanto descriptivo, a modo de *close readings*, como de conexiones o yuxtaposiciones teóricas e históricas muy pertinentes y acertadas, los ensayistas nos ofrecen un profundo y detallado material que, sin duda alguna, aporta frescas y nuevas perspectivas tanto literarias como socioculturales de la España contemporánea que sigue arrastrando efectos franquistas. Contrario a creencias del pasado, este compendio es un ejemplo sobresaliente de que, de manera irreversible, el análisis literario y el cultural ya no van ni pueden ir cada uno por su lado; tanto la literatura y el cine—al igual que otras expresiones y productos culturales no tratados aquí—nos ofrecen terrenos fértiles que nos invitan a seguir escudriñando el pasado y el presente para seguir edificando caminos más promisorios hacia el futuro. En efecto, para tan complejo como fascinante propósito, los autores aquí agrupados ya nos han dejado plasmados sus meritorios aportes.

Conal Condren. *Political Vocabularies: Word Change and the Nature of Politics*. Rochester, NY and Suffolk: U of Rochester P and Boydell & Brewer. 200p.

DOREEN ALVAREZ SAAR
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As a scholar of early American literature, I am deeply interested in political language because politics influences, to some degree, all of the texts produced in America in the tumultuous eighteenth century. Thus, I chose to review *Political Vocabularies* because I hoped the work would touch on my questions about the nature and development of eighteenth century political language. Although many of my questions were not addressed, I found the book fascinating. The author describes *Political Vocabularies* as “a general description of the mechanisms by which political vocabularies are formed and transformed in use and from which the very idea of the political is shaped.” It is part of a particular school of intellectual history, the “contextualist empirical school” identified by Richard Devetak in *Critical International Theory: An Intellectual History*, which “treats the theoretical acts of abstraction themselves as objects of empirical historical investigation.” That is, Condren and his work explore the very framework—the words—on which academics have been building explanations through empirical examination.

Political Vocabularies makes readers face the uncomfortable idea that the universalizing operation upon which we build our theories may, in fact, be somewhat in error. Even such primary concepts as “power” in a political sense--especially when applied outside of the most contemporary of uses--may itself create the phenomena which the structuring word purports to discover. Although I can't do complete justice to its intricate argument, one of the simple, non-political examples may make the point. Our reliance upon the idea that the spectrum of colors through which we identify the world is not cognate with that of other cultures. According to Condren, the Japanese word *awo* may mean blue or green, the Tiwi (an aboriginal Australian language) changes the words for color depending upon the object described. Further, the cultural associations with color vary from culture to culture. This example perhaps illustrates the difference in

Condren's approach: one may use the nugget of information to advance another argument but be unable to do justice to the particularities on which s/he builds the case (for example, my knowledge of Australian indigenous language is extremely limited).

This most recent work in Condren's decades-long examination of the relationship between political language and its specific setting is the product of his objection to the way "otherwise fastidious historians rely unreflectively on a contemporary political vocabulary when purporting to describe previous societies in which it was conspicuously absent." Our way of approaching our definitions of the political based on our contemporary understanding does violence to our comprehension of the historical process and essentially sets up a mirror in which we merely see our own reflection. While this concept is easy to express in this very bald way, showing its truth relies on a precise and empirical study. After a three-chapter explanation of the intention of the work, seven chapters look at the ways in which meaning migrated: extension and salience; neologism; euphemism (one on symptom and taboo; the second on accusation and re-description); loanwords and translation; metaphorical incursion and migration; and metaphorical imposition and entanglement.

The wide-ranging discussion offers some delightful moments of insight. For example, political discourse has two opposing ways in which neologisms function depending upon whose ox is being gored. The aversion to change creates new words that define the object as negative, such as *anabaptist*. Sometimes these labels became badges of honor for the group labeled, such as *leveler*. On the other hand, when the object has progress as its hallmark, the new word becomes a point of self-promotion and group identity. Condren's dissection of the development of populist and populism has uses that "criticize the popular without sacrificing the overt commitment to the democratic." Further, he argues that these neologisms: "Help create a misleading or nonexistent entity--abstract nouns from partial qualifiers," and do not constitute an ideology, but a political style (78-9). I have not mentioned the analysis of much of our contemporary political discourse – generally delightful and with examples drawn from far and wide including the British political satire *Yes, Minister*. Dip into this work if you find the slipperiness of our contemporary political discourse unnerving; it will give you new ways to think about what is happening, and perhaps some ammunition for argument.

Conxita Domènech y Andrés Lema-Hincapié, eds. *El segundo Quijote (1615) nuevas interpretaciones, nuevas reflexiones cuatro siglos después (2015)*. Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2018. 414p.

ELIA HATFIELD
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Si bien no hace falta remarcar la importancia capital de una obra maestra como *El Quijote* y su notable y vigente lugar dentro de la literatura universal, sí es necesario revisar las nuevas interpretaciones académicas que surgen a partir de una reflexión crítica y filológica acerca de La Segunda Parte del *Quijote* como respuesta a la celebración de los cuatrocientos años de su publicación. *El segundo Quijote (1615) nuevas interpretaciones, nuevas reflexiones cuatro siglos después (2015)* es una compilación de quince ensayos de necesaria lectura para todos aquellos que nos consideramos seguidores de las propuestas literarias cervantinas. Las aportaciones se centran en cuestiones de géneros literario y teatral, de estilo, de poética, de estrategias narrativas y de emblemas culturales propios de la cultura cervantista. Dichas propuestas son elaboradas por académicos, filólogos, teóricos, historiadores de la literatura, así como filósofos, y críticos de cine que han encontrado una mina narrativa inagotable para sus reflexiones. Se compone de cinco secciones, cada una con una aproximación crítica inteligente, reflexiva e iluminadora.

“Segunda Parte del Quijote: vientos de guerra, de ficción y de muerte” es el título de la primera sección. Se integra de tres propuestas críticas. Diana de Armas Wilson abre el discurso con la temática, “Cervantes y los piratas de la Berbería”. Álvaro Bautista-Cabrera, en “Interacción entre ficción y realidad: algunas diferencias entre la Primera y Segunda partes del *Quijote*”, cita a Borges y a Alfred Schutz para establecer los tipos de relaciones entre la ficción y la realidad entre ambos textos. Desde otra vertiente, Andrés Lema-Hincapié propone en “Las muchas muertes de Alonso Quijano el bueno” la posibilidad de analizar tres interpretaciones acerca de la muerte de don Quijote-Alonso Quijano y de reflexionar sobre lo que la muerte de Quijano implicaría filosóficamente desde su propia perspectiva como lector.

Igualmente resulta interesante la sección dos, titulada: “El Quijote II éste también es el libro de Sancho”. Edwin Williamson

presenta su discurso, “Avellaneda y la crisis de autoridad en la Segunda parte del Quijote”. Jennifer Brady, en “La formación teatral de Sancho Panza”, perfila una lectura crítica basada en términos teatrales apoyándose en los estudios críticos de Vladimir Nabokov, Diana Taylor, Martín Heidegger y William Worden. Desde otra vertiente José Reinel Sánchez cierra esta sección al analizar en “La naturaleza de los animales en el *Quijote* de 1615” algunos aspectos de la presencia de los animales desde una referencia aristotélica.

En la sección tres, “Géneros visuales y literarios en diálogo con el *Quijote*”, Michael Paul Abeyta examina la temática de la *maqāma*. Por su parte, Nelson R. Orringer en “La malaventura de Melisendra: La Segunda Parte del *Quijote* en las obras de García Lorca” argumenta que el capítulo 26 afecta de manera decisiva el propio arte literario de García Lorca. Desde otro punto de vista, Carlos- Germán Van Der Linde examina “La actuación de don *Quijote* en el retablo de maese Pedro: una expresión temprana de la libertad en sentido negativo”. El artículo de Jorge Latorre y Oleksandr Pronkevich, “El *Quijote* y los Wésterns”, señala que existen dos aproximaciones fundamentales a la obra de Cervantes, la erudita o la tradición crítica y filológica, y la tradición popular. Uno de sus objetivos principales será revisar la producción cinematográfica de los wésterns quijotescos y considerar la evolución o americanización de la figura de don *Quijote*.

“El *Quijote* y sus cuestiones humanísticas” es el título de la cuarta sección del libro. En “El tomismo del *Quijote* II: reflexiones sobre la virtud en tres personajes quijotescos”, Michael J. McGrath revisa la Segunda Parte del *Quijote*, su relación con Santo Tomás de Aquino y su *Summa Theologica* (1265-1274). Julia Domínguez explica en “La medicina política de Cervantes: el gobierno del cuerpo en el *Quijote* de 1615” la relación entre medicina y política. Jorge Chen Sham cierra la cuarta sección con “*Quijote* II, 33-36 de la prudencia a la sanción Moral: ‘No es oro todo lo que reluce’ y ‘La codicia rompe el saco’”. Chen argumenta que en el capítulo 33 y a través de la paremiología se puede catalogar a estos refranes como compleja metáfora monetaria que habría sido desatendida por la crítica cervantista.

La sección V y última del libro, “El Quijote como una obra maestra de Cataluña” la conforma Antonio M. Rueda con su artículo, “*Don Quijote* en Barcelona: una explicación del viaje a Cataluña”. Rueda estudia indica que Barcelona, la ciudad Congal, y el Mar Mediterráneo influyeron en el cambio de mentalidad del protagonista. “Llenos de

pies y de piernas humanas': Don Quijote y Sancho Panza entran en Cataluña" de Conxita Domènech cierra el discurso y analiza los cambios narrativos que ocurrirán en el *Quijote* con la entrada del caballero andante y el escudero en Cataluña, a partir de cuatro apartados: la ficción, un distanciamiento del centro a la periferia, la muerte, y el preludio de la guerra de Cataluña.

Es así como *El segundo Quijote (1615) Nuevas interpretaciones cuatro siglos después (2015)* al tiempo que conmemora la obra de Miguel de Cervantes, ofrece una lectura crítica, inteligente y sostenida en una base teórica tangible. Es un texto imprescindible para todos aquellos que seguimos insistiendo en las infinitas posibilidades narrativas que nos ofrece Cervantes en su obra monumental, en particular, en su Segunda parte del *Quijote*.

Bill Dommett. *NU-ENGLISH: A Simpler English Language for the Future*. Chermside West, Queensland: Bill Dommett, 2018. 230p.

ALYSSA YOUNG

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

As an instructor of English Composition and a teacher of English as a Second Language, I am intrigued by the idea of refining the English language to assist students with ease of learning. I have witnessed so many issues that complicate a learner's journey to perfecting the idiom. Therefore, when presented the opportunity to read *NU-ENGLISH: A Simpler English Language for the Future*, I gladly accepted.

Dommett has a clear passion for the practical. His background in Microbiology and Information Processing clues readers to his straightforward use of language to convey information. The book navigates the possibility of changing written English for more efficient international usage. Throughout the text, Dommett describes all of his methods and reasons as built upon logic (220). The book has zero fluff and is direct with clear, substantive ideas about improvements, with the support of various tables to display suggestions. Sixteen chapters dissect parts of speech within the language, as well as provide a preface, introduction, and a detailed autobiography. The organization is clear and candid, making it very accessible to readers.

Background information was provided well throughout the introduction and first chapter for readers who are less familiar with

the grammatical functions within English. Dommett explains the inconsistencies caused by newly developed words, changing words, outdated words, words influenced by other languages, words that change from country to country, and homophones (5). This holistic and expansive introduction allows readers from all backgrounds to appreciate the work in later chapters to improve and create universal unity for English speakers and learners. Dommett also proposes a 10 to 15-year transition period in which both the current and new English are accepted as correct (8). Afterwards, the former English should be considered unacceptable and incorrect in schools (8). With a swift introduction, the reader is ready to receive the material.

Dommett begins by suggesting that the English alphabet should be changed to having forty-four characters, as opposed to twenty-six, to allow for a more direct, phonetically accurate representation of all sounds in the language (17). He does a thorough job of introducing these revised letters and explaining the imperative need for each revision. Prior to presenting a lengthy selection of tables, the author guides readers with a foregrounding analysis of the revisions applied to each word or letter. This pattern continues, suggesting the elimination of: all silent letters; the letter “r;” “y” as a vowel; “c” and instead use “k” or “s” to represent the sound; soft “g,” and instead use only the hard “g” sound; hard “s,” and instead use only the soft “s” sound; irregular verbs; all unorthodox terms for animal groups; homophones by developing new unique words; and more. He advocates maintaining: accents on the same syllables; regular verb rules with simplification; the minimal indication of gender in nouns and verbs; usage of prepositions; and usage of conjunctions. He acknowledges that future generations will encounter difficulty in reading and decoding literature and lyrical poetry, but explains that modern speakers face the same trials when attempting to study Shakespeare (14).

NU-ENGLISH does an appropriate job of making suggestions and conveying ideas in a concise manner. The introductory teaser paragraph acts as an example for the readers to form an idea about the simplicity of the proposed rules. However, I would have liked to see more sample paragraphs later on in the text to display the value of each new proposed rule. Dommett also uses alternative languages, French and German, to demonstrate the functions of improvements for other language. Although this could be understood as beneficial, it was distracting to the main claims of the book. The author described

several rules that apply to the different languages and made an entirely new endeavor for readers to attempt to understand the separate rules and potential changes. Dommett shared intriguing suggestions for the revision of these languages, but should save these claims for a different book.

Overall, Dommett produces a thorough and methodological work that can be closely followed with little interruption of excessive wordiness. His ideas and suggestions are first explained in a short manner and thoroughly exercised within the charts, providing a wealth of examples. The claims provided in *NU-ENGLISH* are wholistic and logical. The propositions for alterations to the alphabet; elimination of irregular rules; recommendations towards adjustment periods; and advocating conversion towards metric and decimal systems amplify the deep process of re-evaluating a language. I suspect that if society were to attempt to redesign the English language, referring solely to Dommett's work would suffice as a complete manual. It is an interesting read for linguists, language instructors, and scholars interested in the functionality of language.

Katie Drager. *Experimental Research Methods in Sociolinguistics*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2018. 199p.

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Getting started in the world of sociolinguistics can be an arduous task due to the wide range of options when it comes to methodologies. The so-called experimental method resorts to controlled experiments to which different participants are subjected. In one of the best manuals dedicated to sociolinguistics, Katie Drager —Associate Professor at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa— manages to compact this method from the first and essential phases through the publication of results. “What is covered is a range of different experimental paradigms as well as descriptions of what are currently considered to be the best practices when employing them” (2). Indeed, the first chapters deliver fundamental concepts: from the definition of an experiment to how to carry it out in detail, including necessary equipment, recruitment of participants, and ethical considerations. Through a conversational and informal style, the author balances basic and more advanced aspects

that allow us to develop complete experiments. Drager’s innovative manual will surely define some of the most popular trends in the coming years. It fills a gap by applying and extrapolating widely used psychological methods to sociolinguistics.

Of particular relevance are the structure and content of chapters 3 and 4 that treat perception and production respectively. Among the perception experiments, chapter 3 discusses “experimental paradigms that are especially well suited to investigate the more socially focused research questions . . . and those that are used to examine the cognitive aspects of linguistic structure” (57–58). Methods are proposed for both perception—such as rating, open response, and implicit association tests—and for production with identification, discrimination or matching tasks. In chapter 4, the author details methods that can address a variety of different research questions related to production, including interviews, conversation and corpora, semantic differential questions, map and tangram tasks. Constant examples and two illustrative sample experiments accompany both chapters, along with a wide range of references for learners to become experts in the field.

The following chapter includes methods and theories from other disciplines adapted to sociolinguistics, resulting in an innovative, but challenging, approach since Drager recommends working with additional experts. “I present this chapter merely as a guide to give you enough knowledge to think up some cool research ideas” (118). She certainly succeeds. Eye-tracking, experiments with children or ultrasound provide infinite possibilities to extend sociolinguistic study. As in previous chapters, numerous examples and references to real research are included. To conclude the development of experimental methods, chapter 6 presents “some of the most commonly used statistical methods, stepping through how to pick the right one for your data and how to use R to run the different tests” (134). Both basic qualitative methods—the creation of plots and graphs—and complex quantitative statistical methods—regression models with random effects—are discussed, along with how to interpret and report the results of these analyses. This is an accessible chapter for those readers with limited statistical knowledge since it incorporates a helpful spreadsheet and additional resources in the companion website.

Although I highly endorse the work of Katie Drager, the audience of this manual does not seem to be entirely clear. From the

beginning, it is emphasized that “this book is intended for readers who are unfamiliar with experimental methods but who are at least vaguely interested in using them” (1). However, we soon discover that, in reality, the intended audience is sociolinguists (2) since common concepts in the field such as priming (13), accommodation (23), false-positives (28) or phonetic-reduction (95) are taken for granted without any explanation, while extremely basic concepts like “dependent variable” or “independent variable” (6) are detailed. Due to that, accessibility is partially limited; even though there is a balance between basic and more complex concepts, sometimes the criterion for selecting the elements defined is not clear. Nonetheless, the choice of not emphasizing some terms that every sociolinguist should know is understandable, since defining each one of these would require a much greater length, and her work would cease to be such a brief and manageable guide.

Experimental Research Methods in Sociolinguistics is a remarkable contribution and functions as a perfect reference manual for carrying out research tasks, thanks to its step-by-step description of the experimental method. Besides, the large volume of bibliography that exemplifies each of the methods and that encourages further reading perfectly complements the work. To conclude, it complies with the main purpose, carrying out a thorough and thoughtful introduction to the experimental method that will undoubtedly inspire both new academic research and university courses.

Gary Edward Holcomb, ed. *Teaching Hemingway and Race*. Kent State UP, 2018. 142p.

ALYSSA YOUNG

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How do we take the works of America’s machismo male figure, Ernest Hemingway, and utilize them strategically with pedagogical objectives for enlightening students about race? As an English Composition instructor, I feel the urgent need to verse my students in the topic of race, and how it appears in texts. Unfortunately, there is a lack of material that provides examples of literature and pedagogical strategies for teaching about the presence of race. That is, until I found *Teaching Hemingway and Race*, part of Kent State University Press’s *The Teaching Hemingway Series*. The series exhibits varying topics found within

Hemingway's works, which include gender, modernism, war, race, and more. *Teaching Hemingway and Race* contributes a vital lens of pedagogical approaches to teachers, instructors, and professors alike who seek a detailed guide for how to instruct students about race.

Divided into two categories, the essays describe accounts of teaching experience in accordance with the goal of instruction on race. Holcomb introduces a synthesis and general overview, giving the audience a framework to have in mind. The pedagogical category features essays on approaches with strategies to teach students how to read and interpret representations of race and ethnicity. All chapters have a clearly stated purpose and a rationale for support. The second category compares the writings of Hemingway and similar race-oriented authors, and demonstrates how to use them together in the classroom.

Marc Dudley's essay guides instructors in teaching "The Battler," and provides background, "Hemingway works as an impressionist of sorts, painting character and landscape for striking sensory effect; but he also works as a reporter, a historian, and sometimes a political agitator, looking both to document and manipulate truth for optimal psychic effect" (8). This information gives teachers who are not familiar with Hemingway's life and work the foundation to appreciate his writings and contributions made to teaching race. Analysis of the characters of ethnic background helps students form questions and thoroughly dissect "The Battler" to discover how it portrays race. Dudley maintains explanations of his academic moves in the classroom and details what students gain from each reading and exercise.

Margaret Wright-Cleveland elaborates on the unique racial education Hemingway received while living in Oak Park, Illinois, which ultimately influenced his works (16) and builds the foundation of historical events in order to apply them to activities such as the Critical Race Theory.

Ross Tangedal addresses the lack of scholarly attention pertaining to race, and encourages attentive reading from students towards complexities of race in literature. He analyzes the benefits that "Death in the Afternoon" and "Green Hills of Africa" bring to the classroom. After reading the works, he suggests questioning students about the roles of the fighter's ethnic backgrounds and characterizations, and states the imperative nature of the activity, "If race is to be understood in either work, attention must be given to

Hemingway's treatment of his experts and their activities," noting that experts were people of ethnic background (39). The remaining three pedagogy chapters follow suit by detailing historical context, introducing the works analyzed, explaining the sections that make students uncomfortable, encouraging instructors to push through to ensure that they arrive at the cognitive state to ask intelligent questions, and expounding upon the final understanding of the lesson. I suspect that the first category of essays is more appealing to instructors who are seeking step-by-step outlines of how to approach a lesson and focus on race because of the introduction of learning outcomes, scaffolding recommendations, and exact questions that should be used.

The comparison category contains entries on teaching Hemingway's work in combination with the texts of additional authors who write about race. Each essay begins with the objective and personal interests of the essayist, and the learning outcomes they hope to stimulate within their classrooms. These comparisons act less as a guide and instead present the commonalities between Hemingway and additional writers. The essays integrate the topics of the Harlem Renaissance, dislocation and questions of belonging, the jazz age sexual revolution, and connections with teaching the pastoral. Comparisons allow instructors to see how identifying connections between Hemingway and similar authors brings students to understand the agency held by authors regarding race.

In summary, *Teaching Hemingway and Race* is a wholesome and detailed collection of essays complete with shared methods that guides teachers through noteworthy lessons about race. In my opinion, this book should be an integral part of any classroom.

Robert W. Lewis and Michael Kim Roos. *Reading Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms: Glossary and Commentary*. Kent State University Press, 2019. 347p.

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In an era awash with cultural, gender, biographical and myriad other ideological studies where art and artist become subsumed to a particularly dedicated focus, there emerges a series of trustworthy critical volumes devoted to the masterpieces of one of America's foremost 20th century authors, Ernest Hemingway. To date Kent State University Press has issued companion volumes to *The Sun Also Rises*, *Men Without Women*, *Across the River and Into the Trees*, *To Have and Have Not*, *The Old Man and the Sea* and *A Farewell to Arms*. The latter represents a laudable effort to set straight a record of mis-readings penned by legions of self-anointed Hemingway critics ranging from acquaintances, distant relatives, fans, and other equally unreliable amateurs, who for decades have appropriated Hemingway and his production to their own often selfish ends. It is refreshingly welcome to discover Lewis and Roos's *explication de texte* approach to *A Farewell to Arms*.

Their compendium is an exhaustive chapter-by-chapter--indeed almost line-by-line--elucidation of Hemingway's tragic novel of love and loss in the time of war that he once described as his *Romeo and Juliet*. Fredric and Catherine's brief and doomed love in the Italian war front echoes Shakespeare's own Veronese young couple's ill-fated demise. Attentive not only to the standard American Library edition but also reaching back constantly to the holographic manuscript as well as the definitive typescript housed at the John F. Kennedy Library, these two scholars pull back the curtain and let us see Hemingway's creative genius at work as he carefully, deliberately and consciously constructs his opus. Ranging from the relatively paltry eleven entries of chapters 8, 17 and 24, to an astounding ninety-five pertaining to chapter 41, Lewis and Roos offer up no fewer than 1,423 commentaries to orient readers with a guide map replete with detailed information necessary to fully apprehend and appreciate the narrative's textual richness.

No opportunity is missed to delve deep into Hemingway's

writing process, from his obsessive search for just the right ending (he essayed forty seven) to his adherence to the “iceberg principle,” knowing just what to leave unsaid while trusting the reader’s ability to collaborate in gauging the full meaning of the remaining 7/8 of the submerged iceberg. Precisely this mode of writing, which suggests more than it tells, compels Lewis and Roos to make certain that every reader becomes fully aware of the rich polysemious nature of *AFTA*. Simply put, whereas in the novelist’s finished work the trick has always been to hide the trick, these critics see theirs’ as just the opposite: to discover or uncover each, and every, trick.

In this vein, Lewis and Roos endow readers with the means to follow Hemingway’s step-by-step building of his wonderful novel. Historical dates, topographical maps, intertextual references, toponyms, character appellations and real life identifications, battle locations, armaments, political factions, city descriptions, significant dates, text variations, eliminated sections, word changes and choices, relevant oenology, and many other similar founts which Hemingway himself may not have been familiar with since his initial stay in Italy postdates the novel’s action of 1917. Thus, our critics mine works such as Baedeker’s popular guides to Italy and Switzerland, G.M. Trevelyan’s *Scenes from Italy’s War* or Hugh Dalton’s *British Guns in Italy* and reveal Hemingway’s own invaluable references that he reached for in his determination to lend authenticity and the essence of truth he always sought.

Scribner’s brought out *AFTA* “on the day the market broke” in 1929 as EH himself later remembered. He had begun writing it, probably in Wyoming, in the winter of 1928 and finished it in Paris in the spring of 1929. In spite of the tragedies and difficulties that darkened this period of his life, such as his father’s suicide or his wife Pauline’s near fatal caesarean birth of their second child, Hemingway labored ceaselessly through it all. He produced a six hundred and fifty-some page manuscript that would become an almost immediate success, immune to Wall Street’s seismic losses of the day on which it appeared for sale. At the age of twenty-nine, he became the most important writer of his generation and, subsequently, of America’s 20th century, a time when many fellow writers were forgotten.

Because of his growing stature and *AFTA*’s enduring worth, every aspect and nuance, no matter how small, must be studied and recognized by current and future readers, scholars and students.

Reading Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* deserves a place alongside Hemingway's masterpiece third novel. Lewis and Roos' guide and commentary will reveal the hidden seven-eighths of *AFTA's* iceberg like no other critical glossary extant.

Javier García Liendo. *El intelectual y la cultura de masas. Argumentos latinoamericanos en torno a Ángel Rama y José María Arguedas*. West Lafayette: Purdue UP 2017. 266p.

RENEÉ FRITZEN
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

El Intelectual y la Cultura de Masas analiza los efectos del capitalismo en América Latina a través de dos escritores, Ángel Rama y José María Arguedas, y el impacto que la cultura de la imprenta tenía en estos dos intelectuales. Ángel Rama (1926-1983) fue uno de los críticos más importantes de la segunda mitad del siglo XX en América Latina. Fue también un gran promotor cultural, tanto en Uruguay, su país de origen, como en Venezuela. La obra de Rama y su trabajo con la imprenta contribuyeron al desarrollo y a la expansión de la literatura, las humanidades, y las ciencias sociales en círculos de las masas, y también de los que no eran intelectuales. Creyó nuevos canales de comunicación y exploró las utopías, los límites, y las contradicciones de la mercantilización e industrialización de la cultura de la imprenta latinoamericana desde el modernismo hasta *el Boom* de la narrativa hispanoamericana. La base de la discusión es lo que García Liendo llama "el ciclo popular de la cultura de la imprenta" como un sueño de democratización cultural. Terminó mostrándolo como el establecimiento de una privatización casi absoluta de la cultura.

Los capítulos dedicados a la obra del reconocido escritor y antropólogo peruano José María Arguedas revelan que su trabajo como novelista, traductor y abanderado de la literatura quechua le permitió consagrarse como uno de los escritores más significantes del siglo XX. El autor observa las prácticas intelectuales de Arguedas con la cultura de la imprenta y el folklore peruano. Arguedas pensó que la imprenta como un sistema técnico podría constituir un espacio de comunicación popular en una época marcada por las migraciones masivas del campo a la ciudad. Se aprovechó de nuevas tecnologías como la grabadora

y discos que atraviesan por igual su trabajo en el periodismo, la antropología, la literatura y la promoción cultural. Estas condiciones dieron forma a una nueva cultura popular urbana en Perú. Quería promover la cultura y el idioma indígena llamado *hispanocriollismo*.

García Liendo describe el capitalismo como una fuerza que transformó las posibilidades de los intelectuales como Rama y Arguedas para que tuvieran voz y atención público durante la era de esta industrialización rápida. El libro desglosa muy bien los diversos conceptos como la cultura de masas, el espacio cultural, la práctica intelectual, el ciclo popular de la cultura de la imprenta, y el indigenismo, y los define con explicaciones detalladas. La foto de Arguedas en la página 128 llama atención al conflicto que Arguedas tenía al fin (cerca de su suicidio) hacía los efectos del capitalismo con la mercantilización y la industrialización y los cambios de la cultura andina que causaron las tensiones políticas y sociales del país, especialmente para la gente pobre indígena y los criollos en la ciudad de Lima.

Laura Godfrey, ed. *Hemingway in the Digital Age: Reflections on Teaching, Reading, and Understanding*. Kent, OH: Kent State UP, 2019. 232p.

WAYNE CATAN
BROPHY COLLEGE PREPARATORY

In this new Teaching Hemingway title, Laura Godfrey of North Idaho College selects essays from top Hemingway scholars who recommend best practices to teach Ernest Hemingway in the digital age.

In “Virtual Papa,” Lisa Tyler of Sinclair Community College discusses an artful way to conduct online research. First, she warns teachers that in the nascent stages of research students will, most likely, punch up facts that are already known, such as his fishing and hunting prowess, his family’s mental health issues, and myriad plays, exhibits, and festivals that take place annually. Tyler points out that this information does not focus on the literary Hemingway. To get to know the literary Hemingway, she suggests several newspaper archives including the *Kansas City Star* and *Toronto Star* because both papers: “ransacked their archives and published online every article they could find that Hemingway wrote during his tenure at their organizations” (17). George Plimpton’s 1958 *The Paris Review* interview and Lillian

Ross's 1950 *New Yorker* article are available online too, providing a glimpse into Hemingway as a writer and as a person. Additionally, Tyler recommends the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library website and The Michigan Hemingway Society site, where students can secure information about his fiction set in Michigan.

Michael K. Steinberg and Jordan Cissell discuss their environmental literature class at the University of Alabama in "Beyond the Photographs." When students are asked to "describe the first image of Ernest Hemingway that comes to mind" (22) the answer is most often associated with a picture of Hemingway standing next to a large fish. Interestingly, their students use these photos for research. In fact, they measure the fish and compare them to the size of fish caught today. Students learn that fishing in the 1930s was much different than it is now. For instance, "The size and number of fish Hemingway caught are largely unheard of today in the same waters" (24), and billfish population has drastically declined. The authors do caution that "we cannot and should not suggest that students make quantitative statements about the declines in fish sizes and populations based on a limited number of photographs. However, the photographs can at least demonstrate what existed during Hemingway's Cuban years, illuminating their drastic decline in both size and number" (25). The essay also highlights that Hemingway was not simply a "meat" fisherman – someone who catches and kills large fish for entertainment; he was "cognizant of the pressure that both early sport and commercial fishing were having on certain species" (28). Hemingway was a founding member of the International Game Fish Association and collaborated with scientists from the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Because of his knowledge, experience, and love of fishing and the ocean, he was able to write realistically about it.

Hemingway scholar Kirk Curnutt, English professor and chair at Troy University, writes about the benefits of using memes and photos as a teaching tool to enliven the classroom in "A Meme-able Feast." Curnutt recommends pictures of Hemingway pointing his Tommy gun into the camera lens, and images of Hemingway fan tattoos, which display "how fans publicize their literary passions" (36). This – especially the photo with the Tommy gun – "help[s] break the ice in classrooms by humanizing the author's image" (35). The bottom line for Curnutt is that it is important to be engaging, so do what you have to do to connect with students. He believes the educational value

of Hemingway memes – especially the ones with quotations – are central to Hemingway studies because they demonstrate a basic trait of modernism, and that is they are “reinventing literary expression through experimentation . . . in other words [they] MAKE IT NEW” (41).

Rebecca Johnston, co-vice president of the Florida Hemingway Society, discusses the benefits of using Google Maps and Google Earth to better understand the setting in Hemingway’s works. Here’s why: although he included autobiographical elements in his texts, he did write fiction, so locations can be misinterpreted. Some students believe Hemingway only wrote about places he visited. This is not the case. For example, in *A Farewell to Arms*: “Frederic Henry served on the frontline of World War I in an area Hemingway could not have accessed until after the war” (148). To clarify setting in *Farewell*, Johnston recommends using Google Maps to “receive directions from Gorizia to Plava, Kuk, and the Bainsizza Plateau” (149). Additionally, she provides information on where teachers can access YouTube videos to highlight events featured in Hemingway’s fiction, including a San Fermin procession akin to the one featured in *The Sun Also Rises*.

Hemingway in the Digital Age is divided neatly into four sections and serves as a valuable tool for educators who want to engage their students in the digital age. A bonus section of teaching material makes it easy for instructors to bring new forms of expression into their classrooms.

Wendy Larson. *Zhang Yimou: Globalization and the Subject of Culture*. Amherst, N.Y.: Cambria, 2017. 420p.

NAJI R OBAID
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Zhang Yimou: Globalization and the Subject of Culture comprehensively depicts both Chinese and English methodological supremacy, culture, and history in a well-documented piece. The name Zhang Yimou has been dominant in post-Mao Zedong philosophy and in Asian cinema. Highlighting the post-Maoist Chinese political era, it is therefore recommended for politically inclined individuals to get acquainted with that political mythology. It gives practical insight on how things used to work in ancient medieval Medellin politics, with particular comparison to modern stereotypes. Larson teaches very important lessons about the Chinese and their culture as it relates to globalization. Different

sources from English and Chinese perspectives are used to delve into Zhang's films, posing a strong argument on the potential, limitations, and the significance of the Chinese post-socialist cultural era.

Author Wendy Larson's research, including *From Ah Q to Lei Feng: Freud and Revolutionary Spirit in 20th-century China*; *Literary Authority and the Chinese writer: Ambivalence and Autobiography*; and *Women and Writing in Modern China*, is always substantiated by well-crafted textual descriptions and is made even stronger by comprehensive theories. Her present study significantly contributes to the global field of academic and cultural studies through its essential analysis of film director Zhang Yimou, who has, over the years, been controversial due to previous works that have raised debate among professionals. She also lays a foundation for gender, post-socialist, visual, and globalization studies.

Larson has a whole new approach to studying modern China, one of the topics that receives major attention. This most beautiful work has the propensity to attract more academic readership to culture studies and geography, probably due to its versatile theoretical knowledge and what most people consider a "Slippery Idea" of global culture; other anticipated potential readers are students in Chinese studies, film studies, and history.

This 420-page volume can be considered her magnum opus. She writes with unbiased rationale, creativity, attention to detail, and persuasiveness. It can simply be described as a seminal text since it treats a large number of Zhang's most influential works in depth, reminding everyone who has interest in cinema that the Chinese film industry has actually diversified; this book truly has the potential to guide readers down the road to understanding the Asian continent.

Larson's sophisticated assessment of Zhang's methods clearly analyzes eight out of the nine films that he directed from 1987 to 2005, including *Red Sorghum*, a "cross-cultural threnody," which caused a bit of controversy during its time, and *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles*. Using these scenarios, Larson sets the stage for debate on the treatment of culture in the Red Trilogy by opening up questions about postcolonial China and Eurocentrism and by prompting readers to study further. Her analysis views *Hero*, a movie that has been described as a fascist documentary in its representation of the Chinese state, from an informed angle that counters that notion, and persuasively argues that it is a perfect fit in the development of Zhang's career as a director.

In conclusion, Wendy Larson's book intensely observes Zhang's

films, placing them in a larger realm and re-defining the idea of global culture. In this skillful study, Larson boldly challenges pre-existing and incorrect perceptions about the films, which have been tagged either as anti-government or anarchic. It is not surprising that this is one of the world's finest works about Zhang Yimou, since, through careful close study, it evaluates the detailed politics and culture during post-socialist China as well as its current position in the present-day world of capitalism. It is a perfect tool for individuals who are inquisitive about the politics associated with modern Asian culture.

Michele Loporcaro. *Gender from Latin to Romance*. Oxford UP, 2018. 368p.

JOHN M. RYAN

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Gender from Latin to Romance is a scholarly comparative analysis of the history, geography and typology of grammatical gender systems across the various Romance languages and dialects. Consisting of eight chapters, it begins with an overview, the method used for the study, and some basic facts and observations about gender systems worldwide. Serving as a springboard for the remainder of the book, chapter two lays out the comprehensive grammatical gender system of Classical Latin as the baseline against which modern languages are to be compared. Chapter 3 discusses most common and widely known modern gender systems of the Romance languages, including the binary systems of Italian, Spanish or French. This is followed immediately by another section on gender assignment rules. Chapters 4 through 6 go on to treat more complex Romance gender systems that have been either attested in present-day languages or dialects or documented in past stages of Romance. This includes remnants of the neuter, languages with three gender systems as in Romanian, as well as the correlation between the mass/count noun distinction and gender in Asturian.

Diverging from his approach for the earlier chapters, Loporcaro then undertakes the task of providing a comprehensive reconstruction of the development of grammatical gender from Latin to Romance, including such topics as the rise of the *genus alternans*, gradual depletion of the neuter, and the rise and fall of a four-gender

system. The concluding chapter deals with themes outside the realm of diachronic topics and moves to a more typological focus and the wider implications of four gender systems, internally motivated versus contact-induced change, and syntactically-dependent overt gender marking.

Gender from Latin to Romance, the twenty-seventh monograph of the Oxford Studies in Diachronic and Historical Linguistics series, offers several advantages to scholars within linguistics as well as those in other fields, such as sociology, psychology, and gender studies. It provides the first ever, one-stop compilation of research on grammatical gender across the entirety of the Romance language family. This showcases the wide variety of outcomes in gender systems that have transpired across the neo-Latin languages, far beyond the more familiar binary system among the mainstream languages of French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish, and includes details about less widely studied languages like Sursilvan, Neapolitan, and Asturian. It also makes references beyond the Italic family to show where those languages share aspects with Romance, and reviews the work conducted by others on evidence for grammatical gender on the ancestral languages preceding Latin, most notably on Proto-Indo-European by Matasovic (2004) and others.

Another strength lies in its sound methodology that explains the different manifestations of gender systems both within and outside of Romance, dedicating ample space to examine the previous seminal work of Corbet (1991) on the wider topic of grammatical gender. Specifically, Loporcaro's application of the controller versus target dichotomy is largely effective.

Gender from Latin to Romance provides exhaustive description, documentation, and comparison of the different gender systems, both simple and complex, that have evolved between Latin and the many neo-Latin tongues of today. Although it is not intended as a textbook on the subject, it would serve as a suitable complementary manual of copious examples for students who are studying grammatical gender as a linguistic phenomenon in any context.

Valeria Luiselli. *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions*. Coffee House Press, 2017.

MARCUS EMBRY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Valeria Luiselli's *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions* is very timely in subject matter, but also in terms of our current critical moment. Luiselli is Mexican, a legal resident of the US who lives in New York, and the recipient of a 2019 MacArthur Fellowship. She is already known and celebrated for her novels, but this book displays the full power of her critical insight and writing skillset.

Titled "An Essay," it is written on many levels that weave the reader into the text alongside the author and the asylum-seeking unaccompanied children who Luiselli interviews. She begins the essay in the midst of her family's green-card application process. The reader is suspended through the text, waiting for the process to reach its conclusion. But, that is the outer layer of process that structures this text. While waiting, the reader journeys with Luiselli's family on vacation. As we all move away from New York, we become aware of the humanitarian crisis unfolding on the southern border of the US in 2014. Over sixty thousand unaccompanied children seeking asylum have been swept into the system, and as Luiselli and the reader get closer to the southern border, Luiselli finds herself also swept into the system, her Spanish language skills vital for interviewing the children and filling out their paperwork for asylum.

Each section of the book is structured around the forty questions on the form Luiselli fills out for the children she interviews. From the beginning, she focuses on the dissonance between the formality of the written questions and the answers of the children. The questionnaires dictate the form of the answers, but the children's narratives cannot conform. In question seven, for example, Luiselli must ask if anything happened on the child's "trip" that "scared or hurt" the child? The children's answers cannot begin to encompass the fact that eighty percent of migrant girls and women are raped along the way from Mexico to the US. In answer to the question "Why did you come here?" a little girl replies, "because I wanted to arrive" (99) a heartbreaking update of "When we Arrive" in Tomas Rivera's

1972 classic *Y no se lo tragó la tierra*.

Beyond the interplay of the information Luiselli provides through the unique structure of the book, which many previous reviews have mentioned, I want to highlight the interplay Luiselli creates between the various narrators in her work. Of course, the children being interviewed are the primary narrators, but Luiselli simultaneously weaves the book through her wait for her green card long after her immediate family members have received theirs. As we proceed through the text we wait alongside Luiselli, just as the children in the detention centers wait for the words that Luiselli transcribes to bring resolution to their plight. As Luiselli locates herself, the undocumented children, and the reader in this place of waiting, she weaves in her own daughter's reactions to the entire process: Luiselli's daughter asks the question, "So how does the story of these children end?" (55).

This book, however, is not a story, nor is it a novel or a testimonio. Rather, it is an essay, and Luiselli demands that we consider the boundaries of what an essay can be in our contemporary world. On page 41, she presents a graph of information that one child provides to a question about home. As we puzzle through the paradigmatic and syntagmatic meanings evident in the graph, we realize that home for this child is not a place of origin but rather a destination, the family that the child naively and impossibly hopes to join somewhere in a vast country that has swallowed the child in the machinery of its border. So has the machinery of the border swallowed the author and the text itself: on page 62, for example, Luiselli translates the child's responses in sometimes first person, sometimes third, the child, the author, and the reader lost in a hopeless struggle of a narrative that is at the same time deeply personal and mercilessly institutional.

The title does not ask how the story ends; it asks how "it" ends, and this pronoun without antecedent foregrounds the slippage between narrative locations in this text. As we proceed in a critical environment where we recognize that racism is a practice without an empirical science to ground it, we recognize that narratives have even more devastating force than we imagined. Narratives have deadly consequences, though they may lack clear antecedents. As the children are trapped in the narrative forced into the bureaucratic form, so too is Luiselli, and so too are we as the reader, though the narrative bureaucracies that trap us differ. Tell me how it ends is the question we ask on behalf of the children; but it is also the question we ask on behalf of ourselves.

Nasrullah Munshi. *Kalila and Dinna*, trans. from the Persian by Wheeler Thackston. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2019. 187 pp.

ALBRECHT CLASSEN
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Recent scholarship has begun to explore more specific lines of contact between India, the Middle East, and Europe during the late Middle Ages. One most impressive example of global literature already at that time was Nasrullah Munshi's *Kalila and Dinna*, which made its way to medieval Europe and was available in numerous different translations. It was based on the Indian *Pañcatantra*. This collection of animal stories in the ancient fable tradition served exceedingly well as a kind of "mirror for princes," and the didactic approach was obviously highly welcomed by, and useful to, aristocratic circles in many different cultures. Despite many adaptations and modifications, in essence, *Kalila and Dinna* exerted a deep influence on many East and West cultures and can certainly be regarded as a prime example of global literature.

There could be many ways of making this enormously influential collection of fables better known to modern audiences, such as translating it into a modern language, and here into English. Wheeler Thackston draws from the Persian translation created by Abu'l-Ma'ali Nasrullah around 1120, although that one was subsequently replaced several times by newer and more expansive Persian versions, such as the one by Husayn Va'iz Kahifi (late fifteenth century) and by Abu'l-Fazl (again ca. 100 years later). On the basis of either the Arabic or the Persian version, medieval European poets such as Rabbi Joel, Giovanni da Capua (John of Capua), Agnolo Firenzuola, Anton Francesco Doni, and Anthonius von Pforr created their own rendition, and those in turn became the sources for a variety of early modern translations into a range of other languages.

The original collection often was also called *Bidpai Fables*, but in Nasrullah's version, we only hear of the Brahman and Raja of India who debate with each other about ethical conflicts and issues. Comparing the many different translations, it proves to be rather complicated and highly confusing to distinguish the 'original' from subsequent renditions. Thackston translates in essence Nasrullah's version, published by Muḡtabā Mīnuvī-Ṭīhrānī in 1983 (in a previous

footnote [6], listed as published in 1964), but he also draws from the Arabic version edited by Louis Cheikho (1905, rpt. 1981), whereas he deletes many quotations of Arabic poetry included by Nasrullah. The issue of authenticity of the available text thus remains rather murky, so it proves to be helpful that Thackston begins with a concordance of the tales as they appear in the ancient Sanscrit (*Pañcatantra*), in Syriac, Arabic, medieval Persian (Nasrullah) and late medieval Persian (Kashifi).

In short, there is a lot of confusion, and the present English translation does not necessarily clarify this complicated situation. The translator offers first Nasrullah's preface, then the preface by Ibn al-Muqaffa and the one by Buzurjmihir Bokhtagan, who is introduced only in a footnote as advisor to the Persian kings Kavadh I (d. 531) and Chosroēs I Anoshirvan (d. 579). This can only be the physician named Burzoē whom Thackston mentions at the beginning of this book as the author of the Middle Persian translation, but how can it be that here we face his preface, whereas Thackston claims that Burzoē's work has been completely lost (ix)? This is then followed by the latter's testament, but we do not learn anything about the critical edition. Thereupon follows the body of the text, but there are no explanatory notes, no references to relevant scholarship, and we are missing a bibliography or an index.

It would have been extremely important if Thackston had made transparent his translation method, that is, whether he rendered the Middle Persian text literally, or more freely. In fact, the translator took quite a bit of liberty in dealing with his source text, eliminating passages that are "insolubly problematic." He follows here the model of Kashifi who had already deleted them, which leads Thackston to the conclusion that "these places in the text were already corrupt in his time" (xvi). The general reader might welcome this 'cleaning up' of the text, but the translator has thereby done a grave disservice to scholarship.

Granted, the textual situation is highly complicated and rather difficult, but simplifying the condition by deletion does not solve anything. Moving from this medieval Persian version to the German translation by Anthonius von Pforr, for instance (ed. Wilhelm Ludwig Holland, 1860), we quickly realize the vast differences, but the global framework, the ethical ideals, and the technical structure are still the same. This English version of *Kalil and Dinna* this allows us to pursue

more global perspectives already in pre-modern literature.

Despite a number of rather questionable decisions by the translator concerning the text selection and the treatment of scholarship, we still can be thankful for having this highly influential Persian fable collection available in a modern English translation. This makes it now possible to pursue global literary studies further, establishing meaningful bridges between India, Persia, the Arabic world, and medieval Europe.

Gustavo Pérez Firmat. *Viejo Verde*. Charlotte, NC: Main Street Rag, 2019. 89p.

JOY LANDEIRA
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Some poets whisper sweet nothings, and then there is Gustavo Pérez Firmat in the guise of a Dirty Old Man (D.O.M), a *Viejo verde*—“green old man” to translate the Spanish expression literally—who whispers slightly off-color and sour somethings. The dirty is a little bit bawdy and body, with cracks and wisecracks, wrinkles and tinkles and an eye that twinkles. *Choteo* is the Cuban word for it, a concept that GPF has developed in previous poetic and essayistic work. The poignant “somethings,” often internally rhymed, but unrhymed at verse end, tear at the heartstrings and cause tears of laughter and of sadness to spring and fall. Followers of Pérez Firmat will recognize about half of his Dirty Old Man collection from previous appearances as individual poems in literary journals. Thoughtfully, he has combined the earlier *poemas sueltos* along with new ones, as a present, he claims, to himself on his seventieth birthday. It’s not the color, but the off-color that makes a green old man fresh and fertile. That’s a good way to think of these poems, dirty old man jokes that reveal a lot about their author, both the humorous and the serious way of gliding along the edge of taste and gilding every observation with old-manly wisdom, self-evaluation and revelation.

Pérez-Firmat dedicates the volume to Mrs. D.O.M., his wife Mary Ann Pérez. She gets the credit for the author’s back-cover photo and for everything from dying his hair in 15 minutes to putting up with his rants that should be directed at his ex-wife “(the only / error she will ever admit to is having married him)” (11), to keenly evaluating his

dreams, “My dear, dear Dirty Old Man, you never change. / Familiar things in unfamiliar places always scare you” (33). She is only solid personal relationship he clings to, the “blind spot” on his glaucoma eye chart (70).

The D.O.M. reminisces in a conversational interior monologue that combines third-person talking to—and about—himself, babbling and sharing confidences. He discloses details of his New Year’s Eve breakup with his first wife and breakaways from other family members—the scotch-drinking Cuban father whose aquamarine and diamond ring he now owns, that does not make a difference (“He slips it onto his finger. It changes nothing”); his parents (“Are you close to your parents. Yes, they are both dead.”), siblings, who he disregards, and his “bequeathed by marriage” granddaughters, who tease him by grabbing a cigar from his hand. Barely acknowledged, the D.O.M.’s family members seem to have slipped out of his life. So has his desire to return to Cuba, “so sure that he will not return/ that only the odd chance of waking up one morning in the country his father lived for rattles him” (18). His memories, literally, go up in smoke, as he asks a woman at carwash to blow second-hand smoke in his face because it makes him think of his parents (68).

Certain prose snapshots depict him as aging--propping a heating pad against back of chair (53), listening to Lawrence Welk reruns (83), and musing out the window at birds and squirrels (53). Yet, the D.O.M. still takes pleasure in: his “dropping a pencil trick” to look up blonde’s skirt on train; or having a dermatologist write her phone number on the back of his prescription (58); or remembering and regretting Other women (62-64); or planning a medically enhanced “date night” with his wife (“No prostate. . . No problem”) (61), and admits, “What you lack in virility you make up in affection” (39). The biographical in-beddedness and embeddedness of GFP’s forays give us insight into this poet as D.O.M., but also as a caring old professor. He learns his students names, discusses Borges poetry with them (45), and “He never found a reason to treat students the way he treats himself.” Wistfully, he says farewell to the classes at the end of every semester, even as he hides out in his “hidden 4th floor bird nest of an office” with the “door locked to bar his colleagues.” “Imagine a lone wolf/ who dislikes sheep so much/ that he will not even eat them: D.O.M. at a faculty meeting” (41).

His bird’s nest office reflects an ongoing affinity with birds

that is one of the unifying images of reverie and calm. His “backyard birdland” with its bird feeder and birds that “migrated from his other country” often inspires poetic flights of fancy. In contemplating migratory birds, he connects with them: the squawking grackle that reminds him of his youth, the preening cardinal of his middle age, and now “he’d be a finch/ among finches, though he knows he is one nuthatch away/ from turning into a titmouse” (23). No longer wishing for *Next Year in Cuba*, the title of his own immigration story and of the words of the annual New Year’s toast for exiled Cubans, Gustavo Pérez Firmat, in *Viejo verde*, has nested with Mary Anne, his goldfinch (36), in the US, and, just like Laurence Welk, this *maestro* keeps on singing his song.

Philip Pullman. *The Book of Dust. Volume one: La Belle Sauvage*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017. 449p.

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La Belle Sauvage, the first volume of *The Book of Dust*, reminds us how exceptionally important young adult literature has become in regard to grown-up speculative topics, not least of which would be the nature of consciousness itself. Pullman, often accused of being anti-Christian, is probably better understood as the anti-Lewis, mining similar territory as *The Narnia Chronicles* if only to offer his own brilliant take on Lewis’s motifs, especially the possibility of plural universes (recall the “wood between the worlds” in *The Magician’s Nephew*). Pullman’s universe also ingeniously employs Enochian angels. HBO has announced the first season of its own adaptation of Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*, the trilogy most notable for its first volume, *The Golden Compass* (originally titled *Northern Lights*). It became a 2007 movie starring Nicole Kidman as Mrs. Coulter, the villainous mother of the young protagonist, Lyra Belacqua (also known as Lyra Silvertongue) for her consummate skill with storytelling and lying.

In this first volume of *The Book of Dust*, a prequel to *His Dark Materials*, eleven-year old Malcom Polstead is the infant Lyra’s most faithful guardian. He uses *La Belle Sauvage*, his beloved canoe, to rescue her from the clutches of the Magisterium’s violent, repressive, and murderous investigative agency (known by the initials CCD), and to

navigate the river Thames when it abruptly overflows, creating a flood almost as devastating to Oxford and its immediate environs as the Great Flood in Genesis, but which has the effect of re-inaugurating island outposts of mythic portents familiar to everyone from fairy folklore. Pullman hardly needs to fall back on borrowed, ready-made characters and motifs, which was Lewis's predilection. The anti-Lewis then might have been his fellow inkling J. R. R. Tolkien. In *Prince Caspian*, for instance, Lewis gives us the reawakening of a mythic world as led by the boy-god Bacchus, who is very much the same character we find in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The pains-taking Tolkien never ceased to be chagrined by Lewis's penchant for ready-mades and thought he was giving us a Bacchus-figure in his own character Tom Bombadil, who was sadly left out of Peter Jackson's movies. Pullman's Malcom is equally original, a Promethean temperament with a talent for mechanics and working with his hands, taking pleasure in how things work, and pondering such quotidian mysteries as how to fix broken window panes or how to improve security for window shutters by using special "non un-screwable screws" (106).

The point of departure for *The Book of Dust* might be Lewis's *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, which is also a voyage from island to island, but, ironically, Malcom's mechanical gifts give him the edge in each island's allegorical world. In one case, it requires out-thinking a fairy godmother who scorns literal-minded children (like Malcom in her view) and who abruptly breastfeeds Lyra and claims the infant as her own. Malcom outwits the fairy woman. He quickly masters systems of any kind and in the cove of a different island persuades a swamp-bound giant to open a water gate back to the flooding Thames. Pullman's only narrative peer might be Danielle Trussoni in the Enochian novel *Angelology*, but even then, many people might give the palm to the consummate phrasing and diction of Pullman, only hesitating when comparing him to the beloved Rowling. Yet Rowling is much closer to the economical narrative of Lewis than the rich, panoramic vistas of Pullman's description.

However, Philip Pullman is more than a foil to Lewis, more than a fabulist on par with Tolkien, and more than a rival with Potter's Rowling for the laurels of most important still-living author of young adult literature. Just to cite one example, in *La Belle Sauvage*, Pullman anticipates where events have taken us in our own country as well as the UK. He describes a political shift in the government of Lyra's

world that emboldens religious authorities, especially the Magisterium and the Consistorial Court of Discipline (CCD), and forces secularly inclined agencies in the government to operate under the radar, a clear and obvious “deep state” scenario. Meanwhile, the CCD sends representatives to Malcom’s school to induct young people into the League of St. Alexander, which encourages children to tell on and report their parents, teachers, principals, and other adults. What ensues is a kind of insurrection of children, effectively illustrating how this totalitarian technique uses the ignorance and enthusiasm of young people to aid and abet the closing of their own minds. The principles of this insurrection underlie a much more violent (but dynamically similar) scenario in Cixin Liu’s *The Three-Body Problem*, which revisits China’s Cultural Revolution when college students were encouraged by the Communist party to turn on their professors and lead a purge of academic institutions. World to world, certain principles seem constant. Pullman prefaces *La Belle Sauvage* with a telling epigraph from “Snow,” a poem by Louis MacNiece: “World is crazier and more of it than we think, / incorrigibly plural...” Pullman is the most important author writing today in young adult literature, using this genre to engage and troubleshoot perennial problems of religion, government, cosmology, ontology, and metaphysics across multiple worlds.

Mara E. Reisman. *Fay Weldon, Feminism, and British Culture*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018. 171p.

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The enigma of the influential and successful author Fay Weldon (1931) is that no reader should be certain whether the Birmingham-born writer’s overall aim is to wholly define and refine womanhood or to re-imagine what womanhood is supposed to be. I mean, even one of Weldon’s books is titled “What Makes Women Happy” (2006). So what critic, literary or otherwise, would ever dare to discount and dismiss this best-loved writer’s successful pursuit of both paths?

Assuredly, Weldon has spent the past half-century explaining, defending, excusing, chastising, re-creating, moralizing, illustrating, ruminating, and entertaining about the female condition through more than sixty novels, novellas, short stories, dramas, chapbooks, and

essays. It is true that her fiction is a lot like that by Gloria Naylor, Caryl Churchill, and Julia Alvarez, but Weldon also stands apart from each of these novelists who also write about women, as much as they stand apart from her. Fay Weldon has her own words and wisdom, and she applies them with wit and experience to comment about the present state of the individual, intimacy, and literature.

Simply put, if anyone wants to learn about what makes women happy and whether sexual relationships are everything that they are popularly cracked up to be, then read, enjoy, and fall in love with Fay Weldon's writings. For womanhood is most acutely what it is and always has been – acknowledged by one of Weldon's fictional characters – a “symbol of success” and a “symptom” of it (*Down Among the Women*, 1971).

Hence, while Weldon seldom, if ever, disappoints her readers, she almost inevitably provokes and inspires them about the inventions, limits, and possibilities of women and how they--along with, and aside from, men in matters of gender, sexual politics, friendship, family, and modern life and literature—raise concerns about ethics, morality, and personal and corporate responsibility, which all of us should think about, and then think again.

For as much as Weldon's writing entertains with satire, humor, and directness about the relationships between men and women, she also explores and analyzes issues of memory, feminism, diversity, and cultural history. Even the topics of food and chocolate are put under the spyglass and given the taste test. As a result, by focusing on a plethora of aspects about femininity and the man-woman thing—what Weldon labels “the truths”—this prolific author has faithfully piqued the public's interest for over fifty years while also interrupting the public's intellect about identity, British nationhood, and the unsentimental reality of our modern world.

Therefore, capturing the essence of almost six decades of Weldon's commentary about the female condition and social concerns requires a significant accounting and holistic review of the challenges and controversies that Fay Weldon's books and herself as an author offer. Fortunately, for fans and scholars of Weldon, Mara E. Reisman undertook this challenge.

Reisman is associate professor of British literature and women's literature at Northern Arizona University. Her 2018 comprehensive literary analysis and historical overview of Weldon and her work is, as the American academic and humorist Regina Barreca states on the

back cover, an “engaging” study to “be recognized by scholars and critics as a useful, erudite, and lively exposition of sex, class, humor, feminism, and the art of publishing over the last half-century.”

With the subtitle, “Challenging Cultural and Literary Conventions,” Reisman’s book reviews and examines Weldon’s works through seven chapters that concentrate on the on-going social and critical debates about women, sex, feminism, fiction, and nonfiction. Reisman does not address all of Weldon’s writings, but she admits this in her introduction and states that, “I have chosen representative works from each decade that speak to the multiple controversies and challenges to convention in which Weldon and her books played a key role” (xiii). Thus, Reisman has laid out the chapters chronologically, from Weldon’s earliest publications to the most recent. She uses the backdrop of literary and cultural changes that correspond with Weldon’s texts in order to dissect and interpret how these changes affected Weldon’s works and their reception.

By the time she arrives at her seventh and final chapter, “Challenging Narrative Truth,” Reisman assesses Weldon’s bold success at challenging social and cultural conventions in our twenty-first century, and she includes Weldon’s latest novel, at the time that Reisman composed her study, *Death of a She Devil* (2017). In this novel, Weldon delves into emotional and psychological dimensions of feminism and transgender issues. It is a work that has especially irritated and delighted Weldon’s readers and critics.

Reisman concludes with a worthy reflection about the culture in which Weldon has written and how cultural and literary landscapes have altered and been reshaped. A bibliography and index are also included. This is a scholarly assessment that identifies how Weldon has managed to weave between the revolutionary and the conventional in order for readers in Britain and around the world to access and accept her, even when the author, Weldon, tasks her readers with skepticism, deep thinking, ridicule, and desire.

Mara Reisman’s *Fay Weldon, Feminism, and British Culture* sets down a base for the critical heritage of Fay Weldon, and she provides a worthy example for future critics of how to write about an important author like Weldon whose works and their meaning is not easy. Yet Reisman capably collects and synthesizes Weldon’s life-long effort at breaking taboos, rethinking pleasure, and presenting serious truths.

Terence Scully. *The Neapolitan Recipe Collection: Cuoco Napoletano*. Ann Arbor: The U of Michigan P, 2015. 256p.

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While *The Neapolitan Recipe Collection's* target audience is food historians, particularly those of the late medieval period, this collection offers anyone interested in food many *amuse-bouche* about late medieval cookery and medieval society. This critical edition of an Italian manuscript (held in the Morgan Library) penned by an unknown cook of the late medieval period includes an astonishing array of scholarly apparatus including discussions of the manuscript, the textual questions, and the cookery of the period. Editor/translator Terence Scully demonstrates a wide range of scholarly skills: clearly, his passion is in the history of cuisine since his other works include *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages* and *Early French Cookery: Sources, History, Original Recipes and Modern Adaptations*.

As an avid but amateur cook and a dabbler in things foodie, I was drawn to this volume because so few works on cooking of another period and in another country provide English translations of the recipes. Thus, I could dip into *Cuoco Napoletano* for delightful tidbits about medieval lore while theoretically enabling myself to reproduce a medieval Italian dish. Like a well-planned meal, the book had a depth of complexity and certain surprises. I had believed that the chefs of this period were unlettered since the skill of writing was limited to the upper reaches of society and the clergy; however, this manuscript was written by a cook who could not only write and read but was cognizant of, and working from, other sources about cookery. In fact, as Scully tells us, knowledge of gastronomy is “most developed for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries throughout Europe” where collections of recipes exist in “all of the major European languages.” These collections, of course, were developed for the aristocracy and the upper bourgeoisie who had the capacity to employ both professional cooks and the battery of supporting workers. Scully also describes four traditions of recipe collections in Italian: this one owes most of its formulations to the work of Maestro Martino, the greatest chef and cookbook author, called by many both the first modern and the first celebrity chef. Martino’s *Liber*

de arte coquinaria is a standard of late medieval gastronomic literature. According to Scully, our unnamed author drew upon these recipes as well as on Catalan sources likely because of the influence in Naples of various portions of the Borgia family (whose origins were in Valencia) and secondarily because of the reign of Ferrante, the King of Naples and the son of Alfonso V of Aragon.

Like most of us, I do not have a very accurate historical sense in that I make assumptions about the past based on my experience of the present. This text disabused me of many. Vinegar is such a staple of the modern kitchen that any cook relies upon the quality of the product; however, vinegar was of variable quality in the early medieval period and the cook had to know how to judge it. Despite my assumptions, sugar rather than honey was the favored sweetener in the kitchens of the aristocracy. Snails were considered a dish for the well-to-do. Most chefs had to have a repertoire of dishes for the ill and sickly: the lack of a significant number in this manuscript is unusual and indicates the relative wealth of the cook's employers. While ravioli and macaroni were known in other parts of Europe at this time (even in England!), the eggplant was unknown beyond Italy and Spain. Our cook is aware of recipes that originate well beyond Naples: in addition to dishes originating in other parts of Italy ("Roman Macaroni," [which is differentiated from Sicilian macaroni] and "Florentine-Style Goat Kid in a Baking Dish"), he records "French-Style *Tremolette*," "Aragonese Sops," "Slavic Cooking Sauce" and "German-Style Scrambled Eggs." While one thinks of the spectrum of color as a constant, there are colors that were particular to this period (and used as important achievements of the kitchen) including "gaudy-green" and a sauce that was described as "genista (the plant known as broom)-yellow." And, of course, there is a special section of the manuscript devoted to the production of banquet dishes or "Wonders of Gourmandise." Who doesn't want to know how to create "Redressed Peacocks which Seem Living; and How to Make them Breathe Fire Through their Mouth"?

In all, a toothsome book that may be best summed up in the words of our anonymous chef, "Let the cook be judicious and never stop trying to learn."

K. Aaron Smith and Susan M. Kim. *This Language, A River: A History of English*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2018. 350p.

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The acknowledgements in *This Language, A River* remind us of the significance of this book. Susan Kim thanks previous collaborators, implying that this collaboration with Aaron Smith, her colleague at Illinois State, is of a special caliber—perhaps something more challenging than either Smith or Kim had previously attempted. Smith and Kim do have a chapter together on colonialism and linguistics in MLA's forthcoming *Teaching the History of the English Language*, but Smith seems to be the driver as evidenced by two articles, one in 2009 on “be fixing to” and another in 2011 on post-1600 standardization, followed in 2015 by a chapter on “Ain't-Periphrases” for *Ain'tbology: The History and Life of a Taboo Word*, titles referenced in *This Language, A River* in the chapter on dialect and Creole English. However, Smith makes it clear how much this book depended on the support of so many. Everyone in their English program seems to have thrown in to help the authors, as if all concerned realized how ambitious this book was and sensed intuitively how important it might turn out to be. They would be right.

If Smith and Kim had not written this book and Broadview not published it, the stones would cry out. What we need today at the undergraduate college level is a book that can span a classroom of both sophomore and upper level students (including non-majors and dual-listed graduate students), whose preparedness runs the gamut, including faulty or nonexistent knowledge of grammar. However, the book's grammar overview must be more than just brush-up and catch-up. This overview must provide a meaningful scaffold of concepts and terms that would help elucidate historical shifts in pronunciation and morphology among Indo-European and Germanic languages, Old, Middle, and Modern English, and dialects of English spoken around the world. This book must also instill the International Phonetic Alphabet. Such would be its conceit: that it could stand on the shoulders of Baugh and Cable and a host of other scholars, distill the most important elements of the history of English, and present them in a way that was feasible without being condescending—such is the achievement of *This Language, A River*.

Smith and Kim do not spend enormous time on each topic. They offer their best explanation of an idea and then return and pick up the thread as often as necessary to deliver the whole model or arc of development. The book builds through overlapping topics, connecting ideas of subordination, for instance, to Old English syntax, which falls short of real subordination the way we thought about it earlier in the book, but excels at parataxis, hypotaxis, and the appositive style. By the time the reader arrives at the shift between Old and Middle English, we have a working knowledge of principles and origins that allows us to appreciate and understand what is happening to the language. The phrasing of Smith and Kim is clear, purposeful, and thrives on a kind of recurring metaphor: the slow dismantling of a case-oriented English as a kind of dying. The process of decay is by analogy as nouns and adjectives seem to watch each other and imitate the loss of inflected endings as if under peer pressure. Weak nouns fall in line with strong nouns, and parts of speech follow each other's example except for the possessive: "the pressure was high for the dative plural to move in line with the nominative and accusative plurals; in other words, the dative collapsed in the plural (as it had in the singular) with the rest of the noun forms—except the genitive, which has its own story to tell" (190). Concerning pronouns, the diction is equally climatic: "One change that does occur, however, is the collapse or conflation of the accusative and dative cases into a single case that we call simply the objective case" (195).

What some will appreciate most about Smith and Kim are their exercises with answers in the back of the book, which makes doing at least some of them almost irresistible. The exercises build multiple skills, including the use of IPA symbols and of the relevant literature, including one battery of questions that connects all its salient points to Chaucer's famous prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*. Indeed, throughout the chapters on Old, Middle, and early Modern English, *This Language, A River*, we encounter the great literature of the given era as when the authors utilize a certain Old English riddle that, like other such riddles, describes itself in the first person, making you guess its identity. As we conquer the riddle word-by-word, phrase-by-phrase not yet guessing the speaker's identity, the humor unfolds with clever use of red herrings, such as when the speaker says he feels something like a bird pooping on his skin: "[...] the joy of a bird / sprinkled me with lucky droppings" (163). These "lucky droppings" turn out to be words in ink on a page. The speaker is a book and not just any book—he is the Bible.

Warren Treadgold. *The University We Need: Reforming American Higher Education*. New York: Encounter Books, 2018. 184p.

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As the reader knows, American higher education faces a myriad of crises. For example, a tenure-track post is almost an anachronism, and if there is such an opening, the search committee is overwhelmed with a heap of applications due to the surfeit of new PhDs. In addition, faculty has taken a back seat to administration, which runs academia. The problems are undeniable and all of us have opinions on them. *The University We Need* is useful because Warren Treadgold goes beyond opinions—though he does have his share—and offers specific proposals for reform. Regardless of whether one ultimately agrees with the author's solutions, his ideas are worthy of being considered for the sake of students and professors alike.

Treadgold, who teaches Byzantine History at Saint Louis University, makes many valid points regarding the current state of academia, namely the rampant ineptitude of administration at most colleges and universities. The author elucidates how the bloated, irresponsible budgets of administrators have come at the expense of instructors (part-time and full-time), students, and most importantly, learning. Similar to Benjamin Ginsberg's acclaimed *The Fall of the Faculty* (2011), Treadgold ably demonstrates how in the past twenty years or so there has been an enormous transfer of power from the faculty to the administration, and it is only getting worse. He reminds the reader how convenient it has been for academic administrators simply to replace former tenure-track positions with adjuncts, limited-term lecturers, and online instructors. Moreover, Treadgold claims that the abolition of tenure—a desire of many in the administrative state—would only embolden administrative profligacy, and would impinge on the academic freedom of all, especially conservative and moderate professors.

So how does Treadgold propose to mitigate an overabundance of doctorates, administrative extravagance, and the lack of ideological diversity on campus? His solutions are bold and perhaps quixotic, but original nonetheless. To address the problem of thousands of mediocre doctorates hurriedly granted each year, he proposes using federal legislation to create a “National Dissertation Review Board.”

The board would be managed by specialized referees (mostly retired professors from the respective fields) who would assign a rating for each dissertation. The author argues that such a standardized assessment tool would ensure quality dissertations, and would also level the playing field for those students who attend less selective institutions. Quite convincingly, Treadgold states: “If the United States government can inspect and grade food and drugs and examine the competence of elementary and secondary teachers and students, why should it not examine and evaluate doctoral dissertations and academic publications?” (110). As many of us in academia deal with the increasing role of assessment in our academic instruction, such a proposal should not be immediately disregarded, and could end up protecting doctoral students, academic departments, and search committees. However, at the same time, some would cringe at the idea of the federal government being the ultimate adjudicator of academic merit. (Similarly, he also proposes the establishment of a “National Academic Honesty Board” to find plagiarism in academic work.)

In addition, Treadgold recommends a percentage cap on administrative costs in order for a university to maintain its tax-exempt status as a nonprofit institution. While the author does not offer an exact percentage, he suggests administrative costs not exceeding 20 percent of the total university budget. Although the statistics used are a bit outdated (2007), they are still instructive: he shows how Wake Forest spent 53.7 percent of their budget on administration, with Stanford at 17.5 percent, and the University of Michigan at 8.4 percent. Such disparate figures give credence to the author’s insistence on capping administrative costs, as it seems some institutions have spent with impunity, while others have been more prudent with their budgets.

Finally, given that Treadgold contends there is hostility towards conservative professors and students, he advocates the creation of a new “leading” university, commenced by a private donation of \$1 billion. After such an initial contribution, the author argues that many wealthy Americans would follow suit, in order for there to be an elite institution where academic freedom is truly practiced. He goes out of his way not to label such a university “conservative,” rather one that welcomes a plurality of viewpoints. While such an idea most likely would never work, its ambition is entertaining.

Although Treadgold should be lauded for offering specific ideas

in order to solve real problems, *The University We Need* is not without its own shortcomings. Occasionally, the author's assertions sound like talk radio rants instead of measured critiques. Moreover, his criticism of "Campus Leftism" would be more plausible if he specifically limited it to the Humanities and Social Sciences. While it is true there are hardly any conservatives in these fields, I doubt this is the same for other disciplines such as Business, Computer Science, Engineering, etc. Had Treadgold curbed his political worldview somewhat, I believe his work could have resonated with a broader readership.

Nevertheless, *The University We Need* should be given credit for offering specific solutions, rather than merely listing complaints. The author's work is valuable for all professors, but particularly for junior faculty members and doctoral candidates. Treadgold's thoughtful reflection on his experiences in academia, coupled with the trends he sees for the future, would greatly benefit those who plan to be in a profession that finds itself in a precarious state.