REVIEWS

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

Véronique Anover and Rémi Fournier Lansoni. ***On tourne! French Language and Culture through Film.*** Georgetown UP, 2020. 194p.

Alexandria J. Ekler
University of Wyoming

The textbook *On tourne!* aims to expand upon the foundation of students' French knowledge through film. In each chapter, different handpicked movies focus on various aspects of French culture: food, immigration, love, family, crime, friendship, fashion, terrorism, history, village life, the French-speaking world, music, and national education. The authors state that it was created with *ACTFL World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (2015) in mind for students with intermediate abilities. This review discusses whether it has indeed achieved this goal. ACTFL considers five components to be critical in language acquisition: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities.

The most basic of acquisition requirements is the ability to use the target language effectively in "a variety of situations and for multiple purposes." Since each chapter—and therefore each film—has a different focus, students will surely be exposed to distinct vocabulary and grammatical structures. Vocabulary sections (with definitions) offer slang and idiomatic expressions and activities to react with the vocabulary. Towards the end of each chapter, there are grammar review activities. For example, chapter 2 reviews present tense, passé composé, and imparfait verbs (28-30) and chapter 8 treats prepositions *à* and *de,* as well as comparisons (115-16). Some of the grammatical activities are simple—in chapter 5 students fill in the blank with the appropriate pronoun (71); others may be more complex and require more in-depth thought—in exercise 14 in chapter 7 students explain why either passé composé or imparfait were chosen in the film script (98). The majority of the most complicated French grammatical structures are covered, such as the subjunctive vs. indicative and the passé composé vs. imparfait.

By centering chapters on different cultural modules, the authors

attempted to incorporate culture in the curriculum, at the very least, on the surface. Activities invite students to reflect and think critically about the film's cultural aspects and their significance. In each chapter's "On réagit" exercise, learners read quotations from the featured film and decide why they are important, humorous, ironic, tragic, or in what way they carry a double meaning. "A vous de tourner" requires students to find the reality within the movie, while drawing attention to its cultural aspects. To further the impact, students would need to reflect on the cultural differences seen in the films.

ACTFL's idea of connections is softly carried throughout the text. The very fact that the cultural information is accessed through watching foreign film could be classified as a connection by ACTFL's standards. Students are expected to learn more (both culturally and otherwise) about each featured theme. Furthermore, activities labeled "On analyse" invite students to analyze critically specific film scenes and to ponder multiple meanings.

On tourne! emphasizes the most difficult topics for French learners who natively speak English, opening the door to linguistic and cultural comparisons. Many chapters include activities where students need to consider the meaning of idiomatic expressions, which can be useful for those who do not realize that idiomatic expressions commonly vary depending on the language. Chapter 6 explains French slang, drawing comparisons between different cultures (85). While many activities do not explicitly require comparisons, they will naturally occur through watching the films, analyzing scenes, and discussion.

The idea of community is largely incorporated. Some movies explore distinct cultures present in France, recognizing the influence that other nations and colonization have had, even going so far as to have an activity centered around Arabic phrases that may be heard in France (117). Despite not asking students to interact with people from other countries, the lessons do prepare them for it by teaching grammar, vocabulary, and even asking them to access websites in French.

Great thought has gone into the creation of this textbook, incorporating reading, writing, listening, and conversation. The authors embrace the idea that many people learn best when the topic interests them. They achieve this by including several genres of movies made

between 2010 and 2016. *On tourne!* is a recommended tool for the French learning class, but it is just that: a tool. Grammatical explanations are not included and would likely need elaboration by the teacher, who should also guide class discussions to ensure comprehension of plot, cultural ties, and linguistic variation.

LaNitra M. Berger, editor. ***Social Justice and International Education. Research, Practice, and Perspectives.*** Washington, DC: NAFSA: The Association of International Educators 2020. 326p.

Daniel C. Villanueva
Cultural Vistas

To make study abroad and multicultural engagement more inclusive and transformative for more college students and the communities in which they study, what pedagogical and experiential aspects could be theorized as we enter the third decade of the new millennium? LaNitra Berger's edited volume suggesting reimagining current study abroad programs and pedagogy through a social justice lens is one of the most recent rewarding answers to this question. Indeed, it will be of interest not only to language and culture faculty in higher education, but also to our colleagues in university administration, particularly study abroad and fellowship advising offices.

Berger, an art historian by trade and Senior Director of the Office of Fellowships at George Mason University's Honors College, frequently researches multicultural international education. Here she has assembled a multidisciplinary group "to address the ways in which the field of international education uses social justice education, curriculum design, and community engagement practices to address inequality and systems of oppression in various forms around the world" (2). The 11-chapter volume is divided into three parts: Social Justice Research, Social Justice in Practice, and 12 brief vignettes from practitioners titled Reports from the Field. Berger centers the collective inquiry around these goals: To provide multiple frameworks for defining and thinking about social justice in international education and to theorize on what educators can do now to take more decisive actions, assess outcomes, and bring more voices together in constructive dialogue about social justice and how it

shapes internationalization on campuses (3-4).

Ambitious goals indeed, but the contributing authors capably demonstrate how creative approaches to their fulfillment are possible. Each theoretical approach and case study has fascinating methodological foundations while offering practical pedagogical implications and avenues for further research. Examples include: Shontay Delalue's interrogation of the dynamics of multiple identities in racialized experiences of African and Caribbean students in the USA (83-109); Malaika Marable Serrano's case study of social justice-centered programming of study abroad students in the Dominican Republic (155-72); and Becca AbuRakia-Einhorn's article outlining the myriad considerations at play in encouraging deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing students to study abroad while accommodating their distinctiveness (191-213). Bryce Loo provides useful cultural perspective and pedagogical approaches to suggest ways to make college more attractive and feasible for refugees seeking shelter in the United States (215-45). Finally, praxis vignettes, one in poem form, provide micro-examples of larger pedagogical approaches from universities and colleges that have been found to be effective in the nonprofit space.

A primary benefit is the multitude of voices, ethnicities, and perspectives of the contributors, all experienced scholar-practitioners from both public and private universities. Some are teaching and research faculty while others are administrators in various international and study abroad offices. As varied as the projects and viewpoints are, so too are the types of students and their stories. One searches in vain for traditional Eurocentric outlooks, which is all to the good. Another strength is the acknowledgement that no one approach to teaching and modeling social justice, celebrating difference, and effecting change is appropriate for every situation-—the term social justice itself is refreshingly understood to be contested and contextual. Further, although most foundational concepts and assumptions are commonly seen in the U.S. academic context, many contributors take pains to name the fact that the best international social justice pedagogy should not primarily address current U.S. student populations or U.S. administrative priorities in diversity, inclusion, and social justice. Finally, each chapter contains a useful bibliography that encourages further intellectual engagement with the material. (A marginal quibble

might be that there is no comprehensive index at the end of the book.)

These admitted strengths of Berger's volume must be juxtaposed with one major point of concern from the viewpoint of language and culture education. Nearly all essays fail to mention the key role of (foreign) language in transmitting and reflecting culture and contributing to global understanding of issues at stake in domestic and foreign social justice pedagogy both—for visitors to foreign lands and the visited themselves. In only two essays is world language proficiency by outbound U.S. students a central theme in discussions of pedagogy, student learning, and societal change. Tonija Hope Navas's contribution (173-89) considers foreign language proficiency and its effects on cultural transmission and social change in a serious manner, and AbuRakia's essay usefully mentions contending with various national variations of sign language and students' proficiency in it. To be fair, foreign language proficiency is mentioned as an aside in some essays, but mostly as a challenge to be overcome by foreign students in the USA, i.e. in the context of some foreign students not being able to access university student services fully and being subject to discrimination or lack of full inclusion. This is indeed a social justice issue and worthy of further inquiry, but on a different level than what is posited as the potential of U.S. students studying abroad–what the majority of the volume is designed to address.

Further, Aaron Clevenger's otherwise excellent essay on experiential learning in the social justice and academic research context in several countries around the globe (63-82) and Yecid Ortega's informative case study on students teaching English in a marginalized Colombian community (111-33) could both have benefited from intentional inclusion of a discussion of foreign language proficiency. The reviewer found himself asking often here and elsewhere, were the encounters described occurring in students' native language, the target language, or a hybrid? How might such an answer affect the validity of the effectiveness of the social justice context and larger pedagogical dimensions described? Certainly, most authors do not state whether their studies involved monolingual students or novice language learners. The absence of such information in many articles affects the power of many conclusions, even if the assumption of some may be that foreign language proficiency was a given and did not need to be stated.

Nonetheless, Berger's edited volume is an excellent introduction into possibilities for engagement in the social justice space in study abroad and international education and provides useful perspectives to educators and administrators on important issues to consider in their transformative work with a social justice lens. For those whose primary vocation links social justice and international education explicitly to acquisition of foreign language proficiency, the essays should be read attentively, but with an understanding of some methodological limitations.

Robert J. Blake and Gabriel Guillén. ***Brave New Digital Classroom: Technology and Foreign Language Learning.*** Georgetown UP, 2020. 231p.

Alexandria J. Ekler
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Professor of Spanish Linguistics, Robert J. Blake, and Assistant Professor of Spanish, Gabriel Guillén, collaborated to create a critical pedagogical handbook outlining the importance of technology use in the language classroom. The authors propose that employing a variety of resources—technological as well as traditional—offers the largest benefit. While some educators may fall on one side or the other of the digital debate, this more moderate approach suggests that too much—or too little—of one sort of teaching may not be in the best interest of students' development.

Teaching methods (especially in language) have changed drastically over the last 50 years and continue to evolve as more research is devoted to language acquisition. New online resources and technologies have revolutionized the learning process, making not only more interactive and communicative options available, but also activities that may better spark student interest. The first chapter cites technology as a primary component in language teaching development and clearly states that it is not the solution to all struggles in the classroom. General classroom practices and a thorough understanding of second language acquisition (also addressed throughout) should be in conjunction with lesson plans that incorporate technology to deliver the most beneficial learning environment. Leading up to the second chapter, the authors debunk certain misconceptions

about second language acquisition and the use of technology.

Considering the frequent mention of various scholarly articles and the explanation of principle pedagogical concepts, *Brave New Digital Classroom* would serve well in any language pedagogy course, especially one focusing on the use of technology. Each chapter offers powerful insight to aspiring educators by beginning with a concept of human nature and relating it to language learning. For further study, a list of citations and discussion questions encourages research and critical thinking on the topics. Various activities that may help learners include task-based language teaching (TBLT) that focuses on real-world communication and comprehension (50). Examples of options for TBLT tasks and advice on how to prepare them are also illustrated (51-52). Additionally, the authors emphasize computer-assisted language learning, or CALL.

While CALL programs are great tools, there are now many of them and they are not all created equal. Some appear to be beneficial for learning several topics, but are really only helpful in one arena. For example, the book cites Duolingo as a good option for expanding vocabulary, but, even though verb conjugations are included in the learning interface (112), they are not as effective. A table evaluates the pros and cons of each application (39). There are still many fallacies with technology, because, after all, technology will never bring to the table all of the options and assessments that humans do.

Nonetheless, these programs still have value and this volume will help readers navigate them. For many years, researchers have attempted to produce a technology advanced enough to aid students with their conversation skills. Created for this purpose, ICALL is unable to emulate natural, human conversation. Despite that, teachers can still use student input for evaluation (125). Chapter 5 discusses the importance and usefulness of games in the classroom, but also mentions that there are still very few game options for language learning, despite the benefits and booming gaming industry (133-35). However, students may use online games produced for social entertainment to practice at home by changing the language settings and communicating with people from other countries.

Brave New Digital Classroom does a good job of stating the facts and leaving readers to arrive at their own conclusions about what is appropriate for the circumstance. It is clearly stated that too much or

too little of anything can have a negative impact on learning, but the authors do not outline exactly how many technological resources should be used. The bottom line is this: each student and class is different; therefore, there is no exact formula for how to create the perfect learning experience, but teaching methods should vary so that each student receives a mixture of different sorts of assignments and activities. By the end, readers should have an understanding of the development of these technological programs, the impact they have had on acquisition based on studies, and which programs are useful and why.

J. J. Butts. ***Dark Mirror: African Americans and the Federal Writers' Project***. Ohio State UP, 2021. 185p.

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Franklin Delano Roosevelt's (FDR) presidential tenure remains a topic of ubiquitous scrutiny due to the seismic economic, political, and social shifts that overhauled the tapestry of America. No legislative or programmatic endeavor was more controversial than his New Deal program. The cleavage that persists between New Deal supporters and detractors provides multiple veins of discussion that center on several noteworthy events. For example, Jim Crow, the Great Depression, and World War II permanently transformed the fabric of America. Each of these crossroads in American history reveals the ongoing turmoil and exacting moods of uncertainty that permeated the country.

Dark Mirror provides a meticulous analysis of an esoteric portion of FDR's New Deal, the Federal Writers' Project. According to author J. J. Butts, "*Dark Mirror* explores one of the momentous shifts in the structure of American liberalism through literary artifacts of the New Deal area written by African Americans." It offers a scathing critique of the vestiges of Jim Crow, including what Rayford Logan coined as "the nadir of the American Lynching movement" and effortlessly weaves the Negro Question—what should be done with the presence of the troublesome Negro for maximum exploitation?—into assessments of Negro writer's roles in creating the Federal Writers' Project (FWP). Butts frames his inquiry and the Negro Question by utilizing iconic Negro writers, such as Zora Neal Hurston, Ralph Ellison, and Richard

Wright, to concretize the importance of the FWP's sovereignty regarding the documentation of Negro life. At its core, the FWP deconstructs how the future of the Negro is fastened to America's fascination with liberalism, modernization, and pluralism.

The author asserts that the FWP began as a symbolic national project that romanticized the future of America through the lens of patriotic propaganda backed by a governmental authority. It transformed descriptive rhetoric into a prophecy of inclusion, with the proclivity to transcend class, geographic boundaries, and race. Butts points to the fervor that surrounded the FWP as a phenomenon to amend the problems closely associated with America's color line. His profound investigation unmasks bitter friction between remnants of Jim Crow and civic pluralism via black vernacular culture. Richard Wright contended that because of the governmental authority over the FWP, a significant portion of whites based their so-called rational thinking not on a manifestation of freedom but of continued subjugation of black culture and life.

The volume focuses on the hypocrisy of FDR's New Deal by reminding readers that a critical mass of the opinions of the FWP lessened racial conflicts between whites and blacks by removing the racial battles for space while promoting urban planning and modernization to secure a national community of equity and inclusivity. New Deal housing programs married slum reform legislature and modern architecture to seemingly remove substandard housing, mainly for African Americans, while creating a compact community and advocating for future housing projects. Butts uses a series of contradictions to highlight the deceptive practices that belie the FWP's dedication to strengthen the operationalization of America's status quo of white supremacy. His exegesis identifies the origin of the term "the deserving poor" to solicit empathy for the condition of blacks in housing, but more importantly, Butts criticizes the FWP's choice not to delve into the race-driven policies that placed many blacks at the lowest rung of housing. At the same time, he explains how whites found a continuous rise in housing options that does not appear in the FWP's narrative.

Butts' rhetorical stamp forces readers to examine the undergirding racist pathology of FDR's administration as far more than a minor portion of a larger equation of racism but as the esoteric and fundamental cornerstone of American liberalism. As a sign of rebellion, a small

group of FWP writers used the FWP's resources to thoroughly examine the FWP's sanctimonious temperament and how it intentionally sanitized the intersections between modernization, pluralism, and America's racist social atmosphere. The savvy of this group of writers can be calculated by how they applied FWP resources for personal gain. For example, Richard Wright used the FWP platform to create his quintessential novel, *Invisible Man*. Butts methodically dissects the layered nuances of how black authors faced racist systemic tropes that marginalized their creative genius to provide meaningful criticisms of the duplicitous nature of the FWP while remaining compliant with the baseline of expectations demanded by FDR and the FWP.

The author's lens of investigation offers multiple avenues of inquiry mandated for clarity and depth concerning the legacy of FDR, the New Deal, and the FWP. His work extends the dominant discourse found in the traditional introductory, intermediate, upper-level specialty, and graduate courses in history, political science, and topics related to social justice. I plan to use chapters from this book in my "Black Freedom Movement 1955-Present" course to dismantle the misnomers of black writers' limited impact on American literature after the New Negro movement. As well, I will use it to introduce the fluidity and relevance of the Negro Question then and now to undergraduate students. In sum, *Dark Mirror: African Americans and The Federal Writers' Project* is a necessary option for reframing contemporary arguments surrounding FDR's presidency and the complexities tied to American liberalism, modernization, and racism.

Graley Herren. ***Dreams and Dialogues in Dylan´s* Time Out of Mind**. London: Anthem Press, 2021. 175p.

Alfonso Livianos-Domínguez
Independent scholar

Desde que Bob Dylan recibiera en el año 2016 el premio Nobel de literatura, los estudios estrictamente literarios de su obra discográfica resultan tan necesarios como legítimos. El libro que el profesor Herren ha escrito sobre *Time Out of Mind* (1997) constituye una gran aportación a la bibliografía existente y presenta sólidos argumentos para justificar la concesión de tan meritorio galardón al trovador de Minnesota. La elección de este álbum como objeto de estudio obedece tanto a su

valor artístico, muy representativo del mejor Dylan, como al hecho de constituir para Herren el renacimiento del autor. También supone un intento de restituir *TOOM* al lugar preeminente al que pertenece, y que Dylan, por sus batallas con el productor Lanois, intentó injustamente degradar ensalzando *Love and Theft*, su trabajo posterior.

Herren utiliza la metodología de la biografía textual para rastrear y comprender el proceso creativo del artista y la materialización del disco en su forma definitiva, incluyendo, con gran acierto, las cuatro composiciones descartadas que analiza con brillantez. Aspira a explicar y contextualizar todas estas canciones que percibe como sueños, y que al igual que éstos, muestran una resistencia extraordinaria a reduccionismos y a análisis exhaustivos. Por ello, Herren no siempre necesita explicar su lectura, a veces le resulta suficiente con sugerirla. Como el título del libro indica, estos sueños-canciones están en permanente diálogo con un gran caudal de citas y textos, constituyendo la intertextualidad y autorreferencia pilares fundamentales del arte de Dylan. En el caso de *TOOM*, este diálogo se extiende a todas las canciones del álbum, que Herren, siguiendo a Paul Williams, percibe como un solo tema. La mente del sujeto poético se convierte en la materia y en el escenario del álbum, y todo cuanto acontece está relacionado con él y con su eterno deambular por ese espacio sin tiempo al que alude el título del disco.

El autor destaca y analiza esta capacidad de Dylan para habitar los personajes y mundos descritos en sus canciones, así como la facilidad con la que puede acceder al cancionero americano, que reelabora y transforma creativamente en algo siempre nuevo. Las canciones de Dylan funcionan simultáneamente en varios niveles de significación y se insertan en diferentes tradiciones, que en el caso de *TOOM* serían las baladas de asesinatos, la alegoría religiosa, y la raza / esclavitud en Estados Unidos. Cada uno de estos niveles es tratado en un capítulo independiente y presenta un personaje que canta sus tribulaciones, bien como amante despechado sediento de venganza con su amada; bien como peregrino escindido entre los deseos mundanos y su anhelo espiritual; o bien como afroamericano en busca de la libertad y la justicia prometidas. En los tres casos, la búsqueda resulta infructuosa y no hay resolución definitiva, subvirtiendo Dylan a su manera cada una de las tradiciones en que van insertas estas canciones.

El estudio resulta acertadamente "dylaniano", reflejando a su manera la naturaleza del material que analiza. Al estar muy bien escrito

y funcionar en distintos niveles de significación, es un libro valioso y accesible para todo tipo de lectores. El análisis se mueve con libertad y fluidez entre la teoría y la práctica, y entre lo concreto y lo abstracto. Al tratarse de un libro bien documentado, la intertextualidad es permanente y el diálogo profundo, pues no sólo dialoga con *TOOM* y con el resto de la obra de Dylan, sino también con los múltiples textos con los que éste ha dialogado a su vez, así como con otros críticos de la obra del cantante. El estudio está sólidamente estructurado pero es flexible al mismo tiempo, lo que le permite al autor explorar también cuestiones tangenciales y no menos interesantes. Resulta particularmente acertada la forma de cerrar el libro, como si de una canción de Dylan se tratara, omitiendo las conclusiones de rigor, para aludir en cambio, a esos "good trouble" a los que John Lewis se refería en la marcha de Washington en 1963, y a los que Dylan nunca ha temido afrontar, pero desde su insobornable individualidad.

Sorprende que Herren no aprecie en "Highlands" el tema que cierra el trabajo, evolución alguna, porque es evidente y la letra de la canción lo respalda ("new eyes", "sun is beginnin´ to shine on me", "there´s a way to get there and I´ll figure it out"), que tras la tempestad padecida durante todo el disco, el personaje termina dirigiéndose más tranquilo hacia la calma simbólica de ese lugar interno. También creo que la soledad es el tema central de *TOOM*, y que si se olvidan las palabras, esta es la sensación fundamental que se percibe al escuchar el disco. Pienso que Herren en su estudio del número 3 como principio creador en Dylan, podía haberle sacado mucho partido al trío constituido por la primera canción, la última, y el título del álbum. Por último, discrepo de que *TOOM* constituya el inicio del renacimiento del músico, pues éste ya se había producido en 1989 con *Oh Mercy*, el primero de los dos discos producidos por Lanois, y al que Dylan presta mucha atención en el primer y único volumen de sus crónicas (2004). La comparación de la versión de "Born in Time" de 1991 con la producida por Lanois en 1989 y aparecida en el 2008, no deja lugar a dudas respecto a que el renacimiento de Dylan se produjo gracias a su milagrosa colaboración con Lanois, y que los problemas que tuvieron, como dijo antes Lewis en relación a la lucha por los derechos civiles, fueron "good trouble", pero como puntualizó el propio Herren, "necessary trouble". Parece que así terminó comprendiéndolo también el propio Dylan.

Anna S. Kudyma. ***Russian From Novice High to Intermediate.*** Routledge, 2022. 560p.

Maria Mikolchak
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Russian: From Novice High to Intermediate is a second and/or third year language textbook that, for the first time, recognizes the new reality of our technologically advanced students and modern life in general. Unlike textbooks from at least twenty years ago that were strictly texts and exercises, it is based on blogs, vlogs, chats, tweets, Facebook posts, What's Up messages, emails and advertisements, which clearly shows that the author tried to imitate what she thought is a typical mode of life for most students. In a way, there is so much of everything that it seems overburdened with social media. While new technology certainly is important in our everyday life and should be included in textbooks, unless they are updated every couple of years, they run a huge risk of becoming outdated within a short period. For example, the younger generation does not use Facebook anymore, preferring snapchat and Instagram. Trying to catch up and keep up with technology seems futile; therefore, adhering to more established activities and not necessarily trying to include all social media known today might be a safer course of action.

The seventeen chapters are structured around conversational topics such as family, romantic relationships, friends, studies, and holidays, to name a few. The Preface indicates that students consistently choose these themes as the most engaging and that they also comply with ACTFL standards for oral proficiency interviews. Each chapter encourages communication in the three modes: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational, allowing students to learn how to communicate effectively in realistic ways. While it's impossible to include all compelling topics in one textbook, what some students might find lacking is information that connects Russia to the rest of the world, for example: travel to and from Russia; the context of Russia's position in the world; and at least some references to the current political and cultural climate. Earlier textbooks used to have some references to the Soviet era, Cold War and Perestroika, which were hard to avoid twenty-to-thirty years ago. Now it seems that 2022 textbook could and should have included at least some reference to Russia and its current political climate. Even if it might not want to

risk any political engagement, in a realistic conversation with a Russian person, one could hardly avoid topics such as Putin and his 21 years in power, Ukraine, the Baltic countries, etc. For American students interested in Russia, these might be at least as thought provoking as studies, university, and food.

"Travel Together" addresses subjects that realistically could be discussed with Russians, but again, seems to be totally distanced from political reality. Travel to Ukraine might become a heated topic, considering that for a while, male Russian travelers were not allowed to visit the country, and there were reasons for that. Likewise, speaking Russian in Ukraine could be a welcome topic, including where (in what part of Ukraine), how a visitor from Russia would be received, and what speaking Russian implies in Ukraine. Indeed, since annexation of the Crimea in 2014, Ukraine as a travel destination has a very special position, but none of this is reflected in the textbook that, in a very antiseptic way, discusses a tour to Kiev to explore the cuisine.

The cover seems to be in line with what seems to be the author's approach to dealing with Russia by presenting it as an intriguing country using clichéd images of 19th century Russia—winter, troika, shuba (fur coat), etc. At the same time, these images are totally out of line with the attempt to build the textbook around new social media and technology, which would benefit from images of the modern Moscow-city. On the other hand, one could argue that Russia is both a modern country in the internet space with Moscow-city high risers and the old Russia with horse carriages and piroggis. Without necessarily insisting that it should be either one or the other, I must point out that the textbook's appeal to modernity is missing the connection to modern political and cultural events in the country.

Finally, I emphasize that this seems to be the only updated intermediate level Russian textbook and that its readings, blogs, forums, commercials, recipes, weather forecasts and many other more traditional features such as biographies, poetry, etc., video blogs and much, much more will be an invaluable tool in the hands of a good professor.

Caroline McCracken-Flesher and Matthew Wickman, editors. ***Walter Scott at 250*: *Looking Forward***. Edinburgh UP, 2021, 227p.

Elisabeth Kinsey
Regis University

Walter Scott at 250: *Looking Forward* discusses why Scott will influence futurity, specifically Scott's temporal effect contributing to interpretations of the historical novel that many believe Scott ushered in. Genre theorists will enjoy the return to temporality and its hold on western 19th century's authors' rush to represent verisimilitude, especially Scott's reliance on multiple histories that hold readers in a temporal vice. The discussions about temporality and the novel's future(s) allow for a broader audience who would like to strengthen their understanding of historical presence and its interpretations through Scott's manipulation of the reader's perception of time.

From Ina Ferris's essay on "intervallic time" to Penny Fielding's "biding time," themes extend beyond reinterpretation as each essay repositions the reader's perception. Scott's time is complicated, caught in "intervals," "ruptures," "transitions," and "chronotopes" that speak of a type of history that is distant past, recent past, present, yet attached to a future the reader only has access to through past events. For example, in "Temporality and Historical Fiction Reading in Scott," Ferris focuses on Intervalic (/intervallic) time that complicates physical bodies so much so that the "break" in reading creates "a poetics of the interval." This interval, claim the editors in their Introduction, underscores the sense of an "unclosed" past in Scott's brand of history. Ferris goes on to describe Intervalic time in reference to Ruth Livesay's "ejection" through Scott's characters' propensity to be tardy, thus remaining passengers longer than they should, "ejected" into a place for which they are "always going and to which they keep going" (24). The emphasis on this "keeping going," or intervallic time, reinforces an anticipatory reading of the future while in the present, since the present keeps returning to the past.

Penny Fielding's "'I bide my time': History and the Future Anterior in *The Bride of Lammermoor*," points to an "anterior" phrasing of "biding" that "pushes a future that never arrives, gestures towards

a past that seems unwilling to perform its function as history, and inhabits a present troubled by both of these" (30). The flux that the reader must endure never resolves, but only ruptures. Reading Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor*, we are able to conjecture about the future through "an epistemological-temporal structure that depends on continual reinterpretation of the past" (42). All this talk about time touches upon enlightenment concepts of history, and in this volume, points to McCracken's previous work on Scottish Enlightenment. Although this connection is important, it is not necessary to have in order to read these essays.

Unlike theories and discussions about the bildungsroman that evoke place, materialism, Hegelian ideas of beauty, subjective ideas of "becoming" in English and German, Scott's scholars seem to say that his history stands out of time as something unlike its German Enlightenment time-magician, Goethe. Ian Dunkon mentions chronotope as it applies to the "spatiotemporal continuum of the prehistory of the present" (56). Without mentioning Bakhtin's discussion of the literary chronotope [where Bakhtin relies on metaphor "expressing the inseparability of space and time—time as the fourth dimension of time and space" (*Dialogique* 84)], nor any mention of Bakhtin's discussion of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship's* "great time" [that refers to the chronotope as integral to influencing the European novel], Dunkon misses an opportunity to at least point a footnote to readers, who could link Scottish Enlightenment to German, and/or produce further scholarship in genre studies of the literary chronotope as applied to both Scott and Goethe. Dunkon delivers in his goals to unpack Scott's "ontological cost" in comparison to Austen's "impulsion" to re-read. Scott's *Waverly* "flattens its protagonist, emptying him of subjective, inhabited time, as our present, heavy with the burdon of history, rolls over him" (62).

Further discussions of economy and anachronism contribute loosely to the philosophical conundrum that is Scott's history. Not to be thought of as "post human," Matthew Wickman's essay "*Redgauntlet*: Speculation in History, Speculation in Nature" treats Scott's unthinkable history in the 1820's novel, set in a Jacobite Rebellion of the 1760's, and enlists literary [and genre] theorists Raymond Williams, Walter Benjamin, and Fredric Jameson, to name a few, to explain Scott's plunge into an "unthinkable" history. Wickman's focus extends

theories of the unthinkable as attached to the relics of history rather than history itself.

Walter Scott at 250: *Looking Forward* looks further to anachronisms, women's roles in domesticity and ideas of "home" at Abbotsford, antiquity and time that won't disappoint in this thought-provoking look back to bring Scott into the future.

Lissette López Szwydky. ***Transmedia Adaptation in the Nineteenth Century.*** Ohio State UP, 2020. 256p.

Joy Landeira
University of Wyomiing

In the spirit of adaptation, I'll begin this review with my own take on Peter Allen's 1979 song refrain from the movie *All that Jazz*, "Everything old is new again. . . and adapted again and again!" I highly recommend *Transmedia Adaptation in the Nineteenth Century*, not just for scholars interested in nineteenth century works, but also for everyone who wants a deeper understanding of how adaptation of all types of media has blossomed throughout the centuries and contributed to the creation of canon. Szwydky contends that the "fact that new texts get adapted on a constant basis proves that adaptation doesn't require a canon; instead adaptation creates both popular and literary canons by trying and extending the immediate cultural reach of texts or authors" (211). Rather than appreciating adaptations as canon *extensions* or *preservation,* she feels that they "should be understood as a central, driving factor of literary production, reception, and canon *formation"* (211.) "Regular and continuous adaptation" is required, therefore, for works to "remain canonical or culturally relevant (211)."

Multiple retellings and interpretations of the same stories keep them in the public eye (books, comic books, graphic novels) and ear (songs and opera—from traditional to rock) and feet (ballet, tap, modern dance) and even toy box (paper dolls, plastic swords and light sabers). Theater and film adaptations are multimedia blitzes for all the senses, and now with video, sound recordings, and social media, there is 24/7 access, with versions targeted to any age group.

Consider one of Szwydky's critical specialties, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's 1818 *Frankenstein,* and do not overlook its subtitle: *Or, the Modern Prometheus,* which underscores the novel's own transmedia adaptation

origin from ancient Greek tragedy recounted by eighth century B.C. poet Hesiod and dramatized by Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.) in *Prometheus Bound*. Probably the best example of an endlessly adapted "culture text," *Frankenstein* moved from nineteenth century novel to live theater to twentieth century movie theaters and continues to survive well into the twenty-first century. Mel Brooks' 1974 *Young Frankenstein* parodied both the original novel, as well as its 150 year "adaptation history" (52), relying upon layers of theater versions from the mid-1800s and old horror movies from the 1930s. Dr. Frankenstein (Gene Wilder) and his Creature (Peter Boyles) sing and two-step to Irvin Berlin's "Puttin' on the Ritz." It may be a 1930s movie song, but previous 1848 and 1887 comedy versions had singing and dancing monsters (52). With her exaggerated comical, conical and iconical white-streaked bouffant hairstyle, actor Madeline Kahn's character is, literally and figuratively, an over-the-top rendition of *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), itself a sequel to Paramount's first *Frankenstein* film (1931), with the dual role of author Shelley and the titular character both played by Elsa Lancaster.

Mary Shelley's nineteenth century Creature has become a twenty-first century household fixture. He appears on every household's doorstep on Halloween, TV set, and, even breakfast table in my own favorite example, General Mills' strawberry flavored Franken Berry cereal (one of the monster trio along with Count Chocula and Boo Berry), demon-strating the pervasiveness of literary adaptation that surrounds us as part of our everyday pop culture and sugar pop culture.

There is absolutely no denying that adaptation in and across all media is all around us, and reproduces itself at the speed of light—like Prometheus's and Frankenstein's lightning bolts. Szwydky's well-researched and well-documented proofs convincingly affirm that transmedia adaptation not only preserves canon; it is, indeed, a central driving factor in forming canon.

Philippe De Vita. ***Dictionnaire Jean Renoir. Du cinéaste à l'écrivain.*** Paris: Honoré Champion, 2020. 459p.

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Cinq ans après la publication de *Jean Renoir épistolier : Fragments autobiographiques d'un honnête homme*, Philippe De Vita, docteur en langue et littérature françaises et chercheur associé au laboratoire POLEN de l'Université d'Orléans, enrichit les études renoiriennes d'une publication au format aussi iconique qu'inattendu. Avec ce tout premier dictionnaire consacré à Jean Renoir débute une exploration en 120 entrées de A – comme Acteur – à Z – comme Darryl F. Zanuc – en passant par R – comme Pierre-Auguste Renoir -. Afin de constituer sa matrice, De Vita prend appui sur la correspondance, matière au caractère particulièrement fragmentaire mais immensément féconde.

On apprend ainsi que l'honnête homme avait jeté son dévolu sur la forme épistolaire principalement dans la période d'après-guerre. Bien que les entrées proposées couvrent un vaste champ, il n'importe pas d'offrir un recueil exhaustif, mais plutôt de souligner la prégnance et la permanence de la culture de l'écrit tout au long de la vie de celui qui se définissait volontiers comme un artisan des arts. Dès lors, il n'est pas surprenant de constater que les mises en vedette dans le dictionnaire regroupent davantage d'écrivains et de membres du cercle intime que de cinéastes, même si ces derniers, à l'instar d'Orson Welles, Luchino Visconti ou bien encore François Truffaut, ne sont pas complètement en reste. Fruit de ce délicat maillage, le destin d'un polygraphe qui passera l'intégralité de sa vie à s'essayer à différents styles d'écriture se dessine en filigrane. Tour à tour épistolier, journaliste, biographe, dramaturge ou bien encore romancier, le touche-à-tout utilise les lettres comme un atelier d'écriture créative. Le choix même de la forme du dictionnaire relie son auteur à son sujet puisqu'il s'agit d'un « objet partiellement littéraire, c'est-à-dire extrafonctionnel, esthétique, imaginaire, ludique et, dans ses effets, symbolique et onirique, donc potentiellement poétique » (27), ce qui le rend éminemment représentatif du style de l'écriture de Renoir. Polygraphe, c'est en effet le terme que lui préfère De Vita afin de mettre en exergue le manque de prétentions littéraires du patron.

Si l'on passe au crible sa filmographie, son admiration pour la

littérature, tout particulièrement pour celle du dix-neuvième siècle, est souverainement visible. Toutefois, son engouement pour les grands maîtres de la littérature s'avère bien trop débordant pour s'autoproclamer écrivain. Malgré tout, il s'opère un glissement progressif dans sa carrière, un passage du cinéaste à l'écrivain comme le souligne le sous-titre. Le spécialiste rappelle par exemple que dans les films de multiples personnages rêvent d'écriture. Cette mise en abime révèle à quel point l'enjeu était de taille pour le « gardien des mots ». Dans un premier temps, la correspondance facilitait le maintien des liens avec ses compagnons de route et plus généralement avec la France, notamment à la suite de son exil aux États-Unis. Puis, dans un deuxième temps, elle comblait un vide, celui crée par des tournages de moins en moins fréquents. Finalement, on entrevoit comment il palliait au déclin de l'attrait de ses propositions cinématographiques par le prisme de l'écriture. Tous ces éléments mis bout à bout permettent de mieux saisir la trajectoire de l'écrivain en devenir. Qu'il soit question de films, de lettres ou bien encore de littérature, ce qui demeure au cœur de ce qu'il est et de ce qu'il propose artistiquement, c'est de raconter des histoires (des adaptations littéraires aux récits partiellement inspirés de sa propre vie). En somme, cet ouvrage fouillé, richement documenté donnera sans aucun doute aux lecteurs, néophytes, inconditionnels du cinéaste-écrivain ou bien encore spécialistes, l'envie de découvrir ou de redécouvrir un artiste qui n'en finit pas de surprendre. Car appréhender Renoir sous forme de dictionnaire, c'est accéder à un pan méconnu de son œuvre et de sa contribution artistique.

Wilfred Yang Wang. ***Digital Media in Urban China: Locating Guangzhou.*** Rowman & Littlefield, 2019. 197p.

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In an age with advanced technologies and widespread digital networks, the concept of placelessness or globalization has been widely recognized. However, Wilfred Yang Wang opposes such popular discourse and asserts in *Digital Media in Urban China* that digital media fails to form a global cultural identity or to promote universal values. He argues that "the ideologies and 'culture' of digital media are always localised rather than globalised" (22). To prove his argument, Wang chooses

the Chinese city Guangzhou as an example to show how Guangzhou citizens' applications of digital media technologies contribute to their local cultural subjectivities as well as to the reterritorialization of Guangzhou in a process of urbanization (deterritorialization) initiated by the central Chinese government.

Wang's introduction discusses the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s relentless effort to forge a sense of nationhood and local people's resistance to the CCP's ambition and push for deterritorialization. By looking back in Chinese history, Wang points out that the strategy of homogenization is not a recent invention, since it was used by the first emperor Qin shihuangdi, long before the CCP come to power. However, while Qin shihuangdi and the CCP share the same aim of achieving uniformity and standardization within the nation, the latter confronts challenges that are presented in digital forms while dealing with relationships between the center (the official) and the periphery (the local) in the contemporary digital media era.

Chapters 1 to 5 concentrate on how residents in Guangzhou take advantage of digital placemaking (reterritorialization) to express and construct a sense of self and place. Wang sees digital placemaking as a form of *minjian* force; importantly, he believes that conceptualizing the idea of *minjian* society is a fundamental step to understand digital media in China. The first chapter provides a very detailed interpretation and solid analysis of the term *minjian*. More than simply giving a definition of *min*, which means people, and *jian*, which means space and in-betweenness, the extensive discussion includes associated concepts such as citizenship and *guan* (officials) that can help readers with different backgrounds understand *minjian* in the Chinese context. To emphasize the nonexistence of a straightforward connection between *minjian* society and the CCP-led state, Wang distinguishes *min* from Chinese citizenship, which he believes is "indeed 'a state-centric view [that] continued to subject 'the people' to [a] metadiscourse of nationalism in China's nation-building project' " (54). Further, to claim that *minjian* society or *minjian* force is essentially not interdependent on officialdom or central authorities, Wang elicits the concept of *guan* and accentuates the paternalistic role that *guan* has performed towards *min*.

Chapter 2 contextualizes Guangzhou and claims that Guangzhou is structurally organized by the authorities and, at the same time, discursively recreated by ordinary Guangzhou residents' daily practices. The subsequent three chapters mainly use various case

studies as evidence to show how Guangzhouers' cultural identity is structured and expressed through digital media. Chapter 3 features the digital placemaking practice—the pro-Cantonese activism that took place on the Chinese social platform Weibo in 2010. By examining the affordability of Weibo, including "portable," "locative," and "interactive" (112), Wang concludes that Weibo has played a significant role in igniting Guangzhou grassroots' passion for preserving Cantonese, which ultimately contributes to their sense of locality and cultural subjectivities. Chapter 4 addresses how geographical knowledge of Guangzhou is formed through digital visualization. The first part of the chapter pays attention to Eat Drink Play Fun in Guangzhou (EDPF), which was one of the most popular Weibo city groups in 2014. By investigating and categorizing the content posted by EDPF, Wang asserts that Guangzhouers' sense of solidarity, locality, and reterritorialization is established and shaped by visualizations on digital platforms. The second part of the chapter goes beyond geographical boundaries and observes Guangzhou through the western social media platform. By examining the debates on Guangzhou identity and cultural subjectivity posted by the I Love Guangzhou (ILGZ) group on Facebook, Wang demonstrates "the remaking of Guangzhou is an act of transnationality, transmedia and even transculture" (138). Chapter 5 explores the function and importance of roles of opinion leaders in digital public communication. Wang denies the idea that digital media is "grassroots or vernacular" (141) and argues that "digital placemaking is the collective response to calls of action made by central figures or authorities" (142). The conclusion begins with an emphasis on the author's goal of "'locat[ing] Guangzhou' within the vast digital networks which span different geographical areas and locations." It also summarizes the arguments presented in the previous chapters and provides further discussions of the key ideas raised earlier, such as *minjian* society and *minjian* forces.

In sum, *Digital Media in Urban China: Locating Guangzhou* provides very interesting and inspiring discussions on the reproduction of Guangzhou under the impact of the central government's deterritorialization policy and ordinary people's reterritorialization desire. The book successfully presents an ambivalent or conflicting China. While centering on the southern city Guangzhou, it further invites readers to reconsider the influence of digital media across China.

O. Alan Weltzien. ***Savage West: The Life and Fiction of Thomas Savage.*** U of Nevada P, 2020. 257p.

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Despite being a student of queer literature with an interest in writers of the American West, I had not encountered the work of Thomas Savage (1915-2003) until reading this new biography. O. Alan Weltzien acknowledges the critical neglect of Savage's oeuvre and achievement of a Guggenheim Fellowship (1980). While most of the thirteen novels published over forty-four years (1944-1988) received glowing reviews in *The New York Times Book Review* and *The New York Review of Books*, sales remained low and sporadic at best. Though at times numerous, Savage's recognitions were far fewer than those given to other American West writers such as Montana contemporary A.B. Guthrie, Jr., author of *The Big Sky*.

The biographer's declared goal is "an act of recovery" (12) that seeks "to reverse his sad tale of obscurity" (6) by assembling biographical and critical research to argue that Savage is purposely overlooked for two major reasons. First, he contends that Savage's novels subvert white American western narratives of Manifest Destiny and self-congratulation. Second, he asserts that Savage's identity as a gay writer, and his novels' corresponding disruption of heteronormativity, "makes us squirm and revise common understandings about life in the rural West" (6-7), work many readers and scholars have opted not to pursue. Weltzien makes a compelling case for Savage's long-overdue inclusion in American West literature.

Moving chronologically, the six chapters include a timeline of the novels and a copious list of individuals who inspired the fictional characters. The first two chapters, covering about twenty years each, provide useful context by addressing Savage's rural Montana childhood and the emergence of his writing talent. Chapters 3-5 each discuss five to twelve "high tide" (121) and "zenith" (151) years and focus on writing process, public reception, and identity struggles. Fulfilling the (Anglowestern) narrative arc, the final chapter traces Savage's last twenty-one years and his slide from "limelight [to] obscurity"

(177). The personal and literary impacts of Savage's relocations from Montana to New England and then to San Francisco are fascinating, and this well-researched book will inspire confidence for many readers, even as it raises significant questions for others.

While inviting and conversational overall, it sometimes jars the reader with jumps in register. For example, Weltzien informally describes "weird Uncle Bill Brenner, clearly the odd duck at the ranch," before switching registers on the same page to rhapsodize academically how Savage "subliminally recognized an analogy between his hidden orchestra and his hidden queer self" (46). These jumps might make visible the multiple, conflicting identities that we all, Savage included, inhabit. Yet, the jumps often occur around gender or sexuality, as in the very informal "blow job" (142) or the repeated line, "Savage doth protest too much" (132, 138), that echoes *Hamlet* and thus feminizes and minimizes Savage's concerns. This critique of the feminine recurs in Weltzien's dated description of a women's clinic as the product of "alternative lifestylers" (191) or, more troublingly, when describing the murder of Savage's daughter-in-law as the "chronically unfaithful, alcoholic" woman's fault (177).

Weltzien's biography convinces readers that Savage is an important American West writer, but it is far less convincing in its attempt, heavy-handed at times, to position Savage as a birth-to-death gay man whose sexuality completely shaped his life on the page, in the home, and beyond. Weltzien overlooks substantial queer scholarship and documented experience and posits Savage's sexual orientation as permanent and fixed, even though Savage himself did not make such a claim. Compressing the complexity of Savage's identity into a tidy label, Weltzien writes, "He never breathed a word about his sexuality, as far as I can determine, to his mother, Bess Carlson, or anyone else. Though he had flings with girls and later led a heterosexual life, he was gay" (41).

He repeats this reductive tendency throughout, working hard to make Savage's (presumed) gay identity act as informative biography, but resulting in thinly veiled argument. For example, Weltzien uses Savage's invocation of a rainbow to confirm his gay identity, noting, "'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' is, after all, a queer anthem" (70). While Weltzien could explain Savage and his wife Betty's eventual move to the remote Maine coast as the typical self-exile of countless

writers, he again twists the phenomenon to reflect Savage's sexuality, for, "As a queer man, he separated his family from any town" (78). Weltzien does not provide proof, beyond this tenuous assertion, for linking their relocation—a phenomenon that could serve multiple purposes—to Savage's sexual identity.

Weltzien persistently, and narrowly, interprets such broad phenomena throughout, declaring that Savage creates one character to "den[y] and castigat[e] his own gay self" (102). When his daughter asked if he was bisexual, Savage replied, "There's no such thing" (209). Weltzien uses this reported exchange to shift the burden of reductive, essentialist tendencies from his own writing onto Savage. Again in an over-formal phrase, Weltzien laments "the universal pernicious obsession with categorizing" (209), an obsession Weltzen himself displays repeatedly. Quoting Marjorie Garber (1995) on the fluidity of sexuality, he positions himself as an advocate of this fluidity. However, even though Savage follows a "rigid orthodoxy" and "adhered to the either-or categories, not fluid identity construction" (209), Weltzien's biography should not follow suit, and will not convince some readers.

Just as some will be troubled by the biographer's attempt to neatly confine Savage's sexuality in one static category, others will notice how Weltzien argues that Savage honors Indigenous peoples, even as Weltzien's own writing participates in Anglocentrism. The book opens with an illustration of "Thomas Savage country," a colonizing phrase repeated across the biography; he uses the problematic term "Indians," albeit interspersed at times with specific tribal community names; and he exoticizes one of Savage's Indigenous characters as a "dark beauty" (193). In his most extended discussion of Savage's Indigenous characters, Weltzien makes large claims about the novelist's purposes, asserting that Savage is "recapitulating the white master narrative of settler colonialism" even as he writes "with deep understanding" (195). Yet, Weltzien fails to prove his claims or follow through on his promise to show how Savage subverts such expected (white) Western narratives.

Nonetheless, despite significant reservations about Weltzien's treatment of Savage's sexual identity and Indigenous characters, in addition to tonal inconsistencies throughout, I believe Weltzien achieves his goal of presenting Savage as an important, complex novelist who will, with the help of this biography, justly and justifiably, be included more in American West literary studies.