REVIEWS

Reviews are published in alphabetical order according to the name of the author reviewed. We gratefully acknowledge the many review copies supplied by The Ohio State University Press for this issue.

Jan Alber and Brian Richardson, eds. ***Unnatural Narratology: Extension, Revisions, and Challenges.*** Ohio State UP, 2020. 232p.

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Jan Alber and Brian Richardson have compiled a thoughtfully diverse collection of essays as a follow-up to *A Poetics of Unnatural Narrative* (2013, co-edited with Henrik Skov Nielsen). The editors' refreshing approach is apparent in their "Introduction," which might surprise some readers who are looking for a summary of each chapter--yet, careful readers will immediately appreciate the rigorous overview of the recent landscape of unnatural narratology, various definitions of "the unnatural" and other terms (including differences in scholars' definitions), and responses to critics of unnatural narratology. It is notable that each essay also clearly defines its use of the term "unnatural" relative to other scholars' use of it. Summaries of the essays are saved for the "Afterword," but this is not merely a shift in sequencing. Rather than lengthy summaries, the editors present thoughtful, fair responses to each contribution. This section makes the volume a truly engaging work. The editors offer meticulous explanations (with extensive footnotes) of why they agree/disagree and emphasize how each essay opens up possibilities for future engagement.

As the "Introduction" describes, "unnatural narratology" might seem to be a "newfangled" approach, but as the essays demonstrate, unnatural narratology cannot be reduced to a study of postmodern fiction and its "deconstruction" of narrative structures. Indeed, references to more traditional texts, such as Shakespeare's plays or those by other familiar writers like Brecht, end up proving just how "ubiquitous" the unnatural is. While some contributors state this explicitly, others do not. Nevertheless, even the latter, by dint of their analyses of a variety of textual fields and mediums--from novels, short stories, and films to staged performances, TV commercials, interactive

gamebooks, cartoons, and graphic narratives--make a strong argument for investigating the unnatural in textual fields where it may often be overlooked, at the expense of ignoring narrative intricacies and their larger implications. For instance, Richardson's analysis of the "unnatural" (and its "u-effect" [156] à la Brecht) may offer new ways to consider Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt*, beyond conventional discourses on alienation. Several contributions reframe traditional concepts of narratology, such as fabula, syuzhet, and diegesis, explaining how their analyses develop or challenge these concepts. There are also efforts to delineate the differences between concepts, for instance, of "non-mimetic" versus "anti-mimetic" or unnatural narration versus "magical realism." Each essay, regardless of the historical placement of the analyzed text, highlights the implications for narrative studies that could not be investigated as long as we took for granted concepts of mimesis. In this way, the collection is tied to unnatural narratology's post-structuralist heritage (insofar as starting as a response to postmodernist texts [1]) but expands the question beyond a binary opposition of mimetic versus non-mimetic--or, natural versus unnatural (10). The essays offer possibilities for (re)interpretations based on the developing concept of the unnatural, including that of challenging traditional concepts of mimesis--which also brings into play challenges to other concepts, such as "the probable" and "the possible."

This collection expands critical approaches to the unnatural to include a wide variety: feminism, affect studies, and "postcolonialism" (albeit the term is used carefully by Klein not as a "temporal" marker but to denote an "enhanced awareness of the colonial legacies" [54], since the status of being colonized is still a reality for many peoples). *Unnatural Narratology* is also rich in its analyses grounded on close readings of one text, as well as comparative analyses between genre, medium, national languages, philosophical grounding, or theoretical approaches. Furthermore, because of the wide-ranging textual fields analyzed, the volume resists coming across as a private dialogue among only a coterie of "unnatural narratologists." Rather, its dialogue invites readers to consider the implications not only for narratology, but also for the broader problem of representation.

In the interest of space, I can only gesture to a few of the many instances of this invitation: the editors' lively debate with Sommer

over "what constitutes a narrative" opens investigation into the definition of a "narrative" as it relates to a texts' "degrees of narrativity" (215); Wake's proposition that the interactive gamebook, as a genre, problematizes both the unnatural and the genre itself (202) allows for unnatural narratology to contribute to the larger field of genre and mode studies; Punday's study of "ontological metalepsis" demonstrates how conventional views of the process of defamiliarization can be re-examined; and Klein's modulation of the question, "what is the unnatural?", into "unnatural *for whom*?" (56) highlights more than just the ongoing need to define the unnatural or "culture" (in "cross-cultural") but the very problem of the phenomenology of reading. I strongly recommend this collection.

Ayse Gul Altinay, María José Contreras, Marianne Hirsch, Jean Howard, Banu Karaca, and Alisa Solomon, editors. ***Women Mobilizing Memory.*** Columbia UP, 2019. 544p.

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Authored by scholars working in different disciplines across the Humanities and Social Sciences as well as artists, curators, and activists, *Women Mobilizing Memory*'s twenty-six essays are organized thematically: "Disrupting Sites," "Performing Protest," "Interfering Images," and "Rewriting Lives." Its transnational approach studies remembrance practices concerning violence and destruction in North and South America, Europe, and Turkey. This global scope allows conversations about the history and lived aftermath of state terror including murder, forced disappearance, and torture in Chile; enslavement, anti-Black racism, and violence towards Black Americans; practices that facilitate the legal, social, and material death of trans women in Turkey; and gender violence and femicide in Argentina. Moreover, the objects of study range from art to photography, literature, performance, museums, monuments, collective activist and protest efforts, return trips to lost homelands, and more.

This breadth in content will appeal to readers well versed in trauma and memory studies and those who are new to methodologies and theories in these fields.

Marianne Hirsch, who developed the theoretical framework of "postmemory" to articulate the intergenerational transmission of collective traumatic memory using the case of the Holocaust, penned the introduction. Hirsch recounts the origins of *Women Mobilizing Memory*, defines the three words that constitute its title, and provides an overview of the authors' intellectual contributions to the field of contemporary cultural studies. The collection seeks to "help define the parameters of what we might think of as a feminist 'ethics of transculturality'" (12). Hirsch clarifies that to put into practice a feminist ethics of transculturality, the authors take up "mobilizing" to mean "activating, setting in motion, [or] moving" (2). More specifically, the essays demonstrate the mobilization of memory for justice and futurity, to confront state and political agents' silencing of dark pasts, and to form communities of solidarity.

Women Mobilizing Memory also provides visual supplements. "Treasures" features artwork from Germany-based, Argentinian Armenian multimedia artist Silvina Der-Meguerditchian, showcasing items from Der-Meguerditchian's project for the prize-winning *Armenity* pavilion at the fifty-sixth Venice Biennale in 2015. Another essay, "Blank: An Attempt at a Conversation," features blank pages submitted by five art students from the Fine Arts program at Mardin Artuklu University. Asked to provide a submission regarding violence centered on Kurdish communities, these students responded: "You are in a hurry but we have an emergency. Our testimony is five blank A4 pages" (n.p./324). Additional images of works by other artists are woven throughout: photographs of some of the embodied experiences of memory work detailed in the chapters; memorial projects at the Estadio Nacional in Santiago, Chile to commemorate those who were detained, tortured, and killed there from September to November 1973; theatrical performances that shed light on state violence around AIDS; environmental degradation or what Robert Nichols calls "slow violence"; the gendered labor of agricultural field workers; and the weekly vigil of the Saturday Mothers/People at Galatasaray Square in Istanbul, where the act of peacefully sitting and holding photographs

facilitates public awareness of the disappearance of Kurds by the Turkish state.

The editors' attention to building a conversation among senior and emerging scholars and their goal of making meaning by juxtaposing while honoring differences in the selected case studies of subjugation and survival make *Women Mobilizing Memory* a timely contribution to the fields of trauma, memory, gender, and feminist studies. As with any edited book, especially one that foregrounds a global scope of study, there are bound to be histories that are not taken up. For instance, it does not include an essay devoted to gendered memory concerning the genocide and territorial dispossession of Indigenous peoples of North America. At the same time, María Solded Falabella Luco's "Hilando en la Memoria: Weaving Songs of Resistance in Contemporary Mapuche Political Cultural Activism" illuminates Chilean state violence and resistance to this "many-sided oppression" by focusing on the "ongoing conflict or war with the Mapuche, the country's most populous first nation" (459). *Women Mobilizing Memory* must ultimately be commended for offering a model on how to explicitly address the politics of comparison. Hirsch does just that by summarizing some of the critical, but not always easy, conversations in workshops, conferences, and events that preceded and informed the production of the edited collection. The book's ultimate strength, then, is the promise of what can come. Indeed, as Hirsch writes in the introduction, the "volume creates a platform in which to think, theoretically, about feminist connectivity and co-resistance" (8). In a period marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing, the potential and possibility of connectivity is a needed and welcome message of hope in and beyond the academy.

Natalya Bekhta. ***We-Narratives: Collective Storytelling in Contemporary Fiction.*** Ohio State UP, 2020. 203p.

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In *We-Narratives*, Natalya Bekhta develops the category of "we-narrators" as "genuinely plural voices that have no individual speaker behind them and that emanate from groups, communities, collectives,

or nations" (1). A we-narrative importantly does not involve "individual characters acting in the we-mode" but "groups themselves, which thus function as characters and as narrators" (17). As a well-known example, Bekhta analyzes William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" as a "setup" that "invites the reader to adopt the villagers' opinions . . . as well as their shock" when they find Homer Barron's corpse (4). Bekhta delineates how a we-narrator is not the same as a narrator who utilizes the "we" pronoun to hide his/her own intentions, as with the narrator in Joyce Carol Oates's "Parricide," where the function of the "we" makes the singular narrator's "opinions and feelings 'objective' where they are intimate and subjective" (28). After three chapters that demonstrate how we-narration is unique in relation to rhetorical narratology, Bekhta then examines we-narrators as voyeurs, gossips, and communities, all fascinatingly involving questions of collective knowledge and what the author calls an "us versus them" dynamic.

The work is at its strongest in the last three chapters. In discussing Jeffrey Eugenides's *The Virgin Suicides,* Bekhta describes the we-narrator's voyeurism as a "group of neighborhood boys" captivated by the Lisbon girls (115). This assesses narratology questions of focalization and perspective because "[m]etaphorical personhood is one of a group's 'collective artifacts' . . . such as group beliefs or social institutions" (112). Regarding collective knowledge, we-narrative "offers insight into the performative act of knowledge creation . . . exemplifying the social nature of knowledge" (134). This is an observation, I might add, with profound impacts for epistemology in a post-truth era, as truths are often debated socially. Finally, in an analysis of "Watch the Animals" by Alice Eliott Dark, Bekhta examines the "us versus them" dynamic to reveal that "[c]ommunities exist by containing differences" that are otherwise disruptive of community identity (168). Thus, the character of Diana is treated as an "outsider" due to her animal rights activism until the end of the story, when "we" insist on caring for Diana's animals during her terminal illness and after her death (169, 174-75). This insistence only comes about after "we" refuse to take the money Diana offers, but instead start arriving at her house uninvited to care for her and the animals, ultimately driving her to suicide in a way that "we" conveniently overlook. Much of this final chapter fascinates in an age of "alt-right" politics as an assessment of the behaviors of a "conservative community toward outsiders" (172).

On the whole, the last three chapters fascinate while the first three could have been condensed. Much of the discussion of rhetorical narratology takes on the shape of literature review or unnecessary distraction instead of assessment of the already unique and fascinating we-narratives Bekhta scrutinizes. In arguing in favor of the "usefulness of the author category" to eliminate the question of an "impossible enunciator," Bekhta claims that this "removes the largely irrelevant questions of how a group can physically speak as one" (75). It seems, however, that much of what enchants about we-narration is precisely these "irrelevant" questions. Of course, it is not realistically possible that a we-narrator in "Watch the Animals" is dictating this story as a collective, and that is the point. We-narrative is a fictional representation of communal forms of knowledge and conservatism, and this fictional exploration is not meant to be considered as anything but. In this sense, while fiction expands what one can imagine regarding how to understand and analyze the human condition, this does not mean that we must imagine works of fiction as applying to the laws of interpersonal communication. After all, what could be more fascinating than imagining "how a group can physically speak as one"?

Matthew Clark and James Phelan. ***Debating Rhetorical Narratology: On the Synthetic, Mimetic, and Thematic Aspects of Narrative.*** Ohio State UP, 2020. 232p.

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Debating Rhetorical Narratology, a collaborative effort between Matthew Clark and James Phelan, seeks to revise and expand Phelan's own mimetic, thematic, and synthetic model of narrative and to "model a friendlier but still deeply serious kind of exchange" (ix). Clark begins by revising Phelan's model of rhetorical narratology (MTS) by placing greater emphasis on the synthetic component. Clark's retriangulation becomes the synthetic, mimetic, and thematic model (SMT): "*[s]ynthetic analysis concerns all kinds of verbal construction, from sentences to whole plots, and also the construction of characters and narrative worlds*" (11, emphasis original). In other words, the synthetic element is the "foundation for

the fabrication of narrative worlds and the creation of characters in those worlds," therefore sustaining both the mimetic and thematic elements (19). One of Clark's early points of emphasis involves realism, as, in cases like Dickens, there is "hardly a realistic novelist whose style is even relatively transparent" (25). It is apparent to any attentive reader that even Dickens's descriptions of setting are still evidently a "fabrication" and not a "transparent" attempt at describing some kind of fact-based "reality." Thus, mimesis and theme are encapsulated within synthesis. Clark's analysis is particularly insightful with the examples of Jane Austen's *Emma* and Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

The structure involves three chapters in which Clark outlines the SMT model by discussing each element in turn. Phelan then responds in four chapters, both refining his original MTS model and defending his own view of rhetorical narratology. While Phelan's expansive corpus on narratology stands on its own, his responses to Clark are at times unconvincing. He insists, for example, that his own approach treats narrative as "action" instead of "textual structure" or "text-centric" (137-38). However, the advantages to Phelan's views become somewhat convoluted in his analysis of an audience's "double-consciousness" regarding an "authorial audience" who are aware of a story's fictionality and a "narrative audience" who are more emotionally invested in the narrative while disregarding its fictionality (153). These issues are further complicated by an overemphasis on narrative as "action" as opposed to "text." In a brief examination of Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw,* Phelan argues: "the narrative audience believes in ghosts and the authorial audience does not" (159). This raises several questions: are readers conscious of themselves *as readers* when in the act of reading, making a novel more an act than a text? Are they furthermore conscious of a story simultaneously being fictional while ignoring this fictionality? Why is "belief" in ghosts a prerequisite for reading and understanding a work of fiction? Ultimately, these confusions tend to indirectly reaffirm Clark's account of narrative as "text-centric."

In the conclusion, titled "Yes, but…," Clark offers perhaps the most convincing support of his revision of Phelan's theory. The SMT model "does not require this division of the reader into hypothetical audiences" (204). If it is readily apparent to any observant reader that the basic "verbal construction" of even a single sentence in a work

of fiction is synthetic in both its creation of some form of mimesis relative to reality and its establishment of any narrative themes, then it is not necessary to inquire on what level a reader does or does not believe in what they are reading. Rather, it is simple enough to point out that readers "don't object to contrivance; they object to clumsy contrivance" (208). In other words, if the synthetic elements are well-executed, a reader does not question mimesis. When reading *The Lord of the Rings,* if hobbits consistently do hobbit-type things, then synthesis has supported mimesis.

This topic of the behavior of characters in a plot leads, however, to Phelan's most essential contribution in *Debating Rhetorical Narratology*: that "[p]rogression is a synthesis" in narrative (178). If Clark left out an important detail in his discussion of synthesis (that he does not leave out in his discussions of mimesis and theme, by the way), it is the significance of what narrative *does,* which is *progress.* Clark makes this point in part in his excellent overview of Austen's *Emma* as a "long narrative" that, true to type, "expresses many meanings" that "gradually develop over the course of the story" (103). While Phelan is perhaps too insistent on a convoluted understanding of audience, his point about narrative itself only helps to strengthen Clark's own work: that narrative develops, whether in the categories of synthesis, mimesis, or theme.

Paula Derdiger. ***Reconstruction Fiction: Housing and Realist Literature in Postwar Britain.*** Ohio State UP, 2020. 219p.

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To see clearly requires unobstructed views: a great expanse before one's eyes, to reach out toward an ideal and in hope with the construction of each new day, to make an idealized future a reality. Following the interiority and isolation that citizens of Great Britain experienced through World War II came a distinguished call for social mobility, transparency, and outward optimism. However, before such endeavors were to become succinct and fulfilled, reevaluation and reconstruction of structural values, both architectural and aesthetic, were in dire need. Throughout dilapidated and war-ridden London stood those who

desired to reconstruct these values not with the intention of returning to what was, but to stand in transparency and new un-idealized reality—to stand humbly empowered by Elizabeth Bowen's declaration in "Calico Windows": "we shall look outward through glass" (186). Paula Derdiger's *Reconstruction Fiction: Housing and Realist Literature in Postwar Britain* is an inquiry and assessment of the Welfare State and its impact on postwar literary fiction through emerging voices of a generation comparatively more neglected than that of their predecessors T. S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf.

In the wake of Woolf's iconic interiority, Derdiger evaluates the realist tradition not as a historical anachronism of the 19th century, but as an ongoing development of ideas. In the same vein, realist literature exists fluidly beyond the constraints of historical dating. In fact, as Derdiger argues, recent critics state that realism is "naïvely mimetic, and that 20th century realism is residual" (25). A gap exists in modern fiction in which realism becomes the mode of interpretation and representation to fill that gap (41). She moves her inquiry away from the debate about "the end of modernism" and toward a broader historical analysis of realist techniques following World War II, thus developing a formal framework of "reconstruction fiction" that is intended to exist alongside and within categories of modernism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism. Derdiger identifies four primary stylistic approaches of "reconstruction fiction" that serve as key analytical pieces of her argument: an interest in the visible, exterior world; an account of what is invisible, unseen, or missing; a demand for historical continuity; and a thematic, formal, and stylistic engagement with the present (12-13).

The framework of this renewed way of thinking about mid-century and postwar literature emphasizes the indisputable influence of the war and the creation of the Welfare State. Just as limited as the realm and parameters of realism, "reconstruction fiction" broadens the term and allows for more diverse representation through new welfare-based lenses. As both a critical term and set of texts, "reconstruction fiction" is dedicated to the realist representation of social and material conditions and change by responding to the altered landscapes and sociopolitical attitudes toward housing through a creative attention to the exterior (6). Works of Elizabeth Bowen, Graham Greene, Patrick Hamilton, Doris Lessing, Colin MacInnes, Sam Selvon, and Elizabeth

Taylor showcase the emergence of the exterior, and of whose characters attempt to break from an "individual" focus and shift outward toward a "collective" one, as a generative response to the war and Welfare State conditions.

The disparaging acts of the British government and the failure of the Welfare State to provide stable housing in the years following the war allude to the moral and political abandonment of its citizens. It becomes evident that Derdiger's deliberate selection of non-central writers of realist and postwar literature portrays the groups most heavily impacted by the government's failure and affirms Bowen's urgency in accepting "this 'bleak' emptiness as a new condition for a mode of fiction… that is liberated from nostalgia" (152). In acceptance of the realities, works of "reconstruction fiction" serve as emergency signals for progress, change, and shifts on both cultural and societal levels.

Critics of 20th century British literature and cultural history, as well as those interested in realist fiction and the built environment, will find that Derdiger's original disposition is an empowering and hopeful account of new ways of thinking about postwar literature and its infusion of realist techniques. Furthermore, "reconstruction fiction" exists beyond the historical signposts of realism by influencing the shifts in cultural and societal attitudes toward urban, suburban, and rural landscapes in present day. The longevity of "reconstruction fiction" is apparent in modern-day works of British writers like Kazuo Ishiguro and Zadie Smith, who concern themselves with the stakes of reconstruction in association with private interests and gentrification. *Reconstruction Fiction* emphasizes that we are not to return to what was, but are to reconstruct and rebuild toward a better future—a future that even when the glass is once again blackened, we will find ways and have cause to look outward into a future where we can make a real and lasting impact.

Carmen Fernández-Salvador. ***Encuentros y desencuentros con la frontera imperial: La iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús de Quito y la misión en el Amazonas (siglo XVII).*** Iberoamericana, 2018. 205p.

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En *Encuentros y desencuentros con la frontera imperial: La iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús de Quito y la misión en el Amazonas (siglo XVII),* Carmen Fernández-Salvador explora diversos aspectos de la historia y la misión apostólica de la Compañía de Jesús en Quito a lo largo del siglo XVII. La autora provee un estudio minucioso de las grandes recepciones que la urbe quiteña les hacía a los amerindios bautizados que venían del Amazonas, de los lienzos de profetas, capillas y retablos en la iglesia jesuita, de los retratos de misioneros mártires en los pasillos del colegio jesuita de San Luis, y, por último, de las crónicas conventuales escritas por miembros de una clase intelectual de criollos.

El primer capítulo estudia las maneras en que los edificios religiosos, las prácticas piadosas y los recibimientos ceremoniosos a los indígenas bautizados de la cuenca amazónica definían simbólicamente a la urbe quiteña de la segunda mitad del XVII como un centro de autoridad política y espiritual. Tanto el seminario de San Luis, donde se formaban los misioneros jesuitas y se refugiaban después de sus incursiones en la periferia amazónica, como la iglesia jesuita eran ejes en la representación de Quito como recinto en donde la población se incorporaba plenamente al orden civil y religioso impuesto por el imperio español. Fernández-Salvador sostiene que las ostentosas ceremonias con las que la comunidad quiteña recibía a misioneros jesuitas acompañados de nativos bautizados (por ejemplo, la visita del padre Raimundo de Santacruz con los amerindios de Maynas en 1651) asentaban ritualmente la transformación de los nativos en sujetos civiles y políticos. En estas ceremonias, en donde proliferaban las procesiones por centros religiosos de la ciudad, los nativos recibían el sacramento de la confirmación y tenían un cambio de vestimenta. A través de estos rituales civilizadores, la sociedad quiteña gozaba de protagonismo en la articulación de la incorporación de los neófitos al orden colonial.

El siguiente capítulo examina las relaciones históricas de

los jesuitas criollos Manuel Rodríguez—*El descubrimiento del Marañón* (1684)—y Pedro de Mercado—*Historia de la provincia del Nuevo Reino y Quito de la Compañía de Jesús* (escrito no antes de 1683)—como relatos hagiográficos. Estos textos tuvieron un rol importante en la confirmación de la orden jesuita como una corporación religiosa ejemplar y en la construcción de Quito como una comunidad cristiana designada por Dios. Estas relaciones, que la autora usará también en otros capítulos como fuentes principales, forman parte de las llamadas crónicas conventuales y fueron producidas dentro del círculo de criollos letrados que se extendió en Quito desde diversos núcleos, en particular el colegio jesuita. Tanto para Rodríguez como para Mercado, el colegio jesuita de Quito había hecho posible el florecimiento de una clase intelectual arraigada en lo local. A diferencia de las relaciones de otras órdenes religiosas, las jesuitas se esmeraron por ligar la historia y los logros del colegio jesuita con el desarrollo de la ciudad de Quito y, de esta manera, le brindaron a la urbe quiteña una identidad caracterizada por ser un centro civilizador y de gran piedad cristiana vis a vis la Amazonía periférica que esperaba ser conquistada territorial y espiritualmente.

El capítulo tercero describe el programa decorativo de la iglesia jesuita de Quito durante los siglos XVII y XVIII. A lo largo de la segunda mitad del XVII el diseño estructural y la decoración de la iglesia revelaba una coherencia que se había adaptado a diversos agentes y preocupaciones locales. Por ejemplo, en la selección de imágenes y la ornamentación de retablos intervenían, en distintos modos, mecenas locales y distintas cofradías al igual que los intereses locales de la orden jesuita. Los retablos, en particular, contribuyeron a la construcción de identidades corporativas laicas. Las cofradías de mestizos, de negros y mulatos, de amerindios, entre otras, asumieron la tarea de construir y adornar los retablos y de celebrar procesiones y fiestas litúrgicas. La ornamentación y la iconografía de la iglesia atravesó una gran transformación a partir del XVIII, dando un giro hacia lo escultórico en los retablos y, así mismo, modificando el uso y propósito de las imágenes. Se reemplazó, por ejemplo, la devoción a los apóstoles por la veneración a aquellos jesuitas que habían sido canonizados recientemente. Finalmente, la autora interviene en los debates sobre la autoría de los lienzos ubicados en la iglesia y afirma que es necesario considerar que éstos se basaban, en realidad, en una

versión anterior de la Biblia de Niccolò Pezzana publicada en 1669 y que, por lo tanto, deben ser estudiados dentro del contexto de la hagiografía y oratoria sagrada.

El capítulo cuarto aborda la relación entre el programa iconográfico de los jesuitas y las celebraciones litúrgicas en Quito en el XVII. Tanto los sermones como las imágenes de la iglesia—tales como los lienzos de profetas, retablos y capillas—estaban anclados en el calendario litúrgico y eran entidades concurrentes y complementarias entre sí. Los sermones conservados no tan solo describen acontecimientos bíblicos como si éstos fuesen pinturas, sino que hacen referencias directas a las imágenes que adornaban la iglesia a tal punto que es ahora posible inferir desde donde fueron predicados y, también, precisar el lugar original de algunos lienzos y capillas. Es más, la eficiencia didáctica de las imágenes radicaba en la función mnemotécnica que tenían para los predicadores (en la composición de sermones) y para los espectadores (en la apreciación de diferentes niveles de significado de dichas imágenes). La autora argumenta que el programa iconográfico también sirvió para formar una identidad colectiva. Por un lado, la tipología cristiana presente en los lienzos y sermones—en donde ciertos eventos y personajes del Antiguo Testamento se convertían en prefiguraciones de la nueva ley—permitía a los feligreses quiteños imaginarse como parte de una corporación cristiana escogida por un designio divino. Por otro lado, las múltiples fiestas litúrgicas, como la procesión en honor de la Virgen de Loreto, eran rituales performativos donde el pasado conmemorado ocurría nuevamente en el presente y la comunidad quiteña podía verse dentro de la historia cristiana.

El capítulo quinto analiza los lienzos de profetas de la iglesia jesuita y los retratos de misioneros mártires del seminario de San Luis, enfocándose en las maneras en que las escenas de martirio de ambas series se empleaban tanto para despertar el fervor apostólico de los misioneros que iban a partir hacia la Amazonía como para preservar y definir el legado de la evangelización jesuita en Quito y su periferia. Al igual que las biografías de misioneros y manuales de comportamiento, los retratos de los mártires jesuitas que habían perdido la vida en el Amazonas tenían la función post-tridentina de enseñar sobre la virtud cristiana y el celo apostólico y, asimismo, de encender los ánimos de los espectadores, en especial de aquéllos que iban a las misiones.

Por esto, historiadores jesuitas como Mercado y Rodríguez exaltaron en sus relaciones el martirio como característica fundamental de los misioneros de su orden. Fernández-Salvador sostiene que los lienzos y retratos se complementan cohesivamente ya que los últimos señalan una continuidad entre los personajes del Antiguo Testamento y los misioneros contemporáneos de Quito. De esta manera, los retratos no solo influyeron en la formación de los futuros misioneros o elevaron el prestigio de la orden, sino que cumplieron un rol fundamental en la articulación de una historia jesuita local.

El capítulo sexto y último aborda la rivalidad que existió entre la Compañía de Jesús y la orden franciscana de Quito por tener el control apostólico en la frontera amazónica. A lo largo del XVII tanto jesuitas como franciscanos debatieron y aseguraron su propio derecho a la evangelización de la Amazonía en relaciones sobre el descubrimiento y la temprana evangelización de dicha periferia y en lienzos o murales sobre misioneros mártires. Fernández-Salvador afirma que la orden jesuita en sus intentos por legitimar su primacía en la conquista territorial y espiritual del Amazonas empleó el principio de antigüedad apostólica y, en especial, los casos de martirio de sus misioneros como argumentos que justificaban su precedencia en la región. A diferencia del primer viaje de los franciscanos en 1632, los misioneros jesuitas incursionaron a la Amazonía desde 1599 y, según los historiadores jesuitas de la época, en más de una ocasión encontraron la muerte a manos de los amerindios mientras les predicaban la doctrina cristiana. Las pinturas de los edificios de las dos órdenes también participaron en el debate. Cada orden buscó establecer su linaje local a través de murales y lienzos que representaban—ya sea en el convento franciscano de San Diego o en el seminario jesuita de San Luis—a sus propios misioneros martirizados en la Amazonía.

A pesar de que algunos capítulos, como el segundo y el quinto, se desvían de sus temas principales y vuelven a incidir en argumentos ya elaborados previamente sin añadir ninguna novedad, el libro brinda un estudio serio y ambicioso sobre la Compañía de Jesús en Quito. Las reproducciones de lienzos, grabados y mapas guardadas como apéndices son, asimismo, de incalculable valor. *Encuentros y desencuentros con la frontera imperial* es, en efecto, un gran aporte interdisciplinario a los estudios sobre Quito colonial, la orden jesuita en Hispanoamérica, la evangelización del Amazonas y la historia del arte colonial latinoamericano.

Coulter H. George. ***How Dead Languages Work.*** Oxford UP, 2020. 223p.

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How Dead Languages Work surveys six languages of the ancient and medieval worlds--Greek, Latin, Old English, Sanskrit, Old Irish and Biblical Hebrew--that, according to author Coulter George, possessed linguistic personalities considerably different from that of Modern English. George asserts that because of the varied and unique ways in which these languages functioned, translations of their original texts into Modern English unfortunately tend to be inadequate from a number of perspectives; only closer scrutiny of their inner linguistic workings helps us gain a better grasp of the true meaning and intentions of their ancient authors.

Serving as the book's introduction, Chapter 1 lays out the volume's framework, methodology and roadmap. Each subsequent chapter focuses on one of the six languages and demonstrates its most distinctive linguistic features with short excerpts from actual ancient texts. George then explains what these characteristics reveal about their uniqueness and where Modern English translations have fallen short in capturing the very essence and, in many cases, the intended message behind the passages evaluated. The author reminds us that not everyone has the time to study all of these languages, nor is he making that recommendation, but his hope is that by presenting them this way, readers will have not only a closer look, but also a better understanding and appreciation of their relevance to today.

George begins his cross-linguistic examination with both languages of the Greco-Roman world, dedicating Chapter 2, the largest chapter, to Ancient Greek and Chapter 3 to Latin. Chapter 2 starts with a brief review of the sounds, lexicon, and formulae employed in ancient Hellenic texts, indicating which of these are believed by linguists to be also characteristic of Indo-European, the mother of most other European languages. The author gives special attention to the verb in Ancient Greek and the power and conciseness

of expression it achieves with its many forms. Several texts illustrate these points: Homer's *Iliad,* Thucydides's historical accounts, and the epistles of Saint Paul to the Romans. Throughout, the assessment includes different historical translations of these same texts to show how subjective interpretations question the adequacy of translations into Modern English, due to the entirely different way that Modern English works.

Chapter 3 turns to the assessment of Latin. Whereas the preceding chapter showcased the potential power and versatility of the verb as a grammatical category, Chapter 3 focuses instead on the additional flexibility and conciseness provided by the Latin noun. The loss of nominal case endings, no longer present among Latin's modern descendants, has rendered these languages considerably less flexible in terms of word order and less concise in terms of function and meaning. Evaluations of works of Lucretius, Horace and Tacitus show how restrictions of word order in Modern English, which has also coincidentally undergone a similar loss of nominal case endings as did Latin, does not allow for the same effects of chiasmus employed by the ancients.

The following chapter leaves the Greco-Roman world behind and examines another Indo-European offshoot--Old English--as representative of the Germanic family tree. Old English can serve as an intermediary between other Indo-European languages like Greek or Latin and Modern English. Old English possessed, albeit to a lesser degree, many of the traits of these other ancient languages. Following a review of sound changes like Grimm's Law and the discussion of strong versus weak verbs (as well as the probable origin of the latter), George evaluates an excerpt from the gospel of John from the 10th century *Wessex Gospels* along with the opening lines of *Beowulf* to demonstrate the major differences between Old English and Modern English.

Chapters 5 through 7 feature Sanskrit, Old Irish (and the Celtic family) and Hebrew, respectively. Since all three are much more distant in their relationship to Modern English than those treated in the first three chapters, the author suggests that especially Sanskrit and Old Irish, coincidentally of Indo-European origin but much further removed from English than Latin and Greek, are equally important in terms of their shared connections with English. In the case of Hebrew—

not of Indo-European descent, but rather a Semitic language of the Afro-Asiatic family of languages that originated in the Middle East—George maintains that it was important to include an ancient language outside the Indo-European family in order to contrast the many Indo-European traits discussed previously. Chapter 5 shows how the Sanskrit of the *Rig Veda* uses words with roots also in English. Chapter 6 points out that Old Irish, even as unusual a language as it seems, still builds on common Indo-European linguistic patterns. Finally, Chapter 7 describes how such calques or turns of phrase characteristic of the Hebrew Bible as "And so it came to pass…" found their way into English.

Despite not being the author's primary reason for writing *How Dead Languages Work*, the book is indeed an apologia for a weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. George provides a thorough account of the more prominent linguistic traits of each language, particularly as it relates to Modern English. With each case, he succeeds in showing where Modern English structure or translations fall short of the mark to represent precisely either the message or feel of the original ancient texts.

Throughout, George employs three central techniques for his syntactic, lexical and semantic analyses. He first does this at the level of syntax by positioning vertically the original language texts immediately above Modern English equivalents, showcasing both the uniqueness and clearly comparable efficiencies of the older language. A second strategy is the evaluation of certain underscored items within chosen texts. Third, George compares several translations of a given text against each other, as well as against the original text, in order to display the intricacies of the meanings and to identify comparable inadequacies of the translation. All three methods are effective in making the point about what is lost in the translation to Modern English of so-called dead languages.

Although *How Dead Languages Work* does not claim to be a trove of new information, it does present the attributes of the myriad languages examined in a coordinated fashion. In fact, what makes it so useful is the author's ability when discussing the particular characteristics of a given language to then circle back to previously discussed traits, making linguistic comparisons and connections among them. Additionally, from the pedagogical perspective, George

has organized the book to introduce precise technical terminology at appropriate times and in an approachable fashion. Admittedly, his design goal was to not overwhelm readers with linguistic terminology, but rather provide, in increments and on an as-needed basis, sufficient information to support the topics discussed within a particular chapter. This approach is clever from two perspectives: it first allows the author to focus on only those aspects critical to the present topic, and it serves as a tool to circle back to languages already discussed previously that may have shared this particular trait to a lesser extent than the language he is discussing currently. By the book's end, the reader has been exposed to all the necessary terminology in order to grasp the many linguistic facets of these languages. Although it was certainly not intended, this particular method serves as an excellent introduction to the study of Indo-European linguistics because, in addition to presenting the more important findings surrounding each of the offshoot language families, it points out similarities and differences among them, all of which ultimately circle back to Proto-Indo-European.

One of George's most poignant points at the outset turns out to be an overarching commentary for the entire volume. No text can be considered living, not even contemporary or modern texts, in the sense that they were written for the same general purpose of preserving thoughts of a previous time. All languages change and one day, after all, future readers will likewise want to read the words, style and expressions that we currently use to express how we think about things today. George repeatedly reminds us that this is precisely why we should continue our study of the ancient languages, and why we should read original texts, in addition to translations, of the languages in which ancient works were written.

Nuria Godón. *La pasión esclava: Alianzas masoquistas en* La Regenta. Purdue UP, 2017. 224p.

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In their analyses of gender in Leopoldo Alas's *La Regenta* (1884-1885), scholars remain divided in their views on Ana Ozores, particularly in relation to her sexual and spiritual deviations. Many insist on Ana's passivity and ultimately, domination, while certain strands of feminist criticism have recuperated aspects of the protagonist's willfulness or find a critical feminist potential in Ana's subjection. *La passion esclava: Alianzas masoquistas*, devoted entirely to *La Regenta*, falls into the latter camp without rehashing familiar debates over the novel's misogynist versus feminist undertones and ends.

From the outset, the book arouses the reader's attention, announcing the central problematic: masochism in *La Regenta*. The front cover features a caricature of an expressionless Alas calmly holding a cat o' nine tails—a multi-tailed flogger historically used for corporal punishment but also, rather crucially, associated with the sexual practices of BDSM (bondage, discipline, domination, submission, and masochism). The bemusing image appears to be a play on Alas's reputation as a caustic, merciless literary critic.

Far from being a niche subject of inquiry, masochism has been the focal point of critical inquiry in diverse schools of thought including psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, and postcolonial theory. Most recently, masochism and by extension, submission, domination, and abjection, have been the focal point of significant interventions in Queer Studies. Godón's debut book on the topic in the field of modern Iberian literary studies is both welcomed and long overdue.

The introduction opens with an epigraph from Concepción Arenal: "[E]l dolor cuando no se convierte en verdugo, es un gran maestro" (1). The pages that follow enfold a reflection on Arenal's theory of pain (*dolor-verdugo* versus *dolor-maestro*), the gendered contours suffering, and the pedagogical function pain that can have both spiritual and liberatory ends. Godón's analysis of this concept becomes a point

of departure for examining the so-called "utility" of pain through the framework of female masochism and in turn, prompting us to rethink the power relations that structure gender in *fin-de-siglo* Spain.

Ambitiously taking on historical formulations of masochism and its afterlife in poststructuralist thought, the introduction provides a robust overview of its cultural significance and theoretical import, while tending to the specificities of Spain and the unique Catholic valorization of pain and abnegation. From there, Godón moves into a multidimensional engagement with masochism, moving from theory to history to literature with great agility.

Chapter One, "Reconsiderando el masoquismo," conceptually anchors the book, deftly weaving historical and theoretical conceptualizations of masochism including Deleuze, Sartre, Weber, Beauvoir and of course Krafft-Ebbing's Venus in Furs (Venus de las pieles). Godón never loses sight of the text in question and is careful to guide the reader back to the *La Regenta* and the context of Catholic Spain where notions of self-punishment and abnegation prove central to her reading of how masochism's theatricality—public displays of pain and suffering—places it squarely in the realm of performance. It is ultimately masochisim's performative function, Godón suggests, that opens up new avenues for subversive plays of power, crucial to our understanding of gendered subjection.

Chapter two, "Yo tu esclavo y tu mi amo," reconsiders Ana's willful subjection to Fermín de Pas in the letters she composes to him signed "su esclava." Godón recasts these letters as a kind of masochistic contract that subverts the roles of gender and brilliantly parodies the Rousseauian social contract. Chapter three, "La pasión extraviada," further extends the analysis of the masochistic contract and, crucially, Fermín's abandonment of its terms. Anchoring the analysis in the oft-commented Holy Week procession, Godón reconsiders Ana's performance of humiliation, and ultimately makes a case for how the misuse of the contract exposes the failures of "compañerismo" and the ideal gender roles it subtends. The chapter's close returns to the pedagogic function of pain (Arenal), emphasizing how masochism takes the politics of submission to an extreme in order to expose its failures. The final chapter, "El imperio masoquista en la madre iglesia," turns to the figure of doña Paula as a feminized and subversive incarnation of ecclesiastical power. According to Godón,

non-eroticized or asexual mothers have been left out of masochistic equations. The author goes on to make the case for doña Paula as an imperatrix—in juxtaposition to the dominatrix—a phallic mother whose authoritative reach extends to her acquiescing children. The end features an appendix of masochistic contracts and provides a shocking and tantalizing window into masochism's historical manifestations.

In sum, *La pasión esclava* provides a new and daring take on *La Regenta*, opening up new possibilities for our understanding of gender and power in and beyond Alas's novel.

Adam Grener. ***Improbability, Chance, and the Nineteenth-Century Realist Novel.*** Ohio State UP, 2020. 198p.

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From the fractals gracing the cover to the methodical statistical analysis of chance and coincidence within the works of key nineteenth century artists, Adam Grener's *Improbability, Chance, and the Nineteenth-Century Realist Novel* reveals a new method for understanding realism in fiction by demonstrating the shift to social and historical aspects of probability that underpin the period's use of chance, coincidence, and statistical anomalies within the novel. Grener approaches his argument regarding narrative probability through close reading of notable works by Jane Austen, Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, and Thomas Hardy. He interprets those evidentiary texts through application of philosophical contexts of the emerging statistical theories of that century, which create subjective states of knowing, or objective analysis of frequencies of causal events in the lives of the characters and plots discussed. Furthermore, he traces the denotative transformation of "chance" and "probability" from their originally synonymous meanings at the beginning of the nineteenth century to incongruous terms that stand in opposition to one another by the century's close. To demonstrate this epistemic metamorphosis and its influence on nineteenth century realism, Grener draws connections between the artistic works of his study and the scientific discourse of the period to conclude that the realist novel's fascination with coincidence, chance, and the improbable stems from the shifts in the

foundations of probability that resulted from scientific progress. In turn, Grener provides the field a much-needed corrective lens for criticism and examination of causality in the nineteenth century novel.

Improbability, Chance, and the Nineteenth-Century Realist Novel finds its strength in the grounding of its historical contexts that support the author's aim. As it traces the development of statistical philosophies beginning with the influences of Aristotle's *Poetics* to Laplace's *Probabilities* and Venn's *Logic of Chance*, each chapter carefully substantiates how scientific probability develops alongside the realist novel as a means for representing the causal effects of human affairs. Grener rightly demonstrates that chance in terms of meetings or events within realist fiction reinforces the interconnectedness of social existence as he explicates Charles Dicken's *Martin Chuzzlewit* in the third chapter. Yet, his strongest arguments are made in chapters 4 and 5, where he proves how emerging laws of statistical probability infiltrate the works of Anthony Trollope and Thomas Hardy respectively. Grener points to the ideas of representation and sampling, as well as Darwinian theories of variation and determination prevalent during the nineteenth century. By drawing attention to the manner in which characters are defined by their social status and spatial location, Grener establishes that the characters' actions and the events executed through plot are due to conditioned behavior more so than ratios of probable outcomes that control the characters' choices. Cloaked by these artists as incidents of "chance," "coincidence," and "risk," the author proves that realist fictional narratives use probability to engage in political reform, social identity, and cultural representation.

With regard to the shortcomings of the work, Grener reveals one in the second chapter's discussion on the link between cultural representation and Otherness. The reader may encounter some difficulty eschewing the logical connections Grener attempts within the chapter as he explores Sir Walter Scott's "The Two Drovers" as a reading of chance that illustrates historical/cultural otherness, pointing directly to causal ambiguity as the primary driver of his premise. In the story, Robin Oig receives a detailed prophecy from Janet warning him that if he goes south into England, he will kill an Englishman and face execution. Grener accurately draws the conclusion that Robin's Scottish identity stands in opposition with the English legal code, creating the sense of otherness that is tied to that identity as a Scottish

Highlander during his fateful conflict with the Englishman Harry. Grener's argument regarding causal ambiguity deteriorates due to his assumption that the causal relationship is ambiguous. Understanding the cultural/historical, but more importantly, the political contexts surrounding Scott's fictional work actually creates a direct causal relationship. Enmity between Highlander and English especially before, during, and directly after the '45 Rising was palpable, making Robin Oig's action in the alehouse a logical, rational outcome due to cultural/ political factors. Yet, the remaining evidence as Grener constructs it does support his argument that Scott's "The Two Drovers" stands as a testimony to cultural otherness.

Overall, *Improbability, Chance, and the Nineteenth Century Realist Novel* breaks new ground and forges a much-needed path for evaluating fictional realism. It brilliantly delineates how nineteenth century realist novelists use chance and coincidence to explore cultural, social, and historical dimensions and questions of the period. Through close examination of works by Austen, Scott, Dickens, Trollope, and Hardy (artists who embedded coincidence, improbability, and chance in their story arcs) paired with contextual application of statistical theories, Grener establishes a new tool for the formative evaluation of causality in the nineteenth century novel.

Erin James and Eric Morel, eds. ***Environment and Narrative: New Directions in Econarratology***. Ohio State UP, 2020. 224p.

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This essay collection is suited for students and scholars of narrative theory and/or ecocriticism who are looking for methods to blend the two seemingly disparate lenses. Part of The Ohio State University Press's *Theory and Interpretation of Narrative* series, it is no surprise to see arguments rooted in the work of its prolific co-editors and eminent narrative studies scholars James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz. The inclusion of well-respected ecocritical scholars like Greg Garrard and Ursula Heise bolsters the volume's heft along with its formulation of questions that drive each chapter. For instance, in *Postcolonial Green: Environmental Politics and World Narratives* (2010), Heise urges

readers to attend to the "aesthetic transformation of the real" to better understand and even remake the "ecosocial imaginary" (258). In Markku Lehtimäki's words, "the rhetorical emphasis in narrative studies can also be seen in the service of ecocritical or other politically engaged literary studies" (87). This collection responds to reading narrative as transformative and to envisioning ecocriticism as an evolving but committed praxis.

Grounded in questions raised by Monica Fludernik's and Jan Alber's works, Hegglund's chapter opens section one, "Narratology and the Nonhuman," with the natural and the unnatural not as binary opposites but as a method for reframing questions around mimesis, emergent agency, and "the contingency of the 'human' as a narratological category" (43). In his study of VanderMeer's *Annihilation*, Hegglund argues that boundaries are blurred between real world and impossible storyworld, which he coins as "weird storyworld" for a narrative that refutes the subject/object divide for a hybrid emergent ontology. While methodically outlining how object-oriented plots decenter human realities, Caracciolo's case study stretches narratology practice to concern itself with the intertwining of human experiences and nonhuman phenomena in *Underworld* and *Babel*.

In the second section, "Econarratological Rhetoric and Ethics," authors Morel, Lehtimäki, and Garrard draw heavily on Phelan's narratology influence. Morel's chapter opens with a practical interrogation of how Rabinowitz's rules can be useful to gauge readers' reactions to climate change and how climate change might influence reading. Revisiting Twain's paratext of *The American Claimant* and responding to reader-writer reactions in contemporary print culture such as *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times,* Morel makes a clear case for infusing econarratology with rhetorical narrative theory lexicon and practices as climate change is continually interpreted by readers who bring their contextual framework to older and newer texts. Lehtimäki reads McEwan's *Solar* as a "metarhetorical narrative about climate change," claiming that literary fictions abet insights into the rhetoric around climate change. Garrard's analysis of Richard Powers's novel *Gain* offers a model for bringing Phelan's "ethics of telling" to the forefront of ecocritical studies; focusing on the story's formal components, Garrard illustrates the dilemma of responding ethically to texts that do not narratively offer a pat moralism.

In the third and final section, "Anthropocene Storyworlds," the authors draw upon the cognitive narratology scholarship of David Herman, Marie-Laure Ryan, and Erin James. Von Mossner builds on cognitive narratology and examines the role of embodied simulation and character empathy to understand the reciprocal relationships between characters and narrative environs. She argues that readers sense and feel along with Babb's prairie protagonists because literary works "evoke virtual environments in emotionally salient ways" (144). Next, Low recognizes that narrative has played a significant role in perpetuating the notion of the prairie as barren; interested in restoration ecology, he pairs fieldwork with narrative theory for the reconstruction of the prairie ecosystem and prairie storyworld. Distinguishing it from Trexler's Anthropocene fiction, Bracke defines climate fiction (or cli-fi) as novels that paint climate change and crisis; the genre underscores the familiarity of the textual world to the real world that results in defamiliarization. With a stress on the telling and its form, she argues that how we tell the story of environmental crisis abets how humans can respond to it. In the final chapter, James's returns to a wider lens and calls for an "Anthropocene narrative theory" and its attendant questions for new structures and new readings of agency.

In practice, *Environment and Narrative* proposes econarratological modes of reading, which include transmedial scholarship and the role of nonlinguistic cues in cinema and comix to elicit empathy in nonhuman subjects and/or narrative agents. Versed in the diverse strains and topics of ecocriticism, the chapters reverberate in narratological dialogue with each other and their respective theoretical models for reading. These essays also reinforce the need for narratives (in all its forms) to deliver the problem of climate change to its human audience. Heise's "Afterword" reinforces the value of literature to "mobilize affect" and econarratology's critical role in "mapping" stories (210). The question, as this timely collection shows, is not whether literature can accurately represent or solve ecological problems, but that it records and proposes insights into humans' relationships to other beings and the world (and storyworlds) in how the stories are told.

Isiah Lavender III and Lisa Yaszek, eds. ***Literary Afrofuturism in the Twenty-First Century.*** Ohio State UP, 2020. 264p.

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Feminist Stand-Point theory continues to gain acceptance in academic circles amidst a burgeoning scholarly movement dedicated to the demands for inclusivity in higher education. This theory is mainly used to analyze inter-subjective discourse. The overarching premise centers on the thought that knowledge is socially situated, and the most marginalized voices are valuable locales of knowledge production. *Literary Afrofuturism in the Twenty-First Century* parallels the Stand-Point theory in that it solicits the writings of one the most marginalized populations, black science fiction writers, to define and explain Afrofuturism through a critical black lens. Editors Isiah Lavender III and Lisa Yaszek employ a diverse assemblage of black science fiction writers to provide critical analysis of the systematic layered nuances of racism in the genre of Science Fiction (SF). They contend that: "This anthology is designed to introduce readers to Afrofuturism as an aesthetic practice that enables artists to communicate the experience of science, technology, and race across centuries, continents, and cultures" (1). *Literary Afrofuturism* offers two fundamental objectives: first, a means to widen the current scope of SF actors, accomplices, and allies; and second, a scathing examination of the historical marginalization of black authors' ideas and accomplishments in SF.

To define one's identity remains a prerequisite for self-determination. Afrofuturism symbolizes the on-ramp for black authors to "reboot the black identity, challenge white supremacy, and imagine a range of futures in full color" (1). Wrought with an imaginative and exacting posture, *Literary Afrofuturism* takes on the task of re-defining Afrofuturism that challenges its mainstream definition and origin. Many SF consumers and critiques credit Mark Dey, a white cultural critic, with coining the term Afrofuturism in the early 1990s. According to Dey, "Afrofuturism is a process of signification that appropriates images of technology and the prosthetically-enhanced

future to address the concerns people of color face in contemporary culture" (3). This definition stands as the fundamental pillar of how a significant portion of white artists identify with Afrofuturism. The editors remind readers that a ubiquitous phobia exists within the industry's central zone of power that believes black writers will ruin SF's enjoyment by critically examining pressing social justice issues. This anthology underlines how Afrofuturism can become a remedy to disrupt the dominant narrative by embracing a more balanced and inclusive focus on black humanity when defined by progressive black artists.

Literary Afrofuturism explores distressing concepts of white privilege in SF by taking readers on a comprehensive excursion by black SF writers who make empirical arguments about the lack of depth and veracity concerning Afrofuturism's definition. From a medley of skillfully written narratives by prominent SF writers, a core group of notable themes emerges: (1) the current definition marginalizes the diverse paradigms, theories, and talents of black SF artists; (2) it is a filter that systematically excludes individuality; and (3) it does not possess the propensity to liberate the dominant pop-culture consciousness from its racist nature. Minister Faust provides an analysis that uncovers the lack of pragmatic utility of the term Afrofuturism, "much of Africentric fantasy is set in the past or the present, not in the future, which makes the term Afrofuturism a failure from the start" (27). Nisi Shawal finds the term a convenient marketing tool, while Nick Wood deems it a conceptual umbrella that encompasses the "African diaspora in North America" (28).

Although Afrofuturism finds considerable public criticism from black SF practitioners, it directly holds value for black authors. It widens the customary roster of contributors by giving palpable agency to women writers. Andrea Hariston and others now wear the title "Dangerous Muses" due to their devotion to adding an all-important aesthetic lens that eradicates the traditional boundaries assigned to women SF authors. "They are dangerous to the status quo, destroying the old temple images of the golden past, and are stealthily building the world anew in their own remarkable image" (36). The thread that links the growth of the importance of women writers and Afrofuturism lies in how their work continues to inspire future generations of young women writers, "a new renaissance, a reemergence of Afrofuturism in

all its forms" (36). Following Octavia E. Butler's incomparable legacy, contemporary women SF authors alter the established narrative by offering untold stories and erasing their invisibility.

Literary Afrofuturism's significance and impact lie in its scathing critique of the complex and unsettling nature of SF's institutional racism while providing a diverse blueprint for the amelioration of these problems from a resolute black perspective. In sum, notwithstanding pragmatic amendments to Afrofuturism's definition and scope, it poignantly analyzes a tragic past but directs readers to a future with the potential to inject esoteric storylines that diminish the anti-blackness in SF.

E. Nicole Meyer and Joyce Johnston, eds. ***Rethinking the French Classroom: New Approaches to Teaching Contemporary French and Francophone Women***. Routledge, 2019. 165p.

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The title, *Rethinking the French Classroom: New Approaches to Teaching Contemporary French and Francophone Women,* attracts readers, who, like so many of "today's French instructors must be prepared to teach outside of the French classroom. We are challenged to reinvent how we teach along with what we teach" (1). The volume, expertly edited by E. Nicole Meyer and Joyce Johnston, responds to this need in four parts, each with four or five articles.

Their Introduction details the overall structure and the importance of each article, addressing immediately the reader's first questions of *Why?* and *How?*. Instead of dwelling on the negative circumstances that render French "an embattled language in the States, despite its cultural, literary, and linguistic prominence across the world" (1), the editors provide much-needed solutions, and "concrete strategies for teaching difference and diversity at all levels of the French classroom, as well as tools to promote their programs on campus" (1).

Part 1, "Exploring Identities/Exploring the Self: French Literature and Women's Studies in the Twenty-First Century," brings together four articles. Eilene Hoft-March justifies studying languages and literature: "being able to make sense of human beings is an

invaluable (read also: commodifiable) ability" (13). Articles by E. Nicole Meyer, Alison Rice, and Dawn M. Cornelio note the value of studying autobiographies, focusing on questions of identity and authenticity, both of which are pertinent to our society.

In part 2, "New beginnings, New Horizons: Women Writers in Beginning and Intermediate French Classes," the articles by Sage Goellner and Elizabeth Berglund Hall are increasingly relevant with a focus on online course structure and e-journaling, respectively. Joyce Johnston articulates ways to link advanced learners to beginners, inspiring us to bridge "the gap in contemporary language teaching" (62). Natalie Edwards and Christopher Hogarth present a course in which "the literary text [is] at the center" which "push[es] students to learn about the language and culture at the same time, rather than by introducing a false dichotomy between them" (70). This second section gives specific examples that support French instructors who wish to move beyond dichotomies of mode of teaching—online or in-person, of linguistic levels—beginner or advanced, and of content—linguistic or cultural.

Five authors contribute to, "Colonial and Postcolonial French Women Writers: Teaching Diversity on Shifty Ground." In the course he proposes, Laurence M. Porter introduces a diversity of writers from across the postcolonial Francophone world "to dissociate the issues of gender and postcolonial identity construction from a specific location, and to introduce students to the wide varieties of postcolonial feminist writing" (80). Rebecca E. Léal advocates an analysis of the shifting definition of "French" which shapes her course on "Multicultural Identities and Gender in Contemporary French Literature" (95). Florina Matu speaks of "disrupt[ing] stereotypes associated with Algerian women" (105) with strategies for teaching Algerian literature and film. Eric Touya de Marenne specifically responds to what he sees as the need for higher education "to offer alternative ways of thinking, [to] challenge ways of knowing, [to] interrogate sources of information, and [to] create a context for counternarrative" (111). These articles propose specific examples—ranging from detailed syllabus descriptions to theoretical approaches and reading material—to help French instructors address potential lacunae in their courses.

Responding to a desire for interdisciplinarity, the fourth part "Interdisciplinary Approaches to French Studies", brings the

French classroom together with the fields of Criminal Justice (Araceli Hernández-Laroche), History (Courtney Sullivan and Kerry Wynn), Music (Arline Cravens), and Queer Studies (CJ Gomolka), as well as incorporating French in boarder courses in institutions where there is no French major or minor (Shira Weidenbaum). All these fields, and others, as Hernández-Laroche indicates, gain "with the integration of languages, cultures, and world literatures" (121). Weidenbaum, as well as Sullivan and Wynn, push students beyond their comfort zones by discussing unlikable female characters and WWII films and their representation of women, respectively. Cravens conveys the need for this interdisciplinarity "to aid humanity as a guide in attaining understanding and enlightenment by establishing connections to our world and with others… to express and bring about harmony" (148). Gomolka speaks to a need for inclusion which "promotes interdepartmental and intercultural connections that can be leveraged within and without French and Francophone studies to more fully understand the pluralistic modes of being of LGBTQ persons of the past, and those of today, in and outside of the Francophone world" (150).

The articles specifically demonstrate 1) why interdisciplinarity, diversity, creativity, and self-discovery are crucial to *rethinking the French classroom*, and 2) how to actually do it, showing concrete strategies and ideas, instead of vague notions. The editors say it best: "Teaching matters. Teaching French and Francophone women's texts (in the largest possible sense of the word) matters" (1). This reviewer would add that these conversations, and this volume, matter.

Viet Thanh Nguyen. ***The Committed.*** Grove Atlantic Press, 2021. 345p.

Pamela J. Rader
Georgian Court University

A sequel to the Pulitzer-winning *The Sympathizer, The Committed* picks up with our anonymous narrator who wryly calls himself Vo Danh, punning on Odysseus's Nobody and commenting on dehumanized, nameless modern refugees. He alerts his readers that he pens this second manuscript in Paradise. After their re-education under the

auspices of the Commissar, the narrator and Bon, his anti-communist "best friend and blood brother," weather an Indonesian refugee camp for two years before gaining entry to France in the early 1980s. Still a man of two minds and ex-double agent, our narrator earns his existential epithet of Camus, but cannot shake the one suggested by his half-white-French and half-Vietnamese body: a bastard. This slur is metonymic of the novel's central questions about colonization, its violent legacy, and the identity crisis of the colonial subject, now a refugee. While the term insults its bearer, it raises the question of principles and commitment; white male colonizers and slave owners have left a trail of irresponsibility to their unclaimed sons and daughters. The doubling of father—progenitor and priest—is problematic for this anonymous narrator; with the obvious breach of celibacy, the father fails to name his son, calling him "you," and represents the colonist who fails to acknowledge (or atone for) the subjugation and othering of Vietnamese people.

This novel moves away from the American war in Vietnam and into discourse about colonialism, capitalism, and cultural imperialism as its narrator navigates his Boss's drug and prostitution spheres, the intellectual and political elite of his *faux* aunt's circle, and the Parisian community of Vietnamese-French. For instance, mass-produced commodities, like aviator sunglasses and Italian shoes, become material and ideological sites of conflict for the narrator. While the sunglasses serve as a mask, the shoes ironically save his life. A VIP neo-colonial orgy arranged by the Boss provides another stage for interrogating the white overculture's fantasy of controlling the master narrative to marginalize the refugee and non-white French national's place in this society.

In the narrator's reclamation of various subject pronouns and his inchoate verbal mania, I see reverberations of Fanon's fissiparousness, which are accentuated by the narrator's need for the drugs he sells. The collective "we" of the refugees seeking recognition and rescue at the novel's opening shifts to the "me," "myself," and "I" of the fractured self. And the split "you" wants to explore the *tu* and *vous* of the colonizer's language. While I understand the importance of examining the various voices of the narrating colonial subject, this confession flirts with navel-gazing (perhaps unavoidably) as it considers some important ideas. It pays homage to Voltaire's critique

of human suffering at the hands of other humans, Beckett's theatre of the absurd where nothing happens, and Sartre's *littérature engagée*. If *The Sympathizer* explores the colonial subject's quandary of self-representation, its sequel values the perspectives of the colonized.

Nguyen's cast of characters exposes the dialectic between refugees of the colonial diaspora as well as the white French, like the politician known by his monogram "BFD" and "the Maoist Ph.D." In his high-risk position as a drug dealer, the Vietnamese-born-American-educated narrator relies upon his invisibility (and sexual impotence) as a non-threatening Asian male to move through various circles in Paris. When Vo Danh meets "the eschatological muscle" of the brothel Heaven, who is French-born to Senegalese parents, he reads what the muscle reads: Césaire's *A Tempest* and other primers on colonialism. These encounters in 1980s Paris foreshadow the rise of FN and Le Pen and the tense climate for the non-white French who become known by their racial epithets. In one of the more disturbing but droll scenes between the narrator and "Mona Lisa," a competitor in the drug underworld, the French North African dealer teaches the narrator various racial epithets to supplement "Arab," and they bond over their otherness in the colonizer's tongue. As a Vietnamese man, the narrator learns that Asians in Paris are all called *chinois*, even if they are not remotely Chinese. A polyglot, our narrating refugee-writer relishes the sport of double-entendres, the vernacular *verlan*, and tone, whose cross-cultural and cross-linguistic play creates some humorous moments.

Nguyen's novel is a political novel for the twenty-first century; it demands that its readers respond to and eschew indifference. While I am not as interested in the violent plotline of the drug underworld, the scatological details of canines or humans, or the various scenes of male characters performing (or questioning) masculinity, I respect an ambitious novel that inspires one to read from the French language tradition where topics of inequality, injustices, race, and power are still relevant today. Even as Fanon wrestled with Négritude's essentializing qualities, he saw value in its proponents' promotion of self-determination and self-love.

The Committed furthers the existential question through its dramatic use of being held at gunpoint; in the face of death, does one gain insight, or does life's meaning become clearer? Perhaps.

Or, perhaps it is as Vo Danh claims: "nothing is sacred." In spirit, the narrator invokes Fanon's final secular prayer from *Black Skin, White Masks*: "O my body, always make me a man who questions." This exiled-narrator's skepticism makes me curious about his next installment: will he resolve his external and internal conflicts to find a home in his writings?

Lee Chancey Olsen, Brendan Johnston, and Ann Keniston, editors. ***Ethics After Poststructuralism: A Critical Reader.*** McFarland & Company, 2020, 283p.

Lucien Darjeun Meadows
University of Denver

How do we—ethically—relate to the Other? Does the category of "the Other" still hold valence in contemporary critical conversations? Who, for that matter, counts as "we"? How can scholars advance an ethics that resists grand narratives, an ethics that offers planet-wide relevance, and an ethics that opens considerations of human, animal, and ecological sentience? In *Ethics After Poststructuralism*, editors Lee Olsen, Brendan Johnston, and Ann Keniston offer a robust critical reader centered around Emmanuel Levinas's ethical philosophies as a pathway toward exploring these important questions.

These editors balance their text in a complex space. They offer an inclusive anthology of "ethics after poststructuralism" —a wide field, potentially including philosophers across the world from the 1960s onward—yet they use one significant philosopher, Levinas, as the fulcrum, with inclusions serving to interrogate and advance, to "counter and extend" what they term Levinasian ethics (8). The editors admit that "Levinas never aligned himself with the poststructuralist movement as such" (15), and this categorization is due to subsequent scholars (e.g. Jacques Derrida and Simon Critchley). However, their decision to focus on Levinasian ethics opens a dynamic space for applying his ethics, particularly his assertion that the source of all ethical praxis is in one's relationship with the "vulnerable Other" (3), across a wide range of disciplines and fields, including: relational theory, psychology, politics, postcolonialism, decoloniality, posthumanism, animal studies, ecology, and more.

Ethics After Postcolonialism organizes sixteen chapters into four sections: "Hospitality and Responsibility for the Other," "States of Exception," "Decoloniality and Ethics," and "Posthuman Ethics." The selection mindfully includes woman-identified philosophers (almost 40% of the total contributors) and philosophers from nations beyond the United States (e.g. Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia, and Turkey). Scholars and students are likely to recognize several names—Rosi Braidotti, Judith Butler, Derrida, Michel Foucault, Walter D. Mignolo, and, of course, Levinas—but many will welcome the opportunity to engage with lesser known or emerging philosophers, like Mary Bunch and Madina V. Tlostanova.

In a growing textbook and research market, instructors and researchers alike will enjoy inclusions largely from 2000 onward, and scholars looking for deeper investigations will appreciate that many are condensed versions that originally appeared as articles or book chapters. "Suggested Further Reading" directs readers to a range of anthologies, books, and themed journal issues. Most are for explicitly Levinasian scholarship, which reaffirms the anthology's slant, but even so, the editors include Levinasian and broader materials on biopolitics, ethics, politics, postcolonialism, psychoanalysis, and trauma studies.

Witnessing the strong focus on Levinas, this reader was grateful to see how the invited scholars resonate with Levinas and challenge and complicate his ethical philosophy. For these reasons, the chapters in the "Decoloniality and Ethics" section were particularly engaging, since they bring African, Central American, European, and South American perspectives to Levinas's Eurocentric scholarship. For example, in their collaborative article, Madina V. Tlostanova and Walter Mignolo push against Levinas's potentially reductive formulation of Same and Other. They extend this conversation from the colonialist formulations and decolonialist implications of labeling humans as Same or Other, to the ecological implications and ethical questions of seeing the Same as *humanitas*, or fully-human, and the Other as *anthropos*, or less-than-human (157). In another chapter, Nelson Maldonado-Torres questions Levinas's infamous 1961 essay describing, "The yellow peril! […] it is spiritual," his 1986 statement that "humanity consists of the Bible and the Greeks," and other manifestations of what Maldonado-Torres terms Levinas's "hegemonic identity politics" (173), interrogating Levinas's problematic assertions by going beyond

the still-dualistic formations of Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek to advance the philosophies of Frantz Fanon and to offer a means toward more sophisticated conceptualizations of alterity and decolonialist humanities.

Further, many contributors reference the theories of other contributors to the volume, such as Mari Ruti's challenge to Judith Butler's "flight from a priori norms" in her theorization of the Other (69), and Mary Bunch's application of Rosi Braidotti's feminist scholarship to "post-subject politics" (222). These conversations across chapters, together with the anthology's larger dialogue around Levinas's ethics of the Other, generate a rich web of interdisciplinary connections likely to inspire future conversation, research, and publication.

John Pier, ed. ***Contemporary French and Francophone Narratology***. Ohio State UP, 2020. 237p.

E. Nicole Meyer
Augusta University

John Pier's collection of diverse essays, written primarily by French colleagues, is designed "to take the pulse of recent developments in narratological research in the French-speaking countries" (1). To best understand narratology's potential, the volume starts with Raphaël Baroni's thorough review of past critical approaches, those of classical French narratology. They question various perspectives (e.g., functionalist, objectivist) as well as narrative form, tension, dynamics of plot, suspense, ideology and more. Sylvie Patron emphasizes the importance of reflecting on the history of linguistic and narrative theories in surveying continuing issues of postulating a narrator. She takes us through the terminology and various discussions over time of the no-narrator and optional narrator theories, marking "an important step in the evolution of narrative theory" (51). Pier's own essay, located in the center, further explores the French perspective toward discourse analysis and narrative theory, considering multiple orientations and frameworks. The tension between *langue* and *parole*, and understanding what compromises narrative itself, underlies all of the essays.

For me, given this thorough grounding in the pivotal work of

the past, the collection provides a wonderful review of my graduate training; oft-cited predecessors include Roland Barthes, Gerard Genette, Émile Benveniste, Ferdinand de Saussure, Algirdas Julien Greimas, etc. Several English-speaking critics, such as Seymour Chatman, Gerald Prince, and Dorrit Cohn, offer robust mutual and/or self-citation of their own work. While at times this use of mutual and/or self-citation feels like an inbred process—Claude Calame manages to cite 12 of his own books and articles—the volume's solid grounding and theorizing on narratology and narrativity provide a wonderful addition to my library and surely that of many others. More important, however, are the interesting viewpoints on the expanding notion of what constitutes narrative and on narrative theory in general. Richard Saint-Gelais's superbly written essay "Narration Outside Narrative" starts with the arresting statement: "A novel is a narrative; it is also a book" (54). In other words, narration, temporal ordering and other aspects of narrating a story must be considered in the context of the material object. Borders become blurred, inside and outside distinctions prove unclear. Diverse and fascinating examples of what narration can be (including Henck Elsinck's *Murder by Fax*'s typographical innovations, as well as a discussion of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and John H.Watson) reveal a "Möbius strip" complexity of both materiality and the enunciation within. Saint-Gervais expands sources to include critics such as Stanley Fish, John R. Searle, and Jean Ricardou as he explores the ambivalent status of interpretation and of its object. Interpreting narrative involves a series of decisions that cause Saint Gervais to propose the notion of *parafictionalization* (65) in this delightful essay.

The volume is impressive in its breadth. Denis Bertrand resorts to the notion of "regimes" of immanence to distinguish narratology and narrativity, while the aforementioned Calame returns to ancient Greek myths as the basis of his discussion. Importantly, several chapters develop narrative discourse beyond standard fictional narrative in fascinating ways. Benoît Hennaut investigates performance and the role of narrator or "postdramatic narrator" in staged productions. Olivier Caïra expands fiction to include interactive digital media—abstract nonmimetic games as well as board and video games. This essay truly encapsulates the "contemporary" component of title and will likely appeal to a large readership due to its expansion not only of narrated

objects, but also of the definition of what constitutes fiction itself. Françoise Revaz's transmedial approach in "The Poetics of Suspended Narrative" proves quite exciting. The notion of suspended narrative relates to discontinuous reading where the outcome of the narration is delayed. Indeed, the fragmented mode of publication imposes a fascinating temporal and spatial discontinuity which raises questions of continuity, cohesion, fragmentation, and what constitutes a whole. Revaz proposes a consideration of "backward-facing" and "forward-facing" "sutures" that further complicate closure in more traditional narratives. For instance, she mentions Ugo Dionne's examination of numbered and titled chapters. Book chapters and comic strips inspire transmedial and generic reconsideration.

Pier arguably saves the tour de force for the end, however. Françoise Lavocat's "Policing Literary Theory: Toward a Collaborative Ethics of Research?" pushes the envelope in her interrogation of narratology's rise as interest in French theory declines. The fall of literary theory results from its violence, what Avital Ronell urged others to join her in doing, "to cause harm to texts." Transfictionality and collaboration expanded to non-Western literatures; media-conscious narratology aids the power of narratology to transform literary studies and literary theory, and thus opens up lasting dialogue. In all, *Contemporary French and Francophone Narratology* provides a cogent overview of narratological terms and practices and makes a strong case for the resurgence and durability of narratology's impact on literary studies and research in literary theory.

Deborah S. Reisinger, Mary Beth Raycraft, and Nathalie Dieu-Porter. ***Affaires globales: S'engager dans la vie professionnelle en français, niveau avancé.*** Georgetown UP, 2021. 240p.

Marie-Line Brunet
Ball State University

Bénédicte Sohier
University of Wyoming

Résolument dans l'air du temps, Affaires globales adopte une approche interdisciplinaire, communicative et actionnelle destinée à des étudiants de niveau intermédiaire-avancé à avancé. Ancré dans la pratique du français sur objectifs spécifiques, le manuel se présente sous forme

de parcours professionnel. Un de ses points forts est l'axe autour duquel l'intégralité du contenu s'organise, à savoir le lancement d'une start-up. Cette idée, novatrice et captivante, favorise le développement des compétences langagières des étudiants de français des affaires, étudiants aux profils fréquemment hétérogènes dans la mesure où ils se destinent à des carrières dans divers domaines. Pour mener à bien ce projet semestriel ou annuel, les étudiants aborderont, par le prisme de sept unités, des thématiques aussi variées qu'originales autour de la recherche d'un emploi, de la communication en entreprise, des relations internationales, du marketing, de la publicité, de la santé, de la diplomatie et des questions de développement durable. Chaque unité comporte du vocabulaire à activer, des tâches professionnelles à accomplir, sans oublier les précieuses questions culturelles et les repères interculturels, le tout permettant aux apprenants de renforcer leur pratique des trois modes de communication (interprétatif, interpersonnel et de présentation) et d'approfondir les savoir-faire acquis dans les unités précédentes.

Visuellement, la palette de couleurs, épurée et agréable à l'œil, dans les tons turquoise et orangées procure une excellente lisibilité des textes. Le peu d' infographies et de photographies disséminées ici et là rendent le manuel verbeux de prime abord, néanmoins, la richesse des activités et documents authentiques (podcasts, articles, entretiens), ainsi que les vidéos disponibles en ligne pallient à la profusion textuelle. Chaque unité offre également aux étudiants la possibilité de s'interroger au fur et à mesure de leurs progrès sur certaines stratégies afin de développer efficacement des compétences transférables. Autre outil pour enrichir l'arsenal des étudiants, l'appendice qui regroupe une panoplie de documents référentiels tels que la lettre de réclamation, la note de synthèse, le compte-rendu d'une intervention orale et qui favorise la constitution d'un portfolio professionnel solide et complet. Enseignants et apprenants apprécieront à n'en point douter l'ouverture sur le monde de l'entreprise francophone grâce aux références aux pratiques professionnelles canadiennes, haïtiennes, belges, ivoiriennes pour ne citer que quelques exemples. À noter toutefois l'emploi de l'appellation passéiste des Départements d'Outre-Mer (DOM) et Territoires d'Outre-Mer (TOM) qui n'existe plus depuis la révision constitutionnelle de 2003 et remplacée par la qualification de Départements ou Régions d'Outre-Mer (DROM) et de Collectivités d'Outre-Mer (COM).

Finalement, et comme il est désormais coutume pour la

majorité des manuels de français sur objectifs spécifiques, l'ouvrage offre une préparation de qualité à tout étudiant désireux de passer un Diplôme de français professionnel (DFP) auprès de la Chambre de Commerce Paris Île-de-France. Côté enseignants, le Guide pédagogique de cinquante-huit pages disponible en ligne propose plusieurs programmes semestriels articulés autour de quinze semaines d'enseignement (en présentiel, distanciel ou hybride), un résumé du contenu et des objectifs des unités, des points de grammaire à réviser, ainsi que de multiples ressources complémentaires et des suggestions de films contemporains afin que l'enseignant puisse concevoir ses propres examens et interrogations. En somme, plus qu'un manuel, *Affaires globales* est certain de devenir un ouvrage de référence incontournable qui accompagnera l'étudiant dans ses pérégrinations professionnelles à travers le monde francophone.

John Savarese. ***Romanticism's Other Minds: Poetry, Cognition, and the Science of Sociability***. Ohio State UP, 2020. 192p.

Sasha Tamar Strelitz
Regis University

Part of our inherited understanding of Romanticism is that poetry exists as ruminations on and exercises of the inner workings of the mind. The movement's fixation on the interior landscape—on thoughts and feelings—took form in the late eighteenth century, drawing influence from earlier movements such as the German *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress). For both the German predecessor and its more broadly European successor, the shift towards emotion was a purposeful resistance to the Enlightenment's staunch adherence to reason. Romantics preferred Maine de Biran's turn of René Descartes' rationalist statement *Cogito, ergo sum*" ("I think, therefore I am")—*Volo, egro sum* ("I will/desire, therefore I am"). But, what if our inherited knowledge of Romanticism divorces its fidelity to the sciences? What if Romantic poetry functioned as a sort of response to the early cognitive sciences? John Savarese's *Romanticism's Other Minds: Poetry, Cognition, and the Science of Sociability* strives to reinscribe the relationship between Romanticism and science.

His book-length recovery of Romanticism's interrelation with the sciences takes an interdisciplinary approach to reading Romantic poetry with keen awareness of its ties specifically to the

early cognitive approaches produced contemporarily with the artistic movement. Savarese shows that Romanticism's interrelation with science "reinforce[s] the Romantic idea that poetry was most at home in the inward domain of thought and feeling" (2). After all, cognitive functions include but are not limited to emotions.

With his focuses on James Macphereson, Anna Letitia Barbauld, William Wordsworth, and Walter Scott, Savarese reinforces the notion that early cognitive approaches to poetry are more diverse than remembered by post-Romantic inheritors. By reading these poets' work through a cognitivist lens, which he claims recovers Romanticism's own "cross-disciplinary 'turn to phenomenality'," Savarese spotlights the close relationship between the science of sensation and Romantic poetry (Richard Sha qtd. in Savarese 2). His resuscitation diverges from our inherited understanding of Romanticism, as the book traces and investigates the movement's "exploration of interiority [as] thoroughly enmeshed in the emerging language of physiological psychology and the embodied mind," which was not faithfully transmitted through time by the post-Romantic memory (2).

As featured in the title, "other's minds" and "science of sociability" are central to Savarese's inquiry. In the introduction, he points to the post-1980s "cognitive turn" in literary studies, or what Lisa Zunshine previously termed as "cognitive cultural studies" as central to his methodology (7). Using cognitive cultural studies as a theoretical gateway, Savarese reimagines Romantic literature as scientifically-informed accounts focused on the mind's social powers—social powers that are understood as in-built or natural. Therefore, the poetry not only elicits from private consciousness, but also the mind's social powers as related to the social contexts the person involves herself in. In other words, Savarese troubles the notion that Romantic poetry elicits solely from introspection or affective intensity, but instead he posits that it relied on "*social* intelligence[…]social recognition, agent tracking, and perspective-taking" (4). For instance, the chapter on Wordsworth applies the previously established cognitivist methodology to poetic moments in order to better understand the poet's own assertion that Nature, or larger yet, his external environment played an active role on his mental life (106). By understanding the mental structures Wordsworth built to process the world around him—"These chiefly are such structures as the mind / Builds for itself"—through the cognitivist lens Savarese offers, the reader rethinks the external location of the poet's creative

agency in Nature (Wordsworth qtd. in Savarese 131).

The central purpose of *Romanticism's Other Minds* is to offer a prehistory of cognitive approaches to literature in order to reinscribe the fact that Romanticism was born alongside a fledgling cognitive science. Therefore, the book is a recovery project whose methodology is borrowed from Alan Richardson, who applies neuroscience in *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*, which is itself a project of "*cognitive historicism*—a method that looks to contemporary cognitive science as a way to strengthen the historicist project rather than to challenge it" (12). Throughout his five chapters, Savarese shows how the poetry emphasizes the impersonal, the intersubjective, and the collective by explaining with modern scientific terms the same arguments Romantics were making in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Lewis Turco. ***The Book of Forms: A Handbook of Poetics,*** Fifth Edition. U of New Mexico P, 2020. 431p.

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University of Wyoming

For fifty years, poets, teachers and students have relied upon *The Book of Forms: A Handbook of Poetics* to provide definitions, explanations, and examples of formal structures of verse written in English from classical times through the Middle Ages to the present. Comparatists who write and study poetry in other languages will also enjoy the commonalities and shared origins from Italian, French, Spanish, Welsh, and Irish works. True to its subtitle, the handbook's handy "form finder index" lists over three hundred traditional forms, based on meter, rhyme scheme, and stanza or poem lines (91). More than a glossary or reference book, this up-to-the minute fifth edition goes well beyond enumerating and defining poetic forms. Its detailed and often humorous clarifications and examples from centuries of poets, as well as a good dose from the author himself, inspire readers to investigate and immerse themselves in poetry.

Poetry, Turco tells us, is "the *art* of *language*." He identifies the *levels* of language usage: typography (how words are distributed on the page); sound (rhyme, meter, phrasing); tropes (figures of speech that appeal to all sensory modes); and theme. To bring them to life, the

author delights in engaging his own art of language and narrating with clever double entendre and internal rhyme. For instance, to interpret Mawr's twelfth-century Welsh "To a Girl" who has spurned a lover, Turco vividly draws a picture: "the suitor is 'cut dead'—he is no *more* than a shadow lying flat on the *floor…Mawr* does no *more* with this image" (53—italics mine). Mawr may not do more, but through his spry and sly intervention, Turco gives us Mawr and more. Teachers and students will appreciate not only basic information about poetic components, but also the careful and entertaining evaluations of how and why they work.

More than three hundred pages are dedicated to "traditional verse forms," divided by genre into dramatic (tragedy, comedy, monologue, dialogue, soliloquy), lyric, and narrative poetry (ballad, romance), with alphabetized definitions and illustrations. Lyric receives the lion's share of attention, detailing hundreds of variants, with added discussions of voicing since lyric poems (songs) are in subjective voice, while narrative uses objective, and dramatic verse employs dramatic voice—of course, all can allow combinations. The real treasure gleams through the examples, from Anonymous Welsh medieval versifiers, to Emily Dickenson, to Walt Whitman, to the author himself. In an oft-played trick, Lewis Turco particularly indulges Wesli Court with long citations of frequently ribald original poems that perfectly demonstrate the concepts. Who is this Wesli Court? Hint, hint: see "acrostic" (128). If I may offer my own Spanish bilingual acrostic, I would tell you this is a Wise Truco!

Poets and soon-to-be poets will find a wealth of inspiration in these structures and samples, for they challenge us to play. Try writing a cross-rhymed, alliterated Irish séadna, an enjambed sestina, an aubade (alba) for morning, or an elegy for mourning, or cut up words and rearrange them randomly into "Dada" poems. Turco dedicates *The Book of Forms* "to my students and formalist friends past, present, and future." Don't just use it as a reference, read it from beginning to end, and you too will be a formalist friend.

Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh. ***The Missing Pages: The Modern Life of a Medieval Manuscript, from Genocide to Justice***. Stanford UP, 2019. 402 p.

Helen Makhdoumian
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

The Missing Pages: The Modern Life of a Medieval Manuscript, from Genocide to Justice (2019) is in part the narrative of Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, who defies an implied expectation in the academy: that an art historian's role is not to intervene in a legal matter involving a museum or controversies surrounding art. Aware of precisely this reaction to her 2010 op-ed about the litigation of the Zeytun Gospels, Watenpaugh frames the volume with a Prologue and an Epilogue that articulate why she retraced the steps of this manuscript illuminated by Toros Roslin, a renowned artist of medieval Armenian art. That history includes how the Canon Tables were separated from what she calls the mother manuscript housed in the Mesrob Mashtots Institute for Ancient Manuscripts (known as the Matenadaran) in Yerevan, Armenia and how these separated folios entered The J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. The Zeytun Gospels made headlines in June 2010 when the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America brought a lawsuit against the museum and accused it of holding a sacred object vandalized and plundered during the Armenian Genocide. *The Missing Pages*, then, also provides an overview of the court case proceedings, the settlement, and its implications for provenance, reparations, and the adjudication of crimes against cultural heritage.

Each chapter of the main text focuses on a stop on the seven-century long journey taken by the Zeytun Gospels: Hromkla, Zeytun, Marash, Aleppo, New York, Yerevan, and Los Angeles. Beyond tracing this medieval manuscript's modern history, Watenpaugh seeks to illustrate the "webs of relationships, emotions, deeds and misdeeds, and pious, sacrilegious, rapacious, and creative acts that unfolded around it" (47). One way the author achieves this is by introducing each chapter with a brief narrative set in the moment that the manuscript rested in that particular location. To frame the chapter on the origins of the manuscript, for instance, Watenpaugh imagines for readers a scene in

which Roslin, described as a scribe hunched over his work, writes the colophon in the scriptorium in Hromkla in 1256 and signs his name. Watenpaugh deftly synthesizes archival documents, her own fieldwork in the present, critical scholarship, and documents in legal proceedings to introduce readers to a transnational network of individuals involved in safeguarding the manuscript.

The Missing Pages, however, is more than just the journey of the author as she retraces the steps of the Zeytun Gospels. It is also more than just the "biography of a manuscript that is at once art, sacred object, and cultural heritage," as the blurb on the front book flap indicates. That is, Watenpaugh proffers a useful concept in the study of materiality when it comes to questions of trauma and memory: survivor objects. Survivor objects "symbolize violence but also survival and resilience" (40). The Zeytun Gospels exemplify the work of survivor objects insofar as the pages shaped the way that Armenians in the wake of genocide and exile reconstructed their identities. Furthermore, Watenpaugh argues that this illuminated manuscript "experienced the Armenian Genocide and bears the mark of its violence" (40). The author develops this argument by referencing the words of an Armenian bishop who visited Armenian refugee communities in Syria and Lebanon in 1923. Watenpaugh asserts that the bishop viewed the thousands of orphans he met and the illuminated manuscripts he came across as both survivors. He also drew parallels between the destruction of the Armenian community with the destruction of art. Informed by the writings of contemporaneous witnesses who conceived of cultural objects as witnesses to devastation and resilience, Watenpaugh goes on to demonstrate that critical study of survivor objects like the Zeytun Gospels can offer a more holistic understanding about the issues of cultural heritage and the role of the cultural objects' caretakers and viewers.

Beyond theorizing survivor objects and applying this rubric to the study of a work of art caught in circumstances of collective trauma and violence, the author also turns to the case of the Zeytun Gospels to revisit contemporary discourses on cultural genocide. To do so, she contextualizes this case by discussing a trajectory of efforts to protect cultural heritage, exemplified by legal instruments to implement rights outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 as well as by the 1990 Native American Graves

Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Relatedly, she discusses the genesis of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, including how the version adopted by the United Nations General assembly in 1948 did not include what Lemkin called "vandalism," or the destruction of culture, in its definition of genocide. Finally, Watenpaugh consistently articulates the larger stakes of tracing the Zeytun Gospels, and how the example relates to, but also differs from, legislative and courtroom victories concerning Nazi-looted art. *The Missing Pages* will appeal to a range of readers, from those interested in memoir and biography, to art history, human rights, cultural heritage, and the afterlives of genocide and exile.

Winter Jade Werner. ***Missionary Cosmopolitanism in Nineteenth-Century British Literature***. Ohio State UP, 2020. 210p.

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A substantial strand of recent scholarship on nineteenth-century literature and culture contests the secularization hypothesis, the claim that religiously oriented worldviews are becoming less pervasive and influential as more rationalistic perspectives increasingly drive cultural priorities and decisions. This hypothesis depends on, and often merely assumes, a simplistic binary opposition between these two organizing visions of reality. Werner's study counters this hypothesis by focusing on texts from the first half of the nineteenth century that find an emergent religious impulse not only compatible with but also contributing to a more inclusive view of intercultural encounters.

An 1837 introduction to John Williams's *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Seas* confidently proclaims that "the Christian is the only true cosmopolite" (1). Few in Britain would have aspired so explicitly to such an appellation at the close of the eighteenth century. To call oneself a citizen of the world in the immediate wake of the French Revolution was to risk being suspected of an incendiary disregard for nation and family. Werner's first chapter traces how the rhetoric and practice of the early nineteenth century missionary movement contributed to the rehabilitation of cosmopolitanism as a concept. In describing their aims as cosmopolitan, missionary societies returned

to an earlier Enlightenment conception of universally shared values "born of Christian belief rather than from an explicit political agenda" (49). By focusing on saving individual souls and largely abstaining from the local politics of the places they visited, missionary efforts plausibly advanced the possibility that one could be cosmopolitan and at the same time reassuringly British. While emphatic critique of missionary priorities persisted—Werner's first chapter concludes with a discussion of *Bleak House* as an example—for the most part these priorities and their fundamental view of the world became more acceptable over the first half of the nineteenth century.

Because missionary societies frequently described their efforts in terms of revived and rehabilitated Enlightenment ideals, their work frequently proved especially appealing to those seeking "reasonableness" in religion. Werner's second chapter examines how one such admirer, Robert Southey (Britain's poet laureate from 1813 until 1843), both popularized and crucially misrepresented this aspect of the missionary perspective. Although their travels frequently coincided with British colonial expansion, missionaries were often opposed to the more overtly coercive features of the imperial project: "the political and cultural benefits of Christianity would only be realized by changing individual hearts [...] Social good followed individual spiritual salvation" (91). Southey's literary representations of missionary work, in contrast, "tries to appropriate missionary cosmopolitanism to suit his own nationalist ends" (93). Werner shrewdly emphasizes this contrast through a reading of *A Tale of Paraguay* (1825), a long poem that construes the logic of posthumous salvation as an exculpation of imperial brutality: "colonial disease and native deaths work ultimately work for the greater good" (99). What might be seen as common ground in a rhetorical tendency toward pragmatism overlooks deeper theological and ideological divides in practice.

The first two chapters of *Missionary Cosmopolitanism*, then, highlight the ways in which early nineteenth-century missionary work entered a mainstream that it sometimes subtly strove to redirect. The final two chapters illuminate the fissures that opened up in the movement in the 1840s and 1850s. The third chapter reads St. John Rivers's proposal to Jane Eyre in connection with the increasingly vexed debate over missionaries and interracial marriage. Because the missionary movement was predicated on the idea of universal

human kinship, interracial marriages were accepted and even to some degree encouraged well into the 1820s. Yet precisely because these marriages proceeded from this assumption of equality, they also disrupted other assumptions about cultural superiority that tacitly informed missionary work. St. John's insistence that he marry someone like Jane, someone as much like himself as possible, betrays an anxiety about a disruptive desire for the other by pre-empting it as emphatically as possible. Werner's final chapter explores a turning point in the way that missionaries imagined cross-cultural difference: the uprising against British imperial rule in India in 1857. This shock to the cosmopolitan system produced "a nascent recognition of the irreducibility of cultural plurality" (141), a decisive turn away from an essential universal humanity implicitly motivating missionary work. As evidence of this shift, Werner compellingly traces the ways in which Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan revises her 1811 novel *The Missionary* in the wake of the Sepoy Rebellion. These revisions, when attended to at all, are usually taken to be either purely stylistic or an attempt to foreground the Indian perspective of its female protagonist Luxima. Instead, Werner demonstrates how these revisions effectively delete the reader's access to Luxima's inner life, rendering her a more inscrutable and unignorably "different" presence in the text.

In a brief coda, Werner proposes that this emergent awareness of difference anticipates current efforts to articulate "new cosmopolitanisms" which "argue that genuine universal values arise not from a privileged 'view from above' but from the ongoing negotiation between universal claims and 'rooted' experiences" (178). To this reviewer, this seems like a reach beyond the grasp of the present study. The case for that claim would seem to begin where *Missionary Cosmopolitanism* ends in terms of chronology. With that caveat in mind, *Missionary Cosmopolitanism* is nevertheless a rewarding and revealing account of an under-examined facet of nineteenth-century religious experience. It provides detailed historical context, and its close readings abundantly confirm the role that literature plays in "concretiz[ing] otherwise abstract ideas in depicting characters' individual actions and motivations, as well as the tangible effects of such actions on others" (37). These tangible effects require a more sophisticated lens than is often brought to them by our current critical discourse; Werner's work credibly contributes to a more refined and perceptive vision.

Paul Yoon. ***Run Me to Earth***. Simon & Schuster, 2020. 254p.

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Run Me to Earth is set during the chaos of the Vietnam War but tells the story of the often-forgotten country of Laos. Laos lies between Thailand and Vietnam and shares the entirety of its eastern border with Vietnam. During the Vietnam War, Laos became a transportation route for the Viet Cong and Northern Vietnamese Army to reach southern Vietnam while avoiding major roadblocks and confrontations. Consequently, the United States initiated a series of 580,000 aerial bombing missions lasting from 1964-1973 in an attempt to prevent the Viet Cong's movement. During this time, "over two million tons of ordnance were dropped on Laos," which is more than the combined amount of bombs dropped on Germany and Japan by the United States during World War II (viii). Over thirty percent of these bombs did not explode on impact. It is in the chaos of these bombings that readers are first introduced to three orphaned teenagers whose stories drive the narrative.

This narrative begins in 1969, when we are introduced to Alisak, Prany, and Noi, who have grown up in Laos and know nothing but war. After years of nomadic lifestyles and taking any odd job that would put food in their mouths, the orphans have found work at a United States field hospital as make-shift medical assistants, janitorial staff, night watch, and, most importantly, motorcycle runners. Using sticks to mark safe routes, these teenagers are sent on daring missions to pick up wounded civilians trapped in the Plain of Jars amongst unexploded bombs and bring them back to "the farmhouse" field hospital for medical care. It's dangerous work, but comes with high pay, educational opportunities, and the chance to leave Laos with the Americans. While working at "the farmhouse," a Vientiane doctor called Vang befriends the orphans and teaches them English and French. Their connection with the doctor grows as he begins to fill a quasi-parental/teacher role long absent in their lives. As the North Vietnamese Army expands its control and evacuation becomes imminent, the orphans start to daydream about where they will go

after the war: France, Spain, the United States. During the actual evacuation, the three are separated, each one's journey representing a different experience of the Laos people during the remainder of the war and the Communist reconstruction afterwards. These journeys are supplemented with the experiences of Auntie, a smuggler and human trafficker working to help refugees cross into Thailand, and Khit, a child orphan in the employ of Auntie who desperately wants to leave Laos, but cannot afford the trafficking fee.

While connected into one cohesive narrative, it becomes clear early on that each chapter is really a complex short story with its own plot arc. The chapters are not numbered; instead, they are titled only with the narrator's name and dated by year. Yoon switches character views deftly, creating independent voices for each, while also maintaining a simplicity of language. This simplicity and understatement allows the shock of the characters' experiences to reverberate through the text and becomes one of the connecting features that ties all the narratives together. Through these individual narratives, Yoon creates a comprehensive and sympathetic view of Laos as a victim country. Through the orphans' perspective, we experience devastating civilian injuries and death, the complexities of immigration, the brutality of "reeducation camps," and the redefining of family after loss. Additionally, we are exposed to the world of human trafficking and smuggling through the characters of Auntie and Khit. By including each of these narratives as stand-alone stories within a larger narrative, Yoon gives voice and recognition to the many unseen victims of war. In this sense, each of the orphans and their journeys begin to represent the larger civilian experiences of Laos.

This experience recognition sets *Run Me to Earth* apart from other novels. Yoon has the uncanny ability to recognize a character's experience, create a deep emotional attachment between reader and character, and present a character's journey in a way that allows for understanding rather than judgement. So many novels about the Vietnam War written by American authors are quick to offer political commentary and judgement, largely a relic of McCarthyism. By respectfully representing realistic situations, although fictional, Yoon allows more independence for readers to come to their own conclusions about the effects of war and their own involvement in world conflicts. The author's own familial experience with refugeeism

during the Korean War brings compassion and honesty not often found in writings by other American authors. Additionally, readers are given the chance to recognize the complexities of government—civilian and national—as each character's flaws are made apparent and no political side is taken. Mankind's ability for, and acceptance of, brutality is recognized on personal and large scale levels.

Alisak's narrative and journey serve as a guiding star through this novel. His narrative is the first to begin the novel, introduce our characters, and set the stage for the current situation in Laos and the complex emotions associated with leaving. At the end, through the character of Khit, we again return to Alisak,'s memories and the ghosts that have haunted him since his evacuation from Laos with the American doctors. The introduction of two stranger refugees based solely around their shared losses and a common acquaintance not only connects the narratives, but also provides a statement about the cyclical nature of refugeeism, global displacement, and relationships. In this sense, *Run Me to Earth* is not just another war novel, but a novel about what connects us as human beings living in a world of shared traumas and joys. By using Alisak's story to bookend the complete narrative, Yoon also reminds readers of the many unknown or unnamed people who make up an experience. While Prany, Noi, and Auntie's voices are limited, their impact is felt throughout the entire novel. Vang, the Vientiane field hospital doctor, is never given a chapter or his own narration, yet his influence is felt in every narrative. This echoes historical reality where individual voices are often forgotten or deliberately erased, but the individual impact of those lives remains. In this case, the novel contains a hopeful, if bittersweet, message. By returning to Alisak, through Khit, and remembering and recognizing these shared voices in their lives, Yoon reminds us that there really is no such thing as a forgotten life.