Book Reviews

Bailey, Matthew. *The Poetics of Speech in the Medieval Spanish Epic*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2010. Pp. 148.

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Professor Matthew Bailey is well known among Hispanomedievalists for his *The 'Poema del Cid' and the 'Poema de Fernán González': The Transformation of an Epic Tradition* (1993) and the collection of essays on *Mocedades de Rodrigo* edited by him (1999), as well as translations of *Poema del Cid* and *Mocedades*. His new book *The Poetics of Speech in the Medieval Spanish Epic* is an impressive achievement that deserves attention from everyone working in the field of Hispanomedievalism, as well as from anybody with an interest in Medieval culture, folklore, or in the direction that literary studies have been taking in the last few years. However, the importance of the book in this regard might be lost for some readers because of understatement or lack of context, so, after summarizing the book, I will make some remarks about these broader issues.

A short introduction presents the material of the book, namely the three extant Castilian epic poems of *Cantar de mio Cid*, *Poema de Fernán González* and *Mocedades de Rodrigo*, as well as the focus of the research, "the extent to which their unique expression is linked to their original oral delivery" (7); more precisely, Professor Bailey contends that these poems were orally composed by minstrels (*juglares*), although there was some degree of clerical intervention in the decision to put the texts down on parchment. Chapter 1 has also an introductory function as it describes the state of the art; it touches on the main contributions to the theory and study of oral poetry in the 20th century (Parry, Lord, Zumthor) as well as scholarship on

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Castilian epic poetry, from Ramón Menéndez Pidal through Alan Deyermond, Colin Smith, Joseph J. Duggan, Tomas Montgomery (and others) to Alberto Montaner. Professor Bailey detects a certain impasse in the application of the usual theories and concepts (formulaic diction, composition by theme or motif, etc.) and proposes to analyse the poems with help of some results of linguistic research about contemporary oral speech (Wallace Chafe) that have already proved fruitful in dealing with Homeric poetry (Egbert Bakker).

Chapter 2 is a kind of detour through medieval learned culture. Professor Bailey shows the role orality played even in the composition of Latin texts, and *a fortiori* in vernacular ones; he mentions works as different as the books of Thomas Aquinas, the translations made under Alfonso X in Toledo, and the tales recorded by Petrus Alfonsus and Juan Manuel. The conclusion is that it seems unlikely that minstrels would compose their poems in writing, when such a process would involve speaking even for the most learned men (36-37).

Chapter 3 deals with *Cantar de mio Cid* by means of the findings of Wallace Chafe about spoken language. First, spontaneous speech tends to be produced in brief "spurts", characterised semantically as "idea units" or prosodically as "intonation units"; such units correspond to the basic component of epic verse, the hemistich. Another feature of epic style that is typical for spoken discourse is parataxis. Professor Bailey contends that such features should be considered natural cognitive constraints rather than deliberate choices or artistic devices. The same may be true of assonance, which indeed is not a spontaneous phenomenon, but has a constraining function as an aid to memorisation. Professor Bailey proceeds then to the analysis of longer narrative segments, characterised as sequences of focuses of consciousness or 'centres of interest'; he points to the presence in the text of the *Cantar* of the perturbations detected by Chafe in the processing of complex information with several centres of interest: abandonment, postponement, pursuit of a side interest and subsequent return to the main track, insertion of a different level of interest, supplementation after premature ending. Several pages are devoted to this issue in relation to the phenomenon of "double narration"; Professor Bailey detects the difficulties of a speaker in going ahead with a complicated tale, his hesitations and reorientations.

The following two chapters can be summarised more briefly, since they deploy the same methodology in dealing with *Poema de Fernán González* and *Mocedades de Rodrigo*. However, both of them contain a certain *tour de force*. The *Poema de Fernán González* (chapter 4) happens to be a text of clerical form, monorhyme tetrastich or *cuaderna vía*, although it might have a traditional minstrel-like poem at its base (a point about which there is no consensus among the scholars; Professor Bailey thinks it "likely" [82]). The daring move in this regard is to consider some of its many flaws in metre and rhyme not as errors in a process of copying but as traces of an original spontaneous oral speech. The *Poema*'s relationship to written Latin sources is also discussed, before going into an analysis of centres of interest. In chapter 5, about *Mocedades de Rodrigo*, the reader is surprised when orality is looked for (and found)

in the management of documentary sources about lineages and territories, instead of in the salient mythic and folkloric features of the poem.

The short concluding chapter (123-24) makes a strong claim: "I believe that the question of the mode of composition of these texts has been answered here. These poems were produced orally", with a qualification immediately following: "even though clerics played a role in their production, whether in their initial composition or in a more limited way, in their overall design and in the process of their placement onto parchment." Evidence for this is that 'these narratives retain many of the features of spoken discourse...many of the same expressive characteristics as the spontaneous speech of the modern-day subjects of Wallace Chafe's linguistic studies."

I have quoted the conclusion at some length because I would not like to misrepresent Professor Bailey's position, since I will next be arguing that he does both more and less than he claims.

Professor Bailey does more, because he not only makes a specific point about the production of these particular poems, but he also implies that Castilian medieval minstrels cultivated a certain kind of oral poetry. As is generally known, Paul Zumthor claimed that oral production is not necessary for a poem to be considered 'oral'; transmission and reception in performance are the sufficient conditions (*Introd. à la poésie orale*, 1983: 32-33). Furthermore, Ruth Finnegan has shown that some oral poets compose at the actual moments of performance, but others compose prior to and separately from the act of performance, in ways that are not wholly different of poems composed in writing (*Oral Poetry*, new ed. 1992: 18; see also Lubomír Doležel, "Oral and Written Literature: Theoretical Implications Drawn from Serbian Epic", in *The Peasant and the City in Eastern Europe: Interpreting Structures*, ed. Irene Portis Winner and Thomas G. Winner, Cambridge, MA: Schenkman, 1984, 253-64). Put in this frame, Professor Bailey's conclusion means that the Castilian epics were composed in performance with a certain degree of improvisation. Thus, these poems are oral not only in fact, but in conception. According to the ideas of Professor Oesterreicher and the teams working and publishing in the series ScriptOralia, there are two parameters: the medium (oral vs. written) and the conception (proximity vs. distance); and texts such as these may retain their conceptional orality even when transposed to the other medium (Oesterreicher is not quoted in Professor Bailey's book, but he is in one of its sources, Egbert Bakker's paper on Homeric epic).

On the other hand, I think that Professor Bailey does slightly less than answering the question about the mode of production, because he does not address the issue of traditionality or traditionalisation. His treatment of Menéndez Pidal's work is too focused on the latter's references to writing and memory when dealing with the minstrels (*juglares*) of the *Cantar de mio Cid*. In fact, Menéndez Pidal does not dwell long on the topic of medium, and one might suppose that "writing" is for him a certain equivalent (perhaps a careless and unfortunate one) for "composing". The main concern of Menéndez Pidal is not whether minstrels wrote or not, but the way in which a poem, once composed, becomes popular and then traditional. For there is no poem

that is traditional from the start; traditionality is necessarily the result of a process of selection, transmission and re-creation (see *Romancero hispánico*, 1953; *La Chanson de Roland y el neotradicionalismo*, 1959). This process is, to a large extent, oral. Thus the question arises: might such a protracted oral transmission not produce the same phenomena observed by Chafe in spontaneous speech, and discovered by Professor Bailey in the epic poems?—One could even say, Chafe's experiment is precisely about that, how people retell a story they have previously received.

A last consideration raises the importance of this book above the exciting but limited field of Hispanomedievalism. Professor Bailey's innovative enterprise should be put in the context of a reframing of the study of literature that has been taking place in the last two decades, and will probably set the agenda for the profession in years to come. I mean the grounding of literary studies on the 'hard' or natural sciences: cognitive science, neuroscience, evolutionary biology, human ethology (see Mark Turner's *Reading Minds*, 1991; Karl Eibl's *Animal Poeta*, 2004; Brian Boyd's *On the Origin of Stories*, 2009). I would like to point to a precedent for Professor Bailey's book, Monika Fludernik's *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (1996), a study of the features of spontaneous everyday stories (as described in William Labov's researches) projected on the evolution of the Western narrative tradition. Along this line of thought, we should pay more attention to natural faculties and constraints of the human mind, to Nature in short, rather than to Culture or Art; and thus discover how an art is made out of these natural resources. Whether this is a fruitful way of dealing with works of literature, I think that such a book as the one reviewed here helps to answer in the affirmative.

Halpern, Richard. *Shakespeare's Perfume: Sodomy and Sublimity in the Sonnets, Wilde, Freud, and Lacan*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2002.

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In the elegant short book Richard Halpern produced after his renowned *Shakespeare Among the Moderns* (1997), a study of the modern reception of the dramatist Shakespeare by theorists such as Marx, novelists such as Joyce, dramatists such as Muller, directors such as Stanislavski and Graig, etc., Halpern sets out to achieve a reading of the Sonnets from the perspective of what could, in thick description, be called *queer theory*. The gist of the argument, elaborated in the book's eponymous first chapter (11-31), and then retroactively projected on earlier writings on Shakespeare and homosexuality (by Wilde, Freud and Lacan), is that the sonnet-sequence reverses the terms of Freudian sublimation, since "instead of regarding art as the displacement of sexual aims, it posits Shakespearean homosexuality as itself a product or effect of the aesthetic". Halpern's point of entry into this argument is

provided by the lexicon of the "procreation" Sonnets, which echoes, Halpern argues, the "semen's right use" doctrine developed by late antiquity and medieval theologians (St. Paul, Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus et al.), without ever adopting a tone of theological condemnation. In this manner, Halpern rounds off his argument, the specter of sodomy becomes the work's suppressed aesthetic measure, its idiosyncratic, hauntingly present version of the Sublime.

The second chapter of the book, "Theory to Die For" (32-57), explores the way in which Oscar Wilde's novella *The Portrait of Mr. W.H.* is indebted to the Sonnets, in fact performing the aesthetics of the Sonnets. Halpern's aim in interpreting *The Portrait* in the light of his rehabilitated reading of the Sonnets is to de-sublimate Wilde's protagonist's understanding of Shakespeare as the victim of a desexualized fascination with the beauty of the actor Willie Hughes, since the underlying assumption of this "ahistorical" reading is that homosexuality is pathological. Wilde, Halpern argues, contrary to Lord Alfred Douglas's understanding of homosexuality as a "love that dare not speak its name", "opts for vague intimations of the unspeakable sin" (51). In this manner, Halpern continues, Wilde creates a space of the unspeakable, from wherein a notion of the "repressive hypothesis"—as later formulated by Foucault—begins to emerge. As far as the category of the sublime is concerned, Wilde, Halpern posits, "does not render sodomy sublime as much as he creates a sublimity that sodomy cannot possibly answer to. Thus his writing might… manage to render sodomy ordinary after all" (52). The last two chapters of the book explore first the reasons for the formation of some conceptual "blind spots" around the issue of homosexuality in the work of Freud, then the corrective restoration of homosexuality to the place of Uhr-sign, from which all signification springs, in the work of Lacan.

Chapter three, "Freud's Egyptian Renaissance" (58-85), focuses on Freud's study *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*. It details the psychoanalytic reasons behind Fred's misunderstanding of Leonardo's recorded childhood dream of a "kite" as a dream of a "vulture" (which Freud subsequently reads as a dream of fellatio), and the implications that this misreading harbors for the practice of psychoanalysis in literature, as well as for the transferential perception of the child-prodigy Leonardo as mirror image of Freud. In order to forge a link between Freud and Leonardo, Halpern unpacks the hidden significance(s) of two Leonardo paintings, "Mona Lisa" and "St. Anne with Two Others"—as read by Freud.[1] Concerning the "Mona Lisa", the link between Leonardo and Freud is provided by Halpern's understanding of Freud's reading of Mona Lisa's smile as a projection of Freud's childhood reminiscence of his own mother in a state of post-coital satiety. Concerning "St. Anne with Two Others", the link is provided by Freud's adoption of analyst Oskar Pfister's claim, that in the painting Mary's drapery forms the shape of a vulture, whose tail ends in the infant Jesus's mouth. The vulture image surfaces, as far as Freud's own vocabulary of the unconscious is concerned, Halpern finds out, in the copy of the Philippson bible that his father gave to him as a present for his thirty-fifth birthday in

1891; possibly with the hushed reprimand that he does not delve sufficiently in things Jewish. The subversive detail in this critique, which also elucidates the chapter's title, is that, in Jewish monotheism, it is prohibited to represent the human figure. The head of a vulture affixed to the human body would thus, on occasion, be introduced to bypass the restrictions of this regime, but with it would bring "leftovers" of Egyptian polytheism, and suppressed cultural practices related to such oriental "languor". Having explained the reasons behind Freud's fixation on the "vulture" image, and hence his misreading, on two occasions, of Leonardo's dreams and artwork, Halpern moves on to inscribe the Viennese psychoanalyst in the same, traumatic Oedipal cycle that Leonardo had, according to Freud, found himself in. Freud's 'vulture' slippage stands for Halpern, much like Leonardo's 'encrypted' vulture, as the visible sign of a residual homosexual personality buried deep into his unconscious.

The book's final study, "Lacan's Anal Thing" (86-101), turns to an exploration of the concept of "das Ding" with which the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan presented his audience during his Seventh Seminar on *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, delivered at the Collège de France of Paris, in 1959-60. The aim of the chapter is to suggest, as also argued by Lacan, that sublimation does not necessarily desexualize its objects. In this argument the book comes full circle with its first, foundational chapter on "Shakespeare's perfume". Starting off with Lacan's working definition of the "Thing" as "that aspect of an object which does not lend itself to psychic representation—a pure, irreducible alterity that remains 'beyond' the pleasure principle" (88), Halpern embarks on unpacking this most resistant of lacanian concepts, along the lines of the Kantian "beautiful", the Heideggerian "Jug" (90: "a vase…like any other artwork [is] an object made to represent the existence of the emptiness at the center of the Real that is called the Thing"), and from there on back to the discourse of sodomy, where the anus is understood as "the paradigmatically empty space, the vessel as absolute void". Through a chain of metonymic substitutions, that is, Halpern places homosexual desire at the heart of Lacan's intimation of the "Thing". Yet, he is, needless to say, careful not to attach any fixed significations to this metaphorical set of signifiers, truthful to his poststructuralist *formation*. He turns, instead, to an exploration of the ironic dimensions, and the ethical responsibilities embedded in the psychoanalyst's position as master of the "Thing". Faced with the patient as "suppliant", the analyst has two choices: either go along and fulfill the demands of the patient's "pleasure principle" through sympathetic response, or force the patient to confront the real of his desire, that is to "bring him into painful proximity with his Thing, since it is the patient's betrayal of his desire that is the ultimate source of his malaise" (97). The chapter ends with the completion of the interrupted interpretation of Arnaut Daniel's strange, scatological lyric on Donna Ena, with which it had begun—tying literature and psychoanalysis inextricably together, after the example of Lacan.

Halpern's *Shakespeare's Perfume* contains a wealth of factual material, critical thinking on seminal European (literary and theoretical) texts, *as well as* a collection of exemplarily employed reading strategies, which makes it commendable reading

to critics and theorists of literature, of most Departments and theoretical convictions. Loyal to his New Historicist training, Halpern deconstructs the distinction between literary and critical texts, succumbing both categories of texts as texts to rigorous rhetorical scrutiny, so as to uncover their tacit mechanics of signification, and their intended, and unintended, meanings. Another consequence of such New Historicist understanding of literature is Halpern's tendency to dissolve "literature" back into the historical complex from which it emerged, and to look at the text's rhetoric in parallel with other types of discourses circulating at the time of its production; through, on occasion, one might have wished for more in the direction of "historical semantics", as in the case of "Shakespeare's Perfume", where the ways in which St. Paul's use of the diction of "use" has been handed down to Shakespeare are not always clear to the reader. Another interesting strand of his work relates to his profound grasp of the tropological workings of language. A mark of his versatility in Post-structuralism and Deconstruction, the employment of this expertise in Halpern's own writing, turns it into a powerful tool for the elucidation of difficult concepts, through what might, though, at times, appear as a catachresis of metonymy, and logical leapfrogging. To conclude: though the powerful *rapprochement* of psychoanalytic theory and literary critical practice in *Shakespeare's Perfume* at times weighs too heavily on the "identity politics" agenda of *queer theory*, *Shakespeare's Perfume* is, nonetheless, thanks to the brilliance of its particular performance, a book worth having on the reading lists of students of literature and literary theory of all convictions and denominations.

NOTE

1. In this critical move, Halpern foretells his later turn to the study of painting, displayed in his next book, *Norman Rockwell* (2006).

McDONALD, CHRISTIE, AND SUSAN RUBIN SULEIMAN, EDS. *French Global: A New Approach to Literary History*. New York: Columbia UP, 2010. Pp. 546.

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This volume's *raison d'être* is to provide what the dust jacket describes as "a new way of looking at the history of a national literature, along with a truly global and contemporary understanding of language, literature, and culture…recasting French literary history in terms of the cultures and peoples that interacted within and outside of France's national boundaries."

French Global results from strongly collaborative efforts begun within the Harvard Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, continued during a

Radcliffe seminar in 2005, and further developed at a Harvard conference in 2007. This collection presents twenty-nine essays, written in English or translated from French into English. Scholars based in the United States make twenty-two contributions; colleagues in France, Nigeria, Canada, and the United Kingdom offer the remaining seven. Contributors' collective expertise comes from many fields: French, Francophone, American, Latin American, English, Romance, African, and World literatures; French civilization, comparative literature, cultural and film studies. The volume also includes the editors' introduction, a list of contributors with succinct professional biographies, and an index. A single, umbrella bibliography helpfully includes English translations of works written in French, presumably whenever these are available.

The essays are grouped in three sections. The first, "Spaces," looks at spaces "taken in their physical, geographical, geopolitical, or even geometric sense; but also…in a conceptual or metaphorical sense" (xix). The second, "Mobilities," examines "not only spaces and borders, but also movement across them" (xx). Lastly, "Multiplicities" "investigates not only mobility…but also the complicated negotiations of self and identity that result from…displacements" (xx). Within each section, essays are arranged in approximate chronological order. Since many could fit well in more than one section, the editors invite readers to explore their collection in several ways: chronologically within one section; focusing on a given period across all sections; in thematic clusters; in arrangements suggested by personal interests.

Theoretically, *French Global* builds on Denis Hollier's *A New History of French Literature* (1989) and seeks to innovate further. The editors' perspective is influenced by the redefinition of comparative literary studies and the notion of world literature emerging from the work of René Wellek and Austin Warren, following World War II, and developed subsequently by David Damrosch, Linda Hutcheon, Mario J. Valdés and Pascale Casanova. Situating their thinking in relationship to this corpus, the editors place their "focus…on literary traditions in French, inside and outside the country known today as France…[in order to] read…[Francophone] works in relation to the globe…" (xvii). Their approach "places…negotiations with otherness and boundary crossings at the very center of French literary history" (x) in a search for "alternatives to…binarizations…[so as to] propose more dynamic and more inclusive models, both spatial and temporal" (xix). Their volume "espouses the kind of productive perplexity that results from seeing things from more than one perspective…[and its] aim is to see (French) language and nation in their multiplicity, their multiple possibilities" (xix).

Although the volume's theoretical underpinnings are drawn primarily from comparative literature, Gustave Lanson's traditional French studies typify the approach to be invalidated. This blurs the critical perspective. In addition, contributors to such a collection must grapple with the inevitable difficulty of identifying its potential readership. Most contributions reflect these tensions.

Those working outside French Studies may well find some essays quite informative

and enlightening. However, their counterparts within French Studies risk finding the same texts drawn with such broad strokes that they are insufficiently comprehensive or nuanced to be illuminating. Conversely, essays more visibly addressed to genre or period specialists within French Studies can easily prove too discrete or detailed for those concerned with comparative or cultural studies.

Some contributions are perfect matches for this volume and their place within it. In others, linkages to global issues or their section's thematics are somewhat forced, and still others attempt to treat topics too vast to be effectively analyzed in fifteen to twenty pages. While some texts are admirably clear, coherent, well written and jargon-free, others force readers to struggle with unnecessarily disjointed structure and needlessly difficult prose. Frequent typographical errors mar some contributions, and a few, such as the one in which a footnote refers to a "conference program statement," fail to make an entirely successful transition from an earlier iteration.

The twenty-nine essays cover such a variety of topics that no single reviewer can offer an equally informed, comprehensive assessment of them all. A representative sampling of several that stood out for this reader illustrates the wide range of subjects treated: "Homesickness in an Expanding World: The Case of the Nineteenth-Century Lyric" by Evelyne Ender; "Speaking the Other: Constructing Frenchness in Medieval England" by Kimberlee Campbell; "Jews and the Construction of French Identity from Balzac to Proust" by Maurice Samuels; "Choosing French: Language, Foreignness, and the Canon (Beckett/Némirovsky)" by Susan Rubin Suleiman.

The volume's most significant and fairly generalized weaknesses occur in the documentation of sources and the treatment of English translations of French texts. Although several contributions are impeccably documented, multiple problems of documentation elsewhere make it difficult for readers to consult source material. Sometimes there is no entry in the bibliography for an author quoted or cited in an essay. One prolific French scholar's thinking is summarized in a footnote, but this footnote does not indicate the particular work(s) in which it is developed, nor does any work by this scholar appear in the bibliography. Even when works by a cited author appear in the bibliography, it is not always possible to determine from which of these works a particular quotation is taken. Sometimes the source of a quotation or citation is shown, but this attribution refers only to an entire work and indicates no page number(s). In other cases, readers cannot determine to which of the editions listed in the bibliography a citation refers. These bibliographical inadequacies are particularly regrettable because many texts strive to stimulate further exploration of the often uncharted territories they introduce and frequently succeed in doing so.

Similarly, several essays deal with French language material and their English translations in an entirely satisfactory way. In others however, inconsistent or inadequate presentation and documentation of French source material create one of this volume's most troublesome features. The original French source of translated quotations does not always appear in the bibliography. Some essays give the original French with its English translation; others provide only the English translation of a French

text. Often the source of an English translation remains unclear, leaving readers to wonder if the translation comes from the essay's author or the published translation in the bibliography. Moreover, in paragraphs that footnote only one of several quotations from the same author, readers must guess the source of those that do not relate closely to the sole footnoted quotation. Such problems become acute whenever readers of this volume, many of whom could be expected to have a reading knowledge of French, encounter a translation they consider debatable or confusing. One essay uses a text, given only in the author's English translation, to illustrate the semantic evolution of crucial terms, given only in French. The result is potential confusion about how the author treated the pivotal French terms in the English translation. In other essays, English translations that use highly evocative language cry out for an opportunity to compare them with the original French and consider if advancing the essay's argumentation colours them.

This collection's thesis statement might be drawn from the opening of Verena Andermatt Conley's fine text ("Literature, Space, and the French Nation-State After the 1950s"). "What for the last century and a half came to be called 'French national culture' has always been 'in the plural,' the product of many encounters and intersections" (145). Nonetheless, this conclusion may no longer be radical enough to fully justify the volume's subtitle, "A New Approach to Literary History." It is doubtful that the editors' prototypical target, Gustave Lanson, remains a model for many in French Studies. Consider the tendency to view the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as "the long seventeenth century," the forthcoming (2013) volume of *Esprit Créateur*, "The Turk of Early Modern France," or the many contemporary university courses and conference papers that examine French-language literature in pluralistic ways.

Nevertheless, despite reservations about the volume as a whole, several essays will certainly prove quite valuable to readers interested in the topics they probe. Even if this volume celebrates an idea whose time has largely come, it does add to the momentum of the manifesto, first published in *Le Monde* (March 16, 2007) and oft quoted in this collection, "Pour une 'littérature-monde' en français." *French Global* gives uneven but useful support to Hélène Cixous' contention, quoted in Alison Rice's strong essay ("All Over the Place: Global Women Writers and the Maghreb"), that "literature is a transnational country" (165).

Grouard, Father Émile, OMI. *The Beginning of Print Culture in Athabasca Country: A Facsimile Edition and Translation of a Prayer Book in Cree Syllabics*. Trans. Patricia Demers, Naomi McIlwraith and Dorothy Thunder. Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 2010.

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In this hefty, tabletop tome, Patricia Demers (University of Alberta), Naomi McIlwraith (Grant MacEwan University), and Dorothy Thunder (University of Alberta) have reproduced Father Émile Grouard's *Catholic Prayer Book*, which was originally printed in 1883 at Lac-La-Biche, in what is now north-central Alberta. Demers et al. provide a facsimile of Grouard's original text in Cree syllabic alongside a direct English translation, and transliterations of the Cree into contemporary Standard Roman Orthography (SRO) and nineteenth-century SRO, which account for the sheer size of this volume. In taking a mixed disciplinary approach to Grouard's *Catholic Prayer Book*, Demers, McIlwraith, and Thunder have produced a volume that offers both linguistic and historical insight into Roman Catholic missionary methods amongst First Nations in the late nineteenth century. The translators demonstrate that Grouard took pains to make his religious texts relevant and recognizable to the Cree, giving linguists and historians an example of late-nineteenth century missionary flexibility and language sensitivity.

Although Grouard's prayer book was one of the earliest documents ever printed in northern Alberta, the Oblate missionary's efforts were not necessarily unique. Various religious missions and other special interest groups brought out books, newspapers, and newsletters in First Nations languages (in alphabetic, syllabic, or hieroglyphic form) in great succession across North America in the late nineteenth century. Methodist missionary, James Evans, for example, had begun printing biblical and hymn translations in Cree syllabic near Norway House around 1840. However, *The Beginning of Print Culture in Athabasca Country* is a unique publication because the translators have gone to considerable effort to provide the contemporary reader with a cultural and linguistic perspective of the Cree language in the late nineteenth century. Demers et al. paint Grouard as holding an unusually enlightened and advanced attitude as regards the usual missionary attitude towards First Nations languages—particularly at a time in Canadian history when Aboriginal cultures and languages were beginning to come under direct and heavy attack in the government funded and missionary administered residential school system. Demers et al. argue that Grouard's efforts in learning the Cree language and mastering use of their syllabic writing system mark him as an enlightened Christian missionary who was unusually sympathetic to the language and cultural needs of his Cree flock. Indeed, Grouard's efforts highlight a fascinating instance of the interaction between orality and literacy, where his mission press imprints may be read as "textualized orality," representing Cree "speech habits and oral strategies of communication." Thus, the

translators suggest that Grouard's considerable efforts in learning the Cree language and translating biblical literature into Cree syllabic belong to an "idealistic phase" of missionary activity in the North-West "when the reality of print culture affected the whole community, speaking—not silencing—the language of the people was of vital importance" (ix).

Demers et al. have provided contemporary readers with a pioneering work of historical linguistic significance, and reveal through their study of the language he used that Grouard sought to share his religious zeal with the Cree. In making available a nineteenth-century catechetical text, and in positioning themselves "at the interface of oral culture and textual representation" (445), the translators of this work offer a unique examination and reconstructive translation of a mission press imprint in a Native language. The translators of this volume have gone to great lengths to provide the reader with unique insight into Cree syllabic as it was employed in Grouard's time, making this volume of considerable value to students of Cree language and linguistics. The volume's afterword goes into some detail describing the complexity of the language and syntax, uncovering deeper meanings in the messages conveyed in Grouard's original text. In the original concluding hymnal, for example, the missionary did not literally translate the original Latin and French texts as one might expect. Instead, he appropriated and re-fashioned the hymns to suit local Cree realities in an effort to bring the texts—and therefore his mission—closer to the hearts and minds of his flock. As the translators make clear, presenting the Oblate missionary's efforts in reconstructive translation offer the modern reader a sense of Cree syllabics as "one way of perceiving the world as Grouard and the Cree people he worked with did." (445). The efforts of Demers et al. demonstrate Grouard's great degree of agility and deep understanding of both the religious texts he was working with, but also of the Cree language and people. In order to make these texts meaningful to his Cree flock, Grouard had to thoroughly understand the rules of the Cree language. In shedding light on his remarkable linguistic achievement, he gave the Cree (and through Demers et al., modern non-Cree speakers as well) a "book of consequence that offers considerable clarification on the relationship between the missionary's message and the medium through which he delivered that teaching" (454).

Religious conversion was certainly Grouard's primary motivation as a missionary. However, Demers et al. provide the modern reader with a deeper sense of his mission efforts. In exploring his linguistic and translation approaches, Demers et al. show that for Grouard the mission did not involve distancing himself from the Cree, but encouraging them to share his religious zeal. His status as an Oblate, however—as compared to the literary attempts at Native conversion and education practiced by missionaries of Anglican, Methodist, or other Protestant faiths—is not tackled in any great detail in this volume. While the work of Protestants, like James Evans and George Barnley among the Cree are mentioned in passing, Demers et al. could have strengthened this work with extended historical discussion of the differing philosophical and ideological approaches to literary education that missionaries of the

Catholic and Protestant faiths took in their work amongst Native populations. This oversight, however, can be forgiven given the pioneering nature of *The Beginnings of Print Culture in Athabasca Country*. It will be the task of future scholars to build upon this important work, to provide us with a deeper understanding of comparative and contrasting linguistic approaches to missionary effort amongst First Nations communities in late-nineteenth-century Canada.

Cabajsky, Andrea, and Brett Josef Grubisic, eds. *National Plots: Historical Fiction and Changing Ideas of Canada*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2010. Pp. xxiv+252. CDN $42.95 paper.

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Terry Eagleton proposes in *The English Novel: An Introduction* (2005) that "The finest historical fiction tends to spring from periods in which history is visibly in the making—in which you can feel the ground shifting under your feet, and are capable of making new sense of the past in the light of the rapidly changing present." He contends that Walter Scott, whose first novel, *Waverley*, was published in 1814, "was able to see history almost literally before his eyes, with the persistence of the Highland past into the present." The setting of *Waverley*, the Jacobite uprising of 1745, lies at a historical remove from Scott's present, yet, as Eagleton maintains, bears evidently upon it, with the result that the novel interprets past and present simultaneously. The prevalence of historical fiction in Canada in the second half of the twentieth century might lead critics to ask what ground-shifting forces impelled writers to turn to the past, and to ask which novels and stories pass the "litmus test of the historical sense," in Eagleton's phrase, by conceiving of past and present as historical and intertwined. The essays collected in *National Plots: Historical Fiction and Changing Ideas of Canada* suggest that for Canadian writers of the contemporary period the appeal of the historical novel stems less from the experience of epochal events ("history… visibly in the making") than from mutating conceptions of identity, nationhood, historiography, and fiction itself, such that narrative revision of the past is a perpetual concern.

Eagleton is not cited in *National Plots*, but one of his chief interlocutors, Georg Lukács, is well represented. A claim from his *The Historical Novel* (1937) is taken by the volume's editors, Andrea Cabajsky and Brett Josef Grubisic, to illustrate the genre's problematic complexity: "Lukács defines historical fiction in paradoxical terms: as a genre that encourages readers to recognize their quotidian reality as the fulfillment of foundational events, encounters, or moments in the past; and a genre that remains elusive, for it possesses no formal or thematic features to differentiate it from other kinds of novels." In responding to the variety and abundance of Canadian histori-

cal fiction, *National Plots* proceeds from three major premises. First, that the ideas of Lukács, who in "the post-centenary period…replaced Scott as the predominant model against which the historical novel was evaluated," as Cabajsky and Grubisic observe, are insufficient to explain the multiform nature of the genre in Canada. Second, that Linda Hutcheon's enormously influential studies of "historiographic metafiction"—as in her essay on "Canadian Historiographic Metafiction" (1984) and *A Poetics of Postmodernism* and *The Canadian Postmodern* (both 1988)—require revision, given the literary and critical developments in the two decades since her ideas were embraced. And third, that in the 1990s and 2000s, Canadian historical fiction (and the critical lexicon used to describe it) changed significantly, in terms of diversity of authors and subjects, as a result of "a body of revisionary historiography begun…by Joy Kogawa [in *Obasan*, 1981] and SKY Lee [in *Disappearing Moon Café*, 1990], among others." George Woodcock's remark, in an essay published in 1979, that the historical novelist is "a rather rare Canadian species" seems inaccurate from the present vantage point, as Cabajsky and Grubisic note. Writing of the last two decades thus forms, in *National Plots*, the basis for a reexamination of the genre that accounts for changing cultural politics and an apparent trend away from formal experimentation and an emphasis on ultimate uncertainty about the past, two hallmarks of the historiographic metafiction of the 1970s and '80s.

In addition to the concise introduction by Cabajsky and Grubisic, *National Plots* contains thirteen chapters divided into three sections: "A Usable Past? New Questions, New Directions," "Unconventional Voices: Fiction Versus Recorded History," and "Literary Histories, Regional Contexts." The chapters that focus closely on individual literary works address Fred Stenson's *The Trade* (Kathleen Venema), Aimée Laberge's *Where the River Narrows* (Cynthia Sugars), Hugh MacLennan's *Barometer Rising* (Robert David Stacey), Alice Munro's "Meneseteung" (one chapter each by Tracy Ware and Dennis Duffy), Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road* (Herb Wyile), George Copway's *Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway* Nation (Shelley Hulan), and Daphne Marlatt's *Ana Historic* and George Bowering's *Burning Water* (Owen Percy). The balance is between the venerable, most notably *Barometer Rising* (1941), and the new and relatively unexamined, namely the novels of Stenson and Laberge, which were published in 2000 and 2003, respectively. Copway's *Traditional History* (1850) is the outlier. The five chapters that address themes, theories, or regions, rather than single works, concentrate on representations of the Orangeman Thomas Scott (Albert Braz), recent African-Canadian fiction (Pilar Cuder-Domínguez), female characters in novels set in the Canadian West (Aritha van Herk), the prairies (Claire Campbell), and Newfoundland (Paul Chafe). National Plots is eclectic by design, multifaceted and exploratory rather than dedicated to a particular critical outlook or argument. The editors doubtless strived to juxtapose analyses of canonical works, including the almost instantly consecrated—Ware observes that "None of…Munro's stories has been more quickly canonized than 'Meneseteung,' the first harvest of an interest in the nineteenth-century history

of southwestern Ontario that culminates in The View from Castle Rock [2006]"—with less-studied works. ("Meneseteung" was first collected in *Friend of My Youth* [1990].) There are, however, few examples of works from before the mid-twentieth century, although the editors note that the genre of historical fiction is "nearly two centuries old" in Canada.

The connections among the chapters are sometimes general and sometimes particular. The two essays on "Meneseteung" are most closely related; they create an intriguing dialogue. Disagreements are likewise provocative: Percy takes Bowering's *Burning Water* (1980) as a "major landmark" in Canadian historiographic metafiction, while Duffy suggests that *Burning Water* and Douglas Glover's *Elle* (2003) are not, in fact, historical novels but rather "contemporary fictions with historical settings." One of the volume's recurring contentions is that Canadian history and its narration are characterized by errors and distortions. As Duffy notes in his fascinating account of Munro's story, "There is a Lachine Canal in Montreal because Cartier hoped that China lay right over the horizon. He got the white water of the Long Sault instead." But confusion can offer narrative advantages to the writer of historical fiction. Duffy suggests that "Munro's call to her readers to pay their respects to her foremothers emerges from a bullhorn distorting that call and focusing a hearer's attention upon the medium rather than the message. Her narrative play keeps the message at bay. In so doing, she offers an alternative version of history, another way of expressing the angularity of being-in-time." His essay is a highlight of *National Plots*; the editors fairly call it "magisterial."

A passing reference to *The Prelude* in Duffy's chapter and the accompanying suggestion of a continuity between Wordsworth's poem (or novel-in-verse) of personal history and the historical novel stand out in a book devoted to fiction. Yet in Canada other genres have often been used to represent the past and to examine its relations to the present—a preoccupation with history occurs in Canadian literature generally. Several of the authors examined in *National Plots* (e.g., Bowering, Marlatt, George Elliott Clarke) are historiographic poets as well as novelists. National Plots cannot be faulted for a focus on one genre, but the wider critical project of exploring Canadian literary investigations of the past ranges across modes and forms; the "plots" to which the collection's title refers are not confined to fiction. In *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (1976), Eagleton remarks of Lukács and Raymond Williams that "In the extensive literary *oeuvre* of both men, *poetry* is a significant lacuna…This striking absence is not fortuitous: for poetry is the most searching test of a Marxist or para-Marxist criticism accustomed to dealing in structural generalities and historical abstractions." Genres engage history and test critics differently. Cabajsky and Grubisic thus reasonably propose that "more work needs to be done in order to broaden the scope of scholarship on reflexive historiography to include comparative, cross-generic examinations of fiction in relation to other forms, such as historical drama and long poems, among others." (In fact they have achieved some generic diversity with Hulan's chapter on "History, Fiction, and Rhetoric" in

Copway's *Traditional History*, an ostensibly non-fictional work that is considerably indebted to Ojibwe oral traditions and of which the authorship is contested.)

Although *National Plots* does not explore the topic in detail, it raises at various junctures the possibility that historiographic metafiction in its incarnations of the 1970s and '80s is now essentially a spent force. Percy writes that the "real value to readers" of *Burning Water* and *Ana Historic* "nearly thirty years later lies in the floodgates of possibility that they forced open—both in form and in content—for conceiving of the past, of the Pacific Coast, and of historically *novel* writing itself" (emphasis in original). But many of the critically and commercially successful novels set on the West Coast (and elsewhere) in recent years have eschewed the experimentation of Bowering's and Marlatt's books. Recent works of fiction by Eden Robinson, Timothy Taylor, Jack Hodgins, Bill Gaston, and Tim Bowling, all of whom are admired authors, are not characterized by the "generic innovativeness" that Percy ascribes to *Ana Historic* and *Burning Water*. On the contrary, they adhere to a formally conservative model of fiction (which is not to suggest an easy equivalence between formal conservatism and either political conservatism or literary value). The continued influence of a certain vein of historiographic metafiction remains unclear, although Bowering and Marlatt have sustained and developed in their own bodies of work the projects they began in their books of the 1980s. (*Burning Water* was out of print for many years before it was reissued by New Star Books in 2007. *Ana Historic* has remained in print, no doubt in part because it is a popular selection for university courses in Canadian literature.)

The individual chapters in *National Plots* provide important examinations of particular authors and works. As a whole, moreover, the volume amply demonstrates the extent to which historiography is a recurring, multiform aspect of Canadian literature. Canadian historical fiction is a protean genre, *National Plots* suggests, with retrospective works focusing variously on monumental events that contribute to a national mythos and on events that have generally been excluded from the historical imagination. Sometimes both impulses register in a single work—in Boyden's *Three Day Road*, for example, and perhaps most famously in Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion* (1987), which begins with the now-familiar epigraph from John Berger that epitomizes Ondaatje's modus operandi: "Never again will a single story be told as though it were the only one." (Ondaatje's works are not treated directly in *National Plots*, but are mentioned a handful of times.) Several contributors' summarizing claims about the historical novel indicate the range of perspectives evinced in *National Plots*. For instance, Wyile proposes that *Three Day Road* "illustrat[es] the potential of the historical novel as a powerful antidote to the colonial inscription of Canada's past," while Braz observes that "it is unlikely that the new historical novel could be much more pluralistic than the old one." Despite such internal tensions, however, the essays in *National Plots* all attest to the accuracy of van Herk's claim that "For Canadian writers, the gravitational pull of history is a given."

McSweeney, Kerry. *The Realist Short Story of the Powerful Glimpse: Chekhov to Carver*. Columbia, SC: U of South Carolina P, 2007. Pp. 136.

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The Realist Short Story of the Powerful Glimpse: Chekhov to Carver by Kerry McSweeney brings together short stories from five authors that cross generational, national, and cultural backgrounds: Anton Chekhov, James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, Flannery O'Connor, and Raymond Carver. McSweeney asserts that these authors share a commitment to realist representation and to the short story form that helps to examine the strategies and assess the claims of realist short fiction. Each of the five chapters focuses on an individual author and one or more lines of inquiry set forth in the introduction.

McSweeney's specific objectives are clearly stated in the preface: "to develop an aesthetic critical model for more detailed considerations of the short stories of my subjects that brings distinctive features of the work of each into sharp focus, facilitates making qualitative discriminations among stories, and provides a basis for assessing the profitability of other critical models" (x). Accordingly, the introduction establishes the various ways by which realist short fiction communicates powerfully, yet succinctly, to a reading audience: intensity of focus, clear and specific language, meaningful detail, omission, the effective use of convention, and emphasis on description rather than prescription or judgment. By focusing on Carver's views of realist short fiction, supplemented with selections from the other featured authors, McSweeney describes the means of effectively assessing the formal resources and reading strategies appropriate to a realist short story. He comes to the following preliminary conclusion: "any fully adequate critical reading of a story involves the integration of three components: the enjoyment and contemplation of the story in and for itself; affective receptivity—response to the story's emotional content; and cognitive activity—the reflective consideration of the story's conceptual implications" (19). Importantly, McSweeney emphasizes that the "integration of all these components results in an aesthetic reading—as opposed to interpretative readings that concentrate attention on the determination (or indetermination) of meanings" (19). As such, a theoretical, but practical framework for critical discussion and assessment of specific authors, works, and alternative theoretical approaches is established.

In chapter one, "Aesthetic Readings of Chekhov's Stories," McSweeney "distinguishes aesthetic readings of [Chekhov's] stories from interpretative readings with particular reference to the recent spate of Christian exegetical attention his work has received" (x). He begins by considering Chekhov's novella *Three Years*, clearly establishing the difference between interpretative readings that reduce the story to singularly Christian themes and aesthetic readings that illustrate affective and intellectual tensions inherent within the story. McSweeney points out the limitations of overtly thematic interpretation by highlighting, in "Anyuta" for example, how "all

the story's elements are held together in an aesthetic moment that mingles beauty and sadness" (25). He also compares different stories within Chekhov's oeuvre, illuminating key variations in the author's deployment of the realist short fiction form. While doing so, McSweeney continues to develop his critical aesthetic model of reading by demonstrating how recent exegetical writing on Chekhov exaggerates subtext, thus reducing a story to a strictly linguistic reading defined by external influences. He then contrasts this mode of analysis with the role of the aesthetic critic, "which is to offer as inclusive, nuanced, and balanced an account of the artwork as he/she can" (31). McSweeney also considers reader reception, demonstrating how the power of the realist short fiction of Chekhov depends upon both sympathetic engagement and reflective inquiry that fully immerses the reader in the story.

Chapter two, "Joyce's 'Stories of My Childhood' and Cultural Studies," employs the first three stories from Joyce's *Dubliners* to discuss "the difference between essentialist and constructionist readings...with particular reference to the usefulness of cultural-studies models of critical discourse" (x). McSweeney points out the importance of attaching the appropriate weight to particular words or details while avoiding highly interpretative or deconstructive readings that tend to reduce stories to ambiguity. The distinction of essentialist and constructivist readings extends the theoretical position introduced earlier while allowing for further comparison with disparate forms of analysis in the field of cultural studies.

The third chapter, "Affects in Hemingway's Nick Adams Sequence," investigates "the affective dynamics of interrelationship among stories in a sequence" (x) by considering three of Hemingway's Nick Adams stories. This inquiry takes into account "Hemingway's comments about his fictional method, genetic materials, and their intertextual relationships to each other and to other stories in the sequence" (58). The readings highlighted are not only interesting for their consideration of the role of consciousness, omission or indirection, and point of view, but because McSweeney deftly weaves together key insights from Chekhov, Carver, and others that add depth to the analysis and help to keep the work as a whole integrated. Further, the challenges of analyzing stories that form part of a narrative series, but also chronological or biographical sequences, are brought forth with considerable skill.

Chapter four, "O'Connor's Christian Realism," takes on "the Christian realism of Flannery O'Connor and considers the compatibility of the terms of that oxymoronic phrase" (x). McSweeney draws a lucid picture of recent critical discussion concerning O'Connor, and reiterates his critical stance, by differentiating between the work of a majority of Christian exegetes and a minority of secular commentators. As with each of the preceding chapters, McSweeney is careful not to turn O'Connor into a repeat of Chekhov. He distinguishes key differences in her work that reflect back upon Chekhov, Joyce, and Hemingway while illustrating the unique qualities of her own realist short fiction. An important point, also continued from the preceding chapter, is the distinction between denotation and connotation which allows an aesthetic rather than merely symbolic reading. This distinction is crucial if the overtly

Christian reduction of O'Connor's work is to be avoided. McSweeney does not deny the Christian reading of O'Connor or that O'Connor's stories are concerned with 'the moment of grace' but makes every effort to widen the reading of her stories to demonstrate the aesthetics involved, or lacking, in her renditions of the realist short story.

In the final chapter, "Carver's Dark View of Things," McSweeney begins to assess Carver's achievements as a realist short fiction writer by comparing Carver's "The Cabin" with Hemingway's "Big Two-Hearted River," a contrast that allows for a telling intimation of Carver's experimentation with and mastery of the realist short story. The exploration of Carver's work provides detailed, insightful analysis of the form in question. The selections in and of themselves are excellent, which keeps the reading fresh. Further, Carver proves a wise choice for the final chapter, for his down-to-earth fiction set in twentieth-century suburban America provides yet another alluring twist in the diverse history of realist short fiction.

The afterword indicates three key advantages to McSweeney's approach to realist short fiction: "understanding the importance of social context; understanding the status of meaning(s); and making qualitative discriminations" (115). Of particular importance for students and teachers of literature or literary theory is the distinction McSweeney makes between his model of aesthetic reading and the New Critical model that remains highly prevalent in North American post-secondary institutions. Rather than an essentialist presupposition that undervalues social and cultural context, McSweeney advocates a form of reading realist short fiction that combines "both a social context and a theme that transcends that context" (116).

The Realist Short Story of the Powerful Glimpse: Chekhov to Carver is concise, well-written, and easy to read. It is organized into clear sections with few footnotes and no translations. The citations are appropriate, well-placed, and used to great effect throughout. Although McSweeney's critical focus is consistent, there is little or no repetition from one chapter to another. In short, McSweeney writes according to the dictates of the best realist short fiction. This book will be interesting and useful for students and teachers of short fiction, English literature, cultural studies, comparative literature, and literary theory. It is, of course, also highly applicable for writers of realist short fiction.

Anderson, Lisa Marie. *German Expressionism and the Messianism of a Generation*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011. Pp. 210.

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The question of whether we have entered a post-secular age has been the subject of much discussion over the past few years, and a good deal of recent scholarship has been devoted to re-evaluating the place of religion in Western culture. As the author

herself points out, this book is one of several recent publications to examine messianism, in particular, a pivotal aspect of many religious traditions, including the Judaeo-Christian ones. The observation that messianic hopes are present in a good deal of the art and literature of German Expressionism, and that these hopes are usually explored by means of religious motifs of redemption, salvation, and apocalyptic transformation, will be obvious to anyone with even a passing knowledge of the movement. Yet Anderson contends that existing scholarship has underplayed the importance of the messianic to German Expressionism. She claims that Walter H. Sokel's use of the term "Messianic Expressionism" in his classic study *The Writer in Extremis: Expressionism in Twentieth-Century German Literature* (1959) is typical of this scholarship, in that it suggests that messianic elements are significant in just one phase or segment of Expressionism. Anderson prefers the term "Expressionist Messianism," as it reflects the central tenet of her study that messianism is a defining characteristic of the entire Expressionist movement.

The title of this book is a little misleading, however, in so far as Anderson does not provide a survey of the role of messianism in German Expressionism as a whole. Her focus is in fact one genre: drama. Her sound justification for this is that the Expressionists viewed theater as a place uniquely suited to exploring messianic subject matter. They believed that theatrical performance has an innately messianic potential, in that its directness and communality enable it to provoke redemptive transformations among spectators. But while Anderson flags this quasi-religious redefinition of theater in her introduction, little attention is given in the main part of her study to exploring specific ways in which Expressionist plays exploit the messianic potential of theatrical performance as form. Anderson generally does not consider actual or possible performances of these plays, and instead uses the techniques of literary studies to analyze the themes, forms, and motifs of selected written dramas by four major Expressionist playwrights: Ernst Barlach, Georg Kaiser, Ernst Toller, and Franz Werfel.

The book is sensibly structured, beginning with a careful discussion of the problem of defining the two slippery terms at the heart of the investigation: "messianism" and "Expressionism." In subsequent chapters Anderson gives brief but useful overviews of messianism in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures before analyzing the place and significance of borrowings from these scriptures, such as motifs of prophecy, nativity, crucifixion, resurrection, and apocalypse, in the selected Expressionist texts. She also provides an accessible introduction into the modern philosophy of messianism in order to demonstrate how the dramas are influenced by the thought of figures such as Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin, and Friedrich Nietzsche. Anderson's analysis gives the reader a thorough understanding of the huge extent to which certain Expressionist plays are informed by both religious and secular messianic notions. One slight problem with her meticulous exegeses of the dramas, however, is that they rely excessively on quotations from these works, which are often unnecessary and tend to interrupt the flow of the argument. English translations are provided, which

will make the study accessible to readers who do not speak German, but the disadvantage is that they make the text appear even more cluttered.

Anderson's book is not merely a descriptive survey of uses of messianic motifs, for it engages sensitively throughout with some important critical questions: To what degree are Expressionist hopes for the future rooted in the past? Do the selected dramatists project their messianic desires onto political, aesthetic or religious realms? Do they seek redemption within human activity or do they pin their hopes on something that lies beyond the human being? Do the Expressionists secularize or resacralize the religious motifs they rely on so heavily? Anderson's nuanced discussion emphasizes that there are no straightforward answers to these questions, for there is no one Expressionist Messianism.

In the book's conclusion, Anderson considers the degree to which the messianic aspects of Expressionism resurfaced in the ideology and rhetoric of National Socialism. The point that Expressionism has some troubling links with fascism is an important, if familiar, one, and it certainly needs to be mentioned. However, the reader may be disappointed to find that Anderson does not address the theatrical legacy of Expressionist messianism. Even a brief discussion of the Expressionists' influence on the messianic qualities of later avant garde theater, especially as manifested in the work of figures such as Antonin Artaud, Jean Genet or Jerzy Grotowski, would have allowed for a deeper understanding of the significance of Expressionist messianism in twentieth century European culture.

This small reservation aside, this is a well-written, perceptive, and, as the extensive footnotes and bibliography demonstrate, well-researched book that provides a more detailed and wide-ranging discussion of an important aspect of Expressionist drama than exists elsewhere. It will appeal to anyone with an interest in German Expressionism in particular, or the role of religion in twentieth century drama in general.

Swirski, Peter. *Literature, Analytically Speaking: Explorations in the Theory of Interpretation, Analytic Aesthetics, and Evolution*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2010. Pp. 222. $25 paper.

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Iconoclastic as the pronouncement may sound, *Literature, Analytically Speaking* is one of the most engaging contributions to the aesthetics of a literary work since Roman Ingarden. Swirski's literary-theoretical *opus magnum* continues Ingarden's and Husserl's tradition of studying works of art from the analytical and phenomenological point of view, while enriching it with a nuanced grasp of contemporary

developments in literary and philosophical aesthetics. In this way he bridges the most important achievements in the philosophy of art of the twentieth century with the newest analytical, formalistic, and evolutionary approaches that take him and his reader right into the twenty-first.

It may not be amiss at this point to say a few words about the structure of the book. *Literature, Analytically Speaking* consists of eight chapters, each introduced by an apt quotation from a scholar who combines semiotic and analytic erudition with gracefulness of style: Umberto Eco. The connection with Eco is further strengthened within each of the beautifully written chapters which are clearly designed to be as reader-friendly as the material allows (and accompanied with photographs, one per chapter, which illustrate the key theses of the book). Every chapter is subdivided into sections which demarcate the stepping stones of the analyses, and each is preceded by a pithy quote from Eco on theory of literature.

A model of well-informed and well-executed interdisciplinarity, the book as a whole begins with a solid discussion of aesthetics, analytic philosophy, and analytic aesthetics, after which it proceeds to investigate any number of crucial issues surrounding the nature of art, text, literary work, fiction, fictional truth, interpretation, only to end with a chapter devoted to problems of aesthetics as seen through the lens of evolution.

The first chapter, which doubles up as an introduction, gives a detailed overview of the overall design and the contents of the book. It begins with a simple but resonant phrase: "This is a book of literary theory, written by a literary theorist for literary theorists" (3). Although it is perfectly accessible to general readers who may want to find out more about the problems of literary interpretation and intricacies of literature itself, specialists in literary theory, philosophy of art, analytical aesthetics and cultural studies should benefit the most from reading this study.

And read it they should. *Literature, Analytically Speaking* invites readers to follow in Swirski's footsteps on a voyage of discovery that, to this reader at least, resembles not so much an encounter with an academic study but with an old-fashioned detective story. The author describes it in the following terms:

> …the book is structured conceptually like an hour-glass. It opens with a basic inquiry into the ontology of literary art and follows with the analysis of the principles of aesthetic interpretation. It then narrows the scope to investigate the nature of narrative fiction as well as the interpretative guidelines for 'fleshing out" story contents (the problem of fictional truth). Toward the end it fans out again to revisit a broader set of methodological points about intentions and interpretations before closing with a look at the evolutionary implications for the notion of the aesthetic and for aesthetics *tout court*. (5)

After the battle plan comes Chapter Two, which tackles the fundamental problem of the nature of a literary work within the context of the philosophical debates on the ontology of art. Aligning itself with contemporary research in analytic aesthetics, it rolls out persuasive theses in defence of artworks as intentional structures-in-con-

texts. This way, it falls in line with the analytical program delineated by Ingarden in his classic *Das literarische Kunstwerk. Eine Untersuchung aus dem Grenzgebiet der Ontologie, Logik und Literaturwissenschaft* (1931).

The connection is to the point insofar as, seeking to construct a solid basis for his theory of aesthetic interpretation of works of art—in an effort to elevate aesthetics to the rank of *Wertwissenschaft*, "the science of values"—Ingarden sought to ground his enterprise in ontology, much like Swirski does in his study. However similar in design, Ingarden and Swirski's projects are unmistakably different in execution. The latter successfully develops a robust theoretical framework for *Wertwissenschaft*, while Ingarden only briefly touches upon the problems he raises (confining himself, again unlike Swirski, to the domain of Husserlian ontology).

If the above sounds a trifle forbidding to non-philosophers, perhaps even more so to literary theorists, and utterly impenetrable to readers who maybe neither, there is no reason to panic. One of the greatest assets of *Literature, Analytically Speaking* is its ability to translate technical concerns into intriguing investigations of books, writers, literary hoaxes, literary paradoxes, rare manuscripts, blatant plagiarisms, spectacular deductions and humiliating errors of interpretation, demonstrating at every step of the way the author's spectacular knowledge of literature and the literary world.

The third chapter concentrates on the question of individuation of artworks, typified by the fictional case of Borges's Pierre Menard who recreates the text of *Don Quixote* word by word independently of the original. The central question is: is Menard's *Quixote* the *same* work as Cervantes's, or is it merely textually indistinguishable from it? Swirski's arguments, which lead ultimately to a masterful juxtaposition of two passages from Homer's *Iliad*, are to my mind utterly persuasive in resolving the issue once and for all.

Later in the same chapter Swirski develops a cogent critique of a position he dubs "textualism" in contemporary literary studies. The upshot here is that a literary work cannot be treated solely as a "text" without taking into account the art-historical context in which it was created—one which, crucially, includes authorial intentions. With characteristic precision, Swirski concludes:

> Even though there are traits equally attributable to writers and their works—being innovative or contemporaneous, for example—some aesthetic features cannot be reduced to statements about authors.…In sum, identical texts in different contexts will yield different works: *quod erat probandum*. (52)

Following a dazzling array of literary examples and interpretive case studies that in themselves are a major source of pleasure in reading this book, the chapter concludes with an elegant definition of what a literary work of art is. At the risk of being a spoiler, here it is: "A literary work is an oral or written structure in a langue (restored, if needed, according to its author's executive intentions), created in an art-historical context with a primary intention of realizing aesthetic/artistic properties" (65).

All this is, however, only an *hors d'oeuvre*. The following three chapters provide a true display of Swirski's erudition as he launches an investigation into the nature of fiction, fictional truth, interpretation of literary works and the notion of agency. The core of Swirski's theses can be described as moderate intentionalism, a highly nuanced and highly plausible interpretive position which, as he spares no pains to underline, is as distinct from (ultimately solipsistic) functionalism as from radical intentionalism.

Here, once again Swirski's conclusions are quite similar to Ingarden's postulates that, in the case of literary works of art, fictionality itself and contents of fictional representations (*Darstellung* in Ingarden's terminology) are traceable to authors. Rather presciently Ingarden even appears to ground the solution of the problem of fictional truth (which was not even defined as such in his time) in authorial intentions. Upfront at every step of the way, Swirski puts his cards on the table in defense of his—and by extension Ingarden's—views on the nature of fiction:

> To be a literary fiction, the item in question must also be a literary work, which entails some minimal conditions—such as originality of the created text—that rule out mere copycats as fiction makers. The author must have a genuine intention of making fiction and must have reasonable grounds for believing that his audience will read (make believe) it as such. As long as these conditions are met, whether accidentally true or not, the result is fiction. (107)

The second-last chapter, entitled "Intention and Interpretation", brings all the strands of the book together in order to contrast moderate intentionalism (always grounded in real intentions) and hypothetical intentionalism (grounded in the heuristic concept of an implied author), and resolve them in favour of moderate intentionalism. Finally, the last chapter of *Literature, Analytically Speaking*. In this fascinating discussion, Swirski continues to explore the intellectual currents charted in his previous studies of cognitive values of literary works (e.g., *Of Literature and Knowledge,* 2008), focusing provocatively on evolution and art.

The literary-Darwinist provocation, while present throughout the book, reaches its peak in this chapter. Multiplying examples from physics and mathematics, Swirski shows first of all that aesthetic principles such as the concept of beauty, elegance, and symmetry have always been guiding research in the exact sciences. In a series of convincing arguments, he ties this fact to other indications that certain characteristic features of art are part and parcel of an evolution of human beings, somehow underwritten by adaptive pressures and carried forth one generation to another. One of such adaptively-grounded features is the human instinct to tell stories and to identify with the story's characters. With a provocative twist at the end, Swirski writes:

> One reason we easily identify with literary characters is that, just like us, they display goal-oriented behaviour directed at understanding the world in which they are embedded (which for us forms the storyworld). These literary agents fashion interpretations, hypotheses, or half-baked guesses and proceed to test them in an elemental manner by adjusting their behaviour. And so do we as readers and critics, forming hypotheses

> about the characters and about the behaviours they exhibit. In distinction from the literary agents, we have no means of testing the truth of our hypotheses. But what about *evaluating* them? (167)

To conclude, I should stress what is perhaps an obvious point, namely that Swirski's virtuoso investigations of literature from the standpoint of analytic aesthetics and the theory of evolution open new avenues in humanistic studies in general, and in literary studies in particular. Inviting all scholars to join him in the literary-theoretical trenches, he could lean on Ingarden, who remarked once: *Wir wollen zunächst nur eine 'Wesensanatomie' des literarischen Werkes geben, deren Hauptergebnisse erst den Weg zu seiner ästhetischen Betrachtung eröffnen sollen* (1972, 2; For the present we would like to provide only an "essential anatomy" of the literary work; its main conclusions will only then open the way to an aesthetic consideration of the work [1973, 4]).

Had Ingarden lived into the second decade of the twenty-first century, he would have been proud of seeing this project flourish in the hands of first-rate thinkers like Peter Swirski.

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