

BOOK REVIEWS

BERNS, UTE, ED. *Solo Performances: Staging the Early Modern Self in England*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010. Pp. 272. \$76.

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Jared Johnson, Thiel College

Published in 2010, *Solo Performances: Staging the Early Modern Self in England* gathers a diverse collection of essays assembled from papers presented at the Performing Cultures conference held at the Free University of Berlin in 2007. The work features thirteen new essays from a wide range of international scholars that position performance studies in a pivotal role in shaping the future of early modern English studies.

In the introduction, Ute Berns, the co-organizer of the Performing Cultures conference and editor of this volume, invokes Stephen Greenblatt's famous concept of Renaissance self-fashioning as the volume's theoretical point of departure, characterizing it as "a process that is performative in nature," and claims that the works included in *Solo Performances* will revisit early modern self-fashioning with a "new theoretical edge and analytical precision" (11). The sharpening instrument that the collection's contributors apply to Renaissance self-fashioning is performance studies.

Though Berns articulates a rigidly defined critical context to situate the essays that appear in *Solo Performances*, the articles themselves present a multitude of scholarly perspectives. The contributors to the volume vary greatly in terms academic training and experience, some based firmly in the German university system and others extending across the European continent and beyond. The collection is organized in three major sections: 1) "Authoring and Authority," 2) "Self-Inventions and Pathologies," and 3) "Fashioning Sovereignty." The individual essays contained within each section examine a wide range of textual performances.

In a collection of essays covering a period of English history that was dominated by the London commercial theater, readers might expect a volume entitled “solo performances” to treat soliloquies almost exclusively. Indeed, a number of authors do examine the stage soliloquy, such as Andrew James Johnston and Ina Schabert. Johnston and Schabert’s focus on soliloquies as solo performances represent more the breach than the observance, though. Berns intends “the concept of ‘solo performances’ [to be] used as a flexible heuristic device” that can be applied to a wide range of texts and subjects (14).

A major strength of *Solo Performances* is the volume’s diversity of academic approaches and individual styles of scholarship. Each essay offers a new perspective on just what solo performance in early modern England means, at times blending the methodology so eloquently sketched out by Berns with other schools of criticism. From the introduction, the reader should anticipate the melding of New Historicist and performance studies approaches in this volume. Indeed, Ralf Hertzels reading of a letter from Ottoman Emperor Amurath III to Queen Elizabeth I as a solo performance in “Turkish Brags and Winning Words: Solo Performances in Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great*” serves as but one of many examples of the intersection of the two methodologies. *Solo Performances* showcases the application of performance studies alongside other approaches to early modern culture as well. For example, in the book’s two essays on John Donne, Wolfgang Müller’s “The Poem as Performance: Self-Definition and Self-Exhibition in John Donne’s *Song of Songs*” and Margret Fetzer’s “Plays of Self: Theatrical Performativity in Donne,” both scholars place performance in the context of rhetorical criticism. Likewise, both Richard Wilson and Rui Carvalho Homem discuss the solo performances of plays and their playwrights in their respective biographical studies on Shakespeare and Jonson. Another contributor, Andrew James Johnston, applies the lens of performance studies to his study of gender and sexuality in Shakespeare’s *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

Another virtue of the collection is the volume’s inclusion of outstanding solo (and paired) performances by the contributors themselves. Even scholars who are resistant to Richard Wilson’s reading of the “winking Wills” that pop up in Shakespeare’s plays as demonstrating the bard’s “recalcitrance towards the printed fix of authorship itself” (85) cannot but marvel at Wilson’s virtuoso concluding statement to “Our Good Will: Shakespeare’s Cameo Performance.” Wilson’s final paragraph takes the reader on a linguistic roller coaster as he employs print-related soundbites from the bard and his critics to structure his conclusion. Likewise, Günter Walch performs an innovative reading of *Hamlet* in “The Life and Strange and Surprising Adventures of Hamlet, of Denmark.” Inviting his readers to view the play in the vein of Defoe’s novel, Walch re-envisions character criticism through the lens of performativity. From this theoretical context, Walsh understands Hamlet’s soliloquies and other forms of narrative that appear in the play (such as his letter to Horatio explicating his captivity at the hands of pirates) as working in concert to perform a type of *Bildungsroman*.

In addition to these individual articles, the entire third part of *Solo Performances*,

“Fashioning Sovereignty,” also stands out as the most thematically unified section of the book. Roger Lüdeke and Andreas Mahler team up in “Stating the Sovereign Self: Polity, Policy, and Politics on the Early Modern Stage” to compare the sovereign performances of *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth*. Anxiety about the possible disruption of social order punctuates and permeates both plays, and Lüdeke and Mahler demonstrate how various characters in these plays interact with the polity with varying degrees of success. Similarly, Jerzy Limon builds on the theme of political stagecraft in his article by convincingly arguing that the monarch performs an integral role in the staging of masques. Finally, Ralf Hertel closes out the third section and the book by comparing Tamburlaine’s univocal speech acts in Marlowe’s play to political performances of sovereignty, such as the Ottoman Emperor Amurath III’s correspondences with Elizabeth I. The “Fashioning Sovereignty” section of *Solo Performances* presents a series of essays that both correspond unequivocally to the theme of sovereign solo performances and that compliment each other in a coherent fashion.

Though the individual essays in *Solo Performances* offer fresh insights on early modern subjectivity by applying performance studies in innovative ways, the collection is not without its weaknesses. One challenge caused by the wide range of hybridized theoretical approaches and various types of subject matter covered in this volume is organization. While the essays in “Fashioning Sovereignty” play well together, the other sections of *Solo Performances* lack a strong sense of unity, which some readers may find dissatisfying. As a unit, the first section, “Authoring and Authority,” features essays that seem ill-matched: the critical works of Schabert, Wilson, and Von Koppenfels explore, in one way or another, biography, while Johnston’s essay examines a stage soliloquy. Similarly, the second section seems like a forced conglomeration of divergent subjects, styles, and approaches. Even the title of the second section, “Self-Inventions and Pathologies,” begs the question, *how do these two terms fit together?*

While the works assembled for the collection stretch far beyond examinations of the stage soliloquy as the quintessential embodiment of early modern solo performance, the collection could have benefited from including one or two works that expand even farther. Somewhat misleadingly, Manfred Pfister suggests in the forward that “[i]t might be helpful, perhaps even illuminating, to take as the prototype of ‘solo-performance’ not the stage soliloquy of the celebrated ‘To be or not to be’-variety” but, instead, to consider the performative power of images. Besides Pfister’s forward, the only other readings of the performativity of visual texts occur in Von Koppenfels’s “Spiritual Self Fashioning” and Limon’s “The Monarch as Solo Performer in Stuart Masque,” and only in a limited capacity. Likewise, in a collection that is so obviously indebted to speech-act theory and so committed to problematizing Foucaultian discourse by introducing the factors of agency and change made possible during live performances, some readers might expect an essay or two that examines live performances of early modern texts such as theatrical productions, historical reenactments, or even conference presentations.

Despite these minor drawbacks, *Solo Performances* presents an interesting fusion of New Historicist-era self-fashioning with current trends in performance studies. The contributors to this edition demonstrate that, if applied properly, the strong electric charge of performativity can defibrillate and enliven approaches to early modern studies once thought dead.

ALMEIDA, JOSELYN M., ED. *Romanticism and the Anglo-Hispanic Imaginary*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011. Pp. 360 notes index.

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218 “Romanticism dramatically reoriented the imperial histories of England and Spain,” exposing “just how entangled were the national imaginaries of England and Spain” (53, 54), states Joselyn Almeida in her contribution to the volume she edits. In the diversity of its fourteen articles this book shows the many different ways in which the interplay of ‘the imaginary’ between three geographical nodes—England, Spain and Spanish America—becomes a “field of presence” (Almeida, “Introduction” 6) during the first half of the nineteenth century, a period during which England is inundated by ‘things Hispanic’ in its every cultural and political manifestation. The volume thus constitutes a welcome addition to the library of current Romanticism studies, specifically in the burgeoning field of the ‘transatlantic’ or international perspective. As per its stated objectives, “[t]he present collection combines scholarship on British Romanticism, Spain and Latin America to trace the contours of the Anglo-Hispanic imaginary that emerges through the convergence of these cultures and discourses at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The essays address Romanticism’s poetic and polemical engagements with some of the major historical developments that inform this imaginary” (Almeida, “Introduction” 13). It explicitly builds on Diego Saglia’s 2000 monograph on this topic, *Poetic Castles in Spain: British Romanticism and Figurations of Iberia*; many of the contributions refer to his work and he also contributes the first study, “Iberian Translations: Writing Spain into British Culture, 1780-1830” (25-52). Saglia uses the term ‘translations’ to refer to the transfer of knowledge, people, languages, maps: “The Romantic (re)writing of Spain was...a writing of otherness, a ‘heterography’” (33).

The collection of articles in the volume thus explores Romanticism as a rich, international phenomenon framed by Napoleon’s invasion of Spain in 1808 and the consequent ‘war of independence’ in this country, the subsequent colonial uprisings in Spanish America and that continent’s wars of independence—in both of which episodes Britain played a supportive or oppositional role, depending on the circumstances. In fact, it is clear from the diverse essays constituting this volume that England’s perspective of Spain as ‘Other’ underwent dramatic transformations

during the first half of the nineteenth century. With Napoleon's incursion into Spain, Britain's general ignorance and stereotypical, external, mostly literary view of Spain as exotic, rustic, unchanging, "an archive of images" (Saglia 27) had to adjust to an actual reality: the large number of Spanish intellectuals that came to London, preoccupied with and active in very current political and cultural issues, continuous news of events in Spain and Spanish America, and the publications of British travellers—all of which destabilized the misconceptions, omissions and erasures of traditional historical discourse. Britain and its intellectuals were asked to support differing opinions on Spain—on its internal problems and later its position on Spanish-American independence movements, again with the presence in London of a number of intellectuals from that continent, thus constituting "a comprehensive operation of mapping, constructing, and interpreting the Iberian country and its cultures" (Saglia 40). These circumstances also resulted in a reexamination and redefinition—on the part of all members of this trilateral group—of a number of long-held (pre-)conceptions about nation, nation-building, nationality (British, Spanish, and newly independent Spanish-American) and the mother-country's role as related to these other nations, about identity, liberty, independence, society, culture and its manifestations, nature and its perception, and even gender, its definition and role(s).

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The volume offers a synthesis of its diversity through the titles of its three thematic divisions. The first, "Theaters of Liberation," examines "how Spain and Latin America indexed British attitudes towards Hispanicity, empire, and liberation, as both sites became theaters of war" (13). This section has five contributions, dealing with "Writing Spain into British culture" (Saglia), "Transnational authorship..." (Almeida), and articles on several specific (British) authors. As Joselyn Almeida states in her contribution, "Spanish and Spanish American writers, émigrés, and exiles constructed a transnational social space that amplified the public spheres of Spain and Latin America" (55). At the other end of the geographical nodes, Tim Fulford examines the implications of the life and writings of Thomas Cochrane, the son of a Scottish nobleman, member of parliament, adventurer and mercenary, who participated in Chile's struggles for independence in the 1820's—his success dissipating "British uncertainty about the revolution's success and its leaders' reliability" (97) and allowing Chile to "float a loan" (*ibid*) of a million pounds in London to continue the financing of their war. Other contributions in this section focus on traditional literary discourses, as in Alicia Laspra Rodríguez's "Fictionalizing History: British War Literature and the Asturian Uprising of 1808" (109-132), where she examines how poetry "performed a major role in the mediation of the Peninsular War to the British public" (111), and Susan Valladares's "Resurrecting the Spanish Setting in Coleridge's *Osorio* (1797) and *Remorse* (1813)" (133-155), in which she makes a similar claim for drama: "In Georgian Britain, drama became a medium for the rewriting of history" (149). Valladares also shows how "Spain itself had emerged as an experimental stage whereupon national identities could be conceived, reconceived and rehearsed" (134).

The second thematic section, "Trades and Exchanges," examines "the interactions,

translations, and negotiations that structured the cultural, political and economic facets of Anglo-Hispanic relations after Napoleon's defeat" ("Introduction" 16), and also numbers five contributions, these dealing with such diverse topics as Britain's crisis of the early 1820s after "British money and British manufactures had followed British soldiers and sailors in bringing South American independence to dramatic fruition" (Tim Fulford 104), and the bursting of the financial investment bubble in the early years of the Spanish-American independence in 1826 (Rebecca Cole Heinowitz 183-212); Alcalá Galiano's role in the reception of British Romanticism in Spain in his "Anglo-Hispanic Cultural Exchange" (Maria Eugenia Perojo Arronte 213-232); British theatre and certain representations of the Spanish female (Jeffrey Cass 233-248), to "The Role of William Wordsworth in Miguel de Unamuno's poetic Renewal" (Cristina Flores 249-273), which sees Wordsworth's ideas on Romanticism as 'imported seeds' that, through "an intermediate intellectual process...the poet makes...his own" (251) and that, through Unamuno's importance to twentieth-century literature, contributed to the enduring legacy of Wordsworth in Spain.

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Finally, the third section, "Vistas and Extensions," explores "the fascination with travel narratives about Spain and Spanish America in the early and later part of the nineteenth century" ("Introduction" 20). It comprises four contributions: Jeffrey Scraba's "Washington Irving Imagines Andalucía"—a wonderfully complex in-depth examination of Irving's various writings on Spain (275-296) as a "palimpsest of romantic modes of knowledge" (288); Frances Calderón de la Barca's Mexico and how her "own identity shifts throughout her narrative and her presence in Mexico is emblematic of the shifting terrain of transatlantic relations" (298, M. Soledad Caballero and Jennifer Hayward 297-326); and the importance of Maria Graham's amateur scientific explorations of the earthquakes she lived through during her residence in Chile (Jessica Damián 327-340). Fernando González Moreno and Beatriz González Moreno offer the final contribution, on "English Travellers and the Belated Picturesque Tour" through Spain (341-366), which looks at the concept of the picturesque in travel writing, which during the Romantic era "generated such a great public demand that English editors began to issue a new kind of publication," in folio format with illustrations given "pride of place" (347; some of these are reproduced in the essay).

This important volume's main contribution lies in its presenting new ways of thinking about Romanticism, which was a pervasive way of seeing, living, thinking and writing, where national frames did exist, but were also crossed, a phenomenon foregrounded in these essays. The volume opens these previously held boundaries of the critical field and so offers a wonderfully enriching experience. One of its very good elements is the way in which contributions refer to (different aspects of) the same authors in the three geographical nodes (for example, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Hemans, Blanco-White, Alcalá Galiano, Unamuno, Miranda all re-appear at various intersections), proposing both intertextuality and emphasis on various components, intensifying our understanding and providing coherence to what might have been a

very loose collection of articles.

There are some quite frustrating deficiencies, such as the lack of theoretical grounding in the historical approaches, the generally descriptive (rather than analytical) discourses and, especially, the lack of definitions of the terms used in the title of the volume, or setting a temporal frame for 'Romanticism'. Given the diverse cultures and histories, the different circumstances and chronologies for 'Romanticism' that the volume presents, some discussion of these problematics would have been helpful. However, these omissions can be overlooked in the overall wealth of information and the positive contribution the volume offers.

GRAMICH, KATIE. *Twentieth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Land, Gender, Belonging*. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 2007.

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Reviving women's writing from smaller countries is often a difficult process, and arguing for the study of those texts can be harder. However, in *Twentieth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Land, Gender, Belonging* Katie Gramich, English professor at Cardiff School of English, Communication, and Philosophy, asserts just that. She argues that women's writing in Wales has, for too long, been marginalized and overlooked. In her book, she develops the point that Welsh women writers have been voicing their distinctive perspectives for well over a century, but are continually excluded from any canon. However, in doing this, Gramich has the task of defining what it means to be Welsh and a Welsh woman. She states outright that the purpose of her book is "to examine the ways in which Welsh women writers present Wales and Welsh identity as distinct from other nations and identities" (2). She builds this definition from a succession of writings of poetry, and various types of prose from 1900 up to 2005 of various women writers of Wales.

Throughout the book, Gramich shows that Welsh women writers actually have a long history of work which focuses on complicated tropes such as religion, anti-industry, freedom, belongingness, migration/eviction, and many more. While the chapters move at different paces and pull from a varied number of readings, they each work effectively to present a claim for writings by Welsh women to enter the canon. In her introduction, she postulates the possibilities for why this select group of writings has been so overlooked; and, in doing so, brings up a complication that becomes a trope evident throughout the work: British influence and assumed assimilation. However, Gramich is very clear in arguing in all of the writings she comments on; and continually points out nonconformist attitudes as a part of the Welsh identity. In her defining of Welsh characteristics and its distinctiveness, Gramich develops the argument that the women of that nation are a people of place and that land and their

belonging within it are inseparable from their writings and the identities presented therein. In this way, Gramich lives up to the subtitle—"Land, Gender, Belonging."

Gramich is careful to take the time to outline historical circumstances so that her readers can understand the background of the texts being discussed and the issues that those texts present. In each chapter she begins with this information that helps to set a frame for the different time period each chapter exhibits. Then, Gramich shifts into presentation and commentary on texts of that time. When commenting on texts by Welsh women writers Gramich carefully overviews plot and main points, and focuses on tropes telling of the time period's historical circumstance and the way the writers represent Welsh gender realities. In each chapter, Gramich shifts through a number of writings by commenting on interrelating aspects of the works.

Gramich's first chapter, "Sacred Place: 1900-1920," looks at women's writing in Wales during that time period and comments on how these works were influenced by the publication of the Blue Books Report and the responses that followed it (10).

222 Many of the works in this section focus on political topics such as national culture, religion, and women's place in the two. Gramich identifies a plethora of tropes in this section with the most popular ones being religious revival, otherness and belonging, the Welsh nonconformist national character, and the sacredness of nature over industry. Throughout the chapter, Gramich defends outspoken women writers who write on political topics and have strong feminine characters.

Since *Twentieth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Land, Gender, Belonging* spans such a large amount of time, the text documents changes of the focus shifts of Welsh women writers. Chapter Two, "Fallen Place: 1921-1945," focuses on tropes of Welsh migration to other nations, industrialism, and women's education. Gramich brings up how the Equal Franchise Act and other historical occurrences influenced women writers to focus on education as a gendered and political space (55). However, Gramich explains the greatest influence on writing during this period to be the First World War and the depression that followed. Gramich critiques the writings that stemmed from these effects with a post-colonial lens. In this way, she comments on how the texts depict eviction by absentee landlords and the destruction of Welsh land.

Chapter Three, "Awakening Place: 1946-1977," is perhaps the most interesting chapter of the book. It documents a span of time when women were expected to resume their place in the home after paid work during the wars as well as the beginning of the second wave of feminism in Wales (106). Thus, consistent tropes throughout this chapter are loss and moral issues. After explaining these things in the beginning, Gramich uses the rest of the chapter to comment on how Welsh women writers depicted and explore their shifting gender identities. Through commenting on the differences in writings by women referenced in both chapters two and three, Gramich points out the flux and notions of change represented in works of this time. This chapter is so packed with information and insights that it is difficult to pinpoint select highlights. Gramich is able to carry over ideas and tropes important

in past chapters and note how those ideas shift due to various historical or situational reasons.

Chapter Four, “Feminist Place: 1978-1996,” transitions from the growing interest in women’s influence to feminist readings of texts by end-of-century Welsh women writers. In this chapter, Gramich pulls from works of new Welsh women writers and explains that these writers are the product of the feminist movement mentioned in Chapter Three (146). Gramich spends a greater amount of time and space in this chapter on poetry than in any of the previous chapters. Consequently, there is also a more attention given to voice and distinctive Welsh qualities in it. Gramich shows how writers during this time reinvent, recreate, and rewrite space as commentary on evolving notions of gender within post-industry, post-war desecrated Welsh land. Popular tropes of this chapter are women’s sexuality and voice. Also in this chapter, language gets a large share of the focus. Throughout the book, Gramich notes the way in which different writers use either the English or the Welsh language. In chapter four Gramich still acknowledges the importance of language choice, but also presents it as less of a dilemma in choice (the home language or the colonizer’s language) and more as a set of expression possibilities (182).

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The final chapter before the conclusion, “Hybrid Place: 1997-2005,” is the shortest of the five sections. In the beginning of this chapter Gramich sets up her post-colonial readings by explaining the emerging “hybrid culture” in Wales stemming from the combination of the distinctive Welsh identity (which is highly influenced by non-conformist views) and the British colonization of Wales (183). While in the earlier sections Gramich marks nonconformist views as a central aspect of Welshness, she explains in this last section that the twentieth century ends with notions of hybridity, and acceptance of the lands colonized past. Gramich uses a post-colonial lens for her conversation of Welsh identity, yet with the added hybrid notion, identity becomes more complicated and requires almost the complete focus of this short chapter.

As a piece itself, *Twentieth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales: Land, Gender, Belonging* successfully accomplishes a very difficult task. The text fits over a century of women’s writing in Wales into 210 pages (plus notes). While the magnitude of the purpose of the work requires quick shifts from one text to another, her transitions from text to text flow together between a uniting key factor in each text. Gramich’s text adds significantly to the field of gender studies, and especially to the studies on gender in small and rural nations. This work creates a timeline of Welsh women writing and the issues that concerned them. It creates the opportunity for Gramich, and other scholars, to return to this backbone of scholarship and continue the field by fleshing out important points that Gramich brings up. *Twentieth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales: Land, Gender, Belonging* is a new useful resource and a justified argument for the canonization of often overlooked texts. In her conclusion, Gramich completes the piece with final comments and points on gender theory. At the end of the work, Gramich leaves her readers with the understanding of liveness of place as a Welsh characteristic which women writers have reanimated in a way to comment on

gender appropriated spaces and their belonging within them.

ANDREWS, JENNIFER. *In the Belly of a Laughing God: Humour and Irony in Native Women's Poetry*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2011. Pp 324. U.S. \$55 hardcover.

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224 Jennifer Andrews' *In the Belly of a Laughing God: Humour and Irony in Native Women's Poetry* examines the work of eight contemporary Native American poets: Joy Harjo (Muscogee), Wendy Rose (Hopi/Miwok), Jeanette Armstrong (Okanagan), Diane Glancy (Cherokee), Kimberly Blaeser (Anishinaabe), Marilyn Dumont (Cree/Métis), Louise Halfe (Cree), and Marie Annharte Baker (Anishinaabe). The poets range from enrolled tribal members to non-citizens, and are from rural and urban Canada and the United States. Several of these poets write in their tribal languages (such as Armstrong), employing code-switching, but most write primarily in English, all the while navigating the contradictions and problematics of using what is sometimes called "the enemy's language" (see *Reinventing the Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writings of North America*).

The introduction provides an excellent context for Andrews' analyses to follow, offering a useful survey of indigenous humour and irony as a field of study, while also defining key concepts for readers encountering this field for the first time. Crucial to Andrews' study is her assertion that humour and irony, understood as "discursive strategies," are employed by Native women poets not only as tools of survival and resistance against colonialism, genocide, and patriarchal regimes, but also as the means by which these writers can reinforce the values, structures, and world-views within their respective communities. Early on, Andrews rightfully points out that context is crucial when understanding the functions of humour and irony in these texts—not just the cultural contexts of the speaker, but also the social contexts of that speaking within a flexible community. She also addresses the importance of the listener/reader's context as an essential part of the process of interpretation, a move which recalls Greg Sarris' (Miwok/Pomo) argument in *Keeping Slug Woman Alive: A Holistic Approach to American Indian Texts*. In this light, her introduction attends to her own context and positionality as a "white female middle-class academic who has studied Native literature on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel" (18). Readers coming from a Native American/Indigenous Studies perspective will appreciate this acknowledgement of her position, as well as her articulation of the overall intent of the project, which is "to garner attention for and provoke further discussion about these talented women and their works" (18). Her integration of ample interviews, including those previously published by Andrews in *Studies in Canadian*

Literature and American Indian Quarterly, often highlights the critical perspectives of the Native women poets themselves. Additionally, in her decision to eschew a poet-by-poet examination, she necessarily positions these poets in dialogue with each other, structurally reinforcing an “intratextual web of relations” (21). This comparative approach privileges connection over isolation, and speaks to a living, breathing community of contemporary Native women poets exchanging knowledge and vision across contested boundaries.

Many of Andrews’ chapters offer in-depth analyses of the transformative properties of contemporary Native women’s poetry, but some of her most compelling work is found in chapter two, “Generic Transformations.” The amount of seriousness and attention she pays to Joy Harjo’s (Muscogee) and Jeanette Armstrong’s (Okanagan) oral and musical poetics is genuinely refreshing. All too often, literary scholars merely pay lip service to the centrality of orality and musicality in the context of indigenous literary output, but then critically attend exclusively to written productions. Here, Andrews carefully unpacks the interplay between written and spoken poetics in the work of these women; it is an interplay often found in Native communities today, where traditionally “song and poetry are not differentiated” (32). The result is a chapter that I would recommend to anyone interested in problematizing genre and Western systems of literary categorization. Additionally, Andrews’ comparisons of written and oral versions of the “same” poem of a given poet remind me of one of the most effective approaches for teaching Native American literatures in the classroom—undoubtedly, many an instructor has offered their students a paper copy of “I Give You Back,” then played Harjo’s audio delivery of the same poem. Although Andrews strangely asks if “anyone else” but herself will “so avidly and carefully” compare the textual and aural versions of such poems (117), this may well be a regular exercise in Native literature classes. In this chapter, Andrews ultimately posits that these writers use irony and humour to “challenge the foundations of literary categorization,” (36) while also reinforcing their cultural values. They actively transform genre to suit their own needs and the needs of their communities. Andrews’ emphasis on transformation as poetics is particularly keen, especially since it constitutes a theoretical framework arising out of Native women’s poetry itself. She successfully shows how these poets strategically employ humour and irony in order to transform a wide range of phenomena: their communities and selves, histories, audience expectations of Native identity and creative output, nationhood, spiritual beliefs and practices, language, and others.

Although a discussion of Native women’s issues remains central to the text’s scope, no attention is paid to queerness/Two-Spiritedness or lesbianism in this particular work. Additionally, some sections of *In the Belly of a Laughing God* seem isolated from vital conversations going on in Native literary studies as a field. For example, in her section, “Mapping the In-Between,” she importantly points out the prominence of cartographic images in Harjo’s poems. Andrews uses Bill Ashcroft’s work as a critical frame, outlining the strategic role of literal and figurative mapping within

colonial and post-colonial contexts. However, though Andrews is familiar with the collection *Speak to Me Words: Essays on Contemporary American Indian Poetry* (she quotes from it in her introduction), she does not make use of Janice Gould's (Koncow/Miwok) seminal work, "Poems as Maps in American Indian Women's Writing." With so few scholars writing with and about Native American women's poetry, these gaps constitute crucial losses, reminding us of the importance of cross-dialoguing between scholars working in Native/Indigenous Studies with those in Comparative Literatures and English. Other weaknesses include her heavy emphasis on irony as a discursive strategy while tending less to humour, as well as her periodic usage of the problematic phrase "New World" *without quotation marks* as a referent to the Americas.

I would recommend Andrews' text to anyone working in contemporary Native American poetry, women and gender studies, and humour and irony discourse. Her treatment of the theme of transformation constitutes an important contribution to the field, and if her main intention is to honor the work of these Native women poets with earnest scholarship, she has accomplished just that.

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ADAMS, JON ROBERT. *Male Armor: The Soldier-Hero in Contemporary American Culture*. Charlottesville & London: U of Virginia P, 2008.

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A soldier's war-painted face was staring down at me, looking into my eyes for comprehension, and waiting for a reaction that I couldn't produce. This, I envisioned the moment I finished reading Jon Robert Adams's *Male Armor: The Soldier-Hero in Contemporary American Culture*. I recognized in myself the "very typical American inability to comprehend the character of the professional soldier," which Peter Aichinger articulates in his 1976 study, *The American Soldier in Fiction* (Adams 136).

Published in 2008, at a time when American civilians were comparing the war in Iraq to Vietnam, Adams's study uses representations of war and constructions of masculinity to critique America's faith in the war enterprise. Throughout the historical novels, plays, memoirs, and films that Adams uses as evidence in *Male Armor*, the gap between civilians' expectations of men at war and soldiers' accounts of the war experience becomes increasingly clear. "By locating both historically and culturally the discursive tensions that have given rise to and exploited gaps between civilians and soldiers," Adams notes, "*Male Armor* hopes to offer a way to interpret and understand textual representations of war and to intervene in the American public's continued investment in the war enterprise as a guarantor of masculinity, and by extension, of the nation" (6). While the title to Chapter Two reads "Bridge to Vietnam," the only bridge Adams hopes to construct is the one between American

civilians and soldiers. The larger purpose of his study begs for a demolition of the historical bridge that connects war with both man-making and nation-making enterprises.

As an Associate Professor at Western Michigan University, Adams has a pre-established credibility for analyzing scholarship on gender, war, and American national identity. With evidence situated in gender theory from Judith Butler, fiction from Ernest Hemingway, and popular culture novel-to-film adaptations like *Jarhead*, among many others, it's clear that Adams's study incorporates a broad range of texts on gender and war. To solve issues of scope, however, Adams's analysis focuses on literature written by men, and "men's experience on manhood" (19).

What gives *Male Armor* its persuasive argument, and allows Adams to tackle one theoretical obstacle at a time, is basic chronological organization. From chapter one, "The Great General Was a Has-Been," Adams begins with World War II, and the transition that occurs when President Truman fires General Douglas MacArthur for protesting government war strategy. Adams uses the public's positive reaction, celebrating MacArthur when he returns home, as an early example of how civilian hopes for a hero are governed by fictional constructions of gender. Civilians would do well to learn from Truman's insistence on "a compromising diplomacy," which must replace "brute displays of force" (29). America, as Truman and Adams point out, can succeed without a dependence on the soldier-hero.

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The following chapters, "Bridge to Vietnam" and "Envelope Please," echo Truman's warning. Adams details, through various pieces of war literature, how support for soldiers entering World War II became protest of Vietnam, and the soldiers' hopes for heroism, duty, or honor were lost. The same way British, French, and German soldiers participated in the endless war of World War I, and doubted their involvement, Vietnam veterans had also to sacrifice their masculinity in a war that could only be won through body counts. Once again, the American construction of masculinity was called into question, as Adams points out in Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*: "Rather than making men, Heller declares, war only suffices to unmake them" (70).

If "we can hope to disable war," as Adams suggests in his introduction, "by revealing fictions in social constructions of gender," the success of *Male Armor* is undeniable (7). Adams's study reveals these fictions, and points out how representations of masculinity in various novels, plays, and films are constructed in different, but equally problematic ways. In the post-September 11th era, *Male Armor*'s message becomes all the more urgent: "The sooner the civilian public registers its culpability in enabling the war enterprise, the sooner we can mount effective efforts to protect our servicemembers or to finally bring them home" (127).

It's important that readers of *Male Armor* adopt the corrective Adams proposes, and fight against the fact that "culture shows no signs of altering its expectations of soldiers" (17). The stated purpose of Adams's study, however, is intended for scholars and critics in academia. It's here that I come to my only point of contention. While I've devoted the majority of this essay to my praises of Adams's study, I must

point out the flaw in his audience. The civilian public, which has the power to initiate change much more so than scholars and critics, must be directly appealed to for Adams's message to take hold. I would recommend *Male Armor* more to friends and family, or any stranger who walked out of *Jarhead*, than I would to any individual in the academic community. I agree with Adams that "perhaps scholars can at last enunciate the 'direction or doctrine' that will finally end war," but only to the extent that the general public understand the power of the role they play.

DAVIDSON, MICHAEL. *On the Outskirts of Form: Practicing Cultural Poetics*. Middleton, CT: Wesleyan UP, 2011. Pp. 344. US \$27.95.

228 Richard Cole, University of Alberta

In a 1980 article, "Archeologist of Morning: Charles Olson, Edward Dorn, and Historical Method," Michael Davidson recognized "the dangers of treating 'place' as a sentimental localism" (*On the Outskirts of Form* 122) when he troubled the predominant critical model of "re-presencing" leading many cultural interpreters astray in their analyses of post-WWII poetry (123). An additional thirty years have elapsed since the article's publication. Now viewable through the linear scope of history, it marks a midpoint in the sixty-year chronology of postwar American poetics, documenting the shift from composition to critical reception. But also, if today's critical moment serves as the future anterior giving cause to Davidson's urgency to dispose of a geographically-based criticism, "a kind of spiritual localism" in American poetics, his warning arrives as a remarkably accurate diagnosis of the "spirit of place," that has persisted as a specter in discourse (26). At stake, in understanding this "re-presencing," is how the early critical reception, led by Charles Altieri, Harold Bloom, Albert Gelpi, and J. Hillis Miller, "looks like a return to Romanticism" (160). This approach has certainly had continuing staying power, informing discussions of the highly-reflexive style characterizing postmodern verse, "not as a strategy of evasion, but as a record of moment-to-moment attentions" (160). The approach fails, for Davidson, because it views postwar poetics as an extension of, if not tribute to, Romanticism's model of a "deep self" centered through a hypostasizing quest for natural or immanent forms of experience. Moreover, this fidelity to the lyric "I," a fixed subject which cultivates the "present" moment of experience as a marker of authentic individualism, vastly underestimates the social codes which also determine the "self" as a horizon for neo-liberal individualism. Returning to Davidson's essay helps lift this interdiction. Operating under a similar principle, the other essays in the collection under review carry out a nuanced reassessment of the problems and promises of "self" in both postwar culture and globalized critical contexts. Collecting Davidson's

essays written over the past thirty years, *On the Outskirts of Form* offers a rewardingly paradoxical thesis that a focus on cultivated displacement can itself foster interventions into how poetry engages in collective practices inextricable from mass cultural politics, across national borders and cultural agendas.

In order to give a more precise content to this difficulty, let's evoke what constitutes one of the pivots of Davidson's reflection: that the globalized subject has divested its positionality. Davidson responds to this problem in three ways, marking the three subsections of the book. First, he addresses the contemporary consequences of an extensive "cosmopoetics" of displacement that has evolved alongside globalization. Chapter One is a republished version of Davidson's essay in Barrett Watten and Carrie Noland's edited volume, *Disasporic Avant-Gardes*; parts of it also featured in Davidson's plenary address at the 2011 Modernist Studies Association Conference. He discusses the geopolitical application of mobility in works by "post-NAFTA poets" Lisa Robertson, Mark Nowak, and Christina Rivera-Garza. Chapter Two then turns its theoretical focus to historicize the discourse of poetic manifestos, productively analyzing the aspirations of a globalized poetics that re-determines the instrumentalizing public language that shapes flexible citizenships. To show how and, equally telling, why, cosmopoetics maps the discursive and political tensions arising from increased border security and decreased legal jurisdiction, Davidson advances salient readings of poetic form alongside references to Craig Calhoun's work on the "class consciousness of frequent travelers" (25). In both essays, he ultimately advances what James Clifford defines as "discrepant cosmopolitanisms" that differentiate different degrees of entanglement in national/transnational orders" (25).

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In the second section, Davidson moves backwards in literary history, to the objectivist tradition. Both essays further his previous project in *Ghostlier Demarcations* to provide extensive close readings of the material word. But Davidson takes a new critical turn on textuality, to determine a globalizing moment whose political, communicational, and economic systems have threatened to extinguish the possibility for conceiving a strictly regional or local existence. Less clear is how exactly Lorine Neidecker's privileged repositioning of local landscape (her poetry is "part of the place and not about it") (85) differs from the "re-presencing" and "spiritual localism" Davidson elsewhere arboreos. Although throughout the volume Davidson evokes Williams' "structures of feeling," it remains unstipulated how the pressures of globalization so routinely compromise the status of history by retroactively re-determining spacio-temporal configurations through a process Williams describes as the ongoing articulation of the *presence of the present*. Davidson glosses Williams to support the claim that "globalization is impossible to represent as a totality" so "it can only be experienced affectively" (50). Totalizable or not, the increased disintegration of local agency that Davidson correctly points us to might have been historically grounded using the kind of generative tension Williams locates between mobility and time, an ongoing re-presenting that constitutes a mode of affective exchange, a mobile symbolic economy that trades in the relentless historical supplementa-

tion of a displaced subject determined by circulating global affects. Mark Simpson's work in *Trafficking Subjects* deals more clearly with the politics of mobility, offering a thoroughly convincing resurrection of the theory-death of the subject to posit a circulating individualism constituted by the social disjunction between the regional and the hemispheric. If we lived closer, I would like to bicker with Davidson on such issues over a few pints, but in the era of globalized communication, this review can more easily transcend national borders between our locales; it will suffice for now. The second essay, on "Oppen's Class Spectacles," is the stand out. Has there ever been a more comprehensive, scrupulous, and capable critic on George Oppen? While Oren Izenberg at UIC has gone to lengths to denounce Davidson's status, nor would Isenberg likely nominate Peter Nicholls for the honors, Davidson provides a brilliant cross-examination that distinguishes the fallibility of Isenberg's "ahistorical, cognitive concerns" from a cultural poetics invested in registering the material history of Oppen's "verbal struggle among terms for identity" in the transforming public sphere (118).

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The final section, comprising nine chapters, and involving a multitude of postwar poets, including Creeley, Duncan, Levertov, the language poets, and, surprisingly, Shelley, it reaches across the borders of so many literary traditions that it would be impossible for any critic (or reviewer) to group them under a single conceptual focus. The heading, "Approaching the New American Poetry," operates accordingly as a loose set of sutures. The essay previously referenced on Olson and Dorn provides the lead, serving as the volume's most argumentative, not least for its challenges to the "cumbersome term 'postmodernism' and its implied oedipal struggle with the previous era" of modernism (126). Alan Golding and many others in attendance at MSA 13's panel on "Postmodern Poetry: Fact or Fiction" will be grateful Davidson so easily disposes of this banal term. Critics of the New York School can also be appreciative that Davidson's "The Pleasures of Merely Circulating: John Ashbery and the Jargon of Authenticity" has found its way into print. First presented at 2010's *John Ashbery in Paris Conference*, Université Paris Diderot, it facilitates a necessary corrective in Ashbery studies. Davidson views the sliding of pronouns ("pronominal ambiguity") characteristic in Ashbery's polyphonic voices as the cultivation of "inauthentic, cliché, and bathetic" language, positing a generic subject position circulating anonymously between identities in the era of Cold War conformity, rather than inhabiting any one subject position (219). While I agree, this claim has widespread and complicated ramifications. Extensive work is now necessary to reconceptualize the pre-Stonewall queer politics of the New York School, if not completely expand the reading of typographical displacement as it informs other possibilities. The section also contains an essay (1983) on ekphrasis, previously published, that I wish critics (not least myself) had discovered earlier as it clarifies the terms by which the post-war painterly poem "refuses to be contained" (203). Its "scale undermines much of the ekphrastic principle," thereby diverging from its predecessors; the sister arts are hence no longer fettered by Joseph Frank's model of spatial form.

What sense does it make, then, to speak of a *cultural poetics*? After the global turn, this phrase signifies a particular interest in the interweaving of multinational corporations, labor outsourcing, free trade agreements, and digital communication that unfold in poetry to outline a new, globalized citizen subject. The unorthodox decision to organize essays from this present day moment to the historical past offers a surprisingly productive optic to read not only the poetic tradition in reverse, but also Davidson's critical discoveries. The volume marks a career of achievements by American poetry's sharpest critic. So the reader is left with an understanding of the collapsing of global distance, establishing in critical discourse an analog for the surmountable task ahead to conceptualize how cultural poetics arrives simultaneously from the past, and the future, to announce itself adjacent to the cultural politics shaping the expansion of the commons.

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SERRES, MICHEL. *Malfeasance: Appropriation Through Pollution?* Trans. Anne-Marie Feenberg-Dibon. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2011. Pp. 89.

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In *Malfeasance: Appropriation Through Pollution?* French philosopher Michel Serres puts forth a bold meditation on the role of pollution in our contemporary ecological crisis by contemplating how "*appropriation takes place through dirt*" (3). This characteristically irreverent thesis provides Serres a way of linking seemingly disparate phenomena across disciplines, fields, and history. What Serres offers in this slender volume is an all-encompassing and impassioned plea for reorientation of our conception of how to be in the world as we face our "giant contemporary global catastrophe:" we must reconsider our long and oppressive history of property rights that bolster the idea that we are "masters and possessors" of the world and everything in it (27). Instead, we must enter a "natural contract" with the world and become global renters. This newest addition to Serres's prolific oeuvre is a generative but sometimes far-reaching contribution to ongoing conversations about the contentious relationship between nature and culture in our increasingly dire environmental concerns.

In Part 1, "Urine, Manure, Blood, Sperm: The Lived Foundations of Property Right," Serres considers how animals mark their territory through acts of excremental appropriation. Just as "tigers piss on the edge of their cave" or cicadas drone into the summer air, we too mark our spatial parameters through pollution, be it the literal shit of everyday existence or the more diffuse tendrils of electronic communication (3): echoing earlier scholarship which addresses the convergence between animal and human customs, Serres argues that such marks render place inhabitable since "what is properly one's own is dirt" (3). In other words, these "slices of inhabitable space" are marked as inhabited by us because we dirty them with our excremental bodies

(11). Serres also develops a theory of the foundation of “natural law” by progressing through a series of linked sites organized around the four bodily discharges of his title. By addressing animal ethology (urine), anthropology (manure), history of religion (blood), sexology (sperm), and marriage (the old private right), Serres rallies for a change in how we think about our so-called stewardship of the Earth. Our malfeasance can only be redressed by dispossessing ourselves of Earth. From here, Serres jumps to his next link—blood and corpses—in order to consider how “purification occurs through sacrifice” in violent wars of the order Virgil or Homer depict in the “bloody trail whose abomination abundantly soiled the space they traversed,” or of the gory origins of the French national anthem, the *Marseillaise* (15-16).

As solid and material wastes affect the environment, so too the proliferative world of “matter and signs” bombards our senses. In Part 2, “Garbage, Images, Sounds: Matter and Signs,” Serres continues this rallying cry for our dispossession of the world by inviting us to consider a “new period of hominescence:” a gradual shift from hard to soft pollution (84). Whereas hard pollution is that “solid residues liquids, and gases, emitted throughout the atmosphere by big industrial companies or gigantic garbage dumps, the shameful signature of big cities,” soft pollution is those “tsunamis of writing, signs, images, and logos flooding rural, civic, public and natural spaces as well as landscapes with their advertising” (41). We occupy a new space now for we cannot enclose a piece of land any longer: “We haunt a topological space without distances, rather than the old Euclidian or Cartesian expanse that could be located metrically by a network of coordinates” (67). Since property right depends on this network of enclosure, we have the opportunity to free ourselves of such appropriatory markings and thus dispossess ourselves of Nature: “We no longer own it; we only live here as tenants” (72).

This slender book would have been even more persuasive had Serres gone into greater depth about some of his more provocative examples. Nonetheless, my desire for more detail is tempered by Serres’s ability to move deftly across seemingly unrelated phenomena, generating new concepts from connection and juxtaposition and displaying a nomadic style of meditation and border-crossing. Serres’s methodological flair for accruing a carnival of associations which flow towards an all-encompassing model seems at times too freewheeling, but it is the hallmark of a thinker invested in generating new concepts rather than critiquing old ones. Those interested in the cultural politics of dirt and pollution, the overlap between human and animal, or the stylistic possibilities of synthesizing philosophy will find generative nuggets in this sparse yet urgent ecocritical tract: “The new contract becomes a rental agreement. Once we have become mere renters we will be able to contemplate peace—peace among humans because peace with the world. May this *cosmocracy* come soon” (72).

LIONNET, FRANÇOISE AND SHIH SHU-MEI. *The Creolization of Theory*. Durham: Duke UP, 2011.

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“Creolization is a miracle begging for analysis” (Trouillot, 1998)

Since Ulf Hannerz’s (1987) proclamation that “we are all being creolized” or Edouard Glissant’s evocation of a creolized “*tout-monde*”, creolization has indeed emerged as a significant concept for analysing complex processes relating to contemporary globalization. The more universal application of *creolization* beyond its historical reference to the plantation-based societies of the Caribbean or Indian Ocean is reflected in the wide range of publications that have emerged in recent years which adopt the concept either as a theoretical tool or as a metaphor to depict particular forms of social or cultural mixing or “entanglement”. *The Creolization of Theory*, edited and introduced by Françoise Lionnet and Shu-Mei Shih, represents a timely contribution to this body of work, offering an eclectic set of essays which explore the possibilities that emerge when theory is taken beyond the abstract universalisms of Euro-American thought and decentred—or *creolized*—so as to be better placed to engage with “the living practices of being and knowing” (2). While some of the nine essays seem to deviate somewhat from the overriding theme of creolization, and the language can be impenetrable at times, this interdisciplinary collection includes some highly original material that make it a valuable read for those interested in both the concept of creolization and the role of critical theory.

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In the recent burgeoning of work on creolization, the concept has often been used interchangeably with terms such as hybridity, syncretism, multiculturalism, or as a metaphor for globalization. This has led to a backlash among scholars who warn against the use of the term beyond its geo-historical, and indeed violent, contexts (Palmié, 2006). While acknowledging the importance of prudence, Shih and Lionnet argue in their introduction to the book that historical and geographical grounding do not preclude the conceptual potential of creolization, which “continues to take new forms in the contemporary world, leading to unknown and unforeseeable results” (30). Indeed, just as creolization must not be used without reference to its origins in colonialism and the violent encounters of the New World, so too, they argue, theory must be contextualised. Thus, through examining the political, historical and intellectual “entanglements” of contemporary academic disciplines—and in particular the emergence of American “ethnic studies” courses and “French Theory”—the editors argue that theory must not be used as abstract, universal and apolitical, but rather as intrinsically linked to, and engaged with, socio-political realities. It is precisely the inherently unequal power dynamics implied within creolization that, they propose, makes it a pertinent concept to “rethink theory at a time when its death is frequently announced and prematurely mourned” (3).

Drawing on Clifford Geertz's distinction between "a model of" and "a model for", Aisha Khan (2007) argues that within recent scholarship on creolization, there is often a tendency for scholars to conflate the term's use as a model to *describe* processes of cultural change and contact with a model that *interprets* them, leading to the "overdetermination" of the creolization model. In *The Creolization of Theory*, by contrast, it seems that the simultaneously descriptive and analytical nature of the term is treated as part of its strength. Indeed, this is reflected in the book's structure which is divided into two parts, the first entitled "Creolizing Methodologies", and the second "Epistemological Locations", both allowing for fairly open understandings of creolization as adjective or verb, as "model of" or "model for".

The editors' introduction puts forward a thoughtful and convincing argument for the "creolization of theory", an expression whose meaning, they explain, is threefold and refers to: "*creolization as theory, creolized theory and creolization of theory*" (25).

234 The argument is thorough, and it is sensitive to the multiple and contested meanings of creolization, yet there are times when it seems that the distinction between creolization and other related terms such as minority, marginality, hybridity or decolonization becomes blurred. This loosening of the term's conceptual boundaries seems to justify the inclusion of essays in the collection that make little or no reference to creolization. In such cases, the reader is left to decide the extent to which what they are reading actually represents a "creolization of theory", how far it differs from postcolonial—or decolonial—theory, or whether it in fact represents a new guise for Lionnet and Shih's (2003) previous conceptualisation of "minor transnationalism". In such instances, the purportedly more open analytical model put forward in *The Creolization of Theory* exposes the editors to the charge of "overdetermination" that Khan (2007) warns against.

Nevertheless, for the most part, the essays in the collection do represent innovative approaches to theory in which the notion of creolization enables authors to rethink and decentre some of the generalisations surrounding, for example, political, racial, psychoanalytic, and postcolonial theory. Barnor Hesse's chapter in the volume traces the history of Black politics through the logic of creolization: the emergence of the concept of race as a colonial category, and the *entanglements* of the political with "the public-private and subaltern aspects of those Western formations" (59). Fatima El-Tayeb's chapter also calls for a creolization of the political, arguing persuasively that "creolizing theory" enables the expression of the otherwise silenced position of "visible minorities" in contemporary Europe, which, she argues, is "deemed impossible in the dominant European discourses, that of Europeans of colour" (239). Most notably, she proposes a "queer-of-colour" critique which can destabilise the colour-blind and gender-neutral construction of marginalized groups within Euro-centric discourse, and allow for the reworking of such essentialising categories.

New ways of thinking about minorities in Europe emerge again as the focus of Etienne Balibar's chapter in which he underlines the "gigantic inequality" and "dis-

symmetries” in the rights of circulation and movement of people (217). He calls for an expansion of the civic rights and practices of minorities through the notion of what he calls “diasporic citizenship.” Moving beyond more abstract, apolitical conceptions of diaspora, Balibar’s concept refers not to a global citizenship or a borderless world, but a citizenship that recognises the complexity of spaces and movements that make up peoples’ everyday realities.

Postcolonial and psychoanalytic theory are read through a “creolizing” lens in the chapters by Liz Constable, Pheng Cheah and Anne Donadey. Thus Cheah, for instance, critiques Frantz Fanon’s transposition—or creolization—of Freud’s theory of trauma to colonial racist violence as he himself seeks to analyse the global power dynamics in relation to the Asian financial crisis of 1997. In his own reworking of Jacques Derrida’s concept of “autoimmunity”, he argues that we need to think beyond that dominant colonial paradigm of power as an *external* imposition (107). Constable’s chapter compares the 1993 Algerian novel *L’Interdite* and the 2003 film *L’Algérie* as she attempts to rethink psychoanalytical themes from minoritized perspectives. While the chapter includes a rich discussion of the concept of *creolization* and the possibilities it allows for new ways of thinking from “minor perspectives” and through “vernacular modes of representation,” the core argument often becomes lost within the essay’s long and convoluted structure.

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Several of the authors use literature, music and art to explore new ways of thinking about the history and legacy of colonialism within contemporary processes of globalization. Creolization—or creolized theory—becomes a useful means through which to analyse these creative endeavours and practices, but also for thinking about how the forms themselves are the product of creolizing processes. Ping-Hui Liao’s chapter, for example, uses the concept of creolization to discuss the collaborative work of the Chinese American playwright, David Henry Hwang, and the musician Philip Glass. Liao’s convincing and powerfully expressed essay contrasts creolization to discourses of multiculturalism, arguing that the former involves more than just a rethinking of colonial power relations, “but of entanglement and enrichment through discursive struggles to be other than and larger than oneself” (143).

The inclusion of translations of Dominique Chancé’s short essay that traces the genealogy of the concept of creolization and of a 1998 interview with Edouard Glissant in the appendices provide some important context to the chapters in the volume—revealing creolization’s complex development as a concept, but also the theoretical potential of the term for engaging with the new challenges of the socio-political present and future.

The Creolization of Theory brings together essays that explore possibilities for “creolized theory” from a diverse range of disciplinary, geographical, and theoretical perspectives. Through combining them in this rich volume, the editors create a forum for the forging of new interconnections, new creolizations, new ‘relations’. Indeed, as Glissant (2005: 8) writes, “[r]elation is not made up of things that are foreign but of shared knowledge.” Despite some inconsistencies, *The Creolization of*

Theory represents a significant contribution to debates on the role of theory in the humanities and opens the space for a more relational approach to the historically, geographically, politically and intellectually *entangled* world we inhabit and for the emergence of more “shared knowledge.”

DOLEŽEL, LUBOMÍR. *Possible Worlds of Fiction and History: The Postmodern Stage*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2010. Pp. ix+171 bibl index.
\$60.00US hardcover.

Cindy Chopoidal, University of Alberta

236 With his 1998 book *Heterocosmica*, Lubomír Doležel provided an informative and interesting guide to fictional-world theory, the study of how literary works create and embody their own alternative worlds in the minds of authors and readers. In *Possible Worlds of Fiction and History*, he expands his study of literary worlds and world-making from fiction to historiography, in part as a response to the claims of postmodern theorists such as Roland Barthes and Hayden White “that there is no fundamental difference between the fictional and the historical narrative” (viii). Doležel agrees that fiction and historiography are similar in that both modes of writing involve the creation of possible worlds through narrative, but argues that there are indeed fundamental differences between them, because where historiography creates “models of the actual past...fictional worlds are imaginary possible alternatives to the actual world” (viii).

Doležel begins the book with a brief outline of postmodernism, summarizing some of its key theorists including Brian McHale, Linda Hutcheon, Jacques Derrida, J. Hillis Miller, and others, all of whom have contributed in various ways to this complex and fascinating literary/cultural movement whose primary definition may well be the difficulty of defining it, or even of deciding whether it is “now over, or... still alive in today’s world” (2). According to Doležel, the importance of postmodernism is that “because of its cultural critique...its ruthless deconstruction of all authority...[w]e are wiser because we think and act with much less certainty” (3) and because it has helped to make us more aware of possibilities in both the actual world and literary worlds rather than relying solely on master narratives imposed from above by authority figures. It is from the background of postmodernism that theories of historiography and fiction like those in Barthes’ “Le discours de l’histoire” and White’s *Metahistory* emerged, as did responses such as those of Paul Ricoeur and Dorrit Cohn, who, like Doležel, regard the difference between history and fiction as the difference between telling stories of “the ‘real’ past and the ‘unreal’ possibilities” (Ricoeur, qtd. in Doležel 22).

In Chapter 2 Doležel summarizes much of his previous book on possible-world

theory, *Heterocosmica*, presenting a brief overview of the development of fictional-world theory from the philosophical models of Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz to the modal-logic models of Saul Kripke and others, and so on to its applications in the humanities and social sciences. For those who have read *Heterocosmica*, the overview will be familiar; for those coming to Doležel's theories for the first time, it provides a useful and well-supported introduction that helps to set the stage for what follows. The majority of the chapter, however, discusses in detail the significant differences between the world-making techniques of historiography and of fiction: historiography is by necessity confined to the actual world, while fiction is free to deal with anything the human imagination can produce, even what would be considered impossible or improbable in the actual world. Furthermore, "[f]ictional texts are performative: they call possible worlds into fictional existence" (42), where historical texts describe "a world that preexisted the act of representation" (42). Similarly, though both historical and fictional worlds are by nature incomplete, being "products of the finite human mind and time" (37), the nature of their incompleteness is different. Gaps in fictional worlds are part of those worlds' structures which cannot be filled without creating a new fictional world, whereas gaps in historical accounts can be filled by the discovery of new evidence or via alternative points of view, or speculated upon based on inferences from the existing evidence.

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Doležel also calls attention to one of the risks of equating historiography with the writing of fiction: the possibility of revisionist or falsified history, "the creation of a false image of the past to legitimate the current political system" (40), either by emplotting the events in such a way as "to make [for example] Hitler...and others 'noble'" (24) or by deliberately omitting "figures who have fallen out of favour" (41) from historical records or even from photographs. This sort of revisionism can be seen as an extreme form of historical relativism, which holds "that representations of the past are always biased by the momentary conditions of their production" (40), but differs from other forms of counterfactual or fictionalized narratives in being created for political rather than for aesthetic or inquisitive purposes, and in being imposed upon the reading public as "an attempt to remake the past" (41) rather than being presented as alternative possibilities for the reader's consideration.

The remaining three chapters of the book examine in greater detail three different approaches to the history/fiction question: postmodern historiography, exemplified here in the works of Simon Schama; historical fiction, with works by E.L. Doctorow and A.S. Byatt as paradigm cases; and counterfactual history. Postmodern historiography emerged as a response both to "the narrative history of the nineteenth-century 'classics' [and] to social-science history" (45), but rather than sweeping both aside to create something entirely new, combined both approaches with techniques adapted from the writing of fiction. Doležel chooses Schama for his case study of postmodern historiography in Chapter 3 because, unlike writers such as Bryan Simon whose uses of fictional techniques end up producing works that are more historical fiction than historiography per se (49-52), Schama demonstrates that the use "of literary, rhetori-

cal, and narrative devices...do not [necessarily] affect the truth-functional status of historical discourse" (54). In *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution*, Schama focuses on some of the individuals who contributed, on all sides, to the Revolution rather than merely seeing them as "roles in more or less tightly organized groups" (55) as a more 'traditional' historical account might do. In *Landscape and History*, he emphasizes places—forests, rivers, and mountains, for example—using a method he calls "excavation" (qtd. in Doležel 64) to explore the history and mythology that have grown up around these places. In contrast to both of these works, Schama explicitly presents his narrative accounts in *Dead Certainties (Unwarranted Speculations)* as historical fiction, using speculations, first-person narratives, and "represented discourse" (82) to expand upon what is known from historical documents of the periods discussed in each chapter/story while otherwise keeping divergence from those documentary records to a minimum. From his comparison of these three representative works, Doležel concludes that Schama succeeds as a writer both of postmodern historiography and historical fiction because his works "engage both historical research techniques and fictional imagination...without confusing them" (83).

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Chapter 4, dealing with acknowledged works of historical fiction, begins with a discussion of fictionalized counterparts of historical entities—that is, the historical person as a character in a work of fiction, such as can be found in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* or Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, for example. Such characters are best understood as counterparts of their historical 'originals' within a fictional world rather than as the 'originals' themselves, since one of the key features of historical fiction is the interaction of the historical—that which was known to exist in the actual world—with the fictional—that which is the product of the author's imagination. Doležel points out that mimetic criticism, the insistence on 'historical accuracy', involves a misreading of the purpose of historical fiction, and especially in the case of postmodern historical fiction in which writers "create alternative possible pasts" (88); however, unlike historical revisionism, postmodern historical fiction does so as "an aesthetic game of unleashed imagination" (88) rather than as a serious politically-motivated attempt to alter or deny what readers agree actually happened. In this chapter, Doležel analyzes E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* and A.S. Byatt's *Possession* as examples of the creation of postmodern historical-fictional worlds. Much like Schama's treatment of the French Revolution in *Citizens*, Doctorow examines "New York at the dawn of the twentieth century" (93) in terms both of individual characters and the social groups to which they belong. However, where these works differ is that all the characters and events discussed in Schama's work did in fact exist in the actual world, where Doctorow's world includes both fictionalized counterparts of real people and purely fictional characters, and combines known historical events with invented ones. Byatt's fictional world, meanwhile, combines elements of romantic and realistic fiction in a layered narrative shifting back and forth from the past—specifically, nineteenth-century Britain—to the present, with the characters in the past and present narrative layers becoming counterparts to each other even as the

characters in the present attempt to reconstruct the lives of those in the past in what becomes a metafictional reflection on the nature of literary and historical criticism. Furthermore, Byatt's fictional world, rather than simply creating fictionalized counterparts of actual-world entities, instead creates not only fictional entities within a counterpart world of the past, but also literary works that within the fictional world are the writings of major characters, but within the actual world are the creations of Byatt herself. The similarities Doležel sees between Doctorow's and Byatt's fictional worlds and Schama's historical worlds do not, for him, prove the suggestion that fiction and historiography are no different from each other; rather, they illustrate "the fiction writer's free imagination, which is denied the historian" (100).

Having briefly addressed revisionism, the creation of an alternative historical past for political gain (cf. 143, n. 8), Doležel devotes Chapter 5 of his book to counterfactual history, the creation of an alternative historical past for aesthetic and/or rhetorical purposes. Though he admits that counterfactual historiography seems on the surface a "weird phenomenon" (101), he argues that it is a useful manner of exploring both the past and present as well as the similarities and differences between fictional and historical writing. Since the publication of David Lewis' *Counterfactuals* in 1973, counterfactual thinking—the examination of what did not happen in comparison and contrast to what did—has been an important part of possible-world theory, for even if some event were not true in the actual world, it could be true in a possible and/or fictional world. Counterfactual narratives are common in speculative fiction: some examples Doležel discusses include Ward Moore's *Bring the Jubilee*, in which the South won the American Civil War; Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* and Robert Harris' *Fatherland*, in which the Germans won World War II; or Kingsley Amis' *The Alteration*, in which the Catholic Church dominated Britain. All of these are characterized by historical timelines in which "an event contrary to well-attested historical facts occurred" (109), resulting in worlds which are, often, drastically different from the actual world. But counterfactual thinking is also present in historiography as well as in acknowledged works of fiction; historians such as Johannes Bulhof have justified its use in "ascribing causality, evaluating historical figures' actions, and judging the importance of historical events" (Doležel 115). With this in mind, counterfactual history reminds the reader that history is not determined but rather depends on the interaction of many diverse factors, none of which can be predicted with pinpoint accuracy; it also allows us to reflect on the present by postulating alternate paths toward or away from that present. The great paradox of counterfactual historiography, according to Doležel, is that it is at its heart the creation of "semantically fictional" (122) worlds, models of a past or pasts that never actually existed. How, then, does counterfactual historiography differ from historical fiction, especially knowing that "historians have...warned, and been warned, against using historical fiction as a source of knowledge about the past" (124)? Doležel answers this question by referring to Alexander Demandt's (Doležel 119-121) and Niall Ferguson's (Doležel 124-126) theories of counterfactual history. For both Demandt and Ferguson, who developed

their models independently of each other (Doležel 147, n. 11) and also as responses to “radical thinkers of the postmodern [who] were denying the difference between history and fiction” (126), a successful counterfactual world should be based on evidence from the actual world and not rely on anachronism or improbability, and should be based on an event whose presence, absence, or difference would result in significant consequences for the possible world being constructed. Where these models differ is that Ferguson’s model generally avoids imagining long-term consequences to the altered event, where Demandt’s does allow for “*longue durée* vision” (121) as long as it can be related to existing evidence in the actual world. Doležel puts forth these counterfactual-world models, and especially Ferguson’s, as ways of resolving the paradox that counterfactual history creates fictional worlds to answer questions about the actual world: though “[f]ictional representations of the past...cannot be a source of reliable historical knowledge” (126), these counterfactual worlds “are a special kind of fictional worlds constructed under specific constraints” (126), those of the historian who must limit his/her world-making to what is possible in the actual world. In this way, we can achieve a greater understanding of what did happen in history by also considering what might have happened if certain conditions had been different, and thus, possible worlds can be just as useful to historiography as they are to the writing and study of fiction. As well, the possible-world model allows us to recognize the distinction between a historical and a fictional world by comparing the free reign of the imagination of an author of fiction to the specific constraints governing the (re-)creation of historical possible worlds.

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Possible Worlds of Fiction and History is a useful counterpart text to *Heterocosmica* as an expansion of the earlier work’s outlines of possible-world theory, demonstrating that the theory can be applied to texts which deal with the actual world as well as to worlds we recognize as fictional—and also to those worlds which exist in the borderland between ‘fiction’ and ‘history’ by exploring “the paths not taken, the events prevented, the attempts failed” (126) in comparison to what we know did happen in the actual world. Doležel’s work also succeeds in presenting the often complex concerns and questions of postmodernism in an accessible form, with both text and footnotes occasionally adding a light-hearted touch—for example, reflecting upon “the obsessive use of quotation marks around certain terms in postmodern writing” (131, n. 10) or considering the possibility, raised by Hayden White and referred to by Robert A. Rosenstone, of “surrealistic history” (137, n. 5)—to this faceted and fascinating analysis of the similarities and differences between history and fiction, ‘traditional’ and postmodern, revisionist and revisionary, actual and counterfactual.

SAYED, ASMA AND NAYANIKA KUMAR, EDs. *World on a Maple Leaf: A Treasury of Canadian Multicultural Folktales*. Edmonton: United Cultures of Canada Association, 2011. Pp. x+102 bibl illus.

Shazia Javed, Brampton, Ontario

Once upon a time, not so long ago, before the advent of twenty-four-hour in-home satellite entertainment, internet and personal computers, in the era of face-to-face communication, children used to gather around grandparents, parents and other elders to be entertained by stories which had been passed down from one generation to another. Each generation and even each storyteller added a bit from their own experiences, imagination and distant memory and took away what they thought was inappropriate and unwarranted in their time for their children. Thus these stories, the “folktales” as we call them, help identify the communities in which they are shared as much as the community in which they originate. “Folktales, like all oral narratives, often give evidence of the collective desires and circumstances of the communities that create them and pass them on,” says David Mikics in *A New Handbook of Literary Terms* (116). And this is where *World on a Maple Leaf: A Treasury of Canadian Multicultural Folktales* is relevant as a literary tribute to and celebration of Canadian multiculturalism.

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This collection of twenty-five folktales is comprised of stories that originate from about twenty different countries across the globe, each coming from a different cultural milieu. In these stories one meets with characters that practice different faiths, and each story allows the reader to experience the original sound of the story by including some words from its native language which are then translated in a glossary of words accompanying the tale. Yet re-told and re-imagined by authors who were either born in Canada or have made Canada their home, these stories are all markedly Canadian.

In the introduction to the book, Dr. Asma Sayed, who co-edited this book with Dr. Nayanika Kumar, informs us that the authors were asked to “re-imagine the stories they heard from their parents, grandparents, friends and families, and to write them for Canadian children”. Thus, in *The Flying Head*, an eerie and thrilling tale of a mother whose presence of mind helps her save her child, author Antoinette Botsford creates a personal connection with the reader by bringing in her own childhood and elders into the narrative; Marghalara Rashid, author of *Shirin and Farhad*, a poignant love story similar to that of *Romeo and Juliet*, chooses to tell her grandmother’s version of the story from amongst many others she heard later even though—as she says of her grandmother—“she mixed many folktales as she told this story to me in Persian” and Catherine Melnyk, who tells *The Story of the Thumb Sucker*, alters the story to change its moral lesson “from one that is meant to warn children that their actions could produce dire consequences, to a story that instead demonstrates the moral that there is reward for changing one’s behaviour in a positive direction”.

These examples—though not complete—are a testimony that folktales are a living art which is constantly changing and adapting to the needs, wishes, desires and the ideals of the communities in which they are re-told. Another case in point, which demonstrates the relevance of this collection of folktales in today’s day and age and attests to its “Canadian-ness” are the female characters therein. The editors of the collection show thoughtfulness and great discretion in choosing the stories in which female characters—whenever they have something at stake—are actively involved in changing their destiny or rescuing themselves from challenging situations. No damsels in distress here waiting for a knight in shining armour or sleeping beauties to be woken up from deep slumber but a young girl who must overcome her fear of the unknown and help others before being helped by them in her mission to rescue her younger brother (*Masha and the Swan Geese* by Nataliya Bukhanova and David Schultz); the young protagonist Erla, of *Erla and the Raven* by Faye Mogensen, is able to escape landslide and find shelter with neighbours because of the friendship she has fostered by being kind to the raven and sharing her food with it; and the farmer’s daughter in *The Squire’s Bride* by Pearl-Ann Gooding who refuses to marry but for love even when a rich squire proposes to her, and defeats him in his efforts to forcefully marry her by using her clever wit. Even the seemingly meek Dingxiang in a Chinese tale by Xie Wenjuan is able to rise above her circumstances only due to her good karma and the ability to recognize a precious stone from other ordinary stones which her husband lacks.

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This portrayal of young girls and women is even more important as, inherently, folktales are meant to contain moral lessons and have the potential to inform the values of young children while entertaining them at the same time. For parents who are conscious of giving their children the right values of gender roles and equality, *World on a Maple Leaf* is a collection they can rely on for stories to read aloud to their children at bed-time.

Another great way to enjoy the book is to keep an atlas as a companion to it and map the different countries from which the stories originate and to which the storytellers trace their lineage, thus gently helping the young children understand and value the multi-cultural nature of Canadian society.

Suitable for children of all ages, the collection would be further enriched, especially for younger children, with colorful and more frequent illustrations. My four-year-old, for instance, was eager to see a picture of Moradita, the purple caterpillar in the profound coming-of-age Mexican tale *More Than a Caterpillar* by Danielle Lamb. That, however, did not hold her from enjoying the story as she was busy drawing the characters in her own mind. As a parent, it was very rewarding to see how the various stories ignited her imagination, the questions they created in her mind and the various emotions they took us through (for we are, perhaps, never too old for a good folktale). The book definitely helped enrich our personal time together (evenings with dimmed lights and unplugged devices) and provided me with an opportunity to talk to her about my own heritage. It was the first time I ever spoke to my daughter

about my own grandmother as I remembered and narrated the various tales she used to tell me. And just as the folks (pun intended) behind *World on a Maple Leaf* set out to achieve, most parents would find, as they are reminded of the tales they heard in their own childhood, that long after the book is finished the tales continue...

ERNST, JUTTA AND BRIGITTE GLASER, EDS. *The Canadian Mosaic in the Age of Transnationalism*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2010.

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AN ISOCHRONIC ORDER FOR CANADIAN CULTURE? *TRANSING THE CANADIAN MOSAIC*

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The essays published in this collection deal with the present moment of immense transformation not only in the spatial composition of Canada's social imaginary, but also in the conditions of possibility for articulating a consensual notion of communal/national identity. They stem from the work presented at the interdisciplinary conference held at the University of Göttingen (Germany) in July 2008, with the mission of "bring[ing] together scholars from various disciplines in order to investigate the geographical, sociological, political, economic, literary, and cultural implications attached to the concept of the Canadian mosaic in an age of mobility and globalization." The project of articulating the national versus the post-national or the transnational is far from new, be it in the specific case of Canadian literature (see, for instance, Davey; Dobson; Siemerling and Philips Casteel) or in the more general context of contemporary culture in the West (see, for instance, Jay; Ramazani). Nor does the attempt to study how the mosaic, as a trope for cultural identification within the nation, is faring vis-à-vis the inescapable global thrust imply in itself a significant innovation (see, for instance, Henighan; Kanaganayakam; Kertzer). Yet this volume could be said to represent an advance in the current state of affairs in a number of ways: in the first place, in the historic/diachronic perspective of some of its best essays, placing the emphasis on the need for epistemic transformations of the national canon; secondly, in its multidisciplinary approach; and lastly, in putting forward a common, multilayered critique of multiculturalism. These potential contributions notwithstanding, the book's achievement as a whole seems uneven and the force of its argument varies considerably from essay to essay to unequal results.

The collection's attention to the diverse and often contradictory historical conditions for multiculturalism in Canada is first evinced in Jutta Ernst's and Brigitte Glaser's Introduction, which, moving partially away from the emphasis on the present that defines many studies of this kind, offers a historical overview of mul-

ticulturalism in Canada since the country's origin in the 19th century. The authors' brief examination of a selection of texts on multiculturalism from various disciplines succeeds in unveiling the conflicting uses of the term and frames the discussion around the changing intersections between culture and identity. Drawing on Stephen Vertovec's definition of *transnationalism* as a non-national, potentially post-ethnic mode of individual, cultural, social and economic exchange, Ernst and Glaser argue that these new forms of relationship ultimately challenge nation-based tropes of social signification such as the Canadian mosaic. The compiled essays are then presented as attempts to reassess and reevaluate "the concept of the Canadian mosaic in the age of transnationalism" (13).

And, indeed, the very first essay takes the reader by surprise by diving back, down, into and under Canada's colonial/imperial history. George Elliot Clarke's "Canada: The Invisible Empire?" dismantles traditional views of Canada as a colonial object and looks at the possibility of it being an imperial monster instead: "I wanted to trouble this relatively passive image of Canada as being an entity only gradually gaining its independence from Britain and only slowly defining its identity as a work-in-progress while facing, next door, the distorting, fun-house mirror that is America," writes Clarke. "I think that, if we look more closely at Canadian history and geography, a different, more difficult, and more challenging image of Canada and Canadians emerges" (20). His essay traces an untraveled path of Canadian history, zooming in the moments at which white supremacy has operated in explicit and subtle ways to produce and support racial discrimination and thereby construe the nation not as colonial entity but as a shadow Empire. Clarke's point, that so far "the diagnosis of Canadian imperialism is left unperformed" (30), is reinforced by his concluding mention of a number of contemporary anti-imperialist, anti-racist African Canadian writers, including Dionne Brand and Marlene NourbeSe Philip, vis-à-vis early African Canadian apologists for imperialism, such as Abraham Beverly Walker and Anna Minerva Henderson, whose works further complicate Canada's colonial/imperial heritage.

Also unusual in its scope and interesting in its method is the perspective contributed by H.D. Forbes's "Authenticity/Recognition: Charles Taylor in Theory and Practice," which exposes the limitations of the philosopher's well-known view of multiculturalism, by analyzing his essay "The Politics of Recognition" against his own practical recommendations as commissioner of the Government of Quebec to inquire about the state of multiculturalism in the province. One may object that Forbes's reduction of the multicultural "problem" to Quebec, that is, his belief in the "relatively smooth functioning" of multicultural policies in Canada (47), remains highly questionable and therefore unsatisfying. Yet, by looking at multiculturalism through the lens of Quebec's problematic rapport to it, he succeeds in drawing the reader's attention to the unsolved contradictions between the theory and the praxis as well as to the impasse created by the difficulties involved in any exercise of identity and recognition.

Markus Reisenleitner's "Gibson Country: Global City-Spaces in the North-American Imaginary of *Pattern Recognition* and *Spook Country*" provides an intriguing reading of Gibson's work as an instance of the obsolescence of the multicultural model as a prevalent form of identification, national or otherwise. This essay brings to the fore an essential aspect of transnationalism that is absent from the discussions elsewhere: that the rise of the connection global/urban is responsible for the displacement of Canada's nation-narration and is producing a particular spatialization of identity, since it "draws attention to a new order of spatiality that is, for those who partake in it, thoroughly urban, affective, deterritorialized, and multi-dimensional" (241). Kirsten Sandrok's "Carnivalizing Cape Breton: Multiculturalism in Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall On Your Knees*" is also thought provoking and innovative in its approach. Through a critical recuperation of the Bakhtinian carnival as a reading strategy, Sandrok analyses the novel against the multicultural grain, as it were, focusing on those moments in which cultural interaction fails and multiculturalism is implicitly subverted. Finally, Susan Ingram's "The Reverse Diversity of *FT Fashion Television*: Canadian Culture's Global Positioning System" closes the volume with an unusual approach to Canadian multiculturalism by analyzing the components of the popular TV show as paradigmatic of how current globalization processes are affecting perceived cultural identities in Canada.

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Another positive aspect would be the essays' order in the collection, which often adds a further analytical framework, enriching one another with supplementary readings of related texts. Thus, for instance, Till Kinzel's "Transcending Multiculturalism? Neil Bissoondath and the Question of Canadian Identity" can be read side by side with Dagmar Dreyer's "Canada in *Darkness*: 'Happy Multicultural Land?'" which follows and dissects the writer Bharati Mukherjee's well-known position against Canadian multiculturalism through a close reading of her short story collection. Kinzel examines Bissoondath's anti-multicultural stance by focusing on the problems that the implementation of the official policy has provoked, but he also introduces a critical note at the end about the dangers of a liberal individualistic approach to social integration. On her part, Dreyer comments how Mukherjee's physical move from Canada's mosaic, which she accuses of being a racist model of social integration, to the American melting pot, which she sees then as a more encompassing and accommodating model for social interaction, has not only been a source of embarrassment for very many Canadians since but also proven naive on Mukherjee's side. As many racialized writers have protested before and since, the erasure of hybridity as a stately sanctioned mode of identity address does not necessarily imply the disappearance of the hegemonic discourses that construct the racialized subject as different from normative national subjects. Read together these two essays supplement each other and add rich nuances to the well-known anti-multicultural positions signified by these two writers.

Most of the essays insist that, the notion of multiculturalism being attached to that of national identity in Canada, the current globalization trends are bringing forth

a transformation of both, moving the pillars of identity formation from fixed categories to rather fluid *transing* options. The argument, however, notably varies from essay to essay and is more or less challenging depending on the discursive structure and the uneven weight of the essays' theoretical background. Patrick Imbert's "The Valorization of Geographic, Cultural, and Economic Displacements in the Literary World of Canada," which argues for a transcultural ethos that transcends fixed notion of identity, national or otherwise, is a case in point. According to Imbert, the chameleonic virtues of characters and social contexts in recent novels like Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* and *Self* are paradigmatic of a desire for ethnic and cultural transcendence: "To act like a chameleon," Imbert asserts, "is to blend in within a temporary location" (55). Yet as the materialist approach suggested by this choice of terms is not taken, Imbert's point seems to lose itself in the midst of generalizations about a "liberal globalizing dynamic" (55) that is said to be "exhilarating" and "stimulating" (58), but is never explained in the context of Martel's texts. In cases like this, the essay's initially

246 discursive force seems to dissolve itself as the writing proceeds and the contradictory implications of literary globalization are overlooked.

In some cases, the tendency to issue vague generalizations about diasporic writing in Canada occludes the potential of the particular reading proposal. In "‘Even things that are true can be proved.’ ‘Even they?’: Recent South Asian Canadian Literature and the Need for Human Similarities", Elisabeth Damböck offers a rereading of works by Shani Mootoo, Anita Rau Badami and Shauna Singh Baldwin, among other South Asian writers who have often been taken as representative of the success of multicultural literature in Canada. Questioning the validity of looking at cultural diversity as a differentiating and liberating feature in these authors' texts, Damböck searches for patterns of social interaction that posit what she calls a "radical imaginary." Her proposal would then draw the reader's attention to "more universal concerns and the increasing precariousness of life in the face of globalization" (104). But the question remains about how radical this "future-oriented" imaginary may be, it being based, as the author asserts, on a rejection of the past. To say the least, many readers would find controversy in this type of proposal.

Similarly, Maria Moss's essay, "(Reluctant) Postcolonial Storytellers: Dionne Brand, Thomas King, and Rohinton Mistry" undertakes an initially interesting postcolonial analysis of the effects of orality in three very different texts by three equally dissimilar authors. But the promise of a comparative reading of this kind becomes thwarted by the large dissimilarities between the chosen texts, and this, in turn, endows Moss's analysis with a survey-like tone and a tendency to uncritical generalizations: "the use of a 'storyteller' persona in texts by Mistry, Brand, and King might imply an attempt to recover identity and rearticulate authenticity by invoking and incorporating the world found within the oral tradition, a world uncontaminated by any other discourse, whatever its name" (117).

In other cases, it is the method or the very topic that become unclear. Anca-Raluca Radu's "Beyond Multiculturalism: *Divisadero* as a Transnational Novel," for instance,

reads Ondaatje's text from a post-national perspective, arguing for the transcendence of national or ethnic allegiances and the celebration of a form of cosmopolitanism that is not rooted anywhere, but rather relies on the characters' involvement in a wide range of artistic forms that are nationless and universal. Beyond that basic premise, the introduction of a reader's response approach has some confusing effect on the essay's purpose and critical perspective. As a result, the analysis of the implications for Canadian literature of the dissolution of the national category in Ondaatje's fiction (as has been done, for instance, by Stephen Henighan) is left largely unperformed. So is a critical examination of Ondaatje's fiction in the current processes of transnationalization of culture as articulated by Mary Louise Pratt.

Elsewhere, in my opinion, "Fickle Places: Canada in Contemporary Scottish Novels" by Frauke Reitemeier, although potentially interesting for the study of the literary connections between Canada and Scotland, does not seem to contribute much to the debate, except perhaps very tangentially.

Most notable in this collection are the studies that combine a theoretically informed analysis of certain texts with a self-conscious intervention in the (multi-cultural) canon of CanLit. Renate Eigenbrod's analysis in "'Harvesting a Common Future': Richard Wagamese's Indigenized Stories of Intercultural Relations" provides one such instance of that double objective. By looking into Wagamese's texts through the lens of trauma studies, Eigenbrod offers not only a critical reading of a less well-known author, filling thus a critical void, but also implicitly dismantles the multicultural myth by introducing a First Nation experience that disrupts the official discourses on it. This dismantling notwithstanding, Wagamese's emphasis, Eigenbrod claims, is not on dwelling in the historical crimes perpetrated against the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, but rather on the restorative power of storytelling and the need for connectedness (an assertion that would probably need further elaboration).

Reingard M. Nischik's "'Heights and Depths I Never Guessed At': Cultural Locations of Ethnicity in Vancouver's Short Fiction by First Nations and Chinese Canadian Writers" undertakes a diachronic study of a selection of short narratives about Vancouver, from Pauline Johnson's "The Two Sisters" (1910) to Madeleine Thien's "A Map of the City" (2001). Focusing on the representation of what she calls "cultural locations of ethnicity," Nischik argues for the dissolution of ethnic borders and the transcendence of ethnic affiliations towards a "post-ethnic" experience of the city in recent fiction. On the one hand, I would contend that her reading of Thien's character in such post-ethnic identitary context (largely based on Kwame Anthony Appiah's notion of "rooted cosmopolitanism") would need further development as well as proof. Additionally, gender issues being a prominent part of all the texts chosen, a gendered perspective on the construction of "cultural locations of ethnicity" seems lacking (an absence that could in fact be applied to the whole book). On the other, Nischik's diachronic and teleological approach has the welcome result of turning the literary history of Vancouver upside down, contributing a fresh reading

perspective on cultural representations of place as they intersect with the complex processes of production of locality (Appadurai).

Outstanding in terms of the theoretical complexity of its argument is Sabine Kim's "Transing the Nation: Fred Wah's Re-Reading of Ethnicity," which, using Wah's experimental writing as a case in point, puts forward the need to accept transnationalism as a critical framework to analyse Canadian production beyond the multicultural grid. Wah's work, Kim argues, "can be understood as in dialogue with his attempt to 'race' the lyric when placed in a transnational framework" (152). Implicitly, this essay would talk back to Kinzel's and Dreyer's, mentioned above, its defense of Wah's approach to the "hyphen" as productive trope sharply contrasting with, and providing a way out from, Bissoondath's view of it as "a sign of an acceptable marginalization" (118).

248 Finally, Eleanor Ty's "Revising the Romance of the Land: Place in Settler Narratives by Contemporary Asian Canadian Writers" is also remarkable in its unusual and innovative scholarship. By looking at Chinese Canadian settlement narratives vis-à-vis the traditional European Canadian settler literature, Ty dismantles and rewrites the country's foundational myth of the wilderness. Her essay unsettles the historical pillars of Canadian identity by self-consciously using the term 'settler' to refer to the early diasporic Chinese communities in Canada, and contrasting the tropes of spatial wonder and spatial constriction. In so doing, Ty shows how a shift in the critical epistemologies may enact the necessary transformation of the very concept of national identity.

Much has been written about the current transformations of Canadian literatures and cultures: the site of a (necessarily non-local) *ethnoscape* has notably shifted from the cosy utopian *nationscape* of cultural nationalism to a restless borderless *globalscape* (see Appadurai). This move has provoked the need to rethink critical discourses about multiculturalism beyond a national frame of reference as well as articulate diasporic writing and reading practices *beyond autoethnography* (see Ty and Verduyn). *The Canadian Mosaic in the Age of Transnationalism* attempts to address a scenario for Canada, in which spatial and temporal differences are somehow flattened out, and, in so doing, some of the essays fall into the trap of privileging what Imre Szeman calls an *isochronic* image of the world, or "the creation of a single global time in which it is no longer possible to position oneself as out of sync with the main currents of modernity" (190). This idea, thwarted by the problematic conflation of the transnational and the global, often leads into uncritical celebrations of globalizing processes of culture, ignoring the rampant neo-liberalization of the global paradigm, and bypassing any reflection on the desirability of entering that isochronic order of culture. In such conflation, as Jeff Derksen and others have commented, the possibility of ideological dissent as well as the ability to think the literary through the cultural, the social, and the political specificities of the nation are omitted.

Besides, there are other factors in the transnational scenario whose discussion seems almost entirely missing, like the increasing importance of the urban in the

national imaginary. Interestingly, as Justin Edwards and Douglas Ivison have analysed, the turn to the city in contemporary Canadian literature does not necessarily do away with the project of the nation. Rather, it makes its borders more permeable to previously antagonistic notions. It does not seem by accident that the strongest essays in *The Canadian Mosaic in the Age of Transnationalism* are those that, still working within a national frame, look into a variety of modes that undermine not only traditionally ethnocentric but also multicultural modes of nation narration. They are the essays that, by moving away from dichotomous thought, introduce an epistemic break, intervening in the canon and opening new discursive possibilities. Elsewhere, this book seems fraught with challenges and its contribution to current scholarship in the field remains uneven.

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