REVIEW ARTICLE

POLYMORPHIC READINGS IN THE NOVEL: THEORY AND PRAXIS

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MAZZONI, GUIDO. *Theory of the Novel*. Trans. Zakiya Hanafi. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2017. Pp. viii + 382. $39.95.
MCCLUSKEY, ALAN. *Materiality and the Modern Cosmopolitan Novel*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. vii + 222. $95.
MORSON, GARY SAUL, AND MORTON SCHAPIRO. *Cents and Sensibility: What Economics Can Learn from the Humanities*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2017. Pp. x + 307. $29.95.

The product of some fifteen years of research between 1995 and 2010, Guido Mazzoni's impressive *Theory of the Novel* first appeared in Italian in 2011. Its availability now in Zakiya Hanafi's estimable translation, an important scholarly achievement in its own right, is a welcome event. Mazzoni subscribes fully to the Bakhtinian insight that there is "no unitary language or style in the novel" ("From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse" 48), that it operates beyond thematico-formal prescription and limit. In Mazzoni's own formulation, "*Starting from a certain date, the novel became the genre in which one can tell absolutely any story in any way whatsoever*" (16; emphasis in original). Similarly, he concurs with Bakhtin, if with some qualification—a point to which I will return presently—in the view that the novel is in a constant state of change and development.

Any theory of the novel will inevitably be a story about stories, and this is Mazzoni's

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story: across millennia of (European) history, there has been a slow devolution of mimetic interest and influence away from the powerful and exemplary few to the many, from kings and gods and heroes, and their amanuenses, to lesser nobility, what we have come to call the bourgeoisie, and the existentially unheroic, and finally today to pretty much any person and any existential circumstance. Thus, the dominant narrative genre of the Greco-Roman period, the epic (*epos*)—with its stories of the "glorious deeds of heroes," of "the works of the gods and men" (22) in Homer's formulations—offers few "narrative traces" of "common folk" (24). Similarly, medieval romances, with their heroes and improbable plots and impossibly idealized moral codes, neglect the many and the commonplace. It is only with the rise of the novel circa 1550 that narrative focus slowly starts to become more diffuse in its characterizations, more ecumenical in its plots, and more pluralistic of narratorial voice.

Mazzoni offers a very rich and detailed analysis of the "historical semantics" of the terms that nominate the genre. He traces out two separate genealogies, both Latinate in origin: "*le roman, der Roman*, and *il romanzo*" from the old French "*romanz*," and the other English, "novel," both for "novelty," but also related to "nouvelle," i.e., the novella (60-64). In a process of reverse discovery or "retrospective identification," akin to a quasi-Borgesian selection of one's precursors, writ large across centuries, utterly different works like *Satyricon* (c. 100), *Aethiopica* (c. 300), *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1532-64), *The Princesse de Clèves* (1678), *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), and *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), all come to be viewed as "novels" (64, 66). By 1800, the term means what it does today:

> *a polymorphic space providing a home for stories of a certain length that do not fall within the confines of more rigidly codified narrative genres* (*epic poems, works of history, and the* chansons de geste). (66; emphasis in original)

Significantly, in emphasizing the "retrospective" nature of literary historiography, Mazzoni questions Bakhtin's "entelechy" of the novel as a "privileged lineage" of a "pluridiscursive and polyphonic tradition" which, ambiguously, stands alongside the latter's claim that the novel is a continuously protean form (65).

Mazzoni develops his theory of the novel, effectively his novelistic canon, through what he calls an "intraspecific" approach which focuses on intra- and intertextual relations. He eschews to a large degree the "sociological theme," concentrating rather on the formal analysis of character and character types, and plot structures (13, 161). In particular, Mazzoni's own canon for this genre without, in the words of Bakhtin, any canon, "only examples" ("Epic and the Novel" 3), revolves around a body of works that detail in progressively more granular and more diverse fashion the experiences, perceptions, and observations of more or less "normal" people. As he outlines, a gradual rejection of two *ethoi* occurred that separated the embryonic modern novel from classical literary genres. *Stiltrennung*, the separation of styles, codified by Aristotle in *Poetics* (335 BCE), was based on the "rigid social hierarchy" of the day, and indeed mirrored it; a high "sublime" style was reserved for the depiction of the deeds of the great and heroic, while subject matter related to lower social strata was cast in lower rhetorical forms (103). Further, the classical preoccupation with unity slowly gave way to *entrelacement*, the orchestration of more complex plots and suspense-building narrative convolutions. In time, the classical and Judeo-Christian preoccupation with allegory and exemplary moral characters (*exempla*) fell into desuetude. By circa 1800, with the gradual elevation of common people and their problems to focal points of mimetic and readerly interest, "narrative democracy" (111), and with it the age of the modern novel, had been reached.

In general, Mazzoni's novelistic canon is conventional, but painstakingly problematized and argued: Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding in the eighteenth century (and Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* [1957] is fully engaged), as well as Rousseau and Goethe; and, following Lukács's historiography in "Narrate or Describe?" (1936), if not his broader ideological commitments, Austen, Scott, Balzac, and Stendhal in the first half of the nineteenth century, and Flaubert, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Eliot, and Zola in the latter half. As Mazzoni insightfully observes, the latter half of the nineteenth century is a period of "epochal eclecticism," marked both by an adherence to the conventional realism of Balzac and others and a pre-modernist cultivation of experimentation through naturalism, interior monologue, and the mimesis of new conceptions of time, among other things (273). Again, in Mazzoni's orthodox periodization, the turn of the twentieth century is marked by the advent of modernism and the emergence of a time of full-blown experimentation that runs until 1940, and witnesses the works of the modernist greats. Proust receives greatest emphasis, but Woolf, Joyce, Broch, and Thomas Mann are also discussed. Oddly, American writers do not figure considerably in Mazzoni's analyses; Faulkner is referred to only in passing, while Dos Passos is mentioned just once, and Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Stein, Hurston, and Wolfe not at all.

Influenced by Erich Auerbach's practice in *Mimesis* (1946) of close readings of long, cited passages, Mazzoni offers rich, fine-grained analyses of many of his canonical texts throughout his study, and these are particularly illuminating in the chapter devoted to late realism and modernism. At the same time, his examination of post-1940 novels is surprisingly brief and underdeveloped. He devotes only some ten pages to this varied and heavily populated period; in contrast, for example, his discussion of a single aspect of modernist fiction—"new characters"—receives lengthier attention. For Mazzoni, the post-1940 period marks the fourth historical stage in the development of the modern novel, characterized by "extremely experimental narrative" (336). He identifies a three-stage development after 1940 for what has become a "planetary" literary phenomenon, the "global novel": magical realism which, with the success of García Márquez, has become, in his view, the "dominant form of the postcolonial novel"; "clusters of experimentation" between the late 1950s and the 1970s, especially in Europe, notably the *nouveau roman*; and postmodernism, in the "narrow sense," developed in the United States (336-38). He summarizes his historiography of the post-1940 novel in the following terms:

> Each of these currents introduced new techniques; each of them created a genealogy that is still alive at the beginning of the twenty-first century; and yet none of them was able to establish their devices as models with the same force or the same ability to create collective habits that the major innovations possessed between the beginning of the nineteenth century and the 1930s. (338)

I do concur that (exemplary) "collective habits" in post-1940 fiction will not be found within the realm of narrative aesthetics, narrowly construed, but important collective habits have indeed emerged since the mid-twentieth century that echo the "epochal eclecticism" of high canonical fiction in the late realist and modernist periods.

As a matter of critical practice, Mazzoni tends to foreground the formal evolution of the novel, while placing thematic innovation in a subsidiary position. In line with this reasoning, among contemporary writers we might elevate to high-canonical status are people like Calvino, Pynchon, Coetzee, Pamuk, and Houellebecq—all of whom Mazzoni mentions—but such a coterie of formal innovators is exceptional in an age that has, for the most part, as Mazzoni suggests, "[left] behind the paradigms that presuppose a perpetual renewal of forms" (341). A couple of responses to this assertion come to mind. First of all, thematic and sub-generic innovations are forms of innovation; further, the genealogy of the novel of the last century is far more heterogeneous and complex than Mazzoni indicates.

Across its history, and in accelerating fashion in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the imaginative engagement of formerly un(der)represented themes enlivens the core, historical impulse of the novel to be what D.H. Lawrence calls in his posthumously published 1925 essay, "Why the Novel Matters" (1936), the "book of life," a form that can capture the "whole hog" (qtd. 1). Therefore, H.G. Wells, through *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The War of the Worlds* (1897), among other formative science fiction works, does not advance the novel formally, but he does extend its expressive range. The same could be said for a high-canonical modernist such as Lawrence himself, whose fiction powerfully represents proscribed themes such as freedom of sexual expression and class solidarity, even as he remains, at best, of secondary interest as a *formal* innovator. During the development and efflorescence of the modernist experimental novel, and beyond science fiction, other important events occur within the genre: the emergence of the dystopian novel (Zamyatin and Huxley); the emergence of "minor" literatures in places such as Bengal (Tagore), Scandinavia (Knut Hamsun, Henrik Pontoppidan, and Selma Lagerlöf), and Finland (F. E. Sillanpää); and the emergence of the identitarian novel with its various focuses, such as class (Gorky, Henry Green, and Steinbeck), race (the Harlem Renaissance), and sexual orientation (Forster, Isherwood, and, later, Genet and Baldwin).

In the contemporary period, and consistent with the trajectory of the novel's development for centuries, the expressive range of the novel has been extended into areas formerly ignored or even wholly unrecognized in some instances. This extension of novelistic mimesis suggests less an abandonment of tradition than a radical endorsement of it. As in the modernist period, some novelists are more intent on formal innovation than are others. Thus, while we see experimentation in the novels of David Foster Wallace, Jennifer Egan, George Saunders, Tom McCarthy, Mo Yan, and Yan Lianke, we find an extension of novelistic thematic range when new stories are told about such emergent topics and concerns as the environment, globalization, technology, population mobility, financial crisis, ethno-racial identity, national and sub-national definition, and so on. Again, *in toto*, the evolution of the novel today as a global and globalized genre is less a story of trend violation than of trend continuance. To be sure, there is no universality of formal experimental practice in contemporary fictions, and no "collective habit" in this regard, though neither was present in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century fiction. Mazzoni's claim that today, in contrast to the period of High Modernism, the formally "new has lost prestige as a criterion of judgment" (336) is founded at once on a restricted modernist canon and a narrow reading of contemporary mimetic novelty. As a representational form, the novel has never been richer than it is today. So, Bakhtin's assertion about the "entelechy" of the novel remains true because the general trajectory of novelistic practice has been the promotion of greater freedom and greater democracy rather than less, a circumstance that should neither be taken for granted nor ignored. The novel continues to absorb existing storytelling methods and to rearrange them in highly imaginative and innovative ways in an effort to capture an "existential realism" whose depiction is the central impulse of the genre (341). The novel today, no less than in the early nineteenth century when it achieved its mature formation, or the period of High Modernism when it reached new levels of formal sophistication, is a celebration of "narrative democracy" (111).

Guido Mazzoni's *Theory of the Novel* is a major and timely contribution to our understanding of the form, whose analytical insight and extraordinary erudition guarantee it a place in all informed discussions of the historical development of the genre. The other works under review here also assert the importance of the novel, if in rather different contexts. While not aspiring to the panoptic view of the genre that Mazzoni offers, Alan McCluskey's *Materiality and the Modern Cosmopolitan Novel* investigates a significant preoccupation of the contemporary novel: the negotiation of an ethical cosmopolitanism. Focusing on (in the main) three major novels by each of three major contemporary novelists—Caryl Phillips, J.M. Coetzee, and Philip Roth—McCluskey builds on Levinas's moral philosophy and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Foucault's work on disciplinary power and subjectivity. In his introduction, he briefly outlines various theories of cosmopolitanism. Amanda Anderson and Rebecca Walkowitz advance what McCluskey calls an "'aesthetic' orientation" (6), which accepts that writers are not obliged to tender an overtly ideological position in fashioning a cosmopolitan stance, though such a "distanced" position may indeed yield sociopolitical insight. Others, such as David Harvey, emphasize the importance of thematizing sociopolitical engagement, criticizing David Held, Ulrich Beck, and Kwame Anthony Appiah for attending overly to issues of tolerance and "universal human rights" (9) and neglecting economic inequality and class disadvantage. For his part, McCluskey offers a hybrid view of cosmopolitanism that gives credence to a variety of theories while insisting on the overriding importance of "inclusiveness, egalitarianism, eclecticism, and individual agency" (12).

The first chapter, the strongest of the three critical chapters, attends to the work of Caryl Phillips, and in particular, to *Higher Ground* (1989), *The Nature of Blood* (1997), and *A Distant Shore* (2003). While an important writer, Phillips has received considerably less critical attention than either Roth or Coetzee, and McCluskey's readings are welcome. Bakhtin is a periodic presence in the book, and his well-known and apposite views on novelistic dialogism are invoked to good exegetical effect here to understand the often complex interplay of "intertextuality, estrangement, and polyphony" (27) in Phillips's novels. As McCluskey demonstrates, the homophobia and essentialistic identitarian views of Rudy Williams in *Higher Ground* violate all notions of empathetic cosmopolitanism, even as we, the readers, understand the racism that Williams experiences in contemporary America. McCluskey develops his interpretation of *The Nature of Blood* around an intellectual notion of empathy, espoused for example by Kathleen Woodward and Martha Nussbaum, rather than an affective, "emotion-based" one such as that which Laura Berlant has elaborated. McCluskey's analysis of *The Nature of Blood* is especially adept at unpacking the complex intertextuality of the novel that knits within its contemporaneous narrative the stories of an Othello-like sixteenth-century general, a fifteenth-century Jewish Venetian moneylender, and Anne Frank's autobiography. Finally, in his examination of *A Distant Shore*, and its depiction of an improbable relationship between Dorothy, a middle-aged English school teacher, and "Solomon"/Gabriel, a refugee from a war-torn sub-Saharan nation, McCluskey details how ideas of "home" can be refurbished, morphing from the provincial and exclusionary into the broad and cosmopolitan.

In his chapter on Coetzee, McCluskey considers three major works: *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), *Disgrace* (1999), and *Elizabeth Costello* (2003). Through his fiction and occasional writings, Coetzee has become a major twenty-first-century ethicist, embracing an expansive and ecumenical view of rights, for human and non-human animals alike, a point McCluskey ably demonstrates in his analyses of these novels. Each work focuses on a highly conflicted protagonist. In distinctive ways, the Magistrate, David Lurie, and Elizabeth Costello suffer from a fracturing identity and moral schizophrenia as they engage and contest a myriad of conventional views on, variously, race, empire, gender relations, interspecies dynamics, and/or intergenerationality. Applying Foucault's analysis of power, McCluskey's readings acknowledge Coetzee's extraordinary ability to present moral choice and moral failing beyond the "straightforwardly tendentious" (81). Throughout these novels, as he shows, Coetzee avoids any suggestion that a cosmopolitan sensibility can be achieved through mere empathy, whether intratextually or through readerly reception. While the analyses of *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Disgrace* are detailed and capacious, it bears mentioning that the section on *Elizabeth Costello* is uncharacteristically curt, and does not press far enough into the author's declared interest in non-human animals and the extension to them of moral consideration.

For McCluskey, Philip Roth's *American Trilogy* "provokes a critical cosmopolitan vision of American culture and society that is anchored in political, ideological, and historical awareness" (128). He turns to classical Greek tragedy to frame his argument, emphasizing the "tragic flaws" (*hamartias*) of the protagonists of *American Pastoral* (1997), *I Married a Communist* (1998), and *The Human Stain* (2000). His reading of the first novel is mostly straightforwardly Marxian, and emphasizes the deleterious social effects of Swede Levov's entrepreneurship on life in Newark, the site of his glove factory, and the upheavals of his personal life in America in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In his discussion of *I Married a Communist*, the tragic flaw of key characters revolves around their excessive ideological fervour. Finally, McCluskey offers a nuanced reading of the problems that attend constructions of racial identity in late twentieth-century America. In this chapter, as throughout *Materiality and the Modern Cosmopolitan Novel*, McCluskey successfully engages important ethical issues through a careful contextualization of characters' lives within the "materiality" of their lived circumstance, a materiality that is compatible with Marxist notions of socioeconomic determinism but not simply reducible to it (183). Finally, here and as elsewhere in his study, for McCluskey the measure of a successful enactment of an ethical cosmopolitan remains Levinasian. Are characters able to break the self-Other antinomy? Are they capable of, in Levinas's words, the "surpassing of the subjective" (qtd. 3)?

Cents and Sensibility: What Economics Can Learn from the Humanities is the product of a somewhat unusual collaboration. Gary Saul Morson, a Slavicist specializing in nineteenth-century Russian fiction, and Morton Shapiro, an economist and President of Northwestern University, have come together to examine the moral and intellectual limitations of conventional economic reasoning and how these limitations might be overcome through a literary hermeneutics. Morson and Shapiro are at pains to demonstrate the special capacity of literature and its informed exegesis to serve a particular traditional didactic purpose: the inculcation of sympathy and empathy in readers, and therein a heightened awareness of ethicality. They are critical of economics—both classical "rational choice" and some newer behavioural approaches—and of interdisciplinary literary studies, with its frequent dilettantism and mission creep. In each instance, practitioners misrepresent themselves and their projects, engaging in what the authors term "spoofing," in other words "pretending to represent one discipline or school, when actually acting according to the norms of another" (2). Thus, the economist will claim to illuminate "ethics, culture, and social values in purely economic terms," when the narrowly instrumental methods of the discipline are impediments to the type of insight sought. Similarly, in an English course, the interdisciplinarian will usurp other fields, such as political science, sociology, evolutionary biology, neurology, and others, and in the process both neglect the "humanities" and disillusion students about what the latter constitutes. *Cents and Sensibility* positions itself as a corrective to these interloping tendencies—especially as evidenced in the discipline of economics, often accused of "field imperialism"—that acknowledges in particular the inimitable capacity of literature and its expositors to explain the human condition (61). Paradoxically, Morson and Shapiro, neither of whom is a philosopher, seek to apply the insights of philosophy, particularly moral philosophy, to literary studies in a manner that is itself interdisciplinary, and Aristotle, Kant, and Mill, among others, are briefly cited. This is, therefore, seemingly a case of *do not do as we do, but as we say*.

Morson and Shapiro identify three circumstances that much economic thought understates, or even ignores: people are cultural constructs and are irreducible to equations; people understand themselves through narrativization, and *especially* through "great realist" and mostly nineteenth-century novels; and finally, economic thought involves ethical questions that are irreducible to economics or any other social science. They seek a productive "dialogue of disciplines" between the humanities—in large part, the nineteenth-century realist novel and readings thereof—and economics and, in their loose codification, term this "humanomics," wherein disciplines are not fused but rather keep their "distinct approaches to knowledge" (18). To be clear, the stakes in this matter are high for them, nothing less than the institutional survival of the humanities and literary studies at a time of plummeting interest in literature majors, an ever-increasing collateral emphasis on STEM disciplines in colleges and universities, which they acknowledge, and an accelerating emphasis on de-institutionalized careers in business and IT, which they do not.[1]

Morson and Shapiro make a good deal of the distinction between "hedgehogs" and "foxes" that Isaiah Berlin sets out in his renowned 1953 essay, *The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History*, between those who know one big thing and those who know many things, between "the great systemizers and the skeptics," between "the monists and the pluralists" (57). "In creating a dialogue between economics and the humanities—with literature seen as the core of the humanities—[they propose] to temper the hedgehogism of traditional economics with the foxiness of the great novelists" (63). While they see themselves as both hedgehogs and foxes, as Berlin saw Tolstoy, most of their rhetorical energy is trained on critiquing the former and celebrating the latter.

By the time of his death in 2014, Gary Becker had established himself as one of the most celebrated economists of the last half century or so. Long associated with the University of Chicago, and the philosophical traditions of the discipline there—he was a conservative and an empiricist—Becker is credited with establishing a major sub-discipline, behavioural economics, and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1992 for, in the words of his Nobel citation, "having extended the domain of microeconomic analysis to a wide range of human behaviour and interaction, including nonmarket behaviour" (qtd. 120). The authors regard Gary Becker as a paradigmatic hedgehog, even as they acknowledge that there is a "soft ["foxy"] Becker" that can be extrapolated from his work. Still, it is the "hard" Becker with whom they are principally concerned. They attend most closely to Becker's germinal

The Economic Approach to Human Behavior (1976) and, for the most part, to his views on marriage and family, which foreground economic utility in the selection of marital partners and family planning. Morson and Shapiro decry this assignation of rational choice and transactional ethics to these most personal, most intimate domains of human conduct, and reject all efforts to make universalist claims on the basis of economic analyses. Indeed, in their view, the great (and long) realist novels of the nineteenth century show how people's choices are heavily embedded in culture, that they are often irrational, and that preferences change over time; in sum, human behaviour cannot be adequately explained in economic terms.

Morson and Shapiro promote the explanatory value of close readings of their canonical literature, but it is close reading of a particular sort. It eschews, variously, textual/technical approaches (although they extend a single dispensation: to Bakhtin, upon whom Morson has done work), judging literature by contemporary standards, and historical contextualization. Further, it is "anti-theorist" (250). Indeed, *Cents and Sensibility* makes recurrent recourse to "case-based" ethical studies drawn from their novelistic canon which, as noted, privileges nineteenth-century realist fiction, but in particular, its Russian manifestations and often the work of Tolstoy, who remains for them, "arguably" (14), the world's greatest novelist and the author of arguably the greatest novel, *War and Peace* (1869).

Notwithstanding the extraordinary achievements of nineteenth-century European realism and the readings it yields, the literary hermeneutics offered in *Cents and Sensibility* is unduly narrow in a couple of ways. First of all, sympathetic/empathetic affect and collateral ethical considerations derive as well from all manner of writers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as we see in major modernists such as Faulkner and Proust, late modernists such as Bellow and Morrison, postmodernists such as Kathy Acker and John Edgar Wideman, contemporary science-fiction writers such as Paolo Bacigalupi and Emily St. John Mandel, and contemporary realists such as Jonathan Franzen and Jussi Valtonen, to say nothing of the authors studied by McCluskey. Further, ethical considerations are not always inextricably linked to sympathetic/empathetic affect. Novels of ideas often, or even by definition, foreground certain philosophies rather than "thick" characterization, and their cogency and relevance do not hinge on psycho-emotional identification with the protagonist; think of Dostoevsky's willful and cantankerous Underground Man or DeLillo's larcenous murderer, Eric Packer, in *Cosmopolis* (2003). No productive reading of either of these novels can neglect their specific historicity, notwithstanding whatever ethical extrapolations readers might make. Similarly, dystopian political allegories such as Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman" (1918) and Zamyatin's *We* (1924) are not built around characterization especially, but rather rely greatly on overtly historicized ideological critique revealed through artful orchestration of plot. An expansive novelistic canon best enables us to appreciate fully the artistic and philosophical majesty of this polymorphic genre without any rules.

Curiously, *Cents and Sensibility* does not actually discuss novelistic representations of economic life—call it *econopoesis*—to any considerable degree. In this regard, only passing mention is made to research on economics and literature, the book's punning title duly noted; there are brief allusions to, respectively, Jane Austen's novels and to the moral failings of banker Nicholas Bulstrode in *Middlemarch* (1871-72) (253-55). Inspired by economic events and issues such as, among others, globalization, the Great Recession (2007-09), economic migrancy, the economic ascendancy of China, and income distribution, a very considerable body of contemporary global fiction is focusing on economic issues and helping to form the nascent interdisciplinary field of economic humanities. Clearly, this emergent subgenre will, like its distant historical antecedents, help us to understand better the moral inflections of our economic behaviour.

The self-imposed limitations of its canon notwithstanding—an instance of insufficient "foxiness," perhaps?—*Cents and Sensibility*, like Mazzoni's and McCluskey's studies, makes a strong case for narrativity as a fundamental and inalienable condition of our moral and epistemological being. Further, shifting their focus to something like a politics of reading, Morson and Shapiro offer richly instructive commentary on a miscellany of topics: the importance of judgement and practical reasoning, namely, Aristotelian *phronesis*; the need to acknowledge cultural difference in a steadily globalizing world; the value of teaching world literature in translation; and the ongoing importance of the history of ideas. Finally, the principal objective of the book is to infuse "the wisdom of the humanities into mainstream economics" (200). This certainly seems laudable but, as its authors also rightly point out, the relationship between the two should be dialogical and dynamic. It remains to be seen if literary scholars can meaningfully integrate the methods of traditional economics within their work, if the qualitative biases of the former can be married in some productive way to the quantitative biases of the latter. There is little evidence of this to date.[2]

NOTES

1. Morson's and Shapiro's concern is not misplaced. Even as overall undergraduate degree enrollments have steadily increased in the United States for a considerable time, majors in English and foreign languages have been in steady decline in recent years: the number of English degrees granted has gone down every year since 2008-09, falling from 55,465 in that year to just 42,795 in 2015-16; and the number of foreign-language degrees has also been under considerable pressure, going from 21,169 in 2008-09 to 18,427 in 2015-16. In 1970-71, English degrees granted stood, remarkably enough, at 63,914 and foreign-language degrees granted at 20,988. See "Bachelor's Degrees Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions, by Field of Study: Selected Years, 1970-71 through 2015-16."

2. Some interesting work is being done by economists on the role of storytelling in the shaping of our understanding of economic events where, effectively, the "narrative" becomes the ordering "truth." See, for example, George Akerlof and Robert Shiller's *Animal Spirits: How Human Psychology Drives the Economy, and Why It Matters for Global Capitalism* (2009) and Jens Beckerts's *Imagined Futures: Fictional Expectations and Capitalist Dynamics* (2016). For an instance of a traditional quantitative economist integrating statistics and literary analysis, see Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2013). Piketty uses nineteenth-century realist fiction, specifically Balzac and Austen,

to corroborate his detailed statistical narrative around income inequality.

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