

REVIEW ARTICLE

INTERDISCIPLINARY ADVENTURES IN CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

Paul Megna

State University of New York, Purchase College

503

BLUME, HERMANN, CHRISTOPH LEITGEB, AND MICHAEL ROSSNER, EDs. *Narrated Communities, Narrated Realities: Narration as Cognitive Processing and Cultural Practice*. Leiden & Boston: Brill/Rodopi, 2015. Pp. 263. \$91.00 US paperback, \$92.00 US ebook.

NALBANTIAN, SUZANNE, PAUL M. MATTHEWS, AND JAMES L. MCCLELLAND, EDs. *The Memory Process: Neuroscientific and Humanistic Perspectives*. Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 2011. Pp. 440. \$40.00 US hardcover.

PEARCE, LYNNE. *Drivetime: Literary Excursions in Automotive Consciousness*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2016. Pp. 256 illus. \$120.00 US hardcover, \$29.95 US paperback.

Interdisciplinarity has long been a buzzword among scholars and university administrators eager to forge synergistic ties across academic disciplines. Although scholars in the humanities have drawn from other disciplines to cultivate and refine their methodologies for decades, recent years have seen an increased desire to use advances in the sciences and social sciences to aid humanistic enquiry, as well as a corollary, though markedly less fervent, desire among scientists and social scientists to apply humanistic methods to the study of non-humanistic academic discourses. The three texts reviewed in this article each participate in these endeavours in order to explore various aspects of consciousness and subjectivity.

The Memory Process: Neuroscientific and Humanistic Perspectives is a collection of nineteen essays on memory written by practitioners of neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, literary studies, musicology, and art history. Its origin was the Interdisciplinary Memory Symposium in Neuroscience and the Humanities held at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in 2007, which was organized by Suzanne Nalbantian. The essays in the volume, written by scientists, do substantially less to engage humanistic topics or methods than those composed by humanists do to engage the science of memory, which is probably a result of the long tradition of interdisciplinary scholarship in the humanities and the equally long tradition of scientific disciplines defining themselves by their characteristic though ever-changing methodologies. Nevertheless, some of the volume's scientific contributions comment insightfully about various works of art, literature, and music, and about the process of artistic creation in general. Moreover, the volume itself, and especially its introduction, will no doubt catalyze future interdisciplinary enquiry by focusing on the mutually beneficiary nature of conversations between humanists and scientists on memory. Like *The Memory Process*, *Narrated Communities, Narrated Realities: Narration as Cognitive Processing and Cultural Practice* is a collection of essays emerging from a conference. Its twelve essays focus on the role of narration in various discursive communities including academic disciplines such as particle physics, philosophy, and psychotherapy, as well as literary texts and works of visual and musical art. Unlike *The Memory Process*, *Narrated Communities* is united by a common methodological approach, cultural studies, through which its contributors "try to encompass the various scientific and scholarly fields in which concepts of narration are at stake" (7). In so doing, they explore "how narratives—communicated either orally or by means of other media—affect social practices" in and outside of academia (7). Finally, *Drivetime: Literary Excursions in Automotive Consciousness* is a single-author study on automotive consciousness, especially as reflected in a wide variety of twentieth-century literary texts. Lynne Pearce develops a unique methodology that mixes a cultural studies approach with insights from phenomenology to explore the many ways in which driving both spurs on and symbolizes cognition. Taken together, these three books reveal the many ways that interdisciplinarity can enhance our understanding of various facets and capabilities of consciousness including memory, narration, and mobility.

I. SCIENCES, ART, AND MEMORY STUDIES

Recent decades have seen huge advances in the scientific study of memory, which have taught us much about the molecular, synaptic, and genetic processes through which memories are formed, modified, and lost. The first section of *The Memory Process*, "Scientific Foundations," details the recent history of these developments and the current areas of enquiry in which scientists struggle. In the first chapter,

Yadin Dudai discusses the long search for the engram, a term originally coined by Richard Semon to describe the enduring physical changes in the organism effected by the recording of a given memory. It is “a bit naïve,” Dudai concludes, “to consider an engram as a discrete, well-defined long-term physical trace” (38). Instead, he suggests “engrams are palimpsests, reflecting the physical traces of many layers of past events” (38). Although he holds that scholars tend to employ “era-dependent metaphors” to describe the engram (29), Dudai selects an archaic metaphor in the palimpsest, which describes texts that have been written atop older texts in bygone eras in which writing surfaces were valuable enough to be repeatedly reused. Moreover, he makes brief reference to Jorge Luis Borges’s short story “Funes, His Memory” (38), which makes several appearances in *The Memory Process* (122-23, 270-71). In engaging Borges’s story, showing the importance of metaphor to scientific discourse, and carefully selecting his own metaphor from the history of media, Dudai’s essay embodies the volume’s interdisciplinary spirit. Like Dudai’s essay, Alcino J. Silva’s chapter calls into question the consolidation theory of memory, the idea that a particular memory is localized in a particular physical area of the brain, illustrating how recent research indicates that memory is more “dynamic, constructive, metamorphic, and transformative” than hitherto imagined (51). In his compelling conclusion, Silva suggests that our “deeply engrained need to trust our remembrances of things past” might account for the consolidation theory’s “continuing grip on our imagination” (51). Science, however, is “a merciless arbiter, and emerging genetic evidence is bearing down ever more heavily on this moribund workhorse of memory research” (51). Jean-Pierre Changeux’s chapter brings his extensive research on the epigenetic processes, “the productive interaction between genetic information and environmental changes” (55) through which memories are stored to bear on the process of artistic creation. Just as environmental changes interact with genetic disposition in the process of memorialization, Changeux argues, so too do artists use memory to follow “specific epigenetic rules that creators have imposed on themselves from the beginning of time” (55). Finally, Robert Stickgold’s compelling chapter argues that both sleep and dreaming are integral to the process through which we construct meaning out of memory. Despite its scientific tone, Stickgold’s chapter, like the others in this section, will prove useful to humanists, especially those interested in literary forms such as the dream vision, which often conceive of dreaming as integral to the process of meaning making.

Also containing contributions from scientists, the second section, “Scientific Phenomena and Functioning,” begins with a chapter by Paul M. Matthews surveying how advances in brain imaging technologies have furthered not only our understanding of the cellular and molecular mechanisms behind memory, but also the clinical treatment of a variety of memory disorders. Next, James L. McClelland’s chapter explores how two complementary learning systems interact in the process of memorialization with recourse to an analysis of Harold Pinter’s *Old Times*. The final two essays in this section, one co-written by Joseph E. LeDoux and Valérie Doyère

and the other by Edmund T. Rolls, deal with the concept of emotional memory. The first of these surveys the extensive research on fearful memories using experiments involving fear conditioning that reveal how the act of retrieving fearful memories can either strengthen or weaken them. Such explorations of the underlying mechanisms at work in fear memory retrieval, the authors argue, may “provide a window for cure of posttraumatic stress disorder” (169). Rolls’s chapter discusses how two separate modes of processing emotional memory, “conscious, rational (explicit) and unconscious (implicit) processing” (173), sometimes conflict, producing “noise in the brain” that might be integral to creative production of imaginative literature including James Joyce’s notoriously noisy experimental novel *Finnegans Wake* (187-88).

The third section, “Crossroads to the Humanities,” contains three contributions by philosophers and, as Suzanne Nalbantian writes in the volume’s introduction, “serve as a bridge between neuroscience and the humanities [...] offering exterior measures of truth and forecasting, veridicality of knowledge and prolepsis, by which to judge the scientific findings by humanistic criteria” (2). John Bickle’s chapter demonstrates that neuroscientific discourses on memory have helped philosophers to reflect on topics as various as “the status of folk psychology, methodology in neuroscience, scientific reductionism, causal-mechanistic explanations, and multiple realization” (195), concluding optimistically that “perhaps neurophilosophy can return the favour, and help push actual neuroscience further along” by exploring the possibilities and pitfalls engendered by neuroscientific investigations of memory (212). Focusing on confabulation, the phenomenon of sincerely claiming to remember events that did not actually happen, by sufferers of memory disorders such as Korsakoff’s syndrome, William Hirstein’s essay shows how a degree of confabulation is also present in normative memory retrieval, suggesting compellingly that “one reason why clinical confabulation is so fascinating is that we see a bit of ourselves in the neurological patients. We are aware, at some level, that the difference between us and them is only a matter of degree” (231). In one of the volume’s most accessible and pertinent essays, Walter Glannon explores the neuroethics of memory. Although he concurs with neuroscientific researchers on the great potential of using pharmacological means to dampen pathological memories such as those experienced by patients suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder, he also acknowledges the worries cited by the US President’s Council on Bioethics that such therapeutic dampening of memory “could erode much of our moral sensibility by making us lose our sense of shame and regret” (237). Likewise, Glannon draws from case studies of individuals with abnormally accurate autobiographical memories, which seems to affect their quality of life adversely, to argue that pharmaceutically enhancing memory might have unintended, negative effects (241-46). Finally, Glannon explores the problematic nature of using fMRI-imaging techniques to adjudicate criminal cases. In each of his examples, Glannon shows how scientific advances in our ability to dampen, enhance, and measure memory bring with them ethical quandaries that urgently need to be addressed before we implement these advances in medical, therapeutic, and legal

practice.

The volume's penultimate section, "Literary Data for Memory Studies," contains four chapters discussing literature's complex relationship to memory. Nalbantian's chapter surveys modernist autobiographical literature including Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, James Joyce's *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, Anaïs Nin's *Seduction of the Minotaur*, and Salvador Dalí's autobiography. Throughout her chapter, Nalbantian argues that modernist autobiographical literature, rife with varied modes of experimentation, constitutes an archive that can be useful to scientific memory researchers, since it demonstrates how devices of literary expression such as metaphor, metonymy, and analogy render the creativity inherent in the memory process "more visible for analysis" (271). Likewise, Alan Richardson's chapter focuses on romantic writings by William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Jane Austen, arguing that these works anticipate modern neuroscience's recognition that imagination and memory are inextricably bound up in the process through which the brain draws on past experience to imagine possible futures in a sort of "mental time travel" (280). John Burt Foster, Jr.'s chapter, which explores literary memoirs by William Butler Yeats, Vladimir Nabokov, and Mary McCarthy, is similar to Nalbantian's. Finally, Attilio Favorini offers one of the most thoroughly interdisciplinary installments in the volume by showing how playwrights including Henrik Ibsen, Tennessee Williams, and Samuel Beckett anticipate the scientific understandings of memory promulgated by Sigmund Freud, Jerome Bruner, and Gerald Edelman. Like each chapter in this section, Favorini's eschews the New Historicist approach of showing how scientific discourses affect contemporary works of fiction, preferring to illustrate how fictional texts anticipate subsequent scientific discoveries.

507

The four essays in the volume's fifth and final section bring the science of memory to bear on non-literary texts, including works of visual art, music, and film. David Freeburg's essay surveys the substantial scholarship in art history that engages the neuroscience of empathy. Its central case study is Rogier van der Weyden's *Descent from the Cross*, which portrays a crowd of Biblical characters in various postures of grief as they lower a dead Christ from the cross. Freeburg convincingly argues that our memories of assuming similar postures of grief in the past allow us to empathize with the subjects of van der Weyden's painting. The two subsequent essays, the first by David Michael Hertz and the second by Barbara Tillmann, Isabelle Peretz, and Séverine Samson, deal with music, which, Hertz argues, "works by triggering the memory" (359). Hertz's chapter argues that Beethoven, whom he claims "makes memory itself a subject for expression in his works" (364), "started a revolution in European musical form by going beyond the strictures of movements into cyclic memory" (367). Tracing this revolution from Beethoven through the developments by Schumann, Schoenberg, and Stravinsky, Hertz contends that these composers intentionally engaged the interplay between short-, intermediate-, and long-term

memory “[l]ong before scientists could dread of showing the complex cognitive processes essential for memory in music” (374). Likewise, Tillmann, Peretz, and Samson discuss how listening to a given musical piece involves both the short-term memory required to recall its earlier sections and the long-term memory required to compare it with other musical works in the hearer’s “musical lexicon.” In their conclusion, they explore exciting “research on musical memory and emotions, and consider its clinical implications for the rehabilitation of patients with cognitive impairment, particularly those suffering from Alzheimer’s disease” (378). In the volume’s final fascinating chapter, Fernando Vidal explores memory in late-twentieth- and twenty-first-century films including *Blade Runner*, *Total Recall*, *Johnny Mnemonic*, *The Bourne Identity*, *Memento*, and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, arguing that many of these films expose our culture’s tendency to associate personal identity and authentic memory by speculating on scenarios in which a subject’s authentic memories are erased, overridden, or replaced causing a corresponding shift or outright negation in his/her personality.

508

II. NARRATION AND COMMUNITY ACROSS DISCIPLINES

In many ways similar to *The Memory Process*, *Narrated Communities*, *Narrated Realities* likewise grows from a conference that brought together practitioners of different academic disciplines to discuss a common theme: in this case, narration. As the editors’ introduction states, the collection takes a cultural studies approach to focus “primarily on how narratives function, rather than on how they are structured” (7). Although this sets the essays in the collection under the single discipline of cultural studies, the objects of analysis range from particle physics to novels composed in the (Post-)Yugoslav region. Each of the essays focuses on the discursive construction of “narrated communities,” be they the two-person community formed in the analyst-analysand dynamic of the psychoanalytic setting or the large, trans-historical community of readers of and responders to “El Cid” between the twelfth and twentieth centuries.

The first of many essays on scientific communities in the volume, Jochen Gläser’s chapter takes a sociological approach to analyze three types of scientific storytelling: publications, the narratives that disclose particular research discoveries; “shop floor stories,” the more informal “gossip” that “communicate unpublished knowledge, know-how, and evaluations of publications and their authors” (23); and the overarching narrative of the communities of knowledge. Like Gläser’s chapter, Klaus Mecke’s examines scientific narratives, but focuses specifically on those involving quantitative metaphors in physics. “Laws of nature,” Mecke suggests, can be understood as “synonymous quantitative metaphors, where the redundancy of experiences [...] is discovered solely by equal numbers of performed measurement narratives” (31). In other words, physicists arrive at “laws” by comparing measurement narratives (i.e.,

accounts of experiments) until they determine that two quantitative metaphors (e.g., force and momentum flow, as in Newton's law of motion) are equivalent. Arianna Borrelli's chapter on narratives of naturalness in today's particle physics community is similarly concerned with narratives in physics. In wrestling with the ways that matter behaves differently when considered in different analytic scales, physicists are presented with a "naturalness problem," which is neither an experimental anomaly nor a mathematical incoherence—it "makes sense numerically" (69)—but instead an aesthetic or philosophical quandary with which particle physicists continually contend. The naturalness problem, for Borrelli, "is best understood as a hybrid narrative combining words, formulas, numbers, and analogies" (69). Borrelli does not claim that narrative analysis provides a solution to the naturalness problem; however, it can be used to help particle physicists explain to their non-specialist audiences exactly what type of problem the naturalness problem is. Delving into the history of science, Michael Böhler examines J.W. Goethe's vehement opposition to Isaac Newton's colour theory, arguing that Goethe champions what Jean-François Lyotard would centuries later associate with a traditional culture of narrative knowing against a modern culture of scientific knowing that for Goethe was embodied in Newtonian colour theory.

509

Where scientists tend to be relatively unconcerned with the role of narrative in forming their discursive communities, practitioners of other disciplines, including philosophers, psychotherapists, and art historians, consider the construction and analysis central to their disciplinary identities. Bernd Bösel's essay focuses on the work of Peter Sloterdijk, casting him as a "narrative evocative philosopher" (87), one who seeks to *de*-tangle his audience from a pre-existing web of philosophical narratives, encouraging them to compose new, self-determining philosophical narratives of their own. Philosophy, for Sloterdijk, ought to be conceived of as "a general science of revolution" and the narrative task "of not telling the same and possibly toxic stories over and over again" (98) is central to his agenda for enacting this conceptual shift. In a sense, Sloterdijk's philosophical problem, as seen by Bösel, is akin to a psychotherapeutic process of establishing and analyzing identity-constituting narratives in order to address the pathologies that sometimes undergird them and compose new, less pathological narratives. Brigitte Boothe's chapter discusses how narratives are offered in a psychotherapeutic setting by patients who frequently crave affirmation from their therapist. The therapist, however, is likely to "produce in the interlocutor a sense of alienation and aversion rather than of goodwill and empathy" (112). Analyzing a series of case studies, Boothe argues that this "potential for irritation" at the patient's narrative offering is not necessarily a hindrance to the therapeutic process, but instead opens "a space of taking chances" (112). While it also deals with concepts from psychotherapy, particularly Freud's theory of the uncanny and Lacan's adaptations thereof, Christoph Leitgeb's chapter focuses on effecting a rapprochement between the narrative theory implicit psychoanalytic understandings of the uncanny and theories of narrative promulgated by Wolfgang Iser and practitio-

ners of “speech act theory.” In a compelling though brief case study, Leitgeb brings his chimerical theory of the uncanny to bear on Nicholas Royle’s scholarly account of the events of 9/11. Like Leitgeb, the art historian Antonio Baldassarre reflects on the politics of narrative. He does so by analyzing French Orientalist art produced in the nineteenth century, which implements “the East into a Western matrix,” thereby creating “a multifaceted web of narratives” reflecting, not so much the actual East, but a series of Western fantasies about the East (247).

Unsurprisingly, several other of the volume’s chapters partake in literary analysis, which, as its editors acknowledge, is foremost among the fields that have developed a formalized narrative analysis within their methodologies. In an interesting and expansive essay on (ethno)nationalist narratives in late-twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature from the (post-)Yugoslav region, Elena Messner explores a variety of anti-war narratives designed to “subvert models of exclusive (ethno-)national identity” (133), which accomplishes the important cultural work of providing a counterpoint to a parallel ethnonationalist, “right-wing scene.” Michael Rössner’s essay on reception history of the medieval Spanish epic *Poema de Mio Cid* is even wider in scope. For Rössner, the *Cid* is primarily about neither heroism nor the founding of a community, but instead an account of “the creation of the State’s monopoly of coercion and therefore of the modern State of Law” (173). In subsequent centuries, Rössner shows, the narrative of the *Cid* is appropriated and recast for a variety of localized, alternately revolutionary and conservative purposes. Tackling a much narrower archive, Dorothee Birke’s chapter analyzes Doris Lessing’s experimental novel *Alfred and Emily*, which speculates about how the lives of Lessing’s parents might have played out differently if World War I had not happened. Although she by no means disparages Lessing’s novel, Birke’s essay explores how *Alfred and Emily* “exposes some of the uncomfortable issues connected with the question of the power and responsibility of the storyteller” (150). Finally, Aura Heydenreich’s chapter draws on narrative theories of René Girard and Paul Ricœur to analyze Richard Powers’s novel *The Time of Our Singing*, which, Heydenreich argues, incorporates both Kurt Gödel’s cosmological concept of time and the musical compositions of Johann Sebastian Bach to give rise to a unique narrative approach to the portrayal of a hybrid community.

III. PHENOMENOLOGY, CULTURAL STUDIES, AND AUTOMOTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

Unlike the first two books I have discussed here, Lynne Pearce’s *Drivetime: Literary Excursions in Automotive Consciousness* is a single-authored book reflecting one scholar’s continuous and unified project. Pearce is a Professor of English at Lancaster University, where she is affiliated with the adamantly interdisciplinary Centre for Mobilities Research. She has long been interested in the literary and cultural history

of driving (and “passenger”), and *Drivetime* is among the fruits of this sustained engagement with the topic. Although it is, like the books discussed in the previous two sections, both interdisciplinary and concerned with consciousness studies, it is markedly less invested in bridging a divide between the humanities and the “hard sciences.” Instead, Pearce draws from cultural studies, literary studies, phenomenology, as well as social sciences such as sociology and psychology to explore “automotive consciousness,” or “what we’re *thinking* when we’re driving” (viii).

Drivetime’s long first chapter contextualizes the book’s overall project in the larger, interdisciplinary field of automobility studies. The chapter’s aim is “to demonstrate how driving is paradigmatic as well as formative of the way we think” (1). In other words, driving not only dictates how we think while we are doing it, but also mirrors the process of thought itself: “the way in which the mind travels through time and space on its everyday cognitive journeys—encountering a novelty here, a memory or an obstacle there—is figuratively similar to the way in which cars and their drivers engage with the temporal and spatial environments through which they pass” (1). In support of this claim, Pearce surveys a wealth of scholarship on driving from the social science and humanities, paying particularly close attention to Nigel Thrift’s foundational work on automobility and to Dylan Trigg’s Deleuzian-phenomenological conceptualization of the act of driving as “becoming-toward.” But Pearce’s project in *Drivetime* is neither fundamentally phenomenological, nor social scientific. Nor is *Drivetime* primary a work of literary criticism, though that is certainly closer to the mark, since each body chapter focuses on several literary accounts of driving, often interspersed with non-literary accounts. Instead, Pearce situates her book firmly in the domain of cultural studies: “This [...] is very emphatically not a book that employs the thematic of driving [...] in order to better understand the texts themselves, but one that draws upon literature as a means of contributing to and advancing recent debates in automobiles research” (xi). That is not to say that Pearce’s focus on philosophical and social scientific understandings of driving in the early pages of her book is mere window dressing. On the contrary, Pearce’s introductory chapter not only provides historical context for the twentieth-century texts discussed in her book, but also makes a compelling case that those texts themselves often contain phenomenological analyses of driving that reveal the uncanny analogy between driving and thinking at the heart of Pearce’s book. The project of her book, or at least its most central project, is to analyze these phenomenological analyses of driving to tell the story of how the twentieth century’s love affair with driving—which, in light of the current environmental crisis, seems to be rapidly coming to a close—yielded substantial metacognitive fruit. Nestled between this introductory chapter and her first body chapter, however, is an interlude titled “Driving North, Driving South” (previously published in 2000), in which Pearce herself reflects on two of her own drives with the autoethnographic precision, philosophical acumen, and literary flourish of many of the earlier texts she explores in her subsequent chapters.

Pearce organizes the four chapters after her interlude around a series of gerunds—

searching, fleeing, cruising, and flying—which she theorizes as types of driving that coincide with the types of thinking (and feeling) that accompany them. Moreover, the chapters progress more or less chronologically from the beginning to the end of the twentieth century. Chapter Two, beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, details how the advent of the automobile “enabled drivers to search out and synthesize a multitude of landscapes in the course of a single day” (42), thereby fundamentally transforming “personal mobility [...] at the beginning of the twentieth century” (59). Pearce’s main case studies in this chapter are H.V. Morton’s *In Search of Scotland* (1929) and Edwin Muir’s *Scottish Journey* (1935), which describe their authors’ acts of searching the Scottish landscape through driving. Searching, for Pearce, does not necessarily denote the purpose-driven act of looking for some particular object or destination, but can also denote the act of leisurely exploring the landscape in a relatively slow moving vehicle. Although the “heyday” of this kind of driving was, for Pearce, the early twentieth century, Pearce looks forward to a new era of searching

512 enabled by the advent of compact electric cars such as the Renault Twizy, which she describes as “a mode of personal transport that *does* compromise many of the comforts and expectations we have come to expect from motoring and returns us to a vehicle that offers a driving experience that is presumably not dissimilar to Edwin Muir’s Standard 12” (85-86, emphasis in original).

Chapter Three, “Fleeing,” jumps “across the pond” to explore American literary texts from the mid-twentieth century including Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road* (1957) and Patricia Highsmith’s *Carol* (1952). While these texts are very different, especially in their respective portrayals of gender politics, both feature high-speed driving as a means of escape. Pearce’s chapter, however, probes the question of what one actually escapes when one drives fast. Countering two famous essays from the 1980s on driving by Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio that imply that “automotive speed is indicative of a profound denaturing of perception, cognition, memory, and our temporal orientation in the world” (119), Pearce’s analyses of Kerouac’s and Highsmith’s novels suggest that driving at high speeds does not necessarily prompt an escape from consciousness or a “turning off” of the driver’s and/or passenger’s cognitive faculties, but instead that fleeing in a car sometimes delivers unique cognitive insights about existence or thinking itself, which are often facilitated by conversations between driver and passenger. The following chapter, “Cruising,” remains in America, but focuses specifically on driving in the state of California. Like the previous two chapters, it is centered on thoughtful analyses of two literary texts. The first is Neil Young’s autobiography *Special Deluxe*, named after his 1950 Plymouth Deluxe Sedan, in which Young chronicles the shifts in consciousness that come with driving, specifically tying them to his very personal relationships to specific cars, many of which he names. Indeed, Young is particularly attentive to how the car one drives dictates the thinking one does while driving. “After driving for a while and not seeing anyone,” he writes of a meandering drive through a redwood forest, “it became the year of the car” (144). The chapter’s other case study is Joan Didion’s novel *Play It*

as *It Lays*, which features a protagonist who habitually drives on the Los Angeles freeway system, not to get anywhere, but to work through the trauma of an abusive relationship. In both Young and Didion's narratives, driving—a specific kind of non-purposive driving that Pearce calls cruising—is therapeutic insofar as it “helps to focus and structure the drivers' thoughts and develop transferable cognitive-behavioral strategies” (151).

Although Pearce's final chapter is titled “Flying,” it is markedly less focused on theorizing a specific type of driving than the prior three chapters and is instead focused on theorizing “six types of automotive reverie” (euphoria, enlightenment, utopia, anxiety, delusion, and death-drive) with recourse to the philosophical writings of Ernst Bloch and Gaston Bachelard. This final chapter also differs from its predecessors in offering shorter analyses of a wide variety literary texts, including Kerouac's *On the Road*, Jan Struther's *Mrs. Miniver* (1942), Elizabeth Taylor's *A Game of Hide and Seek* (1951), and Ilya Ehrenburg's *The Life of the Automobile* (1929), among others. The chapter's many sources allow Pearce to exemplify how driving can facilitate her six types of reverie with results ranging from therapeutic to catastrophic. This final chapter is, therefore, an apt conclusion to a book that does not simply glorify driving's capacity to engender and symbolize certain types of thinking, but instead shows how a wide variety of twentieth-century authors theorized the consequences, both positive and negative, of automotive consciousness. Indeed, Pearce's interdisciplinary approach furnishes nuanced insights about automotive consciousness that exemplify the great and variegated scholarly possibilities opened by taking an interdisciplinary approach to consciousness studies.