# Book Reviews

Zamora, Lois Parkinson and Monika Kaup, eds. *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2010. **321**

**Patricia Klingenberg, Miami University**

This collection of essays provides the source material for Zamora's award-winning previous book, *The Inordinate Eye*. Now, in a single volume one finds the important essays which explore the literary, artistic, architectural and philosophical characteristics of Baroque culture from its origins in 17th-century Europe to the Americas and its rebirth in 20th-century Latin American culture. Many of the seminal texts collected here were originally written in German, French or Spanish so simply the gathering of all sources into English translation is itself a service to those reading and/or teaching in English. The extensive introduction situates the Baroque in its European context and defines its spread to the Americas, especially Latinate (their word) America, as a process of invention, not mere imitation. The book is divided into three parts: the first comprises a set of essays which define the term *Baroque* based on its European roots and its subsequent reappraisal in the New World; the second argues for the mutuality of influences, seeing the cultural borrowings going both ways across the Atlantic; the third offers a consideration of the neo-Baroque of the twentieth century as it is reimagined in the New World. This is an invaluable reference for any study of the Baroque, with short introductions to each author, additional bibliography provided for each, and a complete index which permits a search of the whole volume; the main bibliography at the end provides sources for additional research.

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The first and longest part, entitled "Representation: Foundational Essays on Baroque Aesthetics and Ideology," collects and translates key essays on the definition and importance of the European Baroque, starting with Nietzsche, and ending with several which incorporate Baroque aesthetics and postructuralist theory. The first section of Part One traces the "conceptual genealogy" of the Baroque starting in Basel with two colleagues of Jacob Burckhardt, Fredrich Nietzsche and Heinrich Wölfflin, who contributed to the recuperation of Baroque art and sensibility for the modern world. Nietzsche expresses the view that the Baroque is an artistic impulse which reappears throughout history rather than in one specific historical moment. His Apollonian (characterized by classical order and integrity) and Dionysian (ecstatic, chaotic, disruptive) world views are opposing forces which can be traced from Greek culture into the modern age. While Nietzsche and Burckhardt both view the Baroque in terms of decay, Wölfflin takes a more even-handed view suggesting that the Baroque is "not a difference of quality...but a different attitude to the world" (52). The essays of the first section continue to modulate this debate, whether the Baroque is an attitude or style which transcends historic specificity, as Eugenio d'Ors also argues, or whether, in Rene Wellek's words, it can and should be used to refer to a cultural period: "In spite of the many ambiguities and uncertainties as to the extension, valuation, and precise content of the term, Baroque...it is still the one convenient term which refers to the style which came after the Renaissance but preceded actual neoclassicism" (108). Christine Buci-Glucksmann's essay melds Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology with Lacan's psychoanalytic comprehension of Baroque visual excesses as a search for the connection between vision and speech. By concluding the section with this theoretical and therefore generalizable approach the editors offer a persuasive illustration of the ways they want to have it both ways: the Baroque embodies a spirit recognizable through the ages, rises to prominence in the European 17th century but retains an aesthetic practice even as it crosses an ocean, extends in time, and is reinvented in the 20th century.



The second section of Part One is devoted to the emergence of the Baroque in its New-World setting. Here the essayists express the tensions surrounding the Baroque as the language of conquest and oppression as opposed to those who see in it the expansive mixture of cultures that the Baroque invites. Alfonso Reyes starts the process of recovery by pointing to the originality and profundity of Spain's emblematic Baroque poet, Luis de Góngora. His essay traces well-known controversies of Góngora's day, that is, his disputes with Quevedo and Lope de Vega; Reyes then describes the way Góngora's incorporation of Latin words and phrases brought a degree of respectability to the Spanish language, until then still considered a vulgar form of Latin; and finally, argues for Góngora's "technical revolution" of language and poetry. In their introduction the editors trace Reyes's influence throughout what he calls "nuestra América" because of his service in the Mexican diplomatic service, living during extended periods in Spain and Argentina before returning to Mexico in the 1930s. Reyes thereby spreads his appreciation of Baroque aesthetics through-

out the new world at the very beginning of the twentieth century. The subsequent array of essays offers some surprises, especially the presence of Argentine architect Angel Guido whose argument for Baroque "mestizaje" predates that of more familiar voices such as Lezama Lima or José Vasconcelos. Guido argues persuasively for a two-part conquest and reconquest of the Americas by way of the Baroque. After the original conquest of indigenous societies by the Spanish, he claims that the 17th-century Baroque offers a chance for recovery of these same peoples, comparing Tupac Amaru's armed revolt with the "indiátides" incorporated on the facade of the church of San Lorenzo de Potosí by Quechua Indian sculptor, José Kondori. Both Kondori and the Brazilian known as O Aleijadinho provide examples of the kind of aesthetic blending of cultures that Guido finds most original about artistic expression in the New World. Guido believes that the 19th century represents a new conquest by European culture, reducing the most original forms of expression to mere imitation of borrowed forms and making of the Americas a sight of what Ortega y Gasset calls *trading posts*, "outposts of empire [which] do not know how to express themselves in their own voice" (191). Guido's essay, written in the late 1930s, is prophetic in its declaration that the "rehumanization of art," as he puts it, will take place in the New World: "European man and his landscape suffer from something like oversaturated civilization,...fatal for the New Art, which requires a climate of primitivism and primordialism, a virginity propitious for birth" (196). This argument is more familiar coming from Alejo Carpentier a few years later. The triumvirate of Cuban writers, Carpentier, Lezama Lima and Severo Sarduy are each included here with nuanced readings of the New-World Baroque as it appeared in both art and literature. Sarduy, in particular, brings the understanding of the Baroque into a structuralist, theoretical discourse by treating it strictly as a play of language. He concludes that the playful, sensual excesses of the Baroque amount to an eroticism which subverts the dominant rational discourse, relating it to Bakhtin's carnival, and finally, in his words, to "a Baroque of the Revolution" (290).



Part Two contains directly comparative essays focused on the interplay between the New World and the major figures of the Spanish Baroque. William Childers's "Baroque Quixote" suggests that Cervantes was influenced by New-World thematics, such as Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana*, in his complex relationship to both nostalgic Renaissance notions of the heroic and Baroque parody of contemporaneous posturing, which tended to value fame over virtue. Using Roberto González Echevarría's argument in *Myth and Archive*, Childers connects many texts, both Old-World and New, with the idea that they are, in essence, *relaciones*, legal documents which address royal power in a covert argument, "a petition or appeal or an answer to some sort of accusation" (420). The many personal narratives included in *Don Quijote* mimic the legalistic processes so common in the era which obviously include the Inquisition as well as those of the royal authority. Don Quijote as character listens to these stories almost as judge or magistrate, thus providing a dual meaning for Cervantes's readers: "Through Don Quixote, Cervantes would *both* caricature the supercilious rural

hidalgo who supports the absolute monarchy because it lets him relive the time when his ancestors were the autonomous governing class, *and* also remind readers of how much this complacent attitude differs from the radical reformist spirit that infused the Renaissance utopianism that his character verbally espouses" (435, italics original). Childers's history of the heroic takes him through the Romantic period, back to Latin America and into the twentieth century, in which he movingly quotes a letter that Ché Guevara wrote to his parents where he explains his need to lead a rebellion in Bolivia because he felt "el costillar de Rocinante" (449, n. 71). I quote at length from Childers's wonderful essay because it reflects the enormous scope of the entire book.

Part Three, "Counterconquest," then, concentrates on the neo–Baroque in 20th-century Latin America with essays by Irlemar Chiampi, Carlos Fuentes (on Faulkner), and González Echevarría, among others. What is especially fine in the entire book is the way the authors speak to each other, rather than simply holding forth in individual monologs. The reader is fully prepared for this final segment because the other writers have already referred to several of these essays, just as these writers mention those that have preceded them in the anthology. This is a thoughtful, complex, provocative and finally satisfying set of arguments that will inspire readers to seek out or return to the primary texts involved, the highest achievement of any scholarly work.



Saul, Nicholas and Simon J. James, eds. *The Evolution of Literature: Legacies of Darwin in European Cultures*. New York: Rodopi, 2011. Pp. 346.

**Madison Natt, Florida State University**

In *The Evolution of Literature: Legacies of Darwin in European Culture*, editors Nicholas Saul and Simon J. James have compiled 19 inter-disciplinary essays originally presented at a public lecture series at Durham University in 2007 and a conference at Durham University in 2008, both slightly in advance of the Darwin Year. The book traces Darwin's legacy through 150 years of literature and criticism. The breadth of its focus ensures that the material will be of interest to a wide cross-section of scholars in the hard sciences (biology), social sciences (sociology, psychology), and humanities. At its most basic level, the collection is a critique of the way Darwinism has "attained an illusory immediacy before readers' consciousness" without being actually understood (10). The goal is a reevaluation of Darwinism that calls for applying modern theoretical frameworks to his ideas rather than mimicking Victorian assumptions and debates. In particular, the authors view existent "literary Darwinism" as problematic for a variety of reasons.

Joseph Carroll's school of literary Darwinism is judged harshly for stressing attention to plot over language and thus privileging narratives about competition and courtship. Literary criticism following in Carroll's vein equates canonicity with

"authors who fit into normative notions of human nature" and thus "risks becoming only an observation of the mechanistic working-through of epigenetic rules, or a recursive explanation of characters' motives according to Darwinian folk psychology" (11, 12). Rather than oversimplifying cross-disciplinary studies, Saul and Simon suggest it is more beneficial to cultivate "the special complexity, the recognized distinctiveness, of the aesthetic subjects," highlighting the "variousness" of cognitive and literary capacity (14, 15). To that end, the book's reexamination of Darwinian thought "looks toward the formation of an authentically Darwininst, evolutionary aesthetic" through analyzing "evolution *in* literature and the evolution *of* literature" (15). Many of the essays argue if—and how—evolutionary theory can be beneficial for understanding the origins and adaptation of literature, while other essays focus on traces of evolutionary thought in English, French, and German writers since the 19th century.

Several authors primarily reevaluate the legacy of Darwin's ideas. David Knight tracks the varied reception of Darwin's theories in Victorian and Edwardian times, examining if the statistically-based natural selection is incompatible with views of nature as Designed or moral. Paul Weindling stresses that sexual selection is often marginalized in favor of a focus on natural selection, which allows for misreading of Darwin; he illustrates that Darwin himself was not a Social Darwinist, seeing "human love and social sympathy" as rooted in evolution and finding "merit in how 'civilised men' check nature's efforts to eliminate the weak" (41, 38). David Midgley considers how Darwinism was received in German thought, focusing on Henri Bergson's *L'Évolution créatrice* and the "Bergson boom." Each of these essays speaks to the need for academics to question their understanding of Darwin and application of his ideas.



Furthermore, many of these essays center on the vexed relationship between evolutionary psychology and literary studies. Both John Holmes and Nicholas Saul draw attention to how modern evolutionary criticism recapitulates Victorian criticism and its errors. Holmes focuses on the evolutionary theory and biopoetics of Herbert Spencer, Hippolyte Taine, and Grant Allen, and ultimately argues that modern "biopoetic critics' largely unquestioning dependence on evolutionary psychology for their hypothesis about literature looks unscientific" (112). Saul looks at Wilhelm Jensen's *The Legacy of Blood*, emphasizing that narrative is an aesthetic experience that reveals more about cognition and personal development than Darwinian inherited behavior. Similarly, Jon Adams takes issue with critical attempts to explain the content of literature, which tend toward judging texts based on "criteria of biological normality" and concludes that because evolutionary theory offers "no basis for discriminating between texts…it's not at all clear what it can offer to literary study" (169, 170). Alistar Brown examines the structure of texts, reading the evolutionary digital game *The Sims* alongside Richard Dawkins's algorithmic narrative *The Blind Watchmaker*. Brown argues that literature and computer games share narrative traits, but do not operate through comparable algorithmic processes, which "problematizes

the idea that evolution generally offers a universal explanation for all cultural products and….complicates the notion that evolution can explain every aspect of human culture with equal efficacy" (141).

However, not all of the contributors feel that evolutionary thought has little to offer literary theory. Katja Mellman argues that even if Darwinism might not be a useful tool for understanding the text itself, the heuristics of evolutionary psychology and structural literary theory can reveal correlations of structure and affective response. Wendy Wheeler agrees that evolutionary theory has a role in literary studies, but points out that recent developments in evolutionary biology require a reformulation of Darwinian Synthesis. Wheeler contends that to move past mechanistic and reductionist Darwinism, scholarship must embrace biosemiotics in its discussions of language (signs), nature, culture, and aesthetic value. Patricia Waugh attempts to unite literary Darwinism and postmodernism by emphasizing that Darwin was instrumental to the way modernists viewed the mind, and thus is relevant to analysis about its representation in fiction. Her examination of Ian McEwan's *Saturday* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* provides a test case for future scholars.



In addition to essays devoted primarily to these theoretical debates about the relationship between the hard sciences and the humanities, there are a number of essays that seem to take for granted that evolutionary theory is a useful tool for reading literature. Various essays deal with Samuel Butler's *The Way of the Flesh* and notions of filiation (David Amigoni); the implications of paternalistic Darwinism on poetic voice in the works of Alfred Tennyson and Robert Chambers (Anna Barton); H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* and notions of degeneration (Simon J. James); how Nietzsche's literary production mirrors prevalent evolutionary ideas through conflating organic and inorganic operations (John McCarthy); the deterministic nature of Michel Houllebecq's novels (Douglas Morrey); and reconsidering Darwin's influence on Emile Zola (David Baguley). Louise Lyle looks at post-WWII French fiction, examining how Vercors' *Les Animaux denatures* and Romain Gary's *Les Racines du ciel* problematize traditional notions of humanity to suggest a more complex notion. In a particularly enlightening study, Christopher Lloyd traces how French and English writers from the fin-de-siècle through the 20th century deal with the presentation of animals, humans, and beasts within humans. Focusing on Swift, Voltaire, Stevenson, Zola, Maupassant, Hugo, Wells, and Octave Mirbeau, Lloyd examines how their texts both reflect and rewrite the theory of primate evolution.

The collection certainly succeeds at illustrating the "complexity" and "variousness" of Darwinian thought and at forcing readers to reevaluate its uses in literary studies. Nonetheless, though each individual essay is well worth reading, the wide range of subject matter also means that the collection is very loosely held together. Most significantly, while the introduction claims to look forward to the creation of an "evolutionary aesthetics," many of the contributors obviously acknowledge seeing questionable value to the union of evolutionary thought and literary studies. If this is the case, the authors seem to be adding an additional obstacle to the "chasm" that

they claim still divides the hard sciences and the humanities (9). In addition, the assertion that the collection addresses an existent critical gap created by the way the humanities "tend to insist on the autonomy of the text from social and cultural processes, and so maintain their independence from naturalist scientific discourse" (11) seems curiously out of step with the last half century of literary scholarship. Saul even argues that "unless we count the most elementary forms of Marxist and Freudian criticism….[e]ven in today's pluralized scene, from hermeneutics to new criticism and deconstruction to new historicism, literary autonomy continues to serve axiomatically as the…basis of most theories of literature" (239-240). While certainly the humanities and hard sciences could improve inter-disciplinary practices, such a view of literary studies collapses the complexity of theoretical discourse, conflating all literary criticism with formalism. In so doing, Saul and Simon ironically work somewhat against their own aim to avoid reductionism in the humanities.



Dunphy, Graeme and Rainer Emig, eds. *Hybrid Humor: Comedy in Transcultural Perspectives*. Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi, 2009. Pp. 194.

**Miriam Chirico, Eastern Connecticut State University**

The significant influx of immigrants to Europe in the second half of the twentieth century signals a large-scale examination in how ethnic and national identities are formed. Due to contrasts between the majority population and minority immigrants as well as distinct nationalistic identities between countries, the European Union provides a useful barometer for evaluating how well humor can illustrate cultural differences. Edited by Graeme Dunphy and Rainer Emig, *Hybrid Humor: Comedy in Transcultural Perspectives* is a series of well-researched, finely-edited and thoughtful essays analyzing how minority groups use humor to position themselves more authentically within their new home. The highly readable volume conveys a wide impression of the cultural cross-currents within Europe today with migrant groups represented from Iran, Surinam, and Morocco. The various languages quoted, such as Dutch, French, Arab, and Turkish, all translated for English-speakers, creates an impression of a polyphonic society, a continent of teeming voices raised in contested and comic conversation.

A more apt title for the collection might be "Humorous Hybridity" as the writers focus more on how migrants use humor to negotiate a hybrid identity rather than explore humor as an instrument for cultural critique. The introductory essay, for example, demonstrates this prioritization of hybridity over humor; it surveys the demographic terrain of Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands by offering census data of immigrant groups and summarizing the different political discourses

regarding multiculturalism, but only discusses humor as a Freudian method to displace hostility, or a Bahktinian model of overturning ideological discourse. Joking, according to Freud, permits one to utter an idea typically repressed by the censoriousness within society; thus, the subaltern makes comic remarks to escape from dominating hegemonic forces. Bahktin's egalitarian carnival space coincides with Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity's "third space" because it provides the individual an alternative position in which to escape stereotyped ethnic roles or mock the dominant order, while simultaneously avoiding the fixed identification of East-West binaries.

These two models offer provocative ways of thinking about hybrid humor, but Rainer Emig is the only writer to develop this conceptual frame in his essay on Asian-British film and television. Examining the sketch comedy *Goodness Gracious Me*, Emig studies scenes which reverse cultural bias by using mimicry to destabilize the colonizer's assumptions. A British manager who moves to India is forced to accept a complex polysyllabic parody of an Indian name, because no one is able to pronounce his name ("Jonathan"). However, this reversal of cultural bias does not permit Asian-Brits to articulate a clear identity, only one in relation to the dominant British majority. Though they may find representation for their political or social issues such as assimilation or mixed-marriages in these televised comedies, the traditional media forms simply replicate dichotomies between the self and Other rather than offer any radical critique of the status quo or level hierarchical difference.



The hybrid practice of double-articulation appears within the work of four writers from Turkey, Surinam, Iran, and Morocco living in the Netherlands as documented by Michiel van Kempen. In his study, he traces the linguistic play employed by writers to question their migration status, focusing on the humorous strategies of one writer in particular, Edgar Cairo. Due to his Surinam background, Cairo had learned Dutch as the language of its colonizers and engages in a playful hybridization between the two languages by inventing words; his deliberate choice to take liberties with the colonizer's language and to use the vernacular of his country is a means of retaining self-esteem in the face of the oppressor, preserving and honoring Surinamese Dutch culture. A generation after Cairo, the other writers van Kempen examines do not write for an audience in their native country, but write to position themselves within their adopted society and to redefine what is meant by Dutch Nationalist literature. Thus the essay provides more insight about migrant identity within a multi-cultural society than it does about the use of humor; while these later writers playfully attack language or use self-mockery, humor is an incidental by-product of their writing in their attempts to no longer be considered migrant writers.

More explicitly than any other writer in the volume, Hedi Abdel-Jaouad explores how humor can be used as a tool to establish rapport, empathy, and resistance by North African immigrants living in France. Looking at the works of a cartoonist, stage comedians, and rap artists, she explores how an ethnic minority group descended from North African migrants, collectively known as Beurs, claims a voice

through exchanges with the larger French population. The cartoonist Farid Boudjellal uses the art of exaggeration and caricature to push his audiences out of their complacency and make them recognize his own humanity, as both an immigrant and a disabled individual. In the story he writes of a mixed Franco-Algerian marriage, he reveals the prejudices both families have towards one another, finding conflicts to explore through laughter and misunderstandings. Repeatedly, Abdel-Jaouad points out the usefulness of the self-deprecating humor as an instrument to individualize the comedian; an individual capable of laughing at him or herself signifies an autonomous individual, a subject capable of self-reflection. Likewise the inventive licensure with the French language marks a comic approach to hybrid identity, just as it did in van Kempen's article, when comedians and rap artists appeal to the French youth by creating a new language redolent with "onomatopoeia, new and fresh elocution, funny neologisms, and disarticulated grammar" (126). As a group that feels excluded from their fellow citizens as well as from their North African relatives, these Beur writers use humor to move from a position of rage to more socially amenable forms of communication.



Communicating effectively with an audience is an important step towards dismantling cultural stereotypes and Graeme Dunphy illustrates how satirical texts by four Turkish-German writers deploy ironic self-depictions to achieve this goal. In his article about "Domesticating and Demythologising the Exotic," Dunphy focuses in particular on the element of the exotic in immigrant writing. Considering literary texts wherein migrants have depicted themselves in mysterious or flamboyant ways for comic effect, Dunphy contends this practice is a double-edged sword; exoticizing difference can enable migrant groups to maintain their ethnic identity, but it imprisons them within a stereotype that ultimately works against assimilation. A short-story writer, Şinasi Dikmen, manipulates both German and Turkish stereotypes to demonstrate cultural misunderstandings on the part of both national groups; his Turkish narrator-*cum*-guest worker misreads "exotic" German social practices and makes—under the guise of gullibility—pointed and critical remarks. Muhsin Omurca vivifies his cartoons with Turkish cultural clichés (stereotypes of gambling, eating kebabs, being nomadic), in order to draw in his audience and encourage them to empathize with the cultural isolation Turks feel. However, stereotypical portrayals of one another can only go so far; without offering an alternative and constructive model of Turkish identity, these humorous portrayals ultimately do little towards eliminating biased cultural representations of the Other.

Delia Chiaro's article "Italian Comic Stereotypes Viewed from Within the Peripheral Group" establishes a statistical model for evaluating how Italians living in Youngstown, Ohio, view stereotypical depictions of themselves. Chiaro provided a group of Italian-Americans with a series of video clips manifesting examples of Italian stereotypes and assessed whether their level of irritation, humor, or entertainment differed based on their generational status. Drawing upon Larry Mintz's development theory of ethnic humor, she initially hypothesized that later generations

of an immigrant group would adopt a self-deprecating humor towards their own ethnic depiction, but ultimately discovered that later generations are more adverse to such stereotypes than their immigrant grandparents. Chiaro offers reasons for her findings, but her conclusions are tenuous for several reasons. First, Chiaro discusses European nationalistic stereotypes of which most untraveled Americans are unaware; thus the practice of mocking another ethnic group would seem unfeeling to a non-immigrant American raised in an age of "political correctness." Secondly, Chiaro conflates different kinds of media stereotypes in her experiment, mixing together pejorative images of Italian mobsters with advertisements selling ice cream, pizza, and olive oil, which might inspire cultural pride. Finally, she never provides the sample size of her test group, raising questions about the significance of her data.

The immigrant's experience in Europe alters his conception of self; caught as he is between his home country and his newly adopted one, he understands himself as seen through the eyes of the cultural majority. The actors and writers are aware of their hyphenated identity, and they are also acutely aware of how they choose to represent themselves against such cultural bias through graphic novels or television sit-coms. In this study, the comedian serves as a diplomat, using humor subversively or good naturedly not only to be heard, but to rectify the images of his ethnic group shared outwardly with the world.



Säckel, Sarah, Walter Göbel and Noha Hamdy, eds. *Semiotic Encounters: Text, Image and Trans-Nation*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009. Pp. 276.

**Stephanie A. Glaser, University of Copenhagen**

How are transnationalism and intermediality related? What are some the challenges to scholarship in understanding plurivocal, plurimedial, and transcultural phenomena? To what extent do current methodologies and terminologies remain sufficient for exploring new constellations of media, languages, and cultures? In what ways can intertextuality be productively used as a tool for analyzing encounters between cultures and their creative outputs? These are just a few of the questions raised by this thought-provoking volume, which originated in a symposium on intertextuality in twentieth-century Anglophone literature, film, and photography organized in 2008 by the American Studies Department at the University of Stuttgart. Aiming "at opening up scholarly debates on the contemporary challenges of intertextuality in its various intersections with postcolonial and visual culture studies" (7), the volume starts off with essays by Mary Orr, Harish Trivedi, and Renate Brosch. These essays sketch out the range of inquiry and explore various theoretical aspects of the volume's ambitious premise. Beyond this, they offer stimulating perspectives that

develop issues raised in current theorizing and debates about intermediality as well as postcolonialism and globalization, particularly the dissolution of authoritarian or elitist cultural structures in the global dissemination of verbal and visual media.

In the opening essay, Mary Orr discusses the power hierarchies inherent in current academic terminology, arguing that the age of digital media and transnational communication requires non-exclusive terms that break away from elitist power structures (supported, in her opinion, by "inter" prefixes), to reveal the "diverse hands" (25, 26) that have unacknowledged been at work in artistic and scientific production throughout history and that the digital age has made visible. In view of this she makes a plea for collaboration between the humanities and the sciences, contending that the concepts 'intertextuality' and 'intermediality' can be useful tools in "active[ly] remembering" (26) the significance of these anonymous or suppressed contributors and thus effacing traditional linguistic, national, and disciplinary boundaries. Emphasizing another aspect of intermediality in an essay that invstigates the implications of globalization on visual imagery, Renate Brosch maintains that in a globalized context intermediality must be understood not only as a transfer from one signifying system into another, but as a transnational encounter between audiences, each of which brings their particular linguistic and cultural backgrounds and aesthetic preferences to the reception and creation of globalized images. She argues that these "migrating images" are performative because they create transnational reading communities united by similar concerns, especially in times of crisis. Crises of various kinds are thematized in the essays by Noah Hamdy, Joachim Frenk and Christian Krug, and Caroline Lusin.



Exploring postcolonial bilingualism, identity formation, and intermediality, Harish Trivedi focuses on a specific case of double (intermedial and cultural) encounter: cultural translation in book and film. In line with current theories of adaptation that drive against the common prejudice that a film adaptation is inferior to a literary work, he shows how the media specificities of film can be fully exploited to underscore, for example, the bilingual, transnational situation of postcolonial migrants, in bringing out the "double enunciation" (44) through, for example, the aural (the native language spoken) and visual (English subtitles, visual imagery) interplay between languages and cultures. His well-crafted study not only demonstrates how an intermedial perspective can enrich readings of verbal and visual texts, it also underscores fundamental issues of transnational assimilation, a theme which comes to the fore in essays by Nicola Glaubitz, Sonia Fielitz, Walter Göbel, and Irina Bauder-Begerow.

The arguments and wide-ranging perspectives on the interrelations between postcolonialism, Visual Culture, and intermediality offered in these essays do not, however, replace an introductory theoretical reflection by the editors, clarifying the conceptual underpinnings of the project and systematizing or even highlighting the various thematic focal points of the essays and the underlying issues they bring up. For lack of a substantial introduction the volume seems disparate, with some essays engaging with the major themes of transnationalism, intermediality, and intertex-

tuality and with others primarily with the latter, which leaves the reader confused about what exactly the project aims to contribute to scholarship. Nor does the title offer enough focus or direction. Even if the main title "Semiotic Encounters" does imply various kinds of meetings (textual, intermedial, cultural, linguistic) the reader encounters throughout the volume, it is too abstract to indicate that intertextuality is the red thread holding the volume together. Along with the cover image, the subtitle signals that the volume focuses on East-West encounters, Postcolonial and Film Studies. While the title and the volume's organization place the visual on equal ground with the textual, the use of "image" in the subtitle does not necessarily call attention to the richness of the aspects of Visual Culture discussed by the contributors: "visual media" might have been more in line with the volume's objects of study. Moreover, and paradoxically to what the title does promise, with the exception of Ida M. Samperi's article, where typographical arrangements akin to visual poetry from the work *Thru* (1974) are reproduced—but not, unfortunately, discussed in their fascinating intermedial aspects—images are absent from the volume altogether. From any perspective, this is a weakness in a volume taking Visual Culture as one of its objects of study.



The organization of the volume reflects the lack of theoretical consideration and absence of overall direction. The first section, composed of the three essays discussed above, is followed by a section focusing on literary intertextuality and its ideological or subversive strategies, with the final section dedicated to "visual encounters". It is here where intermediality, which we have seen to be an important aspect of the theoretical essays, finally takes shape in the discussions of film (and television), with Susanne Gruss's (discussed below) and Noha Hamdy's essays being exemplary. Hamdy analyzes the "trans-semiotisation" (249) of the photograph of the "Falling Man" into an article and into a documentary, exploring this in light of American myth-making in the post-9/11 era. In this case especially, the essay's impact would have been heightened by reproducing the photo. If the crux of the volume is to analyze the concept of intertextuality across media and cultures and to explore its various uses, Hamdy's use of various terms is symptomatic of the ongoing reflection throughout the volume: he speaks of "trans-mediatisation" (249), "sign transference and transcoding" (250). Other contributors consider the concept in terms of "intermedial transposition" (211), "intermedial allusions" (70), "intratextuality" (127), "allusion, imitation, rewriting, parodying, and quotation" (137), "appropriation" (228), "rewritings" (119), "reconfiguring" (71), "cultural transfer" (220), or "semiotic dialogue" (69), thereby opening up multiple facets of the concept "interetextuality" in order to consider not only its manifestations but its uses and goals from parody to subversion to ideological reappropriation. This richness and range of inquiry and analysis might have been better brought to light by organizing the volume in terms of types of intertextuality and their various uses.

Simply stated, the essays deal with three types of intertextual phenomena: first, the literary, which includes "master texts" or "pretexts", authors (Shakespeare), genres

such as the Victorian adventure or seafaring tale (Lusin), and system reference, the use of an author's major themes (Säckel, Keller); second, the cultural or nonfictive, such as Victorian (Bauder-Begerow, Lusin), Japanese (Glaubitz), or Western (Frenk and Krug) culture; third, the intermedial, primarily film, adaptation (Gruss, Nowaira, Fielitz). By no means exclusive, these categories enable a greater understanding of the volume's themes of transnation and intermediality through types of intertextual practice. Two of the strongest essays show ways in which postcolonial rewritings manipulate the ideologies of the master text. Caroline Lusin skillfully draws out intertextual elements in works by J.M. Coetzee and Matthew Kneale and shows how the two authors exploit the most sinister of Conrad's themes in *Heart of Darkness* to condemn imperialism and man's inhumanity to man and to question the reliability of language. From the perspective of postcolonial narratology, Irina Bauder-Begerow articulates the ways in which Peter Carey and Lloyd Jones deconstruct and undermine Victorian themes and ideals in their rewritings of Dickens's *Great Expectations*, particularly through the plurivocality of their "mosaic of narratives" (125). Less engaged with the volume's overarching themes are the essays on intertextuality as system reference. Sarah Säckel analyses Shakespearian quotations and themes taken up by P.G. Wodehouse in his *Jeeves and Wooster* novels, and Wolfram R. Keller discusses the Ovidian themes of metamorphosis and exile in David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1983). This, however, is the weakest part of the essay, which, to my mind, makes its principal contribution in fleshing out the problematic Canadian-American relations in terms of identity, popular culture, and globalization.



Walter Göbel and Nicola Glaubitz use postcolonial theoretical stances to examine cultural intertexts. In seeking to elucidate Washington Irving's 1848 postscript to "Rip Van Winkle", Göbel skillfully demonstrates how postcolonial theory can be meaningfully brought to bear on intricate questions of literary history. Drawing attention to the double-sided fate of America as both settler colony and brutal power that suppressed Native American culture, Göbel shows this double movement by examining Irving's search for poetic inspiration in the mother country and through the mythic intertext of Native American culture. Glaubitz introduces the useful concept of cultural transcription, a process by which cultural elements are made readable to outsiders, to explore the techniques used by Kazuo Ishiguro in transposing elements of Japanese culture and exploring questions of migrant identity in *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986). She makes the case that Ishiguro's much-criticized lack of factual precision in his novel can be understood as a statement about image production that has relevance in the globalized world, a stance which nicely ties into Renate Brosch's essay.

Many of the essays dealing with visual media explore adaptation as the main kind of intermedial intertextuality. Sonia Fielitz offers an insightful perspective on the globalization of Shakespeare from Kurosawa through Branagh to Luhrmann. Her telling case study in "trans-cultural intermediality" (219), the American filming of

Alan Bennett's play *Madness of King George III* (1991), explains, with a very slight snubbing of American ignorance, the necessity of simplifying or removing detailed cultural and political references or a globalized market. Likewise thinking in terms of globalization, Susanne Gruss writes an informative and multifaceted essay that considers intermedial connections in a hybrid film genre, the role of Shakespeare in the Anglophone transnation, intertextual exploitation of Shakespeare, and cultural borrowing. She explains that rather than concentrating on revising *Othello* in a postcolonial context, Vishal Bhardwaj "uses Shakespeare's text to explore specifically Indian genres and concerns" (234) in his film *Omkara* (2006). The film fails, she argues, because in combining Hollywood and Bollywood conventions it creates a hybrid genre which is only partly readable and thus disappoints expectations at home and abroad.

Despite the weaknesses in the volume, one of its major strengths, besides opening up reflection upon the issues discussed in my first paragraph, is to bring the German discussion of intertextuality influenced by Broich and Pfister's important work, *Intertextualität: Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien* (1985), to an English-speaking readership. The depth of the analyses in most of the essays reflects the precision and exactitude which characterizes the best of German scholarship. Along these same standards, the quality of the English is high. The occasional Germanisms remind us that the entire volume is itself an encounter between cultures and languages. Distracting, however, are a small number of typographical errors (misspellings, end-of-line hyphenations within a line of text, and a glaring misprint in the title of Irina Bauder-Bergerow's essay), indicating that another round of editing would not have hurt. Nonetheless, many of the individual essays make solid contributions to scholarship. Although some of them may be over the heads of most undergraduate students, many will interest scholars and students of postcolonialism, globalization, and especially intertextuality, and a number of them will be of use to scholars of intermediality and film studies. In the end, the questions they raise are pertinent to many academic fields, including Cultural History, Literary and New Media Studies.



Juvan, Marko. *Literary Studies in Reconstruction: An Introduction to Literature*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011. Pp. 282.

**Jelka Kernev-Strajn, Ljubljana, Slovenia**

Through a series of upheavals occurring over the past decades—the marginalisation of literature, equation with non-artistic practices of signification and confrontations with other canons—the western literary canon has embarked on a journey of transformation in which no end is in sight. With it, literary studies, which have long

shaped this canon by evaluating, describing, interpreting, historically situating and providing an existential basis, are also changing. The monograph is devoted to the transformations literary studies are undergoing; despite a thorough respect for historical dimensions, it is a theoretical work, but only provided one takes theory to mean "the theory of literary discourse".

As its point of departure, the work takes the detection of a general crisis in modern literary studies and in the humanities in general. However, this crisis is understood for the most part in view of its positive connotations, that is, as the intersection of time and space where the decisive moment will arrive. And the work was in fact dictated by the author's decision to distance himself from the predominant currents of critical, transdisciplinary, eclectic and self-referential discourse characteristic of theory, but, at the same time, to transcend a binaristic approach determined by the oppositional relationship of subject and object that is characteristic of traditional literary studies. Juvan firmly believes that literary discourse—as a space of interaction —is sociologically and anthropologically irreplaceable, as some are wont to forget (cultural studies grounded in transdisciplinary theory, for example). Nonetheless, he does not hide his affinity for the poststructuralist treatment of literature in his attempts to approach his object by producing new knowledge, in the sense of *poesis*, through a dialogue with its alterity.



The book comprises eleven chapters divided into two thematic sections. The first is dedicated to literary theory, literary history and the question of world literature, while the second presents terms and concepts (text, context, textology, hypertext, literary space, cultural memory, etc.) that are unavoidable in modern treatments of literature. As the author himself suggests, the text as a whole is to be understood as a "site under construction", which means that it differs not only from textbooks, but also from all holistically conceptualised monographs with similar subject matter.

Juvan traces the beginnings of literary theory's transformation into an interdisciplinary theory to the politically charged, revolutionary year 1968. It was then that literature began to be treated as a discourse among discourses and that there arose the realisation that the concept of literature cannot be defined through a single feature that would be achievable in every single work of art. In this respect, although the author's methodological and conceptual reconstruction of literary studies takes place through a dialogue with literary texts, it also examines insight provided by other disciplines (sociology, philosophy, anthropology, linguistics). This theory justifiably lays claim to the attribute "literary", even though it breaks down the barriers between disciplines, genres and cultures. Here the author relentlessly reflects on and checks his work using examples from world and Slovenian literature; at the same time, he notes that discourse is not merely a theoretical concept, but also a historical one, which is why it has an important role in literary history.

For this reason, he calls our attention to shifts in the definition of both history and literary history: focus on the narrative (the historicism of the 19th century), movement away from it (the 1960s and 1970s) and returning to it anew by way of

"explaining its processes" (the 1980s). It is these processes that led to the numerous transformations of literary history, transformations through which a vast narrative genre was broken into pieces, bringing the fragment and encyclopaedicity to the fore. In this respect, it is understandable that the author identifies in hypertext a model that holds promise; through its capacity for palimpsest data structuration, hypertext facilitates the linking of history as narrative and fragment—through its rhizomatic, non-hierarchical structure, it corresponds to the infinite intertextuality of historical writing. The constructionist nature of every historical narrative, as well as its subjectivity, contingency and perspectivism, are thus brought to light; all of this, the author concludes, was made possible by shifting the focus onto developments and actors once considered marginal or generally neglected, such as minority literatures.

A close examination of these literatures opens the questions of the asymmetry of the world literature system, that is, of interactions between centre and periphery, global and local, world literature and national literatures. Making reference to F. Moretti and P. Casanova, Juvan's text provides an exemplary demonstration of how no cultural system is self-sufficient, as centres are always plugged in to the periphery, and once peripheral spaces change into centres. The author, who takes a critical stance towards Moretti's cultural transfer model, shows that the relationship between centre and periphery is intertextual, auto-reflexive and even auto-ironic, and that world literature can only be observed through specific aspects, that is, fragmentarily. He feels that multi-perspective observation of the fragmentation and plurality of world literature is most easily accomplished through the use of electronic media, as these media imply a rather new understanding of the text as a discourse fragment emerging through a process that articulates meanings through a dialogue with endless separation from alterity. As a part of textology, genetic criticism reveals the genesis of the literary work and in doing so provides literary history with data that can accumulate *ad infinitum*; it is precisely hypertext that provides this possibility with its openness, decentralization and interactiveness. The unique democraticness of hypertext neatly concurs with the poststructuralist awareness of how the structure of the literary text essentially differs little from the structure of the non-literary text, in that it is merely a network of relationships without an essence. The author rethinks structure through a consideration of the concepts of Barthes and Deleuze. On the basis of differences between the two, he also points out similarities by noting that for both authors, structure is a process or event that generates differences, meanings and relations. The question of the specificity of the literary text is thus directly opened. This is why he uses a concrete example, specifically the first paragraph of the first Slovene *povest* (a type of tale) *Fortune in Misfortune* (1836), to expound his own understanding of a text structure indelibly linked to cognition and articulation. The author concludes that it is this very feature that confers upon structure the historical dimensions of event. Yet here he does not neglect to point out that the literary work is also historical from the standpoint of reception, and not only production. Namely, in both cases historicity enters the work through intertextuality. Chapters devoted to

literariness and the problem of genre and style also build on this finding.

When the focus in literary criticism was redirected from literary ontology to the function of literature, the opinion that became predominant, in the spirit of anti-essentialism, was that literariness is but one of the social conventions of literature. Juvan is not satisfied with this interpretation. In response, he convincingly analyses two Slovene poems to demonstrate his view of literariness as the structured essence of the literary text which may be theoretically described.

The work also confronts the question of essentialism in its treatment of the problems surrounding genre. In opposition to genre essentialism he places the concept of relationism, although he critically amends the latter from the perspective of intertextuality. This is dictated for the most part by the observation that while texts grouped in the same conceptual series do correspond to one another in certain features, they do not have an identical essence. The author feels that this realisation is of fundamental importance for genealogy, as it provided the basis for the hypothesis that took shape within the latter regarding genre as institution and social contract and genre as an intermediary between text and context or the space where the meaning of a literary work is articulated. The methods of this articulation pertain to the style of a literary work. In this connection, the author justifiably expresses doubts regarding the merits of certain terminological pairs on which stylistic studies are usually based (norm and deviation, neutral and marked); he reasonably criticises style as free choice and uses a comparison of two Slovene lyric poems to call attention to the weak points of the definition of style as choice. Using an analysis of an excerpt from Queneau's *Exercises in Style*, he shows that it is not a matter of the writer's choice, but of the many interfaces which come between the author and the text and which are dependent on repeatable situations. Style is therefore also an intertextual fact that enables the observer to situate the subject of an utterance in a social space, which means that as an effect of intertwined intersubjective processes, style also works on the identity of the text or its subject. This is why we may willingly concur with the author's realisation, presented in the form of a maxim, that "The sense of style thus serves to navigate identity" (176).



Intersubjective relations and interaction between literary discourse and other social discourses are also of fundamental importance for the question of the relationship between facts and literary fiction in light of censorship and the prosecution of literature. By appealing to deconstruction or the surpassing of the opposition between facts and fiction, the author calls attention to the undecidability of the borders between the two fields, as fictional worlds are parasites on reality, while the real world also contains elements of fiction. Taking two concrete examples from contemporary Slovene literature and case law, the interactions characteristic of different discourses (literary, theoretical, social, legal) are described. They are reconsidered from a theoretical and historical standpoint, which allows the author to convincingly transgress the frameworks of academic research and touch upon social space.

The transgressive nature of the relationship between reality and the literary text is

also decisive in treatments of literary space, the latter being, as the author concludes, inherently intertextual. Here, an important realisation is that the spaces presented in texts form different relations or, in other words, "spatial syntax". The forces of imagination characteristic of literature transgress the logic of this syntax and produce transgressions of space which also serve to reshape identity. Taking the example of Proust's novels and the poetry of the Slovene poet S. Kosovel, four such processes of transgressivity are examined in the book: figurativeness, palimpsestness, textual explosion and intertextuality.

Intertextuality is also the fundamental dimension in a treatment of literature as document and monument—as a trace of time and space that accumulates and simultaneously generates memory. The question of which literary works are involved in this process depends on the canon as the main mechanism for the formation of cultural memory and, consequently, identity. A text's memory is its intertextuality. The author demonstrates the intertextual functioning of genre memory, topic, canon and citability in a specific semiosphere using the example of the Slovene sonnet; he convincingly explains why it was the sonnet, specifically the Italian sonnet, that acquired the status of key text for Slovene culture.



This explanation is but one piece in a series of evidence that Juvan's reconstruction of literary studies does in fact take place in a dialogue with concrete discourses, whereby most of the examples of literary discourses are taken from Slovene literature; in the book, these are in most cases listed in their entirety in both the original language and in translation. This could be especially interesting for global readers, both for those who will choose the book as an introduction to the study of literature and for those who will attempt to enter into a dialogue with its author.

King, Homay. *Lost in Translation: Orientalism, Cinema, and the Enigmatic Signifier*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2010.

**Ken Provencher, University of Southern California**

Hollywood's long and lamentable history of stereotyping Asian characters as inscrutable Orientals has been well-documented and critiqued, and yet, as Homay King argues persuasively in her new book *Lost in Translation: Orientalism, Cinema, and the Enigmatic Signifier*, the usual approach of those critiques has left room for expansion. Generally limited to scripted elements such as characterization, action, and dialogue, the methodological scope of traditional Orientalism studies suggests that what is Orientalized has a narrow cinematic range, that it is a matter of writing, casting, and acting, and not also a matter of cinematography and production design.

A further tendency in critiques of Orientalist films is the suggestion that there is a recognizable standard of authentic representation of "the Orient" that any given film

either meets or falls short of (usually the latter). But Orientalism, even in Edward Said's terms, has always been more of a distorted mirror reflecting Western fears and desires than a blurry window to a reifiable culture of Otherness. It is as much of a psychological as an artistic and industrial phenomenon. Applying psychoanalytic concepts to a study of typically unregarded aspects of Orientalist films, King's book attempts to expand the scope of traditional analysis while addressing the psychological dimensions of Orientalism itself. Although the brevity of the book prevents it from achieving comprehensive status, its clarity and depth of perception are engaging and provocative.

The "enigmatic signifier" of the book's subtitle derives from Jean Laplanche's conceptual "twist" on classic psychoanalytical theory. King's digest of Laplanche is concise: by positing that our inner selves are largely a product of encounters with "the unknown and unintelligible" (3), Laplanche defines the enigmatic signifier as the incomprehensible Other that exists before the Self. The value of this concept in analysis of Orientalist films is that it suggests ways in which the Orient as the stereotypical "inscrutable Other" actually lays bare the unstructured, unmoored Western Self. At best, a sincere acknowledgment of the elusiveness of the enigmatic signifier opens up possibilities for "more reciprocal, if not transparent, forms of cross-cultural exchange" (4). However, the Orientalist framing of enigmatic signifiers in films typically illustrates a paranoid projection on the part of the Western protagonist and/or filmmakers, whose frustrated desire to *know* the Asian Other actually impedes understanding. Within the enigmatic signifier concept, King sees both a tool of critique and a theoretical model for bringing together, rather than driving apart, the Self and the Other.



King's critique of Hollywood Orientalism focuses on what she calls the "Shanghai gesture": "seemingly marginal Asian set dressing" that "ends up functioning as a load-bearing narrative element" (48-49). In noir films like *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), *The Big Sleep* (1946), and *The Lady From Shanghai* (1947), which King deftly analyzes, Chinese-identified props and décor that may seem gratuitous to the plot symbolize repressed desires and represent a loss of rational thought and free will that is connected to "a confrontation with the East" (51). These objects are "infuriating, pleasurable, and endlessly intriguing" to characters and audiences alike because they are unintelligible (52). The enigmatic signifier represented by these objects signals that there are deeper secrets beneath the revelations uncovered by the investigating protagonists; these are not just mystery stories but stories of mystery, of subterranean desires and transactions that only these oriental objects are hinting at, without making direct reference (59).

In her analyses of *Chinatown* (1974) and *Blade Runner* (1982), King argues that from the audience's point of view, the balance of knowledge tips almost completely over to the Oriental Other, which has not only a separate consciousness but a malignant one. Detailed information about Jake Gittes's backstory of a traumatic event in *Chinatown*'s Chinatown eludes the audience and perhaps even Jake's own com-

prehension, as it seems to repeat itself, fatalistically, in the Chinatown-set climax. And *Blade Runner*, set in a future Los Angeles dominated by Asian corporate power and largely populated by cyborg slaves, imagines that the greatest threat to humanity is not the differences between human and cyborg but the similarities. The more cyborgs become "like us" the more they prevent the Western Self from asserting its own authenticity, and therefore they must be contained. King is extremely adept at teasing out the paranoia embedded in these visions of Orientalized settings while scrupulously avoiding the trap of pitting the West's rendering of the Orient against some presumed "authentic" Orient.

The book also advances the study of Orientalist films by exploring works outside of the Hollywood system, such as Wim Wenders's *Notebook on Cities and Clothes* (1989), a meditative-travelogue follow-up to *Tokyo-ga* (1985), the more iconic of his visit-to-Japan documentaries. For King, a film like *Notebook* is a corrective to works like *Blade Runner* that urge the West to "exert constant vigilance against the false imitation that tries to pass itself off as the real thing" (124). In an early scene in *Notebook*, a shot utilizing a split-focus lens makes the cities of Tokyo and Paris appear equivalent and inextricable; they appear as themselves, and as mirror images of each other. Such images "help to reimagine the relationship between East and West not as a one-sided mimicry or appropriation but rather as a layered series of enfolded exchanges" (129). The self-consciousness of the Wim Wenders persona in *Notebook*—his reflections on the ebb and flow of his feelings of connect and disconnect with his surroundings—enhances Tokyo as a space of constant interaction, not alienation, between Self and Other. As an alternative to typically Orientalist works, *Notebook* may be an exception that proves the rule, but it does appear to challenge notions that the Orientalizing practices of Western media are omnipresent and inescapable.



More ambivalent, however, is King's study of a pair of films with uncanny similarities: Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation* and Sophie Calle's photographic exhibit *Exquisite Pain*. Both dated 2003, both featuring "lost girls" from the West who wander around an alienating Tokyo reflecting on their romantic disillusionments, both works show the great extent to which a young Westerner would avoid encounters with Otherness in an Asian country. Neither "lost girl" approaches Tokyo as a colonizer would, and yet their cosmopolitanism runs the risk of appearing to be, according to Ackbar Abbas, another form of cultural imperialism. Abbas's concept of "arbitrage"—the adjustment of less privileged men and women struggling to make sense of their experiences in a foreign culture—serves King well here, as she proposes "detranslation" as the process by which the female protagonists of both works respond to their enigmatic surroundings by opening up to alterity rather than repudiating it (151-152). But in King's estimation, Calle's work is the more successful, because *Lost* contains a male Westerner, Bob, who seems to shield the female Westerner from exposure to the more threatening—and sexualized—aspects of Tokyo culture (167-168).

King's study of *Lost in Translation* is a bit out of place; this may be due to its origins

as a review article in *Film Quarterly*. For the first time, she takes audience reactions into account, contrasting the negativity of Japanese audiences and critics with the film's more popular, award-winning reception in the U.S. As a result, this final case study threatens to bring the analytical framework closer to tradition: an indictment of the perceived racist caricatures in the film that according to King are the source of the Japanese audience's displeasure. And it is in this chapter where she develops an Oedipal-biographical theory introduced in the *Notebook* section (based on a narrated remark by Wenders in that film regarding his own father) that is fascinating but not integral to the broader concept of the enigmatic signifier. King places Coppola within the privileged cultural boundaries that are the domain of her father Francis, to the extent that *Lost in Translation* may be an unofficial sequel to *Apocalypse Now* (1979) in terms of its Orientalist aesthetic. King argues that condemning *Lost* for its maker's privileged upbringing would be inappropriate and unproductive, but further protests that the awards it received and its "negative reception in Japan" (169) may influence other filmmakers to portray the Orient from within similar, closed-off cultural boundaries. I am not sure why Japanese reactions to this particular film are so crucial to King, or where she sees dangerous sexuality in the film's rendition of Tokyo, where Japanese men appear mainly as voyeurs, harmless acquaintances, clowns, and the elderly—surely more obvious and relevant grounds for accusing the film of retrograde stereotyping.



That minor inconsistency aside, as a whole the book offers a compelling alternative to traditional critiques of Orientalist film. Its case studies are few and brief, but they have an admirable scope—from the silent period to the present—and King draws original and convincing connections between them. The elegance of her prose matches her insights. Despite the book's title, what is more important to King is not what is lost in translation but what is gained in mistranslation.

Chivers, Sally. *The Silvering Screen: Old Age and Disability in Cinema*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2011. Pp. 213. US $24.95.

**Karen Bruce Wallace, Ohio State University**

In this provocative monograph, Sally Chivers explores what she terms the 'silvering screen,' a set of films that depend on aging to drive their action and often feature actors who achieved fame in their youth (xvi). She notes that such films consider the present of their aging protagonists in terms of a distant, youthful past, and judge that past as a source of regret due to missed opportunities (xvii). In the process, they attempt to tap into the concerns of their aging audience, which, in their depictions, often include a loss of desirability or cognitive capabilities. By defining this common core of concerns, they homogenize the experience of aging and construct a shared social

identity for older people (xviii). They suggest that age involves physical decrepitude and mental decay, but reassure their audience that these changes can be managed. Chivers is interested in how monolithic this silvering screen representation of old age seems to be, and how it obscures more varied and meaningful depictions of aging (xx). She is also concerned with tracing the ideology behind this stock portrayal of aging, and thinking about how audiences interact with it (xxi-ii).

Chivers roots her examination of these issues in critical gerontology and disability studies, bringing the two disciplines into dialogue with each other, and arguing that "'old age' requires disability in order to be legible within an 'efficient' capitalist society" (8) . Her choice of methodology arises from her perceptive observation that, on the silvering screen, *visible* old age indicates ill health, and ill health is often signalled by an impaired body (8). The visibility of age is central to her argument in this regard, since the silvering screen distinguishes between *growing* old and *looking* old, and presents healthy aging as an imitation of youth (enabled by medical interventions), so that signs of age become signs of infirmity and impairment (8). I found her coupling of gerontology and disability studies to be the most suggestive and productive part of a generally fascinating monograph. As she remarks, scholars of disability studies and of gerontology have seldom engaged with each other's work, although the two fields have clear commonalities, and deal with two groups who are often associated in the public imagination (9). Given this, she suggests that collaboration between the disciplines would be fruitful. In the case of disability studies, an examination of old age would serve as an opportunity to rethink the barriers that affect a range of "problem bodies," and a salient reminder that older people with disabilities may find themselves fighting the same battles over access and attitudes that they did in youth (9, 22). In the case of gerontology, disability studies is able to provide theory that is otherwise lacking, since it takes as its focus stigmatized bodies, and their relationship to their sociocultural world (22). Her work provides a sophisticated model of how to bring these two disciplines together, since she is highly aware of the dangers of conflating old age and disability, and therefore focusses her attention on the ways in which society constructs them both "as bodily, threatening and signalling failure" (23).



Chivers uses this theory to think through a series of representative films from a range of national cinemas and production contexts. She begins by examining a pair of early Hollywood films: *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) and *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962). Taking the form of backstage melodramas, they tell of actresses who have become obsolete as they have aged, and feature stars such as Gloria Swanson, Joan Crawford and Bette Davis, who were "thought of as defunct and cast as dysfunctional" once they reached their fifties (38). Chivers reads these works through the lens of Mary Russo's scandal of anachronism, where acting against one's age means risking pity, contempt and ridicule, but is also "necessary and inevitable *as sign of life*" (41). In both *Sunset Boulevard* and *Baby Jane*, Swanson and Davis play middle-aged stars who cling to their youth, and whose theatrical performances are inappropriate

for their age. They emerge as grotesque and unstable figures, whose inability to act their age is intended to evoke feelings of pity and horror in the audience (45-47). Chivers notes how either mental or physical disability is a central part of these representations, such that they present "aging femininity as horrifyingly disabled" (39). This connection is most exemplified in *Baby Jane* by Crawford's depiction of Blanche Hudson, whose placement in a wheelchair serves to mark her as old and obsolete, and emphasize her passivity and dependence (51). By bringing together gender, age and disability, these films foreground "the impossible standards placed on all non-normative bodies (that is, all bodies) by mid-twentieth century Hollywood cinema" (41). Chivers concludes by arguing that Swanson, Davis and Crawford risk a similar scandal of anachronism to their characters by remaining on screen past a supposedly suitable age. They may take on markedly different roles from their youth, and make themselves objects of horror, but they also assert that they are still alive and working, which gives their performances a challenging and subversive edge (57). Chivers' analysis is thorough and convincing for the period she examines, but we may wonder whether the situation has changed to some degree, with actresses such as Meryl Streep, Julianne Moore and Helen Mirren continuing to have successful careers into their fifties.



At this point, Chivers moves from looking at films which present aging as disability to ones which "separate out aging with a *disability* from aging *without* a disability" by including at least one character who suffers from cognitive disability late in life (58). In *Pauline and Paulette* (2001), Pauline has always lived with a developmental disability, so that the film is a rare portrayal of an aging person with a disability. The film uses disability as a figure for the solitude of old age, yet also suggests that it provides fulfilment and richness in late life, not only for extraordinary individuals who will have the assistance and company they need, but also for care-giving relatives who might otherwise be alone (65). By way of contrast, in *En Sång för Martin* (2001) and *The Savages* (2007), Martin and Lenny develop Alzheimer's as they age, which results in a different depiction of disability. These films present Alzheimer's as a painful loss: loss of control, self, and story (73). It acts as a symbol for fears about late life, and becomes synonymous for age itself (60).

The films also serve to raise the issue of care-giving, which Chivers explores more fully in the next chapter. She is specifically concerned with examining the frequent relationship between care and infidelity on the silvering screen. Films such as *Iris* (2001) and *Away from Her* (2006) foreground the social function of the couple in situations where one spouse has to care for another, and suggests that this type of arrangement is right and proper (75-76). Yet, they also depict relationships troubled by past infidelities, which "threaten the social fabric that requires a sacrificial, loyal spouse to provide the care" (76). By exploiting this tension and repeatedly representing the failure and reincarnation of the couple, these films "struggle to uphold a fantasy of devotion, and the hegemony of heterosexual monogamy," which they present as "fundamental to successful care situations" (97-98).

In the final section of the book, Chivers turns her attention to the silvering screen's construction of late-life masculinity, as portrayed by Clint Eastwood, Paul Newman and Jack Nicholson, who, unlike their female contemporaries, did not become obsolete at fifty and risk(ed) no scandal by continuing to act. She argues that these films "transform the older male figure from a man whose masculinity is perceived to be fading to a man whose masculinity is exaggerated and compensatory" (99). This move is suggestive of the deeper fears that underpin these depictions. Primarily made by and dealing with the experiences of aging, white men, these films reveal their worries that age will deprive them of their traditional privilege, particularly when accompanied by physical debility, and perhaps that "white patriarchy is losing its grasp on hegemony" altogether (102). In order to assuage these fears, the movies reduce all women to sexual objects whose role is to demonstrate the man's continued virility, and negate any threat posed by racialised men by showing them to be supportive or, more disturbingly, easily eliminated (102). She discusses, particularly, how Morgan Freeman has spent his career propping up the aging white male bodies around him and then disappearing from view, as "the visibility of his race obscures the visibility of his physical aging" (99). Overall, her analysis is a clear-sighted and devastating condemnation of a set of films that use misogyny and racism to maintain masculinity into old age (138).



Chivers concludes her monograph by considering the silvering screen's representation of death, which she notes is "not overtly represented as the biggest fear" (138). Instead, they suggest that living with an illness or a disability is by far the worse fate, and hold out comfort that those conditions can be overcome (139). She notes how these attitudes reflect the values of the current economic system, where, for instance, disability is assumed to impede use value (146). Given this, it cannot focus on death, because it would mean a "focus on the death of the current socio-economic system," which the films work so hard to obscure (146).

Throughout *The Silvering Screen*, Chivers expertly balances the demands of disability studies and critical gerontology, bringing them into conversation and showing how they are capable of enriching each other. This methodology reflects broader tendencies within the field of disability studies, where theorists such as Mark Priestley have used a life course approach to consider disability from childhood to old age. More reference to this material would have enriched an already excellent monograph, since Priestley addresses many of the issues that Chivers suggests are lacking in disability studies. Even so, Chivers extends the scope of the current discussion, and encourages scholars to consider issues of race and gender as well. She further demonstrates how such a multivalent approach can make for rich and sophisticated analyses in her study of the silvering screen. Her examination of these films is itself sufficient reason to read this book, as she provides interpretations that are original, insightful and politically engaged. In short, her monograph is an erudite examination of a recent cinematic phenomenon, and a cogent argument for the value of interdisciplinarity in the humanities. Scholars in various disciplines should find

much to interest and inspire them in her work.

Stovel, Nora Foster. *Divining Margaret Laurence: A Study of Her Complete Writings*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 2008. Pp. 432.

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For more than thirty-five years, Margaret Laurence has been the subject of many books and essays. In books alone, there have been Joan Hind-Smith's *Three Voices: The Lives of Margaret Laurence, Gabrielle Roy, Frederick Philip Grove* (1975), Clara Thomas's *The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence* (1976), Micere Githae-Mugo's *Visions of Africa: The Fiction of Chinua Achebe, Margaret Laurence, Elspeth Huxley and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o* (1978), Helen Buss's *Mother and Daughter Relationships in the Manawaka Works of Margaret Laurence* (1985), Jonathan Kertzer's *Margaret Laurence and Her Works* (1987), Patricia Morley's *Margaret Laurence: The Long Journey Home* (1991), Fiona Sparrow's *Into Africa with Margaret Laurence* (1993), James King's *The Life of Margaret Laurence* (1997), Lyall Powers's *Alien Heart: The Life and Work of Margaret Laurence* (2003), Christian Riegel's *Margaret Laurence and the Work of Mourning* (2003), Paul Comeau's *Margaret Laurence's Epic Imagination* (2005), Donez Xiques's *Margaret Laurence: The Making of a Writer* (2005), and Noelle Boughton's *Margaret Laurence: A Gift of Grace: A Spiritual Biography* (2006). There are many collections of essays on her writings edited by W.H. New (1977), Michel Fabre (1981), George Woodcock (1983), Christl Verduyn (1988), Kristjana Gunnars (1988), Colin Nicholson (1990), Greta McCormick Coger (1996), Christian Riegel (1997), and David Staines (2001). And then there are many smaller monographs, four collections of her correspondence, and essays beyond number!



Confronting this abundance of secondary material, the literary critic has two possible routes: to begin afresh with direct commentary or to stand on the shoulders of all these critical studies and attempt to see farther through and beyond their visions. Wisely Nora Foster Stovel has chosen the second route and created a new understanding of Laurence while paying homage to all earlier studies of her writings. The consequence, the impressive volume *Divining Margaret Laurence: A Study of Her Complete Writings*, ranges through all of Laurence's many works, including her final and unfinished manuscript, *Dance on the Earth: A Memoir*, in a judicious and respectful bio-critical study.

The editor of two volumes of Laurence's early writings and two volumes of her non-fiction as well as the author of two short studies of her Manawaka books, Stovel is an authority on Laurence, her writings and the immense criticism of them, and she acknowledges earlier critics while establishing her own perspective on Laurence's

career. Thus her book is rich in perspectives, gathered from many scholars, and rich in her own nuanced interpretations. And Laurence's published and unpublished essays stand always as background to Stovel's many reflective commentaries.

Starting with an extended treatment of Laurence's juvenilia, Stovel moves into a sympathetic reading of her African fiction and non-fiction, seeing this period, not as a prelude to her Canadian fiction and non-fiction, but as a separate, distinct, and productive engagement with the African world. The ancestral past haunts the present in Nigerian writing and in Laurence's own Canadian world, for she believes that "the past and the future are both always present." Thus what Laurence discovers in her Nigerian studies parallels her own writings in both her African and her Canadian fiction: "I began to see how much my own writing had followed the same pattern —the attempt to assimilate the past, partly in order to be freed from it, partly in order to try to understand myself and perhaps others of my generation, through seeing where we had come from."



Laurence's hatred of colonialism, which is captured in the pages of her African writings, and her love of independence, as Stovel shows, "translated into her depiction of Canada as a postcolonial nation, and her sympathy with the plight of African women translated into her portrayal of the self-empowerment of Canadian women in her Manawaka cycle." Thus the major characters of her Canadian fiction had their roots in her African writings.

In her studies of the Manawaka cycle, Stovel skillfully builds upon the writings of earlier critics, fashioning them into her own proper presentation. On *The Stone Angel*, she is particularly fine, seeing it, as Laurence herself commented, as a tragic-comedy: "although *The Stone Angel* concludes with death, the traditional ending of tragedy, the implications of redemption and rebirth suggest that Hagar's story is not a tragedy but a divine comedy."

In her book's closing pages, Stovel corrects James King's assertion that Laurence committed suicide: "the journal that she kept during the last year of her life suggests 'self-administered euthanasia' might be a more accurate definition of the death of the terminally ill Laurence." And she points out the many references to death as self-deliverance, adding that Laurence's choice of Epiphany Sunday as her final moment of life has affirmative implications: "her choice of the day of her death may represent her return to the church of her childhood."

Few indeed are the errors in this important study. *The Stone Angel* was named the best of the top hundred Canadian novels in 1978, not 1982. The bibliography, which is most complete, has some typographical mistakes. And the tendency to categorize Laurence, for example, as "the quintessential Canadian writer" (5), "a great artist" (36), or "a great Canadian writer" (87) detracts from the book's otherwise dignified tone.

*Divining Margaret Laurence* is an up-to-date assessment of Laurence and of her critics. No one reading Laurence can fail to learn from this impressive book.