
At a time when political discourse in America is dominated by moralistic blowhards, Michael O’Hanlon offers a pleasant respite. With level-headed circumspection he tries to unravel defense analysis in all its complexities for lay audiences. An example: The U.S.-led global alliance exceeds 80% of the world’s total military spending, “dwarfing” both China and Russia. The total ($500+ billion annually, not counting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan) is, O’Hanlon admits, “exorbitant.” But this does not mean it is economically harmful. In fact it is a smaller proportion of the GNP than what prevailed during the Cold War, and sometimes deficit spending can benefit an advanced economy. Nor is this amount avoidable given America’s vast overseas commitments, and its reliance on high technology instead of troops (of which it has only ca. 10% of the world’s total). In any case, America always seeks a “major qualitative advantage in military capability” over other nations, not a “fair fight.” O’Hanlon employs this kind of systematic logic in every chapter, at the end of which he raises questions so that readers can apply what they have presumably learned.

To me, the most interesting chapters concern logistics and the computer-mediated “revolution in military affairs.” In regard to the first, O’Hanlon points out that the basis of American military prowess is not its weaponry, which is being rapidly mimicked (and occasionally exceeded) by other countries, but its capacity to safely move and base equivalents of mid-sized cities and their supplies quickly over large distances by sea and air. This is another way of saying (which O’Hanlon does not) that America is the world’s sole imperialistic power. Concerning “nifty” high-tech warfare, O’Hanlon does great service by urging “a certain humility” and “sobriety” about our accomplishments. To be sure, the militarization of space, advances in sensing and ordnance, and GPS battlefield coordination are “not unimportant.” However, they should not be “exaggerated,” lest we repeat the disastrous mistakes made early in the Iraq War; and neither should their “staggering” expenses be ignored. At least into the near future, traditional ground combat skills will remain important.

For all this, I am nonetheless left wondering what “science” in the title refers to. That defense analysis has its own arcane vocabulary—“aimpoint,” “combat exchange ratio,” “fratricide” (= one American warhead inadvertently destroying a friendly second), “circular error probable”—is certainly no proof that it is scientific. Indeed, O’Hanlon himself acknowledges that war-making is “at least as close to art” as it is to science. My guess is that what makes defense analysis “scientific” to O’Hanlon is that it attempts to (very) roughly estimate the costs and benefits of different military policies. But this hardly makes this book, as advertised, “the definitive guide” to war-making after Sun Tzu.

Recommended for all public and university libraries.

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Dostoevsky’s works are often referred to as “novels of ideas” because his main characters...
embody the unique ideological tensions of modernity, tensions that began to erupt in Russia in the middle of the nineteenth century as the Enlightenment values of scientific materialism, secularism, and rational egoism were being rapidly imported from the West and embraced by the Russian intelligentsia in St. Petersburg. Dostoevsky saw these new beliefs as conflicting with the deeply sedimented values of the Orthodox Church, values rooted in religious notions of communal belongingness, love, and self-sacrifice characterized in the mir or rural village of the Russian peasantry. On this view, Dostoevsky’s greatest characters, the underground man (“Notes from the Underground”), Raskolnikov (Crime and Punishment), and Ivan and Alyosha Karamazov (The Brothers Karamazov) reveal different responses to these ideological tensions that, in turn, inform their inner turmoil. In this regard, Bernard Paris, in his new book Dostoevsky’s Greatest Characters, takes a heterodox view by suggesting that it is, in fact, the characters’ psychology and childhood experiences that shape their responses to modernity.

In the case of the underground man, for instance, Paris does not focus on the fact that “Notes from the Underground” (1864), especially Part 1, was written largely as a philosophical response to Nikolai Chernyshevsky’s hugely influential novel What Is to Be Done? (1863) that embraced the Westernization of Russia. The underground man, on this view, is regarded as an extreme incarnation of the psychic turmoil that comes from living a life based on modern Western ideas of atheism, rational egoism, and mechanistic materialism. On Paris’s view, however, it is the underground man’s early childhood experiences that underlie his conflicted personality, his cruelty towards others, his need for mastery and control, and his tendencies toward self-loathing and masochism. Paris points to the fact that the underground man suffered as a child, was raised as an orphan by “distant relations,” that he “grew up without a home,” and that it is because of this that he “turned so . . . unfeeling” (7). For Paris, it is this lack of familial warmth and love in childhood that shapes the underground man’s rage, egoistic detachment, and inability to feel empathy and compassion for others. In making his case, Paris offers a powerful analysis of the underground man’s disturbing encounter with the prostitute Liza in Part 2 of the novella, suggesting that he is not simply manipulating her to satisfy his selfish needs but disclosing his repressed longing for love and emotional connectedness, a longing that can never be actualized because of his own psychic wounds. “He wants to be loving and caring,” says Paris, “but his inner compulsions to stifle his softer feelings, to avenge his injured pride, and to keep his distance from other people won’t let him be ‘good’” (29).

Paris continues this psychoanalytic reading with his treatment of Dostoevsky’s other great characters. In the case of Raskolnikov, Paris convincingly argues that his murder of the pawnbroker Alyona can be interpreted as a symbolic form of matricide. Raskolnikov’s mother, portrayed as delusional, shallow and cruel, regarded her son as a great man destined for glory and who alone was capable of addressing the serious financial needs of his family. Paris writes, “There are many evidences of Raskolnikov’s rage toward his family. In order to ensure that her precious son will ‘be rich, respected, honored,’ and ‘may even die famous’, [his mother] is ready to sell her daughter to a loveless marriage” (79). Filled with guilt by being unable to live up to these grandiose expectations and familial pressures, Paris suggests that Raskolnikov displaces his rage against his mother by killing Alyona: “In murdering Alyona, he is not only symbolically killing his mother but is showing her what she has done to him and is punishing her for it” (80).

In a similar way, Paris focuses on how Ivan and Alyosha Karamazov are shaped “by terrible childhoods that lead them to feel unsafe, unloved, and unvalued in a chaotic and threatening world” (135). Both respond to their early trauma by means of unique defense mechanisms. Ivan famously takes an atheistic view of the world, rejecting the possibility of God’s existence and/or goodness and “protect[ing] himself against further injury by restricting his wishes and looking for little from other people” (143). And, drawing on the psychoanalytic insights of Karen Horney, Paris explains Alyosha’s coping strategy in terms of “self-effacement,” one that involves a disposition of extreme modesty and lack of assertiveness and a severe repression of any “re retaliatory impulses” and sexual desires (194, 209). Paris shows how both approaches involve a kind of rebellion against one’s own inner dictates.
Ivan’s rationally informed atheism and nihilism conflicts with his own need for human connectedness and love, and Alyosha struggles with his self-effacing purity because it forces him to deny his natural, Karamazovian rage and appetites.

Paris’s psychoanalytic interpretation of Dostoevsky’s characters sheds new light on the formation of their personalities, how these personalities informed their philosophical and religious beliefs, and how these beliefs were, in turn, shaped by the emergent tensions of the modern world-view in Russia. However, because he focuses exclusively on the psychological dynamics of these characters, Paris invariably downplays the importance of the intellectual and cultural upheavals in mid-nineteenth-century Russia that played such a vital role in the development of Dostoevsky’s post-Siberian writings. Indeed, to claim as Paris does that, “the characters are so responsive to certain currents of thought because they are psychologically predisposed toward them to begin with” (xii) seems to betray Dostoevsky’s own position on these matters. As Josef Frank has so forcefully argued over the years, the inner conflicts of Dostoevsky’s characters can only be understood within the social and cultural transformations of modernity and how these transformations conflicted radically with indigenous Russian beliefs (Josef Frank, Dostoevsky: The Stir of Liberation, 1860–1865 [Princeton University Press, 1986], and Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years, 1865–1871 [Princeton University Press, 1995]).

Dostoevsky makes this clear in the prologue to “Notes from the Underground” when he writes, “such persons as the writer of these notes not only may, but positively must, exist in our society, when we consider the circumstances in the midst of which our society is formed” (my emphasis). This interpretative criticism aside, Paris certainly makes a compelling case for a psychoanalytic reading of Dostoevsky’s greatest characters. The book offers a rich and insightful treatment of the characters’ inner lives. It is written in a remarkably clear and accessible way, is meticulously researched, and will be a significant contribution to the literature.

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International Faust Studies: Adaptation, Reception, Translation. Edited by Lorna Fitzsimmons. Continuum Reception Studies (London: Continuum, 2008), ix + 299 pp. $150.00/£75.00 cloth.

This substantial interdisciplinary collection of essays by scholars from many different countries and academic backgrounds examines various issues inspired by the reading of Goethe’s work and centers on its reception in an impressive diversity of historical and geographical contexts. There seem to be two central motifs binding the essays together: Faust’s evolution and Faust’s adaptation(s). Both lead towards establishing the eponymous hero of the poem as a figure of global significance.

The first part of the collection—“Anteriorities”—attempts to concentrate on those inspirations leading to the creation of Faust that have been apparently overlooked by critics. However, much as the reader can admire the scope of investigation and the researched material, the role of Alexander the Great as the template for Faust (Arnd Bohm’s essay) is somewhat speculative. Conversely, Jane Curran’s argument that the comic figures from puppet theatre require more attention than was granted to them so far in Faustian scholarship is convincing, especially if one considers the portrayal of the world of the marionette theater as presented in German literature (most memorably perhaps in Theodor Storm’s Pole Poppenspäler).

There are three chapters in Part 2, “Faust in Context,” and those contexts are, in turn: physical (acoustic), technological (architectural), and theological. Alan Corkhill provides a reading of sound in Faust I and II filling a gap in Faust scholarship insomuch as he focuses on the representation of the sonic/semantic environment in Goethe’s poem instead of traditionally reading the visual metaphors. Aural metaphors frequently demonstrate that an appropriate trompe-l’oreille results in the fabrication of symbolic patterns just as much as a trompe-l’œil. Claudia Brodsky, concentrating on Faust II, notices perceptively that at the end of the poem Faust’s early idealisation of the dynamism of nature turns to disenchantment with its purposeless power. Faust’s consciousness of his separateness from nature and the planned engineering activities are remarkably laden with meaning. The language of
technology (and building in particular) leads the author to Heidegger’s theories, which is legitimate if one considers the fact that Heidegger indeed derived the western legitimate if one considers the fact that Heidegger’s theories, which is technology from the root word bauen. The parallels between Goethe’s and Heidegger’s approach to technology are admirably outlined in Brodsky’s essay. Then there comes the diabolic issue. Erhard Bahr discusses conflicting concepts of the devil mostly in Faust I, seeing a certain lack of consistency in the presentation of this “most Christian” among the devils. Mephistopheles—a personification of irony and manifestation of Faust’s alter ego—is one of the most important cynical contrarians in literary history. Goethe’s devil—indifferent rather than malicious—is so inconclusive theologically, according to Bahr, because Goethe never really solved the problem of evil. The German poet maintained in one of his early essays that “what we call evil is only the other side of good; evil is necessary for good to exist and is part of the whole.” This actually sounds as if it was a passage from Blake’s The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. The following text (Fred Parker’s) is included in Part 3 (“Faust: Romantic Intertexts”) but it is related thematically to that of Bahr. Parker concentrates on the figure of Mephistopheles tracing Satan’s shadow behind many Byronic characters. There is a possible evolution here: from Manfred—presented as a Faust who has never met his Mephistopheles (thus perhaps more a Prometheus) to Don Juan. The heroes of Byron differ from Faust in this sense that they have no wagers with the devil; they refuse to make pacts in general, which is, by the way, one of their major problems. Parker convincingly traces in Byron’s oeuvre how an early fascination with the Miltonic Satan yields to the fascination with Goethe’s Mephistopheles. The crowning achievement of Byron’s genius, Don Juan, is a comic analogue to that of Faust. (It might be noted in passim that Goethe thought the music that could accompany his Faust would best be Mozart’s Don Giovanni). Frederic Burwick, in the second essay forming Part 3, maintains that the anonymous English translation of Faust which appeared in 1821 was Coleridge’s work. No doubt, the discussion and the documentation provided in this very well annotated text seem to confirm the author’s stance, yet I would claim that the authorship of the 1821 translation remains disputable.

Part 4 consists of three chapters concerning Faust’s fate in Asia. Adrian Hsia offers a general survey of Faust’s reception in the Middle East, India, Japan, and China. It appears that Islamic culture has a history of adapting/adopting Goethe’s masterpiece while Hindi culture—mainly because of being so much focused on English culture as a result of colonisation and because of a different religious system, plus Goethe’s own dislike of this system—is less receptive to Faust. In Japan Goethe research is well developed while in China Faust, as everything Western, is seen as problematic. The two essays that follow Hsia’s general outline deal in more detail with specific aspects of the reception in Asia. David G. John discusses the Kathakali adaptation of Goethe’s work in India (Aimanam Krishna Kaimal’s production of 1976), while Antje Budde presents two relatively recent Faust productions in China (1994 and 1999).

Part 5 contains five essays which are somewhat strangely grouped together into “The Americas, Europe, Africa and Britain,” not the best unifying category, I dare say. Actually, what links the texts is that they deal with Faustian discourse after the 1970s, radicalizing the original in postmodern and post-colonial fashion. In this part of the study Richard Illgner traces the Magus tradition in The Rebel Angels, a Faust novel by the Canadian author Robertson Davies and looks for affinities between Goethe and Davies in the embracing of the shamanic tradition. He reaches a controversial conclusion that both Davies and Goethe, being obsessed with the recovery of the holistic, were concerned first and foremost with the recovery of nature and the feminine vis-à-vis the patriarchal. While this may be true of Davies, I am not sure it can be safely concluded about Goethe’s world-view. Paul M. Malone follows the Faustian theme in twentieth-century rock musicals, and though they are not too numerous—the fact that rock music is obsessed with the figure of the devil does not make it Faustian yet—the four musicals that Malone analyses do contain direct Faustian themes. They testify to the diversity of cultural discourses that claim Faust as their own. That claim of ownership has always been present among opera composers. Today, one notable difference consists in the fact that the contemporary stage seems to require travesty rather than interpretation.
Gabriele Becheri writes about the Faustian Travestimento in the theatrical/operatic work of Edoardo Sanguineti and Luca Lombardi; Katherina Keim discusses South African and Bahian adaptations of Faust in the 1990s, elaborating on theatrical syncretism in a post-colonial situation; while Bree Hadley analyses Mark Ravenhill’s Faust is Dead, which only goes to prove that Faust, still scandal-bound, is anything but dead.

The volume starts with the assumption that Faust might have been originally conceived as a parody of the heroic tradition of antiquity—the learned doctor being a travesty of Alexander the Great. The volume ends with Faust being dead, yet living nevertheless, travelling as a transcultural Zombie, adapted all over the world. In tracing Faust’s epic journey in discourses, music and on stage Lorna Fitzsimmons prepared a magnificent volume offering informative, rich and well-researched essays. That more than amply compensates for some minor imperfections (e.g.: debatable division into neat parts). Last but not least, there is this delightful feature: the essays are meticulously researched and admirably edited.

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Ruth Leys’s story in From Guilt to Shame: Auschwitz and After begins, in her words, “with the centrality of guilt to post–World War II assessments of survivors of the concentration camps” (4). In order to explain such guilt, Leys argues, a series of American psychoanalysts in the 1960s, themselves applying to the theories of earlier analysts, “argued that the humiliated prisoner . . . regressively defend[ed] against the persecutor’s violence by unconsciously yielding to or imitatively incorporating, the violent other” (5). The term “shame” enters into the discussion in order to counter the inevitable “taint of collusion” that such a notion of survivor guilt produced. The “general privilege [accorded] to shame over guilt,” moreover, “can be situated in the context of a broad shift . . . in the medical and psychiatric sciences, literary criticism, and even philosophy away from the ‘moral’ concept of guilt in favor of the ethically different or ‘freer’ concept of shame” (7).

The first two chapters of the book provide a superb historical survey of the line of scholars, thinkers, and analysts, who moved the discussion of the survivor from guilt to shame. Leys attends not only to the arguments themselves but to the historical contexts that produced them. These contexts include everything from such immediate and practical necessities as applying for medical funding for survivors to the internal dimensions of the dialogue between and among interpreters of Holocaust narratives, as commentators respond to and adapt one another’s arguments as well as reflect their own individual subject positions vis-à-vis survivor narratives.

In the final analysis, however, From Guilt to Shame is a book about shame theory, which builds on Leys’s earlier work in trauma theory. At the center of her focus vis-à-vis trauma (the primary subject of chapter 3) is what she calls the “perennial conflict between the ‘mimetic’ and ‘antimimetic’ tendencies internal to trauma theory” (8). The mimetic theory of trauma, which produces an internal affinity to the idea of survivor guilt, “holds that trauma . . . can be understood as involving a kind of hypnotic imitation of or regressive identification with the original traumatogenic person, scene, or event, with the result that the subject is fated to act it out or in other ways imitate it” (8). The antimimetic theory repudiates this “mimetic notion . . . in favor of the opposite idea that the subject remains aloof from the traumatic experience . . . a spectator of the scene, which he can therefore see and represent to himself” (9). Hence, the affinity of the antimimetic theory with shame rather than guilt. “Guilt,” Leys explains, “concerns your actions,” shame concerns “who you are” (11). Although Leys’s subsequent discussion of shame remains linked to these primary insights differentiating it from guilt and linking it to trauma theory (especially in relation to mimetic versus antimimetic structures), it constitutes a subject in its own right, which Leys fully and creatively explores.

From Guilt to Shame is an extraordinary book: intelligent and nuanced, a rare blend of theoretical insight and historical, archival
research, and written with incredible precision and clarity. It is a must-read for anyone working in the field of Holocaust studies and theories of trauma, guilt, and shame.

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Ultima Thulé: Histoire d’un lieu et genèse d’un mythe. By Monique Mund-Dopchie (Geneva: Droz, 2009), 494 pp. 73.75 Swiss Francs cloth.

Monique Mund-Dopchie explains that in his book On the Ocean, the fourth-century B.C. writer Pythias of Massalia invented the myth of the northermmost island that he called Thule. Many later ancient writers including Strabo, Pliny the Elder, and Tacitus expanded on Pythias’ comments by affirming that Thule was located north of the then known world. Mund-Dopchie describes very clearly that there was significant disagreement concerning the location of Thule, which many people believed to be an actual island. She associates the myth of Thule with the myth of Atlantis, invented by Plato. Although many readers associate Atlantis with the utopian literary tradition, others continue to believe that Atlantis and its very advanced culture were destroyed by an earthquake. Many writers also associated Thule with the utopian tradition of a perfect society unknown to foreigners, whereas others affirmed its actual existence. Numerous British writers located Thule in either the Shetland or Orkney Islands, while Norwegian and Danish writers located it north of Norway, on Iceland or on Greenland. Medieval geographers often referred in Latin to Iceland as “Thule” and to Greenland as “Ultima Thule.” On the northern coast of Greenland lived an ancient Inuit people whom Danish explorers called the Thule and there is a Thule U.S. Air Force base in northern Greenland.

The myth of Thule enabled Europeans to imagine that there existed an extraordinarily advanced northern culture that was entirely unknown to Europeans both during and after the Roman Empire. As Mund-Dopchie explains very clearly, this myth lends itself to both positive and dangerous interpretations. On the one hand, this myth encouraged tolerance and even respect for distant cultures. On the other hand, this same myth was used perversely by anti-Semites in the early-twentieth-century German occult Thule Society and by Nazis in an attempt to locate proto-Aryans on Thule. Historians have demonstrated quite clearly the fascination with occult theories of leading Nazis such as Heinrich Himmler and Alfred Rosenberg on which they often relied in pathetic attempts to justify their bogus claims of the alleged racial superiority of Aryans.

Mund-Dopchie’s book is an extremely well-researched study on a rather obscure ancient myth. She does an excellent job in describing how medieval British, Norwegian, and Danish explorers used a questionable association between Thule and their homelands in a vain attempt to argue for the alleged superiority of their own culture over other European cultures. The outlook of racists such as the members of the Thule Society and of the Nazi party was not terribly different from that of medieval explorers from Great Britain, Norway, and Denmark. Overtly racist attitudes were as common in the European Middle Ages as they were in Germany before the liberation of Germany by Allied forces in 1945. Mund-Dopchie deserves our thanks for this important analysis of racist theories across the centuries.

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This book falls into two unequal parts that have two distinct though ultimately interrelated purposes, both of them timely, though in different senses. One is to devise an overdue comprehensive account, accessible to general readers, of “Mesopotamian” history down to the time of the Muslim Arab conquest in the seventh century of the Christian era—the first of the Islamic era. Benjamin R. Foster and Karen Polinger Foster offer an elegant compendium of that history, with judicious,
illuminating, and sometimes entertaining quotations from ancient documents and B&W illustrations of artifacts. They tell the non-specialist in middle depth what is known, what is generally believed, and what remains yet to learn about the successive states and societies that occupied the geographic space known since 1920 as Iraq (with its present frontiers established in 1925). They ask questions along the way, some as yet unanswerable, and without pedantry encourage us to distinguish the economy of Sumerian kingship from subsequent Semitic rule, Amorites from Kassites in Babylonia. We may appreciate as perhaps never before the diorite statues that we have all doubtless seen in our cultural travels.

The several sensational periods from Sumer onward are generally overshadowed by more glamorous and far better marketed Pharaonic Egypt. Mud-brick ziggurats just cannot compete with limestone pyramids nor bas relief lions and profile human-headed monsters with the Sphinx of Giza, or an Anubis or Thoth in a European or North American museum. To the Western eye nothing ever sculpted in “Iraq” or environs compares esthetically with the finest of Old Kingdom Egypt; while cuneiform, though more ancient and far more adaptable, simply lacks the charm of Nilotic hieroglyphics.

Nevertheless ancient Mesopotamia is intriguing, some of even its earliest proto-historical kings colorful and interesting personalities, more so than any Pharaohs until the New Kingdom, if even then; and in terms of ideas the West may ultimately owe more to the Near East than to Egypt. Whether from study of world history or just from browsing in historical atlases, educated readers will already be aware of its earliest periods in outline, for example recalling the Amorite over-king of Babylon Hammurabi and his so-called “Code.” From reading in world literature they may also know about legendary, tragic Gilgamesh. Those who belong to certain religious traditions believe that patriarch Abram/Abraham came from “Ur of the Chaldeans” and know about the historical deportation of Judeans from conquered Jerusalem to Babylonia, about the restoration of some under the Persian Cyrus the Great, about their persecution by and resistance to the Hellenistic Seleucid monarchy, and finally about their troubled relations with and disastrous rebellions against Rome. This book fills in many unfamiliar details, corrects a few common misconceptions (e.g., about the origin of writing, at least in cuneiform style), and provides information about lives and livelihoods of the people who experienced that remote history, reconstruction of which is often based upon recent discoveries or new analysis and re-interpretation. (The authors themselves have contributed significantly to current understanding in numerous specialized studies, listed impressively in their bibliography.)

At the very beginning of civilization between six and five thousand years ago—a few centuries here before the rise of pre-dynastic Lower Egypt—but also occasionally later, this region was a patchwork of independent kingdoms, rivals over territory and trade with none hegemonic. Each was governed from a walled city centered on the temple of this or that deity; other times the royal, semi-divine dynasty of a hegemonic city dominated in an empire that might endure for generations. After a first, introductory chapter on pre-history, the book’s following three deal with the Sumerians: “The Birthplace of Civilization,” “Early City-States” including Umma and its expansionist king Lugalzagesi, and “Kings of the Four Quarters of the World,” with a section on creating “The First Empire” (viz., that of Akkadian Sargon, since the Fosters deny this feat to Sumerian Lugalzagesi). Thereafter come “The Age of Hammurabi” (where, since Gilgamesh’s “epic” story in earliest full form is Old Babylonian, that legendary Sumerian demigod king appears); “Babylonia in the Family of Nations” (which included Hurrian Mitanni and Egypt), and a flourishing of sciences there, among them the first known literary scholarship; “The Assyrian Achievement,” rehabilitating a nation that suffers bad press in the Bible (and Lord Byron); and “The Glory of Babylon”—however inglorious its treatment of conquered peoples and catastrophic the end of “The Last Babylonian Empire.”

Chapter 9, “Mesopotamia Between Two Worlds,” covers the long geopolitical tug-of-war over the wealthy region between alternating eastern powers and western ones, respectively the Persian empire (with which in fact Chapter 8 had left off), and the Parthian, advancing from the Iranian highlands across the Zagros Mountains to the east, versus Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Seleucid kingdom, and lastly Rome from the
Mediterranean side. A final, tenth chapter treats the ultimate victory of the east, “Sassanian Iraq,” to which world Jewry owes thanks for the Babylonian Talmud, and ends with “Prelude to [the Arab] Conquest.” It stops short, that is to say, of the entire Islamic era regarded as no longer “ancient”: Arab expansion, the Muslim caliphate that established itself on the Tigris at the magnificent new city Baghdad (founded 762 C.E.), and the Turkish sultanates. Indeed, from what those ten chapters relate we do not understand the politics of Iraq in the twenty-first century any better, or of the wider Middle East; but we do appreciate the contribution of the Mesopotamian first civilization to its successors—and debtors—both within the region and far beyond, especially westward.

The second purpose of the Fosters’ book, adumbrated in the Preface and, as predicted there, reflected in captions to several of the Figures, is vehement protest against violations of modern archaeological principles, both in pillaging or sheer destruction of artifacts and in less obviously harmful loss of context. In the “Epilogue: The Discovery and Destruction of Ancient Iraq,” after surveying the history of Mesopotamian archaeology—which misses both the tendentiousness of “biblical” archaeology and the hype and sensationalism of Egyptian—they cite all too many concrete examples of sudden and irreversible failures to protect artifacts and sites. The result has been the loss of what survives only in photographic record—gone forever, in some cases, probably so in others. Sometimes the culprits have been ignorant pioneers in exploration, more often (and still) careless entrepreneurs—robbers, licensed or unlicensed, and their customers—or, worse, civil potentates and even cultural authorities who should know better. Worst of all, however, may be competitive philologists and museum curators who even today often remain overeager to amass publishable texts or to enhance collections, and thus willing to bend or break the laws of governments and rules of scientific archaeology science to win their prizes. As far as the Fosters are passionately concerned, sites and archaeological remains—in-context have eternal rights of their own, articulated by UN declarations and international treaty, however weakly enforced, that ought to trump the day-to-day needs of people oppressed by a dictatorship or impoverished by international economic sanctions or (especially) the tactical movements of invading and occupying military forces.

The book turns into a quiet dialogue between the grand, culturally rich past and the present, between the millennia-old locales of once great cities on the Tigris or Euphrates, now archaeological sites (and goldmines for traders in commodified ancient objects), and modern Iraq, which has its own unhappy story. Although irreparable harm was done elsewhere on smaller scale, the Fosters focus on the unprotected and ravaged Iraq Museum in the capital. The sorry timeline of the April 2003 arrival of the U.S. Army in Baghdad convicts the American government of crimes against culture of initial egregious omission, compounded by what happened—or did not happen—in the weeks, months, and years after. (The bibliography includes the 2008 collection, edited by Lawrence Rothfield, Antiquities Under Siege: Cultural Heritage Protection after the Iraq War [Rowan & Littlefield, 2008], to which Rothfield’s own subsequent, indignant The Rape of Mesopotamia: Behind the Looting of the Iraq Museum [University of Chicago, 2009] can now be added.)

In one instance the Fosters display some ethical tunnel vision of their own, understandable yet disturbing. Gertrude Bell, the person (they tell us in passing) perhaps most responsible for patching together out of provinces of the Ottoman Empire “Iraq” in its present arbitrary, unsatisfactory straight-line borders, was a visionary heroine of the new nation’s archaeological policies and programs. She was, in fact, guilty of the same European arrogance that surveyed and carved up Africa half a century before, with similarly tragic consequences. Her offense is worsened, not mitigated, if she was moved by archaeological rather than contemporary ethnic-cultural considerations, or by a wish at once Romantic and patronizing to recreate the Babylonian empire under a Hashemite king (and imperialist British protection!).

The Fosters’ book appears to be up to date on the state of the questions and state of the answers regarding the ancient ‘World Between the Rivers,’ its 52 pages of bibliography containing many studies from the 1990s and on into 2008. Two maps locate cities and regions, without an attempt that many others make to draw approximate boundaries to the
successive kingdoms and empires. With respect to maps, therefore, and charts and timelines, it suffers much in comparison with the excellent, longer Marc Van De Mieroop, _A History of the Ancient Near East ca. 3000–323 BC_ (Blackwell/Wiley, 2003, revised 2006). Although several other writings of Van De Mieroop, even one from 2007, are listed in the bibliography of _Civilizations of Ancient Iraq_, that book is not—but should have been. Intending a college-level textbook to end with the death of Alexander the Great, Van De Mieroop narrates more dryly, but with more circumstantial detail than the Fosters offer, addressing topics in language and religion. He deals extensively also with states and nations distant from Mesopotamia and barely mentioned in the Fosters’ book, e.g., the Hittites and (though he spells oddly) “Mittani.” He is neither so appealing in his own generous and varied texts quoted, nor so engaged as the Fosters, who plead the cause of non-text archaeology and demonstrate its value and the setbacks it has suffered, especially and recently in Iraq, and, as we have seen, who pursue the land’s story over nearly another millennium.

The presentation overall is excellent, and the modest price of this new book from Princeton scarcely believable in this day and age.

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This collection of essays, edited by James Cuno, is a plea for the principles of interrelatedness, sharing, and interdisciplinarity that encyclopedic museums should uphold and be based on. Museological interdisciplinarity—encompassing historical, legal, and philosophical points of view—is presented following the 2006 conference on “Museums and the Collecting of Antiquities: Past, Present, and Future.” The reality of interdisciplinarity is also rendered through the polarization between the fields of archeology and museum work (64). Opinions on encyclopedic museums range from depicting their collections “as rapacious acquisitions of ill-gotten goods” (13), to “art museums...of secondary value” (15) and “suspected strong-rooms of plunder and pillage” (71). It is Neil Brodie’s view that the primary purpose of museums is to delight and not to teach, that Kwame Anthony Appiah, Sir John Boardman, Michael F. Brown, Derek Gillman, Neil MacGregor, John Henry Merryman, Philippe de Montebello, David I. Owen, James C. Y. Watt, and James Cuno intend to downplay. The arguments of _Whose Culture?_ are presented under three headings: “The Value of Museums,” “The Value of Antiquities,” and “Museums, Antiquities, and Cultural Properties.”

MacGregor’s “To Shape the Citizens of ‘That Great City, the World’” in the first part and Merryman’s “The Nation and the Object” in the third part form a conceptual circle that encompasses the book’s main claim, namely, that encyclopedic museums are “civic spaces” (40) which, through their exhibitions of valuable objects, allow truths to emerge. These essays reinforce the two main arguments in favor of encyclopedic museums: (1) museums reveal a plurality of meanings/truths about social practices that are embedded in the respective object(s)/antiquities and that teach us about others and about ourselves; (2) museums should be focused on an object-oriented policy built on three regulatory imperatives: preservation (protecting the object and its context from impairment), truth (valid information about the human past, historical, scientific, cultural, and aesthetic), and access (objects should be accessible for study and enjoyment) (187–88).

Without denying the archeological importance of determining the precise location of the excavated evidence, the ten authors emphasize that it is in itself sufficient for decoding antiquity. The example of the Cong (the Neolithic period), mentioned by Watt, suggests that archeology does not provide the reasons and the implications of the social standing, providing limited information about the individual object (90–91). Montebello, in turn, makes a plea for uniting both fields with the aim of promoting a public discourse targeted on preserving our cultural and artistic heritage and accessibility.

It is obvious that the answer to the question ‘whose culture?’ does not lie solely
within the field of archeology. Thus the promise of encyclopedic museums as providers of similarities and differences, starting from “crude, reductive, falsely unifying cultural identities” (28), is a first step toward perceiving culture as dynamic and always “in contact with new and strange things” (27). It is precisely this dynamics of culture, as opposed to cultural nationalization, that scholars from different fields should be aware of when studying antiquities.

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Possession: Jung’s Comparative Anatomy of the Psyche. By Craig Stephenson (London: Routledge, 2009), xii + 188 pp. £60.00/ $60.00 cloth; £21.99/$34.95 paper.

In this study, Craig Stephenson explores Jung’s theory of possession in the light of other theories of possession—and he casts his net wide. He looks first at ideas about possession held in the seventeenth century and then at more recent theories of possession advanced in the fields of anthropology, psychiatry, critical theory, film criticism, and theatre history. His objective is to illustrate not only how Jung’s ideas enrich our understanding of other theories of possession but also how they in turn help to iron out some of the problems—such as essentialism and esotericism—inherent in Jung’s formulations. His argument has implications for wide-ranging disciplines including all forms of literary criticism and cultural theory.

Any image or idea that exercises such a powerful fascination on us that we lose our ability to assess it objectively can be defined as possession. Theories about possession have featured in most cultures ever since the ancient Sumerians: the key concept changes little; how it is regarded and tackled when deemed problematic varies considerably. The study begins by looking again at the well-known case of the Ursuline nuns at Loudun in 1634, a case which not only inspired several memoirs by those involved but has also been the subject of innumerable reassessments over the years: notably Huxley (1952) and Penderecki (1969). The probabilities of the historical episode have been widely discussed; possession allows for a handle on understanding the experience of the various protagonists. Fusing the views of Freud (1923), Certeau (1970, trans. 2000), Rapley (1998), Ferber (2004) and others with those of Jung, Stephenson argues not only for a multi-faceted approach to possession but also for not seeing all forms of possession are necessarily demonic. It was not only the nuns who were possessed but also all of those accusing them.

In his second chapter Stephenson examines how recent theories advanced by anthropologists from Boas (1909) and Oesterreich (1921) through I. M. Lewis (1971/1989), Obeyesekere (1981, 1990), Kapferer (1983/1991), Taussig (1987) and Stoller (1989) to Schieffelin (1976) and Janice Boddy (1989) have much to contribute to Jung’s theory of possession. It was, however, only in 1992 that possession under the label Dissociative Trance Disorder was first recognized as a condition by the American Psychiatric Association. The third chapter explores the arguments surrounding the criteria for inclusion and the definition given to a condition, examining how some of Jung’s ideas contribute to the arguments of Kirmayer (1994, 1996), Hacking (1995), and Littlewood (2004) in the field of Western psychiatry as a social discourse, and to those of Kihlstrom (1987) and Claxton (2005) in cognitive research. In the following chapter, the earliest written, Stephenson examines the relation between Jung’s claim that he would often employ a deliberately equivocal language and Vico’s privileging of mythopoeic language in the New Science (1725). His aim is to demonstrate that any concept of possession requires a similar ability to move easily between the literal and the metaphorical and, perhaps especially, to understand possession not always as a fight with a demon but often as “an inner colloquy with one’s ‘good angel’.”

It is not until Chapter 5 that the author investigates Jung’s own concept of possession and its relation to the practice of psychotherapy. Whereas Freud identifies three major components of the personality (the ego, the id, and the superego) and regards the ego as a relatively stable entity, Jung considers the personality as a constellation of different feeling-toned complexes, none of which is entirely stable. Thus in Jungian psychology the ego is not so much an identifiable aspect of the
personality as a kind of ever-changing sorting office responsible for processing its responses to the various complexes that impact upon it. These complexes either do or can be induced to manifest themselves as splinter personalities with which the ego has to constantly negotiate. Psychological difficulties arise when one or more of these splinter personalities usurp control of the individual. And this, of course, is what Jung meant by possession.

It need hardly be added that a great deal of writing throughout the ages has explored not only various characters who exercise such control (e.g. Athene in the Odyssey or Mephistopheles in Faust), but also a central protagonist’s obsession with such figures. Stephenson’s final chapter is given to an analysis of the motif of possession in John Cassavetes’s film Opening Night (1977), which offers a splendid example of very different kinds of possession. It opens with Myrtle Gordon, an actress, having difficulties with her role in a new play that she is rehearsing: she is finding it hard to identify with the attitudes of the older woman whose part she plays. As in all of Cassavetes’s work, it is not clear whether this is because she finds the play bland or because she is having difficulty admitting to her own age. The following scene, in which she is shown being greeted at the stage door by her adoring fans, illustrates the extraordinary need that individuals have to connect with performers. This hunger serves as a powerful metaphor running through the film—and it is of course a form of possession. One of the fans, a seventeen-year-old girl, is run over by a car as Myrtle is driven away to dinner. The actress is so shocked that she begins to have hallucinations in which she speaks with the dead girl. The final rehearsals become chaotic as she experiences greater and greater difficulty in doing what is expected of her: as she becomes possessed by a complex of emotions whose precise nature is never defined. Other members of the cast become equally absorbed by their own worries: the producer, about his investment; the author of the play, the director, and the leading male actor, all equally but differently anxious about the value of their own work. Each of the characters gives expression to their own form of possession: ideas that so absorb them that they cannot properly relate to the difficulties of the central character.

Stephenson’s study offers a groundbreaking introduction not only to various forms and degrees of possession but also to its application as a way of better understanding central issues in literary and cultural studies. My only regret is that he so emphasized demonic possession that he did not give himself the space to fully explore Jung’s—and his own—contention that possession is not always demonic.

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Against Cartesian Philosophy is a translation by Thomas M. Lennon of a late-seventeenth-century work by Pierre-Daniel Huet, a Jesuit priest. As the title states, it is an anti-Cartesian work, and, according to Lennon, it is “the last philosophical attack on Descartes of any historical significance,” and it “takes a remarkably modern approach to Descartes” (10). Lennon’s purpose is to bring Huet out of obscurity, and Lennon claims that, in his time, Huet was a well-known scholar who wrote on a wide variety of topics. To make his case for Huet’s resurrection, Lennon cites that Hume and Leibniz make positive references to his critique of Descartes.

Actually, I found Huet’s approach to be remarkably Thomistic and scholastic but not modern. Further, I would claim that Huet’s arguments are directed more against Descartes’s apologists, such as Malebranche and Pierre-Sylvain Regis, than they are against Descartes. The Cartesian apologists used Descartes’s ideas to challenge Catholicism more than Descartes did, which angered Huet.

Huet’s basic focus is a sustained critical argument on Descartes’s Meditations on First Philosophy, even though he refers to Descartes’s other works where it is apropos. Huet divides his text into eight chapters. The first seven chapters examine the basic tenets of Cartesian philosophy, beginning with the cogito ergo sum, and advancing through methodical doubt, the
mind, God, the body and the void, the "origin of the visible world" and gravity. The eighth chapter is a summary evaluation of Descartes’s ideas.

Huet is not happy that Descartes and the Cartesians submit faith to doubt. Thus, Huet takes up the task of defending the faith. However, his basic thrust through the first seven chapters is not a theological critique but a logical critique. Huet mostly accuses Descartes of circular reasoning and inconsistency rather than addressing Descartes’s ideas. For example, he claims that Descartes’s skepticism is inconsistent because Descartes does not remain skeptical but seeks out truth. But mere skepticism was never Descartes’s issue anyway. Further, Huet never really tackles the issue of self-evidence, so, at times, his arguments seem to make Descartes into a straw man.

In the last chapter, Huet shows his hand and takes up the issue of faith and reason. However, the apology for Catholicism seems to be too little, too late, and scholasticism remains in decline. Descartes’s influence does not wane. Huet’s text will not help anyone really understand Descartes. However, I would say that Cartesian scholars and Catholic philosophers may find some purpose to it. But there are better critiques of Descartes.

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Discourse and Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe. Edited by Aleksandra Galasinska and Michał Krzyżanowski (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), xi + 243 pp. £50.00 cloth.

Discourse and Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe is an eminent example of ‘scientific’ social science. Chapter 10, "Small Stories Fight Back: Narratives of Polish Economic Migration on an Internet Forum," begins with the sentence “[a] long and distinctive history of Polish emigration (see Iglicka-Okólska, 1997; Slany, 1997; Iglicka, 2001; Cyrus, 2006) has left its mark on the cultural tradition of Poland.” The quoted sentence, with four references, denotes one of the best known facts of Polish culture and history. The notion of tacit knowledge of the reader is lost in this ‘scientific’ though redundant manner of quotation. However, those quoted will get a better score in citation indices and enhanced reputation as authorities in the academe.

As a concept science stems from the tradition of conceptualizing nature and society that originated in ancient Greece. The tradition is called ‘Western’ and is considered by us, its practitioners, to be universally valid. In order to be taken seriously and considered for publication, a text that purports to be a specimen of ‘science’ must adhere to the Western tradition. The model science is physics, and the key concepts are theory, hypothesis, and test.

In the natural sciences, a text reporting results is not designed to be a smooth narration. In contrast, in the social sciences, which emerged during the nineteenth century, narrative prose was the traditional means of presenting results. When in the course of the latter half of the twentieth century the Anglo-Saxon variety of the Western tradition became predominant as a model of presenting research results, regardless of discipline, social science had to abandon the aesthetic dimension and take on a scientific look. The consequences of this shift were the overabundance of theoretical concepts on the one hand, and the practice of paying homage to authoritative theoretical forefathers on the other. Because the model of presentation was taken from natural science, the old cherished tradition in social science to use footnotes as reference notes was abandoned and exchanged for references within brackets.

The book under review contains an introductory chapter on the fashionable fad of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and ten empirical chapters on, respectively, the former Yugoslavia, Latvia, Slovenia, Poland (three chapters), the Czech Republic, Russia, the former GDR, and Romania. The common denominator is the CDA, and the venerated authoritative ancestors are Norman Fairclough (15 works) and Ruth Wodak (13 works). The eight countries are treated as representative of the complex “Central and East European Countries CEEC).” The juxtaposition of the labels CDA and CEEC reveal a nomothetic ambition to discover the laws that govern social life in a geographical area with an assumed common history.

The main value of this work on the transformation of the ex-communist bloc lies in
the empirical investigations of social practice
and linguistic discourse in the individual
countries, ranging from a learned and insightful
analysis in Chapter 7 of “Church Slavonic and
the Discourse of Cultural Preservation in Post-
Soviet Russia,” to a nuanced and highly
illuminative analysis in Chapter 6 of the
treatment of, and discourse on, abandoned
children in the Czech Republic. True to the
idiom of the book, this straightforward analysis
of a burning social and humanitarian problem is
labelled “Governing Abandoned Children:
The Discursive Construction of Space in the
Case of ‘Babybox.’”

Thus, the analyses in Discourse and
Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe are
representative examples of critical social
research devoted to the analysis of different
qualms of the inhabitants of the CEEC after the
implosion of communism. However, the book
would have been considerably more pleasant to
read if it had been written without the
pretentious vocabulary of the CDA. One
practical instrument is conspicuous by its
absence: Ockham’s razor.

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Disjunctivism: Contemporary Readings.
Edited by Alex Byrne and Heather Logue
(Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), xxix +
334 pp. $36.00 paper.

What is disjunctivism? According to the blurb on
the back cover of this collection of previously
published essays, it is the claim that veridical
perceptions and “subjectively similar” hallucina-
tions have no “mental commonalities.” Neophytes may puzzle as to how that could
be considered “probably the single most
important idea in philosophy of perception,
epistemology, and theory of reference today”
to cite John Campbell’s glowing back-cover
testimonial. Skeptics about the value of
philosophy may feel their prejudices confirmed.
For what could a subjective similarity possibly
be, if not a mental commonality of some sort?
The uninitiated and the unsympathetic are
nevertheless advised to turn the book over, and
explore what lies within. For there they will
find some of the most interesting and most
influential essays in recent Anglo-American
philosophy, some of which are supportive of
disjunctivism, others of which are critical, but
all of which illuminate the topic of perceptual
experience in perceptive and sometimes pro-
found ways. They will also find an introduction
written by the editors which, whilst often
excellent, contains an account of what dis-
junctivism is, which (unsurprisingly) matches
that of the blurb, and which seems to me to be
vitiates by many of the essays it is intended to
introduce.

Included amongst these articles—by J. M. Hinton, Paul Snowdon, John McDowell,
and M. G. F. Martin—which are usually
considered the canonical disjunctivist texts.
But disjunctivism, as the editors understand it,
cannot be found in the essay by McDowell;
McDowell’s views are fully compatible with
the putatively proscribed commonalities (as the
editors also admit). As for Martin, he clearly
states in his essay “The Limits of Self-
Awareness” (2004) that hallucinations have
“positive mental characteristics” (302) which
they share with “subjectively similar” percep-
tions; viz., properties of being introspectively
indistinguishable from these perceptions. How
this could possibly amount to a denial of mental
commonalities is obscure.

We are left with Hinton, often considered
the father of disjunctivism. That he is so well-
represented in this volume is a fine thing, for his
work is frequently cited, but rarely read. In his
eyes “Selections from Experiences” (1973),
Hinton rejects the existence of (what he calls)
“the common element” (22) in perceptions
and “subjectively similar” hallucinations. But
whether the absence of this element is the same
as the absence of mental commonalities is
moot; for one thing, it seems things comprising
distinct elements can still share properties. And
whether Hinton should be considered a
paradigm disjunctivist is doubtful. Better, I
think, on present evidence, to see him not as an
example, but as a forerunner—as fathers often
are. Better also, I think, to begin with
Snowdon’s characterization of disjunctivism:
“the experience in a perceptual case reaches out
to and involves the perceived external objects,
not so the experience in other cases’

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When Albert Einstein came on a visit to the United States in 1921, he was greeted with great fanfare. More than 20,000 showed up at one event in New York City, causing “a near riot,” the Times reported, when they “stormed the police lines.” From New York Einstein continued to Washington where, as his biographer Walter Isaacson notes, “for reasons fathomable only to those who live in that city, the Senate decided to debate the theory of relativity. On the House side of the Capitol, Representative J. J. Kindred of New York proposed placing an explanation of Einstein’s theories in the Congressional Record. David Walsh of Massachusetts rose to object. Did Kindred understand the theory? “I have been earnestly busy with this theory for three weeks,” Kindred replied, “and am beginning to see some light.” But what relevance, he was asked, did it have to the business of Congress? “It may bear upon the legislation of the future as to general relations with the cosmos.”

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Short of “universal legislation” in the literal sense, relations with the cosmos, I. S. Glass shows in his readable and informative book, have been defined by the work of extraordinary, though imperfect, men. One of these was Arthur Eddington, the man whose 1919 contemporaneous South American/West African expedition transformed Einstein almost over night into the world’s first ever scientist rock-star. Did you know, for instance, that even though he observed the bending of rays of light in a gravitational field during a solar eclipse thereby proving the general theory of relativity, Eddington suffered from such myopia that, according to his students, he “could pass a member of his own family in the Observatory drive without recognition”? Or that, despite his seminal contributions on the internal constitution of stars, the mass-luminosity relation, and the dynamic of the expanding universe, Eddington turned later in his life to mystical speculations that utterly baffled his colleagues? One such example is his cocksure, completely unfounded and unverifiable statement: “I believe that there are 15,747,724,136,275,002,577,605,653,961,181, 555,468,044,717,914,527,116,709,366,231,425, 076,185,631,031,296 protons in the universe, and the same number of electrons,” in reaction to which Bertrand Russell inquired caustically whether Eddington had calculated the precise number himself or had someone else do it for him. Einstein was less forgiving: “He had little feeling for the need for a theoretical construct to be logically very simple,” he wrote of the man who had fixed his own star, “if it is to have any prospect of being true.”

In Revolutionaries of the Cosmos, scientific explication and anecdote blend effortlessly to provide the interested lay reader with an entertaining read. This is not a history of science—it lacks deep contextualization and argument—but neither did it set out to be. Galileo, Newton, Herschel, Huggins, Hale, Shapley, Hubble, and, of course Eddington, are each presented in capsule-portraits that in equal part open the mind, leave one scratching one’s head, and elicit a smile. In many ways, their stories help to show the extent to which both profound ignorance and penetrating brilliance define the human condition in the universe. Come to think of it, perhaps Congress should have a debate about that.

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In the introduction to this book on the EU–Russian energy dialogue (initiated in 2000 as an attempt to strengthen their energy
cooperation), the editor, Finnish Professor Pami Aalto, states that it can be effectively read as a call for a pan-European energy policy “geared at avoiding problems of the commons and promoting collectively good solutions” (3). The book takes a broad approach by analyzing the dialogue from a wide range of perspectives: bureaucratic politics, environment, infrastructure, identities and interests, geopolitics, regional politics, security policy and trade.

Northern Europe is taken as a crucial case study of EU–Russian energy cooperation due to its “promising setting for energy policy co-operation” with Russia (18). Presumably, Northern Europe illustrates crucial issues of the energy dialogue, such as national interests blocking energy cooperation and the European Commission’s difficulty to safeguard all member states’ interests. A number of theoretically and policy-oriented analyses are presented on, for example, European integration, Germany’s impact on the dialogue, the position of the Baltic and Nordic States, actors in Russian energy policy, regional cooperative initiatives and the Commission’s role.

In the concluding part two policy options are sketched out on how the dialogue can develop. The first centres on keeping the dialogue within its present confines, presuming that protracted negotiations lead to good results (as was the case with Russia’s eventual ratification of the Kyoto Protocol). The second option centres on expanding the policy sectors in the dialogue by involving more actors (e.g. states and regional actors) as a way to better cover member states’ interests and to find a more integral place for Russia in Europe.

Generally, this book captures crucial parts of the energy dialogue and provides a good overview of the topic, not least because of its wide analytical perspective. Still, a couple of comments can be made regarding its approach and conclusions. First, the use of Northern Europe as a crucial case study means that detailed analysis of Ukraine is neglected. Ukraine is a key issue that connects with both European integration and the EU’s external energy supplies, that is, the crucial parts of EU–Russian energy relations. Second, the book covers rather modestly Russia’s unsustainable economy (due to its reliance on unprocessed strategic export commodities). Given its weakening effects on Russia’s power position relative to the EU, this is essential for understanding Russia’s preoccupation with sovereignty and with its bilateral relations with EU member states. By definition this connects with the issue of further dialogue development and a common EU position on Russia. Third, the second policy option represents a rather idealistic view of the dialogue, since the EU member states’ diverging interests are a central reason for the lack of a pan-European energy policy and common position on Russia in the first place. Therefore, this book would have gained from a thorough analysis of how realistic such a policy really is and how the parties can work to implement it.

But, overall, this book is rich in its perspectives and insightful analyses. It provides timely and essential reading for anyone interested in the wider ramifications of EU–Russia energy relations.

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Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe. Edited by Oliver Bange and Gottfried Niedhart (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), x + 208 pp. $ 75.00 cloth.

In Berlin, in late 2009, many prominent politicians celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, German unification, and the end of the Cold War. As Timothy Garton Ash has newly stated in The New York Review of Books (2009:17), success has many fathers and everyone has his or her own favourite explanation regarding the crucial political events in the late 1980s and early 1990s: Poles, Germans, Hungarians, Americans, Russians etcetera. It is however also obvious that it was not only in Europe that the end of the Cold War was manifested by a divided Germany in the front line; it was also in Europe that the Cold War reached a turning point in the 1960s, leading to an era of détente. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), with its Helsinki Final Act (August 1975) led to a rapprochement between East and West in the fields of security, economy, and culture.

The changes in the mutual perceptions and rapprochement between the FRG and the
member states of the Warsaw Pact are the focus of the international research project at the University of Mannheim, financed by the VolkswagenStiftung and coordinated by Oliver Bange and Gottfried Niedhart, the editors of Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe. The project has a multinational focus bringing together colleagues from all former Warsaw Pact member states, one outcome of which is this well-written book with eleven interesting chapters on what the authors perceive as the key issues of the process: the German problem and the Western strategy of transformation through increased contacts between the two blocs.

The principal themes of this volume are: (1) mutual perceptions of national interests and their underlying differences; and (2) the stages of rapprochement mainly noticeable at the dividing line of the East-West conflict. According to the editors up to 1975 the CSCE and then the CSCE process became the multilateralised instrument for change owing to the fact that the Helsinki Final Act of August 1975 incorporated “two core issues”: peaceful change of frontiers and free movement of persons and ideas. It goes without saying that the German question was of special relevance to both issues and the key to a successful CSCE. However, “the transformation of East European societies and existing geopolitical realities was the main impetus for the government in Bonn to go along with European Security Conference. This, of course, leads to the question how and how far Western strategies for transformation were perceived by the member states of the Warsaw Pact” (3).

The importance of the German factor for détente and for the role granted to the CSCE turns out to be the major theme connecting all contributions in this anthology, which seems to be a good reason to start the book with an explanation of BRD’s Neue Ostpolitik. According to Oliver Bange it was no coincidence that the final results of the CSCE played into the hands of this so-called Ostpolitik. The analysis shows that there were two long-term strategies encapsulated in the Ostpolitik: firstly “the multiplication of contacts,” which were intended to transform the communist societies from within; and secondly the CSCE and successful negotiations on reduction of troops on both sides (MBFR). The first steppingstone of what would become the grand design for German Ostpolitik, the Fahrplan, was delivered in 1967 by the planning staff of the Auswärtiges Amt under the guidance of Günter Diehl, a confidant of Kurt Georg Kiesinger, Chancellor of CDU, and Egon Bahr, close to the SDP Foreign Minister Willy Brandt. The essence was simply that the central elements of a successful German policy had to be included in a wider political context of peace and détente, or as Diehl months later put it to Chancellor Kiesinger: “A European Security System was simply ‘necessary’ to attain the principal German goal—unification” (25).

Gottfried Niedhart focuses in Chapter 2 on “Peaceful change of frontiers as a crucial element in the West German Strategy of transformation.” Bonn obviously refrained from the psychological warfare of the Cold War and did not openly challenge the Brezhnev doctrine. The acceptance of the status quo was however not seen by Willy Brandt as an end in itself, but rather as a starting point: “To accept the status quo would ultimately provide the means that would lead to change in the existing situation” (42). According to Niedhart’s analysis Brandt’s approach was based on a reformulation of his view of the German question and East-West relations, which meant less containment, deterrence and confrontation, and more communication and transformation. As for Kissinger, architect of the American foreign policy, he seemed at that time to hold a highly ambivalent image of Germany and the Germans. Even though he found the German position understandable, he was bothered by the “nutty Germans” and even called the peaceful arguments from the German side “nuts” and “absurd.” It seems probable that the reason behind this was of course that Kissinger’s views of the Germans and of the CSCE, as the representative of one of the two superpowers of that time, were shaped by his wish to come to terms with the other superpower.

In the final chapter Svetlana Savranskaya highlights what she calls “unintended consequences” or what the editors in the introductory chapter call “the story of momentous historical irony.” The ultimate goals of the Soviet leaders were: confirmation of the status quo, recognition of the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs and an incentive for a European Security System and, as a
consequence of this, driving the United States out of Europe. As Nikolaj Leonov from the Foreign Intelligence Department of the KGB pointed out in his memoirs: “Moscow lost on all accounts” (188), and as the editors correctly conclude: “tanks proved far less effective than ideas” (15). So one lesson from this is that positions taken in the name of national interests can appear to be counterproductive.

It is sometimes said that as a science history is often just one damned fact after another. The other side of the coin is that historians are often very close to their material and sources, which is a good condition when it comes to shaping new knowledge and making interesting observations based on professional use of the sources at hand. This book is no exception to this rule.

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War Stories: The Causes and Consequences of Public Views of War.

Two points need to be made at the outset of this review: First, this is a solid, earnest text rooted in quantitative research utilizing a variety of charts, graphs, timelines, intervals, and scales, in short, the entire panoply of modern day statistical research design. Second, the subtitle of the book is extremely important to understand the larger meanings and moorings of the effort. This is definitely not a volume on conventional War Stories say in the Ernie Pyle or Eric Sevareid sense of those words. It is a volume on The Causes and Consequences of Public Views of War. And here the operative term “public views” is exceptionally important in defining the efforts as well as the limits of this intelligent monograph by Matthew A. Baum and Tim J. Groeling.

The authors generously provide a succinct statement of the goals of the book: “first, to identify the conditions under which the American public will or will not support their president when he or she leads the nation to war; second, to determine precisely when those conditions will tend to prevail (and for how long) and third, to assess their implications for the future of American foreign policy.” I shall focus this review on those three points, rather than snap at the authors for sidebar issues that, in fact, may turn out to be of some greater value in the years ahead, when such books can be re-examined in the fullness of time and tide for the light they shed on present-day American society.

Let us proceed to the first item on the agenda: the conditions under which the American public supports a president leading in a war effort, such as Lyndon B. Johnson in Vietnam or George W. Bush in Iraq. A linguistic difference illustrates a stark difference, long noted in the political science literature, between opposition to a sitting president, but no less support for the legitimacy of the political system even in crisis periods. The erosion of public support for a president constitutes a serious issue between political parties and media accounts. But it is much more unusual for the system itself to suffer a crisis in legitimacy—for that transcends party labels and identifications. Media pundits seem tacitly aware of this distinction. For example, it might be argued that the American Civil War was one such situation when the legitimacy of the nation itself was threatened, and disaffections became divisive to the point of establishing the Confederacy, or a separate national entity. One might also say that Johnson’s decision not to run for re-election in 1968 had the earmarks of a growing legitimacy crisis. This was hardly the case with George Bush and the unpopular war that cost the Republican Party the chance of a victory in the last presidential elections. That notwithstanding, John McCain, the losing Republican standard-bearer, stood in essential support of the Iraq War effort, albeit in a quieter tone of political voice. This raises serious issues about the tripartite interaction among the press, the political elites, and the public—the formulation of Baum and Groeling at the heart of this text.

Serious doubts arise about the authors’ notion of the mediating effect of the outlet reputation of opinion from their own examples. They note, in one of the few references to the current administration, that “President Obama appears to represent a clear example of how taking a politically ‘risky’ position such as opposition to the Iraq War can sometimes prove politically beneficial in
subsequent elections. Indeed, Obama’s stance stood in marked contrast to most of his major 2008 primary competitors, who had cast ‘safer’ votes in favor of the war, and arguably helped cement his support with the antiwar Left in the Democratic Party.” Only one year later, we find the same anti-war President, sanctioning a major military effort in Afghanistan against the wishes of precisely that Democratic Party Left that remained in virtually silent opposition. The media, for its part, still enthralled by the new president, wrote and commented respectfully and objectively about this new turn in international policy.

Indeed, Obama’s view of the Iraq War shifted from categorical promises for an early wind-down, to a view that the surge and its success under General Petraeus owed as much to his new administration as to the Bush regime. Even the timetables for leaving Iraq changed profoundly within the year. What this illustrates is that systemic legitimacy transcends the sort of tripartite factors enunciated in this text, and that actual leader decisions depend on circumstances far beyond those of media preferences or biases and its “systematic distortions,” or, for that matter, party allegiances and public opinions. This is not to dismiss the theorizing put forth, even less the carefully constructed databases that underwrite such theorizing. It is to move cautiously from the realm of communication and public opinion to actual warfare and its causes or consequences. The core of the book is how bias in reporting and ideology in public opinion are deeply rooted phenomena, not easily changed and even more difficult to extricate. But the actual core of events suggests that matters of national urgency can readily trump public opinion and media bias, however well constructed.

The most serious problem with this approach is the failure to appreciate the normative and valuation grounds of objective reporting—not so much as a living fact of many journalists, commentators, and bloggers, but as a steady goal of professional life, and its commitment to report accurately, objectively, and fairly. The dismissive attitude to such an admittedly lofty goal is not helpful. For here too a sort of mechanistic reading blurs the distinction between the existential place of bias and ideology in the reporting process, and the valuation goal to be rid of bias and to restore objectivity to a pedestal. Since FOX network is singled out for more than its fair share of criticism, it is useful to remind ourselves that this network makes sharp distinctions between news broadcasting and opinion making as a verbal op-ed art. In truth, even if Bill O’Reilly seems jaundiced, his is a show based on reporting the news fairly and accurately, whereas the show which follows, Sean Hannity’s hour, is frankly billed as a long standing op-ed column on the air. Such distinctions exist for all the networks, so that the extent of bias is hardly a discovery. Rather as the authors themselves acknowledge on several occasions, it is surprising to note how frequently these distinctions between notions of information and ideology retain a vital hold on the imagination of communications and media personnel.

The imaginative use of statistics is a genuine highlight of War Stories. The authors are sensitive to the need not just to use standard data measures but to create tabular material that explains and supports their findings. The varied charts on the effects of different types of rhetoric on presidential approval, proportional distributions of rhetoric by credibility of party; reporting on Iraq’s national elections in terms of attitudes toward an incumbent president, movement of public support or opposition over time to war policies, and correlates of top news stories being featured by select media—these are worth examining, despite lapses in transparency of presentation. The great strength of the book is its forceful linkage of data and theory. It could serve as a constant reminder that there is no professional “war” between quantitative and qualitative (read normative) types of analysis. They are both the meat and potatoes of good social science.

The very statistical approach in establishing the presence or absence of partisan bias in news content serves to undermine, rather than underwrite the approach taken. The claim is made that “among the principal difficulties in establishing the presence or absence of media bias is clearly defining what exactly constitutes bias” (241). But in setting such a framework, an entire realm of discourse is either ignored or downplayed. For, had the issues been posed in terms of establishing what exactly constitutes objectivity, Baum and Groeling could have suggested a realm of normative judgments beyond bias that could have been examined. As it stands, Baum and Groeling, against their
better judgments, I suspect, fall prey to the now famous utterance of Representative Alcee Hastings of Florida: “There ain’t no rules here…. We make ’em up as we go along.” This sort of crass pragmatism, from which the authors might well recoil in other circumstances, leads Baum and Groeling to claim that “far from revealing a world in which politics stops at the water’s edge, our data suggests that partisanship and negativity dominate war coverage in contemporary America” (179).

However, such a framework ignores the central question: whether the specific war covered (in this instance, the Iraq War) was worth the sacrifice and the risk to achieve a stable regime in an unstable region. The absence of any but a casual remark to the My Lai incident in Vietnam with the Abu Ghraib facilities for events related to Iraq is indicative of a lack of historicity in the analysis as a whole. The work fails to rise to the level of a general theory of political communication because of a virtual absence of historicity, of comparing Iraq with Vietnam; and, for that matter, different political leaders in different periods of American history.

In the absence of any consensus in public opinion on a specific conflict, let alone conflicts past (Vietnam) and present (Afghanistan) there is a far higher chance of dissensus in media response and in political party evaluation. This may be a far less dramatic way of presenting their findings than the emphasis on polarization, but it nonetheless would have provided a more nuanced and consistent set of theoretical conclusions. As it stands, the utility of such studies for the forging of a future American foreign policy, which is what this book aims to achieve, are severely limited. It is not a shortcoming of the data as such, but of the absence of alternate frameworks for policy making in real (short) times in real war zones as yet to be precisely determined. That said, this is a serious book, one that merits careful reading by those charged with making policy decisions at the global level.

There are studies that are best measured neither as successful nor as failing in broad terms but in their limited range of applicability. In this, Baum and Groeling would have been better served by stating the limits as well as the goals of their work. But the literary mannerisms of polarizing media, barbarians inside the gates, back to the future, who shot the messenger? and the elasticity of reality, when discussing the ambiguity of rhetoric, sets the bar far higher than can be reached by the authors even in a timely effort.

Still, even though it strays at times from its spatial and temporal aims, it points the way for future communication studies of American foreign policy. The social science community, and those policy segments interested in the forging of decisions, should be grateful for the integrity and hard work displayed in War Stories. It should be a highly serviceable methodological framework for such work covering the Obama administration, especially on how to understand its decisions to engage in or avoid combat.

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This useful, well-organized collection of essays consolidates well the available resources and readings on dance practices in Europe between 1250 and 1750. Jennifer Nevile, the editor, succeeds in her stated goal “to present a wide-ranging perspective on dance” (2). The book examines “how the dance practices during these five centuries participated in the intellectual, artistic, and political cultures of the day” (2). We are not presented with a through-line of development in dance history. Nor are the different eras or dance forms given equal treatment. More in-depth accounts are offered of the middle and later years, which is to be expected since more extant writing and other artifacts from this time period are available for analysis. The short length of the essays, the conciseness of their arguments, as well as varying levels of scholarly acumen make the collection useful for teaching the content and methods of dance history.

Veteran scholars, such as Nevile, who contributed four of the book’s fifteen essays, provide exceptionally praiseworthy examples of how dance history can be written. A few essays
falter, however, at the challenge of doing interdisciplinary research. Historians necessarily move from particular, concrete artifacts to general claims about their significance and then sometimes to even broader claims about the culture as a whole. However, it takes a great deal of knowledge in many subject areas to make sound pronouncements about an entire culture on the basis of an assortment of artifacts.

Katherine Tucker McGinnis’s essay, “Your Most Humble Subject, Cesare Negri Milanese,” is among those offering a compelling historical argument. McGinnis suggests political reasons for important gaps in the sixteenth-century Milanese dance master’s autobiography, *Le gratie d’amore*. Negri had an intended audience: “He was crafting a résumé” (222). Gathering from surprising sources further biographical information about Negri, McGinnis argues that the political climate between France, Italy, and Spain affected his self-presentation. While her account of the politics is sketchy, the argument is plausible and clever.

The essays discussing dance and Greek philosophy are not as persuasive. For example, Graham Pont’s essay, “Plato’s Philosophy of Dance” attributes to Plato “a system of dance education” without acknowledging that he was not a systematic thinker (269). If there is such a thing as Plato’s philosophy of dance, it is an interpretation extracted from nuanced dialogues with over a thousand years of critical debate about their meanings. Pont, like other authors in this volume who consider dance, music, mathematics, and notions of cosmological order, use a select set of ideas from Plato, Plotinus, and Pythagoras as representative of Ancient Greek culture. The discussions are provocative, suggesting further work to be done, but the scope of the claims needs careful articulation.

Despite these criticisms, *Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politick* makes an important contribution to existing dance scholarship. As Linda J. Tomko reminds us at the start of her essay, “Mr. Isaac’s The Pastorall and Issues of ‘Party,’” dance practitioners and theorists have worked hard “to put into motion the principles, ranges of movement, musical relationships, and approaches to expression that period sources illuminate” (241). The essays in Nevile’s collection add significantly to this diligent work. Every essay is both informative and interesting, and each author provides a valuable list of further readings on the topic.

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Being marginalised in a society, being branded as ‘the other’ in a society in which the majority is of a different persuasion than your group, is a troubling process. It forces people, communities, if not nations, to take cover and to try to form an even more separate identity than that perceived by the majority. The Jews in Christian Europe were, and perhaps still are, such a group. Aamir R. Mufti argues that the Muslims in India before the separation of countries were perceived as ‘the other’ by the non-Muslim Indian majority and therefore a relationship not based on equality but based on distinctions of the two social groups emerged as a result. In political science, especially in international relations, identity-related politics and social interactions is a prominent subject. Most of the current debates and those in the near past revolve around the idea of otherness as it is central to such issues as coexistence, ethnic conflict, and human rights. There is a myriad literature concerning the issue in the field of international politics, from the Marxist to the neoconservative ends of the political spectrum. Minority relations, ethnic conflicts, cultural divisions, Apartheid, racism, historical animosities—are all covered by this general subject—and the concept of ‘the other’ covers a range from the Mormons in the American society to the rights of the Aborigines in Australia.

Mufti has an interesting approach to the subject which makes this contribution interesting and original. Firstly, Mufti looks at the role of the minority figures in the framework of modern secularism, by arguing that minorities, especially religious minorities, are a problem for
modern secular society, whether in cosmopolitan Europe or in colonial India. Secondly, Mufti argues his case by an analysis of literary works. By so doing, Mufti argues that the problem of Muslim Indian identity is akin to the Jewish European identity as both are marginal in their environment of secular change.

Mufti’s book is made up of five chapters grouped in two parts, a prologue and an epilogue. The first part deals with Europe’s idea of ‘the other,’ and focuses on the position of the Jews in Enlightenment-era and nationalist-era Europe. Then, he analyses the Muslim Indian identity in British India during the transition to independence, and concludes that as secularism best suits colonial society and modern society, a religious subculture, a religion-based identity, contrasts with it and is therefore alienated from it. The author sees resistance in the Urdu literature of the mid twentieth century to the ideas of a minority within a secularist India and to a Pakistani nationhood. He analyses the situation in the Subcontinent by analysing works of Nehru, Manto, Faiz, and others.

In terms of a literary survey and a postmodern and postcolonial critique of modernism and its social elements, Enlightenment in the Colony is a successful venture. However, if we look at it as a work of politics, things change. Mufti’s examples seem to be arbitrary for he has chosen certain texts and not others; he sometimes analyses them out of context, tries to see more than there is at times, and most gravely, appears to have misunderstood or misplaced the concept of the Marxist ‘Jewish Question.’

To begin with, Mufti seems to choose literary examples the tones of which overlap with his main idea. He mentions two Enlightenment texts to show the position and perception of the Jews in Christian European societies, and both Lessing’s Nathan the Wise and Mendelssohn’s essay Jerusalem are texts which propose different levels of assimilation for the Jewish communities of their periods, arguing that the Jews should either be assimilated to the Christian majority or that they should adopt universal rules just like the majority. However, Mufti chooses not to look into pieces of literature, even as famous as Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice, which see the Jewish community as individuals in society, despite

the possible misconceptions and prejudices of that society. Some of his Urdu-language examples seem to be less politically significant than he claims them to be. Secondly, most of his examples from Western sources seem to be taken out of context, out of their period’s mindset and political environment. At a time when even Marx argued British colonialism was a positive element for the development of the Indian Subcontinent, one cannot expect to find daring examples of nationalism from the Indian populations or a feeling of equality from the British authors of that era. Thirdly, Mufti appears to be taking the Jewish Question as the only valid universal example of identity-related political problems, but there are many such problems, some dating to more recent or even current times than the emancipation of the Jews in secular, industrial society. The Mormons, the non-Muslim Arabs, the so-called coloured people of South Africa, the Catholics in the United Kingdom, and the Protestants in France, all of whom, for a very long period of European history, suffered badly from the variations of the identity crisis. Therefore, the Jews and Muslim Indians are not the only two such categories; thus subtitling the book “The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture” may be misleading: one may think of the Middle East, specifically of the British Mandate in Transjordan, and of ‘the other Jewish Question’ concerning the establishment of the state of Israel.

Finally, there seems to be a problem with the very question in the title of the book, ‘the Jewish Question.’ Marx argues not only that the Jewish Question is a problem of modernity but that the whole issue with any religion is unnecessary and that religion should be abolished. Hence, arguing that secular society alienated the Jews and then the Muslim Indians and likening the latter to the Jewish Question appears to be fundamentally wrong. The debate between Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx was on emancipation and how religious identities either affect secular society or were irrelevant because the infrastructure was fundamentally wrong. Mufti appears to have understood this as claiming that secular society does not permit religious or ethnic identities other than the universal, secular identity, which is the driving force of modern politics. However, this does not appear to accord even with Bauer’s original argument. Hence, there is a problem
concerning the Jewish Question as one understands it from the Bauer-Marx perspective. Interestingly, Mufti admits to that in a later text, “Enlightenment in the Colony Reviewed: Response” (The Annual of Urdu Studies 24 [2009]: 367–78) and somehow links one review to the reviewer’s lack of knowledge of Urdu literature, while the problem clearly is a misreading of Marx.

Nevertheless, as an alternative look at the Urdu literature and literary symbolism from the mid nineteenth to the late twentieth century, Enlightenment in the Colony works well. On the other hand, it falls well short of presenting a coherent argument on identity, minority, and the dominance of the secular, generalised, standard majority to a cultural minority, the minority’s defiance and resistance, and the final outcome of its alienation. This work is lacking in various respects: first, the reduction of identity politics to a version of the Jewish Question, then projecting this problem of early industrial, urban, metropolitan, and cosmopolitan Europe onto a colonial setting in which the majority (non-Muslim Indians) are presented as being completely assimilated by the colonial way of life, and the Muslim Indian minority as resisting change in order to protect their identity and survive unchanged, thus assigning the moral high stand to the community to which they belong. Secondly, a complete socio-political reading cannot and should not be carried out just through an analysis of literary works—arbitrarily chosen at that and out of the historical context. So, as an interesting opening to the Muslim Indian identity, this is a great book as it is well-written and makes the reader understand the essence of the literary mind. Considering that most English-speaking readers are unfamiliar with the central works of Urdu literature, this is a great contribution. Yet, if the reader is to attain an adequate understanding of the ethnic and religious trends in the colonial and postcolonial political history of the Subcontinent, a study based on political science or international relations may be preferable.

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Hyper-Narrative Interactive Cinema: Problems and Solutions. By Nitzan Ben Shaul. Consciousness Literatures & The Arts 18 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 96 pp. €20.00/ $31.00 paper.

This excellent book postulates in three concise chapters the following things:

(1) Film narrative, viewed from a constructivist cognitive theory of psychological activity, is seemingly at odds with postmodern hyper-narrative theories. On the one hand, the former model views narrative as an organization of spatial and temporal data with a cause-effect chain of events geared towards coherence and closure. Hence, certain key moments that create anticipation, suspense, and the expectation of a plausible conclusion keep the spectator attentive and rewarded. The latter model judges narrative as a fictional, polysemic, and multidirectional construct of indefinite arrangements and interpretative possibilities. The result is that a textual or filmic sense of non-closure and decenteredness tends to frustrate the spectator or to make one experience frustration. Nevertheless hyper-narrative options are possible in cognitive constructivist narrative models in a restricted form. Hence, films like Tom Tykwer’s Run Lola Run (1998) or Peter Howitt’s Sliding Doors (1998) work because their multiple optional endings are plausible and not randomly envisioned.

(2) Interactivity (as in a game) cannot be added successfully to (hyper)narrative in a film because the first brings simultaneity to the fore while the latter relies on the evolution of a storyline (55). Hence, divergences from coherent storylines result in less satisfying stories. Likewise, restrictions placed on players result in less satisfying games. However, a spectator trying to function as an interactor can experience emotional or cognitive engagements with the main character of a film, without needing to replace the protagonist, by positioning oneself as a friend or counselor of the same.

(3) Computer associated audiovisual figurations like hyper-reality, morphing (e.g., Michael Jackson’s Black or White [1991] or James Cameron’s Terminator 2: Judgment Day
digital replication (e.g., in Larry and Andy Wachowski’s *The Matrix* [1999]), and split screens (*Run Lola Run*) may be added to film narrative as long as multi-tasking is avoided. Nitzan Ben Shaul sustains that interactive hyper-narratives threaten narrative coherence, dramatic succession, and closure (83). However, he also realizes that film is moving precisely in the direction of hyper-narrative cinema. In a convincing fashion, the author of this book suggests that reciprocal interfacing must be geared towards coherence and forwarding the narrative towards a plausible conclusion. Whatever interaction one as spectator should have with a protagonist should be complex and not diversionary, random, or game-like.

Nitzan Ben Shaul’s arguments in this book are prudent, judicious, and presented in a concise and cogent fashion.

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Memory in Play: From Aeschylus to Sam Shepard. By Attilio Favorini. Palgrave Studies in Theatre and Performance History (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), x + 324 pp. £40.00 cloth; $80.00 cloth.

This fascinating work claims to be “a work of theatre history” (ix), although in effect it is a study of memory in the theater of, mainly, the Western tradition. Indeed, the author is keenly aware of the convention of memory in the East, especially in Southeast Asia, Japan (e.g., Noh theater), and India, as well as in South Africa, and the United States (e.g., Chicano theater). However, “Issues of length have made this study selective and Eurocentric rather than global” (ix). The author seems to be particularly interested in Edward S. Casey’s work on memory, especially the 1987 *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, wherein recollection is considered in two ways: as a static record of impressions and traces of the world (the Aristotelian position), or as an adaptive and constructive response to it (the Platonic tradition) (2). The rest of the book exemplifies these two points of view.

In his study of Aeschylus’ *The Persians* (472 B.C.E.), as well as of medieval hagiographic and Renaissance plays, Attilio Favorini contends that the past, as in the case of a victory or a celebration, serves to make the present meaningful. For this reason, a play like Phrynichus’ *The Capture of Miletus* (492 B.C.E.), which recalls a Greek defeat, brought opprobrium and a fine to its author, while Aeschylus’ *The Persians*, which celebrates a victory over Greece’s foe, won first prize. Hence, the past is remembered not only to commemorate an important event but also to validate the present and, in a final aim, to construct the future in a meaningful way.

The past may also be remembered not only for its own sake but to construct one’s life story in a favorable light, as in the case of Ryunosuke Akutagawa’s 1920s *Rashomon*. Remembering the past may additionally carry with it its realization into the present, as in Luigi Pirandello’s 1921 *Henry IV*. At times the act of remembering takes the protagonist into a disturbing recollection of the past, a *katabasis*, as in Peter Shaffer’s *Equus* (1973), or into a mirage connected with an archaic collective source, as in Brian Friel’s *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990). In some instances remembering may be the ground of existence, as in Samuel Beckett’s *Happy Days* (1961), where habit keeps characters functional as they become less able-bodied.

Lastly, the most momentous aspect of Favorini’s book occurs in the sixth chapter, wherein the objectivity of history is questioned and, following Joshua Sobol’s *Ghetto* (1984), even dismissed as non-existent if it fails to incorporate the individual recollection of excluded or anathematized groups, among them Jews, African-Americans, Native-Americans, gays, and, on a national level, the Irish. As quoted by Freddie Rokem, critic of Sobol’s theater, history “depends on individual recollection, and the implicit claim is that if we do not remember and confront even the most controversial aspects of our past, our present will become distorted” (234).

In the final analysis, this book’s scrutiny of memory and recollection in drama serves not only to remember the past in order to
understand or reconstruct the present but also, by never forgetting, to make the future possible, whether at the individual or the national level.

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This is a serious attempt to understand the life and perspective of Mithradates the Great, both culturally and within his historical context, while at the same time giving readers a very clear perception of how his career has been perceived since antiquity. Background is provided on the rise of this king of the small kingdom of Pontus, adjacent to the Black Sea, in about 120 B.C., to become one of Rome’s major antagonists—another Hannibal or Jugurtha. His claim to the role of a national hero saving his kingdom from the threat of invasion by outsiders led him to model himself on Alexander, who had seen his eastern conquests as part of a mission to fend off the Persian threat. The perspective of the current biography involves a highly sympathetic portrait of the mindset of Mithradates, significantly influenced by some major trends in contemporary politics of the Near East. The court environment was close to the Persian model; Mithradates had a harem, and poison was a prominent tool in dynastic politics. In this world, Mithradates was an outstanding player. His interest in and considerable understanding of poisons and their antidotes, and the whole gamut of pharmacology is very thoroughly explored here. The educational background of this potentate was far from contemptible. The geographer Strabo, from Amasia, who was aristocratic and connected to Mithradates, reveals the extent of the Hellenisation of the Pontic aristocracy. Nevertheless, the influence of Greece did not prevent Mithradates from laying claim to descent from the Achaemenid, Darius I. Interesting questions are raised about the reaction of the next generation to the fact of Mithradates’ ultimate defeat.

The chequered history of the Mithradatic wars provides a background to the major chapters of this book, but we also gain an insight into court life at both Sinope, and earlier at Amasia. All this shows the author’s good and up-to-date grip on the surviving remains in Turkey today. What is impressive is the wide range of material incorporated, including a great many artefacts today on display in the great museums of Europe. These are all carefully reviewed in an attempt to expand our knowledge of the tastes and interests of this formidable Roman opponent. There is some speculation and a bit of liberty is taken in order to complete the story, but this is handled with care, and most readers will appreciate the completeness of the attempt to arrive at a characterisation. This portrait of Mithradates gives new meaning to the use of the term pragmatist in relation to politicians.

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Eli Berman starts with the intriguing idea that radical religious groups that provide benefits and impose sacrifices beyond theology can hold their membership and thus become more effective. According to an economic cost and benefit analysis, this hold makes defections from the group less likely if it turns to terrorism. As a consequence, certain violent religious groups can be much more dangerous.

There are a number of problems with this economic approach. Berman uses examples of extreme religious groups that do not practice violence to set the stage for his analysis. This method is quite appropriate, but he then concentrates only on violent Islamic groups—Hamas, Hezbollah, the al-Sadr Brigades, and the Taliban. While he mentions Aum Shinriyko as another example, he does not pursue this potentially valuable non-Islamic case. He also does not consider any modern Christian groups (Christian Identity ones) or supporters of Hinduvata. An analysis of only...
Islamic groups cannot hope to explain the danger from all radical religious groups.

Another problem is that it is possible that he undervalues the market “value” of religious schooling. Such schooling does have economic costs compared to other schooling, but it could have status or other social benefits that an economic model misses. He notes that radical religious groups with the characteristics he details are hard for intelligence services to penetrate, yet Israeli intelligence has been able to collect information to consistently allow for targeted killings of Hamas leaders. Since he analyzes Islamic groups and their use of suicide attacks, he should have considered the tradition of *pagsabil* suicide attacks in South and East Asia.

Berman also slides over the fact that violent ethnic groups (e.g., the IRA, ETA) have had very loyal findings and have survived longer than most religious groups—although the global jihad movement is not likely to quickly disappear. He also acknowledges that other extremists groups may have developed the characteristics he ascribes to religious groups, but he does not follow through on this possibility.

Ultimately, his economic analysis is insightful and quite useful, but incomplete. His basic question was—why are religious terrorists so lethal? He has supplied a potential answer for some groups (but hardly all of them), and the answer does not explain how these religious groups are different from other groups like the Tamil Tigers. The book is still worth reading by those active in the field, given its contributions, but it needs to be read with care and in the context of existing knowledge about religious organizations and other terrorist groups.

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**Encountering the Other: The Artwork and the Problem of Difference in Blanchot and Levinas.** By Alain P. Toumayan (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2004), ix + 231 pp. $60.00 paper.

There have been many improbable friendships in the history of literature and philosophy, but what makes it tempting to term the one between Emmanuel Levinas (1906–96) and Maurice Blanchot (1907–2003) an “impossibility,” even an “impossibility of possibility”—a phrase used by Levinas and Blanchot to critique, ironically, human possibility and subjectivity in Hegel and Heidegger—is the remarkable juxtaposition of the two men’s lives. Levinas, a Lithuanian Jew, first met Blanchot, a French believer in royalism, in Strasburg in the mid-1920s before either had reached the age of twenty. The friendship lasted seventy years, ending only with Levinas's death in 1996. What is remarkable is that the friendship survived the decade of the 1930s, for it was during this time that Blanchot associated himself with anti-Semitic, fascistic publications in France. Whatever the extent of such “associations,” which have been much debated, it is certain that Blanchot changed dramatically his political loyalties after this period. Not only did he shelter, during the war, Levinas’s wife from the Nazis, thereby saving her from being deported to concentration camps, as were most of the rest of Levinas’s family, but during the 1968 Uprising in France and Europe, he took highly unpopular political stands against Palestinian groups on the left, acknowledging that, although such anti-Israeli groups might not be motivated by anti-Semitism, the end result was little different. “It would seem,” Blanchot then wrote, “that anti-Semitism from now on can count among its allies those who are, as it were, free of anti-Semitism.”

Blanchot’s political development from monarchist and editor of fascistic publications to such statements as the above is one kind of improbability, if not “impossibility”; another is the intensity of relation, and at the same time gulf, that exists between the thought of the two writers. Certainly the formula often used to describe this relation—that Blanchot introduced Levinas to modern French literature and Levinas introduced Blanchot to twentieth-century German philosophy—is largely a way of rendering that “impossibility” more distinct. Alain Toumayan’s important study of the early, mostly aesthetic writings of the two authors, *Encountering the Other*, manages to approach such an aporia without, so to speak, falling in. It makes comprehensible many aspects of the early intellectual relationship between Blanchot and Levinas without doing what was inimical to both writers: without imposing on their
thought a reassuring conceptual scheme that would assimilate “other” to “same,” reducing the incommensurate elements of their thought (of which there are just as many as there are in their biographies) to a lowest common denominator.

In the process, Toumayan’s study provides what is, quite simply, the best description of Levinas’s early aesthetic writings that is available in the scholarship, disposing in the process, and in the most non-polemical of ways, of a number of misconceptions about those writings. Chief among those misconceptions is that aesthetics wasn’t crucial to Levinas’s early philosophy. As Toumayan says on the very first page of his book, “For Blanchot and for Levinas, the artwork and the very fact or existence of art attest a basic involvement of the human subject with a foreignness, an otherness, an alterity.” Such alterity, as is well known, is also the most distinctive feature of Levinas’s ethics. And in a lengthy note, Toumayan effectively counters the arguments of commentators—one a leading Blanchot critic, the other a leading Levinas critic—that Levinas relegated art to a subordinate status. This point is important also in its implications for the interpretation of Blanchot’s works, for, as Toumayan argues repeatedly throughout the study, the crucial notions which played a central role in shaping Blanchot’s early work, such as the *il y a* [there is], the image versus the concept, and even the “impossibility of possibility” itself, originated for the most part with Levinas, “although the lines of influence go both ways as the pattern of cross referencing in their works suggests” (115).

Taken both separately and together, these accomplishments on Toumayan’s part raise a number of problems about both Levinas’s and Blanchot’s work, and especially about the “impossibly possible” relation between their work, which this study has succeeded in defining with clarity—even if not in “solving.” The first of these is how such a completely ethical thinker as Levinas, whose thought was deeply influenced by Judaism—although he was not, it is generally agreed, in any sense a “religious philosopher”—could have had an intensely close intellectual relationship with the likes of Blanchot, who regarded ethical concerns, a fortiori religious ones, with profound distrust. That aesthetics played a central role in Levinas’s early writings, and that Blanchot misunderstood some of his later ones, according to commentators such as Libertson (as pointed out by Toumayan in a note) are certainly factors that need to be taken into account in approaching this problem. It is also pertinent to observe that Levinas himself never stopped providing arguments, in *On Maurice Blanchot* (1975) and even in his final major work, *Otherwise than Being* (1974), which seem designed to push his friend closer to his own position.

Whatever the case, Toumayan shows repeatedly how Blanchot draws on early Levinasian aesthetic themes that seem to have manifestly ethical implications. For example, in his extremely effective reading of “Orpheus and his Gaze,” Toumayan demonstrates how Blanchot accomplishes in that work a non-dialectical, anti-Hegelian juxtaposition of “patience” and “impatience” that associates artistic inspiration with a necessary, inevitable artistic *failure* or powerlessness: with a sense of loss and experience of passivity that is one of the primary attributes not just of Levinas’s early aesthetic thought but is also a crucial pathway into his mature ethics. Indeed, the phrase, “impossibility of possibility” was initially advanced by Levinas to counter, and invert, the Heideggerian notion of death as “the possibility of impossibility” (i.e., as the possibility of Nothingness) which, when “resolutely encountered,” projected or opened up the finitude of possibility in human life. Levinas and Blanchot’s “impossibility of possibility,” by contrast, connotes what is outside, or “other to,” the limits of human possibility; it is the mystery, and at the same time the horror, of death, which eludes conceptual understanding and entails an experience of powerlessness, an evacuation of self or essence, that may have been originally modeled on the paradoxical passivity with which artistic inspiration has always been associated. It might even be said that the phrase connotes “a foreignness, an otherness, an alterity” attested by “the very fact or existence of art,” to quote again from the first page of *Encountering the Other*.

The second major problem which this study raises is that if aesthetics, as Toumayan demonstrates, is so crucial to Levinas’s early philosophy, then why, with a number of very significant exceptions that include essays on Paul Celan, S.Y. Agnon, and a book of essays on Blanchot himself, does Levinas largely drop
his aesthetic investigations in his later writings? I should emphasize that even in relation to Levinas’s later philosophical writings, there are many important passages and observations pertinent to aesthetics. Still, Toumayan’s contention, that after Levinas’s early immersion in aesthetics, he hands the ball off, so to speak, to Blanchot, seems on the face of it quite justified:

If Levinas seems at this juncture to depart from aesthetics, Blanchot, in The Space of Literature especially but also elsewhere (The Book to Come, The Infinite Conversation) will take up where Levinas leaves off, exploring the implications of Levinas’s definitions with respect to art in general and to writing in particular. (154)

Toumayan’s contention, as I say, seems justified, but I have quoted this passage on purpose in order to pick a quarrel with an assumption embedded in it. Toumayan’s specific reference, in this passage, which occurs in the final chapter of his book, is to Levinas’s notion of the il y a [there is]. The il y a, besides having crucial aesthetic implications, gives emphasis to being’s “horror” [horreur], simultaneously critiquing Heideggerian ontology and linking ethics to tragedy. Toumayan’s argument concerning the il y a, in this passage and elsewhere in the same chapter, is intended to account, at least in part, for the relative lack of discussion of aesthetics in Levinas’s later works. Such lack, Toumayan argues, was parallel to the lessening role of the il y a:

The place of aesthetics and the relationship of the il y a to aesthetic categories is not as prominent in Levinas’s [later] works. The il y a is retained primarily as the background against which an act of emergence is accomplished that produces a subject, a hypostasis, in the act of nomination or identification that constitutes the present. (154)

But this account, it seems to me, applies more to Levinas’s earlier works than it does to Otherwise than Being (1974), his final major work. In a lengthy note that continues the argument, Toumayan says, referring specifically to the latter work: “it is only in as much as the subject remains rooted in the concept of essence that the il y a returns to threaten it” (206). I think that it is a serious mistake of interpretation, pace the views of Ciglia and Critchley, which Toumayan cites, to see the il y a as a “threat.” The origin of the il y a is in literature, specifically tragedy, and it is a threat only in the sense that “the other” is a threat—as an interruption, an empowerment, a disinteresse-ment. As Levinas says in the section of Otherwise than Being entitled “Sense and the There Is”:

But the absurdity of the there is, as a modality of the one-for-the-other, signifies [signifie].... The there is is all the weight that alterity weighs supported by a subjectivity that does not find it.... To support [Pour supporter] without compensation, the excessive or disheartening hubbub and encumber-ment of the there is is needed. (164)

If there is an explanation for the relative dearth of discussion of aesthetics in Levinas’s later work, these passages, it seems to me, indicate that such explanation is not to be found in a lessening role given in such work to the il y a in constituting subjectivity—quite the contrary. The problem, however, is much too complex to be pursued here, and does not in any case significantly detract from the accomplishments of this study. Encountering the Other is essential reading for all Levinas and Blanchot scholars. It contributes enormously to our understanding of the ways in which Levinas’s aesthetics informs the writings of Blanchot; and to how those writings in turn challenge and provide stimulus for Levinas’s most crucial ideas. Jacques Derrida called the relationship between Blanchot and Levinas “a grace, a blessing for our times.” It was also, perhaps, an impenetrable mystery, an impossibility of possibility; and it is not the least of Encountering the Other’s merits that it leaves such otherness intact.

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Finbarr B. Flood’s book, Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval “Hindu-Muslim” Encounter, is a detailed and nuanced analysis and interpretation of life from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries in the northwestern frontier
region of South Asia. Drawing on, and weaving together, theoretical perspectives from anthropology, history, linguistics, art history, and postcolonial studies, Flood brings to life the cosmopolitan and interlocking worlds inhabited by Arab, Persian, Turkic, and Indic traders and princelings, soldiers and artisans during those five centuries. Challenging the centrality of texts in the writing of South Asian history, he examines, instead, the shifting meanings attached to a variety of circulating cultural artifacts: coins, frescoes, textiles, modes of dress, ritual practices as well as the more abstract semantic domains of onomastics and royal titulature.

Flood sets himself a rather ambitious goal: to deconstruct colonial and nationalist histories that have tended to portray this period of South Asian history in rather simplistic, dyadic terms as an endless series of battles between marauding Muslim armies and brave Hindu defenders, and to present, instead, an alternative view that emphasizes the ambiguities and complexities of those times. And to a substantial extent, he succeeds. He demonstrates, quite persuasively, that pre-modern identities, whether Hindu or Muslim, were fluid and contingent, that even ordinary folk engaged in a kind of pragmatic, sometimes opportunistic, “self-fashioning” with an eye to achieving specific goals, and that ruling elites were cosmopolitan in their self-representations. Flood devotes considerable time to elaborating on the ways in which Hindu and Muslim rulers constructed their public persona by picking and choosing from a range of linguistic, numismatic and vestmentary codes so that their assertions of authority over subordinate others would be both overt and effective, paying little or no heed, apparently, to ethnic or religious affiliations.

In the picture that emerges from Flood’s pen, the pre-modern subject shares with his modern successor some traits that are often thought of as distinctive of modernity. Thus, Flood’s pre-modern subject has agency, enjoys considerable social and geographic mobility, and resists being locked into primordial identities. While this was truer of some socioeconomic groups than others, it is nevertheless fascinating to learn of the ways in which people could re-imagine and re-invent themselves—if they were adventurous enough and if they were sufficiently familiar with the prevailing social and linguistic codes. Equally fascinating is Flood’s discussion of objects that circulated because of gifting, trading or looting. Just as identities were mutable in the pre-modern world, so too were the meanings attached to these objects. Circulation, according to Flood, is a value-laden term that means much more than simple absorption and reproduction. Instead, he claims that circulation is a culturally productive process. As objects travel, are adopted, adapted and re-used, old meanings are re-configured, and new meanings are acquired. From this perspective, the original can only claim the privilege of having been prior in time but not necessarily in creativity.

Students of history, anthropology, art history, and postcolonial studies are sure to find this handsome and beautifully illustrated book both captivating and compelling. I do too—with one small caveat. As I have already said, the book is consistently impressive in terms of its scholarship but there is, at the same time, a kind of moral relativism that permeates it that I find a little difficult to stomach. In particular, Chapter 5, which lays out in meticulous detail the image destruction and temple desecration that Muslim invaders (whatever their particular ethnic or sectarian affiliation may have been) routinely engaged in, exemplifies this moral relativism. Flood is scrupulously evenhanded in his scholarly discussion of looting and iconoclasm—so thoughtful and reasonable, in fact, are these discussions, so filled with theological detail and cultural knowledge, that a reader could be forgiven for imagining them to be a defense of such religious intolerance.

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How does the general situation of a historical age affect the texture of life and the character of individuals? In any given historical age, the task of personal existence may encounter particular obstacles, or the possibilities for religion be
tested in a certain way. Some historical periods may be lacking in the silence of study or openness to reality. How can we assess the nature of an age? In his study of the Two Ages, Kierkegaard (1813–55) did not want to understand the flow of history so much as the dialectical situation presented by a particular time and place, and how they frame the sphere of existence. Historical periods open unique possibilities and impose restrictions for individuals and their hopes for religious existence.

Such questions were uppermost in Kierkegaard’s mind during the period in which he completed Either/Or (1843). He complained that the age in which he lived was not particularly wicked, as people liked to say, but rather enervating: “my complaint is that it is paltry; for it lacks passion.” Then Kierkegaard discovered, in a recent novel, an authentic description of the pallid age in which he lived. This was Thomasine Gyllembourg’s Two Ages, published anonymously in 1845. The book was captivatingly relevant to his concerns. In Gyllembourg’s novel, domestic relations were set against the backdrop of historical change, and Kierkegaard enthused that in this novel: “everything is . . . categorically true.”

Readers already familiar with the 1940 Alexander Dru translation of the Present Age have known only about a third of the original work, here presented in an integral edition, along with a dossier of relevant journal entries and other documents. The Two Ages was in essence an exceedingly long, philosophical book review. Nevertheless, here we see Kierkegaard, despite his complex manner of thinking and writing, as a regular member of the literary world of Copenhagen, exchanging letters with editors and commenting on contemporary literature.

Kierkegaard’s methods of literary criticism were distinctive. He tended to read expansively—a kind of fruitful misreading, as he intimated in his journals: “When I read a book, what gratifies me [are] . . . the infinite possibilities there must have been in every passage” for the author. And he believed that infinite possibilities continued to exist for the reader, and to radiate from the written page. The text of the novel was ample grist for his philosophical mill. The characters of the Two Ages were examined in lengthy psychological portraits, barely restrained by the details of the novel. It is suggestive that Kierkegaard, who ordinarily wrote under various pseudonyms, should write this volume under his own name, whereas the subject, Thomasine Gyllembourg, remained anonymous!

Kierkegaard commences his discussion with a sketch of the book’s contents, in which we get a glimpse of what he found so engrossing about this neatly constructed tale of romance and domestic life. He recognized in Gyllembourg a brilliant writer whose work was endlessly fascinating because of the exquisitely-conceived characters, and her ability to portray the connections between those characters and their historical age. The first half of the novel was set in the “age of revolution” and the second half in “the present age.”

Using the subject matter as his framework, Kierkegaard offered his own analysis of the problems raised by the novel: how the “age of revolution” had been succeeded (temporally and dialectically) by a watered-down period, the “present age.” The age of revolution was worthy of respect, despite its glaring faults, while the present age was an embarrassment. In the space that remains, I will note only a few themes of the analysis Kierkegaard embroidered on the surface of Gyllembourg’s novel.

Revolutionary Age. According to Kierkegaard, a revolutionary period, although sublime and unruly, “is essentially passionate and therefore essentially has culture.” To have culture means to engage reality, to leap from sentiment to bold action. Revolutionary ages are times of effectivity in love or politics. Violence and ruthless action are undertaken in the service of passionately held ideals. Although such an age is dangerous and erratic, Kierkegaard clearly would prefer it to the present age.

Present Age. The present age is a period of clammy sublimation, useless ratiocination, and cowardly delays. In the present age, the passion of feeling and the violence of action are replaced by “sundry predeliberations” and followed up by “sundry postmortem reinterpretations.” He humorously evokes the dilemma of a suicidal person who, by endless reflection on the problems and methods of suicide, ultimately fails to kill himself, but is “strangled by calculation!” The present age is spineless, and keeps itself in a false state of precipitation, as if to imply that it might (one day) do something. The present age “has no assets of feeling in the erotic, no assets of
enthusiasm and no inwardness in politics and religion.” Lacking tension in the springs of life, the age is hyper-sensitive, ineffective and weak-kneed. What does this mean for the possibility of individuality?

Inwardness. In the present age, the individual is kept down by the demonic power of leveling, and overcome by the ghostly power of the public. These factors make it difficult to develop individuality. Religious life and moral character depend on the tension of inwardness. Without inwardness there can be no individual character, which is something indelible, starkly engraved in the personality. “Character is inwardness,” and inwardness requires a soul, from the depths of which the individual can try to find God or know reality. But in the present age, “inwardness is lacking.” There is no silence residing like a necessary stone of gravity in the soul. Without silence there is no ability to listen, nowhere to stand, no inner sanctum. Individuality is undermined by the rise of the public, and the sound of its chatter.

The Public. A dominant feature of the present age is the emergence of “the public,” a strange quasi-entity. The public is a body of “unsubstantial individuals” in an abstract aggregate whole, which could never be assembled in a public square or summoned to a courthouse. Participation in “the public” creates a mood of tension without resolution or action. Engagement is replaced by tepid reflection. As a “member of the public,” the citizen of a kingdom does not “relate himself in the relation but is a spectator computing the problem.” The man of the present age can only be a part of the public as a nobody, because “during the hours in which he is the specific person he is, he does not belong to the public.” Here we have the familiar sharp cry of Kierkegaard, the floating seagull of irony. The matter is serious enough for Kierkegaard’s philosophy and personal existence. In the present age the individual soul, by rights an “immediate and beautiful form,” is distracted and stunted.

Chatter. Hubert Dreyfus has suggested that we can deduce how Kierkegaard would have analyzed the internet. Kierkegaard’s discussion of the public and its shadowy existence seems quite applicable to the mass creation and viral consumption of bare information, and to what Paul Ricoeur called “the assault of the virtual.” Kierkegaard’s concept of chatter is crucial here. The public is an “abstract void” and chatter is its echoing form of speech. We recognize anonymous chatter, lacking in substance or responsibility, as the lingua franca of the internet. Chatter evokes the “dizziness of abstract infinity” with a smack of delection. “What is it to chatter? It is the annulment of the passionate disjunction between being silent and speaking. Only the person who can remain essentially silent can speak essentially…. Silence is inwardness.”

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The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory. By Philippe Buc (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), xi + 272 pp. $64.00/£41.50 cloth; $23.95/£16.95 paper.

This arresting book worries over a fruitful use of anthropology and sociology in the study of what has been called ritual, especially ritual aiming at civic unity and order. It cautions against the use of ritual as a category for study of the Middle Ages, and teases out the limitations of social-scientific theories in historical study. As Philippe Buc writes in the Introduction (5) “the essay’s ultimate aim is to examine the fit between, on the one hand, medieval narratives and their implicit anthropology, and, on the other hand, the theories of ritual that twentieth-century historians have employed.” Especially worrisome for Buc is an eclecticism which uses one theory for one type of source-genre or ritual in a culture, but not for all. Here it seems that the source-genres are dictating the models but are incapable of achieving a unified theory. Buc has no new theory of ritual to propose. This book is rather an essay on the limitations of past and current practice. It continues and corrects the study of exegesis Buc pursued in L’Ambiguité du Livre, which I reviewed in The American Historical Review 101 (1996): 163–64.

Part 1 concentrates on the medieval understanding of ritual and of narrative purposes and techniques in analyzing four documentary bodies. Chapter 1 portrays how Liudbrand of Cremona compared rituals to show how the Ottonians were superior to their
rivals for Italy. Chapter 2 turns to a variety of sources in analyzing ninth-century Carolingian political culture, in the process showing the inadequacy of functionalism in ritual study. Chapter 3 turns to Gregory of Tours’ works, and Chapter 4 to martyrdom as a narrated ritual in late antiquity. Here Buc makes the argument particularly forcefully that religion must be more than a cultural system: “that Christianity, to an unprecedented degree if one excepts Judaism, self-consciously underlined difference over accommodation made it and makes it the archetypal group, defining its boundaries through distinction” (125). Whereas a kind of dualism, found in Augustine, which always gave the devil his due—that is, an alertness to the possible manipulation of ritual—was passed on to the Middle Ages, it is often absent from anthropologically inspired analyses.

Part 2, which deals especially with sociology’s theological ancestry, opens many windows. It consists of two chapters which trace the history of the study and concept of ritual from medieval theology to about 1970. These close with a confrontation of the logic of the medieval documents with that of social science. Buc is an excellent, amusing, and provocative guide to a wide-ranging bibliography, and lucidly draws many illuminating connections and comparisons others have missed. There are few questions more important than the relation of religion and society, and of whether, or in what way, culture is embodied religion: Buc brilliantly expands our sense of what these questions involve. An Epilogue reflects on the significance of the difference between the logic of the medieval documents and of social science, especially regarding the misapprehension of early medieval political culture.

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In the first volume of Capital, Marx famously said of the dialectic in Hegel, “with him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell” (Karl Marx: Selected Works, ed. David McLellan [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 458). Thomas Brockelman, in Žižek and Heidegger: The Question Concerning Techno-Capitalism, argues that Žižek makes a similar move in relation to Heidegger. As Brockelman convincingly argues, for Žižek, Heidegger implicitly recognizes what Žižek sees as the radical nature of the modern subject in his ontologizing of finitude. However, Heidegger fails to fully grasp its potential and instead indict the modern Cartesian subject for its technological and destructive existence. Thus, Brockelman argues, much like Marx’s project to ‘right’ Hegel, Žižek’s work is (at least in part) an attempt to “turn Heidegger on his head” so as to extract the Heideggerian rational kernel, which as it turns out, is the revolutionary potential that is inherent in the finitude of the modern subject.

The first—and most striking—part of Brockelman’s book is dedicated to an analysis of Žižek’s reading of Heidegger. He explains how it is that Žižek links Heidegger to the ‘modernist’ project. Here it is argued that Žižek’s understanding of ‘modernism’ redraws the traditional academic lines that mark ‘modern’ philosophy (Descartes to Kant). Brockelman, in clarifying this move, points out that, if one of the defining characteristics of modern philosophy is that of overcoming the view of reality as having a secure epistemic foundation—in an infinite whole—and in favor of a view that asserts a kind of skepticism about such a foundation, given the limited and finite nature of human existence, then this extends beyond the narrow academic category of Descartes to Kant. Furthermore, it is precisely this skepticism about pre-modern holism that makes modernism itself a radical doctrine.

Žižek argues that, though the common response to the modern skeptical—and radical—insights is an attempt to rebuild our epistemic foundations (Cartesian certainty, or Kantian Transcendental idealism), like Hegel, the Heidegger of Being and Time eschews this response and instead completes the modern turn by asserting the radically incomplete (and thus finite) nature of both the human subject and the reality that it is confronted with. Heidegger’s ‘modernist’ moment here is to be
found, as Žižek reads him, in the conception of truth as *a-lethia* or un-concealment, that every truth disclosed to Dasein about its world contains within it its opposite or the concealing of another truth. As Brockelman nicely points out, Žižek claims that for Heidegger, not only does truth as un-concealment exist for one who lives inauthentically but there is a kind of primal concealment in any world-disclosure whatsoever: namely, that we always miss the ways in which the world that is disclosed is always the ‘product’ of our own—limited and finite—disclosing of it.

It is, then, subjectivity itself that sets the transcendental conditions for any world-disclosure at all, but because the subject doing the disclosing is finite and limited, and because the point from which the seemingly complete world emanates, the transcendental conditions are themselves imminent. Thus, for Žižek’s Heidegger, reality itself is always constituted in the relation between a finite subject and the situatedness of the subject’s world. Being is, in other words, fundamentally incomplete. The authentic Heideggerian subject of ‘anticipatory-resoluteness’ is—according to Žižek—one who recognizes this and, as Brockelman puts it, “commit[s] oneself to the world’s incompleteness and our freedom in it” (10). Žižek sees here that in the act of wrestling the self’s determination away from the world of the ‘they,’ in making the resolute decision, the individual also implicitly rejects the closure of meaning and tradition found in the social itself. It is in the very space of this rejection that the world itself actually *becomes* open, as it is subjectivity itself (and nothing else) that discloses a world. Put another way, because, as Heidegger himself implicitly recognizes, the subject makes up the immanent horizon of world disclosure, the resolute subject discloses the world and the social as incomplete and not fully determined. Hence the radical kernel: it is subjectivity itself—and the ‘modern’ subject in particular—that offer the possibility of radical social change.

It is, however, this last insight that Žižek claims that Heidegger fails to recognize. But this failure is not a simple failure; according to Brockelman and Žižek, in his writings on Technology, Heidegger actually reasserts the pre-modern foundationalism that his early work implicitly denies by positing a redemptive vision of a “whole nature” and an “ethic of humility (*Gelassenheit*) opposed to the “pride” of technological domination” (28). This is, of course, not to say that Brockelman sees Žižek are advocating such pride; it is just that for Žižek, technology in itself is not the main problem—it is rather the retreat from the revolutionary potential in the modern subject that Žižek finds problematic.

The remainder of Brockelman’s book is dedicated to a reading of Žižek’s Lacanian revival of this potential (and reversal of the Heideggerian ‘mistake’), and his defense of the modern subject, as well as an explanation of Žižek’s concept of revolution. While these are well covered topics in Žižek studies, both Brockelman’s perspective on them—read as a response to Heidegger—and his explanations themselves shed light on them in a unique and helpful way. Brockelman’s employment of Brunelleschi in helping make sense of Žižek’s understanding of the modern subject, for example, is especially helpful, as is his reading of Žižek as placing himself in the position of the analyst *vis-à-vis* the reader in his reading of the praxical nature of Žižek’s work. In all, Žižek and Heidegger: The Question Concerning Techno-Capitalism makes a significant contribution to Žižek studies and deserves to be read by those who seek to better understand his work.

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**Improper Modernism: Djuna Barnes’s Bewildering Corpus.** By Daniela Caselli (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2009), x + 289 pp. £60.00 cloth.

In *Improper Modernism: Djuna Barnes’s Bewildering Corpus*, Daniela Caselli examines a “bewildering” array of both well-known and obscure texts by Djuna Barnes, underlining Barnes’s contradictory position as a marginal modernist presence that has, at the same time, come to define a “high modernist notion of literature as an exceedingly difficult artistic endeavor” (2). Caselli’s original readings of Barnes’s short stories and poetry, as well as “unreadable” texts such as *The Ladies Almanack*, *Ryder*, and the *Antiphon*, and Barnes’s masterpiece,
Nightwood, accompany detailed critical attention to an extensive selection of Barnes’s letters and private manuscripts (2). Her thesis here is that the difficulty and “obscurity” of Barnes’s corpus follows an “unacknowledged poetics of impropriety” that resists absorption into a coherent genealogy of twentieth-century literature precisely because of its “inherent skepticism” towards those very forms of categorization (2). At stake in this conception of the “improper” is the question of Barnes’s critical resurrection as a lesbian identified or “queer” author, Barnes’s relationship to the “modern” more generally, and finally, her obsessive use of intertextuality to question literary authority.

In what does this “impropriety” consist? Barnes has generally been considered a “queer” writer, but Caselli urges readers to move beyond easy associations between queer subversion and “impropriety.” Barnes’s work troubles both queer and feminist politics because it is not informed by a “reformist agenda” that advances a coherent political ideology (247). Rather, Caselli reads the queerness of Barnes’s corpus as it presents its own “self-annihilation,” offering itself as “posthumous” in a deliberate attempt to question the “assumptions on which historical progression and development models are based” (258). This is an “anti-modern modernism,” (197) “posthumous” because it “stages its own recycling practices” and foregrounds the relation between “writing, forgery, and genealogy” through an extensive intertextuality that privileges William Blake, among others (81). Following Blake, short stories such as “Cassation” highlight the impossibility of innocence in language, queerly disabling normative developmental trajectories of childhood and sexual reproduction more generally.

Perhaps Barnes’s investment in “posthumously” staging the disintegration, even failure, of her own work through intertextual, genealogical manipulation accounts for its impropriety, but after reading the book, I am not convinced that such texts are necessarily improper in opposition to a “proper” modernist practice. Caselli draws connections between Barnes and the doctrine of impersonality T. S. Eliot articulates in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919), particularly as both figures question the “author as the origin of writing” (88). However, this distrust of singular authorship and self-expression was certainly not limited to Eliot and Barnes, but was present in the work of many modernist figures such as Virginia Woolf, Mary Butts, Wyndham Lewis, D. H. Lawrence, and H. D. On one level, then, Caselli’s argument further alienates Barnes from her modernist contemporaries, without considering the connections between this impropriety and other modernist works that are equally critical of historical development and progress. Nonetheless, Improper Modernism, especially in its close examination of the intertextuality of Barnes’s corpus, its serious archival research, and its close attention to previously under-examined texts, is a groundbreaking contribution to Barnes scholarship.

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Sverker Sörlin and Paul Warde’s Nature’s End opens the field of environmental studies. The thirteen essays plus a preface, introduction, and afterword plow into “the emergence of self-conscious discourses of the environmental” (6), “environing as a historical process” (8), “the environmental as a historical category . . . and how the environment can be studied historically” (9).

In Part 1, “The Rise of the Environmental,” Richard Grove and Vinita Damodaran cite saints: Carl Sauer, “the doyen of American cultural geography” (32) and Clarence Glacken, whose Traces is unrivaled in “scale or authority” (43), and sinners: Paul Colinvaux and Jared Diamond, who suffer from lack “in intellectual training” (40). William Adams contrasts “airbrush[ing out indigenous people] from history, to fit the story . . . of a frontier carved in the wilderness” (55) to “strategies . . . that integrate . . . humanity and nature” (65). Surprisingly, Warde’s essay ignores eighteenth-century mercantilism, proposing instead that “market conditions . . . did not fundamentally intervene in the agricultural process” (88). Sörlin traces Hans Wilson Ahlmann’s rise to prominence
in research on climate fluctuation and Guy Stewart Callendar’s fall along with “human-forced climate change as a serious hypothesis” (104). Holger Nehring identifies an “ecological moment” when “protests led the government towards...[discussion] about the ‘environment’ rather than ‘nature’” (126).

Part 2, “History and the Environmental Sciences,” abandons the political for the local. Robert Dodgshon claims that, “[mountain] habitats were continually in a state of response or adjustment rather than stabilised around fixed management strategies” (159). Similarly, A. Hamilton, F. Watson, A. L. Davies, and N. Hanley deduce from interdisciplinary efforts that sites in Scotland’s upland presently exhibiting “a degree of homogeneity...[had a past] of greater diversity” (180–81). Libby Robin laments “the ‘problem’ of...linkage between environment, politics, society and culture” (189) in Australia.

Part 3, “Making Space: Environments and Their Contexts,” re-territorializes the political. Matthew Evenden and Graeme Wynn would have Canadian “environmental historians...attend to the ways in which ‘natural nations’ have been shaped and sundered by human actions” (236). Tim Cooper maintains that the “‘throwaway society’ began...[with] the inability of late-Victorian society to sustain...waste recycling” (262) and with the belief that “it was morally unproblematic to continue with voracious consumption” (267). In the “domain of agricultural intensification,” Mark Elvin demonstrates “that penetrating to the heart of the origins of China’s most pressing long-term environmental problem...requires going far beyond environmental history as ordinarily conceived” (301). Georgina Endfield discovers that in colonial Mexico, “prolonged [drought] might have been more influential than has traditionally been assumed in triggering social unrest” (320).

Part 4, “Things Human,” gives Kirsten Hastrup a canvas to paint “major fluctuations in the long-term development of Icelandic society” (331). Regrettably, Peter Burke’s Afterword complains that “histories of the environment have been written by individuals without a formal historical training” (353).


The University of California exhumed The Encyclopedia of Evolution (published in 1990 and 1993), re-entitled it Darwin’s Universe, and released it at a modest price in time for Darwin’s bicentennial year. Richard Milner’s book is a fine compilation of entries on Darwiniana in popular culture, and its encyclopedia format works well for juxtaposing information. For example, the Huxley family falls into a block containing everything one might ever want to know about the lineage from Thomas to Aldous, and “Darwin, Charles Robert,” begins a block of entries on the man, his ancestors and descendants, illness, home in Downe, bibliography, Darwinism, and sundry. Indeed, Darwin’s Universe might well be the first place one looks for answers to questions on evolution, but it will not be the last place one looks for them.

Darwin’s Universe is preoccupied with tales of the wild-west (e.g., the “Cope-Marsh Feud”), human-interest anecdotes (Johnny Weissmuller’s becoming “sadly confused about his identity” [410]), and snippets of answers to unstated questions (e.g., the relevance of Frank Capra’s It’s a Wonderful Life to the “Quirky Pathway of Evolution”). Milner may be granted indulgence for wit (even when vulgar: “How Dino Dung Saved England”) but not for anthropomorphic shortcuts and mind-reading (“rhinos and gorillas...are perfectly capable of following through...[with a charge] but would rather not expend more energy or risk possible injury, when a bluff is usually enough to scare away an intruder” [127]), for unrelenting Anglophilia, and equating mimicry with lying and animal cognition with ancestral conditions. He also omits important concepts and errs inexcusably about individuals (e.g., Rosalind Franklin was first...
author on the third paper heralding DNA's secondary structure). Milner also indulges in unsupported salacious gossip (during the voyage of The Beagle, “at night [Darwin] shared the captain's cabin” [36]), undeserved derision (Dian Fossey was “the most fanatic of gorilla conservationists” [15]), and dubious declamations (“If it had not been for Carl Akeley, the gorillas...might have been lost forever” [16]).

Of course, one may feel that all these complaints are trivial compared to Milner’s accomplishments: singularly candid (“Origin Myths”), astute (“Exaptation”), novel (“Neoteny”), and rare (“China, Evolution in”) entries; his perceptive homage to “Wallace, Alfred Russel,” trenchant insights (“the metaphors he [Darwin] included in his exposition of evolutionary theory retain their vigor long after his careful collections of ‘facts’ became outdated” [301]); and reflections on contentious issues (“Science owes much to churchmen who developed geology, natural history, and genetics. Frequently, commitment to both religion and science coexisted in the same individuals” [360]; while empire-building Englishmen “thought the slaughter of indigenous Australians and Tasmanians [was] an inevitable outcome of the clash between ‘advanced’ and ‘savage’ races” [394]; and “cutthroat business practices were...helping society evolve” [406]).

Thus, Darwin’s Universe is a treasure trove of stories of dupes and hoaxes, of evolutionary tales, richly embroidered with poetry, quotations, and up-to-the-minute sources compiled in a Bibliography. Indeed, wherever Darwin’s Universe winds up, on the reference shelf or on the coffee table, it will be consulted frequently.

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Experimental Evolution is not a book for everyone. The editors evidently solicited papers from a coterie of sympathetic investigators and produced a volume of interest to acolytes.

In their introductory chapter, entitled “Darwin’s Other Mistake,” the editors strike a blow for creationism, condemning Darwin’s “counter-factual speculation...[and] erroneous reasoning” (4) as well as the “tendency [of biologists] to adopt unthinkingly Charles Darwin’s bias” (5). But the editors’ real agenda is to distance themselves from “much of biology [that] doesn’t even rise to the level of stamp collection...[whereas their Bailiwick,] experimental evolution resembles physics” (6). Indeed, chords of Lysenkoism ring out in Douglas Futuyama and Albert Bennett’s plans for phenotypic engineering of “entirely new types of organisms...literally building a better mouse” (17).

Thankfully, some chapters deviate from the party line. Frank Rosenzweig and Gavin Sherlock provide a lucid review of pioneering and recent studies on artificial selection in bacteria and yeast, and Samantha Forde and Christine Jessup perform a similar service for phage. Most chapters are concerned with the effects of laboratory natural (sic) selection (aka LNS) on morphology (size and structure), physiology (adaptation and acclimation to physical [temperature, tonicity] and chemical stress), and behavior (“whole-body performance” [334]) of animals (beetles, butterflies, crickets, fruit flies, guppies, rodents, stalk-eyed flies, etc.). Initially, labor-intensive efforts produce “lines” of animals having characteristics available for analysis of “genomic architecture” by the automated methods of bioinformatics, microarray technology, gene sequencing, and genetic engineering. Optimally, the results “allow testing adaptive hypotheses about ecological factors thought to favor particular phenotypes” (276) during simulated evolution.

Some authors find room in their chapters to address other relevant concerns. Duncan Irschick and David Reznick touch on conservation, animal care in zoos, reintroduction programs, and domestication (albeit not of race horses [see 330]). Suzanne Estes and Henrique Teotônio even reflect on the creationists’ concern with the permanence of biological “kinds.” The authors conclude that there is “no intrinsic hereditary property of the species or of populations, only of the individual” (138); hence, there are no eternal “kinds” but
only evolving varieties. And Benjamin Kerr takes a critical detour into pluralism and realism in a scholarly chapter on the evolution of altruism.

But jargon will discourage reading chapters on the evolution of sex (and "parasexuality" in viruses and prokaryotes), aging (which "is not primarily shaped by powerful natural selection" [552]), and speciation ("reproductive isolation between initially partly reproductively isolated populations" [632]). Equally daunting, other authors wander in the rarefied atmosphere of "morphospace" confronting "confounding or missing sources of evolutionarily important developmental variation" (437), and many experiments suffer from simplifying assumptions, self-fulfilling prophecies, and design artifacts. Moreover, inexplicable results are attributed willy-nilly to "trade-offs" or "the differential allocation of some limited resource" (21).

Possibly, LNS offers "the best way to test a given evolutionary hypothesis" (674), or do "differences in methodology and data presentation among studies" (445) and "fundamental flaws in the foundations" (667) of experimental phylogenetics undermine the enterprise? "Unfortunately, we see no easy answer to this question" (678).

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The History of Film Reader. Edited by Marnie Hughes-Warrington (London: Routledge, 2009), x + 326 pp. $44.95 paper.

Film anthologies seem to be proliferating as fast as rabbits, lately. For devotees of film, this is both good news and bad news. In the case of The History of Film Reader, the news is not all that good. In spite of the inclusion of "big" names such as Natalie Zemon Davis (whose submission is more than twenty years old—not the oldest, Roland Barthes's essay is from 1972), Marcia Landy, etc., this volume looks to have been a bit slapped together simply to jump on the anthology bandwagon. Even the more contemporary pieces are not new, and all have appeared elsewhere and definitely elsewhere—although there are several from the last decade, so perhaps I am being overly critical. Not that the fact of their appearing previously is necessarily a bad thing, of itself, but one or two essays written just for this volume would have made a better job of pulling things together. As it is, the title could possibly be more aptly stated as The Historical History of Film Reader. Having said this, nevertheless, the volume would be a good investment for those neophytes who are just coming to the study of film, since it does provide a sampling of critical essays from the last thirty years, and the choice of essays included is generally above average.

Natalie Zemon Davis’s article "Any Resemblance to Persons Living or Dead," regarding the period look of films is still instructive, even though venerable, as she analyzes La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc, Day of Wrath (Vredens Dag) both directed by Carl Theodore Dreyer, and Les Camisards, directed by René Allio. Her analysis of Day of Wrath is particularly good in its examination of the film’s ambiguity, and Dreyer’s successful method of telling two stories at once—the "outer" story and the "inner," so to speak. A common theme runs through her discussion, since all three films deal with religion and its power to divide, with the concomitant tragedies which ensue.

Also among the older essays, Robert Rosenstone’s article raises some no less pertinent issues for those of us who are professional historians. One is the danger inherent in putting history on film owing to the necessity of telling one linear viewpoint, rather than the multiplicity of stories that make up a "history." Another is the question, "Is History dead?" Since Rosenstone’s essay appeared over twenty years ago, some interesting things have happened which were unforeseen to Rosenstone—and to us all—which thrusts the question to the forefront again. With the advent of the Internet, Facebook, Twitter, etc., all forcing the majority of us to "live in the moment," one would think the answer to be ‘yes.’ On the other hand, there seems to have been a revival, in the media, of considerable interest in the past, whether the Sixties, as in Mad Men, the mid-Twentieth with Miss Marple, or the Nineteenth century in movies
such as *The Young Victoria*, and again, in television, with the various *Masterpiece* productions, all expensively and beautifully done. This would seem to put the lie to the affirmative answer, since the more technological we become, the more we seem to be driven by nostalgia for what many see as a simpler, more innocent, albeit totally fictitious past.

Of the more contemporary essays, Susan Aronstein’s 2005 article, “Revisiting the Round Table: Arthur’s American Dream,” amuses and bemuses with its recasting of the 1995 Jerry Zucker film *First Knight* as a Clinton-era fable, “substituting brotherhood for patriarchy, service for leadership, responsibility for manifest destiny, and a global village for American expansionism” (162). She is persuasive in her argument that *First Knight* can be better seen as a political allegory than a love story (she is not the only one to argue this idea, as she points out [161]).

Michelle Pierson also engages with the look of films in her 2005 discussion of “A Production Designer’s Cinema,” which deals with historical authenticity. Pierson chooses such flamboyant examples as *Moulin Rouge* (2001), *The Mummy* (1999), *The Mummy Returns* (2001), and Tim Burton’s 1999 *Sleepy Hollow*. Interesting choices, to be sure, but certainly fantastical rather than historical, even though set in the past—none pretends to be more than that. Nevertheless, Pierson manages to fit them into her discussion of authenticity by inserting the term “sincerity” to describe certain of the performances within those extravaganzas. In a somewhat jarring juxtaposition, she tosses *Gladiator* into the mix and, while it falls under the sincerity umbrella, it doesn’t accord well with the other examples.

Other articles of particular note include Sander Gilman’s riveting “Is Life Beautiful? Can the Shoah be Funny?” which first appeared in *Critical Inquiry* in 2000. This is a must-read but a little indescribable. Gilman refers to Charlie Chaplin’s *Great Dictator*, as well as to the Three Stooges *You Natzy Spy*, as some examples of response to the Nazi threat in the early 1940s; and contrasts *Schindler’s List* with Roberto Benigni’s *Life is Beautiful* as more recent examples, describing the mixed reactions of audiences to any hint, or non-hint, of humor with regard to the subject matter. Gilman also discusses Jurek Becker’s 1974 film, *Jacob the Liar*, in the same context. Becker, a child-survivor, displays a much colder, more pessimistic, view of his own survival. Begnini, a non-Jew, presents an “Italian” model—the Italians are basically good and the Jews are well-assimilated—as opposed to the bestiality of the Nazis, while Becker sees an entirely different picture of his own survival as entirely accidental.

Gilman’s premise, in the end, is that the survivors can speak of preserving their sense of humor in the face of horror, but that audiences have considerable difficulty feeling comfortable about their own laughter. Having stated this, however, he concludes by saying, “Laughter is again possible in the 1990s as it was in the early 1940s. But it is also made possible by a filmmaker who is self-consciously understood as not being Jewish, as not needing the authenticity that a Jewish public identity would bring to the telling of the tale” (“Is Life Beautiful? Can the Shoah be Funny?” in *Processes of Transposition*, ed. Marnie Hughes-Warrington [Routledge, 2009], 119).

As I began by saying, the majority of the articles included in this volume are of high quality, so for those interested in the study of film history, but not as yet experienced, this would be a good place to start, certainly for the essay above, if for none other.

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**Processes of Transposition: German Literature and Film.** Edited by Christiane Schönfeld and Hermann Rasche (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 384 pp. 383 pp. €76.00/$114.00 cloth.

Sometimes one can say a book emulates the material, of which it speaks, in style and tone. This is the case with *Processes of Transposition*, edited by Christiane Schönfeld in collaboration with Hermann Rasche. As densely packed as an Expressionist film, and as weighty as a Goethe opus, the various articles discuss the translation of German literature into the more mobile medium of the film. In so doing, the authors not only analyze the adaptations but also
consider the reciprocal influences—literature to film, film to literature—as well as the wider aspects of the filmmaker’s interpretation of the author’s words (a recent article in the Los Angeles Times discusses this concept in connection with the latest Harry Potter release. The adaptor has introduced a completely new scene based on his feelings (emphasis mine) about the story, and the behavior of the characters).

In an insightful analysis of Heinrich von Kleist’s Marquise von O, Ricarda Schmidt contrasts the differences of treatment between Erich Romer’s 1976 movie of the same name and Christoph Stark’s 2001 remake, Julietta. The former is more faithful to Kleist’s novella, which solely depicts male on female violence and its effect on the victim, while Stark’s Julietta changes the story to spread the blame around more equally between the genders. On the face of it, this seems to dilute the message of the original; however, since the rapist in both cases is portrayed as sympathetic, remorseful and loving, the same minimization of the damage resulting from such violence is implicit. In the case of Julietta, this would seem to be an example of the above-mentioned insertion of the adaptor’s own feelings into the author’s intention—rather than the upright black-and-white mores of the nineteenth century, Stark offers an ethical grey area, presumably for “relevance.” Schmidt moves into a similar grey area, as well, since she analyzes, but does not opine.

While essays on Eyes Wide Shut, and F. W. Murnau’s 1931 Tabu suffer from a lack of a definitive point of view, one of the more interesting submissions included is Gerald Bär’s “Perceptions of the Self as the Other,” which considers the motif of the doppelganger as not just seeing oneself, but as haunted by the “other” (Ich, Nicht Ich), most particularly where the double assumes the role of a shadow personality, as in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, William Wilson, Dorian Gray, etc. (Bär notes that there are many more male subjects than women as “others.” He quotes Jean Paul Richter, writing in the nineteenth century, who explains this fact as the female’s lack of ability to self-reflect. I cite this with no comment [92, n.10]).

Bär compares the idea of the doppelganger to the phenomenon of seeing oneself on the screen for the first time in early motion pictures, where the self-image or reflection becomes “transportable” (93) leading to superstitious fear of “soul-stealing.” In support of this notion, he cites the example of a traffic-policeman who, on seeing himself in action on film, rushed at the screen as though to grasp the image only to embrace a “flat white solid surface.” Evidently it took the poor, bewildered man some time to restore himself to reality.

Other articles of note deal with Germany’s history of anti-Semitism, both before, during, and after the rise and fall of the Nazi regime. Yahya Elsaghe describes the use of suggestively “Jewish” sounding names and stereotypical references to physical characteristics—noses, for example—to express anti-Jewish sentiment in the works of Thomas Mann. Elsaghe provides such examples as Dr. Sammet, an obvious hint at the Doctor’s Semite origins, as well as the employment of a character named Spinelli, at first glance certainly Italian, however Spinelli is revealed as being born “simply” in Lemberg, a clever play on words. Not so astonishingly, in the screen adaptations of Mann’s work produced after the war, the exact opposite occurs. Names of characters formerly villainously Jewish are carefully changed to neutral ones pointing to no particular origin, and some nefarious characters possessing Fagan-like physiognomy are done away with entirely. According to Elsaghe, this situation maintains, overall, in German cinema until the 1980s when, as memories fade, the Jewish-sounding names and stereotypical features recur in villains, prostitutes, and other roles of dubious character.

Birgit Maier-Katkin’s “Literary and Cinematographic Reflections on the Human Condition by Anna Seghers and Fred Zinnemann,” although a mouthful as a title, offers some pertinent comments on Zinnemann’s adaptation of Seghers’ novel, The Seventh Cross. Seghers’ novel, written in the late 1930s, dealt with a patchwork of historical moments under the totalitarian regime, giving readers a “complex and ambivalent message about diverse and complicated responses to Nazi intrusion into individual and community life.” Zinnemann’s adaptation lacks the diversity of the original in favor of a focus on just one individual’s story. As Maier-Katkin explains, “the film accepts the idea of a coherent heroic and teleological sequence while the novel . . . contemplates the past as an idiosyncratic and shifting narrative of multiple
fragmented and contradictory experiences” (142). This variance of perspective, of course, is due entirely to the different circumstances in which each version was produced—Seghers writing before the outbreak of World War II, and Zinnemann in the midst. Furthermore, Seghers’ Communist affiliations shape her views as did her French and Mexican exile periods. Zinnemann, an emigrant to America where he settled, by contrast, speaks in the assumed voice of his adopted country, stressing the heroism of an individual (Georg Heisler, as he is called) and simplifying the multiple frames of the original. Produced more for propagandistic than literary motives, Zinnemann is well aware of the tenor of the times and concentrates on those aspects of the story which will resonate patriotically with his audience (although the film does not delve deeply into Nazism, but rather the triumph of the human spirit).

In other examples of note, Juliet Wigmore explores obscenity and sadomasochism in “Sex, Violence and Schubert,” an examination of La Pianiste, one might say a “typical” Michael Haneke film (“obscene,” as he, himself, claims). Susan Tebbutt discusses Sidonie, Patrice Djoufack questions Western and non-Western responses to Nowhere in Africa, and there are still more, all offering perspectives of interest.

Space does not permit the mention of more than a sampling of the volume’s many and various entries—as I mentioned above, this is a dense package, and while one of the anthology’s virtues, it is also one of its biggest drawbacks. Overall, it tries to do too much, and say too much; focus is lost in favor of all-inclusiveness—nevertheless, have it on your film-library shelf.

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Heroes and Victims: Remembering War in Twentieth-Century Romania. By Maria Bucur (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), xvi + 352 pp. $75.00 cloth; $27.95 paper.

Although the literature on the politics of memory has grown exponentially during the last two decades, Romania remains an understudied country and relatively little attention has been given to memorialisation. Heroes and Victims tries to fill this gap by exploring the way in which the World Wars were remembered in twentieth-century Romania. A wide range of sources of information are used, from direct participation in national commemorations and Ministries of Justice and Culture official documents, local archives, personal memoirs, poetry and film to the voices of the wider public as represented on the internet. While the book relies mostly on the historical and anthropological literature on the cult of the dead, scholars of memorialisation, transitional justice, and de-communization will also benefit from the valuable material it presents in painstaking detail.

The book’s seven chapters are structured chronologically. The first chapter, focused on the pre-World War I period, details the local, religious and official death rituals observed in the provinces of Moldova, Wallachia, and Transylvania. Chapter 2 details the tragedies of World War I on the Romanian territory by looking at both the mourning processes that took place right after the war and the subsequent localized efforts at memorializing the war dead. Chapter 3 follows the attempts of Greater Romania to control local commemorations through the adoption of legislation regarding school policies, the funding of building projects and memorials embodying remembrances of the war, and the establishment of Heroes Day and other national holidays linked to World War I.

The interwar policies and processes are identified in Chapter 4 as key to understanding post-1941 official commemorations. Among these are the inter-war official commemorations of the Great War, Romania’s participation on both sides of the conflict during World War II, the war crimes trials organized at the end of the War, and the Stalinism and nationalist-communism of the post-war period. In Chapter 5 the individual voices of those who found themselves unrepresented by the official commemorative discourses are considered. Chapter 6 draws on official and vernacular memorialisation to explore the transformations of the commemorative discourses regarding the World Wars during post-communist times. The concluding chapter continues the discussion on post-communist memorialisation by examining the way post-communist
governments have used the memory of the World Wars to gain additional legitimacy, and proposed the concept of “post-memory” to understand the way generations with no experience with communism relate to the remembrances of the 1940–53 period.

An engaging reading, written in an elegant style accessible to both academics and non-academics, this volume will be of interest to historians, scholars of Romanian history and politics, as well as anthropologists and sociologists alike. Scholars of memorialisation, transitional justice and de-communization will gain valuable insight from the volume’s discussions of Romania’s competing Nazi and communist pasts and the way post-communist Romanians have moved to a post-memory discourse in the twenty-first century.

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This volume, in the Routledge Critical Thinkers series, gives a judicious, balanced and reflective short introduction to its subject. As its placement in the series implies, it is suitable for students and, as its subject might imply, it is directed at more general readers for whom that which Leavis stood for, that which Leavis means (topics ably covered in the volume) remain unstated paradigms of what people read for. For students, there is a helpful annotated bibliography, chapter summaries and boxed entries of complementary and supporting material; for more general readers, there is an engagement with Leavis in the context of contemporary reading habits (as, citing Terry Eagleton, Richard Storer implies), but surpassed, superseded; there is something of the memorial service (or—to use a metaphor from the book—an exhumation rite) about the volume.

Yet Leavis’s views—on the inherent relation between linguistic expression and consciousness of life; on the values of a humanistic education in what he called a “technologico-Benthamite” world (even more so now than when he coined the term almost a half-century ago)—have an abiding relevance, cautiously articulated here, even if implicit throughout is the question of Leavis’s contemporary relevance itself. Storer quotes Joe Moran’s view of Leavis’s education strategy as having a lasting “oppositional” value. While this formulation leaves of course several issues open (Leavis as “straw man”?), such could also be his influence as a whole, and perhaps the value of Storer’s volume is that it clarifies by negotiating contraries, playing them out in the new contexts of “the rise of Theory.” In his “Thought, Language and Objectivity,” Leavis speaks highly of a 1972 volume by Stanislav Andreski, Social Sciences as Sorcery, an entertaining if waspish critique (the opening of chapter 16, redolent of Kingsley Amis’s vituperative critique of higher education, is especially memorable, though Leavis was not fond of Amis), in which the University of Reading sociologist pleads for a “kind of systematic study which aims at providing careful description, substantiated explanations and factually supported generalizations.” Leavis would carefully pick between these particulars, retaining those which tend to specificity and exactitude, to “discrimination,” and rejecting those more redolent of abstraction. While Storer goes some way to providing this sense, there is room for what (following this argument) might be a more “Blakean Leavis,” given the belated, “economical” (to use Storer’s word) yet fundamental place of that poet for Leavis and the central place (including the title) in his late collection Nor Shall My Sword (dedicated, feelingly, “to the York students who gave me a new Blake with clean margins to write in”).

This would be an added insight and would modulate a sense that the commentary was as much on D. H. Lawrence’s Phoenix (a collection which the Cambridge teacher held in high
regard) as on Leavis. Lawrence, here, as for Leavis, is the spectral presence in Leavis's work from the beginning (the novelist died in 1930); this persists not only in the critic's manner, awareness and radical (root) terminology but also in Storer's own articulations and approach to Leavis. Yet Lawrence is not the looming figure he was: he is now read against the grain, the "psychoanalytical" approach being central, in a way contrary to both his own pronouncements (for example, in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*) and to Leavis's, who, as Storer points out, opined against such a "new orthodoxy" in the approach to the writer whose work he had helped make canonical.

Storer pleads his case for Leavis ably; that, to paraphrase his own argument and the general contemporary judgement of Leavis, he comes "close, but..." lies in the nature of such problems and complexities from which criticism, theory and life are made. What remains is a vital consciousness, seminal to Leavis and strategic to Storer's book, that, as Neil Roberts notes in a reminiscence ("'Leavisite' Cambridge in the 1960s," in *F. R. Leavis: Essays and Documents*, ed. Ian MacKillop and Richard Storer [London: Continuum, 2005]): "the study of literature is a compelling serious matter" for its own sake (265).

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**Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism, Volume 1: Case Studies and Country Surveys.**
Edited by Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xiii + 403 pp. £61.00/$95.00 cloth.

This, and its article volume of "Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives" (not reviewed here), give a comprehensive and productive overview of a field which has stirred both the popular imagination and academic discourse. The current volume considers eighteen states, from foundation members of the European Economic Community to those largely post-communist countries which were finalising European Union accession agreements during the timeframe of the volume (largely 2002–4), and extending to one country, Norway, which remains outside the EU. There is regretfully no chapter on the Netherlands, thrust into prominence because of the 2005 rejection of the EU Constitution, and (given the inclusion of Norway) some observations about Turkey might have been complementary.

As expected, perhaps, given that the editors, especially Paul Taggart, have done much to introduce and institutionalise the distinction between "hard" ("principled," non-negotiable) and "soft" (strategic, contingent, conditional) Euroscepticism and to make this originally journalistic term more academically rigorous, most of the chapters, as descriptive case studies of their respective countries, refer to this conceptualisation and base their discussion of the party systems upon it. Interestingly (to use a word overplayed in some chapters), however, Aleks Szczerbiak in his chapter on Poland, and the editors in their summary, seek to go beyond this dichotomy. Szczerbiak refers to Petr Kopecký and Cas Mudde's fourfold distinction (between "euro-enthusiasts," "europragmatists," eurosceptics," and "eurorejects") ("The Two Sides of Euroscepticism: Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe," *European Union Politics* 3.3 [2002]: 297–326), which nuances the concepts but in the process reifies the unstable, developing strategies of contestation.

Elsewhere in the volume, Agnes Batory (on Hungary), Evald Mikkel and Andres Kasekamp (on Estonia), and Karen Henderson (on Slovakia), follow Szczerbiak. In the closing chapter, the editors qualify the usefulness of the original dichotomy, and introduce a tripartite division of contestation: *limited* (widespread but generally peripheral, as in most of the foundation members); *constrained* (i.e. by the trajectory of accession, as in many of the 2004 accession states); and *open* (e.g. in the Czech Republic, Sweden and the UK). While such typologies serve a useful function, of more benefit is the editors' remark that the truth is in the details, in the particular national characteristics of party competition, and the historical integration (in more than the EU sense) of the nation in "Europe." Thus analysis should proceed from an interrelation of salient variables, such as ideology, party competition and the possibility
of coalition, public opinion (as Eurobarometer has repeatedly shown, support for the Union in general has hovered just over the 50% mark), the stage of integration, and the government-opposition divide (parties being habitually more inclined to scepticism when out of office). Nicholas Aylott on Sweden, Franz Fallend on Austria, and Mikkel and Kasekamp on Estonia adopt this fruitful approach.

This is a rich compendium of data from a strategically important, historic and now historical moment in the evolution of the European Union, even if its timeliness is somewhat offset by the lag between the period considered (2002–3) and that of publication (2008). While the editors present their own initial comparisons in their concluding chapters, the specific contexts of ostensibly compatible states can be assessed as the reader works through the chapters. As this volume focuses, as its subtitle reveals, on “party politics,” the distinction between the relatively low party articulation of “European issues” (for example, their low salience in domestic politics) and the relatively high level of Euroscepticism in public opinion, remains an unanswered, or even unanswerable, question. The concentration then on party politics might somewhat hypostatise the issue but it in no way detracts from the usefulness of the volume.

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Women and Achievement in Nineteenth-Century Europe. By Linda L. Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), ix + 300 pp. $80.00 cloth/$24.99 paper.

A study of “women of achievement” in nineteenth-century Europe might seem rather old-fashioned—a return to the early version of women’s history that focused on the “firsts,” those extraordinary women who were the first to do this or be that, a kind of inspirational hagiography that revealed little about the lives of most women and the social, political, economic, and cultural relations of power in which they existed. In this work, however, Linda Clark uses the lives of individual “achievers” to explore those relations of power. By examining the ways that “determined women managed to negotiate social, cultural, attitudinal, or legal restrictions on their sex and to expand the limits of what was possible for themselves and later generations of women” (3), Clark highlights a central theme in recent research in nineteenth-century women’s history: the permeability of the boundary between the private (supposedly feminine) and the public (supposedly masculine) spheres.

The book’s organization is both chronological and thematic. The first chapter on “Women and the Revolutionary Era” focuses on the period from roughly 1760 to the early 1800s, while the final chapter examines the suffrage movement of the final decades of the nineteenth century, followed by an epilogue on “looking beyond 1914.” In between, chapters take a century-wide look at women in literature, the arts, charitable and reform movements, education, and the professions. In these chapters Clark weaves the stories of both individual women and women’s organizations into the wider historical and historiographical narratives. Chapter 4 on “Caring and Power,” for example, places the crucial story of women’s work in charitable and philanthropic organizations in the historical context of expanding state intervention and regulation, growing class consciousness, and changing religious patterns, and introduces important issues of historiography such as the debate over social control and the feminization of religion. Clark’s geographical coverage is also impressive. As the title indicates, this is a study of European, not just western European women, although—almost inevitably, given the focus on public “achievement”—middle- and upper-class women dominate. At the end of each chapter, Clark provides a 2–3 page thematically organized bibliography pointing the reader to key books in the subject area.

Such a clear-cut organization indicates the book’s purpose. Women and Achievement in Nineteenth-Century Europe appears as part of Cambridge University Press’s “New Approaches to European History” textbook series aimed primarily at undergraduate readers. Not surprisingly, then, a specialist in the field will find little that is startling or new here. For the non-specialist historian and teacher, however, Clark’s work serves as a useful summary and synthesis of recent research, and the wealth of detail in the book makes it a rich treasure trove for the lecturer seeking interesting and
illuminating examples and anecdotes. Undergraduate readers may, however, find this abundance of detail overwhelming.

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Margaret Atwood and the Female Bildungsroman. By Ellen McWilliams (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2009), xii + 170 pp. £45.00 cloth.

In Margaret Atwood and the Female Bildungsroman, Ellen McWilliams provides an in-depth study of Margaret Atwood’s renegotiation of the Bildungsroman such that it gives voice to both her feminist and nationalist concerns. McWilliams traces the movement of the Bildungsroman, or story of personal development and progress toward an autonomous identity, from its German origins in the eighteenth century to the rise of the English novel in the nineteenth. With Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre (1847) the Bildungsroman, heretofore a tale of a young man’s achievement of masculine perfectibility, becomes the female Bildungsroman. If Jane Eyre is a landmark novel for the female Bildungsroman, James Joyce’s A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916) is seminal in its use of the Bildungsroman to write the development of the artist. The genre was revived, according to McWilliams, by the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Women writers at this time adopted the Bildungsroman as a means of writing women’s lives such that women are presented as achieving “real” subjectivity and assuming authentic female agency in the world.

Bronte’s Jane Eyre and Joyce’s Portrait, McWilliams claims, have significantly influenced Atwood’s writing. However, McWilliams argues that unlike other feminist writers in the latter part of the twentieth century, Atwood does not simply imitate the Bildungsroman in her novels but subverts the genre as well. McWilliams identifies two basic methods employed by Atwood in her subversion of the traditional Bildungsroman. The first is to replace the story of male progress toward an ideal with the narrative of female negation, particularly of food, as that which is constitutive of autonomous identity. This strategy is evident in Atwood’s novels The Edible Woman (1969), in which the main character, Marian, refuses to eat, and Lady Oracle (1976), in which Joan, the main character, turns from overeating to starvation.

The second and more important device Atwood uses to subvert the patriarchal heritage of the Bildungsroman is to substitute stories of linear progression toward a cohesive, unitary self, which Atwood implies is a masculinist understanding of identity, with narratives that inscribe femininity through the dispersal of the self into a multiplicity of identities. Although Atwood’s preference for writing the self as dispersed and multiple is present in all of her novels, McWilliams thinks it is most fully apparent in The Robber Bride (1993). In this novel the main character, Zenia, tells multiple “fictions of her life histories” (97), drawing the audience’s attention to their “inherent deceitfulness” (97). According to McWilliams, The Robber Bride and other later novels such as Cat’s Eye (1988) and The Blind Assassin (2000) also illustrate Atwood’s increasing interest in the ways that multiplicity of feminine identity are forged through language and storytelling. Thus, these novels serve not only to subvert the traditional Bildungsroman but also to write the life of the female artist, providing the missing female counterpart to Joyce’s Stephen Dedalus in the English literary tradition.

The multiplicity of self in Atwood’s novels, McWilliams argues, inscribes a new Canadian national identity that parallels the inscription of feminine identity. In her earlier novels The Nature Hut (1966) (unpublished) and Surfacing (1972), Atwood engages with the theme of survival—in the wilderness, the snow, the North—as the key symbol of Canadian identity and reflects on the association of woman with nature. Among her later works, Alias Grace (1996) reconsiders these themes in a new light. Atwood, however, according to McWilliams, gradually becomes more interested in multiple identity as a symbol for Canada, a nation containing multiple nationalities within itself.

McWilliams’ analysis of Atwood’s “imaginative engagement with writing women’s lives” (127), is insightful, rigorous, and gives the reader a better understanding of Atwood’s life work. However, although McWilliams claims that Jane Eyre “has a special relationship with Atwood’s work, as will become clear later” (17), the novel receives only very brief
discussion near the end of the book (133–34). Also, one of McWilliams’ central arguments is that Atwood renegotiates the Bildungsroman to give voice to her feminist concerns. Yet, nowhere is The Handmaid’s Tale (1985), arguably Atwood’s most explicitly feminist work, discussed. Moreover, McWilliams makes the very fruitful claim that Atwood’s fiction “occupies a mid-ground between traditional Anglo-American and French feminist models of women’s writing” (122). Although this thesis would give much insight into understanding Atwood’s work, no explicit discussion of or argument for it is provided in the text.

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**Education Policy in Britain.** By Clyde Chitty. 2nd ed. (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), xvi + 280 pp. £20.99 cloth.

Clyde Chitty in his analysis of educational policy in Britain since the end of World War II is extraordinarily detailed. It is precisely in these details, however, that lay the challenge facing Attlee’s Labor government effort to bring democracy to English education. Creating a modern comprehensive system of state primary, secondary, and post-secondary education, to which the Attlee Labor government aspired, was met by entrenched institutions of a traditional class structure, persisting through the nineteenth century, the political economists of which held that it was hurtful to the worker to be educated beyond his status.

The awakening of British popular consciousness derived from the war experience and led to the electoral victory of the Labor Party that unexpectedly repudiated the successful war administration at the war’s end. The Attlee government sought to solidify the democratic solidarity of the war years through a comprehensive educational system within community based schools. The entrenched institutional setting was such that these goals were difficult to implement.

Chitty deals with the impact on the various actors implied by the social reconstruction required to change the relationship between education and society. Parents, localities, the education profession, the Civil Service educational establishment, and the political administration of the party in power were all involved in this process of reconstruction. In the immediate postwar period, comprehensive neighborhood schools were advocated to remove the rigid segregation by social milieu. Even at the primary level, schools had been segregated by a curriculum that prepared working-class children for vocational training and middle-class children for an academic training that could lead to a liberal arts university education. Devising a uniform curriculum challenged the traditional teachers in the schools. Unfamiliarity with the material brought about resistance even when the goals were agreed. Chitty contrasts the problems created by the policy change in England with that in Wales and particularly Scotland. These more egalitarian societies found the changes less threatening and thus more easily complied with.

But the educational aims of the Labor government had not been fully realized when Labor was defeated. The cry “standards not structures” sought to bring England into the modern world of competitive attainment in a service-oriented labor market. Professional skills became the goal to make the British workforce more competitive. The class structure of tradition was preempted by that of achievement. Education for education’s sake was replaced by the market model with both funding and educational philosophy being conditioned by the market place. As Chitty writes, “even ‘collectivist’ Wales and Scotland felt the effects of a succession of radical and far reaching policies designed to destroy the educational culture which had developed between 1944 and 1979.”

New Labor’s promise of return to the earlier paradigm turned out to be fundamentally that of the Conservatives. Chitty quotes the findings of an OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) survey which tell a remarkable story about the sheer scale of educational inequality in England: “In this 2006 Survey, the UK had the third highest tested scores amongst 29 OECD countries. But it is interesting to note that skills were more unequally distributed in England and Northern Ireland than in Wales or
Scotland. Perhaps more damning still is what this Survey reveals about how social background influences achievement. The influence of social origins on individuals’ scores in the UK was greater than in all but four of the OECD countries.” Moreover, England has the highest rate of early school leaving, the lowest rate of achievement in internationally recognized qualifications, and the lowest participation rate in higher education of any country in Europe except Spain and Portugal. Relevant data show: 15%, Britain; 30%, USA; 37%, Japan; 20%, West Germany.

Thus, the subservience of educational ends to commercial and industrial priorities in addition to its educational status compared to the rest of Europe shows that English educational policy does more to lock in intergenerational inequality than to promote social mobility. Chitty, however, documenting that this inequality is not inherent, cogently clarifies the obstacles to institutional reform.

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In the Foreword, Michael Ignatieff notes that this wonderfully written book is the story of how Europe was reborn from the Dark Ages. In addition, “It is also a study of how mosaics and sarcophagi, statues and pillars—the fragments of art left behind—reflect and transmit the experience of a civilization’s collapse and rebirth” (ix). The author of this literary gem, the late Gustaf Sobin, was a poet, novelist, and essayist who spent over forty years wandering around landscapes of Provence, searching for fragments of art that left traces of the past and thus formed a “Ladder of Shadows” to a vanished society. The present volume consists of twenty-five essays concentrating on Provence and Languedoc from roughly the third to the thirteenth centuries. Perhaps a poet could have written such an elegant book filled with marvelous evocative images of southeastern France in the Middle Ages.

In this brief review only a sampling of the twenty-five essays can be given. The author begins with the modern city of Apt, Roman in origin, which floats as it were over the antique, but the substructures of which preserve the original plan. Apt is, as Sobin notes, a palimpsest. It is a poignant story of a city that underwent at least five separate destructions. Bronze coins found in caves and grottoes in southeastern France “bear singular witness to a violent moment in human history” (15). They are what remain of personal treasures buried at the time of the first waves of barbarian invasions by the local Gallo-Roman population; each hoard of coins contextualized is thus a manifestation of a genuine misfortune. The sarcophagi of Arles reflect the shift from classic to Christian art as lingering pagan iconography is replaced by Christian pedagogical iconography. The style also changes, marked by a reduction in relief, “a steady breakdown in perspective as foreground and background merge” (62). The cover of the book shows a torso of a statue of Venus disfigured by early Christians because it embodied pagan religiosity. There were other motives, however. “Much of antique sculpture was reemployed as basic building material” (45). River baptisms were also suppressed because of pagan connections, replaced by octagonal baptisteries such as the one at Riez, all symbolizing the eighth day and resurrection. Connected with baptisms is the story of St. Véran who demystified the waters of the Fontaine-de-Vaucluse the reputed curative powers of which drew pilgrims still clinging to pagan beliefs such as a monstrous dragon and nymphs associated with the waters. The saint built on the site an oratory in honor of the Virgin Mary. It was a new age.

One of the most fascinating essays is one devoted to Sobin’s search for the vanished city of Theopolis (City of God), based on a Latin inscription from the fifth century. Although the author’s efforts proved to be fruitless, the search itself was heroic and poignant. From debris of an early-medieval glassworks found at the base of a cliff at Sainte-Marthe, Sobin gives the readers an evocative picture of glassmaking in Provence before it vanished along with the itinerant craftsmen who produced the pale,
translucent blue glass, of which only tear-shaped beads (droplets) remain.

In succeeding essays the author traces the development of Romanesque architecture including vaulted naves, domes, attempts at human figurative representation, and on the basis of existing putlog holes, how scaffolds were used. There are also two essays on incastellamento, the resettling of the rural population around castles for protection, and the eventual development of faubourgs and suburbs along with the disappearance of the castles that were once at the center, often replaced by massive Gothic churches. Sobin also tells readers about waves of deforestation and the emergence of new flora, the importance of the salt trade and how salt was processed. The penultimate essay concerns the myth of Mary Magdalene’s presence in Provence and the veneration of her relics at the Basilica of Saint-Maxim and Vézelay, a fascinating story of hagiographic fictions. Sobin concludes that it matters little that the bones were nothing more than “the pathetic remains of some anonymous fourth-century personage” (195). This wonderful book ends with a poignant essay concerning a vanished series of fresco paintings depicting Genesis. As Sobin stares at the blank plaster, he says that perhaps he was looking for more than residual deposits—“wasn’t it the image of heaven itself that we sought? Waiting for the gray—for only an instant—to glisten blue?” (109).

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In his Introduction to Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, Richard Rorty describes the careers of his philosophical heroes. “It is against this background [of the irrelevance of philosophy to most of culture] that we should see the work of the three most important philosophers of our century—Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Dewey. Each tried, in his early years, to find a new way of formulating an ultimate context for thought…. Each of the three, in his later work, broke free of the Kantian conception of philosophy as foundational…. Thus their later work is therapeutic rather than constructive, edifying rather than systematic, designed to make the reader question his own motives for philosophizing rather than to supply him with a new philosophical program” (5–6.)

This marvelous and important book is Rorty’s “early work” (first published in 1979). In it he argues with analytic philosophy on its own terms. His mastery of the history of philosophy allows him to argue convincingly for the contingency of the “problems of philosophy” that have in various guises formed the agenda of philosophy since Descartes. In outline, his narrative of the history of modern philosophy portrays it as the hope that epistemology, as the general theory of all that can be known, will re-establish philosophy as the queen of the sciences. A precondition of this hope was Descartes’s construction of “the mind” as a non-material substance, or at least some kind of entity whose connection to the material world is problematic. Thus epistemology as a general science of how anything whatsoever is known is philosophy’s task. Fulfilling this task will provide a foundation for every part of human knowledge.

After setting out this historical framework, Rorty, in a series of brilliant chapters, discusses contemporary (in 1979) foundationalist philosophy, dealing with the leading thinkers of the late seventies on topics in philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, and epistemology. Following his heroes, he does not (usually) propose new theories or new ways of approaching philosophical issues, but rather argues that the issues themselves are artifacts of ways of thinking that are not forced on us by reality, as it were. Rorty admiringly builds on and integrates arguments from Sellars, Davidson, Quine, Kuhn, and other analytic philosophers who had taken significant steps in the dismantling of the Kantian-Cartesian picture of knowledge and reality.

Rorty’s later work largely abandons this book’s attempt to transform analytic philosophy by arguing within analytic philosophy and directly engaging philosophers and their arguments. At a meta-level, then, his path mirrors the paths of his heroes. His later work
implements his vision of post-Kantian philosophy, engaging with his culture in such books as *Achieving Our Country* (Harvard University Press, 1998). In keeping with his disillusionment with contemporary philosophy, his academic appointments from the early eighties until his death in 2007 were in literature departments.

This was a stunning book when it appeared. It changed the way some people, including this reviewer, thought about philosophy. Thirty years later, most of it is still cogent argument against more recent versions of continuing foundationalism. The philosophers have changed, and so the details of the theories, but most of the issues and fundamental positions held by systematic philosophers remain the same. If anything, analytic philosophy has regressed, from a Rortian point of view. The blossoming of pre-Critical metaphysics has displaced Quine, Sellars, and Davidson from the mainstream. Philosophers have become more specialized, so that many of the brightest lack the historical understanding and cultural breadth that enables the kind of role for philosophers that Rorty recommended. With some important exceptions, edifying philosophers are a marginalized breed.

Was Rorty right? Except for a few matters of detail, I still find only one point on which I have always taken issue with Rorty. Rorty’s particular kind of historicism leads him to deny that there are perennial philosophical problems that are thought about in various ways at different times. Since Plato’s social and cultural milieu is so different from that of Davidson, and since philosophical problems are imbedded in their cultural conditions, there is no meaningful sense in which Davidson and Plato can be addressing the same issues. Each epoch has its own philosophical problems. As one episteme becomes another, its problems become other problems.

My disagreement with Rorty is also disagreement with Heidegger and Foucault, as well as with Kuhn. I think it is a mistake to view cultures as uniform, monolithic structures of ideas. When Heidegger, in the *Question of Technology and Other Essays* (Harper Torchbook, 1977, p. 117), asserts that Aristotle could not conceive of the Galilean perspective on motion, of free-falling bodies rather than bodies seeking their natural places, he ignores the fact that Democritus’ perspective was available and in fact discussed by Aristotle. Likewise, Bellarmine could read Lucretius, whose *De Rerum Natura* was printed since the 1400s. Cultures, and the modes of thought they contain, are more diverse than what the “epoch,” “episteme,” and “paradigm” conceptions imagine.

While the details of philosophical projects certainly differ, there are enough commonalities between Plato’s and Davidson’s concerns, such as, for instance, that Davidson’s posthumous book *Truth and Predication* (Harvard University Press, 2005) reasonably devotes a chapter to Plato’s answer and Aristotle’s response. More generally, studying the history of philosophy is a necessary component of doing Rorty’s kind of philosophy, and Rorty himself was very widely read in his predecessors, and published essays on the history of philosophy. Many contemporary philosophers claim to learn from their predecessors. Aristotle and Plato are inspirations and guides in many recent trends in philosophy, from virtue ethics to essentialism.

This is not to deny that there have been major transformations of questions. Reconfigurations and new agendas emerge, as with Descartes and Kant, with subsequent major changes of conceptions of what the problems are and what a solution must be. Sextus and Hume are addressing different questions. Rorty is right to point out that inattention to the cultural contexts of earlier thinkers can distort both them and our conception of what we are doing now.

This re-issue of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is not merely a re-issue. There are three additional essays included in the re-issue: There is an appreciation by David Bromwich, who was Rorty’s colleague in the Princeton English department. This essay rings true with everyone who was Rorty’s student or colleague. Michael Williams contributes an extraordinarily perceptive and intelligent essay, the best short introduction to Rorty’s thought I have ever seen. Most interestingly, there is an early previously-unpublished essay by Rorty himself on the role of philosophy in culture. “The Philosopher as Expert” in effect defends contemporary philosophy, including analytic philosophy, not as a science which resolves perennial problems, but as a free questioning of which questions should be asked. The essay
thus conceives of philosophy as foundational, not in the sense of arbitrating for the other areas of culture, but as the kind of enquiry that is, at least ideally, central to a culture as an ongoing enterprise. This early piece shows both Rorty’s career-long concern with the role of philosophy in culture and the extent to which in his later career he became progressively disillusioned with philosophy as actually practiced.

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Aliens and Sojourners: Self as Other in Early Christianity. By Benjamin H. Dunning (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), iii + 186 pp. $49.95/£32.50 cloth.

Benjamin H. Dunning’s book is about the understandings of “resident aliens” among early Christian authors, used in creating an identity for themselves vis-à-vis others. He remarks that, since an alien identity is not “a pristine essence,” the resulting analysis yields “a fissured image” formed from “a shifting set of multiple positions” (113). Dunning never offers an example of a pristine essence, so what he is rejecting is unclear. Although Dunning’s focus is relevant texts from early Christianity, he argues for the value of his study to contemporary understandings of “marginalized” groups in Christianity, including monastic communities, Anabaptists, and other groups such as Mormons (109).

Dunning makes extensive use of methodological principles advanced by Pierre Bourdieu, including the claim that intellectual worlds are “microcosms with their own laws” (15), and that language must be situated within related power structures (17). Dunning admits that Bourdieu’s methodology is ideally applicable in contexts where sociologists can observe their field of inquiry directly, thereby gleaning more information than texts alone can offer (17). He plausibly compensates for the paucity of non-textual evidence by adducing evidence from early Christian contemporaries, for example, Roman philosophers, to explicate the shifting import of “resident aliens” and its near-synonyms. Dunning endorses the introduction of relations as a way of “capturing” the shifting conceptual landscape (17), but his purpose is unclear, since the phrase ‘is alienated from’ is already a relation. Perhaps he wants to consider alienation primarily as a matter of degree, which is intelligible, as in ‘Jim is now more alienated from his Mormon roots than he was two years ago’, but requires creating a measure of degree of alienation.

Dunning observes that being Roman was not a static description as the empire expanded and appropriated Greek values; this brought considerable fluidity to the understandings of ‘foreigner’, ‘citizen’, etc. (33f). The Epistle to the Hebrews is the locus classicus for the Christian concept of resident alien and of Dunning’s examination. The significance of this concept can be seen in other early Christian writers, including Clement of Alexandria (50) and the anonymous author of the Epistle to Diognetus, also from the second century. In the latter text Christians are not peculiar by way of country or language, but they are by way of being persecuted, dishonored, and being reviled, for Christians are a new race that blesses and loves their enemies, that obeys the law (65), and that does not kill their infants (69). Dunning examines the peculiar character of uniquely Christian values further in the Shepherd of Hermas (89) and, finally, in the Apocryphon of James (97). He here shows Christians to be actively embracing their status as “other,” and “working out their salvation” from that vantage point.

Dunning’s work has obvious value to those researching early Christian self-understandings, and is relevant to understanding contemporary Christianity, for both its “insiders” and “outsiders,” though the value of Bourdieu’s methodology to this project is unclear.

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