

Book Reviews

Christopher Bigsby, *Remembering and Imagining the Holocaust: The Chain of Memory*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2006. 407 pp.

Remembering and Imagining the Holocaust deals with memory, integrity, and the difficulty of remembering trauma whether in autobiography, novel, or drama.

Christopher Bigsby's study deals with an eclectic group of authors remembering the Holocaust in their quest of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and starts with W.G. Sebald, Bigsby's colleague and friend, to whom the author dedicates the volume. Sebald serves as a springboard to some of the other authors. Some were writers whom Sebald valued highly such as Arthur Miller, Rolf Hochhuth, Peter Weiss and Jean Améry. Miller, Weiss and Améry are also connected to Sebald by their shared attendance of the 1963 Auschwitz trials in Frankfurt. The remainder of the writers who complete the "chain of memory" were camp survivors (Améry, Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel, Tadeusz Borowski) except for aspiring writer Anne Frank, who perished as a young teenager in Auschwitz.

Despite its definitive merits and display of great sensitivity – Bigsby provides us with thoughtful insight into the lives and ideas of his chosen writers and is a superb narrator – his study is quite reader-unfriendly. Unfortunately, he repeatedly interrupts his "chain of arguments" with reflections and comments having very little connection with those very arguments. The interrupted discourse however is not conducive to helping the reader grasp his reflections, though valuable they may be. It seems that Bigsby is trying to flaunt his erudite knowledge. In his introduction for instance the author discusses Vladimir Nabokov's concept of memory. While Nabokov was also an author esteemed by Sebald, his autobiographical musings on memory do not point directly to the question of Holocaust memory, and thus this digression distracts the reader greatly.

Such disruptions are rather frequent as further examples illustrate. In the Weiss chapter, it is Sebald who figures too prominently. Instead of discussing

Weiss and his text, *The Investigation*, in depth Bigsby continues his analysis of Sebald and his writings without creating an apparent connection to Weiss. Similar features occur in subsequent chapters. In both the Arthur Miller and Anne Frank chapters the author digresses from his main discourse. Moreover, some of the digressions occupy too much space and we are left with the question, "Why is this necessary?" His excurses neither support an argument nor do they add to the "chain of memory." For example he inserts a lengthy passage on Alma Rosé's biography to prove that the conductor of the Auschwitz orchestra is badly represented in Fania Fénelon's and Arthur Miller's texts. Already there is quantitatively too much on Fénelon's autobiography. These passages provide more insight into Rosé's life and death and Fénelon's text than into Miller's representation of the Holocaust. Something similar occurs in the Frank chapter and leaves the reader bewildered and confused.

Another strange chapter is the last one entitled "Memory Theft." where the author deals with false Holocaust autobiographies such as Binjamin Wilkomirsky's *Fragments*. He unravels the story of an alleged child survivor of Birkenau, painfully recollecting memories of a lost childhood. He then shifts to another "memory thief" vaguely connected to the Holocaust and compares both narrative discourses. Here again, he deviates from the subject and consequently leads the reader off track. What would have been a fascinating chapter on fiction and pain considerably weakens his argument that this "chain of lies" (374) is more than just a misdemeanor and is in fact a betrayal of true Holocaust survivors and readers alike.

A disappointing aspect of Bigsby's study is the lack of a bibliography at the end of the book, in part because his page references and endnotes are unsatisfying. The reader has great difficulty retracing a given quote because the author does not always supply a specific textual reference. Sometimes the reader must go back several paragraphs or even pages to find the text title pertaining to the quote. For a scholar who wishes to extend his or her readings, this represents an unnecessary complication.

Despite these obvious weaknesses, four chapters stand out for their coherence: Améry, Levi, Wiesel, and Borowsky. Although the chapter on Améry does have some flaws similar to those in previous chapters, nonetheless there are significant improvements. Still, it poses a challenge for the reader seeking to acquire a complete picture of Améry and his concerns with *Heimat* and language within the Holocaust context. Bigsby's treatment of the other three authors does them a little more justice. His compassion for the Holocaust victims' plight becomes ever more apparent. These three chapters are more focused, with very few digressions, and they bring out the ideas and texts very clearly. Furthermore, the chapters are presented without ambiguity; we do not lose, as it were, the central theme. Levi's lucidity, Wiesel's struggle with his political objectives and God, and Borowsky's cruel and sarcastic honesty are discussed

in a balanced, enlightening fashion.

In conclusion, this study needs to be read with a very alert mind in order to retain the necessary information. Too often the reader loses track of the author's argument. A prolific scholar like Bigsby, even if he is venturing out of his academic comfort zone – he is a renowned Americanist – should have been more careful as an editor of his own writing in order to make his inquiry more attractive and therefore indispensable for Holocaust scholars and other interested readers.

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Iris Bruce, *Kafka and Cultural Zionism. Dates in Palestine*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 2007. xvii + 262 pp.

It is rare to read a book, put it down, and realize that one has been reeducated about an author about whom so much has already been published. One such book is Iris Bruce's illuminating and elegantly written study *Kafka and Cultural Zionism*. In her splendidly researched, chronologically organized account of Kafka's road to embracing Zionism as a cultural, human project, Bruce revisits many established views about the German-Jewish author from Prague, his Jewish self-hatred, and his involvement in Jewish issues. By focusing on Kafka's engagement with Zionism and its representatives, Bruce chooses a very concrete and narrow lens through which to see this writer; the result, however, is a much broader and more complex picture of Kafka, the member of the Prague Jewish community, than previous scholarship has allowed. It is a more engaged, a more practical and more proactive Franz Kafka that Bruce presents, a man interested in children, gardening and agriculture, a man urging his female companions to become active in the educational projects spearheaded by Zionist leaders in Prague, and a writer who was an avid reader of several Jewish newspapers (the paper *Selbstwehr* provides one of the most interesting sources for Bruce's study).

Instead of reiterating psycho-literary and –historical readings of Kafka and his work that see him as a “Jewish Patient” (thus the title of Sander Gilman's very influential study from 1995), whose writings “[reveal] that he largely internalized the racial discourses of his time” (7), Bruce seeks to show the complexities in Kafka's position vis-à-vis Jewish issues and Zionism in particular. It is less the anti-Semitic environment in which she is interested than the Jewish cultural climate of his time and “his knowledge of Judaism and the extent of his involvement in Jewish affairs” (10). Such an approach does not only allow for her to point out instances in which we can see “Kafka's humor, his playfulness,

his puns" (9), but it also reaches far beyond the book's stated scope as expressed in its title: Bruce's Kafka-book is nothing short of a cultural history of Jewish life in Prague before the *Shoah*. She provides us with shorter or longer life-stories of some of Kafka's famous, yet now-forgotten (Zionist) contemporaries, accounts of the state of Yiddish and Yiddish theater in Prague and beyond, and she details Kafka's interest in the "connection between the socialist-Zionist activities and [feminist writer] Lily Braun's socialist-feminist struggle" (124). On a more biographical front, Bruce provides insights into the more "weltanschauliche" aspects of his relationships to his various female companions and thus complicates, in a most welcome manner, explanations for Kafka's often-quoted inability to commit to any one of them. Last but not least, Bruce's diligent archival and textual research identifies the many influences from contemporary public and social life and discourses that found their way into his writings. Reports about alleged ritual murders in Eastern Europe (about which Kafka read in papers such as *Selbstwehr*) left their mark as well as Kafka's short preoccupation with Yiddish theater after 1910, or debates in which he participated more or less actively, as a contributor to the paper or after attending the Eleventh Zionist Congress in Vienna.

Extensively trained in Jewish literary traditions and Hebrew, Bruce also shows the great influence that Talmudic literature and the "hermeneutic method of Midrashic discourse" (108) had on Kafka's writings. And while her very specialized discussions of some of these connections may not be for a more general audience—who would greatly enjoy her study at large—, it is these sections that make her book an intriguing contribution to the field for even the most "seasoned" Kafka-scholar. It is especially laudable for Bruce to have uncovered previously unpublished material (such as Kafka's Golem-story) and included it in her study, thus providing a more complete picture of Kafka's works and his engagement with Jewish literary traditions. Whether Bruce succeeds in convincing us of the "humor and playfulness" in Kafka's writings remains an open question—too serious and too gruesome could seem the means by which he may have achieved these effects. However, what Bruce's study does accomplish is provide an image of Franz Kafka and his approach to Zionism and to his Jewish identity that renders more complex well-established notions of Kafka's Jewish self-hatred and his uneasiness with religious dogmas. By stressing Kafka's ultimate interest in "people and being part of a community" (201), she brings the discussion to a plane that transcends ideological boundaries between cultural and political Zionism and shows Kafka to be a consistent believer in "the humanist Zionism of bin Gurion, Hugo Bergmann, and Max Brod" (203), as dismayed by anti-Semitic discourse as by dogmatic Zionist or other religious preachings. Doing away with traditional criticism that expresses uneasiness with what has been labeled Kafka's ambiguities vis-à-vis his Jewish heritage, Bruce convinces her reader to understand his refusal to take a clear

stance as his “most powerful rhetorical weapon” (206) in his struggle to keep his freedom at a time when history was about to take a fatal turn.

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Christine Haase, *When Heimat Meets Hollywood: German Filmmakers and America, 1985-2005*. Rochester: Camden House, 2007. ix + 225 pp.

Christine Haase's monograph, *When Heimat Meets Hollywood: German Filmmakers and America, 1985-2005*, is an important contribution to recent studies on German film from a transnational perspective. Aside from the comprehensive overview of the history of German-American relations and the film industry, the chapters offer in-depth analyses of four successful and/or important directors: Wolfgang Petersen (*Das Boot*, 1981), Roland Emmerich (*Independence Day*, 1996), Percy Adlon (*Out of Rosenheim*, 1897), and Tom Tykwer (*Lola rennt*, 1998). In the works of these directors, Haase identifies three forms of negotiations of “different national and transnational cultural and cinematic terrains.” She argues that the filmmakers “(1) contrast, (2) integrate, or (3) level and erase the distinctions between the locally and culturally specific and the transnationally applicable and marketable.” Their works promote “heterogeneity, synthesis, or homogenization via their content and form” (4). With this selection of filmmakers and works, Haase further shows how within these modes of engagement with the national and transnational cultural terrain the notion of “national cinema” is questioned and/or further complicated. She classifies Petersen's work as “integrative,” criticizes Emmerich's as “conformist,” and describes Adlon's as “oppositional,” and Tykwer's as “synthesizing” (202). What she calls in her conclusion “somewhat paradoxical” (202) signals the innovative quality of her study: by engaging thoroughly but critically with the notion of “national” cinema via four filmmakers that in very different ways transgress and redefine the “national,” she shows that film has to be assessed “according to a complex web of influences ... The local and the global, the national and the transnational, the German and its Other, whether hegemonic or resisting, are all linked in a grid of dynamic exchanges and mutual effects” (202). This approach to film analysis promises to be useful and productive for scholars and students, in Film Studies and German Studies classrooms alike.

The four chapters about the directors further offer comprehensive overviews of the careers of these directors and discuss their most famous and/or most important films in greater detail. Haase argues that Petersen, who produced such well-known films as *Das Boot* and *The Never-ending Story* (1984),

is “a Hollywood director precisely because he attempts to fill popular models with a measure of socially relevant content” (96). She calls Petersen a “Blockbuster auteur.” In contrast, her judgment on Emmerich is harsh. She mentions most of his films in her discussion but uses *Independence Day* to exemplify her main points in greater detail. She analyzes the ideological subtext of *Independence Day* as “profitable propaganda” and as an “unambiguous endorsement of right-wing politics and U.S. claims to transnational political hegemony” (128) and identifies *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004) as an exception in Emmerich’s otherwise “calculating and reactionary” (131) oeuvre.

Adlon stands out in Haase’s study as the least commercially successful and the most artsy director. His films also show most clearly a “national cultural interest” and present us with a “German perspective” (157). It remains unclear exactly how his films, which, as Haase claims, rely on an almost intimate understanding of the German national cultural context, engage in multicultural and cross-national dialogue,” especially since, as Haase points out, their “viewpoint” is one of “German national particularity” (157). It seems that this very tension in Adlon’s films deserves greater attention. Without a particular cultural knowledge and at the same time, I would argue, the necessary critical distance, the representations in some of his films remain within national stereotypes and are therefore, at least always also, problematic when it comes to transnational cultural communication.

Haase’s analysis of Tykwer’s films within the tensions between “popular appropriation,” “national allusions,” and “international references” offers a productive framework for the analyses two of his most popular films, *Lola Rennt* and *Heaven* (2002). As opposed to the other directors discussed in the monograph, Tykwer “does not engage with the U.S. either as a nation ... or as cultural imaginary” (163). His references to Hollywood cinema, his self-referentiality, the intertextuality, and the fragmented style of Tykwer’s films are “postmodern”—not in a conformist and conservative way (192), as Haase shows, but in their exposure of the downsides as well as the “potential and promise that is unleashed when the local goes global” (193).

The introductory chapter of Haase’s monograph, “German and American Film Relations in the Twentieth Century,” offers an overview of the mutual influences and interactions between the two national cinemas over the course of a century. It also discusses the connection between cinema, national agendas, and propaganda in both nations. Haase does not engage with the development of the film industry in East Germany, nor with more recent developments in minority or diaspora cinema in detail. However, she provides a productive analytical framework for further research in these two areas. While the state-run East German film production company DEFA, when compared to West German film, does not have such a clear relationship to Hollywood, the more implicit and complex negotiations between East German Cinema and transnational de-

velopments, especially before 1961, would have supported Haase's argument, i.e., that even when films are produced within and for a certain geo-political context, they are "linked in a grid of dynamic exchanges and mutual effects" (202). Similarly, in the wake of the success of Turkish-German filmmakers like Fatih Akin, for example, Haase's understanding of cultural interactions could offer an analytical perspective on trans- or post- national cultural positioning, production, and reception and help to challenge the problematic appropriation of "minority" culture as revitalizing the "German" (national) cinema.

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Dagmar Herzog. *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007. 361 pp.

The relationship between fascism and sexual repression must be regarded as one of the foundational myths of the New Left. The enthusiastic rediscovery of Wilhelm Reich, the fervor of anti-authoritarianism, and the belief in sexual liberation as a political act: all of these derived their critical force from the assumption that fascists were either sexually perverted or sexually repressed. Accordingly, free sexuality became the entry ticket into the world of post-fascism, a working through the past through the rituals of sexual self-liberation. With her provocative, well-researched, and beautifully-written study, Dagmar Herzog bursts the bubble that sustained the New Left for so long and forces us to confront head-on the central role of sexuality both in the postwar political imaginary and in the self-presentation of the Nazi movement. The most innovative scholarship on the Third Reich during the last decades has always involved a double move: against the traditional accounts that privileged structural analyses and institutional perspectives at the expense of "softer" categories such as gender and everyday life; and against the instrumentalization of such historical research by political agendas and in public debates. Contributing to these lines of inquiry while also challenging key assumptions, Herzog's work on sexuality draws attention to one of the remaining taboos in the historiography of the Third Reich and its function within the making of post-fascist identities, whether through the emancipatory rhetoric of the student movement or the hedonistic touch of the neoliberal consumer society.

But Herzog does not only focus on the role of sexual politics in remembering and coming to terms with the Nazi past. She also uses the history of sexuality to complicate standard accounts of twentieth-century German history and to trace the troubling relationship between anti-Semitism and competing dis-

courses of sexuality. Accordingly, in Chapter One, a combination of archival research and personal interviews allows her to reconstruct the conditions under which life during the Third Reich could at once be experienced as sexually conservative and liberating. The tension between the regime's repressive nature (e.g., racial defilement laws, persecution of homosexuals, forced sterilization) and the promise of sexual pleasure and transgression (e.g., in the changing attitudes toward premarital and extramarital sex and unwed motherhood) must be considered a central source of National Socialism's emotional appeal. Even more important, these contradictory positions were infused with the presence of an allegedly dangerous Jewish sexuality, setting into motion a dangerous mechanism of incitement and disavowal that would continue to haunt the sexual imagination of the New Left.

Chapter Two traces the overdetermined function of sexuality through the immediate postwar years, with the fragility of heterosexuality brought into public view by simultaneous experiences of societal dissolution and restoration; here the debates on Clause 175 (criminalizing homosexuality) played a key role. The emergence of a repressive sexual morality and its close ties both to conservative Christian morality and to an official discourse of guilt and shame is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three and its sections on sex education, birth control, and the protection of youth. Chapter Four focuses on the sexual revolution and the anti-authoritarian movement in West Germany of the 1960s, describing what Herzog calls "the morality of pleasure," and Chapter Five on East Germany considers the very different meaning of sexuality under socialism—as a utopian force, with its implications resonating in the recent phenomenon of *Ostalgie*. Finally, Chapter Six follows the unraveling of the sexual politics of the post-war period in the post-ideological present, defined simultaneously by constructivist notions, consumerist approaches, and a much-written about crisis of sexual desire.

"What is the relationship between sexual morality and mass murder and its aftermath?" (1) asks Herzog in her introduction. In answering the question, she enlists a diverse group of primary texts, from sex manuals, marriage guides, medical treatises, and theological debates to political cartoons, advertising slogans, and personal interviews, that place sexuality at the center of contradictory discourses, beyond the familiar binaries of liberation vs. oppression. Herzog makes a compelling case for studying the politics of sexual desire, for analyzing the changing meaning of moral codes and sexual practices, and for placing "the mysteries of the human organism" and the attendant "will to know" at the center of highly politicized debates about sexuality, gender, race, and nation. As is often the case in taboo-breaking studies, she sometimes overstates her case and ignores multi-causal explanations (e.g., in the analysis of antiauthoritarian child-reading in the 1960s). Similarly, she tends to read as a uniquely German phenomenon what can also be observed in the Italian case. However, these are

minor flaws in a study that has made an important contribution to the understanding of fascism and post-fascism and will become required reading for all scholars in German history, cultural studies, and women and gender studies.

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Mikhail Iossel and Jeff Parker, *Amerika. Russian Writers View the United States*, Dalkey Archive, 2004. xiii + 174 pp.

While reading this book, two things stand out the most: the Russian intellectuals' vast erudition on American literary and popular culture and their narcissistic entrenchment in a self-serving fantasy of what "Amerika" is all about. It is a literary project that nonetheless is closely related to Russian mass-cultural perceptions of the US. The essays in this collection posit America as the ultimate Other, which helps the Russians to figure out themselves. One of the contributors observes that it is easier to have intimate discussions in a foreign language, and traveling to America provides the authors with the opportunity for such displacement (65). It is from this perspective that the book may be of interest to those who study Russia.

The premise itself invites subjective reflection; it is of no surprise that several of the essays in this collection along with some that are not included were published on the internet as a project called "America in My Life," which became the first in the "In My Life" series. As Yulia Idlis points out in her insightful review in *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, the authors treat "Amerika" as an artifact; as a literary or religious text that resists interpretation; and as a referent that throws light on Russia rather than as a geo-political and cultural entity in its own right (<http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2005/71/idl27.html>).

Russians have a long history of seeing America as the other side of the coin—not just the New World but as the Other World. This image was intensified by the Iron Curtain and the lack of communication with those who immigrated to the United States. To the internal immigrants, America represented the land of freedom, in keeping with the popular principle of reading Soviet propaganda in reverse. In contrast, the influx of the often violent and largely superficial aspects of American popular culture in the 1990s coincided with Russian experimentation with capitalism, accompanied by a rise in crime, poverty, and prostitution, and a sense of economic and moral defeat. Now traveling to America, whether physically or mentally, the writers are confounded by its alien world and grapple with the lack of categories adequately suited to describe what they see.

The pieces that are open to the strangeness of experiencing America

make the volume's best travelogues. For example, Arkadii Dragomoshchenko describes the energy of New York City as "semiotic saturation," while Andrei Zorin offers a humorous and open-minded account of his sojourn at a Texas university that eschews easy generalizations. They demonstrate that understanding another culture requires an "in" that is unavailable to a casual tourist and closed off to a self-referential one. Others like Leonid Kostyukov find that real America resembles its image in Soviet propaganda, and that the cultural figures with which they used to identify, such as Kurt Vonnegut or Jackson Pollock, are actually "anti-American," while Aleksey Tsvetkov Jr. conveys the pervasive post-Soviet feeling of emasculation, as he notes that the most beautiful Russian women marry Americans and leave (86, 144). Anti-American prejudice, taken at face value, provides a symbolic description of what ails Russia; thus Dmitry Bavilsky argues that "Metropolitan anti-Americanism is a mirror image of the Moscovites' complexes, for they live at the expense of the rest of the country exactly the way America lives at the expense of the rest of the world" (15).

Even some of the writers who are more generously predisposed toward the United States do not completely escape the perils of judging it within the conceptual framework of Russian experience. They struggle with political correctness, which some of them link to totalitarian censorship, with the ubiquitous "no smoking" signs in public places, with inadmissibility of sexual banter in an academic environment and a democratization of culture. While Dmitry Vedenyapin embraces the Anglophone culture because Nabokov and Brodsky wrote in English with the lexical precision that characterizes the language, Evgeny Bunimovich portrays America as a collection of museum sites populated with "noble savages" (153, 26).

At the same time, the authors often demonstrate an almost encyclopedic knowledge of American literature and culture. Several of the contributors are fluent in English and have published translations of seventeenth-century poetry, Robert Frost and John Keats, science fiction, Lewis Carroll and Rudyard Kipling, Charles Bukowski, Leonard Cohen, and Vytautas Pliura, Abby Hoffmann and Malcolm X. Indeed, *Amerika's* table of content is a virtual who's who of Russian creative intelligentsia, as the writers represent a wide range of movements from Conceptualism (Dmitry Prigov, Sergey Gandlevsky) to Meta-realism (Arkadii Dragomoshchenko) to Neoclassicism (Grigori Kruzhkov) to pop-cultural best sellers (Max Frai). Aleksey Mikheev is the editor-in-chief of the prestigious literary journal *Druzhba Narodov*, Evgeny Bunimovich is a high-ranking member of the liberal political party "Yabloko," Aleksandr Levin is a song writer and performer, while Dmitry Kuzmin, Linor Goralik, Stanislav Lvovsky and many others are involved in creating and contributing to literary projects on the internet. Despite the stylistic and intellectual diversity of their essays, they often share a set of reactions, even if they disagree on their wider

significance.

While they actively participate in cultural and political developments in their country, the authors seem to subscribe to the lasting ideals of the Russian intelligentsia. They are suspicious of bourgeois comfort, sympathetic to the underdog, and deeply convinced that literature is related to morality. Culture for them is a classical entity that has a universal appeal and is entirely transmissible regardless of local differences. They often share a habit of defining poetics in terms of ethics and determining ethics apophatically. Perhaps what attracts them to American culture (often that of the previous generation) is precisely the sense of its development taking place in actuality; its open-endedness; its practical availability and self-effacement in terms of the universal cultural premium. Thereby they convey a certain fatigue, and a sense of being weighed down by their own tradition.

Ultimately, one is left with a sense of the quixotic nature of Russian intelligentsia, which is transcendent and utopian but extremely compelling. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, they are comfortable in nostalgia for a more stable reality that allows the luxury of fantasizing about far-off lands. At the same time, the very intensity of their anxiety and the effort to understand their brave new world suggests that better things are coming. In a country where economic concerns are steadily prevailing over cultural ones, the intelligentsia is the America of the Russians.

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Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, eds. *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins P, 2007 [1970, 1972]. xxv + 331 pp.

This third edition of *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, compiling the proceedings of the historical symposium held at Johns Hopkins University in fall 1966, and made possible by a grant from the Ford Foundation, marks the fortieth Anniversary of this event that sent shockwaves throughout the English and the American scholarly world. The book was originally published in 1970, and a second paperback edition appeared in 1972 for which David Lodge provided a historically insightful review in *The Modern Language Review* (1975). This new edition is accompanied by the "Anniversary Remarks" of Richard Macksey in which he

relates the genesis of the book and takes a retrospective look at the plethora of passionate responses the event it chronicles and commemorates generated ever since, from both sympathizers and detractors. After the preface to the 1972 edition and the original preface, fifteen chapters (some of which are translations and edited transcriptions of recorded talks given by French participants) follow. These feature interventions by Macksey, René Girard, Charles Morazé, Georges Poulet, Eugenio Donato, Lucien Goldman, Tzvetan Todorov, Roland Barthes, Jean Hyppolyte, Jacques Lacan, Guy Rosolato, Neville Dyson-Hudson, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Nicolas Ruwet. The volume ends with concluding remarks by Macksey, Girard and Hyppolyte, followed by the symposium's program and an index.

As editors and principal conference organizers, Macksey and Donato, envisioned the book not so much as an anthology consecrating a homogenous presentation of French structuralism to American scholars, but more so as a space for confronting various trends within structuralism with each other and for re-enacting tensions among them (xix) across a wide range of disciplines, which was indeed the general spirit that prevailed during the symposium itself and continued to play itself out since then, albeit in varying degrees and guises. In the course of his own talk, Girard notes in this sense that: "Quite a few disciplines are represented here. Our philosophical backgrounds are different; so are the methodologies in which we trust. We do not speak the same languages or, worse still, we use the same words but they do not mean the same things to all of us. Yet, we all have one thing in common. We do not like the distance between us, we do not like the indifference; we do not like the division of what we still have to call Knowledge, in the singular form, as if it were one" (16). Indeed, no word had been more elusive and problematic during this meeting than the word "structure" itself. Similarly, we will recall that the notion of the "subject" often proved hard to pin down, even as critics of transcendental metaphysics attempt to formulate new subject-centered theoretical approaches that take into account location in time and space (notably Girard, Poulet, Goldman), in the context of the general decline of metaphysics. The strength of this book and the resonance it still carries today lie in the fact that it shows that from the very beginning, what was submitted for debate was the question of "structuralisms" and not so much of "structuralism," hence the obvious title choice "The Structuralist Controversy." The editors note in the original preface that the event was conceived as an opportunity to initiate an active dialogue bringing together "leading European proponents of structural studies in a variety of disciplines with a wide spectrum of American scholars" (xxi) in order to articulate methodological concepts that promote linkages among various disciplines in the Sciences of Man. The talks were presented in English and French. However, and as Macksey ironically notes in the concluding remarks, the overwhelmingly large presence of French participants seemed to inadvertently set the tone

for much of the debate, conferring on the symposium what Macksey qualifies as a “Gallic flavor” (320), throwing into sharp relief the acuteness of the conflict of vantage points among the French participants, where debate at times quickly slips into polemic exchange. Paul de Man’s famously obtrusive dismissal of Barthes’s “ahistorical” bent in his account of literary history, and Angus Fletcher’s impatience with Lacan’s abstruse language heavily shrouded in mathematical concepts, are but two among many moments during the symposium that betray irreducible cleavages within this movement as well as the challenges it faces to make itself relevant in a wider intellectual and scholarly environment.

This volume is an essential reference for readers and scholars concerned with gaining a historical understanding of the formative moments leading to the rise and fall of “theory” in the American academy. This Anniversary edition comes at a moment where a renewed interest in theory and its place in literature and cultural studies programs is being shown. Jonathan Culler’s *The Literary in Theory* (2006) is perhaps one of the most influential recent studies moving in this direction. It is only fitting, therefore, to re-visit an event during which many theoretical questions and disciplinary issues that constitute conceptual commonplaces in contemporary theoretical debates were posed in the American context for the first time across traditional disciplinary divides and within an international framework, not without stirring a great controversy. The new edition could also be revisited profitably in light of the growing interest in promoting collaborative scholarly dialogue and intellectual exchange on an international scale, in the largely ubiquitous context of global and transnational political, economic, cultural and scholarly networks.

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Sharon Magnarelli. *Home Is Where The (He)art Is: The Family Romance in Late Twentieth-Century Mexican and Argentine Theater*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2008. 293 pp.

The nine chapters in this monograph present analyses of well-known plays by recognized dramatists from the two countries with the longest, best-established theatrical traditions in Spanish America—Mexico and Argentina. The plays studied provide insights into the representation of the family from a feminist perspective shaped primarily by the theories of Marianne Hirsch and Judith Butler. Magnarelli has divided her study into two thematic parts, with further equal divisions between dramas and comedies and between numbers of plays from each of the two countries. In terms of dramatists, there are six women and two men included. Given the dominance of male playwrights in

Latin American theater, it is a welcome change for this book to focus on so many excellent women dramatists. The two parts of the book are separated into styles of dramatic representation of the family: in the first part, five chapters treat plays with a naturalistic style and a nuclear, patriarchal family whereas in the second part, four chapters explore postmodernist styles and disintegrating families. Although Magnarelli calls the second half "The Great Divide" in order to mark the cultural changes reflected in the different theatrical styles and unusual portraits of families, the division is not as great as the title suggests. This is true because the analysis and arguments presented in the first half of the book help prepare the reader for the complexities of the plays and analyses in the second half. In addition, Magnarelli's chapters often engage repeating concepts of metatheatrical frames or gender performance. These features, and the dialogs she creates with existing scholarly views of the plays, help keep the reader engaged with her sometimes dense and intricate prose.

Magnarelli's study selects plays that show the intimate relationship in Spanish America between culture and family. Thus, while the model of traditional middle-class nuclear family shares similarities with European, capitalist and bourgeois patterns, the plays demonstrate that the families portrayed on stage are connected to values and cultures that are autochthonous. *Home* draws attention to the features of Latin American culture that influence the family in the late twentieth century, particularly the economic conditions, political corruption and dictatorship, and the slowly changing relationship between men and women raised in the traditional Catholic and patriarchal societies. As the author notes, the family in Latin America has often served a public, political good as a metaphor for the nation. Unfortunately, when times are not good, families are used as a scapegoat to deflect political or social failures. *Home* looks at families on stage as a means for understanding the work of theater as a manipulator of audience anxieties about the family, as a presenter of images of the family that may be unacknowledged or uncritically accepted, and as a questioner of the trope of family in the context of the broader society.

The five chapters in Part I include the following three plays by Mexican dramatists—*Los huéspedes reales* 'The Royal Guests' (1956) by Luisa Josefina Hernández, *Escarabajos* 'Dung Beetles' (1991) by Hugo Argüellas, *¿Homo Sapiens?* (1991) by Marcela del Río; and two plays by Argentine dramatists—*La malasangre* 'Bitter Blood' (1981) by Griselda Gambaro, and *El saludador* 'The Greeter or The Waver' (1999) by Roberto Cossa. The four chapters in Part II treat two plays by Mexican dramatists—*Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda* 'Between Pancho Villa and a Naked Woman' (1993) by Sabina Berman and *La esfinge de las maravillas* 'The Sphinx of Marvels' (1994) by Hugo Argüellas; and three plays by Argentines—*De profesión maternal* 'Of the Maternal Profession' (1997) by Griselda Gambaro, *Volvió una noche* 'She Returned One Night' (1993) by Eduardo Rovner, and *Casa Matriz* 'Matrix, Inc.' (1989) by Diana

Raznovich.

While the chapters in Part I present engaging and well-developed views, the studies in Part II are outstanding in their ability to untangle and detail the many layers and meanings of the postmodern plays presented. These plays mingle the real and surreal, the natural and unnatural, and fact with fiction. Thus, Magnarelli must explain what the plays are and how the audience perceives them before beginning her analysis of how to understand these many-faceted works. She also must carry on a discussion of several levels of meaning in the plays at the same time. The sophisticated performances in the plays are met by equally sophisticated readings from Magnarelli, who received an award for her work on the Sabina Berman play in *Latin American Theatre Review*.

The strengths of this in-depth study of ten plays reside both in the analysis and in the broader thematic treatment of the family and its representation in two Latin American nations. In addition, there are extensive notes and a thorough index and bibliography. The author has provided translations of the citations so that those who do not speak Spanish can also appreciate the arguments and documentation provided. Unfortunately, most of the plays studied are not available in translation and thus full appreciation of the plays are available only to those who read Spanish. Nonetheless, Magnarelli's insights are so well-developed that it is possible to get a good grasp of each play based on her chapters alone.

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Bettina Matthias. *The Hotel as Setting in Early Twentieth-Century German and Austrian Literature: Checking in to Tell a Story*. Rochester: Camden House, 2006. x + 221 pp.

The overarching argument in Bettina Matthias's present study is that hotels represent "quintessentially modern spaces" (6) which allow their guests to experience a modern existence with all of its typical characteristics. Removed from their normal everyday lives, guests may live freely and beyond their usual social boundaries. This existence tends to be marked by superficial encounters and relationships in which the key players have the opportunity to transform into performers (4-5). At the same time, however, one may continue one's existence as hotel guest only as long as financial means make it possible. Thus, the hotel as microcosm fortifies social hierarchies as much as it can facilitate liberation from them (7)—ironically, the individual's experience tends to hinge on gender and social status, so even though the hotel guest's possibilities are endless in theory, practically only the already socially and financially indepen-

dent individual may experience lasting liberation. "Hotels are there to please, not to change," stresses Matthias. A hotel is a business which in reality does not house "guests" but "paying customers" (6) and what they offer cannot be taken into the everyday. "Instead, they offer guests a pleasant shelter from the outside world if they wish to withdraw from their various commitments in their 'real' lives, a break from reality within the limits of the possible that is enjoyable for those players who are stable enough to follow the rules of engagement" (7).

Matthias uses writings by Thorstein Veblen, Georg Simmel and Siegfried Kracauer to establish the theoretical basis for her argument that "the hotel and, more specifically, its lobby create *and* represent the modern experience" (41). Modernity, here, is primarily defined by Adorno's "existential homelessness" which Matthias translates into "man's existential estrangement from everything, including himself" (7).

The theoretical discussion takes up approximately one quarter of the book and is followed by a virtual tour through a grand hotel. Matthias leads the reader through the stock elements of the hotel structure and culture along with its personnel. While this interlude is unusual and refreshingly creative for an academic publication, it also encourages the reader to explore aspects of the hotel that play no part in Matthias's later analysis of literary texts. While this hotel tour serves to prepare the reader for the literary discussion by helping her envision the type of hotel elements the characters might experience during their stay, the generalization of the hotel environment toured is more distracting than enriching.

Matthias's analyses of literary texts tend to focus on *who* is staying in a hotel over *what* hotel their story takes place in. She astutely structures her discussion by gender: chapter four analyzes "Women in Hotels" and chapter five "Men in Hotels." The women include Arthur Schnitzler's Fräulein Else, Franz Werfel's Francine in "Die Hotelterre," Stefan Zweig's Erna in "Untergang eines Herzens," and Christine in *Rausch der Verwandlung*. The male figures include Joseph Roth's Gabriel Dan in *Hotel Savoy*, Franz Kafka's Karl Rossmann in *Amerika*, and Thomas Mann's Felix Krull in *Die Bekenntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull* and Gustav von Aschenbach in *Der Tod in Venedig*.

For each gender, the hotel facilitates a different set of rules and, thus, provokes different outcomes for the individual. For the women, social and financial class, or lack thereof, is amplified in the hotel setting. Matthias concludes from the texts she discusses in chapter four that the hotel is a space managed and regulated by men and is not conducive to female emancipation. "Hotels are social and cultural places, not political ones," she writes (103).

The male figures Matthias observes in the hotel setting are all transients, using their stay to figure out their next phase in life. Women and men alike are faced with difficult and identity-changing decisions, but while the women's crises tend to be provoked by forces beyond their control such as their social and

financial backgrounds, most of the men's situations are self-inflicted. Although the hotel stay of neither men nor women ends optimistically, the men merely leave disappointed while many of the women leave destroyed or dead.

Of the textual interpretations offered in chapters four and five, Matthias's strongest discussions with respect to the topic of her book are of Schnitzler, Zweig, and Roth. Her least insightful interpretation of the hotel setting in literature is her sixth and last chapter which focuses largely on the characters in Vicki Baum's *Menschen im Hotel* and very little on the hotel. This is true of some of her other analyses as well, albeit her research about all authors and works is thorough and represents a valuable addition to existing scholarship.

Matthias's interpretative strengths clearly lie in the area of character analysis and she focuses much of her literary discussion on that. The analysis of the hotel and its function in the text, other than being the setting, at times falls a little short. Her hypothetical tour through a grand hotel sets up the space as more than a mere setting. In at least some of the stories, the hotel could be read as a character in the text, an interpretation that could have been explored more.

Without a doubt, this book is a valuable contribution to scholarship on early twentieth-century German and Austrian authors and their creative interpretations of the social and cultural role of the hotel in their time. Matthias's study is well structured and thoroughly researched. Professional enthusiasts of modernism, the travel genre, and the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries should find it an informative resource and quite possibly a work enticing to continue the discussion from created to real people in hotels.

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Erin McGlothlin. *Second-Generation Holocaust Literature: Legacies of Survival and Perpetration*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006. 254 pp.

In her ambitious new book, Erin McGlothlin juxtaposes the complementary perspectives of the children of Holocaust survivors and the children of the Nazi perpetrators in literature written over the past few decades. Choosing examples of "second generation" literature from the United States, Germany, Austria and France, the author explores the narrative strategies these texts use to represent traces left by the Holocaust past on the lives of individuals who themselves did not experience it. McGlothlin considers survivor and perpetrator perspectives to be structurally analogous, but her readings of "second-generation" writing seek to preserve the qualitative difference of the "first-generation" experiences. Rather than presenting a sustained comparison of the

literature of these two legacies, her book provides a series of individual readings which primarily demonstrate the variety of narrative responses to the second generation's sense of being marked or stigmatized by the experiences of their parents' generation.

McGlothlin situates her readings of second-generation texts within a theoretical discussion of memory in literature that supports the side-by-side consideration of texts written from survivor and perpetrator viewpoints. Taking her cue from the work of Marianne Hirsch, Eric Santner and Dan Diner, McGlothlin argues that, even though the experiences of these two groups were qualitatively opposite during the Holocaust, their relationships to those events in the years following have certain key similarities (such as a sense of otherness or of having experienced something inexpressible). This parallel is compounded for the subsequent generations, who share the experience of growing up in the shadow of their parents' unspeakable experiences. However, it is not merely this alignment of perspectives which grounds McGlothlin's approach, but also her observation that the texts which thematize the experiences of second generation protagonists also bear formal similarities. She asserts that the works themselves show traumatic symptoms, amounting to "a narrative crisis in which narrative voice fractures, protagonists multiply in a compulsion to repeat, temporality is suspended, and generic conventions are transgressed or radically reshaped" (12). She interprets this narrative crisis not as an example of postmodern experimentation, but rather as a struggle for representation and healing in which children of both survivors and perpetrators participate.

In the first section of her book, dedicated to stories of children of Holocaust survivors, McGlothlin identifies disruptions in boundaries between self and other, past and present as representations of the inheritance of traumatic experience. In her analysis of Thane Rosenbaum's short story collection *Elijah Visible*, she reads the successive appearance of the main character, Adam, in loosely-connected stories (his "polyidentity") as a subjective instability which both records traumatic rupture and gestures towards the restoration of continuity. Temporal instability, on the other hand, is the focus of McGlothlin's examination of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*. This graphic novel is presented as an example of how the interweaving of multiple times of narration can be used to represent the unstable relationship between past and present characteristic of the second generation's indirect connection to the Holocaust. Similar to these analyses, McGlothlin's readings of Robert Schindel's novel *Gebürtig*, Patrick Modiano's novel *Dora Bruder* and Katja Behrens' short story "Arthur Mayer, or The Silence" find each text's themes reflected in its formal aspects. Considering *Gebürtig*, McGlothlin draws a parallel between the novel's disorienting jumble of stories, characters and narrators and the lack of a centralized public Holocaust discourse in post-war Austria. In *Dora Bruder* and "Arthur Mayer, or The Silence," the narrators' failure to find sufficient information to reconstruct the

biographies of vanished Jews in Paris and in a small German town is read thematically as an indication of broader social reluctance to claim these memories. Formally, McGlothlin views these texts' stylistic evocation of the lexicon (*Dora Bruder*) and the atlas ("Arthur Mayer") as an epistemological challenge to societies which store knowledge selectively in such encyclopedic media, while the texts themselves function as makeshift memorials to their forgotten subjects.

Whereas McGlothlin's readings of texts written from the perspective of survivor families point to a traumatization of narrative, the second half of her book shifts the focus to works from the second-generation perpetrator perspective, shifts focus. Here, she emphasizes the texts' positioning of the narrating subject within both the individual family and in terms of broader discourses of guilt and responsibility. All of the texts considered in this section are German, and McGlothlin understands them as revisiting the *Väterliteratur* 'father literature' genre popular in West Germany during the late 1970s and early 1980s, in which the conflict between the student-activist "1968" generation and the older "Nazi-era" generation was portrayed as a family conflict between fathers and children. In her study of Peter Schneider's short novel *Vati*, McGlothlin finds that tropes of signification (of reading, writing, and naming) undermine the protagonist's attempt to dissociate himself from his Nazi father, and instead ultimately bond the two of them. McGlothlin understands this linking as a critique of *Väterliteratur*'s attempts to come to terms with the Nazi past by attacking individual fathers in print. McGlothlin identifies a similar move in Niklas Frank's and Joshua Sobol's drama *Der Vater* (based on Frank's novel of the same title). In this example, it is the narrator's mother who represents the most pathological aspects of National Socialism (indeed, she is depicted as Hitler himself), so that she at the same time embodies the fascist legacy and bequeaths it to her son. The aggressive stance which McGlothlin locates in *Der Vater* contrasts with her readings of two very recent works: Bernhard Schlink's *Der Vorleser* and Uwe Timm's *Am Beispiel meines Bruders*. Considering the former, she finds that, although the generational conflict central to "father literature" is now projected onto a romantic relationship, the terms of the conflict itself remain the same: the young narrator represents the 1968 generation, while his older lover, a female concentration camp guard, stands for the Nazi generation. While she calls into question *Der Vorleser*'s claim to this emblematic status for its narrator, McGlothlin presents Uwe Timm's *Am Beispiel meines Bruders* as an example of a more nuanced reconception of *Väterliteratur*, in which language and storytelling form a troubled web enveloping the narrator, his late brother, and his father.

McGlothlin's book presents lucid readings of well-chosen texts and a clear rhetorical style. Her detailed introduction to the study of memory and trauma in both the English- and German-language contexts, which also frequently explore the link between survivor and perpetrator narratives, demonstrates the

relevance of her bilateral approach to “second-generation” literature. At the same time, McGlothlin’s understandable concern with preserving the qualitative difference between survivor and perpetrator experiences results in a somewhat unfocused study: because her book does not follow a sustained analytical trajectory, she is hesitant to make explicit formal contrasts between second-generation survivor and perpetrator narratives, or to discuss textual similarities within or between the two groups. While the introduction to her book provides a convincing argument for considering these two perspectives in relation to each other, the analysis performed in the chapters tends to focus on individual texts without returning to this overarching thesis.

McGlothlin’s book comes at a point where the study of traumatic memory in literature is becoming increasingly important in American literary criticism and discussions of second and third-generation perspectives abound in the German literary scene. Because her work seeks to join these two approaches, navigating with open eyes the difficult theoretical terrain through which they may be linked, it marks a significant step in contemporary studies of Holocaust representation in literature.

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Stuart Taberner, ed., *Contemporary German Fiction: Writing in the Berlin Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 254 pp.

The list of Stuart Taberner’s publications on post-unification German literature includes many important references for any scholar engaging with this time period and demonstrates his familiarity with a broad range of subjects. His *German Literature of the 1990s and Beyond: Normalization and the Berlin Republic* (Camden House, 2005) is one of the authoritative surveys of post-Wende German literature. This new collection of essays edited by Taberner, *Contemporary German Fiction: Writing in the Berlin Republic*, provides an excellent introduction to trends and concerns of German-language literature since 1989. Remarkably, it achieves several complex and paradoxical goals: the authors identify and underscore current literary movements, while acknowledging and allowing some flexibility of their definition; essays treat exemplary works of each trend (such as Lyn Marven’s consideration of Kathrin Schmidt’s *Die Gunnar-Lennefson-Expedition* in her essay on “German Literature in the Berlin Republic - Writing by Women”) without oversimplifying the movement in question; and, perhaps most noteworthy, each essay stands alone as a succinct overview of the category in question, while at the same time contributing

to a more complex whole. As Taberner mentions in the “Acknowledgements,” a British Academy Small Research Grant enabled the contributors to meet in person, resulting in a book that is cohesive and remarkably consistent in tone and approach.

Taberner begins the introduction with an approach he used in *German Literature of the 1990s and Beyond*: he reads the architecture of Berlin as a historical landscape, using the Reichstag building to draw on a variety of periods in German history and to illustrate the ways in which these periods intersect in contemporary German life. The specter of the German past haunts all the authors of the Berlin Republic. Though they may thematize it more or less explicitly, they cannot escape it: history, embodied in the urban landscape of Berlin, serves as the backdrop for nearly all the works discussed in this book. Taberner identifies three overarching themes as red threads that unite German literature: “integration, normalization and globalization” (3). He argues that, “What German-language literature in the Berlin Republic does most effectively, however, is to reconceive and reposition such terms in a manner which detaches them from the abstractions of public-political discourse and confronts them with the lived experience of the people with whom they purport to be concerned” (3).

Indeed, this concern with individual experience emerges in a number of the essays, such as the one by Lyn Marven. This chapter explores breaks and continuities between women’s literature in German of the 1970s and of today. While the focus on subjectivity and individual experience in the 1970s served to create a kind of universalist literature of second-wave feminism, based on sisterly solidarity, literature by women today rejects this sisterhood. Marven questions the feminism of these writers—and it is perhaps worth questioning the decision to see both groups of women writers as points along the same trajectory, as young women writing today often reject any association with the feminist movement. In fact, since 1989, the representation of individual experience has created disunity in literature by women, despite media and marketing attempts to suggest the contrary (one thinks, for example, of the “Fräuleinwunder”), and Marven wonders whether literary trends are better identified by “literary strategies of the text” than the gender and sexuality of the author (174).

Margaret Littler’s chapter on “Cultural Memory and Identity Formation in the Berlin Republic” asks whose memory forms the “normative discourse of shared values and cultural identity.” Littler contends that the continued preoccupation with World War II and divided Germany “perpetuates an ethnoculturalist form of German identity, quite at odds with Germany’s ethnically diverse population” (177). Seeking to incorporate minority cultures in new categories of identity, Littler turns to a variety of authors for a theoretical framework, including the idea of “minor literature” according to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and the concern with the globalization of memory as outlined in Andreas Huyssen’s *Present Pasts* (2003). Littler’s essay points to the trans-

national direction of German literature, considering the contributions of minority authors writing in German to be insights into the German past via “the gaze of one whose identity it has not shaped” (193). One might add to this that authors writing in German but not of German heritage have indeed been shaped by the German past, but in a way that exits beyond the framework of the “ethno-culturalist form of German identity.” In other words, as individuals bring their own experiences to the literature of the Berlin Republic, old categories are proved to be obsolete. Despite the negative tone of Taberner’s claim that “much fiction by younger authors remains narrowly focused on the self” (79), this is not necessarily a disadvantage. The trend of focusing on the personal, the individual, allows authors and readers to claim the German past (and present) as their own, while simultaneously opening up the confining trend of grouping authors with disparate aims, according to superficial factors such as age, gender, even place of birth.

Presenting categories or trends of literature, while at the same time destabilizing them, is a challenge, and one that this book largely meets. Appealing to a broad range of readers, this volume would be an excellent starting point for any scholar interested in an introduction to literature of this time period. (It must be noted, however, that the focus of many of the essays is on the primary literature; any scholar looking for a survey of secondary material on the subject would need to look elsewhere.) One could also imagine assigning students a single chapter of this work, perhaps to contextualize a reading of *Sonnenallee* by Thomas Brussig or *Zonenkinder* by Jana Hensel. Whatever the motivation, any reader will enjoy the book’s balance between succinct overview and insightful scholarship - a remarkable achievement indeed.

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Walter Frisch, *German Modernism: Music and the Arts*.
Berkeley: U of California P, 2005. 322 pp.

Seeking to dispel the common misconception that, of all the arts, music is the most abstract and therefore most difficult to place in a broader historical and cultural context, Walter Frisch’s ambitious project examines the extensive cross-germination that took place between German and Austrian musical, visual, literary, and philosophical works created around the turn of the century (ca. 1880-1916). This well-researched study identifies the early signs of modernism within music (such as the increased experimentation with dissonant tonalities) not only in concert with the other arts but also on a historical continuum, one that signifies a greater engagement with the classical and romantic

past than has been previously acknowledged. One particular figure from the past looms largest in the pages of this book, and that is Richard Wagner. Beginning his discussion of modernism by reminding his readers of the contentious, ambivalent relationship between Nietzsche and Wagner and ending his study by showing how Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal incorporated and reinterpreted Wagnerian textual and tonal motifs in their operatic works, Frisch shows how writers, artists, and composers struggled to define German artistic production after Wagner. Wide-ranging in scope, this book constitutes an important contribution to interdisciplinary studies of modernism that explores the various interconnections between the arts and complicates the dynamic of historical continuity and break.

The book's greatest strength—its broad consideration of a myriad of works by both well-known and lesser-known composers, visual artists, and writers—is also its clearest weakness. In his effort to situate musical developments within the various literary and artistic movements that emerged during this complex time period, Frisch often sacrifices more in-depth analysis of the individual works themselves and attempts to force connections where they do not exist. The best case in point is his chapter on naturalism (36-87), which repeatedly poses the question of whether or not certain late-nineteenth-century musical works, including *Lieder* by Strauss and Wolf and operas by d'Albert and Schilling, could be defined as naturalist, only to conclude that they could not. Although the discussion is enhanced by readings and summaries of debates that took place among the era's music critics, the chapter ultimately constitutes a lengthy diversion that could have been summarized succinctly and incorporated into one of the other, more compelling chapters.

Indeed, the most compelling chapters are those that demonstrate the "points of contact" or "convergence" between the arts (90). Chapter Three, for example, explores two such relationships between composers and visual artists: Johannes Brahms and Max Klinger, Arnold Schoenberg and Wassily Kandinsky. Klinger drew praise and admiration from Brahms for his illustrated edition of a collection of the composer's *Lieder*, illustrations that not only offer highly symbolic interpretations of the music but also physically integrate musical notation and visual artistry (96, 100). In the case of Schoenberg and Kandinsky, one can speak of a more reciprocal influence, for the two men knew one another, maintained an active correspondence, and even worked together in the Munich-based artists' circle "The Blue Rider." As Frisch persuasively shows, the January 1911 concert in Munich of Schoenberg's music inspired Kandinsky and his fellow expressionist artists Franz Marc and August Macke to envision an "analogy between the treatment of colors and the treatment of harmony in music" (120). Schoenberg's concert music, in turn, shows evidence of what Frisch calls "color chords" and musical "gestures . . . like the visual imagery and literary syntax of Jugendstil and symbolism" (127-8). As a painter himself, it is certainly

feasible that Schoenberg consciously employed artistic concepts in his musical compositions, but this aspect of “convergence”—the convergence of visual artistry and musical innovation in one person—is left unexplored by Frisch. What he does explore at length is the genesis of Kandinsky’s *Impression III (Concert)* from 1911, a painting clearly meant to evoke the concert of Schoenberg’s works. *Impression III* was painted at a pivotal stage in Kandinsky’s career in which his works were becoming increasingly abstract, and the charcoal sketches he created for this work demonstrate that progression toward abstraction (132-5). The analysis of this painting, the process leading up to its completion, and the events that inspired it lead Frisch to conclude that art historians’ speculation as to the causes of “Kandinsky’s breakthrough to abstraction” need to consider more seriously “the central role played by music and ideas about music” in that very breakthrough (136-7).

The latter half of the book investigates how modernist composers engaged with the works of their predecessors. Seen by some cultural critics and composers as a healthy antidote to Wagnerian music and *fin-de-siècle* decadence, the music of Johann Sebastian Bach served as a model for composers as diverse as Schoenberg, Max Reger, and Ferruccio Busoni. The resulting compositions showed an obvious reverence to Bach, yet they also contained modernist variations that created what Frisch calls “an unbridgeable distance” between past and present (172). Taking a more playful approach to the past, Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss quoted works by Bach, Mozart, and Wagner in ways that Frisch defines as ironic, even verging on parody (219).

Frisch offers plenty of evidence for these modernist quotations and variations by comparing the musical scores and librettos of the works he examines and embedding specific examples within the text. While the musical analyses are certainly helpful and generally well executed, they exemplify one of the central problems with the text, for they are, at times, too technical for a general readership, yet too superficial for scholars of music. In trying to be all things to all readers, this book falls somewhere in between a general overview and a specialized study of modernist techniques. The sheer amount of material covered by the book requires the author to paint in broad strokes, a method that, more often than not, fails to do proper justice to the authors, composers, artists, and their works.

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