

doctrines such as Freud's psychoanalysis or Lévi-Strauss' anthropology. The closing chapter by Hanna Matthies expatiates on Patricia Drucker's novel *Hallucinating Foucault*. We readers follow Foucault's theories through the novel's central thematics of subjectivity, but this pursuit leads us finally into a fictionalized exposition of madness as a postmodern outcome. The unnamed narrator, the fictional author Paul Michel as the endangered devotee of Foucault, Michel's psychiatrist, and other voices interact, problematizing the nature of critical discourse and relationships of power and resistance.

Theorie erzählen appears well after the main bulge of postmodern writing and critical reflections on it that occurred roughly between the mid-1960s and mid-1990s. This volume possesses several virtues: The critical language is very forceful and effective throughout. Collectively the chapters rest on and refer to important traits of that period without needing to "relitigate" the critical record. The key elements in creative fiction and critical discourse from those ebullient years in European and Western Hemisphere cultures are succinctly profiled and many newer related initiatives from the mid-1990s down to the present are given careful attention; the number of very recently published novels which are treated here is quite impressive. Broadly speaking, it is clear that the so-called academic novel of yesteryear has been thriving and continues to proliferate, because Theory itself has burgeoned as a core subject-matter and shaping force in fiction, as this complex collaboration admirably demonstrates.

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Daniel F. Chamberlain and J. Edward Chamberlin, eds. *Or Words to That Effect: Orality and the Writing of Literary History*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2016. Pp. 317. ISBN 9789027234643.

This collection of twenty essays addresses the lack of attention to oral performance—or what its editors call “celebrations of spoken language” (1)—in comparative literary historiography. It does not purport to summarize the matter, but presents a range of case studies concerning issues

the authors have encountered in their own research and fieldwork. These issues stem in many (almost all) cases from what Chamberlin identifies as the residue, exemplified by thinkers as relatively “modern” as Michel Foucault and Marshall McLuhan, of a nineteenth-century belief in an operative homology between the cognitive development of a child from speech to writing and the development from “primitive” to “civilized” societies. In short, it is the damaging, offhand term “oral cultures,” whose fundamental ignorance Jacques Derrida explored in his early readings of Claude Lévi-Strauss, which is addressed and problematized in the work which is represented here.

For the critics in this volume, it is not a question of reorganizing the developmental relation of speech to writing, but of indicating its falsehood: the collection is above all arguing for an elaborated working definition of “literature” which is freed from various historical demands for a hierarchy between “spoken” and “written” literary forms. Accordingly, Paloma Díaz-Mas’s contribution uses a children’s whispering game called “los secretitos” (“the little secrets”) to examine the mechanisms of oral transmission. She argues that “orality” is less a quality of a particular literature than a form of transmission which likewise can sustain learned literature (which might be written or spoken originally) and folk literature. What is more, folk literature may transpire to have a basis in written texts, just as much as the more familiar folk influence on written literature. For Díaz-Mas, the relationship between orality and written literature is best conceived, without hierarchy or teleology, as a continuing “interaction.” Stuart McHardy’s essay on transmission over longer time periods similarly insists that to be preoccupied with the (often indeterminable) historical “origins” of stories is to neglect the repetition which enlivens them in the first place, and their “psycho-sociological relevance” to their communities: “the stories continue to be told because they continue to be told,” as he puts it (133).

One merit of the collection at large is that such methodological recommendations are concretely backed up elsewhere; too often in literary studies one reads hand-wringing but ultimately vapid pronouncements about how “we” ought to go about our critical business conscientiously. Here, however, the ethics have a point. One reads with interest Levi Namaseb’s reportage of his work devising an orthography of the ꞤKhomani language, believed to be the only surviving language of the click-based Southern Khoesan Language group in Southern Africa, with only a

handful of surviving fluent speakers as of this volume's publication—an impressive and timely example of the “interaction” Díaz-Mas advocates. Namaseb considers correspondences between storytelling traditions in †Khomani, and in his own first language, Khoekhoe. Following this essay, Neil ten Kortenaar discusses some of the folk tales and animal fables told to Namaseb during his †Khomani fieldwork, and explains Namaseb's criteria for analysing these. Interestingly, Kortenaar is also able to show that the †Khomani oral tradition is principally a consequence of a quite indiscriminate bricolage of other stories picked up by that community: a practical refutation of the racist myth of the chthonic “oral culture.”

The collection demonstrates an impressive geographical and historical reach where Africa, America, and Europe are concerned. Andy Orchard's impressive contribution closely reads a range of Anglo-Saxon riddles or *aenigma*, mostly from the Old English Exeter Book, which are concerned with the relations between immediate spoken/sung “voice” and their silent memorialization in writing which nonetheless will have been the only means for their survival. No less arrestingly, Jon Kortazar Uriarte traces the influence of Johann Gottfried Herder on the privileged role of folk and oral poetry in the literary history of the Basque Country, and the study thereof. In a more localized account of influence, Beate Eder-Jordan's essay (translated by Maria Witting) gives an account of the Indologist Milena Hübschmannová's formal analysis of Romani literature, and her framework for understanding its transition from oral performance to conventional historiographical inscription. Eder-Jordan argues, furthermore, that Hübschmannová might also be said to have “co-founded” Romani literature in the Czech Republic and Slovakia by encouraging Tera Fabiánová, the first Romani author in those regions, to write down her poetry. But this itself, Elder-Jordan is right to emphasize, only came about due to those authors' hospitality toward the non-Romani scholar. Again, dynamic and even contingent interaction is shown to characterize the relation between orality and written literary history.

Daniel Heath Justice eloquently discusses the silences or quietness imposed by North American settlement—a theme hitherto neglected even as texts concerning the “Native voice” proliferate in Indigenous Studies—and concurrently thinks about the importance of moments or periods of quietude and silence to his experiences of Indigenous culture. This is a very suggestive dual thematic which Justice marshals with no little elegance into an essay about the ambivalence generative both

of silence and silencing. Michael Asch's text also takes up the topic of settlement in the US and Canada, through the question of the differing attitudes (but same broad ideology of Manifest Destiny) underpinning North American and Canadian treaty policy in the nineteenth century. The former proceeded with confidence that the Indigenous people would soon die out due to their "inferiority;" the latter with the argument that they were capable of more or less autonomous "advancement" into "civilized" status. However, Asch shows that Canadian policy in practice mirrored that of North America and thus was something of an historical wrong-turn. He cites his father's Folkways record company as an allegorical model for the forgotten promise of Canadian treaty policy.

Throughout, the collection considers the university as the privileged site for the implementation of changes to the literary paradigm which might incorporate a more thorough understanding of orality. In the volume's first essay, Daniel F. Chamberlain provides an historical account of what he considers the spatialization of literary history in the 1990s, where traditional presuppositions concerning literary periodization came to be viewed less and less as the only available vantage point; regional literary cultures were paid increasing attention, as well as non-European language communities, many of which maintained their literary traditions in what Chamberlain calls "an audio-oral context supported by forms of non-phonetic script" (35). One would be right to suppose that this elaborated view of "literature" would expand the field enormously, and yet, he argues, oral literatures still have not been incorporated proportionately into conventional or taught histories of literature. Clearly, though, there are dangers going forward both of tokenism (taking as exemplary a limited number of oral performances, or studies of performances, in a specific community or region), and of replacing a written/oral binary which excludes orality with one which includes it: the latter binary would misrecognize just as much as the former what is actually at issue (indeed, some literary critics are fatuous enough to repackage orality as simply the "performative" dimension of written literature). Later in the book, Keavy Martin's essay relates her own efforts to incorporate oral traditions and Indigenous intellectual frameworks into her teaching of literature and literary history in Canada, and Michael Chapman reflects on the challenges of writing the Longman volume, *South African Literatures* in the early 1990s, in a manner which integrated many different language communities, media, and understandings of "literature."

In his subtle and challenging essay, David R. Olson outlines two distinctive modes of discourse, the narrative (“storytelling”) and the paradigmatic (“philosophical” or “scientific”), which he argues evince different, but equally epistemologically valid, ways of thinking, and ought not to be considered less and more rational versions of the same thing. This is to challenge a widespread received wisdom whereby narrative discourse is for “fun” whereas paradigmatic discourse is for the truth. For Olson, narrative is constituted above all by the unexpected, exceptionality, or, in Kenneth Burke’s term, “Trouble.” This can refer to an event in a story, but can also be expanded into a more general principle about literature—that the words used to create it are themselves open to unexpected deployment and significance. Paradigmatic discourse, by contrast, seeks as far as possible to establish stable conditions in which its content can be conveyed—usually a strictly denotative use of language. The expanded range of possibilities a narrative discourse might include does not indicate its relative “irrationality,” but is better understood as “narrative rationality.”

Edgard Sienaert’s essay spiritedly argues for Marcel Jousse’s broadly Heideggerian and rather tie-dyed “Anthropology of Geste” to provide the foundation for “a new common paradigm for future histories of literature and anthologies, one inclusive of oral performance texts” (48). I think, however, that the extant paradigms won’t be affected by that particular suggestion. María Teresa Vilarino Picos provides the inevitable “digital culture” viewpoint which frequently seems to arrive these days at the end of this kind of collection—and equally often strikes one as perfunctory and terminology-heavy. To venture another quibble, the volume, for all its astute and welcome scepticism concerning the false inclusivity of standard literary histories, does sporadically fall back on quaintly consensual edicts about literature (“literature ushers us into a congregation that willingly suspends disbelief to celebrate belief”) and, at times, unhelpful fog packet flim-flam (“There is only one humanity with one common heritage”) (43, 55).

As a whole, though, this is a formidable book which manages a broad range, sustains a high scholarly standard, and maintains a lucid ethical focus: a rare trifecta. The penultimate essay, by Frederico Augusto Garcia Fernandes, might have gone first, so well does it encapsulate the volume at large. His contribution considers the development of critical approaches to oral poetry from those which confine it within hastily-conceived “social functions” to much more sophisticated theories of

voice and performance, such as the work of Paul Zumthor, which entail an argument, endorsed by Fernandes, for a recalibration of the concept of “poetry” more broadly. According to Fernandes, in a neat and summative formulation, “the challenge is not a matter of claiming a place for oral poems in literary criticism and in comparative literary history, but of ... claiming an appropriate representation of oral poetry from a synchronic perspective, amidst its contexts of production and, to no lesser degree, its contexts of reception as performed texts” (268).

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Alexandra Berlina. *Brodsky Translating Brodsky: Poetry in Self-Translation*. New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2014. Pp. 217. ISBN: 9781623561734.

The winner of ICLA’s Anna Balakian prize in 2016, this book deals with the self-translations into English of Brodsky’s poems originally written in Russian. Not only is it an excellent introduction to Brodsky’s work, it offers a fascinating study of the relevance of translation in literary studies. Through her innovative approach, Alexandra Berlina perfectly demonstrates that Brodsky’s self-translations enable readers to apprehend almost any aspect of his poetry. Berlina’s analyses provide an excellent commentary of the originals, especially with regard to Brodsky’s attitudes to and preferences in Anglo-American literature and culture in general. Brodsky attempts to integrate English and American literary traditions. In this detailed work, Berlina aptly summarizes previous scholarship on the topic, however, she also provides invaluable insights of her own, as she privileges comparisons between different versions of the same poem in various languages. From that point of view, she regards translation as a method of close reading, since, as she says, “every translation is a metatext that can enrich the understanding of *both source and target texts*, of their languages and cultures” (5, emphasis mine). Rather than considering translation studies as a discipline, Berlina uses it as a tool for comparative literature and a way of exploring Brodsky’s work in detail.