

evidently, fit the mold of scientific findings. Indeed, some literary works can readily reflect the scientific discoveries that immediately preceded their composition. The realist style can also serve as a vehicle for scientific issues. In his essay, then, Murphet refutes the views of critics who question cognitive literary studies because of their alleged reluctance to analyze experimental or “unnatural” narratives.

Mindful Aesthetics: Literature and the Science of Mind is a useful compilation of twelve essays exploring the different ways in which cognitive science has deepened our understanding of literature and how literature can be examined from a cognitive scientific perspective. More importantly, it avoids the temptation to find immediate solutions for the somewhat problematic position of literary studies within the sciences. Rather, it articulates nuanced questions concerning the nature of literary research and its relation to the scientific method. The absence of an overarching conclusion suggests that the editors wished to emphasize the diversity of perspectives expressed in their collection. This distinctive feature testifies to the scholarly quality of this volume.

ALISON LUYTEN

Alison.Luyten@uantwerpen.be
University of Antwerp (Belgium)

TOM DE KEYSER

Tom.DeKeyser@uantwerpen.be
University of Antwerp (Belgium)



Marcel Cornis-Pope, ed. *New Literary Hybrids in the Age of Multimedia Expression: Crossing Borders, Crossing Genres. A Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages* 27. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 2014. Pp. 455. ISBN: 9789027234636.

This collective book, which is a volume in the ongoing Benjamins series on the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages, has benefited from the support of Virginia Commonwealth University, as well as the International Comparative Literary Association and the “Union Académique Internationale.” The editor, Marcel Cornis-Pope,

who is a professor of English and Media at Virginia Commonwealth University, served as President of the Coordinating Publication Committee of ICLA from 2013–16. In addition to the general introduction to the book, Cornis-Pope also wrote a couple of contributions collected in this anthology. The volume includes a list of Works Cited and a List of contributors (offering essential information about its twenty-five authors), together with a useful Index of Names, Titles and Major Topics.

The book is organized in four parts, each one gathering several contributions: 1) multimedia productions from theoretical and historical perspectives (the two aspects being treated separately); 2) regional and intercultural projects related to the topic of the book; 3) forms and genres; and 4) readers and rewriters in multimedia environments.

In the general introduction, Cornis-Pope deals with literature and multimedia throughout the latter half of the twentieth and early twenty-first century. Following in the wake of Nancy Kaplan, he poses an interesting question about how we understand literacy nowadays. Indeed, this notion should include not only textual literacy, but also visual, electronic and gestural (non-verbal) or even social literacies as well.

It is generally admitted that the relation between literature and other media has been absent from turn-of-the-century reports on the state of literary studies. Cornis-Pope focuses on that relation, offering another interpretation to “hybridity,” one that is not necessarily connected to multiculturalism but to multimedia expression. Historically, textual study mainly referred to the act of reading printed verbal texts. However, the end of the twentieth century has witnessed a true explosion of new media forms, expanding the very notion of “text.” This important shift occurred especially in the 1990s, and has had consequences both on the way we define literacy itself, and on the social status that literacy confers (which is marked by access to information). One of these consequences is that the discipline of literary studies has been concerned with many other media, stretching to its limits the very definition of textuality. This shift has been reinforced by the new hypertext and networked communication technologies, which have favoured a nonlinear mode of reading and writing somehow approaching Roland Barthes’s definition of the “plural text.”

In this context, Cornis-Pope explores the new paradigm shift for “textual” analysis, following in the footsteps of J. A. Kaufman. At the same time, he discusses A. Kirby’s demonic visions of contemporary

culture. This is especially the case when he describes the emergence of a new “digimodernism,” which succeeded postmodernism in the mid-late 1990s and quickly eclipsed it. This “digimodernism” is conceived as a new movement that reasserts the validity of grand narratives and proves susceptible to promote, in the end, some kind of a “toxic fundamentalism” (Kirby 238).¹

Frankly, the distinction between postmodernism and digimodernism, and between earlier modernist multimedia and new media will not be clear for all theorists. This volume thus invites new debates, since the global shift towards multimedia forms of creativity and cultural interconnection also implies new responsibilities for authors and theorists.

Further, this book emphasizes literary production/expression in multimedia environments, including new hybrids that break down the boundaries between the different arts, and allow a new interpretation of discourses based on the contamination with elements derived from other artistic practices.

Another point of interest is the impact of cyberliteracy in the subaltern sphere, which can be rather frightening, as G. Spivak already pointed out in 2002. Some of the contributions of this book deal with that topic, mainly underscoring the fact that global messages are filtered through regional or local interests. This leads to the creation of either thematic or formal hybrids. Obviously, the purpose of this strategy is to win over Third World market. As a matter of fact, postcolonial studies have stimulated scholarship focussing both on media representation of Others and on the process of Othering, in a way that points towards a polycentric form of multiculturalism. The latter could foreground cultural exchanges between Europe and its others.

On the other hand, this kind of hybridity is evident even within Europe and its sub-regions. This phenomenon affects genres and replaces the traditional grand narratives (mainly based on national or ethnocentric visions) with forms of intermediality that emphasize existing tensions between the global and the local. As many contributions in this book suggest, literature and other arts have recently moved towards that intermediality.

1. This notion concerns even terrorism, from Kirby's point of view. See, for example, Alan Kirby, *Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure Our Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2009).

As Cornis-Pope sees it, if the humanities are to retain their fundamental role in our interdisciplinary media-driven world, they have to reconfigure themselves significantly. New technologies (hypertext reading/writing, networked communication, multimedia performances ...) have served the goal of enhancing the interactive component in literary studies, strengthening the sense of the multi-levelled nature of literature. However, Cornis-Pope suggests that we should try to abandon old habits of reading and writing, thus allowing new technologies to create a new space for scriptural and cultural experimentation.

In the introduction to the book, Cornis-Pope also outlines the state of research in the field, showing how discussions in this area have stressed the increasing multimedia configuration of the second half of the twentieth century. The volume draws on both theoretical and applied work in the area of multimedia and electronic literature, either exploring the roots of intermediality or focusing on the increasingly more complex exchanges between literature and new media. It also takes into account some recent developments in non-literary media, such as comics and graphic works in general. Still, from Cornis-Pope's point of view, new theorizations of multimedia work are necessary.

The contributors to this book recognize the current and global shift towards the visual and virtual in all areas of textuality. As mentioned above, the twenty-five contributions are arranged into four sections, according to their response to four main questions posed by the editor about that shift. Part one sheds light on the definition, hybrid genre and interrelated forms of various multimedia products, ranging from earlier hypertexts to digital literature and transmedial works either on computers or in gallery installations. It is completed with some historical explorations of this kind of cultural production. This part puts together contributions by Katarina Peović Vuković, Rui Torres/Manuel Portela/Maria do Carmo Castelo Branco de Sequeira, Verónica Galíndez-Jorge, Bernardo Piciché, Michael Wutz, and Karl Jirgens. Jirgens's interesting essay deals with the historic sources of the neo-baroque features of electronic and multimedia writing, connecting some of Samuel Beckett's works from the 1950s–1960s with the experimentation carried out by some members of Ou.Li.Po (such as Italo Calvino and François Le Lionnaise).

Contributions collected in Part Two (by Yra van Dijk, Pedro de Andrade, Eva Midden, Reneta Vankova Bozhankova, Nevena Daković/Ivana Uspenski, and Marcel Cornis-Pope) provide a regional and intercultural

mapping of the recent multimedia cultures of Europe. The authors of Part Three (Talan Memmott, Astrid Ensslin, Leonora Flis, Bogumila Suwara, Joana Spassova-Dikova, Victoria Pérez-Royo, and Reneta Vankova Bozhankova) focus on the broad range of intermediate forms and genres that has characterized literature in recent times, such as digital expressions, multimedia performances, blogospheres, etc.

The interactive connection between authors/texts/readers in multi-medial forms of literature is the main topic of Part Four, taking its cue from one of the major theorists in the field, Alan Bigelow, whose contribution opens this last section of the book. Other contributors are Francesca Pasquali, Janez Strehovec, Susana Tosca/Helle Nina Pedersen, Artur Matuck, and again Marcel Cornis-Pope.

This collection of essays offers an example of the kinds of international projects and inquiries that have become possible at the interface between literature and other media, both new and old. The book shows how hypertextual, multimedia, and virtual reality technologies are involved in this process. The general purpose of the volume is to integrate literature into the global informational environment, starting from the assumption that literature is actually benefitting from that interaction with other media. Thus, innovative literary practices emerge, emphasizing cross-cultural interplay as well as translation. All in all, this is a very interesting book for scholars and other people interested in the new hybrid forms of textuality in our interdisciplinary media-driven world.

ASSUMPTA CAMPS

a.camps@ub.edu

University of Barcelona (Spain)



Simona Bertacco, ed. *Language and Translation in Post-colonial Literatures: Multilingual Contexts, Translational Texts*. New York and London: Routledge, 2014. Pp. 234. ISBN: 9780415656047.

Dans l'ensemble des travaux postcoloniaux, la question du rôle des traductions dans des contextes plurilingues a été assez peu étudiée. La dernière décennie du XX^e siècle a certes vu plusieurs études de valeur concernant la pragmatique de la traduction (vu travaux de Basnett et