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## REVIEWS

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**Wieland Schwanebeck. *Literary Twinship from Shakespeare to the Age of Cloning*. New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2020. 245 pp.**

Realizing that the use of twins in fiction spans eras of storytelling and that its research has an "overall preoccupation with authors' personal affiliations" (39), *Literary Twinship from Shakespeare to the Age of Cloning* sets out to distinguish literary twinship from other tropes of mirrored duality (e.g. the literary double) and discusses its use in literary fiction. Organized historically, the monograph connects the representation of twins in fiction to the different discourses of the times in which they appeared. Discussions of eugenics, body politics, sexual politics, feminism, modern criminology, and post-colonialism, are related to the twin motif. The different chapters thus connect the constant reconstitution of the twin motif "as a cultural and pathological type" (10) to the aforementioned "battlegrounds of ideological disputes" (10) by relating different literary products to the scientific publications of their times. Schwanebeck's stated goal thus is not only to show "that literature frequently *prefigured* many of the discussions raging in modern twin scholarship, but it has also been instrumental in *facilitating* these debates [...]" (10ff.; original emphasis).

Chapters three to six are organized around "a number of major caesuras, all of which mark a renegotiation of the category of twinship in relation to other discursive fields" (15). The second chapter, "Conceiving Twins," offers a dense account of the history of twin studies, the development of the nature/nurture debate, ethnographic research into twins, twins in literary research, twin mythology, and twins in mythology, providing a set of "master narratives" (15) that recur in representations of twins throughout history. Presenting the struggle between geneticists and behaviorists, it also ties the twin motif directly to discourses of the nature/nurture debate, positing that "twin research reveals nothing about twins" (27). Despite this suggestion, it becomes clear how twin studies has influenced the application of the twin motif. "Conceiving Twins" provides the basis for the later analyses and discussions. The chapter covers a lot of ground but manages to consolidate the different fields into a few grand assumptions about twins that permeate even contemporary discourses.

The chapter "Confusing Twins" describes the farcical use of the twin motif and how the viewpoint "that the origins of twins are, at best, dubious and, at worst, immensely scary" (3) lends itself to the oppression of women by tying a monstrous notion of twinship to the mother's shortcomings or the midwife's witchery. The greater part of the chapter deals with the genre conventions of the twin farce and its standing among other literary genres, but it also argues for the existence of a demonic subtext underlying the genre (i.e. fear of unknown forces taking control of our lives). This section is dominated by discussion of the genre-related aspects of the twin farce, which diverts from the greater argument of the motif's facilitating power regarding the discourse.

Crossing cultural, medial, and theoretical lines, chapter four, "Appropriating Twins," focuses on notions of originality, adaptation, and copies by looking at the transposition of specifically Shakespearian uses of twinship to other literary products.

Schwanebeck provides an account of the process by which adaptation (and retention) of the specific structures of the twin farce carried existing notions of twinship into new environments. However, by constantly working social, medial, and cultural contexts into the discussions of the motif's adaptation to new environments, Schwanebeck unwillingly counters the idea of the motif's prefiguration to such discourses.

"Detecting Twins," chapter five, relates the twin motif not only to the detective genre but, more importantly, to the double. The notion of the evil double emerges with the rise of science during the Victorian age, which was accompanied by a need for classification (e.g. the distinction between the good and the evil twin). Here, Schwanebeck interrelates the double, Galton's twin studies, and the rise of modern criminology. The chapter also veers into the topics of colonialism and English imperialism in its discussions of twinship in Collins's *Poor Miss Finch* (1872) and Dickens's *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870), in which the author highlights the intersectional identities created by colonial twin characters. While the relationship between the twin motif and modern criminology is clearly articulated, the connection to criticism of colonialism seems to arise mostly out of a classic post-colonial view, leaving the specific relation to the twin motif unclear.

The chapter entitled "Multiplying Twins" discusses more recent representations of twinship, particularly clones, and links the anxiety of cloning to the twin motif. Via notions of endless multiplication, breeding as a reiteration of eugenic ideals, and the return of evil doubles, the chapter relates the twin motif to discourses of biopolitics, sexual politics, and questions of individuality and identity. It also reinforces the motif's importance for the nature/nurture debate, demonstrating how old eugenic discourses find their way into contemporary literary products. With current political discursive trends in mind, "Multiplying Twins" provides a convincing argument that the twin motif prefigured not only discussions in twin scholarship, but also prefigured current public discourses. The suggestion that the film *Twins*<sup>1</sup> "underline[s] once more that genes prove infinitely stronger than the nurturing forces of a shared social environment, and the elite should breed among themselves" (204ff.) eerily invokes U.S. Representative Steve King's comment in 2017.<sup>2</sup>

Drawing all of the book's findings together, the final chapter, "Untangling Twins," defines the characteristics and uses of literary twinship, while also making distinctions between the use of the motif in different genres. *Literary Twinship from Shakespeare to the Age of Cloning* makes a strong case for the distinction between the twin motif and the literary double. It also competently highlights the relationship between the literary representation of twins and prominent scientific discourses. However, the monograph's abundance of objects and the wide historical overview lend themselves more to the discussion of the twin motif's adaptations and development across time than to its influence on scientific discourse. While undoubtedly present, the relation of the

1 *Twins*. Dir. Ivan Reitman. Universal Pictures, 1988.

2 "We can't restore our civilization with somebody else's babies" (qtd. in Niraj Chokshi. "Steve King Says Civilization Can't Be Restored With 'Somebody Else's Babies.'" 12 March 2017 *New York Times*. <<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/12/us/steve-king-white-nationalism-racism.html>> [accessed 13 August 2020]).

twin motif to diverse discourses often seems to take second place to its application in literary products. Ultimately, however, the monograph is an unrivaled, comprehensive, and clear approach to the distinction and development of the twin motif, which highlights the co-dependence of current discourses and corresponding literary devices.

CHRISTOPHER HANSEN

**Oliver Bock and Isabel Vila-Cabanes, eds. *Urban Walking: The Flâneur as an Icon of Metropolitan Culture in Literature and Film*. Wilmington, DE: Vernon Press, 2020. 264 pp.**

In their conference volume *Urban Walking: The Flâneur as an Icon of Metropolitan Culture in Literature and Film*, the editors Oliver Bock and Isabel Vila-Cabanes collect contributions from an international conference held at the University of Jena in the spring of 2018. The twelve essays in the book span a wide range of disciplinary, medial, and geographical contexts. Many cover works from literatures with an established link to *flânerie*, like those of France (Schabert), Germany (Herrmann), Great Britain (Carluccio, Vila-Cabanes), or the US (Chukwuemeka, Ries). However, multiple contributions also discuss representations of *flânerie* in texts from places less commonly associated with it, like Norway (Brynhildsvoll), China (Youssef), India (Sandten), and Brazil (Cardozo de Sousa). Furthermore, two essays extend the *flâneurial* lens beyond the literary, addressing filmic approaches to the phenomenon in 1950s American experimental cinema (Hummel) and recent US Science Fiction (Manolache). In keeping with this considerable scope of the content level, the essays cover materials from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century beginnings of the contemplative, observant urban stroller all the way up to its contemporary iterations.

The editors plausibly group the chapters into five thematic categories in the introduction, which are reflected in their order in the book (x-xii): Eva Katharina Ries (1-28) and Lea Herrmann (29-48) contribute to the re-theorization of urban walking in contemporary literature, while Knut Brynhildsvoll (49-57), Isabel Vila-Cabanes (59-95), and Cristina Caluccio (97-117) call attention to understudied depictions of the *flâneur* – in terms of geography, gendering, or hitherto overlooked texts – in the context of its European origins in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The *flâneur* and questions of identity construction in postmodern and transnational migrant writing form the focus of Ina Schabert's (119-131) and Daniel Chukwuemeka's chapters (133-151), whereas Cecile Sandten (195-214), Ana Paula Cardozo de Souza (153-172), and Farida Youssef (173-193) translate literary *flânerie* into the context of cities in the Global South. Finally, the essays by Berit Hummel (215-245) and Viorella Manolache (247-259) fuse *flânerie* and film studies, one focusing on "Beat-related poet-tramp[s]" in the changing "filmic and urban space" of late 1950s San Francisco (215), the other on passengers on a spaceship as Baumanian *flâneurs* and a means of negotiating his "postmodern ethics" (247).

Beyond these themes, the collection's contributions showcase two larger, overarching approaches to the *flâneur*: whereas the first, "more classical" perspective treats the figure as a "literary or social character, as a producer of texts or [...] as a

theme in literature" (x), the second rather conceptualizes *flânerie* as a more abstract "literary and cultural approach" scholars may utilize as a tool to critically (re-)assess the "urban condition" (x). In practice, most essays seem to fall between these two extremes. What unites the book's contributors regardless of their method is that they demonstrate the adaptability of *flânerie* to various urban and medial settings, defying claims of the *flâneur's* obsolescence that have occasionally been heard ever since Benjamin. Yet, the essays also do not lose sight of the *flâneur's* origins in the work of Baudelaire, Poe and the aforementioned Benjamin, a conceptual core towards which many of them critically position their novel perspectives (see, for instance, Vila-Cabanes, Cardozo de Sousa).

One further latent theme within the volume emerges in several of its chapters on literature: Ries, Carluccio, Schabert, and Chuwuemeka all seem to use the *flâneur* figure to conceptualize specific (post)modern forms of urban subjectivity. Their *flâneurial* readings appear to position the urban subject within dyadic systems of identity negotiation and power relations: this logic takes the shape of a conflict between *flâneurial* subjectivization through violence and Butlerian vulnerable precarity in Ries. In Carluccio, it is discussed in the interplay between abstraction and empathy as strategies of modernist portrayals of the city that have been reductively gendered. Schabert's analysis then negotiates between sympathy and irony or rather nihilist isolation in the manner of Melville's *Bartleby* and solitary but joy-filled *flânerie*. Chukwuemeka finally juxtaposes Afropolitan, *flâneurial* privilege with postcolonial, racialized non-belonging and haunting memories in a Nigerian migrant's literary New York City. The conflictual dynamics evident here echo classic urban themes like alienation and belonging, speaking to the *flâneur's* insistent presence in, and parallel development with, urban discourses since the beginnings of the modern city, its culture, and scholarship.

The breadth of materials and approaches that constitutes a strength of this essay collection perhaps necessarily brings with it a certain lack of shared focus. This makes it challenging to identify a common set of critical concerns in the volume's contributions that would suggest a clear direction for future scholarship on the *flâneur*. Yet, the range of the contributions also suggests that the *flâneur* continues to inspire robust research in many disciplines within the humanities. The conference volume thus contributes to the further diversification of *flâneurial* scholarship. It simultaneously gestures towards the still unfinished expansion of the figure beyond the centers of Western urbanity and into post-classical forms: such alternative iterations of the *flâneur* may, for instance, diverge from their predecessor's long-criticized status as a white, middle class, masculine subject of leisure in terms of their gendering, racialization, or class affiliation.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Most recently, such alternative formulations of the figure have for instance been put forward in two noteworthy books: Özlem Özgül Dündar, Mia Göhring, Ronya Othmann, and Lea Sauer, eds. *Flexen: Flâneusen\* Schreiben Städte*. Verbrecher Verlag, 2019; and Lauren Elkin. *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice and London*. London: Chatto & Windus, 2016.

Bock and Vila-Cabanes's volume will prove valuable to readers with a sustained interest in the subject of *flânerie* in urban literature, audiovisual arts, and culture in general, as well as to those with a scholarly focus on one of the (trans)national literatures, cinemas, authors, and texts discussed in the individual essays. For an audience new to the phenomenon of *flânerie*, other works will perhaps provide a clearer overview, for instance Keith Tester's older but informative collection *The Flâneur*.<sup>2</sup> Readers interested in learning about the history of and scholarly debates surrounding female *flâneuses* might consider Aruna D'Souza and Tom McDonough's essay collection *The Invisible Flâneurs*<sup>3</sup> as well. In general, Bock and Vila-Cabanes's essay collection surely presents a welcome addition to the growing field of *flâneurial* scholarship.

CHRIS KATZENBERG

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**Maria Löschnigg and Martin Löschnigg, eds. *The Anglo-Canadian Novel in the Twenty-First Century: Interpretations*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2019. 266 pp.**

CanLit has become a global phenomenon. Readers worldwide enjoy the creativity, quality, and diversity of Canadian literature, both in original editions and in numerous translations. In Germany, public excitement about Canada as intended guest country of the Frankfurt Book Fair 2020 was widespread, even if the guest status had to be partly postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Numerous genres have contributed to the global popularity of Canada's publishing scene over the years, but novels arguably play a special role in the success story of CanLit. Scholarly publications such as George Woodcock's *The Canadian Novel in the Twentieth Century* (1975), Klaus-Dieter Ertler's *Kleine Geschichte des frankokanadischen Romans* (2000), or Marta Dvořák's chapter on "Fiction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Canadian Literature*, edited by Eva-Marie Kröller (2004; 2017), have probed into the role fiction has played in the history of Canadian literature, not only but in particular in the past century.

*The Anglo-Canadian Novel in the Twenty-First Century: Interpretations*, edited by Maria Löschnigg and Martin Löschnigg, breaks new ground in this field by examining, for the first time in an edited collection, Anglo-Canadian fiction in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The purpose of the book is to provide "a selective critical inventory of Canadian novels in English published during the last two decades" (9). As such, the editors remark, they follow a similar aim as recent publications in the field of French-Canadian literature insofar as they chart fresh trends in "outstanding Canadian novels" as well as in scholarly approaches to the field (9). The result is an excellent collection, which offers twenty-five articles on both canonical and not-yet-canonical authors. The writers covered include André Alexis, Margaret Atwood, Joseph Boyden, Dionne Brand,

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2 Keith Tester, ed. *The Flâneur*. London: Routledge, 1994.

3 Aruna D'Souza and Tom McDonough, eds. *The Invisible Flâneuse? Gender, Public Space, and Visual Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006.

George Elliott Clarke, Michael Crummey, Timothy Findley, Don Gillmor, Douglas Glover, Rawi Hage, Frances Itani, Thomas King, Tracey Lindberg, Emily St. John Mandel, Rohinton Mistry, Michael Ondaatje, Eden Robinson, Madeleine Thien, Miriam Toews, Jane Urquhart, Guy Vanderhaeghe, and Richard B. Wright. All articles focus on a particular text, though most essays also situate the work in the larger context of the author's oeuvre and background. This allows readers who may be unfamiliar with an author or a work to get both an overview and a specific interpretation of a novel.

If there is one outstanding feature of the collection, then it is perhaps its timeliness. Not only are the novels state-of-the-art, but so are the themes and theoretical frameworks the articles explore. Indigeneity, ecology, migrancy, race and racism, posthumanism, biotechnology, health and illness, gender, hybridity, kinship, trauma, the residential school system, Japanese Canadian internment, transculturality, and dystopianism are among the prominent themes discussed. The contributors take care to connect these themes to larger Canadian and/or global issues. Essays focus, for instance, on posthumanism in André Alexis's *Fifteen Dogs* (Rūta Šlapkauskaitė), indigeneity, trauma, and healing in Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road* (Silvia Mergenthal), cultures and geographies of belonging in Dionne Brand's *What We All Long For* (Carmen Birkle), disability and care in Frances Itani's *Desoronto Trilogy* (Anna Branach-Kallas), native ecologies in Thomas King's *The Back of the Turtle* (Maria Löschnigg), the concept of indigeneity mainstreaming in Eden Robinson's *Blood Sports* (Jutta Zimmermann), humour and the first-person narrative voice in Miriam Toews's *A Complicated Kindness* (Jason Blake), or imperialism, otherness, and hybridity in Guy Vanderhaeghe's *The Last Crossing* (Heinz Antor). Other articles examine storytelling in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy (Coral Ann Howells), language and race in George Elliott Clarke's *George & Rue* (David Creelman), trauma, memory, and art in Frances Itani's *Requiem* (Brigitte Johanna Glaser), or music in Madeleine Thien's *Do Not Say We Have Nothing* (David Staines) – to name but a few. Two other specific points turn *The Anglo-Canadian Novel in the Twenty-First Century* into a rich resource for anybody interested in contemporary Canadian literature. First, it features several essays that focus on lesser-known works of otherwise eminent authors. There are articles on Margaret Atwood's *Hag-Seed* (Martin Kuester), Timothy Findley's *Pilgrim* (Sherrill Grace), and Michael Ondaatje's *The Cat's Table* (Dagmara Drewniak). Second, several articles focus on works that deserve to become still better known around the world, such as Rawi Hage's *Cockroach* (Sabrina Thom), Tracey Lindberg's *Birdie* (Silke Jandl), or Emily St. John Mandel's *The Lola Quartet* (Maximilian Feldner). Taken together, the range of writers, works, themes, and approaches turns *The Anglo-Canadian Novel in the Twenty-First Century* into a well-timed and valuable publication that maps out key points in the larger landscape of Canadian writing.

Although it is difficult to single out one essay from a multitude of inspiring articles, it might be worthwhile to conclude this review by pointing to the – almost uncanny – connection between art and reality in Maximilian Feldner's contribution on Emily St. John Mandel, including her works *The Lola Quartet* (2012) and *Station Eleven* (2014). The latter tells the story of a world in which a virus pandemic has killed large parts of the global population and has changed international social, cultural, and economic

relations. Those who survive the virus have few things left from "the world before the pandemic," most precious, perhaps, their memories and stories (176). *Station Eleven* was published in 2014. Reading the text in 2020 tells us something about literature's capacity to relate to reality in numerous ways and to introduce alternative worlds that may, at times, not be so far removed from what can become real. The COVID-19 pandemic will hopefully not lead to "society's collapse," as the pandemic in St. John Mandel's novel does (176). Yet, as the articles in *The Anglo-Canadian Novel in the Twenty-First Century* illustrate abundantly, reading is one way of thinking and feeling through possible scenarios and perhaps even to cope with them in times of global change.

KIRSTEN SANDROCK

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**Kai Wiegandt, ed. *The Transnational in Literary Studies. Potential and Limitations of a Concept*. Berlin and Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2020. 273 pp.**

Maybe more than ever before, people, artefacts and ideas travel across cultural, spatial and temporal boundaries, thus inevitably exceeding any singular framework and putting pressure on myths of cultural homogeneity. In literary theory, an array of concepts has recently been mobilized to bring into focus how cross-cultural exchange affects the production, poetics and reception of literary texts. The transnational is one of these terms, which is used to highlight the polycentric entanglements of seemingly national literatures and which indicates the need for new scales of literary history. Many cutting-edge studies, among them Paul Jay's *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies* (2010) and Jahan Ramazani's *A Transnational Poetics* (2009), impressively testify to the potential of transnational approaches in opening up new perspectives on seemingly well-known literary texts, both in regard to past epochs and contemporary globalization. So why add yet another book to the stack?

According to the editor, the volume seeks to "clarify the meanings and applications of the concept of the transnational and to identify areas in which it can be particularly useful" (1). More specifically, the introduction sets out to sketch "a taxonomy of the applications of the transnational" and to relate "the transnational" to "rival concepts" (ibid.) while the subsequent case studies are designed to illustrate how various literary texts respond to transnational challenges. Even if one is no big fan of taxonomies in the field of literary studies, many of Wiegandt's suggestions are persuasive and provide a fine-grained model for the analysis of literature. Identifying different levels on which the transnational may become a formative force, such as "[t]heme," "[a]esthetics," "[r]eception" and "[m]arketing" (2f.), the taxonomy overcomes static distinctions between the inside and outside of literary texts and makes it possible to bring into dialogue what Winfried Fluck calls "aesthetic" and "political transnationalism" (2011, 367).<sup>1</sup> There are, however, some missed opportunities for coming to a conceptually and historically robust understanding of the transnational. With an eye on the declared aims of the introduction, I would have liked to read more about the relations between the transnational and other concepts designed to capture interconnectedness. On three

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1 Fluck, Winfried. "A New Beginning? Transnationalisms." *New Literary History* 42.3 (2011): 365-384. DOI:10.1353/nlh.2011.0030.

densely-written pages, Wiegandt compares the concept of the transnational to the international, postcolonial and cosmopolitan and, in passing, also introduces the concept of world literature. Somewhat surprisingly, transcultural approaches are largely ignored, though they might provide a serious complement to account for interconnections between communities beneath and beyond the nation-state.

The introduction sets the stage for the following twelve chapters, which are subdivided into three parts: Part One presents case studies that explore the "Transnational amongst Related Concepts in Theory and Marketing," Part Two is dedicated to "Transnational Literary Histories" and Part Three engages with the "Poetics and Politics of Transnational Genres." As indicated by the section titles, the essays cover an immensely wide range of topics, examining, e.g., re-configurations of the "Hottentot Venus" (Cecile Sandten), "Transnational Utopianism" (Jacqueline Dutton) and "Transnational Identities in the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Hungarian-Language Novel" (Dobrota Pucherová). This broadness puts to the test readers who value coherence. Still, many of the essays do offer illuminating insights into the interface between the transnational and literature, and some of them even cover new conceptual and methodological ground. Anna M. Horatschek's essay on the Indian playwright Girish Karnad presents a knowledgeable and at times provocative reading of the play *Hayavadana*. Accentuating the incongruence between *Hayavadana* and some of the central premises of postcolonial studies, Horatschek makes a strong case for approaching the play from a transnational perspective while also highlighting the transformative force of locality in reading literary texts across borders. The discussion of the play's transnational poetics might have profited from paying closer attention to the effects of Karnad's self-translations. How, one wonders, do these translations confirm or displace the Anglo-centricity of the international book market and how, after all, does translation feed into the transnation? The Anglo-centricity of the book market is also at stake in Gesine Müller's rich essay on "Transnational Challenges for *World Literatures*: Publishing Caribbean Writers." Taking into consideration the interfaces between literary worlding and the world literary sphere, she convincingly exposes differences in the international canonization of Anglo- and Franco-Caribbean literatures. Lucia Krämer's essay examines constructions of transnational fiction on the website of the Penguin Random House Group. Demonstrating that the category of the transnational is hardly ever mobilized to market those authors and texts that potentially qualify as such, her essay sheds light on some of the gaps between academic discourse and the literary field. Last but not least, it is worth mentioning Thomas Hunkeler's essay on "Translinguistic Theatre," which focuses on internationally acclaimed theatre directors and companies such as Milo Rau, Yael Ronen and the collective Rimini Protokoll. In his essay, Hunkeler stresses the centrality of translingualism to alternative, non-identitarian forms of community-building beyond the nation. Given the close links between constructions of national language and the nation, Hunkeler's essay is a welcome and necessary intervention at the very end of the collection.

To come back to my initial question: Why add another book to the stack? Many of the case studies succeed in exposing contact and exchange covered beneath homogenous constructs of the nation. In an age of rising nationalism, they considerably complicate established concepts of national literatures and models of shared identities. As they explore the critical possibilities of the transnational in the study of literature, the essays also show that the epistemic validity of the term heavily depends on a concomitant engagement with the nation. Yet, some of the examples discussed in the volume focus on alternative, regional, ethnic and cultural configurations smaller or



larger than the nation and thus, voluntarily or involuntarily, point to the limits of the concept. It would therefore certainly be unproductive to discard so-called "rival concepts" (1), such as the postcolonial or the cosmopolitan, in favor of the "transnational." However, as a complement used to engage critically with the nation while questioning and possibly transcending it, the notion of the transnational is indeed much needed. It is one of the achievements of the volume that it encourages readers to reconsider the exact meaning and scope of interconnection in our globalized world.

BIRGIT NEUMANN

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**Carlo Brune. *Literarästhetische Literalität – Literaturvermittlung im Spannungsfeld von Kompetenzorientierung und Bildungsideal*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2020. 389 pp.**

Challenging the paradigmatic orientation towards 'competence acquisition' and its empirical evaluation in the educational sciences and subject-specific pedagogies might seem anachronistic or at least somewhat mouldy. Competences are a defining element of the curricula in primary, secondary and, increasingly, tertiary education; and modelling pedagogic research with an eye on the eventual assessment of individual competence has become common and decisive practice as far as funding is concerned. The concept, in other words, is here to stay. Carlo Brune is of course aware of all this. And yet, as he rightly notes, amongst theorists and educators alike, a certain worry "that a [merely] competence-oriented instruction cannot do the [literary] object justice" (11; my translation) is enough to warrant repeated scrutiny. It is the great merit of *Literarästhetische Literalität* that this worry is addressed without unnecessary polemical acridity and by way of exhaustive theorising and a lucid take on the promises and limitations of empirical assessment.

For this, the book takes the turn towards competences and subsequent critiques as its starting point and provides a thorough critical analysis of extant measures and methods in educational monitoring, from PISA to VERA, especially pertaining to the design of tasks and diagnostic exercises based on textual interpretation. It has long been recognised that both the notion of competences and, to an even larger degree, the obligation to empirically assess their acquisition pose severe conceptual, methodological and, ultimately, educational-philosophical problems, especially when it comes to literary and cultural learning. In particular, it is the demand of participation and empowerment articulated in literature and culture pedagogy, transcultural and global education or inclusion, where processes of engaging with a subject matter are genuine to learning success, that are notoriously hard to capture statistically and that are known to keep on developing and maturing over an individual's life span. This is why the book turns to aesthetic and literary theory in order to explain the observed shortcomings in said forms of assessment: drawing on writing by Kant, Seel, Barthes, Menke and Iser, it revisits theories of aesthetic experience and concretises these with regard to the specificities of literary communication (for this, the book also includes poetological statements by literary practitioners). The next section suggests literacy as a viable alternative to myopic conceptions of competence and begins an outline of a model of literary literacy that aligns competences, more recent work on (multi-)

literacies, and the German philological and philosophical tradition of *Bildung*, before it eventually undertakes the laborious task of fusing all those aspects into a literature-pedagogical model of learning objectives and instructional measures that is applicable in conceptual and empirical research alike.

For me, the book's greatest merit is in its continued motion from there: a great deal of critical thought has already been devoted to the incommensurability of instrumental and standardised views on education and their more challenging pedagogical and philosophical counterparts, subsumed in Germany under the umbrella of *Bildung*. Too many discussions have either ended on a note of argumentative stalemate or argued their way around the frictions and disparities involved. This makes it pertinent to not be content with such an eventual stalemate between, on the one hand, theoretical musings on the specifics of literary and aesthetic experience and learning and, on the other, a research and teaching practice based on operationalising competences without considering the concept's shortcomings productively. As Brune notes, foreign language and literature pedagogies have developed useful models that more appropriately attend to the demands and particularities of literatures and cultures while also taking care of the requirements of competence orientation, for instance in the work of Wolfgang Hallet and Laurenz Volkmann and, more recently, debates on the theorising and modelling of multiliteracy education in the wake of the New London Group's influential programmatic publications. Brune's own model draws on this work and develops a notion of literary-aesthetic literacy that centres on the perception, experience and critical reflection of literary atmosphere, textual gaps and blanks as well as literary speech based on tropes and metaphor. While comparable attempts often fall short of spelling out the pedagogical implications 'in the field,' Brune takes pains to account for the instructional implications of such a theoretically refined notion of literacy, illustrating, for instance, the importance of an educational concern with learners' ability to *listen* as a prerequisite for aesthetic experiences of literature. These and other sections on text-centred reading as well as its affective and cognitive potentials render this book a helpful and relevant contribution to the debate on theorising and researching the role and merit of literature in educational contexts – despite and because of the current dominance of short-term and functionalist forms of assessment.

One can only hope that the meticulous engagement with and acute awareness of the intricacies and standards of philological and pedagogical research will lead to sustained convergences of the respective disciplinary fields. Especially in the German tradition of teacher education, where literary studies and subject-specific pedagogy are an integral element of academic training much too often in need of further integration, the value of Brune's work should be evident. It would indeed be fortunate if this book found its international readership as well: Brune has made the effort of reviewing and including foreign language pedagogies when developing his own approach; via translations and transdisciplinary projects such conciliatory effort will, in the future, hopefully affect international literacy research in turn.

ROMAN BARTOSCH

**Kristin Bech and Ruth Möhlig-Falke, eds. *Grammar – Discourse – Context: Grammar and Usage in Language Variation and Change*. Berlin and Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2019. 376 pp.**

*Grammar – Discourse – Context*, edited by Kristin Bech and Ruth Möhlig-Falke, consists of twelve contributions (including an introductory article by the editors) that are in accordance with the subtitle of the volume, namely *Grammar and Usage in Language Variation and Change*. In the following review, I will briefly address all contributions in their order of appearance before finishing with a summary.

In the introduction, Ruth Möhlig-Falke and Kristin Bech cover the three key terms *grammar*, *discourse*, and *context* before introducing the articles. Eight of the eleven contributions are corpus-based. The other three articles are more theoretical in their orientation.

Kristin Bech focusses on adjectives and present participles in Old English noun phrases. Her study of selected present participles in one Old English text shows that the translation from the Latin original, the context, and the meaning may interact and thus need to be considered when accounting for the distribution of the elements within a noun phrase.

Bettelou Los and Thijs Lubbers adopt a data-driven approach to explore Old English texts to study textual and stylistic differences. Their analysis is based on lexical 4-grams, on POS unigrams used for a correspondence analysis, and on POS trigrams. Los and Lubbers show that morphosyntactic characteristics in particular are related to genre, register, and text type. The correspondence plots are a bit difficult to read as they are not presented in colour.

Belén Méndez-Naya focusses on intensifiers in the *Ormulum*, a Middle English manuscript associated with Scandinavian influence. Méndez-Naya demonstrates that not only linguistic context in terms of word associations is responsible for the occurrence of intensifiers but also language contact situations, which have a major impact on the occurrence and frequency of intensifiers.

The nominative and infinitive construction (NCI) as it is used by Early Modern English writers is central to the analysis presented by Lynn Anthonissen. She examines in how far constructional change within the NCI takes place over the adult lifespan of selected writers. Since the statistical analysis is based on a classification of all cases categorized into three predefined sets, which – not unexpectedly – turn out as categories in the correspondence analysis, the robustness of the results needs to be verified by more data and possibly different methodological measures.

Ruth Möhlig-Falke works with data taken from the Old Bailey Corpus from the period 1730-1910 and focusses on dual-form adverbs. These are adverbs that either occur with or without the suffix *-ly*, such as *deep* and *deeply*. After the analysis of dual-form adverbs within a wide mixture of parameters, she shows that the micro- as well as the macro-context need to be considered when accounting for the variations of dual-form adverbs.

Dagmar Haumann and Kristin Killie present an analysis of the word *naturally* functioning as a sentence adverb and occurring in texts from 1550 to 1899. Their quantitative study is convincing; however, the qualitative analysis is heavily influenced

by complex theoretical considerations. Nonetheless, the authors point out clearly that certain syntactic contexts are more likely to serve as bridging contexts between an analysis of *naturally* as a narrow-scope adverb and a sentence adverb.

Reijiro Shibusaki's contribution starts with a theoretical account within the frameworks of construction grammar and grammaticalization of the sentence-final *is all* construction. He continues with presentations of quantitative data to demonstrate the increase in frequency from about 1810 to Present-Day English. Shibusaki does not present a full qualitative discussion and a detailed account of the meaning of *is all* based on the analysed data set.

Ten highly-frequent verbs in seven ICE corpora form the basis of Elena Seoane's study, which focusses on the entrenchment of adverbs and/or adverbials in connection with perfect meaning. Seoane presents the results of a multivariate approach via a regression analysis. A possible problem for the reader (who may not be acquainted with the literature on which this study is based) is grasping what exactly is meant by perfect meaning.

Martin Konvička offers a highly theoretical contribution that compares three approaches of grammaticalization theories in order to analyse in how far a theory of grammatical status is implicitly or explicitly attested.

Hendrik De Smet outlines two approaches to variation in language and discusses their consequences for linguistic theory, which he refers to as the 'Variationist' and the 'Functionalist' approaches. Based on an analysis of the emotion adjective *disappointed* followed by different prepositions, he demonstrates that variation and change occur in a diachronic dimension. Neither of the two approaches can plausibly explain this variation. De Smet argues that grammatical context needs to be considered to account for the linguistic phenomena.

Hypercharacterisation – the presence of redundant linguistic material in marking a category – is the topic of María José López-Couso's article. After defining and explaining hypercharacterisation, she presents three case studies from the domain of syntax. López-Couso stresses the significance of hypercharacterisation for language change and language variation.

From a formal point of view, the edited volume *Grammar – Discourse – Context* comes in a coherent form in that almost all contributions share a similar set-up that generally follows the same format: introduction, theoretical account, application (if corpus data is used), discussion, and summary. This becomes particularly relevant as the connection between the theoretical account and the application represents one of this volume's strengths.

The wide range of approaches addressed throughout this volume's contributions signifies a clear advantage as it demonstrates the importance of connecting language data with theories and models of language. Two main foci stand out: context on the one hand and variation and change on the other. The link that connects all contributions is grammar – which is considered in the light of discourse and context. *Grammar – Discourse – Context* offers a diverse range of fascinating, valuable, and profound insights into current research in English linguistics.

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