

lisher would have paid more attention (and money) to the illustrations. With modern technology colored reprints of the paintings this should not be a problem, nor too expensive. Now many of the paintings appear with nothing but different shades of gray. On many occasions it is very difficult, if not even impossible, to see the details which professor Neset bases his analyses on. Pity!

And I could have done with shorter quotations of Milton and some other writers Neset refers to.

If you know nothing about American art, this is not the first book to buy. After the introduction, however, this is an excellent second or third book for a better understanding of American art, and the close connection between Europeanism and Americanism.

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Colorful variation: complex issues and concise clarity

Lothe, Jakob, Hans H. Skei, and Per Winther, eds. *Less Is More: Short Fiction Theory and Analysis*. Oslo: Novus Press, 2008. 219 pages: ISBN 978-82-7099-493-9. hardcover \$35

Less Is More is the result of a long-term short fiction project initiated by three scholars, Jakob Lothe, Hans H. Skei and Per Winther, based at the University of Oslo. It sequels *The Art of Brevity: Excursions in Short Fiction Theory and Analysis* (University of South Carolina Press, 2004), the first collection to emerge from the same project. *Less Is More* is an ingeniously designed and thoughtfully researched collection of short fiction theory, and it continues to develop the field of short fiction theory initiated in *The Art of Brevity*, but does so more in alignment with its objects of study. As the academic equivalent of short fiction, the included scholars have created brief aphoristic texts. This is to my mind refreshing for the genre of the academic article. In thought-provoking texts by the size of roughly ten pages these contributors manage to balance the difficult task of presenting theoretically complex issues and remaining concise without losing in clarity. If the introduction to *The Art of Brevity* provides an excellent overview of the development of the field of short fiction theory and its essays aspire to discuss this field, *Less is More* extends the borders of the field to include other media and new approaches.

The present collection is a proof that collaboration is rewarding even when the topics vary widely. The collected essays have been grouped into four parts, "Short Fiction and Questions of Genre," "Tradition and Innovation: Short Fiction and the American South," "Minimalism and Beyond: The Contemporary Short Story," and "Short Fiction and Other Media," and more than just providing an accessible and structured overview of essay titles, this grouping reflects the primary issues in short fiction theory in general as well as moves into new territories of investigation. The long-standing struggle to define the essence of the short fiction genre here finds a release in a productive approach to genre as a discussion of textual tendencies. A few examples of what the scholars accomplish in their essays may be valuable. In "The DNA of Genre: Micro- and Macro-markers of Genre in 'Best' American Short Stories and Essays," Susan Lohafer convincingly shows how cognitive strategies in play in a story guide and disrupt the reader's understanding of the text. She does so through an empirical study of genre markers, and indirectly indicates how rewarding interdisciplinary methods can be for humanistic studies. The concept of minimalism is revitalized through a lucid discussion of an analytical vocabulary for describing narrative strategies of *absence* in "Minimalism and Mystery: Quest for Epiphany as a Function of Desire" by Per Winther. Sandra Lee Kleppe in "The Posthumous Life of Raymond Carver: 'Unfinished Business' in the Poem 'Mother' and the story 'Boxes,'" and Jakob Lothe in "Narrative Beginnings in the Short Story and Film: 'The Dead' and *Short Cuts*," both make an excellent job in showing how a comparison of narratives from different genres can work to expand the understanding of the stories instead of operating as an evaluative method. Laura Castor also extends the borders of short fiction theory by working in the crossover field of image and text. Through an investigation of photographs in some of Sherman Alexie's short stories, she shows how his ironic take on images can work to avoid the reproduction of stereotypes and instead function as an introduction of the nuances of multiple collective memories.

The editors' initial aim "to enter into dialogue with existing research in efforts to broaden the scope of inquiry, as well as to sharpen analytical tools already in use" is successfully developed in *Less Is More (The Art of Brevity)*, ix). Their hope to extend the scholarly geographical cooperation, however, seems to have been too difficult to realize. Their contacts do not reach beyond a continued collaboration with Anglo-American, British, Scandinavian and German scholars, of course an impressive web in itself,

but the weight of occidental theory construction threatens to undo the worthy bridge building between cultures. This bridge building could have been furthered in a continued project, and therefore I can only deplore the fact that what was planned to be "further publications" is now the final product of this project (*The Art of Brevity*, ix). I indeed recommend this collection for its addressing of a colorful variation of theoretical issues associated with and even prompted by short fiction.

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Norwegian-American Essays 2008, Migration and Memory. Volume 12 in the series Norwegian-American Essays. Ed. Øyvind T. Gulliksen and Ass. Ed. Harry T. Cleven. NAHA: Oslo, 2008.

Norwegian traditions and renewal in Scandinavian migration research

During the past ten years, emigration research in Sweden has been less than vibrant and academic works on "Swedish America" have become increasingly far between. In Norway, on the other hand, interest in and development of academic research on Norwegian emigration and Norwegian America is a very living and vibrant force in University departments around the country. Research on Norwegian immigration is also strong in the United States.

How far Norwegian research has gotten is demonstrated in the excellent interdisciplinary volume *Norwegian-American essays 2008, Migration and Memory* which revisits Norwegian America and sheds additional light on immigrant life by using immigrant narratives and memories as sources. This is a very welcome addition to Scandinavian (and Scando-American) emigration research as new sources and new perspectives can complement and qualify the research e.g. on ethnic institutions and present us with new insights on overarching cultural processes connected to ethnic identity.

In the introduction by Øyvind T. Gulliksen the concept of Memory is discussed as he tries to construct a context in which to place the essays on Norwegian-American narratives of migration and memory. He points out the timeless quality of migration by referring to other American immigrant groups' construction of their narratives and the similarities that seem to exist over time.

The ten essays in the book are divided into four categories: Music and the arts, Church and society, History and Narrative and, finally, Letters and