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Introduction

Judgement and criticism are eighteenth-century ideas: from Pierre Bayle to Immanuel Kant, philosophers conceived of the human being as a rational and emotional entity, a self-confident personality who should be able and willing to assess his environment in a more or less homogeneous public sphere populated by educated white European men. According to this historical point of view, individuals were supposed to judge. Yet, at the same time, the need for judgement had already turned into a profession in the eighteenth century: literary criticism.

Criticism thus became a vital element of the work of literary institutions and the concept of criticism an integral part of the public sphere. Judgements were designed to be addressed to the public and communication with the reader became a formative part of the system. Because of this relationship with the reading public, criticism and critical reflection lost their private character. Criticism invites debate, it tries to persuade, it opens itself to contradiction, and by doing so criticism contributes to the public exchange of opinions. In a historiographical perspective, the modern concept of literary criticism is intimately linked to the rise of the liberal, bourgeois public sphere in the early eighteenth century.[1] During this period criticism found its printed form in the literary review, which was to become a relatively stable genre for more than 250 years. The commodification of the book market and the rise of a new consumer culture throughout the nineteenth century comprised a structural transformation and fragmentation that left the model of the liberal public sphere untenable, also affecting the institution of criticism.[2] A division of labour between

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1 See Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *The Institution of Criticism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 1982), 52.
2 Hohendahl, *Institution*, 73-74.

journalistic criticism in daily newspapers and essayistic and academic criticism in magazines and journals arose, also related to the institution-alisation of literary studies in academia. Communicating with a large anonymous readership through growing numbers of daily newspapers with increasing editions or specialised periodicals addressing an in-formed group of readers could both be seen as consequences of the intensification and commercialisation of culture. According to Haber-mas, the effects of the growing mass culture with its privatisation of culture consumption later contributed to the breakdown of the once homogenous public sphere.[3] During the nineteenth century critical institutions changed accordingly. Literary criticism eventually became a professionalised and specialised activity carried out in the printed media, a process related to the professionalisation of journalism, in the end of the nineteenth century with the right of association and the legalisation of trade unions.[4] This process inevitably separated the critic's role from the primary social conditions of the bourgeois public sphere.

The diversification of the conditions and channels for criticism con-tinued during the twentieth century and increased with the addition of new media such as radio and television. With the arrival of the internet in the last decades of the century, the field of criticism underwent a permanent and radical change. At the beginning of the twenty-first century a new order had been established in the field. Neither literary works nor value judgements were to be found where previous canon-makers and arbiters of taste had put them.[5] Book reviews, writer por-traits, critical essays, literary debating programs, blog posts, and liter-ary festivals[6]—literary criticism is no longer a genre but an activity that takes on many shapes. Taking all its printed and digital forms into account, a current typology of literary criticism would have to be immensely diverse. It would also recognise a striking elasticity in 'criticism' as a descriptive concept, making room for both short and shallow and long and deeply probing varieties—in printed and/or digitised form. It may be that the current plurality of voices in cul-

3 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991), 159-74.
4 See Marie Carbonnel, "Les défis de l'Association syndicale professionnelle de la critique littéraire de la Belle Époque à la fin des années trente", *Le Mouve-ment Social* 214, (2006, 1): 93-111. Abstract in English.
5 Phillipa Chong, *Inside the Critics' Circle. Book Reviewing in Uncertain Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).
6 See Gisèle Sapiro, "Literature Festivals", *Journal of World Literature* 7, (2022, 3): 303-31.

tural and literary debates calls for a more heuristic definition of criticism as a concept.

Current debates have focused on the 'new public sphere' and what this posited new situation might entail for criticism. The internet 'decenters' the public sphere, calling forth new forms of computer-mediated interaction.[7] The increasing medialisation and digitisation of the public debate about literature creates an array of collective sub-publics in which more or less renowned individuals or groups can enter into conversation and create opposing discourses, allowing them to engage in dialogues within the groups and also to comment on the literary and cultural institution at large or to attack them.[8] The motley crowd of blogs and chats, booktokers, booktubers, bookstagrammers, and websites such as Goodreads etc. have further differentiated and deinstitutionalised criticism.

This new digital media landscape has led to a shift, not only in the way criticism is read, but also in its function in the broader literary climate. With the increasing number of platforms where literature is criticised and discussed, literary texts that were once assessed and approved by cultural authorities in a hierarchical system are now judged by a horizontal network of lay and professional readers, who in the case of self-publication can decide for themselves what should be published and read and what should not or need not be. The fact that a growing number of amateur experts discuss and review art and culture suggests that this so-called de-professionalisation process going on might rather be seen as a specialisation, increasing as it does collective knowledge about the subject area.

One effect of criticism is its potential impact on sales, making a book product known to a readership and hence to future buyers. Criticism today, is part of and subject to what in recent decades has been characterised as "the attention economy" and is in several ways influenced by it. In an age of distraction and in a society overflowing with information and goods the crucial problem lies in capturing the attention of readers/consumers. Richard Lanham has argued that in post-industrial capitalism the source of economic value is no longer the production of commodities as such but rather the attention that these

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7   See James Bohman, "Expanding dialogue: The Internet, the public sphere and prospects for transnational democracy", in *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere*, ed. Nick Crossley and John Michael Roberts (Oxford, U. K.: Blackwell Publishing, 2004) 131-55 [139].

8   John Michael Roberts and Nick Crossley, "Introduction", in *After Habermas*, 14-16.

commodities are able to capture.[9] Lanham therefore places disciplines of rhetoric and style—design, advertisement, marketing—at the very centre of the attention economy. In its rhetorical struggle for the attention of potential readers and buyers, literary criticism in some of its forms pays heed to these disciplines. Through the plethora of digital platforms and various social media, critics can now reach larger audiences and more effectively distribute their critical ideas and evaluations, provided that the voices can make themselves heard in the ever-louder concert of attention seekers. The attention economy offers new possibilities of dissemination and engagement for literary criticism, but it also brings challenges when it comes to the potential influence of market dynamics. The blogging culture is, as Beth Driscoll has shown, in various ways inextricably interwoven with the market, the publishing industry, and its commerce. Some bloggers are paid for their jobs in the book industry, for example by selling advertising space, and are therefore not amateurs. However, she claims that another aspect of their professionalism counters the commercial, in that bloggers preserve an autonomy that is grounded in their authentic and trusted opinions to the benefit of other readers. In fact, amateur blogging can also have commercial value and marketing effects, mainly in drawing attention to newly released books.[10]

Book bloggers are tastemakers through the expression of individual and group taste cultures, be it mass-market fiction or highbrow literature.[11] Taste has to do with personal preferences, but it also positions the blogger as literary reviewer in a social structure. Expressing cultural or literary taste also comprises the distaste of others' taste, to paraphrase Pierre Bourdieu. Taste classifies the classifier.[12] In their social roles reviewers and critics are part of the infrastructure and institutional architecture that shapes and circulates taste in the cultural industry and book market of the early twenty-first century, David Wright explains.[13] Taste is thus an integral part of what he terms "the liking economy", to be taken as a corollary to the attention economy, where books are given attention (or not) and are evaluated through

9 Richard A. Lanham, *The Economics of Attention: Style and Substance in the Age of Information* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 1-41.
10 Beth Driscoll, "Book blogs as tastemakers", *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies* 1 (2019): 280-305 [282, 301].
11 Driscoll, "Book blogs", 283.
12 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London and New York: Routledge, 2010 [1984]), 49, xxix.
13 David Wright, *Understanding Cultural Taste: Sensation, Skill, and Sensibility* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 144.

various liking systems (thumbs up, stars, lists etc.), making the cultural products visible as commodities on a market and potentially increasing commercial activity.[14] Long before the digital liking culture, in the end of the nineteenth century, novelist Henry James in a critical essay claimed that no aesthetic analysis can beat the I-like-test: "Nothing, of course, will ever take the place of the good old fashion of 'liking' a work of art or not liking it: the most improved criticism will not abolish that primitive, that ultimate test."[15] James' self-assured dictum predates the evaluative element of current blogging culture where bloggers seem to cultivate the immediate liking (or disliking) of the book at hand. Historically, though, taste has been an inseparable part of our engagement with aesthetic objects and thus a component of literary criticism since taste was first systematically theorised in the eighteenth century.

Criticism at large of course also comprises forms and fora of criticism that function as counterweights, sometimes as an outspoken policy, to consumerist approaches to culture and the monetising logic of the market. Literary journals and magazines, in printed form or online, devoted to deeply probing, reasoned, well-argued critical analyses of literature are still vital channels for criticism. Concerns have also been raised—and downplayed—that the myriad of opinions about literature that the internet in its boundlessness mediates, threatens traditional criticism in its printed form. Rónán McDonald has claimed that current "dilation" of criticism is also "dilution", which calls for authoritative critical voices challenging readers to take on more advanced and un-familiar literature, a function that would best be served by criticism whose evaluations are informed by academic reasoning.[16]

Whatever form literary criticism takes and whatever function it serves, literary criticism always deals with judgements and evaluations. What is advanced or antiquated, beautiful or ugly, good or bad, pleas-ing or disturbing? We want to know, especially when it comes to something as fascinating and as difficult to assess as literature. What is the secret of literature that makes for amazing reading experiences or for relevance in a variety of arenas? Why is the meaning of literature not easily consumed, how does it reject all attempts to be understood or used, only to be even more useful, invigorating and necessary? And

14 Wright, *Understanding*, 161-64.
15 Henry James, "The Art of Fiction", in: Henry James, *Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers, English Writers* (New York: Library of America, 1984), 44-65 [57].
16 Rónán McDonald, *The Death of the Critic* (London: Continuum, 2007), 7, 16, 146.149.

how can we cultivate our judgement, our intuition, our cognitive abilities, and our taste so that we know what and how to read?

It is because of the dazzling character of literature and the whole literary field that literature is so hard to judge. Who could grasp characters as scarred as in Morrison's *Beloved*, a plot as diversified as in Pynchon's *V.*, a style as experimental as in Sarraute's *L'usage de la parole*, a tone as dry as that of Herta Müller's *The Hunger Angel*, an atmosphere as magical as in Mahfouz's, García Márquez's or Rushdie's tales, to say nothing of the structural complexity of a modern novel such as Gao's *Soul Mountain* or Gaddis's *J.R.*? Which perceptions should be part of aesthetic judgement and how should these be brought to bear? Assessments of suspense in a text, the ways in which a text is structured, the innovations of its style, its references and self-references, its political and ideological content? There is no formula for literary judgement and its engagement with the text.

What is generously dubbed as 'judgement' is often nothing but a nuanced description: a written and limited account of a reading experience that may arouse disgust, lukewarm feelings or enthusiasm for a book and its author, a more or less elegant manoeuvre in grey zones. Judgement means a statement for or against a book that is shaped by multiple factors: a position in an agency, a publishing house, within a circle of literary critics competing with each other, an occasion for talk in a book club or at a coffee table, a note on social media with which someone wants to raise attention, perhaps strengthen her intellectual profile and increase her cultural capital, an act that both consecrates and demands authority at the same time.

The history of aesthetics has shown that objective criteria for value judgments are difficult to contend with and intersubjectivity hard to reach. Values may be relative, but this does not make them arbitrary. If so, what parameters do we use and how? As John Frow points out, judgements of value are always choices made within specific regimes.[17] This does not mean that regimes determine the judgements in question, but that they specify ranges of possible judgements, and particular sets of appropriate criteria. In so doing, they exclude, of course, certain criteria and judgements as inappropriate or unthinkable. Regimes do allow for disagreement, albeit limited. In a sense, disagreement is only really possible when relevant parameters or rules of engagement can be commonly accepted. The romance book club, the online community for fantasy literature, the highbrow poetry magazine constitutes specific regimes within which literary values are produced, discussed, and tested.

17 John Frow, *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value* (Oxford, U. K.: Clarendon Press, 1995), 144-55, here: [151].

In the end, it is through literary judgement that the process of evaluation, selection and maybe even the canonisation of a literary work begins or is further developed. This happens in the various fora of criticism, be they private or public, non-profit or commercial, where thoughts, feelings and power play a role and where criticism and ultimately literary judgement may only be able to prove themselves if they engage with the text that is being judged. Canon thus results from practice. Literary texts do not form a canon by themselves—they land there because people, and in particular literary critics have read them throughout history, and expressed their opinions about them, always with more or less controversial and debatable results. Canon is a cultural and man-made construct and not a monolithic one. It is conditioned by aesthetic, political, ideological and/or religious value systems. As such canon can always be challenged, revised, rewritten and perhaps even discarded. Burning questions arise concerning the relationship between the centre and the periphery. Where does the world begin? The literary world? All answers involve critical activities. In our globalised world of book production, some say over-production, the decision to translate and translation are discriminatory acts involving selection and evaluation, i.e. criticism.[18] What books, for example, are to be selected for translation and thus allowed to enter the worldwide anglophone circulation system? Answering this question is only possible if the various national literatures and linguistic spheres have been subjected to the basic mechanisms of literary criticism. Whose foundations are, of course, always open for discussion.

Sociological and media perspectives on criticism are crucial for the understanding of its material conditions, but we also need to consider that criticism is a particular type of text. Critical texts, presenting a form of metalanguage, are conditioned by the objects upon which they focus. Michael Riffaterre has characterised criticism in the form of essayistic writing on literature as a category of expression that paraphrases, quotes, and interprets pre-existent artefacts.[19] The critic not only describes but also develops the figurative forms he or she is commenting on. Thus, the figurative language of the novel or poem influences and determines the critical language, generating a new set of tropes and figures born from the literary work. Even without the critic being conscious of it, the figures and rhetorical devices of the literary text may have such a powerful impact that they decide the

18 See Gisèle Sapiro, *Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur mondial?: Le champ littéraire transnational*, Paris 2024. (Forthcoming in English on Polity Press).
19 Michael Riffaterre, "Litteraturkritikkens diskurs", transl. Claus Bratt Østergaard, *Ny Poetik. Tidsskrift for Litteraturvidenskab* 3 (1994): 97-110.

critic's choice of words and formulations. Criticism may thus appear as literature in the second degree, through images and figurative accounts of the poem's images or figurative accounts of the world. Thus, the intertextual approach to criticism draws our attention to distinctive features of the critical language. Literary fiction itself may indeed take the form of criticism, for example in using the language of parody or pastiche to comment on other literature, consciously borrowing its stylistic traits. The double role of the writer-critic is particularly thought-provoking, as a reviewer presumably using his or her personally acquired language when writing about someone else's language. Writing literature and writing about literature using the same pen or keyboard inevitably creates interrelations within the writer-critic's own *œuvre*.

The critical text need not be regarded as a subservient imitation of the object text, but quite the opposite. It tells its own story of a specific meeting between a reader and a literary work within a given historical, social and institutional framework. The critical text as alleged parasite gives birth to something completely new. The critic looks closely but keeps her or his distance, formulating independent observations and saying something new about the artwork, new to the readers and to the writer as well. In this sense it would be more relevant to characterise the critical text as involved in a dialogic situation. The critic enters a dialogue with the literary work, answering its call in an affirmative or rejective evaluative discourse, which may indeed also address the writer directly. The review or critical text is a response in a public discourse about literature that furthermore involves a reaction from the review reader. The notion of dialogue not only applies to criticism in printed media and the relation author–reviewer–reader. In a concrete sense current digital criticism indeed allows for reviewers and bloggers to respond to and comment on each other's readings and reviews, initiating digitised dialogues about literature.

This volume thus addresses an array of questions relating to the forms, functions, and significance of literary judgement; the conditions and consequences for criticism in a gradually transformed postwar media landscape; the changing role(s) of the critic over the last decades; the medialisation of criticism as reviewing and its rhetorical and generic effects; the ascription and dissemination of literary value for a growing but diverse global readership; the implications and consequences for writer, critic, and reader of criticism becoming digitised.

The contributions in this volume were initially delivered at the Nobel Symposium "Literary Judgment and the Fora of Criticism" in Stockholm, June 6-10, 2023. They have been revised before publication, allowing for varied formats and styles of citation.

The content of the volume is organised in thematic clusters. The first section addresses authors as critics and their dually challenging activities, highlighting the problematics of double roles and critical language and focusing on fiction as criticism in itself. Novelist Camille Laurens discusses the double role of critic-writer, speaking from her own experience as critic in the daily press and as prize-awarding member of the Académie Goncourt. However different the judicial criticism of a literary prize-jury and the journalistic criticism in the daily press, she finds herself working with the same language, her language also as a writer, a language with which she is deeply invested, aesthetically and morally. Juan Gabriel Vásquez points out that certain works of fiction—*Don Quijote, Hamlet, Ulysses*—can be read as criticism of fiction itself, whether of genres, mechanisms, or particular works. Since the modern novel was born with this kind of critical act by Cervantes, it is common practice that fictional works or scenes contain acts of literary criticism which are an integral part of the plots themselves, thus reflecting on the activity of discussing literature as a transformative experience. Zeruya Shalev bears witness to the intertwining of criticism and literature throughout her own career as a writer with its ups and downs on the way to success. In particular, the seminal influence of her father, by profession also a literary critic, proves to be a challenge to wrestle with and in hindsight to overcome and to be reconciled with. Daniel Kehlmann testifies to the double-edged function of criticism for the professional writer, who is constantly working under the pressure of being reviewed. Reviews are craved and feared. They can at worst have a negative impact in terms of real and symbolic capital, and yet they are also needed to puncture the bubble of narcissism under which writers work, to keep them on their toes. He concedes that the writer is the powerless part in the critical system, who however on occasion also turns critic in writing book reviews.

Literary criticism functions within a social and public institution. Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó centres on the structural transformation of the literary public sphere and how recent technological revolutions in communication, especially networked digitalisation, have affected certain factors of literary criticism, first and foremost the distinction between so-called lay reading and professional criticism. Following a quick overview of debates on criticism around the millennium in Hungary, he provides a case study of a fierce critical debate in a Hungarian online literary forum in 2007-2008, where anonymous contributors, among them amateur and professional critics, exchanged their views on the intertextual practices of Péter Esterházy's novels. Above all, the debate revealed that the implied ideas of authority over texts expressed the need for authenticity and originality precisely in an (on-

line) medium of communication that, in general, seems to throw away these principles in its everyday textual practices. Literary criticism, whether it be academic or mediatic, is largely ancillary, Lionel Ruffel contends. Not only is it in the "service of," but it is also secondary, consecutive. It maintains a discourse according to which there is only instituted literature if there is a book, just as there is no instituted art except through the gallery, the museum, or the white cube. Perhaps "literature" is lacking an institutional critique of the book, just as there was, in several stages, an institutional critique of the exhibition space and of the white cube. What does one see when one lifts up this invisibility cloak that forms the covers of books? This is what Ruffel attempts to uncover in his article, working from a situated position as director of the most important program of literary creation in France. From his double perspective as a poet and critic Magnus William-Olsson offers a poetic listing of statements on the function and relevance of literary criticism in an era of economic overabundance and with the internet overflowing with information. He presumes that criticism in this so-called new public sphere might indeed, as a counterweight to the market mechanisms of hyper-capitalism, involve public libraries and librarians as critics.

The third section features essays that showcase the practice of criticism from contemporary perspectives. Florencia Garramuño reflects on the function of literary criticism in contemporary Latin American cultures from an intermedial and intercultural perspective. She takes her cue from Argentinian writer Sergio Chejfec's *Modo Linterna* (2013, *Flashlight Mode*) and form award-winning works of Brazilian authors Silviano Santiago — *Machado* (2016) — and Teixiera Coelho, *História Natural da Ditadura* (2006, *Natural History of the Dictatorship*). Recent developments in literature and the arts are characterised by transgressions between media and genres, raising fundamental questions of belonging, individuality, and specificity. This calls for a repositioning of literary criticism away from the dominant hermeneutical paradigm to adequately respond to the transgressive challenges of the new and current art forms. Christopher Odhiambo Joseph privileges postmortem as a theoretical trope, that is, a signifying criticality of reading and generating meanings in artistic imaginaries of war in Eastern Africa. War, similar to death, can only be understood in its aftermath, that is, through a postmortem. Arguably, postmortem as a critical analytical lens offers significant insights into the impact of war on individuals, societies, and cultures. As such the trope postmortem invites a criticality that enables a dissecting of the anatomies of three artistic imaginaries: A film *Ni Sisi* (2013) by SAFE-Kenya, *Murambi, The Book of Bones* (2000) by Boubacar Boris Diop and *Thirty (30)*

Years of Bananas (1993) by Alex Mukulu. Ostensibly, postmortem as a theoretical trope in the context of this article, draws inspiration and reflections from the reading of Wole Soyinka's poem, "Postmortem". Since its emergence, modern literature has been closely associated with the concept of fiction, as opposed to non-fiction and autobiography. Though neither of these terms ever enjoyed ontological stability, Rebecka Kärde argues that cultural, technological and social changes of the last decades have blurred the lines so profoundly that these concepts frequently fail to describe the dynamics at work in much of contemporary literature. Specifically, "autofiction" is not to be regarded as a genre, but as a symptom of a change in the collective structure of interpretation. Drawing on the debate surrounding Alex Schulman's novel *Bränn alla mina brev* (2018, *Burn All My Letters*) and on literary scholars such as Frederik Tygstryp, the article asks what this change means for literary criticism. What is its "object", when supposedly fictitious works refer to factual people and events, operationalising this referential uncertainty in such a way that it becomes intrinsic to their function as artworks?

We live in a global world where literature, criticism, and translation inevitably intersect. In this international context questions relating to canon, historiography, periodisation, and the Nobel Prize are addressed. Ronya Othmann begins by highlighting literary criticism as a public discourse: What role does literary criticism play in times of crisis? Where does it find its place between traditional and social media? How are freedom and criticism connected? And why is speaking publicly about literature so important? Othmann asks a series of essential questions and contends that in times of fragmented and smaller public spheres, there is a need for a place where all the particularities can be brought together, in all their plurality. A lively literary criticism is always a polyphonic one. It is at the same time a democratic practice (no homage to genius), and in no way democratic (no consensus and such). It is solely in the service of literature (whatever it may be) and evaluates it (with whatever criteria). A crisis of criticism is always a crisis of democracy, and vice versa. In the disparate, and oftentimes divisive world that is global publishing, the Nobel Prize in literature is one of the few literary prizes that can be awarded to authors regardless of their nationality, country of origin, language, literary genre or readership within or without the geographical sphere of their published work. Arguably, it is the most international literary prize. These are circumstances which set the ground for Xu Xi's thought-provoking question: how does translation of the world's literature, in particular into the English language, affect an author's consideration for the Nobel Prize? She contends that the problem of English is the problem

of critical judgment skewed in favor of Anglo-American culture and values that dictate what is valued "universally" by humanity and fails to fully embrace the world's actual humanity. Richard Jacquemond investigates the gap between the literary value of an Arabic work as defined locally and its value abroad and the feedback effect of translation on the national scene. This intricate system of the production of literary value is tied to 'Orientalism', the set of knowledge, representations and institutions that is constructed in unequal relations between Arab societies and the Euro-American centers where these are still operating. Jacquemond detects three intertwined literary fields or spaces, in which the value of an Arabic literary work is created: the national literary field (Egyptian, Lebanese etc.); the transnational Arabic literary field; and the Orientalist field. He finds that in recent decades the last two have taken over from the first in the creation of literary value. How value is created in a transnational context is also considered by Galin Tihanov. He centres on the relationship between value and period in literary history, notably the nature and value of Romanticism and its various forms of post-Romanticism as responses to modernity. He emphasises that Romanticism and its versions of post-Romanticism demonstrate that the dissemination of value necessarily transcends conventional periodisation and that value is accrued asynchronically. Tihanov introduces the term "syndrome" in order to specify Romantic and post-Romantic discourses as reactions to modernity in different European countries and also includes China in order to broaden the geographic perspective. Here translation proves to play a pivotal role in introducing European Romanticism in a Chinese context that grapples with modernity in the early decades of the twentieth century.

The digital era has brought fundamental changes for the practices, forms, and functions of literary criticism. James English studies the quantitative systems for rating works of art and literature, especially the prevalent star rating systems in current digital media where the most dominant platform is Goodreads, which he also places in the history of star ratings, most notably Edward J. O'Brien's *The Best Short Stories of 1915*. Goodreads is found to resemble O'Brien's system superficially, whereas it in fact is more closely aligned with the rating schemes developed by *Consumer Reports* decades later. The rating system of Goodreads likewise allows for negativity in providing reviewers with a sharper tool for indexing their disappointment than their esteem. Mark McGurl centers on BookTube as a forum to manage the problem of current literary hyperabundance, which is met by a corresponding abundance of BookTube channels reviewing and discussing books. To what extent and in what way could booktubing be

termed 'literary criticism' in a professional sense? To clarify, McGurl positions BookTube on the map of contemporary criticism relative to other forms and fora of criticism. He points out that longer BookTube videos can in fact in their strongly evaluative language also contain 'formal analysis' of sorts. The related but shorter BookTok format however hardly qualifies as 'criticism' in any meaningful sense of the word. McGurl highlights the ranking video as a particularly successful subgenre, adapted as it is to the requirements and limitations of the attention economy. Phillipa K Chong explores the evolving landscape of fiction reviewing following the upheavals brought about by digitalisation in the early 2010s. She traces the shifting dynamics of professional and amateur reviewing, the impact of digital platforms, and the blurred distinctions between traditional and online media. She weighs up concerns about the displacement of professional critics by amateurs and the changing nature of literary discourse and considers how reviews influence readers' choices and, conversely, how audiences' behaviors affect reviewers' writing in the digital age. Moving beyond an adversarial "us and them" framing of professionals vs. amateurs, she argues for an ecological perspective that emphasises symbiosis, diversity, and the well-being of the ecosystem as a whole. Such a view allows us to consider the broader societal implications of book reviewing as a collective and collaborative endeavor that reflects the multidimensional value of books in our society and in our lives.