

1st International Conference

Book Reviews and Beyond The Transformations of Literature and Art Criticism in Periodicals Between the 18th and the 21st Century

Università IULM – Milano
03-05 June 2020

Although unquestionably all-pervasive within the history of modern and contemporary press, the ‘review form’ has been to present an understudied practice. In fact, this multi-faceted, cross-disciplinary form that has persistently accompanied the different phases in the evolution of “print-capitalism” has hardly been analysed from a theoretical perspective. This dismissal by the academic world is certainly peculiar, if not manifestly contradictory; however, it significantly testifies of the difficulty of investigating such a slippery object of study critically.

The very ‘physiognomy’ of the book or film review, inherently wavering between the duty to inform and the needs of the market, influenced as it is by the definition of ‘taste’, makes this form difficult to tackle with a sound methodological approach. Since the beginning of the XVIII century, the book and film review has proved to be an essential interface between cultural supply and demand, and it has always been something more than a weapon to reach fame and recognition. Depending of the position gained in the literary or film fields, the review has often determined the success or failure of a creative enterprise, of a name or reputation. This particular device has been the yardstick of the most diverse sensibilities and tempers, from the learned expert to the passionate amateur. In this, its proliferation has foreshadowed the changes in the reception processes of works no longer provided with an ‘aura’ and therefore prone to the whims of a mass audience, whose judgments ultimately assessed their value.

For these reasons, it is hard to trace the evolution of the ‘review form’ from a single point of view while focusing on the mechanisms that have triggered its fortune. As a crucial touchstone of intellectual production, the review still performs its essential normative function, contributing to outlining the ever-evolving “horizon of expectations” of its audiences, often identified with an ideal *corpus* which should epitomise a shared canon. On the other hand, as a social process, the review tends to keep track of the continuing dialectics between *mainstream* aesthetic values and their renegotiation in distinct contexts and/or communities of consumption.

In the light of the rapidly-changing scenario of media and technologies, the conference “Book Reviews and Beyond” aims at exploring this compelling area of research in accordance with the interdisciplinary perspective of *periodical studies*, with particular focus on the period from the eighteenth century to the turn of the new millennium.

The topics that will be discussed include, but are by no means be limited to:

- the formats of the review and its relevant features;
- the history of the review in the modern and contemporary publishing industry;
- the types and subgenres of the review;
- art, film, music, theatre, videogame reviews;
- the symbolic status of the review;
- methods of analysis and theories of the review;
- appropriations and declinations of the ‘review form’ in different disciplinary areas;
- the review and the building of the canon;
- the language of reviews (styles, lexical choices, discursive practices);

- the new modes of the review in the digital era.

Scientific Committee:

Paolo Giovannetti
Andrea Chiurato
Mara Logaldo

Organizing Committee:

Dario Boemia
Stefano Locati
Laura Sica

Deadline for submissions:

1 March, 2020

Please submit a 350-500 words abstract (with brief author bio and affiliation, 100 words) in English or Italian by **1 March 2020** to beyondbookreview2020@gmail.com .

Panel submissions are welcome. Panel proposals should include no more than 4 papers in total, a short description (300 words) together with abstracts for each of the papers (150-200 words each including details of the contributor), and the name and contact details of the panel proposer. The panel proposer should coordinate the submissions for that panel as a single proposal.

Proposals will be read and evaluated by 25 March 2020. The time of delivery for each paper should be no more than 20 minutes.

Details regarding the registration procedure and fees for the accepted proposals will be notified after the evaluation process.

Info

The working languages of the conference are English and Italian but all speakers are kindly requested to provide slides in English.

For information about the event, and other questions about the conference program, please contact the Organizing