Hogle and Robert Miles (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019). This is, however, a relatively new approach, which will be of interest not only to postcolonial scholars, but also those interested in history and the complicated relationship between past and present.

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Alessandra Boller’s critical intelligence is of a high class; its sharpness can be seen in how she lays out her theoretical framework and applies theoretical points of view to analyse Margaret Atwood’s _MaddAddam_ trilogy and Kazuo Ishiguro’s _Never Let Me Go_. She smartly builds up her case, brilliantly reassessing the ‘human’, exposing the ideological foundation of ‘natural and irrevocable beliefs, value systems and thought structures’, and concluding that this ‘rethinking has turned out to be inextricably connected to a reassessment of the apparently stable western dichotomy of human (“self”) and animal (“other”)’ (p. 286). The deliberate, methodological treatment of her theoretical framework relies considerably on concepts including, but not limited to, Judith’s Butler’s ‘grievable life’, Michel Foucault’s ‘discipline and biopower’, Georges Canguilhem’s ‘explanations of definitions of physiological (“normal”) and pathological (“abnormal”) bodily states’, and, R. W. Connell’s ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (pp. 286–87).

It should be noted, however, that, while theoretical frameworks themselves are remarkable and useful, Boller’s theoretical applications are unfortunately uninspiring. Her enquiries often reiterate deconstructionist vantage points with which serious readers are already familiar. Furthermore, her deconstructive approach to the ‘human’ in Atwood and Ishiguro is misleading and incomplete. Close reading reveals that the boundaries demarcating the human and the posthuman are not easily obfuscated. In the _MaddAddam_ trilogy, for instance, human survivors (like Jimmy) are ‘positioned outside ecological conditions’ in places ‘superior to other inhabitations of the world’, whereas the posthuman Crakers are not only lacking in ‘symbolic learning and syntactic communication’ (p. 207) but more importantly are dependent on humans for care, guidance, and education. _Never Let Me Go_, by contrast, suggests that a defining part of humanity is inextricably related to the possession of the _Dasein_ (soul/spirit) regardless of one’s status (citizen or clone).

Readers should also note Boller’s mishandling of the concept of the human and her hasty adaptation of animal studies to expand on posthumanism. These interconnected missteps fail to incorporate critical discussions about the human not only in terms of sentience, language, autonomy, and culture but more importantly in association with crucial terms such as mind, soul, and spirit. These latter concepts are not only leading principles in allocating humanity and personhood, but
also significant bases for distinguishing humans from animals or non-/posthumans. Her conclusions, for the above reasons, seem overly optimistic: she argues that, in these literary narratives, the deconstruction of demarcation strategies (such as normality/pathology, animal/human, human/posthuman) initiates a ‘process of overcoming anthropocentrism and speciesism’, displaying ‘the possibility of a new, positive multiculturalism’ that points to a ‘utopian possibility’ (p. 299).

There is on Boller’s part a liberalistic tendency to overextend theoretical approaches in order to formulate opinions on contemporary political issues. For example, she makes clear, at various places in her book, that ‘animal species cannot logically be excluded from considerations of personhood and sympathy’ (p. 296), and that they are entitled to human rights and power. This is not sufficiently borne out by the literary or theoretical texts under analysis. Many readers, however, may sympathetically regard Boller’s missteps as resulting from the ambitious enthusiasm of a young scholar. Despite its faults, her book should be acknowledged for its attempt to reassess the idea of the human, deconstruct human exceptionalism, and expose demarcation strategies in contemporary dystopian fiction. Since Boller relies heavily on deconstructive theories, her book is recommended for readers who want to familiarize themselves with deconstructive critical practice. Her next study will be worth waiting for with excitement, if it overcomes the allure of leaning too heavily on theory.

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Petits poèmes à voir: de la bambochade textuelle aux pochades en prose (1842–1948).

In a nod to the closing line of André Breton’s Nadja, ‘La beauté sera convulsive ou ne sera pas’, Bertrand Bourgeois opens his conclusion by writing ‘Le poème en prose sera objet visuel ou ne sera pas’ (p. 319). The very first sentence of his book is an even more direct quotation, this time from Victor Hugo’s Contemplations: ‘J’ai jeté le vers noble aux chiens noirs de la prose’ (p. 7). Between these two apophthegms lies the presiding argument that ekphrasis is not limited to hypertyposis, and that a significant questioning of the Horatian principle of Ut pictura poesis took place when poets—and specifically poets in prose—assimilated the pictorial into their writing in a new way. No longer was it felt sufficient to evoke or describe a picture: the poem itself had to become a picture. A substantial general introduction sets out the book’s aim to establish ‘une histoire culturelle de la visualité verbale du poème en prose’ (p. 20, author’s emphasis), and defines the corpus retained: works by Aloysius Bertrand, Baudelaire, Huysmans, Rimbaud, Apollinaire, Reverdy, and Ponge. There follow three major sections in which each poet in turn enjoys the critic’s focus: ‘Renversements de l’Ut pictura poesis: “Comment l’emporter sur Raphaël?”’; ‘Lumières et couleurs de la prose du poème’; and ‘Donner à voir: les configurations du regard dans la prose du poème’. Each of these