



Of Literature and Knowledge: Explorations in Narrative Thought Experiments, Evolution, and Game Theory

By Peter Swirski

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"*Of Literature and Knowledge* looks ... like an important advance in this new and very important subject... literature is about to become even more interesting." – Edward O. Wilson, Pellegrino University Professor, Harvard University.

Framed by the theory of evolution, this colourful and engaging volume presents a new understanding of the mechanisms by which we transfer information from narrative make-believe to real life. Ranging across game theory and philosophy of science, as well as poetics and aesthetics, Peter Swirski explains how literary fictions perform as a systematic tool of enquiry, driven by thought experiments. Crucially, he argues for a continuum between the cognitive tools employed by scientists, philosophers and scholars or writers of fiction.

The result is a provocative study of our talent and propensity for creating imaginary worlds, different from the world we know yet invaluable to our understanding of it. *Of Literature and Knowledge* is a noteworthy challenge to contemporary critical theory, arguing that by bridging the gap between literature and science we might not only reinvigorate literary studies but, above all, further our understanding of literature.

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Review

"...merges a conversational, humorous tone with a disciplined academic attitude that not only enlightens but entertains... fascinating, essential contribution towards a more interdisciplinary understanding of literature, commendable for literary scholars, aestheticians, and philosophers."
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...successfully crosses the divide between difficult academic theory and the colloquial idiom of popular speech, and brings into play a range of literary and theoretical reference that is in itself a chief source of pleasure for readers.

Joseph Carroll

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'...A complex and usefully provocative contribution to the field. Laudably ambitious and readable, it deserves to stimulate debate among those of us trying to work out the place of literary studies in a predominantly scientific age.' - Jon Adams, London School of Economics, BSLA Reviews

'Swirski's greatest asset is his clear yet colorful style of writing. Even when discussing difficult theoretical subjects, he manages to write both lucidly and engagingly, often using humor to make his points more understandable and more memorable. It is hard not to be affected by his plain enthusiasm for his subject. In short, Swirski's prose is a pleasure to read... undoubtedly useful for anyone interested in a more interdisciplinary perspective on literature... a valuable and interesting contribution to literary scholarship' - Tero Eljas Vanhanen, University of Helsinki, SubStance 2013

About the Author

Peter Swirski is a Canadian scholar and literary critic featured in Canadian Who's Who. He is Amazon's #1 Bestseller in American History and Criticism and in Canadian Literary Criticism. Specialist in American literature and American Studies, and the world's foremost scholar on Stanislaw Lem, he is the author of fifteen award-winning books, including *From Lowbrow to Nobrow* (2005), *Literature, Analytically Speaking* (2010), *American Utopia and Social Engineering* (2011), and *Stanislaw Lem: Philosopher of the Future* (2015).

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