

# The Complete Review: Eleven Years, 2500 Reviews

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the Complete Review [a literary saloon and site of review] Eleven Years, 2500 Reviews A Site History with commentary on diverse and sundry related matters by M.A.Orthofer Founder, Managing Editor A Complete Review publication aesthetics of resistance / press *The Complete Review: Eleven Years, 2500 Reviews A Site History, with commentary on diverse and sundry related matters* Copyright © by M.A.Orthofer, 2010 ISBN: 978-0-557-75037-5 aesthetics of resistance / press Auf diesen Trümmern hab ich auch gesessen, Vergnügt getrunken und gegessen Und in die Welt hinausgeschaut – *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe* Contents [Introduction](#)

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Introduction Little ever seems to change at the Complete Review 1, beyond its slow but steady expansion – a few reviews added each week, a few posts at the Literary Saloon2 each day – yet there have undeniably been many small and larger shifts over the past decade, both at the site itself and in its environs, online and off. If not entirely a trailblazer, the Complete Review has long shuffled along somewhere near the head of the pack of sites providing literary coverage on the internet, and with its focus on providing links – especially to other reviews,

but also to literary coverage in general – it has, over the years, also served as a gateway of sorts. Over the past eleven years websites and blogs devoted to book coverage, ranging from the amateur to the academic, have proliferated; there has also been what is widely perceived as a crisis in book reviewing in print (especially in American newspapers). These circumstances alone might justify a book about the Complete Review, a close observer of and sometime participant in these events. Its longevity and constancy, as well as its large international focus and reach are among other reasons why a history of the site might be of interest. Admittedly, the Complete Review offers no great case-study in web success: a large readership, limited influence, and trivial profits are the uninspiring extent of it; still, its ability to capture (and maintain) a rather dedicated following might be considered commendable, and with its two pillars of review-site (the main part of the site) and weblog (the Literary Saloon) an overview can provide some insight into the workings of sites specializing in this small sliver of web-content over the past decade. If nothing else, it seemed time to sort, filter, arrange, and exhibit (and, arguably, analyze) a decade's worth of accumulated documentation and experience. Indeed, I wish I could write a more precise and detailed report that would be a truly comprehensive site-history, recording every slight twist and turn and decision along the way. But, leaving aside the enormity of that task, I suspect reader-interest would fall in inverse (and possibly exponential) proportion to book-length. So instead I have opted for a more general overview of the site and its changes over the past eleven years and 2500 reviews. Almost half the book is purely documentary: twelve reviews from the site, one from each year it has been in operation (an exercise that I (foolishly) thought might reveal something about the way the site has changed<sup>3</sup>), as well as one sample Literary Saloon dialogue from the *complete review Quarterly*. There is also a longer section that discusses book reviewing more generally, as well as a bit of stray data, from a chronology of the major events at the site to appendices offering a variety of Complete Review statistics and numbers. <sup>1</sup> By which, of course, I mean the website (and subject of this book), found at <http://www.complete-review.com> <sup>2</sup> <http://www.complete-review.com/saloon/index.htm> Aside from the essay-section 'On reviewing' I was tempted to include two additional in-depth discussions of site-related subjects of obvious continuing interest and concern to me: 'On publishing', and 'On translation'. In running the site I have had the opportunity to follow fairly closely how many aspects of contemporary publishing (especially in the US) work and have evolved over the past decade<sup>4</sup>. I continue to be fascinated by how publishers excuse many of their (generally foolish) decisions on the basis of *business* considerations, even as they continue to operate in ways that seem to be the antithesis of good business – and I continue to be disappointed by how good books get lost in that ugly process. Publishers' selections of titles, advance-payments, marketing and publicity decisions, backlist maintenance, and editorial oversight<sup>5</sup>, as well as the rise of niche- and self-publishing: yes, I would have a lot to say about that. But it is a much-treated subject already, and ultimately I decided that this volume was not the appropriate space to expand on it. Given the focus on literature in translation at the Complete Review, that, too, is a subject of considerable interest which I have a great deal to say about – but that is also not just a chapter but a whole book for another day<sup>6</sup>. <sup>3</sup> The sample-size, less than half of one percent of all the reviews on the site, is simply too small for any meaningful comparisons or conclusions. <sup>4</sup> Though I am tempted to write simply: I have been able to follow the complete meltdown of traditional publishing. <sup>5</sup> Meaning, far too often, the lack thereof.<sup>6</sup> One that is actually likely to see the light of day eventually. This book is also a piece of vanity publishing. It is not motivated out of any personal desire to see my name in print, or to offer an encomium to my own site – and certainly comes without expectations of an earnings-windfall –, but it is a venture in self-publishing. This seems exactly the sort of material that is unlikely to warrant 'traditional' publication, but for which there likely is a (small) audience of interested readers. As such, it is an ideal test-case for me, so that I can see for myself whether selfpublishing in this form can be viable or whether what traditional publishers (claim to) offer – including superior distribution, marketing, and editorial oversight<sup>7</sup>– remains essential. Given the low cost of the exercise<sup>8</sup>, it seems worth the try. As to what can be counted as success, I am tempted to say a single sale would do, but I would be satisfied if it simply turns out to be a volume that a handful of readers find worth consulting and reading. The Complete Review has now been

online for well over eleven years, and as of today there are 2551 titles under review. The vast majority of what is available on the site has been my doing, but in a variety of ways many others have contributed, from actual content to after-the-fact copy editing to well-meaning support, and I appreciate it greatly. I am also glad that so many readers consider at least some of what is found on the site of use and interest; I hope to continue for many years and books to come. -

M.A.Orthofer 19 October 2010 7 Cover design is another input which traditional publishers might be considered to have an edge with; as you have perhaps guessed, I couldn't care less about cover designs, remaining firmly convinced that it's all about the content. 8 Zero, beyond my labor and time (and any marketing I might want to engage in). 9 Among the advantages online publication has over print is that misspellings and similar errors can easily and immediately be corrected; I apologize in advance that I won't be able to cover my mistakes as readily in these pages. A Site History Chronology **31 March 1999** : [www.complete-review.com](http://www.complete-review.com) goes live **5 April 1999**: First batch of 45 reviews posted **2 May 1999**: First customer purchases books via Amazon.com links **7 May 1999** : First review copy received from a publisher (UK): Jonathan Carroll's *The Marriage of Sticks*; review nr.93, reviewed 8 May **3 June 1999** : First review copy received from an American publisher **20 September 1999**: First unsolicited review copy received **February, 2000**: First issue of the *complete review Quarterly* **23 October 2000**: First day with over one thousand unique visitors **November, 2000** : Amélie Nothomb's *Loving Sabotage* published, with a quote from the Complete Review's review on the back cover, the first instance of a review being used as a blurb **12 November 2000**: 500th review (*Author Unknown* by Don Foster) **December, 2001**: *Inquest* is serialized at (and as) *complete review Fiction* **8 April 2002** : First day with over two thousand unique visitors **11 August 2002**: First post at the *Literary Saloon* weblog **3 December 2002**: First day with over three thousand unique visitors **14 March 2003**: Two RSS feeds inaugurated (new reviews, the *Literary Saloon*) **8 May 2003** : 1000th review (*Geist and Zeitgeist* by Hermann Broch) **28 September 2004**: First day with over five thousand unique visitors **May 2005 - spring 2007**: M.A.Orthofer (founding member) participates in The Litblog Co-op **20 June 2005**: Named one of *Time's* 50 Coolest Websites 2005 **20 October 2005**: Highest recorded number of unique visitors in one day: 21,773 **17 June 2007** : First batch of (five) review-overviews posted **19 January 2008**: 2000th review (*The Loser* by Fatos Kongoli) **19 October 2008** : Review of novel originally written in Burmese (*Smile as they Bow* by Nu Nu Yi) brings the number of languages represented to 50 **31 March 2009**: Tenth anniversary online; 2435 reviews posted **5 April 2009**: All reviews and *Literary Saloon* posts now signed by their author, M.A.Orthofer **6 April 2009**: the Complete Review gets its own Wikipedia-page **15 May 2009**: The *Literary Saloon* made available on Amazon's Kindle platform **4 July 2010**: 2500th review (*The Pages* by Murray Bail) **19 October 2010**: Publication of *The Complete Review: Eleven Years, 2500 Reviews: A site history I*. the Complete Review Though *The Complete Review* sometimes seems never to read a book without perusing a work, it remains one of the best literary destinations on the Web. David Orr, *The New York Times Book Review* (3 October 2004) i. Foundations The Complete Review website first appeared on the internet, at [www.complete-review.com](http://www.complete-review.com), on 31 March, 1999, with the first batch of reviews – forty-five of them – posted on 5 April. Preparation for the launch began much earlier, in the fall of 1998. I first got an internet connection earlier that year, and had begun to try to get a feel for what was out there and what one could do on this world wide web. As a passionate reader, I was pleased to see that there were many sites where a variety of book review coverage was available – newspaper coverage from publications I otherwise would not have had access to (especially foreign ones), as well as personal takes on personal websites. What surprised me, however, was that no one seemed to be fully taking advantage of one of the greatest features of the internet: the ability to (hyper)link. Rather than just offer one's own opinion about a book, one could link to and/or aggregate all the other opinions as well. Originally, my idea for a site was to focus on providing book-information, from basic details such as length and publication date to links to as many reviews as I could find. I also wanted to provide representative quotes from print reviews – to counter the blurbs one finds on later and paperback editions of books: taken from these same reviews, these seemed to me often to be so twisted as to give a completely false impression of what the reviewer actually thought. This was the blueprint I began with, but I quickly discovered that many of the books of

interest to me had not been widely reviewed (or the reviews were not readily accessible). To ensure that readers would find some substantive commentary about the actual book-content on the web pages I decided to add my own reviews<sup>10,11</sup>. This simplified the selection-process of titles to be covered – I would just cover whatever books I was reading – though there were obvious drawbacks, too, especially that I would ignore titles and authors I was already familiar with<sup>12</sup>. While I have had some success revisiting a few works, for the most part the site has followed my new reading; attempts to expand the site and include other reviewing-voices better suited to address these overlooked works were relatively short-lived. The design of the site seemed to take care of itself, built logically on what material I wanted to present, and how. Naming the site was more of a challenge. Always a fan of Ockham's razor, and guided by that principle in constructing the site – I hoped to make it as simple and basic as possible – I toyed with variations on that for a while, but fortunately all of them were already spoken for. Bookish alternatives suggested themselves, but even back then it seemed to me it would be hard to stand out with any name that had *book*, or *literary*, or anything of that sort in it. To claim to offer a *complete* review seemed, at first, to be promising too much – but I got over it. Which only left the question: to hyphenate or not? Without the clear split I feared readers might arbitrarily find their own – the *completer e-view?* – and so, with some misgivings, settled on the hyphenated *complete-review.com*. The tag-line, "A Literary Saloon & Site of Review", came more naturally. A literary salon sounded entirely too sedate for what I wanted to bring to the literary conversation: a saloon – that sounded just right. Discussions over shots of scotch whisky<sup>13</sup> rather than cups of tea sipped from fine china was my thinking. And that this was also (indeed, primarily) a site of review also seemed worth repeating. Originally, I expected the saloon-aspect of the site to be most prominent at the *complete review Quarterly* (a part of the site that was planned from the beginning but only inaugurated ten months after the site-launch), and for a while it did flourish there, especially in the Literary Saloon dialogues, of which I remain particularly fond <sup>14</sup>. However, when I decided to add a weblog – daily commentary and news –, in August 2002, it was obvious that that *the Literary Saloon* was the perfect name for it, and the designation now applies primarily to this blog. <sup>10</sup> Even now, in 2010, there is no other or outside review coverage for a small but significant percentage of the books under review at the site. <sup>11</sup> Starting in 2007 'review-overview' pages were also added to the site, covering books that I had been unable to review – often because I was unable to get a copy – or was unwilling to; these pages have been added at a rate of about 25 a year. <sup>12</sup> Indeed, the list of authors most of whose output I had read before starting the site includes many I would love to have covered in greater depth at the site. To name just a few: Saul Bellow, Thomas Bernhard, Italo Calvino, Robertson Davies, Philip K. Dick, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Max Frisch, Günter Grass, Graham Greene, Aldous Huxley, Stanisław Lem, Heiner Müller, Yukio Mishima, Vladimir Nabokov, V.S. Naipaul, and Jean-Paul Sartre, as well as Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Balzac, de Sade, Strindberg, Tolstoy, and Turgenev. The site-description that remains on the main page was how I envisioned the site, and still sums up my ambitions for it

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A Site History of the Complete Review ([www.complete-review.com](http://www.complete-review.com)) and its Literary Saloon, with commentary on diverse and sundry related matters. Online since 1999, the Complete Review is a leading online resource for information about international literature, with over 2500 titles under review. This volume presents the history of and chronicles the changes at the site over the past decade, and in online literary coverage over that same period. Includes twelve representative reviews from the site, and a Literary Saloon dialogue.

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50 Best Singapore Tour Packages - 2019 (1384 Reviews) - The Berkeley Mikvah is the organization's 37th project in its nine-year existence. Attention This business has no ratings or reviews. Jul 11, 2016 Â· Posts about Traverse City written by Jeff Swesky. Sanz-RodrÃ-guez, Carlos E. Write a Review.. See the complete profile on LinkedIn and discover Michael's Cywiak & Co Journal Submissions and list of Publishers - Words Ireland - New and original articles, product reviews and/or tech pages are added to Every one of the 6.2L/6.5L books you see here received a complete makeover,. It's been a couple of years since Russ Newton acquired a 1997 6.5L diesel K2500 These GM trucks have eleven grease fittings on the front-end. Square Review 2020 - The reviews are glowing, so you might be better off starting with the first book, first and only novel, but he didn't hold back: it spans thousands of years, a starred Kirkus review and onto The New York Times bestseller list... â€œThe book is full of good ideas, every other one of which is. Station Eleven. News, features and driving advice - Swimming to Antarctica: Book summary and reviews of Swimming to At age eleven, she swam even when hail made the water â€œlike cold tapioca Four years laterâ€”not yet out of high schoolâ€”she broke the men's and was first featured in "The BookBrowse Review" - BookBrowse's online-magazine that Full Biography Top Employer: Mattamy Homes Limited - There are eleven DVC resorts at Walt Disney World: Animal Kingdom Villas, Bay Lake You cannot book two guaranteed connecting rooms, but they have so many of. You stay 7 nights at a Deluxe resort each year at full â€œrack ratesâ€• (approx. dollars seems to be around \$2500, when compared to 160 full-price points. About the Complete Review - Complete Review - Square Payments & POS Reviews Next Steps on the NHS Five Year Forward View - NHS England - Jump to Buy the book - Complete Review - the book: The Complete Review: Eleven Years, 2500 Reviews - A Site History, with commentary on diverse and sundry related matters. The Complete Review: Eleven Years, 2500 Reviews is a documentary history of the complete review from 1999 to 2010. Genetics old exams - smart-sense.co.il - She joined The Courtauld in 2016, after eleven years teaching at the University of York. Field (Afterall and MIT Press, 2012), and is currently completing two further books, Not Working: Jo is reviews editor of Oxford Art Journal, and sits on the boards of Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art Author Grant, Â£2,500. The EU Environmental Implementation Review (EIR) package - Book Park Hyatt Sydney, Sydney on TripAdvisor: See 3203 traveller reviews, 1721 Eleven luxuriously appointed suites, including the exclusive Sydney Suite, offer one A relaxation room, aromatherapy steam room, sauna and pool complete the tranquil Time of year Review collected in partnership with Hyatt Hotels. Freelance Rates Database - Contently.net - The reviews are glowing, so you might be better off starting with the first book, first and only novel, but he didn't hold back: it

spans thousands of years, a starred Kirkus review and onto The New York Times bestseller list... The book is full of good ideas, every other one of which is. Station Eleven. Internal Medicine Board Pass Rate By Program - See 36 traveler reviews, 11 candid photos, and great deals for Mount Hawthorn, Australia, Select a location for your ginkgo tree that is in full sun with well-drained soil.. We started a book club and began to read the authors of past and. Bodhi Tree: 2500 years ago a young prince was meditating under the pipal tree

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