This collection of essays was written on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the publication of *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* by R. Alan Culpepper. Culpepper’s book was the first thoroughgoing literary critical analysis of the Fourth Gospel and is rightly credited with being the catalyst for a new direction in Johannine studies. The book consists of two parts: essays in the first part offer hermeneutical reflections on the legacy of *Anatomy*, while essays in the second half are studies of particular Johannine passages.

The concluding paragraph of *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* begins with the following sentence: “When art and history, fiction and truth, are again reconciled we will again be able to read the gospel as the author’s original audience read it.” This notion is a dominant theme in this collection of essays. The hermeneutical reflections in the first half of *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism* all have at their center the issue of how to reconcile narrative readings of the Fourth Gospel with the questions of history.

Two essays from the first part of the book—by Adele Reinhartz (“Building Sky-scrapers”) and Colleen Conway (“There and Back Again”), respectively—highlight the way the theme of the reconciliation of art and history is featured in *Anatomies*. Reinhartz articulates several ways of viewing the freighted relationship between literary criticism and historical criticism: literary criticism as an implicit foundation for historical criticism, literary criticism as a tool for historical criticism, literary criticism as undermining historical criticism, the impossibility of historical certainty. Reinhartz identifies her own approach as “history despite ideology,” and then offers a suggestive reading of John’s historical circumstances: John may “have been intended to discourage a turn or return to non-Christ-confessing Judaism”; and “one of the themes of the Gospel is to reinforce a commitment to the Christ-confessing community.” In this reading, John’s anxiety about his community’s complacency, not persecution or expulsion, fuels the Gospel’s rhetoric. Reinhartz’s essay is an exercise in literary-historical imagination—how she reads and understands the rhetoric and rhythms of the literary text (art) open up possible historical worlds (history).

For Conway the relationship between art and history is configured differently. Her essay revisits history and historical critical method in light of postcolonial theory, and the historical and social context is the generative interpretive partner. Art and history do not reconcile in an imaginative reconstruction of a particular first century context; rather art and history reconcile in the ways that the power of history and the power of rhetoric are understood. Art and history both shed light on the repercussions of first century history and the way those repercussions continue to reverberate in the present. Art and history are themselves exercises of power, and reconciliation occurs in naming, unmasking, and reconstructing that power.

Both of these essays avoid the conceptual error that some of the other essays in the book make by claiming that *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, and the literary critical
method practiced in it, celebrated that the meaning of the Fourth Gospel was inherent in the text itself, a meaning intrinsic to the narrative world without reference to external or extra-textual realities. That was never the claim, concern, or interpretive end of *Anatomy*, and yet *Anatomy* has often been labeled as such (including in this book). Reinhartz and Conway both unapologetically assume the hermeneutical value of the ancient world as extra-textual reality for contemporary interpreters.

With one exception, all of the textual studies in the volume’s second half focus on material from John 18-21. The one exception is Staley’s very interesting essay on cinematic representations of the raising of Lazarus, but this essay is the exception that proves the rule, because its focus on death and resurrection parallels the narrative focus of John 18-21 and so the concerns of the other essays. One could make a compelling case that the most enduring impact of *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* is its insights into how the life of Jesus is narrated in John through distinctive literary elements. And yet these more conventional literary critical insights and concerns occupy very little space in these textual studies. The need to reconcile art and history, fiction and truth are not mentioned as explicitly as in the second half of the volume, but the selection of passages keeps the issue present, since the stories of death and resurrection deal with material where questions of “what really happened” underlie many interpretations.

A central premise of this uniformly accomplished collection of essays seems to be that the conversation about narrative criticism is the flip side of the conversation about historical criticism. Yet are there other ways to think about the relationship between art and history, fiction and truth that are not represented in this volume?

1. With the exception of the essays that make explicit use and reference to postcolonial theory (Conway, Tat-siong Benny Liew, Stephen Moore), the social and cultural context of reading and writing, of hearing and receiving a biblical text is largely absent from this collection of essays. The NT’s first century world is a contributing partner in its construction of its narrative world, and yet a deep engagement with the social and political factors that shaped early Christianity’s engagement with its context remains largely absent here. The production of meaning is inextricably linked to the production and reception of texts.

2. Much is made in this volume of the shift in perception about how texts make meaning that narrative criticism facilitated—a shift from power vested in the author to power vested in the reader. And yet there is little or no attention in this volume to the ways in which actual early readers of John read the Gospel. To look at real readings and real readers is to change the angle of the prism on the question of art and history. In a related way, narrative literary criticism as exemplified in this volume does not engage the “narrative criticism” of John’s earliest readers—the grammatical reading practices of the first centuries of Gospel readers. The reception history of NT texts—how the texts were read, how their meaning was understood and appropriated—is hermeneutically suggestive and is one valuable way of reframing the question of how to reconcile art and history.

3. Much of the methodological conversation in this volume revolves around issues of inherent and intrinsic meaning in a text, the shape of the narrative world, and the