Recherche littéraire
Literary Research

40

Automne | Fall 2024

PETER LANG

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Aims & Scope

As the annual peer-reviewed publication of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA), *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research* is an Open Access journal published by Peter Lang. Its mission is to inform comparative literature scholars worldwide of recent contributions to the field. To that end, it publishes scholarly essays, review essays discussing recent research developments in particular sub-fields of the discipline, as well as reviews of books on comparative topics. Scholarly essays are submitted to a double-blind peer review. Submissions by early-career comparative literature scholars are strongly encouraged. Past issues back to 2014 can be accessed on the ICLA website: https://www.ailc-icla.org/literary-research/

Objectifs & portée

En tant que publication annuelle de l'Association internationale de littérature comparée (AILC), *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research* est une revue expertisée par des pair·e·s et publiée par Peter Lang en libre accès voie dorée. Elle vise à faire connaître aux comparatistes du monde entier les développements récents de la discipline. Dans ce but, la revue publie des articles de recherche scientifique, des essais critiques dressant l'état des lieux d'un domaine particulier de la littérature comparée, ainsi que des comptes rendus de livres sur des sujets comparatistes. Les articles de recherche sont soumis à une évaluation par des pair·e·s en double anonyme. Des soumissions par de jeunes chercheuses et chercheurs en littérature comparée sont fortement encouragées. Les numéros antérieurs, remontant à 2014, sont accessibles sur le site de l'AILC: https://www.ailc-icla.org/fr/recherche-litteraire/

Submission Guidelines

Reviews and essays are written in French or English, the two official languages of the ICLA. Book reviews should be between 1,500 and 2,000 words. Edited volumes and journal issues will also be considered for review. Review essays about the state of the art, about several related books, or about a work of major significance for the field will be allowed to exceed 3,500 words, excluding works cited and footnotes. Scholarly essays should count between 6,000 and 8,000 words (excluding works cited and footnotes) and follow the MLA Style sheet (parenthetical bibliographical references in the body of the text as well as a final list of Works Cited). Scholarly essays should also be preceded by an abstract in English of approximately 250 words and by 5 to 6 keywords for indexation purposes. The journal and its editorial team adhere to Peter Lang's code of ethics described in the COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers, which ensures the integrity of the academic research we publish. *LR/RL* does not endorse the opinions of authors once their work is published. The stylesheet for all types of submissions can be found at the back of this issue. It can also be downloaded from Peter Lang's website.

Instructions aux auteurs

Les comptes rendus ainsi que les articles de recherche peuvent être écrits en français ou en anglais, les deux langues officielles de l'AILC. Un compte rendu comptera entre 1 500 et 2 000 mots. Des ouvrages collectifs et des numéros de revues pourront également faire l'objet d'un compte rendu. Un essai critique sur l'état de l'art, sur un ensemble d'ouvrages, ou sur un livre ambitieux pourra dépasser 3 500 mots, hormis bibliographie et notes de bas de page. Les articles de recherche compteront entre 6 000 et 8 000 mots (hormis bibliographie et notes) et suivront les normes de présentation bibliographique du « MLA Style » (références entre parenthèses dans le corps du texte et bibliographie en fin d'article). Ces articles de recherche doivent également être précédés d'un résumé en français et en anglais d'environ 250 mots et de 5 à 6 mots-clés (en français et en anglais) à des fins d'indexation. Une traduction en anglais du titre de l'article est également demandée. La revue et son équipe éditoriale adhèrent au code de déontologie de Peter Lang décrit dans les Directives éthiques du COPE pour l'évaluation par les pairs, qui garantissent l'intégrité de la recherche scientifique que nous publions. *LR/RL* ne cautionne pas l'opinion des auteur·e·s une fois leur travail publié. Les normes de présentation pour tous les types de soumissions sont consultables à la fin de ce numéro. Elles peuvent également être téléchargées sur le site de Peter Lang.

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CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS / APPEL À CONTRIBUTIONS

The submission deadline for the 2025 issue is March 1, 2025.
Please send all submissions to Marc.Maufort@ulb.be

La date limite de soumission pour le numéro de 2025 est le 1er mars 2025.
Veuillez envoyer vos soumissions à Marc.Maufort@ulb.be

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Editorial

From Romanticism to Indigeneity: Comparative Forays into Contemporary Literature

Marc Maufort

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Abstract: This issue of *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* brings together scholarly articles offering bridges between the widely opposed genres of poetry, fiction, and comics in contemporary literature. Its research essays range from an analysis of the Shelley legacy in the works of Alan Ginsberg to an examination of how Indigenous language activism helped shape the Amazigh literary tradition, thus contrasting romanticism and Indigeneity, past and future. The volume's secondary focal points address the continuing impact of Shakespeare in today's world as well as the potential for scholarship inherent in comics and graphic narratives.

Keywords: Beat generation, Alan Ginsberg, Shelley, Amazigh literature, Amazigh activism, Helene Stapinski, Shakespeare, comics, graphic narratives, Superman, comparative literature, comparative poetics.

At a time when our world is more uncertain than ever, particularly as military conflicts are raging in Ukraine and the Middle East, this 2024 issue of *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* continues to explore the richness and diversity of literary production, one of the last bastions of stability in an increasingly fraught political landscape. To this end, it seeks to offer analytical bridges between different genres, such as poetry, fiction, and comics in contemporary literature. The title of this editorial was inspired by the very structure of the journal's opening essay section, which traverses a literary terrain situated between echoes of romanticism and Indigenous language activism in Northern Africa. Indeed, it ranges from an intertextual examination of how the Beat artist Alan Ginsberg reinterprets the British romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley to an analysis of how Indigenous literature in Tamazight progressively gained prominence in Morocco. Moreover, the meanders of the itinerary of this initial section also invite us to ponder on representations of trauma in American postmodern fiction and to reconsider depictions of three early comics villains.

In the opening essay entitled "The Threshold of Ecstasy: Is 'Siesta in Xbalba' Another 'Mont Blanc'?," Mathieu Govaerts shows how the contemporary experimental poetry of the Beats is deeply linked to canonical works from the British romantic period. Through his close-reading analyses, Govaerts demonstrates that "Siesta in Xbalba" and Shelley's "Mont Blanc" share a profound reliance on "Naturphilosophie," which itself is indebted to the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza. In both poems, Nature functions as an "interconnected and organic web" (33), as both poets "experience a transition" (33) to a deeper level of consciousness which foregrounds the sacred. In addition, Govaerts illuminates the ecocritical issues running through Ginsberg's "Siesta in Xbalba." The following essay, Stefan Buchenberger's "Con Men, Mad Scientists, and Magicians. Three Early Superman Villains: The Prankster, the Toyman and Mr. Mxyzptlk," introduces us to the world of comics, which constitutes a special secondary focus of this issue, being echoed in the review essay section as well as the book reviews section. This article sheds light on "early clownish Superman adversaries" (63) that have received little scholarly attention hitherto, thus moving away from the intertextual reverberations examined by Govaerts and providing further insights into what could be called a hybrid literary form. The third essay published in this issue, Eugene L. Arva's "Sinful Times and Timeless Sins in Southern Italy: Transgenerational Trauma and Identity Formation in Helene Stapinski's *Murder in Matera*," explores the connection between traumatic memories and American Italian identity formation in a twenty-first century postmodern novel by Helene Stapinski, thus prompting us to rethink the very notion of literary periodization. As Arva shows, postmodernism is not only confined to the late twentieth century, but reemerges in twenty-first century American fiction. The identity concerns analyzed in Arva's essay are echoed in Brahim El Guabli's "Building an Indigenous Literary Field: Amazigh Activism and the Construction of Contemporary Amazigh Literature," which shows how Amazigh activism, in its defense of the Amazigh Indigenous language against Arab-nationalist consciousness, paved the way to the establishment of a strong

Amazigh literary production in the last decades of the twentieth century. In stark contrast to the reverence for past canonical works detected by Govaerts in Ginsberg, El Guabli stresses, in his future-oriented essay, the promise Amazigh literature holds for the twenty-first century.

The review essay section of this issue is equally marked by its rich diversity. It opens with Tracy Lassiter's article, "The Potential for Scholarship in Comics and Graphic Narrative Studies," which echoes Stefan Buchenberger's scholarly essay on Superman's villains, as she abundantly illustrates the potential for comparative literature research inherent in comics and graphic novels. Jyotsna Singh's "History Lessons: A Conference report," reviewing "Shakespeare Towards an End," the 2023 conference organized by the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa and the Tsikinya-Chaka Centre, subsequently demonstrates that the performance of works by Shakespeare hold "up a mirror to political and cultural changes" (155) in contemporary Southern Africa. Likewise, this conference "offered a window on South Africa in the context of the global south" (151). In other words, Singh convincingly argues that the works of Shakespeare, by being so relevant in the context of today's South Africa, offer comparative insights into the contrast between Western and African cultural productions. Finally, Laura Michiels, in "Roaming Past the Borderlands: The New Militarised Supra-Latina/o Mestiza/o," offers an in-depth review of a significant book in Latina/o studies, i.e. B.V. Olguín's *Violentologies: Violence, Identity, and Ideology in Latina/o Literature*. She thus reintroduces issues linked to identity formation, as she examines the role of violence in Latina/o models of soldiering. In doing so, she further broadens the cultural and literary scope of this issue.

The book review section, comprised of 23 contributions, further explores the way in which comparative literature poetics can connect widely divergent literary forms and cultural traditions. It is divided into seven clusters, the first of which gathers reviews of books dealing with general literature and literary theory topics. The three reviews pertaining to this cluster, respectively penned by Claire Gantet, Yves Clavaron, and Laurence Dahan-Gaida, concentrate on books devoted to the typology of dreams, globalization, as well as literature and arts in the age of artificial intelligence. A second cluster focuses on canonical writers and genres from the Renaissance to the first half of the twentieth century. It opens with two contributions about Shakespeare, which deal with books studying the link between the Bard and pressing concerns of our times such as social justice and racism (reviews by Peter Holland

and Chris Thurman). In positing the relevance of Shakespeare in our age, these two book reviews echo Jyotsna Sing's conference report. This cluster subsequently discusses books devoted to the importance of the fairy tale and the influence of religion in the literary eighteenth century (reviews by Rotraud von Kulessa and Rebecca Short). Finally, it concludes with a contribution reviewing a book about George Orwell, a giant of twentieth century letters, and his vision of Russia (authored by Michael Shelden). A brief third cluster focuses on Hispanic literatures from Spain and Cuba, respectively addressing studies of Miguel de Unamuno and Guillermo Cabrera Infante (reviews by Mercè Boixareu and Jéromine François). This cluster recalls the concerns analyzed earlier by Laura Michels in her review essay. A fourth cluster, which could be titled "East Asian Vistas," concentrates on books examining either the impact of Japan on an American writer such as Ezra Pound or aspects of the history of Chinese literature (contributions by Christopher Bush, Haun Saussy, and Kirie Stromberg). The fifth cluster offers reviews of books in the field of postcolonial literary studies, respectively focusing on queer politics in the francophone literary Maghreb, diasporic fiction and Afropolitanism as well as musical memory in the fiction of the Black Atlantic (reviews by Jordana Greenblatt, Birgit Neumann and Buata B. Malela). The sixth cluster concentrates on books dealing with the relationship between literature and other arts, such as dance and opera (contributions by Elodie Verlinden, Adeline Heck and Véronique Beghain). The final seventh cluster complements Stefan Buchenberger's and Tracy Lassiter's earlier essays through its special focus on studies devoted to comics and the graphic novel. The volumes discussed here deal with such issues as the social history of comics in Belgium and France, the depiction of girlhood in comics, the vulnerability of the body in comics, as well as the translation and transnational circulation of comics (reviews by Sylvain Aquatias, Gaëlle Kovaliv, Véronique Bragard and Isabelle Licari-Guillaume). All in all, this concluding cluster, by stressing the promise for future literary innovations offered by comics and graphic fiction, reiterates the future-oriented energy of our scholarly field. More broadly, then, this issue of *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* emphasizes the ability of comparative literature poetics to bridge differences between various literary and cultural heritages. In this encompassing role, our field asserts itself as an ever-flexible methodological tool, whose multiple facets illustrate the Indigenous notion of shapeshifting, to which I alluded in last year's editorial. Through their polymorphous iterations, comparative literary poetics call to mind the always reinvented and reincarnated Native trickster.

I could not conclude this editorial without thanking all those who helped me bringing this issue of *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* to fruition. I owe a debt of gratitude to our Associate Editor Fabrice Preyat who supervised the French-language book reviews and our Assistant Editor Jessica Maufort, whose editorial advice proved truly helpful. I also wish to express my appreciation to all those colleagues who meticulously peer-reviewed this issue's scholarly articles. As always, I wish to warmly thank Mr. Thierry Waser, the Peter Lang commissioning editor, for his patience in steering this volume to publication, as well as the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) for its financial support.

Marc Maufort
Brussels, October 2024

Éditorial

Du romantisme à l'indigénéité : Incursions comparatistes en littérature contemporaine

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Résumé : Ce numéro de *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* rassemble des articles scientifiques jetant des ponts entre les genres largement opposés de la poésie, la fiction et la bande dessinée dans la littérature contemporaine. Les essais de recherche publiés dans ce numéro vont d'une analyse de l'héritage de Shelley dans les œuvres d'Alan Ginsberg jusqu'à un examen de la façon dont l'activisme langagier Indigène a contribué à la création de la tradition littéraire amazigh, opposant de ce fait le romantisme à l'indigénéité, le passé au futur. Les points centraux secondaires du volume ont trait aussi bien à l'impact persistant de Shakespeare dans le monde d'aujourd'hui qu'au potentiel de recherche inhérent à la bande dessinée et au récit graphique.

Mots clés : génération Beat, Alan Ginsberg, Shelley, littérature amazigh, activisme amazigh, Helene Stapinski, Shakespeare, bande dessinée, récits graphiques, Superman, littérature comparée, poétique comparatiste.

A une époque où notre monde est plus incertain que jamais, alors que des conflits armés font rage en Ukraine et au Proche-Orient, le numéro de 2024 de *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* continue à explorer la richesse et la diversité de la production littéraire, laquelle constitue un des derniers bastions de stabilité dans un paysage politique de plus en plus hasardeux. A cette fin, ce numéro cherche à jeter des ponts analytiques entre différents genres, tels que la poésie, la fiction et la bande dessinée dans la littérature contemporaine. Le titre de cet éditorial s'inspire de la structure même de la première section de la revue, qui traverse un terrain littéraire situé à la croisée entre des échos du romantisme et l’activisme Indigène d’Afrique du Nord. En effet, cette section initiale offre tout d’abord une analyse intertextuelle de la façon dont l’artiste de la génération Beat, Alan Ginsberg, réinterprète le poète romantique britannique Percy Bysshe Shelley avant d’analyser comment la littérature indigène a progressivement pris de l’importance au Maroc. De plus, les méandres de l’itinéraire de cette section nous invitent à nous pencher sur les représentations du traumatisme dans la fiction postmoderne américaine et à repenser les portraits de trois vauriens des premières heures de la bande dessinée.

Dans l’essai initial intitulé « The Threshold of Ecstasy : Is “Siesta in Xbalba” Another “Mont Blanc” ?, » Mathieu Govaerts nous montre comment la poésie contemporaine expérimentale de la géneration Beat est profondément liée à des œuvres canoniques de la période romantique anglaise. A l’aide d’analyses minutieuses, Govaerts démontre que « Siesta in Xbalba » et « Mont Blanc » sont tous deux ancrés dans la « Naturphilosophie » qui elle-même est l’héritière de la philosophie de Baruch Spinoza. Dans les deux poèmes, la nature fonctionne comme « un tissu interconnecté et organique » (33), alors même que les deux poètes « vivent une transition » (33) vers un niveau de conscience plus affiné, qui place le sacré à l’avant-plan. En outre, Govaerts met en relief les motifs écocritiques qui parsèment « Siesta in Xbalba » de Ginsberg. L’essai suivant, « Con Men, Mad Scientists, and Magicians. Three Early Superman Villains : The Prankster, the Toyman and Mr. Mxyzptlk », dont l’auteur est Stefan Buchenberger, nous introduit au monde de la bande dessinée, centre d’intérêt secondaire de ce numéro trouvant des échos dans la section des essais critiques et des comptes rendus. Cet article examine “des adversaires clownesques anciens de Superman” (63) qui ont suscité peu d’intérêt critique jusqu’à ce jour, s’éloignant ainsi des répercussions intertextuelles prises en considération par Govaerts et explicitant de ce fait de nouvelles notions sur ce qui pourrait être appelé une forme littéraire hybride. Le troisième essai publié dans cette section, « Sinful Times and Timeless Sins in Southern Italy : Transgenerational Trauma and Identity Formation in Helene Stapinski’s *Murder in Matera* », par Eugene L. Arva, explore le lien entre la mémoire de traumatismes et la formation de l’identité italo-américaine dans un roman postmoderne du XXI^{e} siècle d’Helene Stapinski, nous incitant ainsi à repenser le concept de périodisation littéraire. Comme Arva le montre, le postmodernisme n’est pas seulement confiné à la fin du XX^{e} siècle mais réapparait dans la fiction américaine du début de notre siècle. Les préoccupations identitaires analysées par Arva trouvent un écho dans l'essai de Brahim El Guabli : « Building an Indigenous Literary Field : Amazigh Activism and the Construction of Contemporary Amazigh Literature. » En effet, il nous montre comment l'activisme amazigh, en défendant la langue Indigène amazigh par rapport à la conscience arabe nationaliste, a contribué à la création d'une production littéraire amazigh considérable dans les dernières décennies du XX[e] siècle. En contraste flagrant avec l'admiration pour les œuvres canoniques du passé détectée par Govaerts chez Ginsberg, El Guabli met en avant, dans un article résolument orienté vers le futur, la promesse que constitue la littérature amazigh pour le XXI[e] siècle.

La section des essais critiques de ce numéro est également caractérisée par sa riche diversité. Elle débute par un essai de Tracy Lassiter « The Potential for Scholarship in Comics and Graphic Narrative Studies », qui fait écho à l'article scientifique de Stefan Buchenberger sur les vauriens dans la bande dessinée de Superman. Elle y illustre abondamment les possibilités de recherche comparée inhérentes à la bande dessinée et au récit graphique. Dans son essai, « History Lessons : A Conference report », Jyotsna Singh évoque « Shakespeare Towards an End », le colloque organisé en 2023 par la Société Shakespeare d'Afrique du Sud et le Centre Tsikinya-Chaka. Elle y démontre que la représentation d'œuvres shakespeariennes « constitue un miroir des changements politiques et culturels » (155) en Afrique australe. De même, ce colloque « ouvrit une fenêtre sur l'Afrique du Sud dans le contexte du sud global » (151). En d'autres termes, Singh argumente de façon convaincante que les pièces de Shakespeare, du fait qu'elles demeurent si actuelles pour l'Afrique du Sud d'aujourd'hui, offrent une vision comparatiste du contraste entre les productions culturelles européenne et africaine. Enfin, Laura Michiels, dans son essai critique « Roaming Past the Borderlands : The New Militarised Supra-Latina/o Mestiza/o », nous donne un compte rendu détaillé d'un ouvrage important pour les études Latina/o, *Violentologies : Violence, Identity, and Ideology in Latina/o Literature*, écrit par B.V. Olguin. Elle réintroduit ainsi le thème de la recherche identitaire tout en examinant le rôle de la violence dans les manières d'être du combattant Latina/o. Par cela même, elle élargit le champ littéraire et culturel de ce numéro.

La section des comptes rendus, qui comprend 23 contributions, continue d'explorer les façons dont la poétique comparatiste peut mettre en relation des formes littéraires et des traditions culturelles fort éloignées. Elle est divisée en 7 groupes, dont le premier rassemble des comptes rendus de livres centrés sur la littérature générale et la théorie de la littérature. Les trois comptes rendus publiés dans ce groupe initial, écrits respectivement par Claire Gantet, Yves Clavaron, et Laurence Dahan-Gaida, se concentrent sur des ouvrages consacrés à la typologie des rêves, la globalisation, ainsi que le rapport entre la littérature et les autres arts à l'âge de l'intelligence artificielle. Un second groupe met l'accent sur des auteurs et des genres canoniques depuis la Renaissance jusqu'à la première moitié du XX^e^ siècle. Il est introduit par deux contributions relatives à Shakespeare, qui se concentrent respectivement sur les liens entre l'œuvre du Barde et les préoccupations pressantes de notre époque, par exemple la justice sociale et le racisme (comptes rendus de Peter Holland et de Chris Thurman). Affirmant la pertinence de l'œuvre de Shakespeare pour notre époque, ces deux comptes rendus font écho à l'essai critique de Jyotsna Singh. Ce groupe traite ensuite de livres étudiant l'importance du conte de fées et l'influence de la religion durant le XVIII^e^ siècle littéraire (comptes rendus de Rotraud von Kulessa et Rebecca Short). Enfin, ce second groupe se conclut par un compte rendu consacré à George Orwell, un géant des lettres du XX^e^ siècle, et à sa vision de la Russie (compte rendu de Michael Shelden). Un bref troisième groupe est consacré aux littératures hispaniques d'Espagne et de Cuba, offrant tour à tour un compte rendu d'études sur l'œuvre de Miguel de Unamuno et de Guillermo Cabrera Infante (comptes rendus de Mercè Boixareu et Jéromine François). Ce groupe rappelle les thèmes évoqués auparavant par Laura Michiels. Un quatrième groupe, que l'on pourrait appeler « Perspectives sud-asiatiques », se consacre à des livres examinant soit l'impact du Japon sur l'œuvre de l'écrivain nord-américain Ezra Pound, soit des aspects de l'histoire de la littérature chinoise (contributions de Christopher Bush, Haun Saussy, et Kirie Stromberg). Le cinquième groupe s'attache à des ouvrages sur les littératures postcoloniales, qui analysent respectivement les politiques Queer dans le Maghreb littéraire francophone, la fiction diasporique et l'afropolitanisme, ainsi que la mémoire musicale dans la fiction de l'Atlantique noir (comptes rendus de Jordana Greenblatt, Birgit Neumann and Buata B. Malela). Le sixième groupe se penche sur des ouvrages étudiant la relation entre la littérature et les autres arts, tels que la dance et l'opéra (contributions d'Elodie Verlinden, Adeline Heck et Véronique Beghain). Le septième groupe final offre un complément aux essais de Stefan Buchenberger et de Tracy Lassiter dès lors qu'il se consacre à des études de la bande dessinée et du récit graphique. Les volumes dont il est débattu ici traitent de problèmes tels que l'histoire sociale de la bande dessinée en Belgique et en France, la peinture de la jeunesse féminine dans la bande dessinée, la vulnérabilité du corps dans la bande dessinée, ainsi que la traduction et la circulation transnationale de la bande dessinée (comptes rendus de Sylvain Aquatias, Gaëlle Kovaliv, Véronique Bragard et Isabelle Licari-Guillaume). Somme toute, en insistant sur la capacité de la bande dessinée et du récit graphique à engendrer des formes littéraires innovantes, ce dernier groupe réaffirme l'énergie tournée vers le futur caractérisant notre discipline scientifique. De façon plus générale, ce numéro de *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* met l'accent sur la possibilité pour la poétique littéraire comparatiste d'outrepasser les différences entre divers héritages littéraires et culturels. Dans ce rôle rassembleur, notre discipline conforte son statut d'outil méthodologique toujours flexible, dont les multiples facettes illustrent la notion indigène de la métamorphose, telle que je la décrivais dans mon éditorial du numéro précédent. A travers ses itérations polymorphes, la poétique littéraire comparatiste évoque la nature sans cesse réinventée et réincarnée du métamorphe autochtone connu sous le nom de « Trickster ».

Je ne pourrais conclure cet éditorial sans remercier toutes celles et tous ceux qui m'ont aidé à réaliser ce numéro de *Recherche littéraire/ Literary Research*. Je suis reconnaissant envers notre rédacteur associé Fabrice Preyat d'avoir pris en charge l'édition des comptes rendus rédigés en français ainsi qu'envers notre rédactrice adjointe Jessica Maufort pour ses conseils éditoriaux avisés. J'ai également fortement apprécié l'aide des collègues qui ont méticuleusement expertisé les articles scientifiques de ce numéro. Comme toujours, je tiens à remercier vivement M. Thierry Waser, notre Directeur des publications, pour sa patience durant le processus éditorial ainsi que l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée (AILC) pour son soutien financier.

Marc Maufort
Brussels, octobre 2024

Articles de Recherche / Articles

The Threshold of Ecstasy: Is "Siesta in Xbalba" Another "Mont Blanc"?

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Abstract: The influence that English Romanticism has had on Allen Ginsberg is more complex and multifaceted than meets the eye. This essay proposes to shed new light on Ginsberg's debt to Romanticism, especially the works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, through the scope of Nature Philosophy, a mapping of the world as an organic unicity rooted in the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza. Thanks to this new tool, this essay confronts Ginsberg's "Siesta in Xbalba" and Shelley's "Mont Blanc" in order to draw the similarities in their conception of the world. In fact, the convergences between the two poems are not simply limited to their foregrounding of a system that presents Nature as an interconnected and organic web, in which the human presence gets more or less challenged. They both attempt to find a balance between mind and matter in their agency or passiveness through a process of becoming deconditioned, achieved thanks to an exploration of a kaleidoscopic landscape. Through these journeys, both poets experience a transition from one consciousness to another, as they learn where the sacred resides. One could even say that, on many different levels, "Siesta in Xbalba" is a modern American version of "Mont Blanc," in which the mountain-scape is transformed into a jungle-scape. In it, the discovery of the landscape corresponds to a discovery of the mindscape, both of which are actually placed in a relationship of constant interchange. After having experienced the marvels of Nature, the readers are invited to re-evaluate Ginsberg's sense of eco-spirituality, which already transpired in his early poetic production.

Keywords: Allen Ginsberg, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Baruch Spinoza, Nature Philosophy, Beat poetry, English Romanticism, Eco-spirituality

Prelude: An Obvious Dialogue

While the conversation between the Beat Generation and English Romanticism has slowly gained scholarly attention,[1] there is still a lack of crucial investigation on a number of potential dialogues. Indeed, while Allen Ginsberg's debt to William Blake has been widely recognised, the influence of a figure like Percy Bysshe Shelley, which Ginsberg repeatedly openly acknowledged in poems, journals and lectures, has yet to be explored in depth. Furthermore, the Beat's spiritual liberation, and especially that of Ginsberg, has often been associated with an interest in Buddhism.[2] However, already at a very young age, Ginsberg developed an intuitive sense of spirituality. He "would sense a ghostly presence around him, a shadowy phantom that somehow encompassed the vast and timeless nature of the universe" (Schumacher 35). While this is very reminiscent of Buddhist "Emptiness," it also resembles Baruch Spinoza's theorisation of the organicity of the world. Concomitantly, Spinoza was a source of interest for Shelley.[3] Therefore, since Ginsberg developed his interest in Romanticism much before the one in Buddhism, we might ask ourselves if a Spinozist form of metaphysics did not trickle down to him through English Romantic poetry.

In order to address these apparent gaps, this essay begins with a systematic and exhaustive study of Shelley's influence on Ginsberg up until his trip to Mexico in early 1954, where he started producing "Siesta in Xbalba."[4] Then, it explores the parallels between Schelling's Nature Philosophy and Spinoza's thought so as to isolate Shelley's Spinozist facet and demonstrate how his appropriation of a certain Nature Philosophy can

1 For more information about the reception of English Romanticism in Beat studies, see Bellarsi, Mackay, Trigilio and Walker.

2 For a rapid overview of Buddhism and the Beats, see Whalen-Bridge.

3 Shelley knew Spinoza's work very well. Indeed, as early as in 1812, Shelley acquired from his bookseller, Thomas Hookham, a copy of "The Tractatus Theologico-Politicus & the Opera Posthuma of Spinosa [*sic.*]" – the latter being the *Ethics* (Reiman and Fischer 737). Moreover, from 1817 to 1822, alongside his attempt at translating Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Roberts 298) and the *Ethics* (Abroon, "Necessity in Spinoza and Shelley" 56), Shelley worked on a biography of the Dutch philosopher (Uhlmann 723).

4 Hereafter, the poem is only referred to as "Siesta." Note that the analysis does not encompass the second part of the poem, "Return to the States."

be applied as a reading grid to Ginsberg's work. On this basis, this study proposes an analysis of "Siesta," highlighting Ginsberg's displacement, which implies a rejection of the dualistic opposition between "mind" and "matter," "object" and "subject," and "sacred" and "profane." This section, then, is followed by an analysis of Shelley's "Mont Blanc," identifying the kaleidoscopic representation of the scene and its effects on the poetic persona. Finally, the study highlights three of the numerous similarities between the two poems, showing how "Siesta" is, in many ways, a modern American equivalent to "Mont Blanc."

Ginsberg Meets Shelley: A Labyrinth of Encounters

Although Shelley's presence in Ginsberg's literary production was only identified in 1958,[5] Ginsberg's indebtedness to Shelley is one of the oldest that the American poet had with previous literary figures.[6] Back in the 1930s, young Ginsberg became acquainted with Shelley, thanks to his father's frequent out-loud recitations of the Romantic figure's numerous poems, such as "Ode to the West Wind," or *Adonais* (Schumacher 7; Ginsberg, *Nineteenth Century Poetics #6* 29:06; Ginsberg and Ginsberg 21:10; Ginsberg, *Expansive Poetics #1* 55:33).[7] Perhaps the most striking passages, in terms of their Spinozist resonance, are the famous lines from *Epipsychidion*, "one life, one death, / One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality, / And one annihilation" which already instilled in the mind of young Ginsberg the notion of the unity of life (Ginsberg, *Poetic Measure – Class 6* 32:54; Ginsberg, *Nineteenth Century Poetics #6* 28:54). Ginsberg explains in "Improvisation in Beijing" that "[he] write[s] poetry

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5 In November 1958, Ginsberg produced "Ignu" in which Shelley figures. He also spent the night at Zev Putterman's house, where both chanted verses of Shelley's *Adonais* (Schumacher 299). At that time, Ginsberg regarded the last stanzas of *Adonais* as "the best statement of what [Shelley] finally concluded" (*The History of Poetry, Part 12, June, 1975* 57:41), especially the lines about "the One remains, the many change and pass" (Shelley 506). The memory of this night and of Shelley's verses led Ginsberg to write "Kaddish," an elegy for his deceased mother.

6 Other figures who have considerably influenced Ginsberg are William Blake, Walt Whitman, William Carlos Williams, Arthur Rimbaud and many others, as a December 1966 letter to the editors of the *Monarch Notes* testifies (Ginsberg *Letters* 323).

7 Ginsberg's father, Louis Ginsberg, was a High School English teacher in New Jersey (Ginsberg *Expansive Poetics #1* 55:33).

because [his] father recit[ed] Shelley […] out loud" (*Collected Poems* 938). In fact, on many occasions in his lectures at Naropa, Ginsberg revealed that Shelley was considered the greatest Romantic poet taught in High School during the early years of his education (Ginsberg and Corso 27:43; Ginsberg, *Expansive Poetics #1* 55:33; Ginsberg, *Dharma Poetics* 30:37; Ginsberg, *Vocalization* 1:10:09). This contact with the literature of Shelley must have already shaped Ginsberg's literary voice from an early age. Later, as a young adult at Columbia University, Ginsberg had to write essays on the literary productions of Shelley and others and thus deepened his knowledge of the Romantic poet and read his biography (Miles 54; Schumacher 51). In 1945, Ginsberg wrote Lionel Trilling to tell him that he finally saw the similarities between his poem, "The Last Voyage," and the works of Shelley, and that, hence, he started reading "Mont Blanc," once again, noticing that "the language [is] much akin to [his] own desire" (*Letters* 11). In the pivotal year of 1948, during which Ginsberg would have had his "Blake epiphany" and started questioning "the nature of reality," he plunged once more into the works of Shelley, in order to seek "some of the wisdom [of] other people" (Morgan 105).

Shelley resurfaces in Ginsberg's life on many occasions after that, but not before the trip to Mexico that led Ginsberg to write "Siesta." It is nonetheless interesting to mention that Ginsberg remained fascinated by Shelley, whom he considered "an extreme strange eccentric and very brilliant genius," and continued to express admiration for his youth and talent (*19th Century Poetics* 14:50). The Romantic poet appears in pieces such as "POEM Rocket," "Death to Van Gogh's Ear!," "When the Mode of the Music Changes the Walls of the City Shakes," "Who Be Kind To," and, of course, Ginsberg described "Wichita Vortex Sutra" as a "big Shelleyan poem ending Vietnam War" (qtd. in Miles 381). Repeatedly also, Ginsberg dedicated courses at Naropa's Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics on Shelley and his poetry precisely because of his debt to and fascination for the English poet. Many years later, Ginsberg claimed that the poetry written by Shelley, especially *Epipsychidion*, the end of *Adonais* and "Ode to the West Wind," which "exhibits continuous breath leading to ecstatic climax," influenced his early production (*Spontaneous Mind* 246).

In short, Shelley was one of the few souls who "had spoken to Ginsberg over the ages" alongside Blake, Whitman, Williams and Kerouac (Schumacher 662). Ginsberg was immersed in the world of Shelley from his earliest and formative years and kept him close – sometimes closer than others – with him on his poetic journey. Understanding Shelley and his poetry, on the one hand, enabled Ginsberg to understand himself better and to shape his sense of poetics, but it also helped him to decode the workings of his environment and to see the interconnectedness of life.

Nature Philosophy: A Shelleyan Spinozism

Schelling's Naturphilosophie*: The Spinozism of Physics*

Nature Philosophy, as coined by Friedrich Schelling,[8] aims at coming to terms with the links between object, that is the perceived experience, and subject, the perceiver of the experience. According to Schelling's theory, the overcoming of dualism and subjectivism can only be achieved through "the creative apperception of the beautiful" (Davis 2). Indeed, Nature Philosophy moves from the object to the subject, explaining the self through Nature. Nature is viewed as dynamic, that is in constant oscillation. Schelling explains that "the entirety of nature is at work in each of its products" (qtd. in Davis 4). In other words, Nature is one interconnected organism (Davis 5). In this, Schelling is directly indebted to Spinoza's system which can be described as the "unity of substance" (Levinson 378). Indeed, in the *Ethics*, Spinoza writes that "a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, but expressed in two different ways" (IIP7S).[9] Thus, the "mode of extension" – that is matter – and the "idea of that mode" – that is mind – are attributes

8 Although Schelling started working on his *Naturphilosophie* in *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur als Einleitung in das Studium dieser Wissenschaft* (1797) and coined the term in *Von der Weltseele: eine Hypothese der höheren Physik zur Erklärung des allgemeinen Organismus* (1798), it was in *Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie* (1799) that he insisted on the autonomy of Nature and called his *Naturphilosophie* "the Spinozism of physics" (Beiser 530). Hence, Schelling participated in making Spinoza relevant to the nineteenth century, and thus accessible to Shelley and the like.

9 According to conventional usage, the references to Spinoza's *Ethics* follow Edwin Curley's notes, in which he explains that "[r]oman numerals refer to parts of the *Ethics*. Arabic numerals are used for axioms, definitions, propositions, etc. The following abbreviations are used: A = axiom; P = proposition; D (following a roman numeral) = definition; D (following P + an arabic numeral) = demonstration; C = corollary; S = scholium; Exp = explanation; L = lemma […]; Post = postulate; Pref = preface; App = appendix […]; Def Aff = the definitions of the affects" (Spinoza xix).

"each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence" (IP11) of "the eternal and infinite Being, which we call God or Nature" (IVPref).

Human beings have access to the universal organism through "intellectual intuition," which is only tangible in the material world through the use of aesthetics, that is in a work of art (Davis 5). For Schelling, "aesthetic intuition simply is the intellectual intuition become objective" (qtd. in Davis 7). This echoes what Spinoza calls the intuitive knowledge, the "third kind," from which arises "[t]he greatest virtue of the Mind," that is "to know God" (VP27D). In fact, intuitive knowledge originates both in "imaginative cognitions and rational knowledge," the first two kinds of knowledge that Spinoza identifies (Renz 170). As such, it allows an infinite intellect, of which the human mind is a part, to know that "*all* formal essences of *all* things follow from God's nature" (Renz 174; original emphasis). In other words, "the infinite intellect would have knowledge of all formal essences of all beings *at once*" (Renz 174; original emphasis). It is important to note, however, that the infinite intellect does not refer to "a faculty ascribed to the divine subject," but rather "an infinite activity of intellection, namely, an infinitely powerful activity that may provide us with a complete understanding of infinitely many things' essences" (Renz 175).

Nature Philosophy entails two postulates. First, there is an "originating force behind materiality […] that is not a product of something else but [rather] the *productive* itself" (Davis 59; original emphasis). The absolute is able to manifest itself through intensification, condensation, and solidification of matter, becoming natural objects. This is what Spinoza calls *natura naturata*, that is "whatever follows from the necessity of God's nature, *or* from any of God's attributes" (IP29S), which he contrasts with *natura naturans*, or what exists independently, namely God, "the rules governing the universe" (Israel 231). In other words, materiality is the result of a fall from the absolute and eternal into the tangible and temporal. Hence, the role of Nature Philosophy is to explain this fall (Davis 60). Second, nature is dynamic, in constant motion. Indeed, there is a continuous flow of energy that maintains the universe in oscillation from a point of equilibrium to one of disequilibrium (Beiser 532). This echoes Spinoza's definition of bodies which all belong to the same and infinite substance but are distinguished according to the "reason of motion and rest, speed and slowness, and not by reason of substance" (IIP13L1). For Spinoza rest is "merely a balance of opposing pressures" (Israel 251). Therefore, individuality exists because the bodies have a certain "ratio" of motion or rest, which is what Spinoza calls "power" (Levinson 382). Matter is therefore finite, but never fixed, that is in constant evolution. Yet, the expressions of matter are themselves infinite. Hence, what gives individuality to a body – be it a person, a tree, or a rock – is the way in which that body moves and the space it fills within the constant interconnected network of God, or Nature. This web of interconnectedness is what makes "Nature philosophy" a Spinozism of physics.

In Nature Philosophy, poetry and philosophy are intrinsically interwoven. The absolute is philosophically sheer energy and poetically "the breath [or spirit] of nature"[10] (Davis 63). In the words of Schelling, the absolute is "the spirit that moves within everything" (qtd. in Davis 62). For him, artists, and poets in particular, have the capacity to perceive the world that surrounds them through their intellectual intuition because "the human mind is itself part of the vast web of nature" (Davis 64). As such, poetic production is not simply a representation of the world but participates in its creation. Poetry is, therefore, able to grant objects vibrancy and vitality. Hence, a nature poem expresses the spirit within nature through its material forms. It tries to represent "the divine voice materialized as world," which is equivalent to a divine energy (Davis 66).

All in all, Schelling's Nature Philosophy is "the self-expression of 'endlessly affirming' and universal life force," as "vibrantly alive and interconnected" and as the "human self-consciousness as the final cause of nature's unfolding" (Davis 67).

A Mind Embedded in Nature: Shelley's Nature Philosophy

From the early stages of his career as a poet, Shelley's lyrics "displace the individual subject as the starting point for speculation, substituting instead the larger, impersonal vistas of our social natural being" (Hamilton 166). This, however, does not mean a total erasure of the subject, as it necessarily returns by the end of the piece. It allows one to experience Nature to its utmost potentiality, only then to return to the subject with a clearer idea of the effects of Nature on human subjectivity. In other words, the displacement of the individual subject offers an understanding of that individual thanks to the impressiveness of nature. In his essay "On

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[10] The words *spirit* comes from the Latin *spiritus* which means *breath*, itself derived from *spirare,* to blow or breathe (*Merriam-Webster*).

Life," Shelley expresses a transition from materialism to an "intellectual system," which, for Hamilton, sounds idealist (166). In effect, in his famous elegy for John Keats, *Adonais*, Shelley illustrates this transition to idealism as he presents life in constant flux: "The One remains, the many change and pass" (506). Moreover, by the end of the same poem, Shelley offers a communion with Nature as opposed to the typical "Platonic heaven" (Hamilton 168). This conceptualisation of Nature mirrors those of Schelling and Spinoza.

Furthermore, nature and culture, for Shelley, are "coterminous" (Morton, "Nature and Culture" 185). He says that "Man is in his wildest state a social being," which establishes a bridge between human beings as parts of nature and their yearning for culture, creating a nature-culture continuum (qtd. in Morton "Nature and Culture" 185). In *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley promotes an "anti-dualist idea of the mind as embedded in nature" (Morton "Nature and Culture" 185). In terms of aesthetics, Shelley puts it as follows:

> Man is an instrument over which a series of external and internal impressions are driven, like the alternations of an ever-changing wind over an Aeolian lyre; which move it, by their motion, to ever-changing melody. But there is a principle within the human being and perhaps within all sentient beings, which acts otherwise than in the lyre, and produces not only melody alone, but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds or motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them. (Shelley 652)

Here, Shelley explains that the mind interacts in continuity with the environment. The poet equates thoughts to the harmony of the different notes of a lyre that are played by the winds of nature. Hence, nature is the source of human thought or that of any sentient being. Morton warns us not to fall into the trap of understanding this as prioritising matter over mind, but he also tells us that it is not the contrary ("Nature and Culture" 186). In fact, mind and matter in the shapes of culture and nature, respectively, fuse together and are therefore inseparable from one another. For Morton, the harp simile presents, in pantheistic views, the idea that "human beings in some sense *are* their environment" ("Nature and Culture" 187; original emphasis). Therefore, nature and culture are part of one phenomenon. In fact, for Shelley, poetry is also "the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own" (674). Thus, Shelley's philosophical thinking and aesthetic production meet under the scope of Nature Philosophy.

Shelley's World Matrix: A Spinozist Nature Philosophy

Besides merely corresponding to a Spinozist system, Shelley's canon is, in fact, directly indebted to the Dutch philosopher. Indeed, Shelley overtly makes use of "Spinoza's pantheistic identification of nature" in his *A Refutation of Deism* (Hamilton 176). In effect, Schelling and Shelley shared a type of Spinozism, as they both claimed that "our ignorance of the power of God is co-extensive with our ignorance of Nature" (Hamilton 178). Concomitantly, Shelley writes in a letter that "God is synonime [*sic*] for the *existing power of existence*" (Hamilton 178; original emphasis).[11] However, the poem which explicitly proves that Shelley's notion of Nature Philosophy is a Spinozist one is *Queen Mab, A Philosophical Poem: with Notes* (1813). This early poem not only prefaces a number of aesthetic precepts theorised in *A Defence of Poetry* (written in 1821) but also paves the way for Shelley's Spinozism and sense of Nature Philosophy, which gets transferred into later pieces and which has helped produce his ideas on Mutability and Necessity.

For Jillian Heydt-Stevenson and Kurtis Hessel, *Queen Mab* introduces a universe of interconnectedness (351). The protagonist, the Fairy Mab, explains that "[t]here's not one atom of yon earth / But once was living man; / Nor the minutest drop of rain, / That hangeth in its thinnest cloud, / But flowed in human veins" (Shelley 37). This introduction and the rest of Mab's teachings to Ianthe seem to directly emerge from Spinoza's metaphysics. As such, *Queen Mab* is a "pedagogy of immanence" (Heydt-Stevenson and Hessel 351). Indeed, the poem adjusts Spinoza's wariness of the human conception of the senses being stripped of immanence due to their "inadequate or confused" ideas of the absolute (IIP36D). Through the character of Ianthe, Shelley presents the link between bodily sensations and the human mind via an immanent power. Shelley narrows the gap between body and mind by indicating that "Ianthe's Soul [resembles] its bodily frame" (27). It nonetheless shows that the soul is able to anticipate its life past the corporeal realm, mirroring Spinoza's proposition that "[t]he human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains which is eternal" (VP23). Later

[11] Note that, for Shelley, there is no God but rather an absolute, which incidentally befits the Spinozist notion of Nature Philosophy. Indeed, Morton stresses that Shelley's controversial ideas on God come from his inheritance of Radical Enlightenment ("Nature and Culture" 194), of which, as Jonathan Israel explains in his monograph, Spinoza was a major figure.

on in the poem, Ianthe experiences Mab's teachings through her senses. Indeed, "her thoughts are concurrent with her body's oscillations as her skin records the emotional reactions that her blood's ebb and flow triggers" (Heydt-Stevenson and Hessel 357). Ianthe practises reason through her body, according to Spinoza's intuitive knowledge. Ianthe's sensations affect both her mind and her whole body because the "soul is the only element" that joins the two, which evokes Spinoza's universal Substance (Shelley 47). Dualism is therefore simply erased and replaced by a genuine synaesthesia (Heydt-Stevenson and Hessel 357). Thus, Shelley's poem is an aesthetic echo of Spinoza's explanation of the limitation to the senses, reason, and intuition of human knowledge despite this knowledge being a part of the universal Substance.

Queen Mab, notably thanks to Shelley's own annotation to his poem, hints at the idea that Shelley's notion of Necessity is based on the philosophy of Spinoza, and more specifically the notion of universal Substance, or *natura naturans*. In the sixth part of his poem, Shelley considers Necessity as the "Spirit of Nature" or the "mother of the world" (62). Once Necessity is understood, existence is seen as a whole. For Shelley, "necessity is obtained by our experience of the connection between objects, the uniformity of the operations of nature, the constant conjunction of similar events, and the consequent inference of one from the other" (93). This echoes Schelling's attempt to reduce the gap between object and subject as well as Spinoza's proposition that "[e]ach idea of each body, or of each singular thing which actually exists, *necessarily* involves an eternal and infinite essence of God" (Spinoza IIP45; my emphasis). Shelley's choice of terms is certainly not a coincidence, knowing his deep interest in Spinoza. Shelley's Necessity can be seen as the "world's *matrix*," from which all substance is born "without metaphysical hierarchy" (Morton, "Shelley's Spinozism" 88; original emphasis). Necessity is, therefore, the soul of the universe that does away with binarism, and is equivalent to Spinoza's Substance. Note 13 links *The Necessity of Atheism* (1811) to a Spinozist perception of the absolute, as it negates the presence of God, but stipulates that "[t]he hypothesis of a pervading Spirit coeternal with the universe, remains unshaken" (Shelley 94). Shelley even appends a quote from Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, translated by Morton as "the power of nature is the power of God" ("Shelley's Spinozism" 89).[12]

[12] It should be understood that Shelley abides by a godless kind of Spinozism, as he always remains in the "context of an anti-teleological argument" (Hamilton 176).

As an influence on the understanding of the organicity of Nature, Spinoza's philosophy was pivotal for Shelley and marked his works from an early age. In effect, the poetry that follows, with poems such as "Mutability," "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," "Mont Blanc," "Lift not the painted veil," "Ode to the West Wind," *Alastor* and *Adonais*, is imbued with a Spinozist Nature Philosophy. Moreover, Spinoza's holistic system also helped Shelley to coin terms such as Mutability and Necessity, which are fundamental to the understanding of his poetry. Therefore, Shelley's sense of Nature Philosophy is at its core a Spinozist Nature Philosophy.

From the Objects of Nature to the Poetic Subject: The Threshold of Ecstasy

"Siesta" corresponds to a rearrangement of several diary entries that cover Ginsberg's six-month trip to Mexico starting on 31 December 1953 (Glen Burns in Bellarsi " 'Alien Hieroglyphs of Eternity' and 'Cold Pastorals' " 249). His travels gave him the opportunity of visiting the different Mayan sites of Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, and Palenque, located in the tropical forests of the Yucatán and Chiapas. Ginsberg spent most of his time outside, exploring day and night the remains of the ancient Mayan civilisation and experimenting with codeine (Miles 154; Morgan 165). However, these long hours on foot or on a cold bed found Ginsberg terribly lonely, and "[w]orrying about [his] fate again" (qtd. in Miles 155). The journey became, therefore, both a geographical and a mental one, filled with moments of wonder and deep introspection in front of the marvels of Nature. During this trip, Ginsberg met Karena Shields, who led him to the Mayan ruins of Xbalba,[13] which is believed to be a place of "limbo or purgatory" (Miles 157). With "Siesta," Ginsberg laid down two precepts of Nature Philosophy. On the one hand, he attempted to explain his notion of self through the experience of Nature. On the other, he sought to explore different levels of consciousness in a place that was known for its properties of in-betweenness.

In fact, Ginsberg's opening lines resonate with Shelley's Spinozist Nature Philosophy, as they establish a link between mind and matter, in relation to the poem's environment, namely Uxmal's "Noble Ruins"

13 Xbalba, commonly written Xibalba, is pronounced as in the Mayan language as [ʃiɓalˈɓa] ("Xibalba").

(*Collected Poems* 105). First of all, in an effort to become deconditioned, Ginsberg asks his reader to "let the mind fall down," which partakes of the fall of materiality from the absolute and eternal contemplated by Nature Philosophy (*Collected Poems* 105). Indeed, both the "Noble Ruins" of Uxmal and "the impossible syntax of apocalypse" are condensations and intensifications of matter (*Collected Poems* 105). In fact, the constant mental fragments that interrupt the journey through the jungle participate in the embedding of the mind in Nature and, therefore, do away with the dualistic divide between the world outside and the musings inside. The second snapshot proposed by Ginsberg creates a link between his mental process, which consists in "reading prose," with the bodily sensations of other sentient beings around, namely "the white doves copulating and monkeys barking" (*Collected Poems* 105). In effect, Ginsberg's surroundings are particularly active and provoke disgust in the poet, which already starts the process of displacement of the individual subject. Indeed, the poetic narrator is already on the edge of feeling the "sensation of the vast movement of divinity," "looking out across the shadow of the pasture in all the semblance of Eternity" (Ginsberg, *Collected Poems* 107). And soon after, he is "waiting at the wild edge: the long shade of the mountain beyond in the near distance" (Ginsberg, *Collected Poems* 107–08).

On several occasions, Ginsberg observes certain particulars related to human activity that seem to mirror his inner sensations, which once again reinforces the interaction between the outside and the inside. Indeed, the "thatch roof" is "dwarfed" "under the tall crowd of vegetation" (Ginsberg, *Collected Poems* 107), his hat is "woven of henequen," his "candle wavers continuously" (Ginsberg, *Collected Poems* 110), and the small ants are "building their minute ruins" (Ginsberg, *Collected Poems* 111). The lyrical I clearly feels diminished and displaced in order to give way to "the larger, impersonal vistas" (Hamilton 166). Throughout this poem, Ginsberg revises his rapport to Nature and tries to become familiar with his environment in order to find a sense of belonging in the vast web of Nature. Hence, he is trying to explain both his surroundings and himself within them through the experience of Nature. There is a constant move from the objects of Nature to the poetic subject. Actually, "these ruins so much woke [Ginsberg] to nostalgia" that he understood a part of himself (*Collected Poems* 111). It is only after the ecstatic experience of Nature that he feels "transfigured" and "[brought] to [his] fate" (Ginsberg, *Collected Poems* 112). Moreover, Nature, which is in constant flux, thanks to the trees that meet "the transparent sky light" and the "amber brightenings of clouds" or thanks to the palms "rattling in presage of rain" and "shifting their fronds in the direction of the balmy wind" (Ginsberg, *Collected Poems* 108), is compared to "the vast movement of divinity" (Ginsberg, *Collected Poems* 107). The power of Nature is therefore concomitant with the power of God (Hamilton 178). Furthermore, Ginsberg witnesses the fusion between humans and Nature. Indeed, the Mayan statues are "grown over with moss and batshit" (Ginsberg, *Collected Poems* 109). He understands that, with time, it all forms but one universal Substance. Dualism is also annihilated by the many bodily sensations that Ginsberg himself feels, which then get filtered by his rational, analytical mind. This is typical of Spinozist Nature Philosophy, as it assembles Thought and Extension under the scope of one universal Substance. In fact, vision, hearing, and touch are constantly stimulated. In other words, he practises reason through his body thanks to synaesthesia. Concomitantly, there is no filter in the presentation of Nature. Ginsberg shows Nature in its prettiest side, namely when he finds a "leaf shaped like a human heart" (*Collected Poems* 111), or in its alienating side, that is "that supersonic cock intensity crucifying [his] skull" (*Reality Sandwiches* 29). The notions of good and evil remain human perspectives that do not apply to Nature, which is just presented as it *is*. In fact, for both Shelley and Spinoza, Nature is devoid of evil (Abroon, "Necessity in Spinoza and Shelley" 59).

Ginsberg comes close to an epiphanic moment in which not only do time and space seem to merge, but also in which Nature and culture, as well as mind and matter, fuse. The sentence, "[t]ime's slow wall overtopping all the firmament of mind, as if a shining waterfall of leaves and rain were built down solid from the endless sky" is a perfect example of a Spinozist Nature Philosophy (Ginsberg, *Collected Poems* 110). All facets of the Oneness of Nature, that is Spinoza's universal Substance, seem to combine: (i) the mind, and thus the human body that implicitly supports it and feels the environment, (ii) the living leaves, and hence the non-human nature with it, and (iii) the endless sky, reaching cosmic dimensions. Indeed, after having been receptive to the particulars of Nature, accepting the passiveness of the mind, Ginsberg is able to better understand both his environment and his desires for the future. What resembles a trance-like state allows for a new understanding of the organicity of the world and therefore corresponds to a "pedagogy of immanence," fusing all the different elements of the poetic narrator's environment kaleidoscopically observed earlier (Heydt-Stevenson and Hessel 351).

As a pure syncretic product, “Siesta” can be read through many a lens. In fact, a Shelleyan perspective, especially from the observation post of Spinozist Nature Philosophy, enables a clearer decoding of the text. The reader understands that the physical journey through the discovery of the jungle leads to a discovery both of the organicity of Nature, as an interconnected web of life, and of the place of the human mind and human subjectivity. Repeatedly, Ginsberg presents a Nature that is vivid and dynamic. There is a flux of energy that courses through every sentient being, be they the copulating doves, the barking monkeys, the many eyes watching the poet, or the hairline of trees, the shining waterfall of leaves, and even the brightening clouds and the moving moon. Hence, by establishing the connection between all forms within Nature, the act of creating poetry, in fact, coincides with the act of creating the world. As a result, this further situates the human mind – through the process of imagination – in the vast web of Nature. The powers of the particulars of Nature destabilise the wondering poet to the point of ecstasy and clear up his confused ideas about Nature.

The Everlasting Universe of Things: Shelley’s Kaleidoscopic View of “Mont Blanc”

Shelley’s “Mont Blanc” is divided into five sections that structure the evolution of the two-dimensional journey, each exploring different facets of the constantly shifting equilibrium between mind and matter. This shift is accompanied by the presentation of the landscape that partakes of the kaleidoscopic dynamic of the poem. Indeed, the location of each stanza changes along with the physical progress of the poet, going through a movement of rise and fall. As a result, the poem offers snapshots of the mountain, but the latter is never seen in its entirety in one sole image.

In section I, Shelley introduces the valley of Chamonix, in which there are “wild woods, among the mountains lone, / Where waterfalls around it leap for ever” (140). It is in this first broad view of the scenery that Shelley finds the “everlasting universe of things” that “[f]lows through the mind” (140). From the start, the poet foregrounds a relationship between the outer world of the material and the inner world of the mental, that is between the particulars of Nature and those of the mind.

There is, therefore, a constant interconnectedness between the external and the internal that is established. This, in fact, partakes of the two attributes of the Substance perceived by human consciousness, according to Spinoza, namely Thought and Extension. Actually, Thought is only "half of its own" if not joined to Extension (Shelley 140). The first image also establishes the rhythm of fluidity and organicity of Nature. Indeed, at the level of imagery and at the level of theme, Shelley presents a world of Mutability, that is the constant cycle of life. Frances Ferguson even says that the image of the river "makes it impossible to say which has priority and determines the other" (qtd. in Abroon, "Transcendence in Shelley" 161). That is to say that mind and matter are first presented as equals. Neither supersedes the other. Indeed, the "everlasting universe" is both imagined like a river that "[f]lows through the mind," and the "source of human thought" (Shelley 140). Hence, the mind is embedded in Nature and participates in the creation of its own environment that is far from being menacing. In fact, it is a rather balanced environment, between "dark" and "glittering," where "a feeble brook" can run in "the wild woods" (Shelley 140).

While the interconnection between the mind and the outside world was the focus of the first section, section II, as though zooming in on particulars, centres on the description of the "Ravine of Arve" (Shelley 140). With its pines, crags, caverns, clouds and sunbeams, it is a "many-coloured, [and] many-voiced vale" (Shelley 140). This second facet of the kaleidoscope suggests a very active Nature, full of life. It is also quite sublime. Indeed, with its "secret throne," its "ice gulphs," its "dark mountains" and its "flame / Of lightning," the ravine lies in a tempestuous environment (Shelley 140). It has an "old and solemn harmony," in which "chainless winds still come and ever came" (Shelley 140). Shelley's narrator is able to expand his sense of awareness so as to "include a list of events happening more or less simultaneously" (McCarthy 364). It is a form of "deep eternity" (Shelley 140) that combines past and present and mutability, and that enables the poet to "seem as in a trance sublime and strange" (Shelley 142). This moment of seeming trance enables the lyrical I to reflect upon his "human mind," which passively "renders and receives fast influencings" (Shelley 142). Shelley's narrator is therefore receptive to his environment in a way that he did not first imagine. The first part of this section, therefore, presents the mind as a receptacle being superseded and overwhelmed by the impressiveness and sublimity of matter. The equilibrium between the forces of Nature and the human mind found in section I is disrupted, as the more-than-human becomes more threatening. However, having contemplated the power of Nature, and thus faced a displacement of his subjective individuality, Shelley understands his place in the "unremitting interchange / With the clear universe of things around" (142). This takes place because the poetic narrator is able to unleash from a more active mind "wild thoughts" which "float above [the ravine's] darkness" (Shelley 142). This is paralleled with the search for a refuge in the "cave of the witch Poesy" (Shelley 142), who for Abroon is the personification of the imagination and therefore the equivalent to Spinoza's third kind of knowledge, namely the intuitive knowledge ("Necessity in Spinoza and Shelley" 62).[14] Indeed, it is only in the second part of section II that the poet is able to find again an equilibrium that "suspend[s] the distinction between the dominant and the dominated" (McCarthy 358). Nature holds both the sublime landscape and the "wild thoughts" of the human mind (Shelley 142). Indeed, the scene seems to be a creation of the poet and seems to connect his mind to that of others (Borushko 228). Thus, the creation of poetry participates in the creation of the world. The binary divide between mind and matter is therefore suspended in order to encompass all of creation. This resembles Spinoza's universal Substance and more specifically the two known attributes of Thought and Extension, which were already present in section I. Nevertheless, the end of section II returns to a disruption of the equilibrium due to a loss of the power of language. The narrator is only able to convey the "Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee, / Some phantom, some faint image" (Shelley 142). This, in fact, participates in the kaleidoscopic representation of the mountain. Timothy Morton describes this as "nothingness," that is "an excess over what we can know or say about [an object], or what anything can know or say about it" (qtd. in McCarthy 365). Therefore, the mind is rendered passive, once more overtaken by the excess of matter. The human is dominated by the non-human. Yet, in this nothingness, Shelley lingers in this place of interchange where time and space collide thanks to the series of "now" (Shelley 142). Thus, matter is no longer organised vertically, or hierarchically, but horizontally and equally.

Section III of "Mont Blanc" begins with the notion of transitory sleep, in which the poet is able to connect with "a remoter world" (Shelley 142).

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[14] Despite the seeming contradiction, Abroon details how Shelley's "imagination" is close to Spinoza's "intuitive knowledge" ("Necessity in Spinoza and Shelley" 62).

Here, Shelley wonders if an "unknown omnipotence" has lifted the "veil of life and death" (Shelley 142). The poet has arrived at the threshold of the knowledge of reality (Borushko 228). He now seems to understand that a greater force is the cause of all things, the *causa sui* in Spinozian terms. It is only when he "look[s] on high," that Shelley is able to see the "still, snowy, and serene" top of Mont Blanc, "piercing the infinite sky," thereby offering the third facet of the scenery (142). Yet, the mountain, that is the distant stormy wilderness peopled by eagles and wolves, remains completely indifferent to the human presence (Economides 105). The human mind has lost all power compared to matter. The sublimity of Nature reduces to nil the agency of the human being. Moreover, this "wilderness has a mysterious tongue" that establishes confusion and a fusion of opposites (Shelley 144). Indeed, on the one hand, it "teaches awful doubt," but, on the other, it induces "faith," which allows "that man may be […] with nature reconciled" (Shelley 144). As is Ginsberg and his "alien hieroglyphs of Eternity," Shelley is faced with the opacity of language of his environment (*Collected Poems* 109). However, the mountain's voice is able "to repeal / Large codes of fraud and woe," and may not be "understood / By all, but which the wise, and great, and good / Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel" (Shelley 144). These "[l]arge codes" could, on the one hand, stand for the language of the power of Nature being equivalent to that of God, reinforcing the Nature Philosophy reading of the poem (Shelley 144). Or, on the other, they could stand for the large volumes of dogmatic and monotheistic religions, especially Christianity, against which Shelley vehemently fought.

At the beginning of section IV, Shelley returns to the first facet of the poem, showing the elements that composed the valley, stretching his gaze backwards again to reveal particulars that "move and breathe," that "[a]re born and die" (Shelley 144). This reintroduces the "everlasting universe of things" in the form of its complex multiplicity (Shelley 142). Indeed, Shelley here once more presents the organicity of Nature through a web of interconnectedness, which is bonded thanks to the Spinozist notion of Substance. This idea is reinforced when Shelley writes that it is the "Power [that] dwells apart in its tranquillity" (144). It is, indeed, not the mountain, nor the river, but some Power, or energy, that is set apart from the rest of the physical world. Moreover, this entity is "[r]emote, serene, and inaccessible" because it does not belong to the realm of the material, but, in fact, to that of the infinite and immaterial (Shelley 144). Hence, the mountain, or "the naked countenance of the earth" is a condensation or a solidification of the absolute (Shelley 144). This equates the power of Nature to that of a pantheist god, which is typical of Nature Philosophy. Furthermore, it does not mind the presence of the human poet, nor that of any other living creature. The image of the ruin reappears when Shelley describes the scenery as "not a city, but a flood or ruin" (144). This supposes that the landscape is constantly changing and mutable, which reasserts the flux of energy with which the place is imbued. Indeed, Shelley compares the place to a "perpetual stream" rolling "from the boundaries of the sky" (144). Hence, he establishes a play on proxemics between the sky above, the mountain, in the middle, and the river, below. Though sometimes disrupted, the vertical axis is constantly used by Shelley in this poem. Indeed, barely a few lines below, the reader's gaze rises up from the "insects, [to the] beasts, and birds" (146). Shelley's narrator then notices that Nature is perhaps not kind to human civilisation. Indeed, "[t]he race / Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling / Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream, / And their place is not known" (Shelley 146), which shows a natural environment "in which man holds no privileged status but is brutally and helplessly exposed to the rage of its elements. […] he is into a world that was not built for him but to which he has to accommodate" (Christoph Bode qtd. in McCarthy 370). Quentin Meillasoux qualifies the Power presented at the end of section IV as "an omnipotence that has become autonomous, without norms, blind, devoid of the other divine perfections, a power with neither goodness nor wisdom" (qtd. in McCarthy 371). However, that which seems destructive on a broader scale seems equally creative (Economides 107). Indeed, the imposing and intimidating glacier transforms itself into "one majestic River" that corresponds to the "breath and blood of distant lands," which itself becomes "the ocean waves" and evaporates as "vapours [of] the circling air" (Shelley 146). Not only does this exemplify the notion of Mutability in Nature, but also presents a self-generating substance, which implies a form of detranscendentalisation. Even though there is fusion between the "Power [that] dwells" (Shelley 144) and the "majestic River" (Shelley 146), namely the two attributes of Spinoza's Substance, the human mind is almost completely absent in the composition. Indeed, Shelley appears in all passiveness, as "these primaeval mountains" "[o]n which [he] gaze[s]" "[t]each the adverting mind" (144). The equilibrium between mind and matter is therefore upset, once more.

Section V, the final part of the poem, reaffirms the presence of Mont Blanc that "gleams on high" in the distance, as the materialisation of the Power, which is one “of many sights, / And many sounds, and much of life and death” (Shelley 146). Shelley concludes his poem by confirming the Spinozist Nature Philosophy reading. Indeed, the mountain is inhabited by a “secret strength of things” which is a law that goes “to the infinite dome / Of heaven” (Shelley 146). The power of God is, therefore, “co-extensive” with that of Nature (Hamilton 178). The end of the poem also reasserts the role of “the human mind’s imaginings” (Shelley 146). Indeed, Shelley still wonders to what the mountain and its surroundings would amount if there was no human mind to witness it. In other words, matter needs mind in order to be perceived. This is a reaffirmation of human subjectivity meant to counter its disappearance in the wild. Even though it is only possible after having been displaced first, the superiority of the mind seems to prevail, at last. This aligns with what Shelley wrote Thomas Love Peacock: “All was as much our own as if we had been the creators of such impressions in the minds of others, as now occupied our own” (qtd. in Hodgson 669). The poetry of “Mont Blanc” participates, therefore, in the creation of the world it depicts. Still, the final interrogation introduces a notion of doubt or even encouragement, “as though urging the mountain to realize its own force” (Hodgson 679–80).

By the end of the poem, the reader understands that there is a constant cycle of life that might seem frightening, but that, in fact, encompasses all sentient beings. It is indeed a “life-destroying glacier” that becomes a “life-giving river” (McCarthy 357). Through a series of individual snapshots, Shelley captures the interconnected “Power immanent in Nature” (Abroon, “Transcendence in Shelley” 160). Through the perception of the poet, Nature is therefore presented kaleidoscopically in its great complexity, namely through its different facets from up close and from far away. As such, each stanza suggests a different version of the mountain and its powers on the mind. The constant fluctuation between the different levels of the passiveness of the mind and the agentiveness of matter that Shelley offers mirrors the different ways of fusion between all entities of Nature in each stanza. This, in fact, suggests that the mind described by Shelley is what Wasserman calls the “One Mind, which constitutes total Existence and of which each individual mind is a portion” (qtd. in McCarthy 362). This is indeed another way of speaking of the Spinozist notion of Substance. In fact, the relationship that binds Nature together does so “not between two ‘presences,’ but between two attributes or two modes of one being"[15] (Abroon, "Transcendence in Shelley" 160). Hence, by showing the different facets of Nature, and its effects on the human mind, Shelley partakes of a "pedagogy of immanence" (Heydt-Stevenson and Hessel 351). Indeed, the different levels of precision that are offered thanks to the multi-faceted view of Nature illustrate where God resides. Traces of Spinoza are also visible at the level of knowledge. Indeed, section II perfectly exposes the transition from passiveness to agency on the part of the human mind. This corresponds to the passage from the first to the third kind of knowledge in Spinozian terms. The former, which is called by Spinoza the imagination, "is marked by passive emotions" (Abroon, "Necessity in Spinoza and Shelley" 61). Whereas, the latter, the intuitive knowledge, "proceeds from an adequate idea of certain attributes of God" (Spinoza VP25D), which "constitute[s] the greatest part" of the active mind (Spinoza VP20S). Shelley explains his sense of self through Nature by "asserting his own existence via an imagined antitype" (Economides 103). A great number of commentators have argued that "Mont Blanc" participates in the exaltation of a transcendent power. However, the attentive focus on the particulars of Nature and their reverberation on those of the mind, especially the understanding of the "mysterious tongue" of the environment, proves that, in fact, the absolute power lies in the physicality of Nature, and nowhere else (Shelley 144). Indeed, the "secret strength of things […] inhabits" the whole of Nature (Shelley 146).

Is "Siesta in Xbalba" Another "Mont Blanc"?

Examined from the perspective of Nature Philosophy, Ginsberg's "Siesta" seems to echo Shelley's "Mont Blanc" in its foregrounding of an interconnected and dynamic Nature. However, even more similarities can be detected when the two poems are systematically placed in conversation with one another. At the level of composition, the poems both are the result of the poet's enterprise of becoming deconditioned by the landscape. Indeed, on the one hand, Shelley specified when "Mont Blanc" was first published that the poem "was composed under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited

15 Note that here Abroon uses a Spinozian rhetoric, which reinforces the Spinozist Nature Philosophy reading of this poem.

by the objects it attempts to describe" (Shelley qtd. in Greenblatt and Abrams 785). On the other, Ginsberg's expedition meant quasi-total isolation in the vastness of the jungle, thereby initiating a deconditioning of consciousness. Such an experience enabled Ginsberg, just as it did Shelley, to find some "positive truth about universe, mind, or nature" (McCarthy 361). Moreover, as in the case of aesthetic devices, some of the thematic material of "Mont Blanc" trickled down to that of "Siesta." There are three fundamental features specific to Shelley's poem that intersect with Ginsberg's: the division into five sections, each offering a distinctive perspective on the mountain; the constant oscillation between the agentiveness and passivity of mind and matter; and the series of precise images.[16]

Shelley's journey into the wilderness of the valley of Chamonix follows his ascent in sections I and II, his arrival at the peak in section III and his descent in sections IV and V. In fact, Ginsberg's trip is characterised by a movement of rise and fall. At first, the Beat poet describes the *selva* or the "abandoned labyrinth of Palenque" (*Collected Poems* 106), just as Shelley records the "everlasting universe of things," with its "feeble brook" and "wild wood" (140). The scene is both welcoming and frightening at the same time. Yet, quickly, both wonderers arrive at the base of the mountain and feel dwarfed by "the tall crowd of vegetation" (Ginsberg, *Collected Poems* 107) and the "giant brood of pines around" (Shelley 140). As they progress in their ascent, they both feel even more threatened by their surroundings, which are peopled with "[s]ome sort of bird, vampire or swallow," "metallic whirr of chicharras," "chirps of cricket," "weird birdsong or reptile croak" in the case of Ginsberg and eagles and wolves in the case of Shelley (*Collected Poems* 109–10). Then, both reach the peak of their journey, or section III. For Shelley, "Mont Blanc appears, –still, snowy, and serene" (142), while, for Ginsberg, "Uxmal [is] unhistoric, like a dream, Tulum shimmering on the coast in ruins; Chichén Itzá naked constructed on a plain; Palenque, broken chapels in the green" (*Collected Poems* 110). Both poets are facing the condensation of "a remoter world" (Shelley 142) or "all the limbo of Xbalba still unknown" (Ginsberg *Collected Poems* 110), contemplating

16 Of course, the sole fact that Ginsberg read "Mont Blanc" several times, as testified by his letter to Lionel Trilling, does not mean that he consciously had the poem in mind while materialising his experience in his journal. The similarities nevertheless invite the reader to draw a link between the two pieces.

the ruins "sunken under the flood of years" (Ginsberg *Collected Poems* 110) and the "eternal now" (Shelley 144). While, in section IV, Shelley identifies the "Power [that] dwells apart in its tranquillity" and the "city of death," with its "dome, pyramid and pinnacle," as "a flood of ruin" (144), Ginsberg discovers "the great crystal door of the House of Night,"[17] an unknown and abandoned cave in the face of the mountain (*Collected Poems* 111). Ginsberg calls this place the "Area of the Lost Souls" (*Collected Poems* 111), whereas Shelley refers to it as the "limits of the dead and living world" (146). The reader understands that both poets have crossed a threshold where the notions of time, life and death are suspended. This journey across a sublime landscape, accompanied by a significant change in the self, made Ginsberg realise that he needed to visit "the classic stations of the earth, the ancient continent" (*Collected Poems* 111) and that "there is an inner anterior image of divinity," an "unimaginable God" (*Collected Poems* 114). Similarly, this journey made Shelley realise that the "secret strength of things / […], to the infinite dome / Of heaven is as a law, inhabits [the mountain]" (146).

Thus, in both poems, the narrator feels at first at ease with its environment, then quickly understands the frightening and diminishing powers of Nature, and finally returns to an awareness of the self and a reaffirmation of the human mind. This is due to the fluctuating agency of the mind that lets itself be controlled by the impressiveness of Nature. Yet, thanks to an exploration of a kaleidoscopic landscape, the poets attempt to find an equilibrium between mind and matter. Hence, their physical journey mirrors their mental itinerary, which creates an interaction between the outside and the inside worlds, on the path to the realisation of the organicity of Nature. This destabilising relationship that both poets establish with the non-human other allows them to find explanations of themselves through the experience of Nature. Actually, the "contact with Nature is said to open man's eyes to his true instincts" (Ferreira da Silva Martins 94). Like Shelley in section I of his poem, Ginsberg presents his environment in a way that comprises both palatable elements like the "white doves" and the temptation of "lying in a hammock" as well as darker tinges like the "eyes watching [him]" and "all that mud" (*Collected Poems* 105). His mind is as active as the elements of matter that surround him, as he is "measuring [his] fate, wondering solitary in the wild" (Ginsberg,

[17] It is known today as Acabalna, in the municipality of Yajalón in Chiapas (Morgan 171).

Collected Poems 106). In this "abandoned labyrinth of Palenque" (*Collected Poems* 106), Ginsberg perceives "the vast movement of divinity" (*Collected Poems* 107) in the same way as Shelley feels the "everlasting universe of things" (140). Thus, both poets start their journey into the wild, while finding a certain equilibrium between mind and matter. However, after an ecstatic moment of transition, during which Ginsberg saw himself from above, the poetic narrator is relegated to the background whereas the impressiveness of Nature is foregrounded. Actually, while Shelley's narrator is overwhelmed by the agentiveness of the "dark, deep Ravine" in section II (140), Ginsberg's voice disappears to let "the shadow of the pasture" and "the tall crowd of vegetation" take the lead (*Collected Poems* 107). Yet, just as Shelley manages to temporarily reassert his subjectivity and agentiveness in this moment of passivity, namely when "[he] gaze[s] on [the Ravine]" (140), Ginsberg also reaffirms the presence of the poetic mind, when "[he] can see the moon" (*Collected Poems* 108). In fact, structurally, Shelley's "[o]ne legion of wild thoughts" (142) resembles Ginsberg's "skully meditation" of the deathshead "where [he] come[s] with [his] mad mind" (*Collected Poems* 109). In section III, Shelley is disturbed by the fact that the mountain seems to be totally indifferent to the human presence, which has therefore lost all agentiveness in the face of an unwelcoming environment teeming with eagles and wolves. Again, Ginsberg also feels completely ignored by the non-human other which remains "unconcerned" and even unfriendly with its "[c]ontinual metallic whirr of chicharras" (*Collected Poems* 109) and its "weird birdsong or reptile croak" (*Collected Poems* 110). After a last moment of focus on the particulars of Nature and passivity in section IV, Shelley finally reasserts, in section V, the human mind as the one granting agency to matter. A similar dynamic is observable in "Siesta," where Ginsberg contemplates "a shining waterfall of leaves and rain […] through which no thought can pass" (*Collected Poems* 110) before finally waking up from this trance and reaffirming "[his] own imagination" (*Collected Poems* 112).

Finally, Ginsberg seems to recycle a type of imagery fundamental to the descriptions of "Mont Blanc."[18] The first and major image recurring in both compositions, which in fact mirrors the disruption of the equilibrium between mind and matter, suggests the oscillation between

[18] Due to space limitations, the images of the opacity of language, ruins and waterfalls will not be discussed in more depth than they have already been in the previous sections of this essay.

moments of wakefulness and trance-like sleep. Actually, the realisation of the power of Nature at the end of both poems is accompanied by an ecstatic awakening, which is introduced by a sleep period. While it is clear that "Siesta" is dominated by the notion and images of sleep, the trance that finally takes place in section II of "Mont Blanc" is preceded by a moment of sleep. The "deep eternity" of Nature (Shelley 140), which incidentally reminds the reader of Ginsberg's "semblance of Eternity" (*Collected Poems* 107), is wrapped in a "strange sleep" (Shelley 140). It is as if, in order to physically access the place where the powers of Nature are the most tangible, namely the mountain or the jungle, the poets had to "let the mind fall down" (Ginsberg, *Collected Poems* 105) in order for a "remoter world [to] / Visit the soul in sleep" (Shelley 142). They must let go of any analytical intellect and become the receptacle of something greater which can only happen in dreams. It is only then that one is able to hold "an unremitting interchange / With the clear universe around" (Shelley 142). Thus, the aftermath of the transfiguring trance-like experience enables both poetical personae to understand where the sacred resides, bringing together Nature and the absolute, as per a Spinozist Nature Philosophy. At the end of section II, Shelley introduces the theme of eternity through art. In his case, "[o]ne legion of wild thoughts […] now rest […] [i]n the still cave of the witch Poesy […] till the breast [f]rom which they fled recalls them" (Shelley 142). Poetry becomes the means through which the poet's thoughts can be recited forever and through which his mind survives the test of time.[19] In "Siesta," too, Ginsberg considers the statue of the deathshead as being "here on portal still and thinks its way through centuries the thought of the same night in which [he] sit[s] in skully meditation" (*Collected Poems* 109). Not only does Ginsberg use the image of thought carried by an artefact through eternity, but he also creates a link between that artefact and the mind that contemplates it, thereby reinforcing the "unremitting interchange" between mind and matter, as Shelley does in "Mont Blanc" (142). Moreover, in both poems, the artefact is associated with the notion of vagueness linked to dreaming. In the "cave of the witch Poesy," the "wild thoughts" are seeking "some faint image" (Shelley 142), whereas, the deathshead's "fine thought's vaguer than [Ginsberg's] dream of him" (*Collected Poems* 109).

[19] Ginsberg identified a similar image in Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," where "[t]he poet's spirit is actually then, in a way, if not eternal, immortal […]. That spirit […] measured to ecstasy can be passed body to body" (*Spontaneous Poetics #6* 59:20).

Coda: Ginsberg's Spinozist Shelleyism

"Siesta" is one of the most important poems of Ginsberg's early years. It reveals a poet looking for a personal and mature voice, notably with regard to poetic endeavours and length. However, it is often disregarded by scholars, who typically favour pieces like "Howl" and "Kaddish." This essay has therefore attempted to rehabilitate "Siesta" within Ginsberg's canon by shedding new light on its highly intricate content. As already pointed out by Franca Bellarsi, this Ginsberg piece recycles a number of Romantic motifs ("'Alien Hieroglyphs of Eternity' and 'Cold Pastorals'" 248–52). However, alongside the interesting confluences it displays with Keats's "Great Odes," "Siesta in Xbalba" lends itself perfectly to a comparison with Shelley's "Mont Blanc." Actually, as demonstrated in part two of this study, Ginsberg's indebtedness to Shelley has shaped the Beat poet's understanding of poetry and his surroundings, especially from a Spinozist Nature Philosophy perspective. Indeed, this essay evidences that Ginsberg is aware of the effects of Nature on the human mind. It also shows how sometimes the latter functions as a mere receptacle and how on other occasions it shapes and even creates the environment in which it is found. This perfectly mirrors Shelley's "Aeolian lyre" simile (Shelley 652). This also indicates that, although Ginsberg is interested in finding a harmonious place among the subsisting non-human other(s), this can prove challenging and defamiliarising. Yet, when the poetic narrator manages to reach a moment of ecstasy for a split second, Ginsberg realises that Nature is organised in a way that befits Spinozist Nature Philosophy. He therefore understands more about his personal journey, explaining himself through the exploration of Nature in its undifferentiated forms. He then seems to realise that a greater force is the cause of all things, the *causa sui* in Spinozian terms. This vision of the non-human other seems to preface and open the way to Ginsberg's embrace of Buddhism and ecological commitments. After looking at Shelley's "Mont Blanc" from the vantage point of Spinozist Nature Philosophy, the readers grasp that – maybe not consciously – Ginsberg recycles fundamental features without which Shelley's poem would not be "Mont Blanc." Specifically, one can identify a number of images echoing Shelley's poem, which Ginsberg seems to reclaim and magnify – for example, the image of transitory sleep. While Shelley uses it as a frame for the discovery of Mont Blanc and the realisation that it constitutes the condensation of a greater power, Ginsberg applies it as a structuring device for his whole poem. Both poets also organise their pieces according to an ascent of and descent from the mountain – be that the Mayan temple or the European peak – and divide it into five sections, each of which depicts a different facet of the non-human other and, incidentally, triggers an oscillation between the agency of mind and that of matter.

All in all, on many different levels, "Siesta in Xbalba" could be seen as a modern American[20] version of "Mont Blanc." It foregrounds a system that presents Nature as an interconnected, dynamic and organic web, where the mountain-scape is transformed into a jungle-scape, and where the discovery of the landscape corresponds to a discovery of the mindscape, both of which being in fact in a relationship of constant interchange. One could therefore decisively argue that a Spinozist facet of Shelley trickled down to Ginsberg at a crucial moment in his poetic development, as manifest in "Siesta in Xbalba."

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[20] In this instance, the adjective "American" means both from the United States and from the American continent as a whole, as "Siesta in Xbalba" is shaped by an experience taking place on the other side of the Mexican border. The term American is therefore directly related to the environment described and the individual subject that contemplates it, reducing once again the gap between mind and matter.

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Con Men, Mad Scientists, and Magicians. Three Early Superman Villains: The Prankster, the Toyman and Mr. Mxyzptlk[1]

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"You don't tug on Superman's cape"
(Jim Croce: "You don't mess around with Jim," 1972).

Abstract: Every comic book superhero needs interesting antagonists as foils to ensure his or her adventures are worth reading. Arguably, the greatest villain in graphic fiction is the Joker who, from pulp fiction-like arch villain to deranged serial killer and mass murderer, has certainly come a long way in terms of character development. Though the multiple depictions of the Joker in textual and cinematic form have certainly gained the most public prominence among readers and viewers, he was not the only clownish villain in the early days of DC Comics, as Superman too had to fight several villains of that particular matrix. In the same way as Superman was a much brighter character than Batman in both visual depiction and characterization, these villains were, at least in their early days, seemingly just colorful anarchistic "nerds" serving the purpose of relatively simplistic points of alterity. Thus, they would upstage the Man of Steel to make him look stupid or to frustrate him through his inability to simply use his awesome superpowers to best these pesky foes. The slightly silly characters of the Prankster, the Toyman and Mr. Mxyzptlk have all enjoyed long careers fighting (but mostly annoying) Superman through their use of cons, science, and magic. This article will analyze these early clownish Superman adversaries

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by employing the three characters mentioned as examples of three categories of comic book villains: con men, mad scientists, and magicians.

Keywords: clownish comic book villains, antagonistic relationship between hero and villain, con man, mad scientist, magician

Introduction

If one thinks about clownish villains in superhero comic books, the first to come to mind is, obviously, Batman's arch-enemy the Joker, arguably the greatest villain in graphic fiction. From pulp fiction-like noirish villain to campy clown to deranged serial killer and mass murderer, he has established himself as a universally known pop culture icon through a range of manifestations which now place particular emphasis on the physical and psychological origins of his personality. Although no other character in comics is quite like him (Buchenberger "Super Villains and the Loss of Humanity" 539–52) or receives such extensive interpretation and coverage, he was not the only clownish villain in the early days of DC Comics, as Superman too had to fight against several villains of a similar kind. But just as Superman was a much brighter character than the later, darker Batman, these early villains seemed to match that atmosphere in being more colourful, anarchistic "nerds." They would upstage the Man of Steel by making him look stupid, frustrating him in his inability to simply best these pesky foes' comic and cerebral talents through his superpowers. The three foremost of these somewhat silly/campy characters – the Prankster, the Toyman and Mr. Mxyzptlk – have all enjoyed long careers fighting against (but mostly annoying) Superman with their use of both magic and science. This essay focuses upon these early Superman adversaries, who provide clownish representations of three categories of supervillains – con man, mad scientist, and magician. It assesses their roles in the history and the development of comic book (super) villains. In analysing these three enemies of Superman, this clownish representation acquires particular relevance, even more so as the Man of Steel himself has a connection to the circus. His iconic costume of tights, cape, and trunks closely echoes circus strongmen in the first decades of the 20th century, a connection that comic book writer Grant Morrison, amongst others, has referenced with the ironic, rhetorical question: "If he's so goddamn super, why does he wear his underpants outside of his tights?" (Morrison 14)

Comic Book (Super)Villains

Why Are (Super)Villains Needed?

The three somewhat rudimentary villains to be examined in these pages represent one small component of the ever-expanding canon of (super)villains, without which superhero comic books simply could not function in the capacity readers have come to comprehend them. In simplistic terms, a hero needs an evil counterpart to fulfil his or her narrative function, which is to showcase his or her physical – and moral – superiority by besting their adversaries and fulfilling a Judeo-Christian dichotomy of good and evil that is predominant in the Western world and forms the basis of much of its philosophical thought. A Superman who merely arrests relatively petty criminals would soon bore its intended audience because this good/evil binary relationship is a conflict without which this genre could not function in simple narrative terms. As comic book legend Stan Lee notes: "After all, if not for the villains, the good guys would either have to apply for welfare or be reduced to battling each other […]" (Lee 6).

Both the mythical and commercial character of Superman necessitates a predictable, constant, and somewhat one-dimensional narrative presentation of his adventures. The latter constantly confronts him with obstacles in the form of villains or catastrophes that he, of course, always overcomes. The very nature of Superman puts him in an endless narrative loop fighting a truly "never-ending battle" (Eco 15,16).

Interestingly enough, as much as villains are needed in order for the superhero narrative to function, there are only very few academic studies about them. Studies of superheroes abound, ranging from overviews of the genre itself and its crossings into other media like film or video games, to studies of specific characters, where Batman seems to be dominating. Supervillains are mostly only mentioned in their role as part of the analysis of the superhero. Moreover, only the high-profile villains, such as the Joker, Lex Luthor, Doctor Doom or the Green Goblin to name but a few, receive consideration. Surprisingly, Umberto Eco mentions Mr. Mxyzptlk as one of Superman's stranger obstacles, although he only refers to him as Mxyzptlk (Eco 16). However, the Prankster and the Toyman are almost never alluded to in scholarship. Just to mention a few examples: *The Superhero Reader*, *Superheroes!*, or *The Amazing Transforming Superhero* do not refer to them. *500 Comicbook Villains* constitutes an exception, although it admittedly functions rather as an encyclopaedia than an academic study. Thus, the superheroes take center stage in scholarship too, while the villains fulfil their traditional role as foils for them.

Though the fictional universes of superhero comic books do not represent reality, they at times keep a close relationship with it. During World War II, Superman often fought against Axis troops or saboteurs but, rather obviously, never really changed the course of the war. These depictions, however, did reflect the moral considerations of the time and did provide a form of escapist propaganda. In a short tale for *Look Magazine* in early 1940, Superman captured both Hitler and Stalin and brought them before the League of Nations (Various *Superman* 12,13). On the cover of *Superman* #17 (1942), he captured Hitler and the Japanese wartime leader Hideki Tojo, but this kind of imaginary story merely served as low-level morale booster in times of war. DC Comics were, of course, not the only comic book company to support the war effort in this particular way. In a more bizarre example, *Captain America* #1 from 1940, the titular hero even punches Hitler in the face.

Disasters of any kind provide another good example of this relationship between comics and society, as we often detect the presence of superheroes in the aftermath of such catastrophes. Yet, they are never depicted as preventing them – a curious anomaly given that, after all, it would seemingly be easy for someone with Superman's powers to do so. Although being an icon of American intervention, Superman failed to prevent 9/11, a fact that he laments himself. He must recognize that he cannot escape the pages of his comic book universe to stop the destruction of the World Trade Center: "The one thing I can **not** do is break free from the fictional pages where I live and breathe [to] become **real** during times of crisis and right the wrongs of an unjust world." (Various *The World's Finest* 16, bold letters in the original text; Buchenberger "Natural and Political Catastrophes" 170)

Just as comic book superheroes do not exist beyond a pseudo-textual reality, our reality only provides a background to the never-ending battles of good versus evil that they monthly depict. Superman and other comic book heroes therefore needed adversaries that challenged them and evinced their worth, a concept that may be traced to Greek mythology, in which the great heroes had to fight against larger-than-life adversaries to prove their physical and, most importantly, moral worth. Hercules, who would become a superhero in both the Marvel and the DC universe, offers a prime example of this, as is evidenced in his victories over the Hydra. Perseus, who bested Medusa, also illustrates the same phenomenon. Both Hydra, as a global fascist terror organization, and Medusa, as a femme fatale Inhuman, would later become mainstays in the Marvel Comics universe. And like their heroic counterparts, the major villains of superhero comic books must always return, establishing and re-establishing a merry-go-round of symbolic binary rivalries that exist in perpetuity.

Yet, in modern times, it is not just Superman who fights a never-ending battle for truth and justice. Rather, almost every hero who came onto the comic book stage after Superman's arrival follows a similar path. Batman made his debut in 1939 in *Detective Comics* #27 and soon had his own gallery of colourful villains. Led by the Joker, who appeared for the first time in *Batman* #1 in 1940, many of these villains have survived until today and have often become icons of popular culture. Yet, as mentioned before, none has had the same longevity and level of cultural impact as the Joker. At their inception, superhero comic villains were conceived in a rather one-dimensional fashion, motivated by greed, jealousy, madness, hunger for power and recognition (Conroy 14). Virtually every issue of *Action Comics* or *Superman*, in its opening dialogue, presents the hero with a different problem, which ranges from natural disasters, war scenarios, apprehending common criminals or confronting supervillains. Multi-issue storylines that cross over into other titles and culminate in elaborate limited series in the contemporary comic book landscape were unheard of at the time. Yet from these early "dime a dozen" evildoers, often appearing in strange, comical costumes and with even stranger motivations, would rise some of the greatest and most complex comic book supervillains in the genre. If one considers Harold Bloom's primary concept of defining canonical literature as those texts in which the struggle of predecessors against precursors plays the central role, these villains and, of course, their heroic counterparts have stood the test of time.

According to Bloom, writing always involves, whether consciously or not, a reaction against (but in coded reference to) one's predecessors, as the artist seeks to establish a new legacy (Bloom). And it is this concept, usually associated with the elevated texts of traditional canonical literature, which is also easily identifiable in the process of creating new comic book heroes and villains, each of whom must always compete with their predecessors as their creators attempt to position them in the canon of their respective comic universe. These early characters, by virtue of simple chronology, had no need to have the psychological depth of those who came later and, as a consequence, many have been forgotten or are only seen very rarely in modern-day comic books, unable to be transitioned from a one-dimensional villain to a worthy adversary with complex origins and motivations.

A Short History of Superman's Early Comic Book (Super)Villains

Given that Superman was one of the first notable comic book superheroes, his villains were also amongst the first ones of their kind. However, other Golden Age superheroes such as Batman, the Flash, or Green Lantern also quickly gathered a gallery of adversaries. A discussion of all of these villains would, however, go beyond the scope of this article. I will therefore focus on Superman, with occasional reference to other heroes. Through these early (super)villains of Superman or other heroes, several standard categories or types sharing a number of common traits were established. The supervillain, for example, often represents a distorted reflection of the superhero. Superman, an alien with god-like powers and superior physical attributes, is contrasted to various characters. Among those, one can list his human arch-enemy Lex Luthor, Brainiac, an alien android, who appeared for the first time in *Action Comics* # 242 in 1958, his distorted mirror image clone Bizarro, who emerged in *Superboy* #68, also in 1958, or the principal focus of this essay, the trio of clownish villains whose diminutive physiques were the exact opposite of Superman's. Following in the footsteps of Mike Conroy's encyclopaedic study of supervillains, I argue that the villains analysed in this study can be put into the major categories discussed in the following sections (Conroy).

Non-superpowered Criminals: Terrorists, Gangsters, Tricksters and Con Men

When the Superman mythos was still in its early stages, the hero's gallery of adversaries also displayed rudimentary levels of formation. Consequently, in these early publications, Superman often fought non-superpowered criminals, who would change from issue to issue. Though they seldom left any kind of lasting impression, these villains would nevertheless reflect the times in which they were created and which, very much like today, were plagued by corruption and crime. Some examples of these early prototypes included the following: Alex Evell, who came into sight in *Superman* #5 in 1940, is a corrupt politician who tries to gain control over the newspapers in Metropolis and to use them in his attempt to take over the city; Broden Mosely, who also became visible in *Superman* #5, is a crooked financier and "ruthless financial giant" (*Superman* #5 3) in league with arch-villain Lex Luthor in a scheme to enslave the country's leaders by means of narcotic incense; and, likewise, in *Superman #5,* Superman foils the crooked schemes of the ruthless gangster Slug Kelly, who tries to swindle children with rigged slot machines.

The Archer, an inversion of the Robin Hood myth who first comes into view in *Superman* #13 in 1941, is an extortionist, clad in a green costume, who threatens to kill rich people with his bow. A former big game hunter, this character's motivation relies on simple greed: "I thought hunting human beings would prove more profitable!" (*Superman* #13 13) The Archer, who appeared at approximately the same time as his heroic counterpart, Green Arrow (who made his debut in *More Fun Comics* #73 in 1941), is also one of the first costumed villains to use one particular weapon. This pattern would define many later supervillains, such as the Icicle, one of the Golden Age Green Lantern's early enemies, who makes use of a cold gun, or the Fiddler, an adversary of the Golden Age Flash, who committed his crimes using a fiddle as his weapon of choice. The Snake, an early animal-themed costumed criminal, surfaced in *Superman* #18 in 1942, in what has also become a very common style for supervillains of all kinds. Because of Superman's connection to circus imagery, he even fought against a circus villain when he tangled with the Strongarm Bandit in *Action Comics* #28 in 1940. In this story, however, the villain is not the actual circus strongman but a clown who commits robberies in the guise of his powerful colleague and who is, predictably, apprehended by Superman.

As the character of Superman rose to fame during World War II, he inevitably also fought against spies and saboteurs such as Calvin Denby, first encountered in *Superman* #12 in 1940, the leader of the fascist Grotak Bund that tried to sabotage the US war effort. Some of Superman's early human adversaries also comprised female criminals in the classic mould of the noirish femme fatale. One such example, Leila, an agent of a foreign power who made her debut in *Superman* #13 in 1940, engages in a plot to steal the plans of a secret weapon, only to be foiled by the Man of Steel. Being a member of a spy organization, Leila however remains a minor villain. In contrast, most of Superman's full-fledged villains were and remain male. From the early days of his conception, Superman has almost always been attached to Lois Lane, so he was never really in danger of falling for alluring female criminals, unlike Batman, whose gallery of rogues contains a few very prominent female villains, such as Catwoman and Poison Ivy. And though Superman's war-related villains had by the end of the war outlived their usefulness, if they had not already died in their confrontation with him, DC Comics rival Timely Comics (which would later become Marvel Comics) created the ultimate war criminal in the guise of fascist villain Red Skull, who popped up for the first time in *Captain America* #7 in 1941. Red Skull has withstood the test of time, which enabled him to continue his battles with Captain America and his allies.

Mad Scientists

Although Lex Luthor, who appeared for the first time in *Action Comics* #23 in 1940, still functions as Superman's main adversary and the archetypical scientific genius turned criminal, he was not the first bald mad scientist to confront the Man of Steel. That honour belongs to the Ultra-Humanite. Conceived slightly earlier than Luthor, he came into sight in *Action Comics* #13 in 1939. Possessing a brilliant mind in a physically disabled body – a disturbing trait of disfigurement or disability in the representation of villains that would permeate a number of genres in literature and film – his motivation would become a primary source for the creation of the generic supervillain: "[…] a scientific experiment resulted in my possessing the most able and learned brain on earth! – unfortunately for Mankind, I prefer to use this great intellect for crime. My goal? Domination of the world." (*Action Comics* #13 n. p.)

Like many early supervillains, the Ultra-Humanite seemingly died after his first appearance yet would resurface in the next issue of *Action Comics.* He would make other occasional appearances, as he became a minor villain in the DC universe. Batman too had early confrontations with mad scientist opponents, most notably Doctor Death. Seen for the first time in *Detective Comics* #29 in 1939, he is regarded as the first comic book supervillain. Likewise, Doctor Hugo Strange, who originated in *Detective Comics* #36 in 1940, also opposed Batman. These early depictions of mad scientists, in turn, carried with them echoes of noir crime fiction – Sax Romer's evil scientist Doctor Fu Manchu (a character that carried clear racist connotations) being a prime example. Superman's rival at the newsstand, Captain Marvel, faced his arch-enemy Doctor Sivana, another bald, physically challenged scientific genius of the same caliber, who emerged in *Whiz Comics* #2 in 1939. This type of supervillain continues to maintain its popularity via its personification of a physical contrast to the super-powered hero. The villains' superior intelligence – perhaps in part represented by the aforementioned baldness – invariably has them match the physical prowess of the hero with their inventions. However, not all these villains would go on to have a long career in comic books. One such example, the so-called Evolution King, an evil scientist who could age or de-age his victims with the special pills he invented, was spotted only once in *Superman* #15 in 1942. As his scheme to extort professional athletes with his aging pills was foiled by Superman, the villain ultimately died from his own pills, which can retrospectively be regarded as an ironic comment on his own short-lived representation in print.

Wizards and Sorcerers

Though Mr. Mxyztplk would become Superman's most prominent magical adversary, he was by no means the only one. As depicted in *Action Comics* #86, from 1945 Superman had to face the evil wizard Wokit, a Merlin-like character, with a pointy hat, white beard, and magic wand, living in a medieval castle, who terrorized the eastern European town of Morabia. Evil sorcerers would become an important part of DC Comics' gallery of supervillains, especially those opposing the Justice Society of America. Even before Superman's magical foes first emerged, the Society fought the likes of Kulak, a three-eyed sorcerer who first came to public attention in *All Star Comics* #2 in 1940. His depiction drew upon racist elements of stereotypical Asian villains.

Evil wizards always presented a serious challenge for Superman. As a being whose tremendous powers are based on pseudo-scientific or, rather, science fiction "facts" giving him the title "Man of Tomorrow," Superman has always been averse to magical powers and their wielders. Such heavy clashes illustrate ongoing battles between science and other more nebulous powers and beliefs, thereby mirroring concerns in the society of the time.

Other types of characters in this category included invaders from time and space, monsters, and robots, whose representatives from the early adventures of Superman have been long forgotten. Further, one could envision many more subcategories, often intersecting with others, for example, human and non-human villains or gender-based categories like the *femme fatale*. In this latter group, Batman's nemesis Catwoman, first introduced in *Batman* #1 in 1940, proved the most enduring example, as mentioned before. Clownish villains and characters, while not forming a category themselves, were also rominent as Superman's adversaries in the Golden Age. In his younger incarnation of Superboy, Superman even fought against a whole criminal circus troupe, led by the so-called Ringmaster, in *Adventure Comics* #120 (1947). In the Silver Age when DC Comics, under what amounted to self-censorship imposed by Comics Code Authority, became increasingly childish, even the Joker committed ridiculous and puerile crimes, and juvenile supporting characters such as Bat-hound and Bat-mite came to the fore.

The Beginning of Superman's Career and his Early Clownish Adversaries

Having debuted in 1938 in *Action Comics* #1, which started the Golden Age of comics, Superman rapidly became a pop culture icon, selling millions of books every month and moving beyond the limitations of his original medium into radio shows, animated cartoons and merchandising (Weldon 26–69). In keeping with his popularity, his powers also grew. As the narrator of the opening lines in the Superman animated short cartoons (17 episodes, 1941–1943, Fleischer Studios) informed his captivated audiences, Superman was "faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, able to leap buildings in a single bound." As he quickly learned to fly, his physical strength also increased exponentially.

In narrative terms, this made it difficult for his foes to beat him in a physical fight. So, many of them, especially his arch-enemy Lex Luthor, had to invent ever more powerful weapons if they were to stand a chance against his superior physical prowess. It is notable, therefore, that kryptonite, the radioactive remains of Superman's destroyed home world and the only substance that could seriously harm or even kill him was only added to the Superman universe in 1949 (Daniels 67). During World War II, Superman also became an icon of American patriotism, fighting spies and saboteurs on the home front and appearing alongside American troops engaged in battle with German and Japanese forces, plot developments which lent his adventures a more sombre tone as the war raged on.

But in the early 1940s, for the first time in what was at that point still a rather short career, Superman also met an opponent that could defeat him, at least in the economic reality of readership. In terms of sales, Fawcett Comics' Captain Marvel outsold the Man of Steel owing to the lighter tone embodied in its titular hero, 10-year-old Billy Batson, who turned into a mighty superhero by simply uttering the magic word "Shazam." He easily connected with a predominantly pre-adolescent readership (Weldon 60, 61). This battle was eventually won in court by DC, which has since incorporated Captain Marvel into the DC universe.

Superman's by now virtual invincibility in physical combat, together with the need to make his adventures more reader-friendly for his predominantly young audience, led to a different kind of adversary, a burlesque (Hausmanniger 79) and clownish villain who would alternatively pester and dumbfound the Man of Steel, diverting his attention, while attempting to commit various crimes (Weldon 63). As Les Daniels claims in his study of the Man of Steel "There was actually no way to intimidate Superman with violence. What was required was attitude" (Daniels 67). Perhaps because Superman's creators (Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster) had originally intended to write a comedic strip (Daniels 67), Superman now had to fight against the proverbial pie in the face, thrown at him by a bunch of clowns trying to take him down a notch or two in full view of an audience that consisted of both the bystanders in the actual comic and the readers of the comic themselves.

The early burlesque villains discussed above may still, occasionally, be seen in the ongoing adventures of Superman. However, they were by no means the only clownish characters in Superman's early career. One example is Lois Lane's niece, the eight-year-old Susie Tompkins, who would give Superman all kinds of trouble with her overactive imagination, as was the case in *Action Comics* #68 from 1944. Such representations ensured that the conundrum facing Superman was now often primarily intellectual or emotional rather than merely physical. Susie would even face Mr. Mxyztplk in *Superman* #40 (1946) in a story entitled "The Mxyztplk-Susie Alliance." The rather unsuccessful stage magician duo, Hocus and Pocus, who first came into view in *Action Comics* #83 (1945), provides another example of this tendency. Thanks to Superman's help, they would come to think they had real magic powers. J. Wilbur Wolfingham, a con man based partially on Hollywood entertainer W. C. Fields, offers a third example. Having been discovered in *Superman* #26 (1944), his crooked schemes would be curtailed by Superman through wit rather than physicality. Wolfingham even conned the Prankster in *Action Comics* #104 (1947), as Superman's clownish adversaries sometimes appeared together. However, all of these and other similar early comical villains have more or less disappeared over time (Daniels 68). Superman's more enduring clownish adversaries, presented here in the chronological order in which they had their first appearances, comprise the Prankster, the Toyman, and Mr. Mxyzptlk.

The Prankster, or the Con Man

The Prankster, who first came into view in *Action Comics* #51 in August 1942 and whose real name is Oswald Hubert Loomis, hardly looked frightening, with his pot belly, funny teeth, and weird-looking clothes. This starkly contrasted with the perfect physique of Superman, a pattern the other clownish villains would also reflect, as will be shown. Early on, the Prankster was basically a thief and a con man trying to pass off as a harmless eccentric. In *Action Comics* #51, in a story called "The Crimeless Crime," he gives money to banks while playing a series of pranks on the bank managers, guard men, and the police, who come to consider him as a bit of a weirdo. However, after triggering this response, he drops his mask and robs the vault of the Metropolis National Bank, whose manager was looking forward to another generous bonus. Apart from being a clever con man, the Prankster then shows another more sadistic side to his character, as he attempts to kill his accomplices and Lois Lane with poison gas. He thus echoes the Joker, who inspired his creation (Uslan 10). Superman, as expected, foils his plan, though the Prankster escapes with the threat: "[…] next time it will be the Prankster who will laugh loudest and the longest!" (*Action Comics* #51 13)

This pattern of misdirecting the attention of the police and Superman, just as a real stage magician would do when performing a sleight of hand trick, would resurface in other texts, such as in *Superman* #22 (1943) in the story called "The Great ABC-Panic!" In it, the Prankster somewhat ludicrously obtains the copyright for the English language, forcing everybody to pay him for using it. In this instance, fooled by the seemingly lawful way in which the Prankster acts, Superman cannot do anything against his scheme. However, he soon discovers that the copyright registrar who was thought to have issued the license had in truth been kidnapped and replaced by one of the Prankster's accomplices. Tired of having all his schemes foiled by Superman, in *Action Comics* #95 (1946) in "The Laughingstock of Metropolis," the Prankster directly targets the Man of Steel himself, trying to humiliate him publicly, thereby forcing him to give up his career. Once Superman realizes that the Prankster stands behind his misfortune – after all no serious comic book villain can resist bragging about his feats –, Superman reverses his decision and returns to apprehend the Prankster. However, the modus operandi of this burlesque villain is all too clear: making a fool of Superman in public, thereby misdirecting him while the real crime takes place. This confrontation forces Superman repeatedly to use his wits instead of his muscles, but not always to gain a clear victory. If the Prankster could not win against Superman, he was, at least on occasion, able to score points against his alter ego, Clark Kent. In *Superman* #37 (1945) in a story called "Pranks for Profit," the Prankster has his schemes foiled as usual but manages to secure a small victory over Clark Kent, who is berated by Lois Lane. She believes that Kent cut her out of the story of the Prankster's capture and that he gave her a trick compact that explodes in her face, while it was the Prankster who substituted Kent's gift with one of his practical joke toys. Lois and Clark then fight, in a scene that illustrates the marked gender roles in comic books in the Golden Age quite clearly. Lois Lane even had her own backup story in Superman entitled "Lois Lane Girl Reporter," in which she is portrayed as a fearless reporter, yet often in need of rescue by Superman. The Prankster subsequently goes to jail gloating, "I always manage to get the last laugh!" (*Superman* #37 11)

The Prankster would only occasionally make further appearances after having been a regular foe of Superman during the Golden Age of comics (which witnessed the rise of the archetypical superhero and lasted until about 1950), and in the Silver Age of comics (which lasted from 1956 to about 1970 and which saw both the second wave of DC superheroes as well as the creation of the Marvel Comics superhero universe.) For example, in a retro-styled adventure from 1977 entitled "The Pranksters Mysterious Misdemeanours," in *Superman Family* #184, the Prankster once again ridicules Superman in public while committing seemingly meaningless crimes. These are so obscure that Superman, in engaging with his foe, cannot help but make a fool of himself in trying to bring the perpetrator to justice. The Prankster's ambiguous crimes, however, offer clues for his partner the Toyman, enabling the latter to find a hidden key to a safety box containing 2 million dollars in jewels. Superman foils the plot, of course, but not before losing his temper in public. One can think of this moment as the last stand of the original Prankster before he returned in 1988 as a disgruntled former TV host attempting to avenge himself on the people of Metropolis because they refuse to watch his show (*Superman* #16 in the rebooted Superman universe, written and drawn by John Byrne). Eventually, he was remodelled into a slimmer, more athletic, villain in *Adventures of Superman* #579 (2000), in which he sold his soul to a demon lord. He now uses high-tech weaponry in his confrontations with the Man of Steel, having lost his anarchistic charm. His original shallowness as a character, a common trait amongst early supervillains as mentioned before, made it difficult to transform him into a character of greater complexity. His one-dimensionality – a clownish criminal without any superpowers who annoys a god-like being to divert his attention while he attempts to commit crimes – precipitated his downfall.

The Toyman, or the Evil Scientist

Cut from a similar cloth as the Prankster, with whom he would occasionally be in league, the Toyman (alias Winslow Schott) first came into sight in *Action Comics* #64, in September 1943, in a story called "The Terrible Toyman," shortly after his future partner in crime. His motivation for becoming a criminal is derived from generic Golden Age evil scientist logic: "People have laughed at me, thinking me a harmless old eccentric. […] Riches and powers shall be mine because of my ingenious toys! Then it will be my turn to laugh at the world! […]" (*Action Comics* #64 3). Whereas the Prankster uses his wits to misdirect and humiliate Superman, the Toyman uses his scientific genius to build weapons in the shape of toys. In *Action Comics* #64, an army of toy soldiers marches into a bank releasing narcotic gas and, while Superman rescues everybody, the Toyman robs the bank and escapes on a flying pogo stick. He even manages to kidnap Lois Lane, but just as she is about to be killed by the Toyman's deadly toys, Superman captures the criminal who, on his way to prison, vows revenge: "How the world will laugh when Superman is defeated by a toy!" (*Action Comics* #64 12). An echo of the Prankster's message at the end of his first adventure, the Toyman's true goal is to upstage and humiliate Superman in public. Unlike the Prankster, however, the Toyman uses advanced science to create his toy-like weapons, which places him in a different, superior category of supervillains, a superiority acknowledged in a story in *World's Finest Comics* # 20 in 1946, aptly titled "The Toyman: Super-Scientist." Like the Prankster, he would continue to pester the Man of Steel with his seemingly harmless toys, and this pair of burlesque criminals would even unite with arch-villain Lex Luthor, who somehow managed to retain his dignity despite operating with such partners. For example, in *Action Comics* #151 from 1950, Luthor teamed up with the soon-to-be-discussed Mr. Mxyzptlk and the Prankster, and in *Superman* #88 from 1954, he cooperated with the Toyman and the Prankster.

After the Golden Age, the original Toyman's appearances became rarer, although two other comic book characters made use of the name "Toyman." One of them was a vicious criminal utilizing toy-like weapons who, after only a 2-year stint in the 1970s, got killed by the original character and did not appear again. Indeed, Jack Nimbal was first introduced as the Toyman in *Action Comics* #432 in 1974 before being killed with a toy in *Superman* #305 in 1976. The second one turned out to be a Japanese teenage genius inventor of superweapons who occasionally helped Superman. He was first encountered *Superman* #177 in 2002. Just as was the case with the Prankster, the revised modern version of the original Toyman is deadlier but also decidedly less funny. Indeed, he is cast as a lonely man driven to take revenge on those who have, in his opinion, slighted him. He resorts to deadly toys to do so. His new story, written by Geoff Johns, appeared in 2008 in *Action Comics* #865, in a narrative that pays homage to the Toyman's first incarnation, as it is once again titled "The Terrible Toyman."

Mr. Mxyzptlk, or the Magical Trickster

Although last from a chronological point of view, but definitely not least, the most enduring of the trio of clownish supervillains presented here, Mr. Mxyzptlk, made his comic debut in the fall of 1944 in *Superman* #30. Not only did he come from another dimension, the so-called "5th," he also offered a whole new level of villainy. Mr. Mxyzptlk is an all-powerful imp, so powerful that reality bends to his will. In him, Superman found an adversary that he had to defeat intellectually because he simply could not vanquish him physically. In order to stop him Superman had to trick Mr. Mxyzptlk into saying his name backward, as this constituted the only way to banish him back to the 5th dimension. He combines elements of Warner Brothers' cartoon characters Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd (Daniels 68), being equally mean and juvenile. Moreover, Mr. Mxyzptlk is, by his own admission, a court jester, a role which he plays to perfection as he tries to cut down to size the most powerful being in the 3rd dimension, Superman, in order to dominate his world. Like the other clownish villains, he would return many times to pester the Man of Steel, only to be tricked time and again into saying his name backward. Mr. Mxyzptlk soon became hugely popular with fans. When Superman's creators asked their readers if they wanted to see further confrontations between the imp and the Man of Steel, the reaction was decidedly in his favour (Dorkin 8).

In the Silver Age, Mr. Mxyzptlk would change his costume to what has become his iconic orange and purple suit and derby hat but would continue to annoy the Man of Steel in the same vein. In 1961's *Action Comics* #273, in a story that would also demonstrate how powerful Superman had become, Mr. Mxyzptlk exposed Superman to a magical sneezing powder, which caused the Man of Steel to destroy an entire planetary system by sneezing it to pieces. In order to teach Mr. Mxyzptlk a lesson, Superman reversed their roles, traveling to the 5th dimension to play pranks on the mischievous imp, thereby causing him to lose a mayoral election. In a further reversal of their roles, it was now the imp who had to trick the Man of Steel into saying his name backward.

Mr. Mxyzptlk has withstood the changes of time that every comic book character must undergo with far greater resilience than his two colleagues. In Alan Moore's classic tale "Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow?" (*Superman* #423, *Action Comics* #583, 1986), which is, to my knowledge, the only time that these three fiendish clowns appear together in one story, we see Mr. Mxyzptlk transformed into a truly evil all-powerful spirit, hell-bent on destroying Superman, forcing the Man of Steel to finally kill him. This, in turn, results in Superman abandoning his career, as he has broken his most important rule. Prankster and Toyman are shown in their original forms and costumes, although their pranks and toys prove deadly, so much so that Superman's long-time friend Pete Ross is killed by them and Superman's secret identity is publicly disclosed. This was the last Superman story before DC's mega-reboot event *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. While many characters received a complete makeover, Mr. Mxyzptlk returned as his old self, a magical trickster with limitless powers, matching wits with Superman. He even played an important role in DC's *Rebirth* event, another reboot of the DC multiverse. In 2017's *Action Comics* #975, #976 and *Superman* #18, #19, in a crossover series aptly titled *Reborn*, Mr. Mxyzptlk causes Superman to realign his own splintered timeline, thereby solidifying the new *Rebirth* universe itself. Here, Mr. Mxyzptlk is once again portrayed as a selfish child who seeks revenge on Superman for not rescuing him when he was held prisoner. Whether this constituted just a one-time return to his former glory or not, remains to be seen.

Conclusion

These three clownish villains from the early 1940s, a con man who uses techniques similar to those of a stage magician to misdirect his audience while he commits crimes, a genius inventor who breaks the law using seemingly harmless toys, and an imp from another dimension with god-like powers and an urge to play tricks on the Man of Steel, all evolved through various incarnations. Yet, they are only rarely seen these days. Though Mr. Mxyzptlk may be a slight exception, he has in truth become more of a minor pop culture icon than a serious villain, although his depiction has managed to stay more-or-less true to itself. This contrasts with the generally darker tone in comics which became dominant in the mid-eighties with Alan Moore's *Watchmen* (1986–1987), and Frank Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* (1986). Moreover, the ever-increasing number of cosmic threats to the DC universe, which exhibit a clear superiority to Superman in physical battle, implies that such seemingly absurd and somewhat comical villains are no longer needed. Furthermore, attempts to darken their personalities have not appealed to audiences. The Joker has successfully negotiated the journey from noirish murderer to crazed serial killer via the figure of a harmless clown and is now considered the most iconic of all supervillains. While he displays the deepest and most nuanced psychological backstory, the three villains presented earlier in this essay have not fared so well.

At the beginning of his career, an important part of Superman's attraction to young readers was his "juvenile naivety" (Spiegelman). The three villains analyzed here were part of this particular period, the Golden Age, when the dichotomy of good versus evil was still rather simplistic and clear-cut. Indeed, good guys were simply good and evil guys just bad. It therefore proved difficult, if not impossible, to add additional layers of complexity to these characters. One could even argue that Superman himself never developed beyond his "boy scout" image, except in alternate realms of the DC multiverse. For example, in Mark Millars *Superman: Red Son* (2003), Superman's and Lex Luthor's roles are reversed. Indeed, Superman's rocket ship landed in the Soviet Union, where he would try to conquer the world under Stalin's tutelage. However, Batman, the second genre-defining superhero and Superman's eternal counterpart, did evolve into a darker, brooding and all around more complex character, which eventually led him to supplant Superman as DC's most popular protagonist. This development both started and peaked in the confrontation between the Dark Knight and the Man of Steel in Frank Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* in 1986. Miller's revision of Batman, which continued in the *Batman: Year One* storyline (1987), fundamentally changed not only the direction of the character himself but also, together with Alan Moore's ground-breaking graphic novel *Watchmen*, the whole genre of superhero comic books, as mentioned above (Wandtke 87–111).

Superman's tribute to this new age of comic books was not that he became darker like Batman but that his storyverse did. In the iconic *Death of Superman* storyline, Superman seemingly died after a brutal fight with the monstrous villain Doomsday (Superman Vol. 2 #75). As dictated by the logic of his narrative and for obvious commercial reasons, he would eventually come back, although his cosmos had become grimmer too (Wandtke 8).

As mentioned earlier, the new Prankster never really regained his original popularity, and the Toyman's transformation into an embittered lonely scientific genius made him into a minor character, for example in the mini-series *Lex Luthor: Man of Steel* #1–5 (2005). Even Mr. Mxyzptlk's new role as an all-powerful entity still remains a mere foil for Superman, as the challenges for the Man of Steel had to, by the very nature of his narrative, become ever more difficult to master. Newer menaces now lurked, taking the shape of super-powered, deadly foes of the Man of Steel like the alien super-intelligent android Brainiac, the kryptonite-powered cyborg Metallo, or the alien dictator Mongul, to name but a few. The nerds could not evolve into this kind of adversary anymore.

They remain, however, an intrinsic component of the Superman mythology as is evidenced in the landmark issue *Action Comics* #1000, in which Toyman and Prankster are evoked by a reformed criminal having once worked as a henchman for the two villains. As further evidence of their fundamental influence, the Toyman's origin story is even reprinted in the 80th-anniversary deluxe edition of *Action Comics*. Further, he also makes a brief appearance in *Man of Steel* #2 in 2018, although he is now portrayed as a petulant child upset by the fact Superman disables his giant robot. Mr. Mxyzptlk even has his own story in *Action Comics* #1000, in which he attempts to create the narrative of the death of Superman at his own hands but ultimately must concede that, for all his powers, the adversarial relationship with Superman is what defines him. Therefore, he realizes he will not or simply cannot erase the Man of Steel from existence. Such villains, then, are consigned to being, if not footnotes to the Superman universe, then certainly minor villains whose characterization has not been in line with the darker nuances and backstories of other villains – and heroes – in the comic book universe in more recent decades. Only time will tell if the Prankster, the Toyman, and Mr. Mxyzptlk will once more become serious foes of Superman, infuriating him with their annoying pranks and tricks, and providing a form of comic relief while doing so.

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Sinful Times and Timeless Sins in Southern Italy: Transgenerational Trauma and Identity Formation in Helene Stapinski's *Murder in Matera*

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"We're all connected, they say. One story leads to the next.
One generation to the next.
But we learn from our stories and our past.
We learn from our sins. And we grow."
Helene Stapinski, *Murder in Matera* (2017)

Abstract: The essay discusses Helene Stapinski's postmodernist novel *Murder in Matera* (2017), a literary testimony conflating memoir, fiction, and historiography, which foregrounds the role of transgenerational trauma in restoring blurred immigrant identities. The mythological imaginary, combined with historical facts interlaced with traumatic memories, creates a narrative of a formal and aesthetic complexity that transcends the customary scope of a trauma narrative. The novel demonstrates that, linking past and present, memory can preserve or reconstruct a subject's identity by means of narratives, and that human lives are in fact the stories that we either tell or hear about. Stapinski's work bears witness to historical and transgenerational trauma, and at the same time rebuilds identities – an Italian American narrator's and those of her Italian ancestors. Tracing the historical origins of extreme events and their traumatic legacy enables the author-narrator to reevaluate and rewrite Matera's history itself *as* a history of trauma.

Keywords: migration literature, Italian American fiction, Italian American identity, Trauma Studies, Helene Stapinski, postmodernist fiction

Delicately set against the historical, mythological, and geo-cultural background of the province of Matera, in Southern Italy, transgenerational trauma and identity formation take center stage in Helene Stapinski's postmodernist novel *Murder in Matera* (2017). Over the past two decades, a growing number of literary testimonies, in either memoirist or fictional form (or, as in this case, in both), has brought the phenomenon of trauma transmission and the concept of transgenerational trauma to the forefront of contemporary trauma-theory investigations. However, in Stapinski's book, memoir and fiction, the mythological imaginary, and historical facts interlaced with traumatic memories all blend into a narrative of a formal and aesthetic complexity that transcends the customary scope and form of a trauma narrative. Following a few hallmarks of postmodernist fiction, such as literary pastiche, overlapping of genres, complementary mixtures of historically documented events and fictional stories, as well as cultural expositions, Stapinski's text reads as a travelogue, a reporter's journal, a detective story, a scholarly investigation, and the fictional recreation of the silent, muted history of late-nineteenth-century Italian immigrants who informed the author and her family's Italian American identity. The novel demonstrates that, linking past and present, memory can preserve or reconstruct a subject's identity by means of narratives, and that human lives are the stories that we either tell or hear about. Stapinski, as a first-person narrator alter ego, embarks on getting those stories right.

Regardless of the ethnic group affected by it, the trauma of exile plays a crucial role in identity formation, being part of the body's composition, viewed as an assemblage. "Material bodies as well as social bodies (institutions, organizations, communities, etc.) – can be effectively investigated by understanding their composition as assemblages," states Jenny Webb (403) borrowing Manuel DeLanda's concept. Stapinski's novel unfolds as a meticulous reconstruction of her great-great-grandmother's identity through the exhaustive investigation of the societal structure, customs, traditions, and history of Matera. What is important to acknowledge is "not so much that we are born into a society that precedes us and contributes to the shaping of our identity, but that we are constructed through what Judith Butler calls regulatory schemes and symbolic ideals" (Camboni 27). Each ethnic group of immigrants coming to the New World has brought with it a specific assemblage formed and conditioned in its geocultural space of origin, being eventually subjected to new regulatory schemes and confronted with the symbolic ideals of the adoptive homeland.

Identity formation and cultural hybridization (in the context of exile rather than colonialism), as well as cultural appropriation are continuing processes leading to both integration and differentiation. An example of constructed identity is that of the foreigner "in its various manifestations and gradations as immigrant, exile, refugee, expatriate, tourist, or enemy. The foreigner is the outsider, the one who does not belong in the *polis*, the one who crosses its borders" (Camboni 29). The focus of Stapinski's investigation is the "foreigner," her great-great-grandmother, Vita Gallitelli, and her alleged legacy of crime, or more specifically, her genetic constitution, which might have instilled criminal propensities in Stapinski's father, Grandpa Beansie, her children, and herself. Determined to prove or disprove her suspicions and fears, Stapinski, the book's first-person narrator, will set out on a historical fact-finding mission to Southern Italy and an unusually meticulous and thorough scholarly research, not a hallmark of memoirist fiction altogether.

Whereas Vita Gallitelli may have left Matera behind, Matera followed her to the New World (a scenario common to most immigrant narratives), and might have even been the cause of her death if Francesco Vena had supposedly had her killed to exact revenge for her infidelity. Literary characters created by Jewish American writers such as Bernard Malamud, Joseph Skibell, Isaac Bashevis Singer, or Jonathan Safran Foer, to name only a few, carry with them (within them) over to America the specific cultural markers of the Old World, often including the collective trauma of World War II, or the historical trauma of the pogroms. Vita brought with her the trauma of a life of poverty, social injustice, and persecution. Jewish Americans and Italian Americans seem to share a "common immigrant malaise" which found fictional representation in their literatures. "Italian American and Jewish American literature both articulated the immigrants' ill-ease with their identity in the New World. Their experience of alienation found expression in their respective immigrant literatures …" (Figueira 6). Stapinski's identity crisis stems from feelings of otherness, insecurity, and anxiety caused by a 130-year-old dubious genetic legacy and transgenerational trauma. Identifying the historical origins of extreme events and the traumata they have caused will help the author-narrator take a significant step toward the reevaluation, interpretation, and rewriting of Matera's history itself *as* a history of trauma.

The historical narrative in Stapinski's novel, partly documented and partly fictional, brings to life the centuries-old pain and suffering of the people of Matera since antiquity to the unification of Italy under Garibaldi in the 19th century, an ambitious undertaking meant to shed light on her great-great-grandmother's life and ultimately on her family's legacy. Understanding trauma in its historical context and history as trauma narrative amounts to more than an academic undertaking: it means coming to terms with the past, and may literally mark the beginning of a newfound humanity. While trauma narratives have developed psychologically complex characters often representing victims or survivors of historical traumata, Stapinski's novel bucks the trend and seems to shift the focus – albeit temporarily – onto perpetrator's trauma, the rumored murder committed by her great-great-grandmother, Vita Gallitelli, before her emigration to America in 1892. Carried out during two stays ten years apart (2004–2014) in Southern Italy, the author's investigation will shed light on, and raise new questions about, the alleged "genetic propensities" of her children and her extended family – and ultimately, about her Italian American identity and her *Italianità*, which, according to William Giovinazzo's definition, expresses the "essential attributes inherent in *Italiani nel mondo*" (268).

Tellingly, even if based on a false assumption at that point, the novel opens with a hard-to-miss hook: "Vita was a murderess. She took a life and ran. […] She left her husband behind and crossed the Atlantic Ocean with her little boys, running from the crime" (3). (The so-called "crime" will be referred to, alternatively, as the "murder" or the "sin" of the author's Italian ancestors.) This is the story that the author and first-person narrator remembers having been told as a child by her mother, in their kitchen in Jersey City, New Jersey, around 1969. As an adult with children of her own, Stapinski produces a literary text that bears witness to the traumatic hardships of the alleged murderess Vita Gallitelli four generations later. Vita will meet her end in America, killed, ironically, with a sock full of rocks, a weapon common in Italy but unusual in America.

Stapinski sets up her novel along four narrative threads: the oral history of Vita Gallitelli and her family; the documented history of Vita Gallitelli and her husband, Francesco Vena; a fictional fleshing-out of the documented facts (recovered during her investigation) in about eleven of all forty chapters; and the historiography of the region, including its multiethnic culture, religion, and myths. Italian words, idioms, and sayings, some self-explanatory and others likely to prompt the conscientious reader to resort to a dictionary or an Internet search, add a flavor of cultural originality and authenticity to the text. Moreover, as it is often the case in literary texts, the geo-cultural setting (the provinces of Matera and Basilicata, the towns of Bernalda, Pisticci, and Metaponto, etc.) does not only serve as background for the plot and its characters, but also becomes a character in its own right, clearly defined by specific personality traits, colors, and smells, and even as victim to historical violence, just like the people inhabiting it. The atmosphere created by the setting, relying on visual and other sensory details, acquires a convincingly realistic note also thanks to the author's reliance on literary and scholarly sources. Stapinski adds about four pages of references at the end of the novel, common in critical works but rare in fictional ones, if at all. A scholar, a student of south-Italian history, society, religion, and gastronomy, Stapinski will discover that her Italianness has been informed by flimsy, if not downright false, assumptions. The "Italian" in her Italian Americanness has undergone a process of cultural appropriation. "To *work* within multiculturalism requires a non-exclusive theoretical openness and curiosity: it requires multiplicity. To avoid reinscription within the dichotomous English/Or hegemony, structurally foundational to the contemporary World Literature approach, the multicultural critic must consciously cultivate a concrete, pragmatic praxis: multiple linguistic and theoretical fluencies" (Webb 400). Her investigation will gradually narrow the multigenerational gap between Stapinski's Italian Americannes and her *Italianità* by discovering and fictionally fleshing out the image of a great-great-grandmother whose resilience and toughness made a new life in America possible.

Stapinski gleans information about the region from both literary sources and popular culture. She imagines, for instance, that Spartacus "once rested on the sandy beaches of Metapontum," looking "an awful lot like Kirk Douglas, chin dimple and all," in Stanley Kubrick's eponymous film of 1960 (29). Pythagoras also settled there, and at some point, Hannibal passed through. They were followed by the Lombards, the Normans, the Aragonese, and pirates – so the locals "joked that they talked with their hands for good reason, after centuries of trying to communicate with strangers" (30).

While in New York, before embarking on her investigative journey to Southern Italy, Stapinski starts researching Basilicata and picks up *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (1945) by Carlo Levi, who used to be a political prisoner there (53). Stapinski underlines passages about "*passatella* [a tavern drinking game], illegitimate children, evil spells, and the poor, melancholy people who inhabited this no-man's-land. My ancestors" (54). While the ultimate goal of her research and subsequent travel to Italy is to unveil the mystery surrounding her great-great-grandmother, Stapinski starts connecting seemingly disparate historical dots in order to understand and face the truth about her and her family's identity. She also reads an anthropological study of magic in Southern Italy, about curses and spells, *monacelli*, the spirits of babies who died before being baptized, and *succobi*, dwarfs who come at night and sit on the chest of a sleeping person (55). Her readings also include Greek history, about Magna Graecia, the Greek settlement in Basilicata of centuries before, and Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Pythagoras, and Plato (and his "Allegory of the Cave," whose metaphor will become relevant at the end of the novel).

Using expository writing, Stapinski lays out multiple historical facts, including statistics, such as the one of the nine million Southerners who fled Italy between 1871 and 1951, most of them "dirt poor" and some of them "criminals" (57). She learns from Rosa Parisi, an anthropologist, that the original inhabitants of Bernalda belonged to the Oenotri tribe, "people from the land of vines," during the Iron Age until the eleventh century BC. They banded together against the Greeks, then the Romans invaded the area in the third century BC, followed by the Barbarians. The first modern ruler was Frederick II, in the 13th century, after whose death, civil war broke out. The French ruler Charles of Anjou let the Florentine banks tax the peasants heavily (110), and the Spanish, the Aragonese, levied even higher taxes, as a result of which distrust and hatred of all public institutions branded the mindset of Southern Italians for centuries to come (111). After the invasion of revolutionary France in 1799, a Neapolitan revolution led by the Jacobins broke out. They also promised reform, but a Bourbon monarch sentenced the Jacobins to death. Even though serfdom was outlawed under Napoleon (1806), Italy's unification under Garibaldi half a century later, the *Risorgimento* of 1861, failed to implement reforms and provide a better life to the peasants. Apparently, the Italian South suffered more "at the hands of their northern brothers than they had at the hands of all those invaders" (117). Even while exposing a trove of factual information, Stapinski's prose retains its beauty and melancholy tone: "Centuries of domination had left the Southerner with a fatalistic view of the world – the Italian shrug, half-closed eyes, and melancholy outlook its main symptoms" (117). Stapinski is struck by the "simultaneous beauty and sadness of the landscape," but at the same time, its history helps her explain it: "decade upon decade of repression and failed attempts, one after another, to remedy it" (117). The author's eagerness to learn more about the land of her ancestors and in particular about her great-great-grandparents is rooted in her insecurities regarding her and her family's identity, which are in turn caused by an intriguing rumor that has been circulating in the family for centuries: Vita was a murderess who was forced to flee Italy with her two sons. If the rumor was true, the question it raised was whether a propensity for violent crime could be genetically transmissible and compromise the lives of her family. The circumstances of Vita's murder – a false premise, as it will turn out later in the novel – will guide her entire investigation of the lives of her Italian ancestors on location, in the province of Matera in Southern Italy.

Vita Gallitelli emigrated to America with her two teenage sons, Valente and Leonardo, in 1892. Leonardo was the author's great-grandfather. According to Stapinski's mother's account, Vita had three boys, but the youngest one was lost on the way to America. "Ma had no name, no proof. Only the story. The myth, really" (5). Following the original story, the author will conduct a thorough research of the births, life circumstances, and deaths in the Gallitelli and Vena families. "They left for America because Vita and her husband, Francesco Vena, had murdered someone in Matera […]. It was a place my mother and I knew nothing about, filled with such poverty that no one really liked to talk about it. Matera came from the Latin word for mother. It was the motherland, but no one in my family ever considered going back there" (5). The stories, repeated over and over again to the author since she was a little girl, have come to establish an imaginary presence of Vita in her mind – a fictional image meant to make up for the scarcity of facts.

Trauma Narrative: The Story as It Must Have Happened

Traumatic memory may preclude the construction of a narrative by prompting the subject to search for a belated and impossible adaptation. Even if it does not store *facts* of past experiences, narrative memory creates *meaning*, an indispensable, congruous sense of what happened. Therefore, about a quarter of Stapinski's chapters are fictional reconstructions of Vita's and Francesco's lives, partially based on historical records that the author-narrator and her Italian friends and collaborators have discovered.

Adding to its originality, the novel starts with a *Cast of Characters*, in the vein of a list of *dramatis personae* in a play, subdivided into two temporal parts, Now and Then. The characters listed in the former are present-day family members and people the author meets during her two stays in Italy, whereas the latter includes the names of her ancestors and some of the actors relevant to their stories.

The first fictional segment tells of Vita's birth, on August 22, 1851. True to a realist narrative, the text abounds with descriptions rich in visual details. Vita's thirty-three-year-old mother, Teresina Stigliano, knew that to scream out in pain during childbirth was a dishonor, but the farm animals, a chicken and a goat, which lived in the same room with her, under the high bed, "sensed her pain" (36). The third-person narrator compares the room to a Nativity scene, and Teresina and her baby are referred to as Madonna and child, acquiring a timeless, mythical stature. The blessed oil of baptism that a priest places on the baby's forehead – to make sure that she does not go to limbo if she dies too soon – is just as important as the talisman (a cross made of straw and blessed by the same priest) that Teresina puts inside the crib. This detail is only one of many other instances in the novel speaking for the "physicality" of Italian Catholicism. According to William Giovinazzo, while Catholicism practiced by non-Italians is cerebral and conceptual, "Italian Catholicism is a full body contact faith" (86). It was this "physical, palpable experience of faith" that the non-Italian Catholic hierarchy in America took issue with (87). While Teresina was giving birth, her husband, Domenico Gallitelli, and his brothers were smoking and drinking homemade wine. The baby came out yelling, fighting, full of life – an important detail considering that most babies at the time did not get to live through their first year, and oftentimes mothers "smothered their infants to spare them the awful life that lay ahead," the hunger, the malaria, the heat of the summer, the silkworm disease, and the earthquakes (37).

Vita Gallitelli, a supposed murderess in the beginning of the novel, comes alive on the page and turns into a three-dimensional character thanks to the fictional accounts recovering her life from childhood to young womanhood, motherhood, and ending with her leaving Italy to start a new life in America. The details of her preparation for marriage, the ritual of marriage, giving birth to her children, losing her husband, crossing the ocean, and settling down in New Jersey, even if mostly made up by the author, all speak for her truthful identity, and will prove the rumor of her murdering someone wrong. Particularly relevant to the author are the physical and character traits, by which she tries to understand Vita's legacy and to cope with the fear of her family's having inherited a gene of violence and crime.

As no evidence of Vita's alleged murder surfaces during the author's research and onsite investigations, the fictional chapters develop a possible, and in fact quite plausible, character biography and detailed scenes, like the one of the actual murder. The factual details discovered by Stapinski in court documents, town archives, or history books lend enough plausibility to the fictional segments for readers to understand and feel the poverty, hopelessness, and overall tragedy of life in nineteenth-century Southern Italy. Moreover, the fictional accounts of Vita's life reveal personality traits that flesh out her character, such as her love for a good story, listening to her mother's incredible legends while working in the fields (103). Teresina would sometimes even sing the stories to her, in a voice reminiscent of a Middle Eastern call to prayer (103). Apparently, Vita did not care so much about the supernatural, fantastic story elements such as the *monacelli*, *succobi*, and *streghe* (local witches), casting spells, and werewolves, as she did about killers, "whom she had seen with her own eyes. They were the best stories because she knew they were true" (104). Growing up, the little girl turns into a strong and confident young woman who often stares down even men of a superior social status, such as the mayor or the padroni. Briefly, she had "moxie," as the narrator puts it. Not beautiful, but sexy, she was "smart and wise all at the same time – what the Italians like to call 'veramente in gamba.' The Italian version of thinking on your feet. […] Liveliness and love of life was hard to find in a place as miserable as nineteenth-century Bernalda. And Vita had it. Vita had it in spades – to quote an American idiom" (128). Her outspokenness and sense of humor earned her the jealousy of the other girls, who started rumors and called her *puttana*. As for the boys, they were both attracted to and in awe of her because she made them feel uncomfortable whenever, intimidated by no one, she spoke her mind.

When Vita's time to marry came (at 19, she was getting old, "entering spinster territory" [130]), her parents, Teresina and Domenico had to provide her with a chest of linen and a chest of drawers. The parents of the bride and those of the groom had an unwritten contract on what linens, furniture, dishes, clothes, and glasses the young woman would bring with her (129). The groom, Francesco Vena, was Vita's senior by seven years and friends with her brother, Leonardantonio. The narrator makes the salient point that, while marriage was not for love, but for convenience – it was ultimately for survival. The wedding celebration followed the inspection of the linen and the furniture, and their parade through the village. The smallest and apparently most insignificant actions carried real life-and-death importance. For example, the last stitch on the white wedding dress was saved for right before the wedding; the veils were meant to confuse the evil spirits; and, throughout the parade, townspeople placed obstacles in the newlyweds' way to represent the challenges that lay ahead (143). A metal ring was placed on the left hand, "the cursed side, to ward off evil spirits," and on the third finger, the one "connected to the vein that led to the heart" (144). The long pasta in *macaroni a fierr* (a tomato ragout with meat) meant a long life, and the number of shards resulting from breaking a vase by stomping on it on the floor foretold the number of years of marriage. Vita was worried because there were no shards.

The fictional segments also include historically documented details, such as the tradition of *prima note*, which allowed the landowner to sleep with the virgin wife of a worker. On such occasions, a special dish was typically served, the Lamb of the Husband – *Agnello del Marito* – symbolizing innocence and sacrifice. On her wedding night, the padrone, Grieco, came to claim Vita's virginity. While leaving the room, Francesco looked into her eyes, and turned down the lamb meal. Therefore, in all likelihood, Valente, Vita's firstborn, was Grieco, the landowner's son (47).

Stapinski fictionally recreates the real murder scene in the latter part of the novel, after several documents, such as birth and death certificates, court documents, etc. have surfaced. It turns out that it was not Vita, but her husband Francesco and her brother Leonardantonio who committed murder. Although they did take a human life, the act itself was not carried out with any vicious intent; it was the result of a random fight. The fictional story recounts that, in 1872, in Ferrandina, Francesco and Leonardantonio flirt with young women, and ask them to taste their small pears, which they eventually bundle together to take home the next day. A 33-year-old miller, Paolo Doraio, warns them that the padrone is extremely vigilant and has a gun – and he even offers to give them some pears himself, but Francesco and Leonardantonio refuse, and come back at night with a friend, Francesco Miraldi, a bricklayer (169). The evening takes a bad turn when the padrone, Antonio Camardo, and his mother, Carmina Albani, come along, and catch them stealing the pears (170). After Camardo shoots Leonardantonio in the finger and wounds the horse, Francesco picks up a stick, pear-tree branch, and attacks Camardo while he is reloading his gun. Camardo later dies of a head wound, and Leonardantonio turns himself in to the carabinieri. Police finally arrest Francesco and Miraldi, too.

The fact that Vita was not a killer, after all, comes as an emotional relief to Stapinski. However, the opening sentence of the chapter entitled "Don't Tell the Farmer How Good Cheese Is with Pears" still speaks for a negative mindset: "My ancestors really were murderers" (175). Everything that so far has been legend or mythology is now reality. "And it was nothing to be happy about," the author admits, "now that I had actually found it and thought about it" (175). In the next fictional segment, Francesco and Leonardantonio, in cuffs, are on their way to the prison in Potenza (207), and Vita loses both her husband and her four-year-old son Rocco, probably from malnourishment, three years after the murder. It is unlikely that he was the product of *prima notte*, opines the narrator. Left with nothing more to lose, Vita appeals to Grieco, the padrone, for shelter, food, and protection (229). There was no shortage of pain and scandal to consider next to Vita's, the narrator tells us, if one thinks of the case of the crazy mother who tried to cook her baby (230). At 24, Vita was still a *furba*, feisty and wily. Even though she was still married to Francesco, who was away in prison, and Grieco was married, too, all she wanted was

> a better life for her and her parents and brothers and sisters. And a few minutes of pleasure. In a life so hard and deprived all the time, in a place where you went hungry and sometimes thirsty for days, where your children died starving in your arms, what was the harm? Sex, she discovered, was one of the few pleasures. And it was free. Most of the time, anyway. (232)

Grieco will also pay for Vita and her children's, Leonardo and Nunzia, fare when leaving for America. As they are sailing farther and farther away from the Italian coast, "everything Vita ever knew, fading, fading, not just the landscape, but the memory of it all. The murder, the lover, the dead babies, and Rocco cradled in her arms. All of it. Fading fast" (266).

The description of the filth-infested, squalid passengers' quarters, rich in visual, auditory, and olfactory details, relays the nightmarish conditions of the crossing, to which a mostly indifferent but oftentimes also abusive crew contributed plenty. The heavy stench of garbage, human waste, seasickness, and the lack of ventilation followed passengers everywhere (269). Toilets and washroom floors were cleaned only at the end of the voyage – to pass inspection. Vita is fiercely protective of her children, particularly of her seven-year-old daughter Nunzia, before her apparent disappearance during the crossing because her name does not appear on the passenger arrival list for 1892.

Historical and Transgenerational Trauma

If the story begins with the author's compulsive quest to trace back the causes of perpetrator's trauma, the murder committed by her great-great-grandmother before coming to America, it soon develops into a case study of historical and transgenerational trauma. The narrative focus shifts from a presumed perpetrator's trauma to a large-scale historical trauma rooted in the *Mezzogiorno*'s, Southern Italy's centuries of poverty, injustices, and violence. Stapinksi notices the "darkness" in Bernalda, probably some vestige left from the centuries long malaria and *miseria*, which she calls a "hangover that would take generations to shake" (29). In Metaponto, for instance, history-conditioned locals hardly ever went to the beach because "centuries of malaria and pirate invasions had left them landlubbers" (29). The sway of historical trauma in the life of a community is not to be underestimated. For instance, according to Marinella Rodi-Risberg, "Collective trauma and individual trauma are not wholly contradictory but unite in the notion of intergenerational trauma, trauma as communicable from one generation to another. The intergenerational transmission of trauma is […] intrinsic to human history […]" (119). "Why were Italians so consumed with murder stories and death?" Stapinski asks herself, only to proffer the answer, "maybe they had been forced to build a culture around it," and to admit that she was also obsessed with the dead, chasing the ghost of her great-great-grandmother Vita. Like all the women in the family, concludes Stapinski, Vita was tough but kind (9). The correlation between transgenerational trauma and identity formation is too important to be ignored. By following and gradually unveiling (and setting straight) her allegedly "murderess" great-great-grandmother's story, Stapinski comes to question not only her own identity (11), but also her children's. Many women in Basilicata, she discovers, suffered from *attassamento*, that is, "intense psychic trauma, a defense against daily life," and they kept no memory of a loved one's death, or showed any recognition of anyone around them, most likely a coping mechanism (187), and the effect of trauma-induced psychic numbing.

Even the abundance of food at the farewell dinner that Stapinski's Italian hosts and friends organize for her could be seen, according to the author, "as if to make up for all those meals their ancestors had never eaten" (252–253). The sway of the nonclosure and the belatedness of trauma cannot be underestimated either. Irene Visser emphasizes this fundamental characteristic of trauma as follows: "Intergenerational trauma, as memories and experiences incurred by later generations, further testifies to trauma's 'belatedness' and nonclosure. The basic and uncontested notion of trauma, then, is that it is a period of aftermath rather than a traumatic event or experience; it is a process following an experience that defies integration" (Visser 126). Traumatic memories can never be integrated unless they are turned into narrative memories. Only a chain of coherent, intelligible events – as in oral testimony or in testimonial writing – can represent trauma, its symptoms, and its disruptive effects in the life of an individual or a community. Transgenerational traumatic writing exploits familial life and traumatic experience, so that writers of transgenerational trauma, like Helene Stapinski, get to translate stories made up of snippets of history. According to Meera Atkinson, they "channel the unassimilated trauma [traumatic memories] of familial ancestors and collective history" (100). In the case of transgenerational trauma, the subject must address not only personal experiences but also traumata from preceding generations, which makes introjection (the unconscious adoption or incorporation of ideas, values, or attitudes of others into one's self) more difficult. In Atkinson's view, what can be achieved, however, is an "introjection of understanding, a process in which the traumata of forebears and its familial legacies are acknowledged and, in some way, accepted" (Atkinson 107).

In Stapinskis novel, one such snippet of history is the fated encounter between Camardo, a padrone, and Vita's husband Francesco and her brother Leonardantonio while the latter were engaged in the trivial act of stealing pears. To Stapinski, the incident acquires a mythical dimension. Her family's original sin was the same as Adam and Eve's: it started with the stolen fruit (177). The author analyzes the causes leading to crime, as in the case of Grandpa Beansie stealing a crate of beans or her Dad bringing home frozen food from work. Before greed, the author concludes there was hunger. She then uses research-based expository writing and builds an improvised history of the pear: 1) In Book 2 of his *Confessions*, St. Augustine "stole pears from a neighborhood orchard just for the hell of it" (178); 2) In Ancient China and Greece, pears were considered a blessing or a gift of the gods (179); 3) The Bob Kulicke still-life painting of a pear in the family's living room (Bob Kulicke); 4) Wallace Stevens' 1942 poem "Study of Two Pears"; 5) Mary's offering the fruit to baby Jesus in Christian paintings; 6) the Spanish expression "to be healthier than a pear"; and 7) "Sweet Pear," one of her favorite Elvis Costello songs.

As it finally turns out, the so-called family murder was not connected to the author's ancestors because Francesco Vena could not be her great-great-grandfather as he was in prison when her great-grandfather was born. She was not a Vena (226), which also meant no murderous Vena genes in her children's DNA (227), her main concern at the beginning of the novel. As the author notices her Greek facial traits in the mirror, it dawns on her that her great-great-grandfather must have been the landowner, Grieco. "I was a Grieco. I could feel it in my bones," Stapinski admits.

Postmemory and Epigenetics

Although vicarious trauma and vicarious traumatization may be the first phrases that jump to mind when trying to understand Stapinski's multigenerational familial trauma, the term that most accurately explains it is Marianne Hirsch's postmemory. "Hirsch had originally introduced the term *postmemory* for the haunted second and third generations of Holocaust survivors who grew up with the symptoms, stories, and unspoken affects to which they were exposed in the family dynamic, tied to the experience of their parents and grandparents and yet separated from them by an unbridgeable distance" (Arnold-de Simine 145). The key phrase is family dynamic, the contextual phenomenon that triggers Stapinski's investigation of her great-great-grandparents. In Hirsch's words, "Postmemory most specifically describes the relationship of children of survivors of cultural or collective trauma to the experiences of their parents, experiences that they 'remember' only as the narratives and images with which they grew up, but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right" ("Surviving Images" 6). This form of memory derives its power from the fact that "its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through representation, projection, and creation—often based on silence rather than speech, on the invisible rather than the visible" ("Surviving Images" 6).

In the beginning of her novel, Stapinski asks herself, "Who the hell was she [her great-great-grandmother Vita]? This complete stranger whose genes I carried around with me every single day in my DNA?" (7). Notably, it is not primarily anatomical genes that the author is worried about, but mostly the ones carrying propensities of behavior and character. Indeed, "looking at Ma is like looking in a magic mirror" because she can see her own physical traits in thirty years' time (15), as in a sequence of time-lapse photography. More importantly, however, she follows her mother's model of motherhood, and hopes that the children did not inherit the criminal genes in her family. Dean, her five-year-old son at the beginning of the novel, has "the same sad eyes that seemed to look back at you everywhere you turned in Southern Italy […], a sadness so deep, several generations of American prosperity hadn't erased it" (28). Stapinski's transgenerational trauma maybe be better described and understood through the work of postmemory, which, according to Hirsch, "defines the familial inheritance and transmission of cultural trauma" ("Surviving Images" 6).

We are made up not only of what we know, remarks Stapinski, "but of all that we don't know as well. Generations of unknowing" (49), so her morbid curiosity about Vita becomes an obsession (50). However, it is not primarily Vita's individual trauma that drives the novel, but mostly Southern Italy's cultural and collective trauma. Hirsch makes a point of the fact that "postmemory need not be strictly an identity position. Instead, I prefer to see it as an intersubjective transgenerational space of remembrance, linked specifically to cultural or collective trauma" ("Surviving Images" 7). She has also extended the meaning of the concept to encompass "witnessing by adoption" (a phrase borrowed from Geoffrey Hartman): "Postmemory thus would be retrospective witnessing by adoption. It is a question of adopting the traumatic experiences—and thus also the memories—of others as experiences one might oneself have had, and of inscribing them into one's own life story" ("Surviving Images" 7). "What if some dirty, fatal flaw was passed on?" Stapinski frets. "I wanted to know the horror, so I could accept it or somehow make it right" (50). She plans to take a proactive approach and not let the horror take control of her life, by getting as close to it as possible, "hunting it down and inhabiting it," "to mourn it. Right it. Forget it. Go into therapy about it" (50).

Since recall is out of the question – simply because there is nothing to remember – Stapinski will, on the one hand, research her Italian ancestors' history, and reconstruct some of its segments in her fiction. As Hirsch points out, "Postmemory's connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. To grow up with such overwhelming inherited memories […] is to be shaped, however indirectly, by traumatic events that still defy narrative reconstruction and exceed comprehension" ("The Generation of Postmemory" 205–206). Stapinski, of course, decides to buck that possibility and reconstructs the story of Vita and her children, her husband, and her lover by "imaginative investment."

As new questions follow old ones and worrying about the genes associated with violent crime start pushing Stapinski over the edge, she reads up on the topic, first Cesare Lombroso's (a nineteenth-century Italian doctor) theory and a Finnish study on two genes associated with crime (98). Is there a "warrior gene" in her family? Is this why Dean, her now fifteen-year-old son, is obsessed with military history? Grandpa Beansie, Leonardo's son (Vita's second boy who came with her to America) is apparently the biggest criminal in Stapinski's family: he stole, beat people up, and murdered a guy (98). His sister, Aunt Katie and her son Mike (Stapinski's cousin) would rig the bingo game, and Mike, who went to Harvard Law School with Antonin Scalia, became a mob *consigliere*. Burglars, bookies, killers, and con men filled the Polish, Italian, and Russian sides of her family (59). According to Cesare Lombroso's racist theories, the African and the Asian blood in Southern Italians' veins made them more likely to be murderers. Criminal behavior was inherited, and criminals were also likely to be recognized by certain typical physical traits (60).

While she never mentions it directly, Stapinski seems to found her logic on the relatively recent science of epigenetics. "The idea is that trauma can leave a chemical mark on a person's genes, which then is passed down to subsequent generations. The mark doesn't directly damage the gene; there's no mutation. Instead, it alters the mechanism by which the gene is converted into functioning proteins or expressed. The alteration isn't genetic. It's epigenetic" (Carey online). In October 2018, a study published by researchers in California found that "male children of abused [Civil War] prisoners were about 10 percent more likely to die than their peers were in any given year after middle age" (Carey online). Whether it was the still controversial nature of this new field that prevented Stapinski mentioning it, or her unfamiliarity with it is irrelevant. However, the fact remains that "a number of studies have argued that trauma can leave a chemical mark on a person's genes, which is then passed down to the following generation" (Bond and Craps 86).

Italianità and Italian-American Identity

One of the most important benefits that Stapinski has gained from her stay in Italy is perspective. How can one compare the loss of a smartphone with the loss of a child? she ponders, after leaving hers in a cab. In her words, she has experienced the "perspective of the blessed," having a charmed life all because of Vita. She stays in a modern, comfortable hotel room, and asks herself, what was a nine-hour flight compared with ten days on a ship, throwing up without a bucket? "I had perspective, and my perception of myself and my whole family and world had changed" (279–280). Just as in Plato's "The Allegory of the Cave," the facts and the reality that she thought she knew were all a substitute for the truth – like the shadows on Plato's cave wall – the reality of Matera, the reality of Vita Gallitelli and Francesco Vena (280).

The next important thing that Stapinski has benefitted from is a renewed sense of identity. As an Italian American (her Polish last name is her husband's), she discovers just how little she knew about her ancestors' country, culture, and history – or the Italian language, for that matter. There are, of course, historical reasons for this loss of identity. On Columbus Day in 1915, President Theodore Roosevelt said: "There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americans, I do not refer to naturalized Americans. […] But a naturalized American is not an American at all … […] There is no such thing as a hyphenated American who is a good American. The only man who is a good American is the man who is an American and nothing else" (quoted in Giovinazzo 14–15). According to William Giovinazzo, Italian immigrants were pressured by American institutions to abandon the traditions of their ancestors for an American way of life. Consequently, their children "succumbing to these pressures, sought to be like everyone else, to lose their ethnic *otherness*. In so doing, however, they lost their connection to the past" (Giovinazzo 15), a sad reality that Stapinski also realizes when she and her children travel to Italy.

The original Italian culture was supplanted by invented tradition, a term first coined by Eric Hobsbawm in 1983. "Many Italian-Americans who have lost touch with their *Italianità* have adopted traditions that were either created in the movies to fulfill a stereotype, or customs developed by specific Italian-American communities that have been attributed to all Italians [e.g. the use of the phrase 'For-ged-aboud it']" (Giovinazzo 18). Statistically, four-fifths of Italian immigrants came from the south, so as a result, "Italian-American culture is primarily a derivative of Southern-Italian *contadini* culture" (Giovinazzo 61). The Italian side of Stapinski's family hails in its entirety from the *Mezzogiorno*, but as she will realize, the essential attribute of being Italian "is a fervor that savors existence whether it is the boisterousness of the *Mezzogiorno* or the *bella figura* of the north. What all Italians have in common, Italians or Italian-Americans, is a passion for life itself. This is *Italianità*, the essence of being Italian" (Giovinazzo 269).

"Invented tradition," then, is just another form of cultural appropriation. Contemporary clichés, memes, and social prejudices – including untruthful narratives and tendentious theories – jeopardize the authenticity, fairness, and open-mindedness of multicultural literary analyses. To a certain extent, Stapinski's great-great-grandmother's alleged and real sins are Proust's madeleine; they unleash a stream of thoughts and emotions that will lead to a narrative of discovery, recognition, and redemption. Memoirist non-fiction, fictional reconstruction, and scholarly investigation combine to produce a work that bears witness to historical and transgenerational trauma, and at the same time reconstitutes identities – an Italian American narrator's and those of her Italian ancestors.

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Building an Indigenous Literary Field: Amazigh Activism and the Construction of Contemporary Amazigh Literature

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Abstract: Imazighen are the Indigenous people of Tamazgha or the broader North Africa. Tamazight, their language, and the culture and identity it has carried were subjected to decades of enforced marginalization and active de-Amazighization policies after the countries that have sizable Amazigh-speaking populations became independent between 1956 and 1962. As a result of their marginalization, educated Amazigh youth founded the Amazigh Cultural Movement, which has since 1966 made significant strides toward the institutional and legal recognition of Imazighen's linguistic and cultural rights. In this article, I argue that the construction of the contemporary Amazigh literary field is the result of Amazigh activists' counter-consciousness that departed from the post-independence Arab-nationalist consciousness. Working against the backdrop of active implementation of Arabization policies, Amazigh activists mobilized all the resources available to them to place their Indigenous language and culture at the heart of a literary field that has not only emerged from oblivion but also forms a pillar of Tamazghan cultural production.

Keywords: Amazigh, Indigenous, Indigeneity, literature, translation, activism

There is a structural and unbridgeable inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous languages throughout the world. José Martinez Cobo has already gestured to the importance of language as a criterion for determining the slippery contours of indigeneity in his landmark 1982 report for the UN (Cobo 32–36). The power of non-Indigenous languages, which have a long history of colonialism and hegemony, is also manifested in their predominant status on the global literary scene. This inequality has allowed non-Indigenous languages to act as agenda-setters for literature, aesthetics, and thought, relegating Indigenous languages to oblivion in most cases. Throughout the world, Indigenous tongues have been prevented from reaching their literary potential either because colonial languages took their places as mediums of cultural production, confining them to the realm of daily communication, or because leaders of postcolonial states, again as a direct result of colonization, adopted non-Indigenous languages as vehicular idioms to unify their multilingual nations. The Imazighen, the Indigenous people of Tamazgha (the Amazigh homeland in the broader North Africa) have been subjected to the disempowering process of linguistic unification after their countries' independences between 1956 and 1962.[1] Although Imazighen have spoken Tamazight (the Amazigh language) for millennia, survived multiple colonizations, defended their autonomy, and were able to preserve their language and culture despite multiple colonialisms and disenfranchisements (Ould-Braham and Lameen Souag 5–35; El Guabli "The Case" 7–26), nationalist leaders who inherited power after the removal of France's direct colonialism re-envisioned their post-colonial societies as Arab and Muslim only.[2] This, of course, erased Amazighness as a fundamental aspect of these societies' Indigenous identity.[3]

French colonialism played an instrumental role in this exclusionary re-envisioning of Tamazghan societies as constituencies of Arab-Muslim states. Since its colonization of Algeria in 1830, France implemented a

1 Morocco and Tunisia recovered their independence in 1956, Mauritania became independent in 1960, and Algeria achieved its independence in 1962. Libya was the first country to receive its independence, in 1951. For a larger conception of Tamazgha and its significance, see Brahim El Guabli, "The Idea of Tamazgha: Current Articulations and Scholarly Potential" and Paul Silverstein, "The Productive Plurality of Tamazgha: Boundaries, Intersections, Frictions."

2 Regarding the construction and counter-constructions of France's "Berber policy," see Muḥammad al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī. *Faransā wa siyyāsatuhā al-barbariyya fī al-maghrib al-aqṣā* and Mohamed Mounib. *al-Ẓahīr al-barbarī akbar ukdhūba siyyāsiyya fī al-maghrib al-mu'āṣir*.

3 For a discussion of the Amazigh and Jewish indigeneity in Morocco, see the "Introduction" to Brahim El Guabli's book *Moroccan Other-Archives: History and Citizenship after State Violence*.

"divide and rule" policy that constructed the Imazighen (Ghallāb 57), particularly the Kabyles, as civilizable people while depicting Arabs – actually meaning Muslims, since Kabyles are also Muslim – (Dewitte 3) –, as Bedouin destroyers of civilization. Ibn Badis's famous sentence "Islam is my religion, Arabic is my language, and Algeria is my homeland" encapsulates the decolonial consciousness that emerged from this colonial policy (Qtd in Chebel 172). As a result of this identity shift in response to colonialism, the nationalist leaders, who received independence from France, consecrated Islam and pan-Arabism as fundamental pillars of the identities of their independent societies (Dirèche 181–82). Besides the desire to eradicate French as a colonial legacy,[4] Arabization policies implemented after independence marginalized and actively targeted Tamazight in both Morocco and Algeria. This situation triggered an Indigenous Amazigh counter-consciousness – constructed against both colonialization and Arab nationalism – that led to the establishment of the Amazigh Cultural Movement (ACM) in Paris (1966) and Rabat (1967).[5] The ACM emerged as a countercultural force for the defense of Amazigh linguistic and cultural rights throughout Tamazgha and its diaspora . In a span of sixty years, this counter-consciousness has left its impact on many aspects of the institutional life of Tamazghan countries, leading in the last decade to constitutional recognition of Tamazight in Morocco and Algeria, the teaching of the language in public schools, the establishment of Amazigh Studies at universities, and the wide use of Tifinagh script in public signage and public administration (El Guabli "Re-Invention" 143–68; El Younssi 129–40).

Most important, however, was the shift from "Berber" to "Amazigh" literature—two names that indicate two entirely different attitudes vis-à-vis the Imazighen and their literary output (Banhakeia 12–14). Amazigh literature has not been outside the scope of this Indigenous

4 Gilbert Grandguillaume has revisited these questions in his article, "L'arabisation au Maghreb."

5 Readers interested in these histories can consult Mohand Aarav Bessaoud's memoir *De Petites gens pour une grande cause ou l'histoire de l'Académie Berbère* as well as Brahim Akhiate's autobiography *al-Nahḍa al-amāzīghīyya kamā ʿishtu mīlādahā wa-taṭawurahā* . Bessaoud and Akhiate are the primary founders of these organizations and their insights about their history are foundational for any understanding of the emergence and evolution of the Amazigh Cultural Movement.

6 This all-encompassing Amazigh consciousness also extended to music and artistic expression. See Brahim El Guabli, "Musicalizing Indigeneity: *Tazenzart* as a Locus for Amazigh Indigenous Consciousness."

counter-consciousness,[6] which yielded a new and ever-expanding Indigenous Amazigh literary field. I argue that the construction of this literary field is the result of Amazigh activists' coordinated endeavor to foil the aims of *siyyāsat al-taʿrīb* (Arabization policy), which had among its goals the total obliteration of Tamazight in Algeria and Morocco. Unlike literatures that emerge from the organic evolution of any given language, what I define as the "Indigenous Amazigh literary field" did not follow from Tamazight's ordinary trajectory. Rather, it is a contrived field that was born out of Amazigh activists' willful struggle to construct a modern, written Amazigh literature that would become a pillar of the revitalization of their threatened language and culture.

This article is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the emergence of the Indigenous Amazigh counter-consciousness within the post-independence context in which Tamazight was excluded in both Morocco and Algeria. I use Amazigh counter-consciousness to describe the emergence of Amazigh Indigenous activism and to underline the fact that it carried a different identity consciousness in contradistinction to both colonialist and Arab nationalist projects. I devote the second part of the article to an analysis of ACM members' efforts to define this Indigenous literary field from scratch. Since the aim of this essay is to reveal how an entire literary domain has been painstakingly constructed under active statal repression in Morocco and Algeria, I have refrained from engaging in close readings of specific works in order to fully focus on the examination of the main characteristics of this revivalist project.

Amazigh activist and intellectual al-Ḥusayn al-Mujāhid defined Amazigh literature in the early 1990s in these terms:

> Amazigh literature, in its broadest conception, encompasses a linguistic and cultural environment that is embodied in the spaces in which Amazigh language, which carries all of its genres, is spoken. This means the countries of the Maghārib [Maghrebs],[7] southern Niger and Mali, and southern Egypt, and the Canary Islands in differential measures from one place to another, although the most important homes for its revitalization and dynamism currently are Morocco and Algeria. Amazigh literature exists in these two countries on the same cultural map side by side with other literatures that

[7] Before the term Tamazgha was employed to refer to the Amazigh homeland in North and sub-Saharan Africa, some Amazigh activists started using *Maghārib*, the plural of Maghreb, to designate the region. Maghārib indicates a spatial plurality devoid of the allusion to Arabness usually evoked by the phrase "Arab Maghreb."

speak Arabic or Darija as national languages and French as a foreign language. (al-Mujāhid 9) [8]

This definition foregrounds Amazigh language as the primary criterion typifying this literary field, which, broadly speaking, is also the literature of Tamazgha. This brief definition of Amazigh literature gestures to the multilingual space in which it emerges, evolves, and negotiates its existence in relation to Arabic and French. Thus, Tamazight and Darija, the two Indigenous languages of northwestern Tamazgha, find themselves in a literary realm dominated by Arabic and French (El Guabli "The Case" 8). Even though multilingualism can foster a healthy environment for contiguous languages, it has proven to be quite an ordeal for Tamazight, which faces extinction due to linguicidal policies seeking to replace it with Arabic.

The Lean Years and the Emergence of Literary Amazighitude

Arab Nationalist Policies and the Birth of the Amazigh Civil Society

The Amazigh homeland of Tamazgha, which extends from the Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean to Siwa in Egypt, encompasses a large portion of sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel.[9] Although the term came into use in the 1990s, Tamazgha, which is a derivative of the word Amazigh, is grounded in the shared linguistic history of its people. Even Allal al-Fassi, a staunch Arabist and one of the founders of Moroccan nationalism in the 1930s, defined the contours of Tamazgha through the common tongue spoken by its people (al-Fassi n.p.). Similarly, and many centuries before al-Fassi, al-Ḥasan al-Wazzān (Leo Africanus) had referred to the inhabitants of the area as speakers of "awāl amazīgh" (Amazigh language), adding that Arabs named the speakers of this "excellent Indigenous African language" Berbers (al-Wazzān al-Fāsī 39). In terms of numbers, Louis Massignon wrote that 60 % of Moroccans spoke Tamazight in

[8] The reader should note that the geographical space that al-Mujāhid depicts here overlaps with Tamazgha.

[9] Daniela Merola has coined the concept of an "Amazigh literary space" to refer to the variety of multilingual Amazigh literatures that encompass the entirety of Tamazgha. See Daniela Merola, "Intersections: Amazigh (Berber) Literary Space."

1923 (Massignon 107). Robert Montagne affirmed that these Amazigh populations did not even recognize the political authority of the Sultan of Morocco (Montagne 338). Around the same time, Augustin Bernard and Paul Moussard estimated that the Imazighen represented 29 % of Algeria's population (Bernard and. Moussard 268, 278).

French colonization of Tamazgha set in motion the process that decreased the number of these speakers. Almost a hundred years later, the UNESCO was compelled to declare Tamazight a threatened language (Kheli 50). When France colonized Tamazgha, it found fully-functioning Amazigh societies that had their own language and culture in a place where Arabic, which was mainly confined to mosques and religious instruction, was only one of several languages spoken in the region. However, when France engaged in its misguided "Berber policy," French colonial scholars and administrators built an entire myth on the biased presumption that Algerian Imazighen could be incorporated into French civilization. In Morocco, civilizing the Imazighen took the form of a parallel educational and legal system that singled them out in their own society. Approved by the Sultan, the edict, intentionally misnamed "al-ẓahīr al-barbarī" (Berber Dahir) by the nationalists, angered the Arab-Islamist establishment whose members considered it an assault on the Islam (Ghallāb 58–64). As Montagne has argued, France subdued Amazigh areas to the Moroccan state urban elites whose "art, language, law, [and] family and governmental traditions were inspired by the traditions of the Orient" (Monagne 340). In fact, France's Arabization policy entrenched an Orientalizing model – meaning using archetypes through which they dealt with or learned from their presence in Egypt and the Greater Syria in the nineteenth century – among these elites who, in turn, sealed the pact of unity between Arabness and Islam.[10]

Nationalist leaders in the post-independence period in Morocco and Algeria weaponized these self-motivated colonial policies to disenfranchise Imazighen. Although Amazigh-speaking areas were the last bastions of resistance against French colonization in Morocco and Algeria (Huré

10 Readers interested in the history of French erudition and Arabization in North Africa should turn to Alain Messaoudi's book *Les Arabisants et la France coloniale 1780–1930: Savants, conseillers, médiateurs* see also Abdelfattāḥ Ayt Idrā's study "Ẓahīr 16 māy 1930 wa-miylād al-ḥaraka al-waṭaniyya." Ayt Idrā places the emergence of the Amazigh at the confluence of Salafism and Arab nationalism in the 1930s; see also Brahim El Guabli, "Racialization in Exile: Allal al-Fassi's Racial Positionalities in Gabon."

viii), this history did not matter for the post-colonial leaders who decided to dismantle all the academic and educational infrastructure that French colonization had put in place to promote Tamazight in Algeria and Morocco. Chaker Salem has recorded the outcome of this witch hunt after independence in Morocco and Algeria (Chaker "L'Algérie" 109–18). From printing presses to academic units to radio stations, Amazigh institutions and cultural outlets that were built in Algeria during the colonial period were "taboo" and outlawed (Chaker111–12). Like Algeria, Morocco engaged in a de-Amazighization policy, which comprised of the cancellation of the teaching of Tamazight and the reorganization of the *Institut des Hautes Etudes Marocaines*, which became Mohamed V University (Vermerren n.p.).

Even the Amazigh toponymy was not spared this unrelenting rush towards total Arabization.[11] Names of villages, rivers, and mountains were Arabized against the facts of history and sociology. Hisham Hassoun, an Amazigh Studies scholar, has declared that

> the degree of Arabization of toponymies intensified during the colonial period and during the era of the modern state in 1956 (the independence state) as Amazigh names became extinct and foreign words became entrenched in the imagination and the language of the space. (Hassoun n.p.)

In its larger ramifications, this attitude vis-à-vis Amazigh toponymy allows us to surmise that the Imazighen have only shifted from being subjugated to a foreign colonization by France to a situation of "internal colonization," which, according to Ramón A. Gutiérrez, "offered minorities an explanation for their territorial concentration, spatial segregation, external administration, the disparity between their legal citizenship and de facto second-class standing" (Gutiérrez 282).

The Amazigh question is, therefore, the outcome of the predominance of pan-Arab nationalism in northern Tamazgha after independence. Many nationalist leaders, like Habib Bourguiba, Mohamed ben Abdelkarim El Khattabi, Allal al-Fassi, and ʿAbd al-Karīm Ghallāb, among other leaders, were Egyptophiles. These leaders were impressed with Egyptian modernity to the extent that they identified with the Arab world at the expense of their local languages. Their embrace of Arab nationalism,

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11 For questions surrounding the translation and transliteration of Amazigh toponymes into Arabic and French, see Nadia Kaaouas, "De l'ambivalence linguistique à propos de la traduction de la toponymie amazighe du Maroc."

albeit to varying degrees, and the choice of a Jacobin model for post-independence states have since then meant that their Arab-Islamic affinity has been endowed with both an apparatus and an infrastructure allowing it to reach every nook and cranny of the recently independent countries (Ouazzi 223). The implications of Ibn Badis's aforementioned mantra were not limited to Algeria alone (qtd in Chebel172), since the ideology underlying it applies to the rest of the countries in northwestern Tamazgha, albeit to varying degrees. Historian Ali Sadqi Azaykou gained an early awareness of this situation and refuted the conflation of Arabic and Islam when he argued that Tamazight, and not French, was the target of Arabization (Azaykou "Fī sabīl" 39–41).

The positions of conservative nationalists overlapped with those of progressive politicians whose ambiguous positions have been critiqued by Amazigh scholars (El Haloui n.p.). Despite their disagreements on the nature of the state, particularly the monarchy's executive power, both Moroccan conservatives and progressives shared a desire to eradicate Tamazight by supporting aggressive Arabization in administrative and educational policies. Muḥammad ʿAbid al-Jābirī, a philosopher and the theorist of *al-Ittiḥād al-ishtirākī li-al-quwwāt al-shaʿbiyya* (The Socialist Union for the Popular Forces) even went as far as to propose an outright extermination of Darija and Tamazight. Al-Jābīrī wrote that:

> complete Arabization should not just target the liquidation of French language as a language of a civilization, culture, communication, and transactions. It should also aim—and this is extremely important—to endeavor to kill local dialects both Berber and 'Arabic' Darija. This will not be possible without intensifying education and generalizing it to the furthest point in the mountainous and rural regions and forbidding the use of any other language or dialect in school, the radio, and television except for the official Arabic language.(al-Jābirī 146)

Al-Jābirī merely transposed the colonial paradigm according to which backward Indigenous dialects needed to be replaced with modern languages. This idea continues to exist among some Francophone scholars who still associate backwardness with Arabic and modernity with French (Gafaiti 20). However, the vision presented by al-Jābirī is also post-colonialist, which begs the question of whether the Imazighen ever entered any form of post-coloniality after the end of French colonialism (El Guabli "When Tamazight" forthcoming). Arabization and the utter exclusion of Imazighen's Indigenous language in the conduct of any official business was the clearest sign that they, indeed, were subjected to a version of "internal colonialism" extending to land, resources, infrastructure, and even first names (El Guabli "Musicalizing" 35–36).

The Imazighen did not ignore that these attempts threatened their existence. Amazigh youth in both Algeria and Morocco resorted to political and cultural activism to curb the course of Arabization and raise awareness about their condition of internal colonialism. A group of Algerian intellectuals and professionals, including Taos Amrouche, Mohamed Arkoun, and Mohand Aarav Bessaoud, and others, founded the *Académie Berbère* in Paris in 1966 (Bessaoud 23). Renamed *Agraw Imazighen* in 1969, the *Académie* was the first Amazigh non-governmental organization to fully advocate Amazigh cultural and linguistic rights independently of their country of origin. Headquartered in Paris, the *Académie* was in a strategic location that allowed its activists to interact with Imazighen from all parts of Tamazgha. The *Académie* relied on committed students and immigrant workers to spread their regained Amazigh counter-consciousness. As Mohand Aarav Bessaoud writes in his memoirs, *Des Petites gens pour une grande cause*, its location in Paris allowed the *Académie* to extend its network of influence beyond Algeria to include Libya and Morocco and even the Tuaregs (Bessaoud 89). Its activities encompassed artistic, literary, political, and literacy activism among Amazigh populations and their allies in France. Upon the suggestion of Mahjoubi Aherdan, an important political figure, the *Académie* resuscitated the Tifinagh alphabet from oblivion and restored Tamazight's ancestral writing system (Bessaoud 91). The *Académie* paved the way for a new Amazigh counter-consciousness and set the tone for the trajectory that led to the achievements that started in 1995 with the establishment of the *Haut Commissariat* à *l'Amazighité* in Algeria followed by the establishment of the *Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe* (IRCAM) in Morocco 2001. These achievements culminated with the constitutional recognition of Tamazight in Morocco (2011) and Algeria (2016), which allowed Amazigh intellectuals to push the boundaries of their activism beyond traditional cultural and linguistic demands (Maddie-Weitzman 4).

Inspired by the work of the *Académie*, a group of Moroccan educators founded the *al-jamʿiyya al-maghrbiyya li-al-baḥt wa-al-tabādul al-thaqāfī* (The Moroccan Association for Research and Cultural Exchange, AMREC).[12] Although the word Amazigh does not appear anywhere in

[12] AMREC was particularly systematic in publishing the proceedings of its conferences and events. Its rich library holds works that are now foundational to the study of Amazigh cultural activism and its contribution to the construction of this literary field.

its name, this association was established, in part, in order to redress the situation of Tamazight in Moroccan education, administration, and radio and television. Ibrahim Akhiate, AMREC's founding president, has discussed the multipronged "soft power" his association mobilized by submitting petitions and demands to the authorities to change their attitudes vis-à-vis Tamazight (Akhiyyat 32–33). Unlike the *Académie*, which operated in exile, the AMREC was located in Rabat. This Amazigh soft power worked through a network of backchannels and personal connections that helped resolve administrative issues, bridge the gaps in polarized political positions, and furnish fundraising opportunities that would not have been possible if AMREC members displayed any confrontational attitudes in public. Although much of AMREC's work prior to the 1990s was deeply cultural, the 1990s, which ushered in the era of human rights after the demise of the Soviet Union, thrust the door wide open for the rise of lawyerly Amazigh activism whose proponents pushed the boundaries of Amazigh activism beyond AMREC's initial demands. As I will discuss in the next section, the establishment of *al-jamʿiyya al-jadīda li-al-thaqāfa wa-al-funūn* (The New Association for Culture and Art also known as Tamaynut, 1978) and the *Jamʿiyyat al-jāmiʿa al-ṣayfiyya li-adādir* (The Association of the Amazigh Summer School in Agadir, 1979) signaled the advent of a new era of diverse opportunities for the emerging Indigenous Amazigh literary field.

The Era of Feverish Recording: Revitalizing Tamazight by Preserving its Heritage

The construction of the contemporary Indigenous Amazigh literary field went through two stages, both of which were underpinned by evolutions in Amazigh consciousness in both the colonial and the post-independence periods. This consciousness translated into endeavors by different generations of Imazighen to assert their linguistic and cultural rights against colonial domination and post-colonial erasure.

Educated Amazigh youth in Algeria gained consciousness of the need to record their literary heritage before any of their counterparts in Tamazgha. Inspired by the work of their French colleagues, these youth resorted to compiling collections of oral heritage as a pathway toward the establishment of an Amazigh written literature. Salem Chaker has described the members of this early generation as teachers who used their workbooks to record tales, legends, poems, proverbs, and all sorts of oral material from their culture.[13] This utilitarian approach had aimed to fix oral literary genres in written form in order to preserve them. Although the efforts of these compilers did not produce an original literary corpus, their work paid off handsomely, as their compilations constitute cornerstones of the Amazigh Indigenous library (El Guabli "The Amazigh Indigenous"). Saïd Boulifa, a language teacher who worked with René Basset, published *Recueil de poésies kabyles* in 1904. Since this anthology was published several decades after the publication of Adolphe Hanoteau's collection of Kabyle poems, Boulifa carefully justified his decision to publish yet another Amazigh poetry collection, arguing his research demonstrated that the poems collected by Hanoteau "have but a relative value," being merely the work of "secondary poets" (Mansouri n.p.). Boulifa's compilations extended to Morocco, where he culled the oral stories published as *Textes berbères en dialecte de l'Atlas marocain*. Published in 1907, this book contains a wealth of socio-historical information about Amazigh societies in pre-Protectorate Morocco. Mouloud Feraoun, the author of *Le Fils du pauvre*, aggregated the poetry of the famous vagabond poet Si Mohand in a book entitled *Les Poèmes de Si Mohand*. A few decades later, anthropologist Mouloud Mammeri edited a fuller and more comprehensive version of his poems under the title *Les Isfera: Poèmes de Si Mohand-ou-Mhand*. These compilers contributed to the establishment of a Latinized transcription of Tamazight.

In Morocco, where French education did not have any impact until 1912, al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī, the famous *ʿālim* and nationalist leader, recorded an impressive amount of poetry composed in the Amazigh Souss area in Arabic. In terms of Amazigh literature, his collections contain translations from Tamazight into Arabic as well as translations of religious texts from Arabic into Tamazight ("Muḥammad al-mukhtār al-Sūsī" n.p.). Beyond al-Sūsī's traditional style, the first Amazigh poetry collection compiled in Morocco was only published in 1968 by Ahmed Amzal under the title *Amanār: Diwān shiʿr shlḥī* [Pleiades: A Poetic Collection in Tashlḥīt]. ʿUmar Amarīr followed suit with the publication of *al-Shiʿr al-amāzīghī al-mansūb ilā sīdī ḥammu ṭālb* [Amazigh Poetry

[13] Salem Chaker, "Documents sur les précurseurs. Deux instituteurs kabyles: A. S. Boulifa et M. S. Lechani."

Attributed to Sidi Hammou], which he initially assembled for his master's degree thesis[14]

My focus on Amazigh compilers should not be interpreted as meaning that non-Amazigh scholars did not participate in this effort. In fact they did, but their interest in the corpus was mostly ethnographic and unfolded within a dynamic of domination (Banhakeia 13). However, literary critic Mohamed Usus has made a distinction between compilations made by colonial scholars and those completed by their Amazigh colleagues, distinguishing between what he called "graphic compilation" and "stylistic compilation" (Usus 101–02). While foreign scholars during the colonial period engaged in "graphic compilation," which used literature for ethnographic purposes, "stylistic compilation" reflects first and foremost the Imazighen's new awareness that literature is foundational for the sustainability of their culture. Stylistic compilation therefore "translates the desire to assert oneself, preserve memory, and protect the heritage" (Usus 102). Usus subsumes under graphic compilation the work of Saïd Boulifa, Brahim Zellal, and Belaid Aït Ali, all Kabyles who endeavored to give a written form to their Amazigh heritage. Usus's distinction between these two types of collection enables a fresh reading of the aesthetic and stylistic innovation injected into Tamazight by the ACM members. Instead of mere recovery and transcription of any given collected text, stylistic compilation involves a level of writerly and agentive intervention by the compiler that facilitates the transmutation of the text from the realm of orality to the sphere of written literature (Usus 102). In Usus's own words, the stylistic compiler "dresses the tales in a new artistic clothing, and gives them a new esthetic dimension by enriching the phrases and fertilizing the style and the structure" (Usus 102). In the same vein, Ahmed Assid insists that the stabilization of oral texts through writing does not automatically make them literary texts. For Assid, "writing is the production of a discourse that has theoretical foundations that one returns to according to conscious intentionality and preplanning" (Assid "Dirāsāt" 50). According to Assid's statement, the transition from orality to writing without the intentional mining of language does not produce aesthetics. This echoes Usus's complication

[14] Despite the belatedness of the emergence of a modern Moroccan school of compilation of Amazigh literature, AMREC activists developed their own transcription method called the "*Arrātn* method," which, unlike their Algerian counterparts, adapted the Arabic alphabet to accommodate the sounds of Tamazight.

of the compilers' roles as having the task to generate newer written texts from their oral originals. In this sense, the compiler of Amazigh literary heritage is called upon to assume the tasks of both recorder and translator. It is all the more important to underline that Usus links this function to the emergence of an "Amazigh consciousness" (Usus 102; Zaheur 43).

This compilatory effort and the consciousness driving it have left their indelible mark on Amazigh literature. The nature of Amazigh consciousness itself evolved over time, even as endeavors to collect stories, proverbs, and tales were underway. Because post-independence states and scholarship acted as though the Imazighen did not exist, a new Indigenous Amazigh consciousness emerged to become a counter-consciousness that was acutely informed by a generalized feeling of exclusion and humiliation. This post-colonial counter-consciousness showed itself to be militant, struggle-oriented, and critical of systems that continued to marginalize the Imazighen and their identity.[15] The accumulated anger and frustration resulting from this reality would erupt violently during the "Berber Spring," which broke out in Algeria in 1980 when the Tizi Ouzou authorities cancelled Mouloud Mammeri's lecture on ancient Amazigh poetry (Dirèche 183–84). *Tafsut Imazighen*, as it was called, infused a new life in Amazigh political activism and provided the opportunity for the emergence of Amazighitude, a worldview in which literature became a crucial locus for the revitalization of Amazigh language and culture.

"To Be or to No Longer Be": Carving Out Space for Indigenous Amazigh Writing

In a matter of a few years, Amazigh literature went from existing in potential and surviving in compilation efforts to being produced abundantly by contemporary Amazigh authors. The ACM made the production of literature a pillar of its effort to revitalize Amazigh language and culture, and its long-term enterprise has paid off in the form of a steadily growing literary field. Accordingly, the production of literature was not just an aesthetic choice but rather an important step toward

15 Nonetheless, the colonial period also had its disadvantages. As Aomar Boum has shown in his discussion of the public fight between Basset and Cid Kaoui, the colonial mindset expected Amazigh scholars to be infeudated to their French counterparts. See Aomar Boum, "Linguistic Cartographies: Navigating Amazigh Landscapes through Colonial 'Berber Dictionaries.' "

giving a concrete existence to Tamazight as an Indigenous language that is capable of conveying both aesthetics and critical thought. Although Amazighologist Paulette Galand-Pernet has stressed that the Imazighen created a "champ littéraire" that combined Islamic notions of education and aesthetic sophistication (Galand-Pernet 41–42), the proponents of Indigenous Amazigh literature conceptualized it as a site of struggle for recognition as well as a locus for the expression of Imazighen's worldviews and lifeworlds. Literary critic Lahcen Zaheur has best captured this dynamic when claiming that "creative writing in Tamazight was a political and cultural challenge […] as it was a literary challenge" (Zaheur 204). The production of literature is thus consubstantial with the revitalization project that Amazigh activists have advocated since the 1960s.

It is utterly stunning that the ancient Imazighen never produced a consequential body of written literature in their own language despite the fact that they had an alphabet of their own (Basset 21; Haddadou 7–8; Banhakeia 12). Imazighen resorted to the languages of their powerful conquerors instead of using their mother tongue to write literature (Haddadou 17–22). The same dynamic governs the choices of authors from the Global South who choose to write in languages that have more currency and prestige than their own mother tongues. Hence, Imazighen wrote in Latin, Arabic, and most recently French and Spanish, bringing their aesthetic skills to these languages (El Guabli "The Case" 9–11). Zaheur, however, draws attention to the fact that colonizers were also to blame for the obstruction of the emergence of a sophisticated Amazigh writing system (Zaheur 37), which some colonial scholars used to categorize Amazigh literature as an oral tradition (Basset 21).

Imazighen's ancestors' historical failure to produce a written literature became a cautionary tale for the younger generation who endeavored to shift Tamazight from its precarity to a state of Amazighitude. Amazighitude is the process whereby the Amazigh individual gains consciousness of their subaltern situation as an Indigenous person, which allows them to act proactively to redress the situation of Imazighen's cultural and linguistic dispossession (El Guabli "My Amazighitude"). Infused with Amazighitude, starting from the 1980s, Amazigh literature has been conceptualized as a crucial pillar of a restorative effort in which aesthetics have a primary role to play in the conscientization of Amazigh youth about the threat of linguistic and cultural disenfranchisement. The 1980s marked the beginning of literary Amazighitude thanks to the number of original writings that disrupted the usual process of documentation of traditional genres. The Amazighitude-oriented literature speaks from its time and addresses the presentist concerns of its producers. Rachid Alliche published his novel *Asfel* [The Offering] in 1981. Two years later, in 1983, *Askuti* [The Boy Scout] was published by Saïd Sadi. Amer Mezdad, one of Algeria's best-known novelists in Tamazight, published *iḍ d wass* [Twenty-Four Hours/A Day and a Night] in 1990 after he had already published a poetry collection entitled *Tafunast igujilen* [The Orphans' Cow] in 1976 (Mansouri n.p.). Holland-based Mohamed Chacha became the first Moroccan novelist in Tamazight after the publication of the novel *Rez Tabu ad teffegh tfuct* [Break the Taboo so that the Sun Comes Out] in 1997.

The construction of this Indigenous Amazigh literary field required a high degree of experimentation. Zaheur has written that literary modernity for educated Imazighen meant "innovation and experimentation" in and with new genres that the Imazighen had not yet explored in their mother tongue (Zaheur 121). Counterintuitively, the need to preserve Amazigh language and culture from the danger of complete Arabization did not mean a return to tradition and, instead, required embracing literary modernity (El Guabli "Musicalizing" 27). As I have already explained, the documentary period during which Amazigh scholars and activists attempted to collect all manners of literary genres in Tamazight was not a "passeist" move but rather a calculated attempt to ensure the future of the language. Writing the novel in this context constitutes the symbol of literary modernity, which in Mohamed Usus's analysis was born "to carry the discourse that countered the Arab-Islamist ideology," constituting "an alternative narrative to the master-narrative of the [Arab] nationalist ideology" (Usus "Fī riḥāb" 19). Thus, the need to restore an Indigenous language to its past glory – real or imagined – motivated the establishment of a full-fledged literary field in Tamazight.

The ACM activists' work to develop a literary field yielded crucial results that encompassed both creative writing and literary criticism. Since the publication of Mohammed Moustaoui's *Iskrāf* [Shackles] in 1976 and Ali Sadqi Azaykou's *Tīmītār* [Signs] in 1988, Moroccan Amazigh activists' writings have covered all genres, as exemplified by Hassan Id Belkassam's short story collection *Imarāyn* [Lovers] and Safi Moumen Ali's play entitled *Ussān smmiḍnīn* [Cold Days]. The publication of literary works authored by activists went hand in hand with the organization of colloquia that brought together Amazigh intellectuals to chart a path for the future of Amazigh thought and literature. The annual meetings of the Association of the Agadir Summer School, which was founded in 1979 and held two landmark meetings in the 1980s,[16] witnessed very productive debates that sparked the advent of Amazigh literary criticism alongside the production of literature and some reflection on the translation of "world literature" into Tamazight.[17] The proceedings of these conferences reveal that the 1980s saw the rise of an immense interest in lexicography and a coinage of new terminology. Examined holistically, the effort to build an Indigenous Amazigh literary field was multipronged and multidimensional, including the creation of spaces and opportunities for literary works to circulate and trickle into Amazigh readerships' consciousness in the public sphere.

The task accomplished by the ACM in disseminating Amazighitude and constructing an Indigenous Amazigh literary field has had a concrete impact, which materialized in the transformation of Amazigh literature. This literature went from having an annual output that did not exceed a handful books a year in the 2000s to the publication of tens of books annually. Hence, Amazigh literature shifted from its status of a "littérature minorée" (diminished literature) (Banhakeia 12) to one that has encapsulated Imazighen's revivalist project. The publication landscape has witnessed its own transformation with the emergence of civil society associations that are now publishing the bulk of the Amazigh literature in conjunction with commercial publishers. Morocco has become a hub for the publication of Amazigh literature, particularly thanks to the work of civil society organizations that have proven their proactive and innovative skills. *Tirra* Association for Writers in Tamazight has published a significant corpus of Amazigh works since its establishment in 2009. Most recently, *Ad Nuru* (Let's Write), an association based in the city of Marrakesh, has been publishing literary works in all varieties of Tamazight. The dozens of works these publishers release annually have created ample space for Tamazight in the public sphere, instantiating a novel relationship between the Imazighen and their culture.

16 See the proceedings of the first meeting in Jamʿiyyat al-Jamiʿa al-Ṣayfiyya bi-Agadir. *Aʿmāl al-dawra al-ūlā: al-Taqāfa al-shaʿbiyya al-waḥda fī al-tanawwuʿ min 18 ilā 31 ghusht 1980*.

17 The contributions to the fourth session of the Agadir Summer School contain very important contributions in this regard. See Jamʿiyyat al-jāmiʿa al-ṣayfiyya bi-agadīr. *al-Thaqāfa al-amāzīghiyya bayna al-taqlīd wa-al-ḥadātha: Tawsnā tāmāzīght gr tamyūrt taynnāyt.*

The production of literature in Tamazight is essential for Amazighitude. Faced with the challenge of establishing a literary vehicle for Amazighitude in the Indigenous language, Amazigh activists prioritized literature written in their mother tongue over other literatures written by Imazighen in different languages. Literary scholar Mohand Haddadou has proposed a distinction between Amazigh literature and literature written by Imazighen (Haddadou 7). The difference between the two promises a strengthening of the definition of Amazigh literature. It is a well-known fact that there is no shortage of Amazigh writers in other languages, but their literary output has not necessarily benefited Tamazight. All non-diasporic Imazighen who write in Arabic, French or Spanish infuse these languages with their Amazigh creativity but, in the final analysis, their writing does not expand Tamazight. Their themes can be Amazigh, and their characters and stylistic choices can be embedded in Amazigh poetics and worldviews. However, the direct enrichment that results from mining language and creating new aesthetic and fictional realities only benefit the receiving language. This is probably what Ahmed Assid means when he argues that writing in Tamazight is an "innovation in language and cultural values" and that this writing "revolutionizes language because it transforms it from a discourse for communication […] to a discourse for theorization" (Assid "Dirāsāt" 50). Refining the definition of Amazigh literature as applying strictly to works written in Tamazight does not dismiss the expression of literary Amazighitude in other languages. One can mention Belgian-Moroccan novelist Rachida Lamrabet and Dutch-Moroccan novelist Abdelkader Benali, who write in Dutch but are deeply committed to their Amazigh identities.

The ACM's striving to produce a written literature in Tamazight is a revitalizing project. It aims to give the Imazighen's Indigenous language its rightful place as an idiom that is capable of conveying complex ideas, arguments, and aesthetics. Therefore, the construction of an Indigenous Amazigh literary field is not a reactionary move against oral literature or any other literature written by Imazighen in other languages. Although all these literatures have their place in the larger Amazigh literary field, that which is written in Tamazight has acquired more significance as a carrier of the Indigenous Amazigh counter-consciousness. For instance, the extemporaneous poetic jousts of *tanḍḍāmt* are foundational to Amazigh celebrations.[18] When two or more poets take center stage in a

[18] Readers interested in this topic can consult Ahmed Assid. *Imārīrn: Mashāhīr shuuʿarāʾ ahwāsh fi al-qarn al-ʿishrīn*.

face-to-face competition that requires the composition of poems in their jousts, they do not only provide entertainment (*lhdert*) to their audiences but they also initiate them to the art of poetic composition under duress. Similarly, even as the move toward an entirely Amazighized literary field was shaping up, Amazigh activists never sought to delegitimize works written in Arabic and French, as well as Spanish and Dutch. Obviously, works like Mouloud Mammeri's novel *La colline oubliée*, Tahar Djaout's *Les chercheurs d'os*, and Brick Oussaïd's *Les Coquelicots de l'oriental* represent the Amazigh lifeworld and its inhabitants' concerns in a non-Indigenous language. These works are all set in Amazigh villages and engage with Amazigh societies facing aggressive Arabization, but they are written and published in French, which again invites the question of whether and how much they truly contribute to Amazigh literature, particularly given the threat that the absence of written works posed to Tamazight's very existence.

Since the Imazighen have not yet produced a colossal written corpus to draw on, penning literature in Tamazight matters. It is another way to both express and enact Amazighitude as a contribution toward the revitalization of their threatened language. Azaykou better sums up this issue in an article he published in *Tifawt* magazine in 1994 and in which he states that "written works are the proof of a person's existence. They are the argument of his life and that of his people and what their achievements are from their past to the present" (Azaykou "Arraten" 9). The urgency of saving their language and culture from the encroachments of Arabizations and Gallicization motivated Amazigh intellectuals to undertake the project of writing in their own language. These intellectuals took pride in infusing a new life into their mother tongue even as the proponents of total Arabization refused to relent. The ever-expanding literary corpus that these endeavors have produced has now positioned Tamazight to be a model of an Indigenous people's agentive and successful revival and regeneration of their tongue against widespread marginalization.

Thanks to their multipronged efforts to anchor Amazigh literature in its own language, creative writers in Tamazight have met the challenge of literary recognition. That said, there remain many avenues that are crucial to open up for Amazigh literature to reach its full potential. Imazighen have met the challenge of revitalizing their Indigenous language and creating a literary field that is attuned to their indigeneity, but academic departments and disciplines that focus on the study of Tamazgha still act as though no change happened in the literary, cinematographic, and intellectual realms in this area. Tamazight is not offered anywhere in Anglophone academia, and scholarship published about Tamazight still operates in the Arabic-French binary, chained to a post-colonial model that Amazigh activism has laid to rest. Moreover, the traffic of translation between Tamazight and other languages is slow and limited. However, all these issues will be resolved when Tamazight and its cultural output are fully integrated into academic units. Hopefully, they will receive their rightful place in a scholarly and curricular setting that allows for the emergence of scholars and translators, who will deepen interest in and knowledge of this Amazigh literature and its corollary expressions.

Conclusion

As this article has shown, the construction of the Indigenous Amazigh literary field is part of the ongoing revitalization of Tamazight. The Imazighen's reluctance to use their own language to write their literature confined their literary output to orality, which deprived their idiom of growth and expansion for centuries. Nonetheless, the advent of the ACM gave rise to a new Amazigh counter-consciousness during the post-independence period in response to the de-Amazighization policies after independence. This counter-consciousness manifested first in the collection of Amazigh literary heritage, before taking the form of creative writing that enabled the production of original written works. Compilation, which was a form of crisis management, allowed Amazigh stakeholders to build a transitional stage toward the construction of a novel field. This transitional stage ushered in the era of Amazighitude, which heightened Amazigh consciousness and centered literature as an important tool against erasure and statal disregard. Thanks to Amazighitude, Amazigh activists, even those who never wrote any literary works, unleashed their creative writing skills. Although not all these amateur works were successful, this endeavor has had tremendous psychological effects. Indeed, it marked the first time in hundreds of years that the Imazighen have truly had a full-fledged literary field based on their language.

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Essais critiques / Review Essays

The Potential for Scholarship in Comics and Graphic Narrative Studies

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Abstract: Comics and graphic narratives have been generally accepted as distinct literary forms worthy of academic attention; however, comparatists and other literature scholars may not be familiar with the genre and specialized subtopics within it. This essay provides an overview of an array of titles and demonstrates how literary theory could be applied to these texts. In short, comics and graphic narratives offer academics a vast frontier of literary exploration and analysis.

Keywords: graphic narratives, literary theory, comparative literature, visual texts, intermediality

A great benefit of being a comic book and graphic novel scholar is that purchases at comic book stores, theater viewings of superhero movies, and attendance at comic-cons justifiably count as research. For some people, attendance at any of these events, given their affiliation with cosplay, role playing games, and other aspects of "nerd culture," would be anathema; however, for the intrepid scholar, a new mine of literary exploration awaits, and it is a rich treasure for comparatists such as we are.

Nowadays, most members of academia recognize comics or graphic novels as worthy of scholarship; indeed, this has been argued by scholars for decades, and we are well into a period where these texts are a regular topic of conferences, undergraduate courses, dissertations, books, and special issues of journals. For many literature scholars, though, their familiarity with these texts is limited to the movie screen or perhaps a television series. Thus, for academics who are not regular readers of these texts and who might be looking for fresh material to research, I hope to demonstrate the comics/graphic narrative genre's potential for their work.

Generally, scholars trained in theory and other comparatist topics are used to thinking of these texts solely from a literary perspective. However, as the panels from Thom Giddens' comic illustrate, visual narratives intersect well with a range of disciplines, including design or even mathematics (fig. 1). Researchers like Henry John Pratt, with his book *The Philosophy of Comics*, bring an analytical philosophical approach to the scholarship of these texts. Outside academia, practitioners like Robin S. Rosenberg, who writes about the psychology of superheroes, use these texts as opportunities to showcase their profession to a wider audience (Rubin 24). These are just a few examples of how comics and graphic narratives lend themselves to other disciplines and our current cultural discourse. Add to that the slew of television show adaptations, superhero films, video games, and other digital forms emerging rapidly, and we come across an overlap with media and cultural studies. Thus, the opportunity for additional graphic narrative comparatist scholarship is growing – and it does so, I dare say, exponentially.


Critical Comics Studies
AN ORIGIN STORY
by Thom Giddens
Late to the discipline party...
Um, hello!
MED-ICINE
ECONOMICS
MATHS
COMICS ROCK!
PHYSICS
ART
PSYCHOLOGY
Who the hell are you?
COMICS ROCK!
Hi! Yeah, I'm, err... comics studies.
COMICS ROCK!
What studies?!
THE DISCIPLINE AUTHORITY

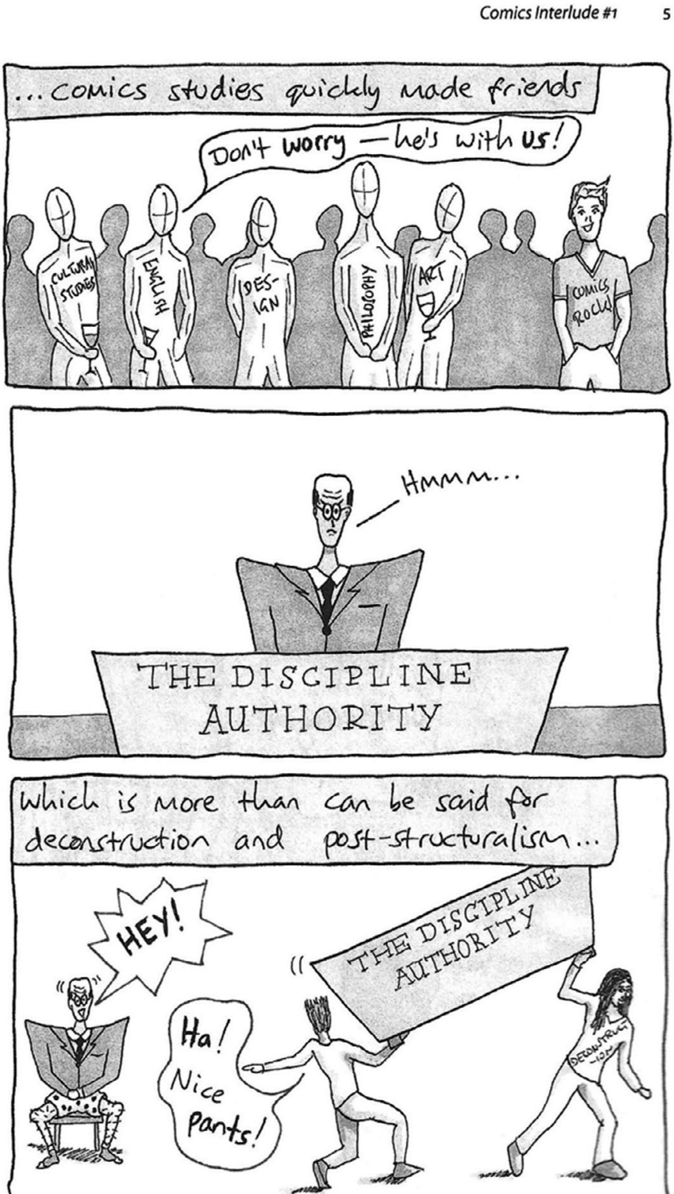

Fig. 1. Courtesy of Thomas Giddens. Excerpt from *Critical Directions in Comics Studies* edited by Thomas Giddens, Copyright © 2020 by University Press of Mississippi.

Traditional Comparative Literature Topics

Despite comics studies' presence in academia, their inclusion of visual and design elements breaks away from traditional forms of literature, like novels, that generally are strictly text. While over the last few decades scholars have come to appreciate how visual elements work in concert with narrative, they first must understand how visuals function. To that end, comics and graphic narrative buffs are deeply familiar with what has become a canonical text for explaining the visual aspect of graphic storytelling: Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. In it, McCloud explains how panel size, symbols, icons, fonts, and other design elements lead readers to comprehend the story at a different cognitive level than they would with straight text. As writer Mary Widdicks explains, "[C]omics and graphic novels tell sophisticated stories through multimodal cues that stimulate similar processes to the human brain mapping the world around it. Combinations of words, images, color, spatial layout, gutters, sound effects, panel composition, body language, and facial expressions are all used to convey meaning" (Widdicks n.p.).

Thus, comics and graphic novels also constitute a cognitively high form of literature. Karin Kukkonen, among other scholars, argues for comics and graphic novels to be considered as such, saying she "advocates thinking of what we can see on the page in terms of clues and inferences, because such an approach allows us to trace our multifold interactions with the page in front of us, the complexity of drafting and redrafting inferences, and the multiple possible paths we can take across the page. Such an understanding of comics provides an interface between comics studies and the close reading of literary criticism, bringing literary approaches to bear on comics texts" (149–50). Indeed, throughout her book *Studying Comics and Graphic Novels*, she applies traditional literary theory, namely Roland Barthes' term "anchorage," meant to designate how words can specify the meaning of an image, or Vladmir Propp's thirty-one basic "functions" of narrative segments (34; 37). Maaheen Ahmed's text *Openness of Comics: Generating Meaning within Flexible Structures* shows how the graphic story's inherently fluid nature leads to reader-generated meaning. Similarly, McCloud's argument that the reader's choices and interactions – their personal and cognitive experiences – create narrative closure. Both of these arguments align with traditional literary reader-response theory.

Furthermore, within the field of graphic narrative scholarship, we see an array of other comparative literary theories applied innovatively. For example, Kai Mikkonen explores comics and graphic stories' narratology; saliently, Mikkonen "revis[es] …narratological concepts and approaches through the study of narrative comics," demonstrating that "while narratology is brought to bear on comics, equally comics are brought to bear on narratology" (abstract). For scholars interested in systems of signs, Angelo Piepoli's work, in particular, would be interesting; he describes, for example, how visual sequences become storytelling through a "semiotic-textological approach" ("Wordless").

In sum, as Kukkonen explains, "Each of the elements of the discourse of the comic's text has been put there for a reason – they all work as clues in the meaning-making process" (Kukkonen 36). Discerning that meaning constitutes a great opportunity for comparatist scholars.

The Graphic Canon

Much comparatist scholarship is rooted in classic European and American literature. However, even this august body of work has been presented in graphic narrative form. One significant example is *The Graphic Canon*. This three-volume anthology was first edited and released by Russ Kick in 2012, who assembled artists and illustrators to re-create over 180 stories and poems. While stand-alone graphic adaptations of literature are becoming more widespread (see, for example, the graphic adaptations of *The Handmaid's Tale,* the Iliad, and *The Heart of Darkness*), Kick's anthologies are globally comprehensive, tracing canonical texts ranging across the centuries from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* to David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*. As Kick explains in his introduction to volume two, "Literature has provided fuel for paintings, plays, operas, symphonies, songs, movies…And now it's time for comics—a.k.a. sequential art—to show what it can do" (xi). Graphic retellings of canonical literature open the door to a host of comparatist exploration, and intertextuality is simply the beginning. Kick states that classic literature is "more exciting, relevant, and subversive than it generally gets credit for being," and he relies on the artists' interpretation to bring these ideas forth (xii). In fact, he explains that even "the pairings of certain artists with certain works seems to have added layers of meaning" (xii). Thus, the multimodality invoked by the visual elements, along with the artists' own creative vision, mean the novels and plays we have studied and analyzed assiduously for generations now suddenly have much more to say.

Historical Comics

One of the most popular and pervasive categories of graphic novels is historical comics. These texts span audience age ranges, from those geared to grade school children (such as textbook publisher MacMillan's History Comics Series[1]) to stand-alone texts for adult readers. In that latter category, some of the more mainstream historical comics and graphic novel titles are Art Spiegelman's *Maus* about the Holocaust, George Takei's *They Called Us Enemy*, about his childhood in a U.S. internment camp, and Rebecca Hall's *Wake: The Hidden History of Women-Led Slave Revolts*. Writer and artist Joe Sacco won an Eisner Award for *Safe Area Goražde* about the Bosnian War; Spiegelman won a Pulitzer Prize for *Maus* and in 2022 won the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. These titles are just a few of the hundreds of global texts constituting historical graphic narratives, and these awards attest to the high-quality narration and artistry the texts generally exhibit.

Thus, such books can be rich and evocative, imbued with analytical opportunities regarding accuracy, artistic interpretation, biographical or autobiographical elements, intertextuality, research, cultural perspective, and other considerations.[2] For example, in her article "Ideological History, Contested Culture, and the Politics of Representation in *Amar Chitra Katha*," Nilakshi Goswami details how collective consciousness and national identity can be formed through shared histories depicted in comics (n.p.). Further, editor Annessa Ann Babic's anthology *Comics as History, Comics as Literature* provides an international, cross-disciplinary collection that demonstrates both the historical and academic content graphic narratives can provide. Her purpose with the collection is to "take [] another step in bridging the gap of scholarly resources and documents, bringing comics closer to the center of the academic debate" (Babic 9–10). Bryan E. Vizzini echoes her sentiment, stating that the movement toward visual learning has been occurring for decades now; additionally,

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1 https://us.macmillan.com/series/historycomics

2 In our introduction to a special issue of the online Italian journal *Status Quaestionis*, Umberto Rossi and I detail these and other considerations unique to historical comics. See: https://rosa.uniroma1.it/rosa03/status_quaestionis/article/view/17510/16750

as we likely have observed, our students often do not bother to read dense university textbooks. Thus, one way faculty can engage students is to consider adding visual narratives to their courses; after all, as Vizzini argues, "What better tool for the task than graphic novels, which are accessible, intelligible, and carry complex messages? Today, this new art form functions at multiple levels in the teaching of history" (Vizzini 238).

The Global South and Other Vast Communities

One of the greater purposes graphic narratives can serve is to provide an alternative view of history. Marginalized communities, Indigenous peoples, and citizens of the Global South use these texts to tell their stories, many of which have been excluded from Western or even national histories. For example, in *A People's History of the United States*, historian Howard Zinn told the country's story from the perspective of the activists, community leaders, and grassroots movements, bypassing the usual national narrative of the white, male "Founding Fathers." Later, he teamed up with Mike Konopacki and Paul Buhle to create the graphic narrative *A People's History of American Empire,*[3] which focuses on the U.S.'s more negative global actions, like expansionism. Those global actions often spurred counter-movements; graphic narrative texts like *Movements and Moments* showcase such pushback and organized resistance. Notably, *Movements* profiles Indigenous communities led by female activists battling colonialist powers. As editors Sonja Eismann, Ingo Schöningh, and Maya[4] state in the book's opening pages, "While an impressive number of graphic novels by women have been published and translated in recent years, feminisms of the Global South have not garnered nearly as much attention, Indigenous feminist activists receive even less credit than their mainstream counterparts. . . This makes it all the more important for the rest of us to pay attention, listen, and learn" (Eismann et al. 7) (see fig. 2).

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[3] Later, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz would write *Indigenous People's History of the U.S.,* which also is available in graphic narrative form. See: https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/757649/roxanne-dunbar-ortizs-indigenous-peoples-history-of-the-united-states-by-paul-peart-smith/

[4] Maya goes by this singular name (no surname).

Fig. 2. From "Shanti: Beyond the Veil" in *Movements & Moments*. Copyright Bandana Tulachan. Used with permission from Drawn & Quarterly.

Indigenous comics creators, writers, and publishers, meanwhile, are becoming more mainstream and reaching new audiences. In 2008, Michael Sheyahshe, an enrolled member of the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma, published *Native Americans in Comic Books*. He traces representations of Native Americans in comics and other literature beginning with works published in 1823. Sheyahshe points out the problems with most portrayals of the Indigenous peoples; historically, they were depicted as barbarians, noble savages, or sidekicks. Worse, Sheyashe argues, these characters are locked in a "sepia-toned prison" of fringed jackets, deerskin clothing, and feathers, "forever trapped within the pages of history and nonexistent in modern times" (Sheyahshe 94–95). However, since *Native Americans in Comic Books* appeared, a slew of contemporary authors and artists bring Indigenous stories, concerns, and culture to the public fore. For example, Arigon Starr's *Super Indian* is popular for its humor and its pointed critiques of issues like blood quantum measures, inequitable U.S. federal policy, and more. It is an easily accessible digital comic[5] and enjoyable for readers of all ages. *Super Indian* provides scholars new to the comic genre with a fun, yet pointed, entry into the study of superhero comics.

A more rounded introduction to the larger scope of Indigenous comics writers and illustrators can be found in the wonderful *Moonshot* and Marvel's *Indigenous Voices* collections. These offer readers some of the best traditional and fictional storytelling from across North America, complete with colorful, powerful artistry. These books appeared well after Sheyahshe's *Native Americans in Comic Books*'s publication. However, it almost seems he predicted them, writing, "With some artistic control from Indigenous writers and artists, comic books may offer a less narrow view of Native Americans. . .Comics will continue to leave their mark on popular culture and its audience. The choice rests with us as just what mark they leave in the future" (192–93).

In that vein, artist, writer, publisher, and entrepreneur Dr. Lee Francis IV founded Red Planet Books and Comics, which now operates as ATCG Books and Comics. It remains the only existing Indigenous comic shop in the world. Readers can find there an array of titles that have to do with a range of Native American narratives, from creation stories (for example, *Hero Twins*) to modern-day concerns such as alcoholism (*Come Home, Indio*) to navigating between Indigenous and Western cultures (*Borders*).

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5 See the web version at https://superindiancomics.com/.

Francis himself created an Indigenous retelling of *Alice in Wonderland* with *Sixkiller*, and other texts (like Stephen Graham Jones's *Earthdivers*) are rooted in science fiction or fantasy genres. Scholars can also find stories about the Navajo Code Talkers, the Sand Creek Massacre, and other historical events.

ATCG's catalog includes several texts from other Indigenous communities around the world, such as Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, Dean Hamer, and Joe Wilson's *Kapaemahu* about two-spirit individuals bringing healing knowledge to Hawaiʻi from Tahiti.

Other racial and ethnic identities are now regular part of the popular culture discourse. For example, Afro-futurism, or "a movement in literature, music, art, etc. featuring futuristic or science fiction themes which incorporate elements of Black history and culture" (Oxford), impacted the superhero genre positively when *Black Panther* hit the big screens. While some experts feared "superhero fatigue" among film audiences, *Black Panther* seemed to put that fear to rest. As writer Devin O'Leary notes, "[I]f comic book movies can offer this much diversity in tone, in visuals, in storyline, then there's no reason for burnout in the genre" (O'Leary 18).

The popularity of Black Panther and of characters from other marginalized communities mean the latter are resonating with the public who are happy, at last, to see various representations in larger spaces. It is difficult to gloss all the works coming from marginalized groups in this essay; suffice it to say that members of the Global South, LGTBQ+ , disability, and other communities can find graphic narratives that speak to their lived experience. For example, in *Why Comics? From Underground to Everywhere*, esteemed comic and graphic novel scholar Hillary Chute describes showcases, exhibits, and other forums for such works, like the *Africa Comics* exhibit of 2006 that featured comics from every African country (Chute 344). Organized by topic (e.g., "Why war?") rather than region or genre, Chute's book describes a range of works created by some of the most popular commercial and underground comics creators today. Comparatists whose research interests are postcolonial, culture, and gender/sexuality-oriented are likely to find a graphic narrative title to delve into.

Graphic Medicine

Related to the topic of disability narratives is another category called "graphic medicine," a phrase first coined by Dr. Ian Williams in 2007. The Graphic Medicine website states this body of work is "[t]he intersection between the medium of comics and the discourse of healthcare" (Williams). This intersection is so vital that medical schools have begun using books from this genre to train doctors and inform patients about various conditions. After all, as Chute writes in her chapter "Why Illness and Disability?", "Comics can make visible both external features of a condition, and internal, cognitive, and emotional features that are otherwise hard to communicate accurately" (241, 243). In *Twitcha*, young author Sarah Baldwin and her friends created a superhero with Tourette's syndrome (Giordano); in *In-Between Days*, Teva Harrison describes living with cancer (Ulinich 28). Chinese-Canadian artist Vivian Chong was a co-creator in the book *Dancing After TEN: A Graphic Memoir*, which details her experience with Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (Chute "Graphic" 17). These stories not only provide practitioners and readers with insights into these conditions, but they also provide the creators with a sense of power and hope, which Harrison says she needs "to get through every single day" (Ulinich 28)

The Graphic Medicine website[6] provides a range of materials – podcast and graphic medicine archive links, online comics, even an undergraduate course syllabus repository. Another interesting and useful repository is the *Drawing Blood* collection. This online collection follows in the wake of an exhibit of the same name held at the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum at Ohio State University. *Drawing Blood* "traces the history of comics' obsession with medicine from the 17th century to today" ("About"). It contains comics on special topics, like the Spanish Flu or COVID-19. It also has a collection dedicated to "Women Missing from Clinical Trials." For an introductory anthology where "a group of authors from various countries and disciplines explore the unique capacity of graphic narratives to represent human embodiment as well as the relation of human bodies to the worlds they inhabit," check out Jodi Cressman and Lisa DeTora's anthology, *Graphic Embodiments: Perspectives on Health and Embodiment in Graphic Narratives.*

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[6] https://www.graphicmedicine.org/.

Celebrities as Comics

As far as trends in graphic narratives go, one of the more interesting ones is the range of texts being written by celebrities. While the celebrity status of the authors does not often lend itself *per se* to literary theory or analysis, there are intertextual and other possibilities. For example, Keanu Reeves was creator and co-writer of *Brzrkr*, a half-mortal and half-god being compelled to violence; the character, known as B., greatly resembles Reeves himself and another comic book and film character he is known for, John Wick. Musician Gerard Way, known for co-founding and serving as lead vocalist for the band "My Chemical Romance," is perhaps better known for his writing and co-creation of graphic narrative and Netflix series *The Umbrella Academy*, among other texts. Jamie Lee Curtis's *Mother Nature* is both a horror story and a klaxon about environmental devastation. Nicolas Cage, Emilia Clarke, Paul Dano, David Duchovny, Samuel L. Jackson, Kevin Smith, and the Wayans brothers are other notables who have created interesting stories and characters (Myrick).

Digital Comics and Technology

In *Between Pen and Pixel: Comics, Materiality, and the Book of the Future*, Aaron Kashtan discusses the overlap of comic books and digital printing, noting how the comic book industry thrives despite the rise of e-books and other forms of digital publishing. At the same time, he points to the number of comics being published in digital form. His central argument is that comics constitute "a useful test case for discussions of the future of the book because of their unique relationship to materiality" (185). Indeed, as he adds, "Comics studies can be a means not only of understanding but also of helping to model both the future of the book and the book of the future" (193).

Relatedly, a news article published in April 2022 announced that WEBTOON and the DC Universe were partnering in order to introduce a new audience to DC characters; as WEBTOON US head of content David Lee notably stated in the article, "Our partnership with DC represents the future of the comic industry, combining legendary franchises with new technologies and global fandoms that cross borders" ("WEBTOON"). Those borders are both international and intermodal since the stories are published from different countries and across a range of forms.

Such texts were the topic of several presentations held during the 2022 European Society of Comparative Literature Congress in Rome, and transmedial/intermedial texts was a panel topic at the "Framing the Unreal: Exploring Graphic/Visual Science Fiction and Fantasy" conference held in Venice in 2024. As some comics are published first digitally and then materially, or are adapted from print for television or film screens, understanding the distinctions between modalities becomes fundamental to comparatist scholarship. These narrative forms likely will persist and evolve, as Kashtan and Lee predict. Scholars Gabriele Rippl and Lukas Etter define *intermediality* as "the interrelations between different media, including their collaborations and networks as well as their functions across cultures and through history" (195). Within this category, they include film adaptations, multimedia combinations, or integration of other artistic forms like pieces of music or montages. Elsewhere, scholar Maria Lindgren Leavenworth defines *transmediality* as referring to parts of or entire stories told in or dispersed across several different media (n.p.). One example of such a text is WEBTOON's *Lore Olympus*. Using the catchphrase "Witness what the gods do…after dark," *Lore Olympus* provides a modern-day retelling of ancient Greek mythology, notably Persephone's relationship with Hades. In author Rachel Smythe's retelling, the gods live an upscale, Kardashian-like lifestyle. Fans can interact with the digital comic site, posting responses and "likes" to each other's comments, use social media tools to share episodes, or even create their own version of other story arcs. *Lore Olympus* also has been published in print, making it both transmedial and intermedial. It also has won two Eisner Awards, three Harvey Awards, and two Ringo Awards (Business Wire). Smythe completed the series in June 2024, yet the full story remains available online.[7] Another digital comic that has become a global phenomenon is Alice Oseman's *Heartstopper,* which was also turned into a Netflix series. This coming-of-age story depicts how two young males discover that what started out as friendship might turn into something deeper (Harris and Ackerberg 22).

These are just two examples of comics that began in a digital space but then became much larger than a singular site. Readers interested in learning more have options for discovering the next big title; besides WEBTOONS, readers can find an array of digital comics and manga on Amazon's Comixology.

Meanwhile, the number of print graphic narratives that have become streaming-television series grows; the hit Japanese manga *One Piece* is also a Netflix series (Kageyama). Others on this list include Brian Bendis's *Jessica Jones*, Brian Vaughn's *Paper Girls*, and Robert Kirkman's *The Walking Dead*, to name but a scant few of the many titles adapted for larger screens.

Technological advances will only continue to impact the graphic narrative industry; virtual reality movie premiers have become "standard" in Hollywood since the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, for example (Bahr). Since the VR avatars closely resemble the actors, it is conceivable VR will influence how digital comics are transitioned to full-length animated productions.

Finally, it is too early to tell how artificial intelligence will impact sequential art. In the *New York Times Book Review* on September 17, 2023, graphic novel author Mike Dawson offered a sixteen-panel comic review of Kevin Wilson's *Now Is Not the Time to Panic*. Of the sixteen panels, twelve included pixelated art generated using Midjourney AI (Dawson). While many AI models currently struggle to depict details like human hands with anatomic accuracy, this is due to the limitations of early forms of generative AI. As AI evolves, it remains to be seen how artists and authors will incorporate it into future storytelling.

Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, the study of comic and graphic narrative studies lends itself to a range of disciplines. However, rather than offer cross- or interdisciplinary interaction, some comics scholars silo themselves, taking field-specific stances disconnected from other fields. Marc Singer, in *Breaking the Frames: Populism and Prestige in Comics Studies*, recognizes the importance of interdisciplinary study. He argues, "[W]e must bring together the many practices and concerns that define comics studies—not individually in the work of any single scholar, but collectively as a truly multidisciplinary field—to form a better understanding of comics: their texts and contexts, their producers and audiences, their historical development and capacities to make meaning in the twenty-first century and beyond" (248–49). Given the interdisciplinary nature of comparative literature, comparatist scholars are well-poised to take up Singer's challenge.

Thus, comparatist scholars should take some time to explore the universe of comic books, graphic narratives, bandes dessinées, manga, manhwa, and more. Digital comics online offer media and scholars interactive opportunities portrayed in vivid color. Print comics and graphic novels offer tales in genres like fantasy, science fiction, and history. Stories from Indigenous communities provide an opportunity to learn about another culture's values and perspectives. Graphic narratives provide first-hand accounts of what it means to be a member of a marginalized identity or a person with a medical condition. Comics and graphic novel creators are broadening their subject matter, and as they do so, the genre gains popularity. With the expansion of the television and movie production industries, graphic narratives often become retold for video forms. Technology provides another realm of storytelling possibility, and this could be good news for us. After all, as scholar Frederick Luis Aldama states, "[C]omics demand careful study as unique, transformative, cultural phenomena" (2). As scholars trained in comparatist work, we are well positioned to undertake this exciting work.

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[7] See: https://www.webtoons.com/en/romance/lore-olympus/list?title_no=1320

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History Lessons: A Conference Report

"Shakespeare Towards an End": Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa and Tsikinya-Chaka Centre, May 24–27, 2023

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Abstract: The triennial congress of the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa was held at Spier Hotel and Farm, on May 2023. Participants came from African countries and the African diaspora as well as from Europe, the US and the UK. In the broad range of papers, many kept returning to Shakespearean incarnations in cross-cultural adaptations and translations in performance, text, and pedagogy, mostly via translations mostly in South African languages. Overall this conference offered a window on South Africa in the context of the global south. In the process, it also illuminated how Shakespeare criticism and performance held up a mirror to political and cultural changes in the country/region.

Keywords: Shakespeare, History, Post-Apartheid, Transnational, Cross-cultural

I

The triennial congress of the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa was held at Spier Hotel and Farm, close to Cape Town on May 2023. Participants came from African countries and the African diaspora as well as from Europe, the US and the UK. The setting of the idyllic Spier Farm had its own story to tell: its organic farm and winery reflected the plenitude of nature and a brisk business in the post-Apartheid South Africa; but its colonial history was also visible in the old farm buildings, including a bell that was used to call servants and slaves to labor. Like an anamorphic shadow, South Africa's colonial and apartheid *history* cast its presence on many of the papers (as was also evident in sights outside the conference); yet one could also observe a constant push back from many participants as they presented on South Africa against past history and toward new, positive energies based on truth and reconciliation, and coupled with linguistic and cultural cross pollinations.

I was returning to South Africa after a gap of a few decades: I had been a participant in a historic conference, "Shakespeare/Postcoloniality," which took place at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, on 3–7 July 1996, organized by the late Professor Martin Orkin. That conference marked a crucial, post-apartheid moment that remains vivid in my memory, at the outset of my career, and in which I presented work on Shakespeare in former colonies such as India. The fissures of race and class – and of differing investments in Western canonical works – were not bridged by the title of "Shakespeare–Postcoloniality." After all, it was only in the late 1980s that the country had witnessed the darkest period of the State of Emergency in South Africa. Yet, discussions on Shakespeare, at that seminal moment opened the way for later generative debates about truth and reconciliation, about the nature of subaltern agency, the possible connections between South Asian and South African historiography, re-readings of Shakespeare within local contexts, or indeed ANC policies on landownership.

II

In today's South Africa, similar discourses of a transnational, multilingual, cross-cultural Shakespeare dominated many of the diverse offerings of "Shakespeare Towards an End," in a majority of the papers, the original English plays were reincarnated in "worlds elsewhere" across South Africa and indeed across Africa, unmoored from a singular white canonical Shakespeare – and from metropolitan centers of the west. Here an important qualification: overall, the conference had an inclusive scope including a mix of papers world-wide, several from Anglo-American and European locations, though not without some explicit and implicit Africa-centered resonances for "Shakespeare Towards an End." Here are a few, selective examples: "Re-appropriating *Romeo and Juliet* in a juvenile detention in Italy" (Marta Fossati); "Shakespeare in the Trans/Sphere," (Lucy Wylde); " 'Is this the promised end?' Travels with/in *King Lear*" (Peter Holland); "Sovereign States: Byatt, Bard, and Coronations" (Peter

Merrington); "Dying with Shakespeare: 'readiness is all' "; " 'Have we not Hiren here?' Racial Slavery and Narrative Tradition in Shakespeare's *2 Henry IV*; *Othello*" (Hassana Moosa); and " 'Send the midwife': The Birth of Blackness in *Titus Andronicus*" (Hanh Bui).[1] Africa more directly was also the subject of few notable papers of scholars located in the West: Stephen Collins's (with Nii Kwaterlei) presentation was titled " 'Tongo is a Prison': Revisiting *Hamile,* the Tongo *Hamlet*," depicted an adaptation of *Hamlet* in Ghana in 1964, which encapsulated the essence of the post-colonial politics of the former President Nkrumah's cultural and national policy. Ifeoluwa Aboluwade presented a complex cross-cultural analysis of Femi Osofian's Nigerian *Wesoo Hamlet*, exploring the correlation between translation, memory, and identity.

Given the location of South Africa and the title of the conference, a majority of papers and events kept returning to Shakespearean incarnations in cross-cultural adaptations and translations in performance, text, and pedagogy, mostly via translations in African languages. The centrality of these themes in "Shakespeare Towards an End" was also intertwined with the key co-sponsorship of the Tsikinya-Chaka Centre*,* a Research Unit in the School of Literature, Language and Media at the University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg), with its Director Chris Thurman co-convening the conference with Professor Sandra Young of the University of Cape Town. Focusing on translating Shakespeare's plays into African languages, the TCC seeks to promote scholarship, teaching and performance that engages with Shakespeare as a multilingual phenomenon. In this transnational imperative, the Centre promotes an understanding of Shakespearean histories and contemporary practices in different national contexts around the world, especially outside the limited "English" paradigms.

The conference opened with a film screening followed by a panel discussion of an evocative film in and about multi-lingual South African renditions of Shakespeare, "Speak Me a Speech." Here, local actors, Anelisa Phewa, Royston Stoffels, Chantal Stanfield and Buhle Ngaba, brought to life in isiZulu, Afrikaans, and Setswana four Shakespeare characters. Iconic Shakespeare soliloquies and other monologues came alive in powerful performances in the languages of one of the world's most multilingual countries. We watched two particularly mesmerizing

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1 All quotations in this essay are taken from the Conference Program, which included a list of abstracts.

renditions of Shakespearean speeches: Anelisa Phewa enacting an isiZulu translation of the Thomas More's "stranger's case" monologue; and Buhle Ngaba performing a very poignant, passionate rendition of Portia's speech to Brutus revealing her unhappiness as a wife in Setswana (See figs. 1 and 2). According to the official site: [as] "the actors in these vignettes express themselves in sounds, idioms, and nuances of South Africa's many languages … each of these characters is reimagined in a world far removed from Elizabethan London in which they were first conceived." (https://speak-me-a-speech.com/) Despite the linguistic divide, by seeing the sub-titles below scenes of very expressive acting, our experiences as the international conference participants were nonetheless very moving: "with situations and emotions we [could] … recognize the characters [and were able] to articulate our thoughts and feelings better than we [could] ourselves"(https://speak-me-a-speech.com/). This opening introduction to local Shakespeares introduced a recurring preoccupation and concern of the conference: how to make Shakespearean words and thoughts come alive in varied languages and cultures in (South) Africa and beyond, especially in other areas of the global south?

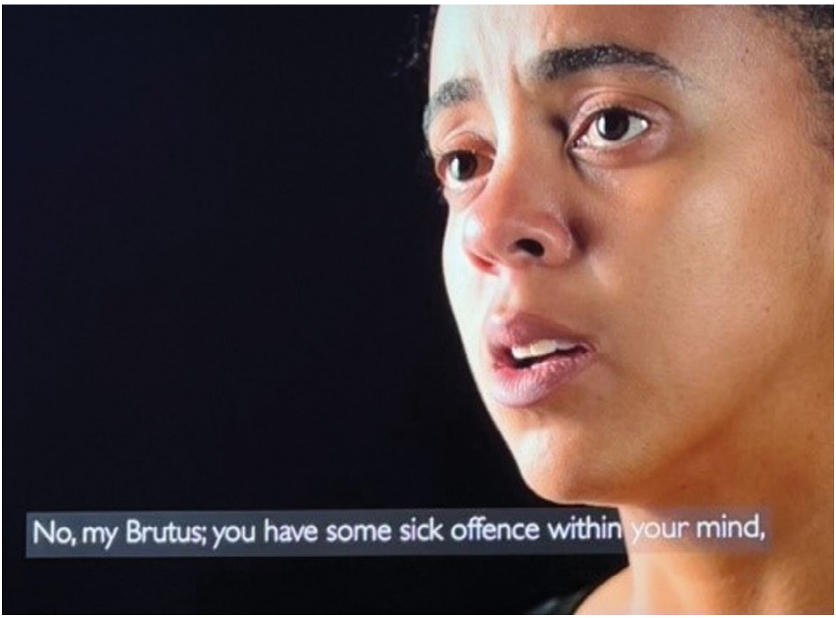

Fig. 1. Buhle Ngaba performing a very poignant, passionate rendition of Portia's speech to Brutus revealing her unhappiness as a wife in Setswana.

Fig. 2. Anelisa Phewa enacting an isiZulu translation of the Thomas More's "stranger's case" monologue.

The papers that followed in the ensuing days offered important **history lessons**- despite being the most iconic emblem of English culture and identity, we learned Shakespeare has inspired, intrigued, challenged and yet emboldened scholars and theatre practitioners world-wide, and particularly across Africa (and the global south as a whole) to adapt and appropriate his works across languages and cultures. Several presentations in this conference reflected complex engagements with South African reincarnations of the bard's plays, showing how Shakespeare productions held up a mirror to political and cultural changes in the country/region, often reflecting a multi-lingual or translingual imperative. For instance, In "The End(s) of *The Tempest* in post-apartheid South Africa," Marguerite de Waal offered a "partial performance history of the play from the beginning of the democratic era in 1994, considering how theatre makers have explored the resonances and limitations of *The Tempest* as an expression of local politics." The critical history of *The Tempest*, perhaps the most iconic of plays about European colonization, was quickly imbricated within concerns about post-apartheid "reconciliation and its post-colonial valences" as in the famous 2009 production in which "Antony Sher's Prospero requested absolution from John Kani's Caliban, while invoking the central dynamics of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission." An interest in other plays, de Waal noted, developed as there was a realization of changing times that needed different ways of expressing contemporary concerns, but productions of *The Tempest* could not quite escape the fixed shadow of the postcolonial allegory "whether it was consciously ignored, inverted, or side-stepped and subtly challenged." This challenge facing South African viewers/readers of *The Tempest* always already imbricated in colonialism as de Waal pointed out, is a recurring dilemma in postcolonial nations world-wide.

Issues about teaching and pedagogy in Shakespeare dissemination also came up as a frequent topic. Among papers discussing varied student engagements with Shakespeare in different settings in South Africa and beyond, particularly impressive were the presentations of three younger scholars who raised and addressed some urgent and provocative pedagogical challenges in the panel on "Teaching Shakespeare in South African schools." Linda Ritchie offered a persuasive argument for teaching Shakespeare to overcome the "monolingualism" of most South African Schools in her paper entitled "Translanguaging Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning Shakespeare in South African Secondary Schools." Her approach argued that "Shakespeare may provide an educationally sound reason for using multiple languages in the class room… [and] for translating the text not only into the medium of instruction, but also other languages in which learners are proficient."

Lauren Bates' paper was entitled: "Activating Shakespeare across the English curriculum to grapple with violence in the South African Context." In it, she claimed that "activating the Shakespeare plays' to teach skills such as 'comprehension and listening, knowledge such as grammar and writing styles, and values such as empathy and integrity, are all within the scope of the English curriculum.' " Then she went on to discuss how the "high levels of violence" in Shakespeare's plays helped "young people to explore and process the violence in their midst in the society around them." She convincingly argued that "using the plays to creatively confront, explore, and process the violence in our midst can lead to higher levels of well-being and resilience, which assists learning."

Kirsten Dey addressed the practices of "decolonizing" a curriculum in her engaging presentation, entitled, "Making Space for Shakespeare in a Decolonized Curriculum: *Macbeth* as a Means to discerning Duality." As an English teacher in a "diverse private high school at which over half of the students are second or additional language English speakers," Dey took us on a rich journey, showing us why it is necessary and how to "incorporate Shakespearean texts in a decolonized English curriculum" and "how a healthy and decolonized relationship can occur between students and a Shakespearean text in the class room." She offered an illuminating account of teaching *Macbeth* – reading, watching, and discussing (see fig. 3) which became a "means to understanding the duality of our identities as human beings and as South Africans, and which in turn, pointed towards the potential of teaching Shakespeare in South African schools today."

Fig. 3. Macbeth Poster made by students (Dey)

These papers about teaching Shakespeare in high schools were a reminder about the conundrums of disseminating the plays in a multilingual society. Thus, not surprisingly, issues about translation and adaptation seemed to rear their heads in all South African engagements with Shakespeare, as evident in a fine set of papers in the panel on "Translation, appropriation and allusion – versions of Shakespeare in South Africa." In "The Certainty of Ambiguity: Revisiting the Witches' Equivocation in *Macbeth* via B.B. Mdlede's isiXhosa translation," Zwelakhe Mtsaka discussed the way in which Mdelede approached the play as a tragedy, and focused on "Fate and Fortune as two forces which are known to be vital ingredients of tragedy." "Evoking a dialogue between past and present," the presenter argued, Mdlede "kept in mind the cultural environment of the Eastern Cape where the stories of prophets and prophecies are taken seriously."

In "*Julius Caesar* in Xitsonga," John Simango examined an attempt to decolonize Shakespeare through a translation of *Julius Caesar* into one of South African indigenous languages, Xitsonga, while drawing on similarities of contemporary South African political realities and a political system which is riddled "with betrayals and killings – just as in Shakespeare's play." Finally in "The Art of Translation: The Sonnet, isiZulu, and 'A Marriage of True Minds,'" Anelisa Phewa offered a reading of a Shakespearean sonnet, examining the ways in which these poems travel across languages into isiZulu, while showing that they were made anew via idiomatic expressions infusing the sonnet's traditional sonnet form.

III

Two keynote speakers addressed disseminations of Shakespeare in relation to cross-cultural political encounters: Ruben Espinosa's spoke on *Hamlet,* hospitality and the treatment of migrants, especially on the US-Mexico border. I (Jyotsna Singh) discussed postcolonial India (specifically Kashmir) through an Indian adaptation of *Hamlet (Haider)* and the deployment of revolutionary poetry by the famous South-Asian, Muslim poet, Faiz Ahmed Faiz. We were both in a sense representing Global Shakespeares, but were located in the Anglo-American/European world –the Global north – as were several other speakers at the conference. We were like 'outsiders' looking in or audiences watching the drama of South Africa unfold at this late post-colonial, post-apartheid moment.

The dramas of individual presentations on (South) Africa coalesced on the closing day in the brilliant, climactic production of *Emi, Caesar! / Olorogun Caesar!* in the outdoor courtyard at the Spier farm. Written by visiting Nigerian playwright and scholar of drama, Lekan Balogun, had already presented a richly provocative paper, entitled "Beyond and Now: Shakespeare Dysphoria, and National Culture. In it, he had examined how Shakespeare's plays could engage with the ascendency of violence in postcolonial Nigeria,' and how they could 'contribute to a national catharsis."

In *Emi, Caesar! / Olorogun Caesar* Balogun describes the genesis and structure of the play as follows (in the conference program):

> *Emi, Caesar! / Olorogun Caesar!* is an example of adaptation of Shakespeare and postcolonial work which reflects and integrates Yoruba creative and performative idioms and translates them into dramaturgy, using core elements of *Julius Caesar* that he transplanted into the complex, violent world of Yoruba politics of the mid-19th century … as a parable for contemporary Nigerian politics where factionalism and economic malfeasance … work against the integrity and security of society.

All these elements outlined above shaped the show: these included Yoruba creative and performative elements, with music, chants, and striking dramatic gestures. The actors were young, Black South Africans who performed with gusto and enthusiasm though the Nigerian language and its idioms must be unfamiliar to them. And in their opening self-introductions we learned of their ambitions and hopes for continuing creative work, preferably in theatre with societal impact. I talked them afterwards and what I recall (as a summation) is that they were concerned about areas of violence and corruption in the new South Africa more than anything else, but had a historical consciousness in trying to understand its causes. We all kind of agreed that their generation would perhaps put the burden of intergenerational trauma behind them and move ahead to re-creating a more prosperous and peaceful nation. And in keeping with the dominant tenor of the conference, they were interested in generating wide-ranging translingual and cross-cultural conversations, while bridging the various divisions of their country.

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Roaming Past the Borderlands: The New Militarised Supra-Latina/o Mestiza/o

A review of B.V. Olguín, Violentologies: Violence, Identity, and Ideology in Latina/o Literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. 374 pp. ISBN: 9780198863090.

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Abstract: B.V. Olguín's 2021 study *Violentologies: Violence, Identity, and Ideology in Latina/o Literature* sets out to question some of the central tenets concerning Latino/a identities prevalent in the scholarly fields of Chicano/a Studies and Latino/a Studies. Focusing on Latino/a models of soldiering, Olguín demonstrates that Latino/as need not be opposed to dominant society and US imperialism, but can, in fact, be integral to it. His book consists of two parts: one dedicated to warfare and one exploring violence in a global context.

Keywords: Latino/a, Chicano/a, violence, warfare, imperialism

Hasta la victoria siempre. Ernesto Guevara is given the final word in the deeply personal preface which B.V. Olguín wrote to open his book *Violentologies: Violence, Identity, and Ideology in Latina/o Literature* (2021). Currently the holder of the Robert and Lisa Erickson Presidential Chair in English and director of the Global Latinidades Project at the University of California in Santa Barbara, Olguín takes us back to a time when he considered enlisting in the US army. This choice would have been "the culmination of [his] socialization into a model of manhood in an extended family that included boxers, soldiers, and street-fighting convicts, with several murderers, too" (Olguín xxii) and would have made his parents proud. A racist incident forced the author to realise that he might be joining the wrong army and that the path he was walking down involved supressing a significant part of his family legacy, which "included the anarchist black and communist red of the Mexican Revolution" (xxv). The present-day scholar who wrote this book introduces himself to the reader as "a Chicano communist" (xxix). The preface does not only acquaint us with the book's personal backstory but also sets its revolutionary agenda: *Violentologies* serves as "part of a community *autocrítica*," which Olguín explains is the "revolutionary practice of assessing and addressing one own's faults and relationships to power" (xxix). More particularly, he wants to ponder "the many transformations of Latina and Latino soldiers and civilians in different eras up to the present who have repeatedly been forced to confront – or try to ignore – the question of what side Latina/os should be on, or if there is anything so clear and defined as 'sides' " (xxix).

What follows is an ambitious, erudite study that aims to question some of the central claims concerning Latina/o identities prevalent in the field of Chicano/a Studies and Latino/a Studies. As explained by Ramón A. Guttiérrez and Tomás Almaguer in their Introduction to *The New Latino Studies Reader: A Twenty-First-Century Perspective* (2016), the terms "Latino," "Latina" and "Latinidad" are relatively recent. During the 1940s, "Latino" was first used to refer to immigrants from Latin America (2). In the 1970s, Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago adopted it to emphasise the unity that existed between them, in order to petition the city for, amongst others, bilingual education. The ensuing scholarly field has struggled to reconcile the unity suggested by "Latina/o" with the many different identities and experiences it covers (Aparicio 54). As suggested by the title of his study, the question of identity is also central to Olguín's book. But it does not seem likely that he would agree that "[a]s an umbrella term, [Latina/o] can be used strategically to indicate the oppositional location of Latinas/os versus, or outside of, dominant society" (57). He repeatedly demonstrates that Latina/os are sometimes very much a part of dominant society. Indeed, Olguín wants to show that transnational mestiza/o sensibilities are not inherently opposed to US imperialism. The Latino/a models of soldiering which Olguín analyses exist outside the framework of revolution and the struggle against oppression of traditional theory, and instead represent "a hegemonic third-space soldiering, a militarized mestizaje" (12). Engaging with scholars including Ramón Saldívar, Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Robert

Irwin McKee and Marissa López who have written about Latino/a and Chicano/a difference and Latinidad, Olguín emphasises that violence plays a central part in shaping Latino/a ontologies and epistemologies. Crucially, the author explains that the

> book's excavation of diverse and often discrepant Latina/o subjectivities rejects the idea that warfare, atrocities, and other forms of violence, along with their perpetrators, are outside of Latinidad. Rather, violence is central to the proliferation of Latinidades, which are inherently plural. (15)

The ultimate goal is to perform "an exercise in *autocrítica*" (25), allowing the field of Latina/o studies "to align more accurately with the objective and subjective realities of the communities it purports to represent" (25).

The "violentologies" of the title is, on the one hand, a neologism referring to "violence" as well as Latina/o ontology, epistemology, agency and ideology (20–21). On the other hand, it indicates Olguín's wish to engage with the Colombian field of *Violentología*, which consists of sociologists studying the civil war and cartel violence. Olguín builds on the work of these *violentólogos* but also departs from it; to him, violentologies is both a verb and a noun as well as a methodology. As a method of interpretation, it "enables us to identify the troubling ways that pathological and even imperialistic violences are just as integral to the theoretical subjects animating Latina/o Studies as are the purportedly revolutionary forms of violence that inform the field's genesis and growth" (23).

The book's two parts focus on warfare and violence in a global context respectively. The opening chapter of the first part, "*Caballeros* and Indians: Land, War, and the Indian Question in Latina/o Autobiography, Historical Fiction, and Popular Culture" considers the concept of "indigeneity," which is central to Chicana/o Studies. Olguín thought-provokingly points out that the "reification of Chicana/o indigeneity through a multiplicity of neoindigenous paradigms and essentialist indigenist discourses" (44) tends to disregard the violent nature of the encounters between Latina/os and Native Americans, not just in the US but in a global context. Although other scholars of mestizaje and mulattaje like Ramón Gutiérrez, Antonia Castañeda and James Brooks have written about this particular history of violence, as Olguín asserts, it is his goal to conduct "a metacritical examination of Mexican American, Puerto Rican, or broader Latina/o antipathies toward Native Americans and indigenous peoples throughout the world" (46).

The second chapter of the first part, "Macho Man: Homosocial Soldiering and Ideological Dissensus in Mexican American WWII Memoir, Theater, and Film," highlights the darker aspects of the Soldado Razo, "a Mexican American soldier archetype that roughly translates as 'buck private' " (26). Instead of focusing on the bravery and heroism of the Mexican American soldiers fighting in the second World War, Olguín wants to explore some of the darker aspects of their male bonding, specifically sexual(ized) violence. Olguín explains that "even though warfare has always involved, and frequently is constituted by sexualized violence, no one has fully excavated Mexican American soldier uses of serial and, indeed, ritualized sexual violence as constitutive of both their soldiering and their citizenship" (98). Judith and Sévero Pérez's play *Soldierboy*, first staged at the Teatro Campesino under the direction of Luis Valdez, is one of his case studies in this chapter and it offers a different way to move away from the heroism archetype of the Soldado Razo, namely by confronting its audience with a model of transracial, working-class solidarity between a white and a Mexican American soldier (113).

With the first chapter of the second part, "Latina/o-Asian Encounters: Transversal Syntheses in Asia, the 'Orient,' and the *Ummah* in Latina/o Wartime Narrative, Travelogue, Spoken Word and Hip Hop," Olguín's canvas widens beyond the Americas and Europe to include the Levant and Northern Africa (144). He discusses "violentological syntheses, for which neologisms such as ChicaNisei, ChicanIndiAsian, ChiKorean and LatinOrientalist" (143) have been coined. Olguín wonders what a genuine kind of solidarity between Latina/os, on the one hand, and the Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese and Afghan populations they met during various wars, on the other, would involve. He also shows that the Orientalist clichés underlying these encounters gainsay "Latina/o Studies' counterhegemonic conceits" (171).

The meeting point between the global and the local as well as between the national and the international lies at the heart of the next chapter, "Violence and the Transnational Question: Regionalism, Nationalism, and Internationalism in Latina/o War Literature." Olguín engages with the femicide paradigm, which departs from the abstract celebration of cultural hybridity characteristic of Borderlands Studies (216). While artistic interventions focused on femicide manage to make the violent oppression of women in the US-Mexico borderlands visible, most do not "succeed at avoiding a gaze that fetishises Mexican women and girls as helpless victims, or bit players in exotically violent foreign landscapes" (217). Additionally, these narratives are unable to extricate themselves from the heteropatriarchal culture responsible for the violence in the first place. The chapter also involves an assessment of state-sponsored terror and its connection to transnationalism and raises questions about the "revolutionary nationalism" (232) frequently celebrated in Latina/o Studies.

In chapter 5, "Militarized Mestizajes: Combat, Transculturation, and Imperialism in Latina/o Life Writing from the War on Terror," the focus shifts to the US invasions of Iraq (2003) and Afghanistan (2001). Using the example of the funeral of Rodrigo Gonzalez-Garza, a Mexican citizen who died during the US military Operation Enduring Freedom, Olguín convincingly demonstrates the complexities of "Mexican American borderlands subjectivity, transnational citizenship, and fluid mestizaje as third world yet imperialist" (254). Mexico had voted against the invasion of Iraq in the UN Security Council, causing the occasion to raise the spectre of diplomatic conflict, and has laws in place against the presence of armed foreign troops, which the funeral disregarded. US imperialism became even further intertwined with Latina/o citizenship in that two separate executive orders, both issued after 9/11, made it much easier for military personnel (living and deceased) to gain access to a green card. Again, the point is to go against the grain of Latina/o Studies, in which "Latina/o" is often tied to "subaltern." I was particularly intrigued by Olguín's discussion of how Latina feminism became embroiled with imperialism during the War on Terror, since female soldiers fought for the right to participate in combat, disregarding the violence this meant inflicting on others, in some cases civilians.

Olguín ends with *Hamilton: An American Musical*, Lin-Manuel Miranda's 2015 Broadway smash hit, which signalled that Latina/o culture had become mainstream. Olguín explains that the musical "has forever changed the status of Latina/o literary and cultural production" and that it "moves the Latina/o corpus from its reified role as a representative of the margins begrudgingly added to the US American literary canon, to its new status as a central part of American *Belles Lettres*, and the world canon in general" (313). Latinidad, for its part, has become "a radically unstable but still salient category" (309) while the field of Latina/o Studies cannot but change radically. While it was quite clear to me what Latinidad was not – not necessarily counterhegemonic, subaltern, revolutionary or removed from the blights of empire – what it was appeared less obvious. The question of Latina/o identity also lies at the heart of two more recently published books*: LatinoLand: A Portrait of*

America's Largest and Least Understood Minority (2024) by Marie Arana, a Peruvian-American writer who is the Library of Congress's first Literary Director, and *Our Migrant Souls: A Meditation on Race and the Meanings and Myths of "Latino"* (2023) by Héctor Tobar, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and professor at the University of California, Irvine. Like Olguín, Arana and Tobar do not or perhaps refuse to come up with clear definitions.

Olguín's aim to expand and redefine the boundaries of several scholarly fields (Latino/a Studies, Chicano/a Studies, Ethnic Studies, *Violentología*, Borderlands Studies) and rethink some of their central tenets is impressive to say the least. While the scope of this book's ambition is obviously admirable, it sometimes makes for dense reading. The introduction marches us through a gallery of theorists that includes Franz Fanon, Elaine Scarry, Achille Mbembe, Hannah Arendt, Slavoj Žižek, Gloria Anzaldúa and Fredric Jameson, to give an incomplete list, all in quickfire succession. As someone who is less familiar with theories about Latinidad, a single sentence or even fragment of a sentence to introduce several of these did not suffice for me. I sometimes felt quite lost, definitely not as lost as Olguín describes feeling at the beginning of the book, stuck in a briar patch in Kentucky, but I, too, could have benefitted from some more elaborate signposting. Chapters regularly roam around the world and across disciplinary boundaries, while also veering from one side of the political spectrum to the other. Often so much is going on that it is not always easy to discern a chapter's critical centre, which is also perceptible from their long descriptive titles. Chapters tend to involve a highly diverse set of case studies: to take chapter 3 as an example, it discusses a travel diary from the 1980s, a 1997 young adult novel, a poem from the 1970s, a television serial, novels, plays and slam poetry, and this list is probably not even complete. The reason why these case studies were brought together is not explicitly made clear nor are their different generic premises given much thought. Two exceptions here are the discussion of Camilo Mejia's *The Road from Ar Ramadi* (2007), which Olguín points out is subtitled "a memoir" and therefore does not work as an example of *testimonio*, with its anti-imperialist ramifications (281), and of Coco Fusco's Brechtian performance "A Room of One's Own: Woman and Power in the New America" (2009). The attention paid to the performance style, venue and audience make for a much more in-depth analysis.

Even though the number of theories which the book considers and builds on is very wide-ranging and offers clear evidence of the author's erudition, I was left wondering why performance theory did not have more of a part to play, given the author's interest in "the proliferation of specific permutations of 'Latina/o' performative theories of being and knowing" (14) and his choice of case studies including dance performances by Felipe Rose. Combined with his goal to situate "the discrepant Latina/o archive" – as one of the subtitles of the introduction would have it – it seems especially odd that Diane Taylor's 2003 landmark study *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* is totally absent here. Rooted in her own personal experience of growing up in Mexico but being sent to boarding school in Canada, leading her to "overflow […] with identifications, white and brown, English- and Spanish-speaking, Anglican and Catholic, us and them" (Taylor xv), Taylor seeks to answer the question as to how performance transmits cultural memory and identity. As the then-chair of the Performance Studies department at New York University, Taylor wrote her book against the background of discussions about the canonisation and archivisation of performance. Her book brings the field of Performance Studies into dialogue with the field of Latina/o Studies, which allows her to uncover other memories, stories and struggles (xviii).

I want to end with a final point about Olguín's choice of case studies related to titles. I am writing this review for *Literary Research* and the subtitle of Olguín's book is *Violence, Identity, and Ideology in Latina/o Literature*. I would be interested to find out what Olguín's definition of literature is, since his case studies, as mentioned, include the musical *Hamilton* and Felipe Rose's dance performances. Connections between dance and literature have been posited by earlier scholars – think about Ellen W. Goellner and Jacqueline Shea Murphy in their *Bodies of the Text: Dance as Theory, Literature as Dance* – but I am not sure that they should be taken for granted. Overall, these are minor concerns about a study that is rich, ambitious as well as wide-ranging and that raises important questions about the core beliefs of several scholarly fields.

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Comptes rendus / Book Reviews

Dieterle, Bernard & Manfred Engel, eds. *Typologizing the Dream/Le rêve du point de vue typologique*

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Issu de deux workshops organisés par le comité de recherche *DreamCultures : The Cultural and Literary History of the Dream*, à Macao en juillet-août 2019 et à la Villa Vigoni (lac de Côme) en septembre 2019, ce volumineux recueil interroge les typologies dans lesquelles ont été rangés les rêves et les récits de rêves. Dans leur « préface » (9–26), les éditeurs postulent à juste titre que les taxinomies sont toujours profondément culturelles et jamais complètement arbitraires. Ils rassemblent de façon stimulante les classifications les plus usitées jusqu'à la Renaissance occidentale (Artémidore de Daldis et Macrobe) sous deux tendances : la question de l'origine du rêve (songe naturel, supernaturel, préternaturel ou induit), et celle de sa sémiotique (le songe comme message, les relations entre signifiant et signifié, la symbolique du songe). La confrontation avec d'autres cultures mène toutefois à élargir les critères pour envisager les thèmes des rêves (motifs ou sujets), leur impact émotionnel, le statut (social ou religieux notamment) du rêveur, son degré de conscience, et la fonction pragmatique ou narrative du récit de rêve. Pour resserrer le propos dans une typologie pertinente dans des contextes temporels et spatiaux fortement dissemblables, les éditeurs définissent six catégories : le cauchemar, le rêve érotique, le rêve humoristique, les rêves indigènes, les rêves d'enfants, enfin les rêves thématiques. Cette taxinomie, on le voit, répond à des critères très différents : affects suscités par le rêve (effroi, désir, rire), statut du rêveur (indigènes, enfants), enfin la catégorie indéfiniment déroulable des rêves « thématiques », dans des textes littéraires.

Le cauchemar est, jusqu'au XVIII^e^ siècle au moins, vu d'un double point de vue : d'une part le sentiment corporel de pression sur la poitrine suscitant une angoisse au sens propre du terme et attaché à l'action d'une figure mythique (*ephialtes* et incubes notamment), d'autre part, des images oniriques bizarres suscitant l'effroi. Si le récit de ces dernières est attesté depuis le XVI^e^ siècle au moins, c'est au XVIII^e^ siècle, au gré de la psychologisation du rêve, que la peur ou l'horreur provoquée par certaines images oniriques est thématisée, étonnamment concomitamment au Japon (Franz Hintereder-Emde) et en Occident (Manfred Engel sur des œuvres littéraires et picturales autour de 1800, Benjamin Specht sur le rêve de culpabilité depuis Schiller). Trois contributions sondent les possibilités narratives ouvertes par le cauchemar, de la provocation des conventions sociales et intellectuelles à l'inspection psychologique de peurs celées. Deux chapitres se penchent sur les rêves traumatiques (Tumba Shango Lokoho sur le génocide dans le Rwanda en 1994, Christiane Solte-Gresser sur la Shoah). Dorothea Redepenning analyse la mise en musique des rêves des œuvres de Pouchkine. Adrian Froschauer quitte le terrain de la littérature pour évoquer l'immobilisation du dormeur dans le cauchemar et du joueur dans les jeux vidéo.

Manfred Engel ouvre la partie sur le rêve naturel érotique dans la littérature en évoquant leur rareté avant le XVIII^e^ siècle et l'absence de réelle étude ; il souligne sa précarité (au XVIII^e^ siècle, il a une connotation morale, puis est lié par la suite à la perversion et à la violence), et étudie ses déclinaisons dans la littérature et le cinéma. Johannes D. Kamininski complète cette analyse en examinant la transformation des récits chinois de rêves, en particulier sous l'effet de la réception de la littérature européenne au début du XX^e^ siècle. Laura Vordermayer explore le hiatus entre le contenu des récits de rêves érotiques et leur absence de performativité, et conclut sur leur esthétique de l'intermittence.

Le « rêve humoristique » (« Funny dreams »), qui amuse le dormeur pendant et après son rêve, forme la substance de la belle contribution de Bernard Dieterle, consacrée à des textes littéraires des XIX^e^ et XX^e^ siècles et au cinéma. Tandis que Bernard Dieterle s'appuie notamment sur des rêves personnels (« authentiques ») d'écrivains, Ricarda Schmidt se penche sur les récits littéraires et signale leur fonction communicative, entre l'ironie et la satire attachées soit au rêveur, soit aux normes sociales que le comique vient dénoncer.

Les parties sur les rêves indigènes et les rêves d'enfants étudient des situations complexes, dans lesquelles la rédaction du récit de rêve est le plus souvent effectuée par un tiers. Rose Hsiu-Li Juan analyse les rêves divinatoires ou visionnaires dans la littérature indigène taiwanaise contemporaine et le *Black Elk Speaks* amérindien (1932), une traduction et transcription d'une narration de la biographie de Black Elk, un homme sacré issu des Oglala Lakota. Parmi ces derniers, le rêve renforce le sentiment communautaire fondé sur des croyances et un imaginaire commun attaché aux songes que l'on pense exhalés d'une force cosmique apte à insuffler la vie. Nicole Häffner, quant à elle, s'attache aux différents rêves initiatiques relatés dans le film *Black Panther* (réalisé par Ryan Coogler en 2018) et dans la nouvelle *Jardines del Origen* (2014) de l'écrivain argentin Miguel Cantilo.

Bernard Dieterle parcourt les différents types de rêves d'enfants : ceux qui sont relatés par l'enfant devenu adulte (un cauchemar de Durs Grünbein), les approches psychanalytiques et thérapeutiques de Sigmund Freud et de Carl Gustav Jung, les compilations d'Uta von Kardorff et d'Emil Szittya, enfin deux nouvelles du poète romantique E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Casse-noisette et le roi des souris* (1816) et *L'Enfant venu d'ailleurs* (1817) : souvent, « les protagonistes enfantins *séjournent* dans des rêves, ou plutôt dans des sphères conçues comme analogues aux rêves, et y font des expériences qu'ils ne relatent pas eux-mêmes et qu'un narrateur hétérodiégétique se charge de raconter et parfois d'expliciter » (520). Iris Schäfer questionne le hiatus entre le désintérêt de la science pour les cauchemars des enfants durant la longue ère victorienne et la faveur qu'ils rencontrent dans la littérature enfantine, de Lewis Carroll à Matthew Barrie.

L'ultime partie sur les « rêves thématique » est fort heureusement resserrée en trois contributions. Bernd Auerochs se demande, à propos de la tragédie *Judith* de Friedrich Hebbel (1840) si un rêve de mort peut être pris comme l'expression d'un désir de mort. Patricia Oster analyse la ville comme espace sémiotique et les images urbaines emplies d'effets oniriques dans des œuvres de Baudelaire (1861), Rimbaud (1875), Italo Calvino (1972) et le film *Inception* (2010) de Christopher Nolan. Monika Schmitz-Evans se penche enfin sur le livre comme seuil vers un monde onirique en se basant sur les romans ou nouvelles *Die unendliche*

Geschichte de Michael Ende (1979), *Dicamus et Labyrinthos* (1984) de R. Murray Schafer et *La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana* (2004) d'Umberto Eco : des livres qui deviennent des théâtres oniriques et des concrétisations (en tant que doubles) des livres dont ils parlent.

Selon l'usage allemand, le recueil ne comporte pas de conclusion. Dans le cadre d'un recueil aussi ample et complexe, quelques propos conclusifs ou un épilogue aurait pourtant été bienvenu. La thématique est certes inépuisable, et le volume aurait pu accueillir encore de nombreuses contributions. La question des classifications n'est toutefois jamais perdue de vue, et le recueil parvient à confronter de façon fructueuse l'analyse de textes littéraires classiques et modernes voire très contemporains, avec des textes extra-européens et des œuvres musicales ou cinématographiques. Les contributions introductives de Manfred Engel et de Bernard Dieterle sont particulièrement réussies. Tant sur le récit des cauchemars que sur ceux des rêves érotiques et des rêves d'enfants, l'ouvrage apporte de nouveaux éclairages. On le consultera avec profit.

Jean-Marc Moura. *La totalité littéraire. Théorie et enjeux de la mondialisation*

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La littérature mondiale est, à sa façon, « une sphère infinie dont le centre est partout » et « la circonférence nulle part », pour reprendre les célèbres mots de Pascal. C'est l'horizon toujours fuyant de la littérature planétaire que tente d'appréhender Jean-Marc Moura, comme quelques autres avant lui depuis les années 2000, dans son essai *La totalité littéraire. Théorie et enjeux de la mondialisation*. L'euphonie du titre – effets d'allitération et d'assonance dans le syntagme « Totalité littéraire » et reprise anaphorique de [lite] – met en valeur l'idée que la littérature, *a fortiori* mondiale, se donne comme un tout en relation avec le tout. On se souvient de la recension monstre de Didier Coste (près de 50 pages) pour *Acta fabula* intitulée « Le Mondial de littératures » et qui passait en revue l'ouvrage de David Damrosch (*What is World Literature*, 2003), *Où est la littérature mondiale ?* (2005), dirigé par Christophe Pradeau et Tiphaine Samoyault, *Debating World Literature* (2004), édité par Christopher Prendergast et la synthèse *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization* (2006), dirigée par Haun Saussy. Même si la littérature mondiale ne conduit pas à « une compétition réglée des littératures entre elles, départagées à intervalles réguliers » comme l'est le football, Didier Coste insiste sur la rivalité, voire les conflits entre les différentes approches de la mondialité littéraire (à défaut des littératures elles-mêmes). Le résultat de ce « mondial » entérine sans doute une relégation ou une « provincialisation » de l'Europe dans la mesure où la littérature mondiale, longtemps comprise comme un ensemble canonique figé de chefs d'œuvre européens ou occidentaux, connaît désormais d'importantes remises en cause et de profondes mutations.

Même s'il a eu quelques devanciers en France (Pascale Casanova, Christophe Pradeau et Tiphaine Samoyault, Michel Le Bris et Jean Rouaud, William Marx), Moura est sans doute le premier à proposer un essai synthétique en français sur la littérature mondiale, en tant que pratique et théorie, qui prenne en compte les acquis de la recherche des deux dernières décennies autour des notions de littérature mondiale, *Weltliteratur* ou *world literature*. La somme des œuvres envisagées est inouïe et la notion même de littérature ne recouvre pas le même sens selon les différents univers culturels. Tout en concédant d'inévitables lacunes dans le corpus mondial mis à l'étude – le comparatiste se trouve confronté aux limites de ses propres savoirs –, Moura se propose d'examiner l'agencement des multiples conceptions de la littérature dite mondiale, les différentes interprétations apparues à la fin du XX^e^ siècle. L'ouvrage qui vise à « déconfiner » les études littéraires s'organise en cinq sections : le corpus de la littérature mondiale dans sa diversité linguistique et ses partages disciplinaires, les grandes conceptions de la littérature mondiale, les obstacles qu'elles rencontrent et tentent de surmonter, les espaces-temps de la mondialité envisagés et, enfin, les perspectives ouvertes par cette histoire littéraire polycentrique.

La littérature mondiale se définit d'abord par un critère linguistique car sa circulation dépend des compétences linguistiques des lecteurs, des traductions et de la diffusion des différentes langues (langues hyper- et supercentrales *vs.* langues régionalisées). Au jeu des facteurs démographiques combinés aux critères socio-économiques, ce sont les langues européennes, anglais en tête, qui sont les plus diffusées. La mondialisation littéraire se définit également par la formation d'un système transnational des traductions, au centre duquel se trouve une fois encore l'anglais. Moura met ensuite en perspective la notion de littérature mondiale avec la discipline littérature comparée en partant de la *Weltliteratur* définie par Goethe, qui conduisait à remettre en cause l'universalisme français. Si cet aspect est assez largement connu et traité, Moura prend soin d'aborder des réinterprétation contemporaines de la *Weltiteratur* et des méthodologies comparatistes à l'aune des études postcoloniales, par exemple.

Les multiples approches de la littérature mondiale peuvent se regrouper en quatre catégories sans qu'aucune ne soit pleinement satisfaisante : l'approche patrimoniale, la « *world literature* », les recherches d'une structure d'ensemble et l'histoire littéraire du temps présent. L'ONU et l'UNESCO ont développé des programmes de collection et de traduction (sans arriver à terme) pour tenter de constituer un palmarès consensuel des œuvres littéraires du monde, mais avec le risque de voir les critères de sélection évoluer au fil du temps ainsi que de muséaliser la littérature dont l'étrangeté culturelle se trouve figée. La « *world literature* » correspond à un enseignement universitaire pratiqué aux États-Unis sous forme d'anthologie de « grands textes ». Moura évoque notamment le débat opposant David Damrosch et Emily Apter. Pour Damrosch, la *world literature* est « une réfraction elliptique des littératures nationales », une écriture qui gagne à être traduite et constitue « un mode de lecture » et non un canon tandis qu'Apter, qui défend une forme d'intraduisibilité, s'oppose à la *world literature* et son cosmopolitisme englobant qui correspondrait à une exploitation commerciale de la différence culturelle et contribuerait à gommer les systèmes de domination au sein de l'institution littéraire. Concernant les structures d'ensemble susceptibles de rendre compte de la totalité du processus de mondialisation littéraire, Moura évoque *La République mondiale des Lettres* de Pascale Casanova ou les théories du système-monde (Warwick Research Collective, Immanuel Wallerstein). Il expose les limites de ces structures : réduction de l'empan chronologique, parisianocentrisme ou anglocentrisme, approche déterministe de la littérature, œuvres assujetties à une théorie socioculturelle… La quatrième approche part du constat que la littérature mondiale est un phénomène contemporain, débutant autour de 1980, lié à la création d'un marché mondial de l'édition et une production d'écrivains inscrite dans les conditions d'une ère mondialisée. Cette approche présentiste implique une absence de recul et une ignorance du passé dans l'interprétation de la littérature.

Quelle que soit l'approche adoptée, le corpus gigantesque de la littérature mondiale présente un certain nombre de difficultés : variété des paysages ontologiques, multiplicité des catégorisations génériques et difficulté du passage oral-écrit. Moura emprunte à Philippe Descola l'acception d'ontologie au sens de « mobilier du monde », un modèle de la façon dont les humains perçoivent continuités et discontinuités dans le monde. Certaines œuvres mettent en scène de véritables sauts ontologiques entre des univers culturels, mythologiques ou religieux différents. Des critiques comme Alexandre Beecroft s'efforcent de définir une écologie mondiale de la littérature à partir des interactions entre les différentes formes littéraires à travers l'espace-temps. La question de la continuité et de la discontinuité des genres littéraires (hypergenres, généricité auctoriale, constellations textuelles, configurations génériques récentes produites par le marché éditorial), est encore assez peu abordée dans la définition de la littérature mondiale. Une troisième difficulté réside dans la difficulté de faire entrer les œuvres orales dans la littérature mondiale. Moura illustre cette partie par des exemples pris essentiellement dans les littératures africaines, montrant comment l'oralité est recomposée à l'écrit grâce à une « voix actée ».

La quatrième section de l'essai est consacrée aux espaces-temps de la littérature mondiale, sachant que chaque approche critique sélectionne des géographies et des chronologies spécifiques. Moura distingue d'abord les études maritimes – notamment l'histoire littéraire transatlantique dont il a été le promoteur en France – et les archipels littéraires internationaux, les « phonies ». Ainsi, la francophonie, espace linguistique et littéraire mondial, est centralisé, même si plusieurs centres littéraires ont fini par se constituer en dehors de Paris (Montréal, Bruxelles, Genève…). Moura explore l'archipel sinophone, tout aussi complexe que son équivalent francophone, avec une attention particulière à l'écrivain Gao Xingjian, dont l'œuvre traverse les archipels linguistique et culturel. Il accorde également une place particulière à la Caraïbe, véritable archipel au sens géographique, et à sa saisie englobante par le Tout-Monde de Glissant ou en tant que méta-archipel par Benítez-Rojo. La périodisation varie selon les différentes approches de la littérature mondiale dont les études commencent à des moments divers : dès l'antiquité, lors de l'extension du capitalisme à l'ère moderne, à la fin du XX^e^ siècle ou au début du XXI^e^ siècle. Moura s'appuie sur la notion d'hétérotemporalité proposée par Dipesh Chakrabarty pour souligner la co-existence de régimes de temporalité extra-occidentaux avec la conception téléologique du progrès. Selon Franco Moretti, il existe une littérature mondiale ancienne (avant le XVIII^e^ siècle) et une littérature mondiale moderne, un système littéraire mondial désormais beaucoup plus unifié. Cette coupure historique est illustrée par le changement de statut des écrivaines, les contributions des autrices étant bien plus visibles et massives depuis la fin du XIX^e^ siècle.

Dans la dernière section de l'essai « Une histoire littéraire polycentrique », Moura évoque l'importance de l'histoire connectée et revient à des sujets qui lui sont chers, comme la fabrique de l'étranger, la construction de l'ailleurs et l'exotisme. Dans une perspective mondiale, l'ordonnance du récit de voyage – et la conquête du monde qui lui est corrélée – est remise en cause par d'autres circulations, à travers l'océan Indien par exemple. L'exotisme, si galvaudé, doit être désormais compris comme « *la totalité de la dette contractée par les artistes d'une culture à l'égard des autres cultures* ». Pour décrire l'imbrication du domestique et de l'étranger, Moura évoque des situations bien connues dans les études postcoloniales, la frontière, davantage zone de contact que séparation, propice aux identités frontalières, les migrations et les diasporas qui informent la littérature mondiale en tant que réseaux transnationaux d'échanges culturels et linguistiques. Il termine son parcours dans la littérature mondiale en se demandant si nous ne sommes pas désormais parvenus à un âge post-littéraire, avant de s'interroger sur les modalités de l'enseignement de la littérature mondiale et le rôle des anthologies, peu prisées dans l'université française, face au défi que constitue l'extension maximale du mondial. La littérature mondiale pose plus que jamais la question de l'usage des traductions, qu'il faut sans doute considérer comme des « trahisons créatrices », un mal nécessaire pour peu qu'on les examine et qu'on les compare.

La conclusion de l'essai, intitulée « Le grand livre du monde », est l'occasion d'ultimes interrogations, parfois lancinantes, liées à des impossibilités ou des utopies : maîtriser un immense corpus et la possibilité de se créer sa *Weltliteratur* personnelle comme le suggère Herman Hesse, connaître toutes les langues et la place accordée à la connaissances des œuvres dans la langue originale, détenir un savoir extensif sur de nombreux contextes d'écriture, car la littérature mondiale dépend de sa situation d'énonciation dont il est impossible de faire abstraction.

L'ouvrage de Jean-Marc Moura se caractérise – c'est un trait de ses précédentes études – par la clarté du propos et de la composition, ce qui en fait un essai didactique au sens noble du terme. C'est aussi un ouvrage expérimental, car atteindre l'exhaustivité sur un sujet comme la littérature mondiale est à la fois un leurre et un point de fuite, dont a bien conscience l'auteur qui ne cesse de remettre en débat les postulats posés. L'essai permet de remettre en perspective des travaux antérieurs sur les littératures des lointains, les littératures postcoloniales, l'histoire littéraire transatlantique tout en marquant une sensibilité nouvelle aux écritures féminines et à leur place dans la mondialité littéraire. La littérature mondiale ne saurait se réduire à un produit dérivé de la mondialisation, à une « Disney-littérature au goût écœurant mais accoutumant de *tutti frutti* » comme l'écrivait Didier Coste dans son « Mondial de littérature ».

Prise en charge par la littérature comparée dont elle constitue l'origine en tant que *Weltliteratur*, la littérature mondiale constitue un objet complexe et infini qui encourage les approches décentrées et relationnelles et permet d'interroger l'idée même de littérature.

Bibliographie

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Alexandre Gefen dir. *Créativités artificielles – La littérature et l'art à l'heure de l'intelligence artificielle*

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Avec les générateurs automatiques de textes, le *deep learning* et les réseaux de neurones artificiels, le rêve d'artificialisation et d'automatisation du langage n'a jamais été aussi proche de se réaliser. L'ouvrage dirigé par Alexandre Gefen arrive à point nommé pour explorer les défis théoriques et critiques posés par l'introduction de l'IA dans les conditions concrètes de la production artistique. Car, de même que les fictions posthumanistes révèlent en creux une figure de l'humain, la création artificielle offre une opportunité de reconsidérer les fondements de la littérarité en revisitant ses notions fondamentales.

L'ouvrage comporte treize contributions qui émanent d'artistes ou de chercheurs en littérature, philosophie, anthropologie, études cinématographiques, humanités numériques, sciences de l'information et de la communication. La variété des disciplines représentées était indispensable pour aborder ce phénomène dont les enjeux sont aussi bien éthiques, esthétiques et épistémologiques que sociaux. Après une brève introduction, les trois premières contributions viennent nous rappeler que l'idée de création artificielle n'est pas entièrement nouvelle mais qu'elle a été anticipée par des textes antérieurs à l'avènement de l'IA. Philippe Bootz et Hermes Salceda montrent ainsi les affinités entre le Procédé imaginé par Raymond Roussel pour écrire certains de ses textes et l'algorithme. Les opérations induites par la contrainte constituent en effet une sorte de programmation qui gouverne le déploiement des possibles d'un texte, tout en lui fournissant un cadre qui circonscrit les hasards de l'écriture. Produisant des variations sur une formule ou différentes actualisations d'un programme, le Procédé est une sorte de générateur textuel qui, grâce à un traitement rigoureux du langage, anticipe la production informatique de textes comme résultats d'un hasard programmé. Valérie Baudoin propose pour sa part une comparaison entre trois textes mettant en scène des « machines autrices », dont les véritables auteurs (humains) sont H. Nearing, Stanislas Lem et Primo Levi. Elle s'intéresse en particulier aux dysfonctionnements des machines qui manifestent une prise d'autonomie rendant possible leur transformation en véritables personnages. Lorsqu'elle ne se limite plus à exécuter des commandes mais se montre capable d'apprendre et de se perfectionner, la machine acquiert en effet une agentivité qui remet en question son statut ontologique et efface ses frontières avec l'humain. Cette capacité d'anticipation est également au cœur de la contribution de Barnabé Sauvage qui porte sur un texte de Robbe-Grillet, *Djinn,* dont la vocation première était didactique (apprentissage du français). Or le texte peut également être lu comme un modèle littéraire de l'apprentissage machine, puisqu'il met en place des boucles de rétroaction qui sont thématisées comme processus d'apprentissage de la grammaire et d'auto-génération du texte. Manifestant un remarquable entrelacement d'enjeux fictionnels et grammaticaux, le roman fait progresser de concert l'apprentissage linguistique (temps verbaux) et la narration qui, sous l'action conjointe de la SF et du fantastique, introduit le subjonctif et le conditionnel comme temps du récit. Le roman s'affirme ainsi comme une « pièce cybernétique » dont la double élaboration – pédagogique et narrative – est conditionnée par le principe de rétroaction.

Les contributions suivantes explorent les enjeux et limites de la création artificielle d'un point de vue esthétique et épistémologique. Je les présente dans le désordre car, en l'absence d'un découpage en sous-parties, la dynamique de leur agencement n'apparaît pas clairement. Je commencerai par les contributions qui offrent les perspectives les plus larges sur la création artificielle. François Levin propose un point de vue historique qui retrace la généalogie des machines créatives à partir de deux grandes approches : l'heuristique formelle, basée sur une méthode calculatoire universelle, et la cybernétique, basée sur le principe de rétroaction, soit la modification en retour des conditions de la pensée.

À ces deux approches, il propose d'en ajouter une troisième, consistant à considérer les machines créatives aussi comme des « machines herméneutiques ». Une telle approche exigerait de prendre en compte ce qui échappe aux algorithmes, ce qui ne se laisse pas modéliser et donc une forme d'imagination du possible faisant appel à l'intuition et à l'interprétation.

Nevena Ivanova propose pour sa part une réflexion basée sur la typologie de M. Boden qui distingue trois types de créativité : la « créativité exploratoire » qui ne permet jamais de dépasser les limites de l'espace conceptuel de départ ; la « créativité combinatoire » où des éléments connus sont fusionnés pour générer de nouveaux éléments ; et enfin la créativité transformationnelle, où les éléments générés sont le produit de modifications appliquées aux objets produits par la créativité exploratoire. Si les machines réussissent assez bien dans les deux premières catégories, elles réussissent moins bien dans la troisième catégorie qui correspond à la créativité humaine. Or celle-ci ne concerne ni l'imitation-reproduction du déjà existant (apprentissage profond), ni la génération d'objets nouveaux et utiles, contrairement à ce qu'affirment les tenants de la « créativité computationnelle ». Nevena Ivanova propose plutôt de la caractériser par une ouverture générale vers l'être qui inclut des affects et des actes de nature sensuelle. L'une des difficultés posées par cette étude, par ailleurs tout à fait intéressante, est qu'elle oppose la « créativité computationnelle » à l'IA, mais sans préciser ce qu'elle rassemble sous chacun des termes. Si le premier désigne un domaine de recherche émergent, on ne comprend pas très bien ce qui le distingue de l'intelligence artificielle et des deux grandes approches qui ont balisé son histoire : l'approche algorithmique et l'approche par réseaux de neurones.

La différence entre ces deux approches est explicitée par Peter Depaz qui la met au compte d'une différence de « style scientifique » (au sens de Gilles Gaston-Granger et Ian Hacking). L'approche algorithmique utilise un symbolisme de logique mathématique qui a pour style de notation les symboles et les listes. Les premiers produisent un effet d'unicité en permettant la combinaison d'éléments primaires dans des expressions complexes, à quoi la liste ajoute un effet relationnel en permettant d'établir un lien entre les symboles. Cette approche atomistique et relationnelle cèdera la place dans les années quatre-vingts à un style diagrammatique, fondé sur des notations de statistique, de spatialité et de plasticité. Cette approche spatiale de l'intelligence et du langage, intrinsèquement liée à la neuroplasticité, va déterminer l'émergence de l'apprentissage profond au début des années 2010, qui, en faisant la part belle à des modèles probabilistes, va rendre possible l'implémentation des réseaux de neurones artificiels, devenue entretemps l'approche dominante en intelligence artificielle.

La différence entre ces deux démarches soulève la question épineuse de savoir si l'intelligence artificielle est véritablement capable d'innovation ou seulement d'imitation. L'apprentissage profond (ou approche par réseaux de neurones) tire sa puissance de la somme de données qu'il permet de traiter, de la possibilité d'accéder à tous les contenus du web. C'est l'approche qui rencontre les succès les plus éclatants aujourd'hui, reléguant au second plan l'approche algorithmique qui est plus rigoureuse mais moins performante. Le défaut du *deep learning,* cependant, c'est qu'il ne permet pas d'inventer du nouveau à partir de rien : recherchant la typicité, la simplicité et l'abstraction analytique, il ne peut que reconfigurer l'existant. Peut-on alors parler de création ou seulement de l'imitation d'une création ? Pour répondre à cette question, Anais Guilet s'appuie sur le roman d'Antoine Bello, *Ada,* qu'elle qualifie de roman du second degré ou du palimpseste. Ada est une IA entraînée pour écrire des romances en synthétisant une masse monstrueuse de données tirées de la littérature populaire. Elle matérialise ainsi la pratique qui consiste à produire du neuf à partir de l'ancien, caractéristique des IA du type GPT 3. Or cette pratique tend à défaire les frontières entre plagiat et intertextualité. Comme toute autrice, Ada est en effet le produit d'une culture forgée par l'intertextualité qui, revendiquée, nuance la conception du génie singulier et novateur du « grand écrivain ». En même temps, les textes qu'elle est censée produire relèvent d'un genre très standardisé, basé sur la reproduction de recettes et de clichés. La technologie dont elle relève la rend extrêmement dépendante des données ou hypotextes qu'elle traite. Ce scénario suggère qu'entre l'autrice Harlequin réelle et l'IA, il n'y aurait qu'une différence de degré : une simple automatisation des programmes narratifs déjà en vigueur, associée à une puissante efficacité en termes de masse de production. L'enjeu du roman de Bello serait alors moins de dénoncer les menaces portées par les algorithmes que de souligner l'automatisation de la création humaine.

La question de l'originalité est aussi au cœur de l'étude Pascal Mougin qui voit dans la création automatique une opportunité pour réinterroger la notion d'auctorialité. En effet, l'idée d'une littérature « artificielle » remet profondément en question l'idéal romantique qui s'est construit par opposition au modèle artisanal, puis industriel, de la production littéraire.

Elle se heurte à un interdit profondément ancré, celui du *faire faire*, donc de la délégation de l'exécution, ce que l'auteur appelle la *factitivité*. Or le *faire écrire* apparaît difficilement compatible avec la légitimité littéraire et ses critères : idéal expressif, purisme de l'écriture, figure de l'écrivain en tant que génie solitaire, etc. Pour dépasser cette aporie, Mougin propose de substituer aux modèles dualistes, l'hypothèse d'une «auctorialité partagée» fondée sur l'existence de boucles de rétroaction. Dans cette perspective, la création artificielle peut être envisagée comme technogenèse, c'est-à-dire comme un jeu d'interférences à double sens, où les humains et la technique se modifient mutuellement.

Bruno Dupont et Carole Guesse parviennent à des conclusions plus mitigées à partir de leur comparaison de deux oeuvres dont la publication a été accompagnée par des annonces tapageuses les présentant comme produites par des IA. Ainsi du livre de Clemens Setz, *BOT : Gespräch ohne Autor* (*Conversation sans auteur,* 2018), produit en réponse à une journaliste qui lui avait demandé une interview détaillée sur ses intérêts et préférences intellectuelles. L'échec de leur dialogue a conduit le jeune écrivain à céder la place à son ordinateur qui a répondu à la journaliste en sélectionnant de manière automatique et en combinant des fragments préécrits de son journal électronique. Dans la préface, Setz présente son livre comme une sorte de « texte posthume. L'auteur lui-même est absent et remplacé par son œuvre ». La couverture du volume le mentionne cependant comme « auteur ». Mais le livre est né des questions posées par la journaliste et des réponses tirées du fourmillement de notes enregistrées sur son ordinateur. Qui alors est vraiment l'auteur ? La même question se pose à propos du livre d'Hermann Kant, *Ein WORD-Spiel* (1995), où des propositions automatiques sont fournies par le correcteur orthographique de son traitement de texte : à partir des erreurs relevées par le logiciel, l'auteur se livre à des associations libres d'où dérivent les anecdotes qui constituent le texte. Les deux auteurs feignent d'avoir abandonné la production de son texte à des processus aléatoires, même si c'est pour mieux ensuite affirmer sa légitimité d'écrivain. Cette stratégie de retrait donne à voir la part de performativité dans les fictions de l'IA : dire qu'une IA est à l'œuvre, c'est la fonder en tant que telle et ériger le texte au rang de preuve toujours renouvelée que ce dire est productif.

Les machines empêchées, dysfonctionnelles, ou simplement faillibles apparaissent dans la fiction souvent comme des machines en voie de subjectivation. En effet, ces échecs sont souvent mis en rapport avec une forme d'autonomie « émotionnelle », laquelle fait désormais l'objet d'une discipline spécifique, au croisement de la psychologie, de l'informatique et des sciences cognitives : l'informatique affective (*affective computing*). Claire Châtelet étudie les manifestations cinématographiques de cette faculté supposée de l'IA, qui est vue comme un prélude à la « conscience machinique ». À partir de films comme *Her* (Jonke, 2013), *Sayonara* (Fukada, 2015) ou *Penser voir* (Fournier, 2018), elle montre que les machines intelligentes ne deviennent vraiment inquiétantes que lorsqu'elles deviennent faillibles et que leurs imperfections brouillent les frontières entre humain et non humain. C'est aussi le constat fait par Ada Ackerman, qui explore les ressources littéraires du drone lorsqu'il devient personnage de fiction. Dans *L'opium du ciel* (Orengo, 2017), le personnage principal est un drone aux velléités littéraires, qui s'est forgé une parole propre à partir de l'hypotexte vertigineux et totalement hétéroclite que constitue le net. Mais le trop-plein de données engrangées l'amène à produire des « bugs » machiniques qui sont présentés comme des inventions formelles, l'auteur jouant de la porosité entre erreur et licence poétique. Loin d'exprimer la peur d'une confiscation du langage par la machine, le roman pointe ainsi vers une possible complémentarité entre agentivité humaine et agentivité machinique, qui signale la condition plus que jamais hybride de l'écrivain à l'heure du numérique.

La question de l'auctorialité est inséparable de celle de la subjectivité des machines, que Nikoleta Kerinska aborde à partir de l'exemple des chatbots. Au-delà de leurs fonctions habituelles, ces derniers sont parfois conçus à des fins artistiques, comme des œuvres interactives capables de dialoguer avec des humains. Or pour illusoire qu'il soit, ce dialogue tend à susciter un engagement psychique et émotionnel de l'humain qui se traduit par une problématique langage-identité. L'utilisation du langage naturel confère en effet à la machine quelque chose comme une identité fictionnelle, dont le paradoxe est qu'elle ne se construit pas dans un récit mais à travers une interaction qui met en jeu simulation, réalité et fiction. La dernière contribution est une simple note, signée Ilan Manouach, qui porte sur la bande dessinée. Échappant aux conceptions traditionnelles de l'auctorialité comme génie singulier, la BD est aussi un media fortement digitalisé qui dépend de communautés en ligne très actives et qui se prête donc aux processus programmatiques qui définissent l'apprentissage machine. L'auteur illustre cette particularité avec l'une de ses œuvres, *Fastwalkers*, la « première BD synthétique écrite avec une IA », sorte de méditation sur l'apprentissage machine qui célèbre la poétique inattendue de la computation générative et explore son potentiel à faire émerger de nouvelles sensibilités de lecture.

L'intérêt de cet ouvrage est d'offrir un premier panorama sur la création artificielle, qui interpellera tous ceux qui sont curieux de découvrir cette « vallée de l'étrangeté » (Masahori Mori). Si la plupart des contributions reste accessible au néophyte, un glossaire en fin de volume aurait été utile pour unifier les définitions et éviter certaines ambiguïtés. Une seconde difficulté se rapporte à l'agencement des démarches qui n'apparaît pas clairement dans la succession des contributions : des subdivisions sériant les approches (historiques, épistémologiques, théoriques, etc.) et une introduction plus étoffée auraient fourni des mises en perspective aptes à éclairer le lecteur.

Chris Thurman and Sandra Young, eds. *Global Shakespeare and Social Injustice. Towards a Transformative Encounter*

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At the end of *As You Like It*, as Touchstone is finishing his riff on "the degrees of the lie," he suggests that one can avoid even the "Lie Direct" with an "if": "Your 'if' is the only peacemaker; much virtue in 'if' " (5.4.100-1). That last phrase deserves to be appropriated for other circumstances and, in the case of *Global Shakespeare and Social Injustice*, it has helped me to recognize that there is much virtue in "*In-*." For, at the heart of this project, even though it powerfully connects with the recent spate of fine work on Shakespeare and social justice, the collection's strength and distinctiveness (and, indeed, distinction) lies in its concern with *in*justice, the investigation of some of the many forms of injustice in Shakespeare's work and, beyond Shakespeare, in the forms of injustice he helps us to understand.

The volume did not begin with that awareness. The impetus for it came from a conference on "Shakespeare and Social Justice," noticeably lacking the "In-," at the Fugard Theatre in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2019. Now it has appeared in a series on "Global Shakespeare Inverted," run by David Schalkwyk, Silvia Bigliazzi and Bi-qi Beatrice Lei as its General Editors and published under Bloomsbury's Arden Shakespeare imprint, a series that is rapidly proving to be both remarkable and transformative in Shakespeare studies in its investigations of its concerns through topics that are new and powerfully considered. For the volumes they have included, the General Editors deserve thanks and admiration. I mention the series and its editors because reviews all too rarely note such things and, as a series editor myself, I know only too well the extensive labour such academic work requires and how often one can feel unrecognized for one's contribution in enabling the volumes in such a project to be published. Among the items in this series' list is one written by one of the co-editors of the current book, Sandra Young's brilliant monograph exploring *Shakespeare in the Global South* (2019).

The new collection takes its place alongside some mighty interventions that effectively established the sub-field of "Shakespeare and social justice," all thoroughly acknowledged here, especially David Ruiter's massive collection *The Arden Research Handbook of Shakespeare and Social Justice* (2021) and *Teaching Social Justice through Shakespeare*, co-edited by Hilary Eklund and Wendy Beth Hyman (2019). But this volume makes its own distinctive intervention as we learn how to chart the possibilities of the field. Its subtitle, "Towards a Transformative Encounter," is, for the editors, a sign of "the potential for radically transformative work that more recent trends in Shakespeare studies and innovative theatre-making invite and enable" (Introduction, 5). While the move avoids defining exactly what work will be transformative and what will be transformed, it seems to be as much the work with Shakespeare in communities subject to social injustices that it documents as well as the work in Shakespeare studies that these chapters demonstrate. Above all, the collection seeks to recognize what social injustices our world is permitting, be it "the pervasiveness of racist violence and gender-based violence" or the ways in which "inequality has been entrenched though the impact of a global pandemic, when access to healthcare, vaccines and income protection has been uneven, devastatingly so for the most disempowered and vulnerable of communities" (5).

As always, it is vital that Shakespeare scholars recognize and work to undo what the editors rightly term that "assumption that Shakespeare represents a kind of cultural and even 'moral' elevation," for, though much has happened, I entirely agree that it is time to turn the concerns with "global Shakespeare" into "a greater capacity for self-reflexive critical thought," for Shakespeare studies "has not aligned itself unambiguously with a social justice orientation" (2).

The result of gathering together a group of scholars from across the world and encouraging them to think about the topic is that the diversity of approaches and materials is both exciting and yet difficult to make cohere so that, as so often with volumes of this kind, the section titles can seem like slightly desperate attempts to impose a structure on chapters that resist their supposed interconnections. So normative is this effect that I found myself reading the chapters in a random order, for there cannot be a simple through-line here. And that also means that, as I dive into their provocations, I shall not work my way through from the opening chapter to the last, from Susan Bennett "Re-thinking 'global Shakespeare' for social justice," offering an energizing reformulation of what had, in the very term "global Shakespeare," come to seem only a reformulation of Shakespeare's power to induce a passive acceptance of the cultural and political capital for which his work had been appropriated, through to Wendy Beth Hyman's account of her own pedagogy in "Teaching *Titus Andronicus* and Ovidian myth when sexual violence is on the public stage," as she demonstrates her profoundly thoughtful pedagogy at a difficult and equally profoundly troubling cultural moment, ending with a call to her fellow Shakespeareans:

> To my fellow teacher-scholars who are never sure whether to avoid or dive into these really tough issues – the deaths, the national tragedies, the scandals the crises on campus and off – I admit it is partly a matter of temperament and ethical orientation that I prefer to dive into the wreck. But isn't there always a wreck, really? And where are we going, exactly, if we won't go there? (245)

I envy her students who can learn from such a vibrant and powerful instructor.

Dyese Elliott-Newton is determined to go to a particular version of Hyman's "there" in her chapter on "Making whiteness out of 'nothing,' " which considers the horrifyingly frequent incidence of "comedic torture of (pregnant) Black women;" Her "there" starts from the violent arrest of an eight-months pregnant Black woman in the parking lot of an elementary school in Barstow, California in 2015, an event that the ACLU adjudged racist but which the Police Department simply refused to see in that light. As she explores *The Merchant of Venice* and, in particular, the conflict between, on the one hand, the interracial and interreligious marriage of Lorenzo and Jessica and, on the other, Lancelot Gobbo's making "the Negro" pregnant, a woman left unnamed as well as unseen but doubly racially identified (first as "Negro" and then as "Moor"), Elliott-Newman guides us to works that were, to me at least, unfamiliar, such as the Norse narrative *Morkinskinna* (1220), while as well providing a new approach to the court masque, *The Masque of Blackness* (1605), a text that I had thought could not yield new insights. As she puts it, "comedic violence reconfigures uncomeliness, misshapenness and monstrosity as constants for the Black body" (94). The injustice of the medieval and early modern representations is entirely in harmony with the abuse of Ms Cooks' body, the denial of her human rights because her body is itself an affront to the policeman who arrested her. If the distance between the literary texts and the 21st century injustice seems vast, it rapidly and rightly narrows in Elliott-Newman's reading.

This example of seeing what the literary or dramatic texts, once read aright, can teach us of what is still unjust is a recurrent method in the book. And *The Merchant of Venice* is a key text, as in Derrick Higginbotham's analysis of the play's "racecraft," as he calls it, in his analysis of the play as "a comedy of turbulent feelings" (102), at the start of his fine study of it as what his title punningly dubs "Feeling in justice." Higginbotham's and Elliott-Newton's attention to the play has a further accompaniment in Hassana Moosa's reconsideration of how the presentation of the Prince of Morocco is a part of "the racialization of Islam" in the play, something Moosa compares with the post-9/11 process among aircraft cabin-crew and airport security of reading the Muslim body, of their "lear[ning] how to recognize and antagonize those who appear to be Arab, Muslim, or Middle Eastern" (Zareena Grewal, quoted by Moossa, 135).

But just as important as such reassessments of Shakespeare plays are the examples of how the early modern and especially the Shakespearean texts can offer possibilities for that transformative work, as in Rowan Mackenzie's study of a 2019 UK production of *Julius Caesar* by incarcerated men who are members of a co-operative theatre company called the Gallowfield Players. Using "Men at some times are masters of their fates" (*Julius Caesar* 1.2.137) as her title and motto, Mackenzie ends by arguing that

> I have sought to affirm that, while the actors of the Gallowfield Players may lack agency in the context of the wider prison system, in their ownership of the theatre company they have been – at some times at least – masters of their own fates. (179)

Quoting from their rehearsal diaries, Mackenzie shows how the stresses and strains, the deep-seated mental health issues for so many in prisons, are alleviated and reassessed through the experience of making theatre. As with the most famous example of Shakespeare in prisons, the Shakespeare Behind Bars programme at Luther Luckett in Kentucky, run by Curt Tofteland, and the subject of Hank Rogerson's documentary film *Shakespeare Behind Bars* (2005), Mackenzie shows how *Julius Caesar* enables that confrontation with the self that is crucial to remaking the self while also offering a rare moment of escape so that, as Ben, one of the actors, writes, when they performed in front of their families, "I can honestly say that…I forgot that I was in prison, forgot that I was a prisoner," offering "a rare breath of fresh air in an otherwise suffocating situation" (Ben, quoted by Mackenzie, 179).

Other approaches to performance speak of the ways in which, for instance, the social injustice of gender distribution of roles in Shakespeare has been differently rethought in "open-gendered casting," in Abraham Stoll's analysis of rehearsal and performance choices in professional theatre or in Kai Wiegandt's fresh thoughts on the Robben Island Shakespeare as a site of "politicized reading and performative writing."

It is the opening section's three pieces, Susan Bennett's chapter I mentioned above, Linda Gregerson's study of "Caliban in an era of mass migration" and especially Alexa Alice Joubin's complex, dazzling, exhilarating attempt to answer the question " 'What makes Global Shakespeare an exercise in ethics?," that, in their overview, add up to differing but equally helpful attempts to pose and to answer the section's title, "Scholarship and social justice: Questions for the field," offering the greatest leverage for our future scholarship on the topic.

Like all the best collections, *Global Shakespeare and Social Injustice* is not an end but a radically new beginning, a way to assess what we have done so that we can move differently forward, here making us confront both the need to engage through our scholarship with social injustice and to represent the two axes along which Shakespeare has stood and continues to stand: backwards to the passivity of conservative traditions, forwards to a future in which his plays can help us move from pervasive injustice to global justice.

Ruben Espinosa. *Shakespeare on the Shades of Racism*

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There is a generative ambiguity in the title of this book. "Shades" may be taken to mean the many different facets or manifestations of racism: its structures, the forces of its operation, the beliefs and words and actions it spurs. The word also calls to mind the reductive but common understanding of racism as being about gradations in skin tone – although this is really colourism; race is much more complicated than that, as early modern scholars know all too well. In his introduction, Espinosa quickly puts to bed the arguments about anachronism that are "often strategically employed to undermine [early modern] studies focused on race": "We can indeed interrogate the term 'race' from our present standpoint despite the perception that anachronistic understandings of the term fall short since 'race' was not a stable concept in the early modern period … Race now, like then, is vastly unstable" (4–5). The relationship between "then" and "now" gives another inflection to the title: if the phrase "shades of" also implies "echoes of" or "reminiscent of," we are being invited to see in the present day echoes of the explicit or implicit racism within Shakespeare's play-worlds – and thus also within the world in which and for which he was writing, *his* world, which has shaped *our* world. "Shades" also suggests the ghostly. There is the sense of being haunted by racism of and in the past, a continuation into the present (and the future). But perhaps, if the shades are the spirits of the dead, those who have come before, those who are sainted, "shades of racism" could even invoke those who have died as victims of racism. The shades of George Floyd and Michael Brown also hover over this book.

Still – if you would further indulge the overfamiliar inclination of book reviewers to dwell on titles – among the expectations that the title may set up for the reader is a book about Shakespeare's insight into or commentary on racism in its many forms. Espinosa very deliberately subverts that expectation, affirming that his book is not really about what Shakespeare can teach us regarding racism. Actually, the emphasis is reversed: in the pages of the book, we learn how a keener understanding of "the shades of racism" can and should inform our approach to Shakespeare. In other words, we are prompted to reflect on what it means to read or perform or watch or teach Shakespeare when we foreground the direct and daily impact of racism on black and brown people, in the United States in particular but also around the world.

This raises the question of readership. The "we" I have casually referred to above does not, after all, exist. Who is Espinosa's ideal reader? Who is his hoped-for reader? Who is his expected reader? These are not coterminous. Opening the book, I caught myself ready to claim a position of solidarity or allyship, as a reader whose approach to Shakespeare has always centred on race – on racial dynamics within the plays, and racism in the society in which I teach and research. And yet, as a white South African, I would also have to acknowledge that I am a beneficiary of structural racism, both globally and in the acute example of my own country. So the challenge is for me to identify in myself Espinosa's intended readership, which seems to be a "white" (American) academy that continues to resist the centrality of race in Shakespeare, as in every aspect of (American) life. The book's introduction gives an indication of this anticipated readership:

> In so many ways, Shakespeare embodies whiteness and exists as a cultural icon that many aspire to access. Unsurprisingly, the ambitions of people of color who seek to access Shakespeare actors, dramaturgs, critics, scholars, and students alike are often trivialized. Quite often, people of color are made to feel that their renditions, adaptations, readings, and understandings of Shakespeare are inauthentic, and that, in many ways, Shakespeare does not belong to them. In my brown skin, I'm here to tell you that what they actually mean to say when they suggest that Shakespeare does not belong to us is that we simply don't belong. I want to make it clear that we do indeed belong, and to make clear that looking at Shakespeare with the darker shades of racism of our present moment in mind is necessary to preserving his vitality in our day. (7)

The "you" here is not me, I comfortably assume. I am not one of those to trivialize black and brown experience, to cling to some outdated and conservative notion of "authentic" Shakespeare. I do not need persuading that Shakespeare belongs to everyone. I am, in this rather self-congratulatory response, at risk of acting not like a "good white" so much as what South African satirist Rebecca Davis calls a "Best White" (Davis). Not for me, white fragility; not for me, defensiveness and exclusion and casual bigotry. I'm not like other white people!

But Espinosa has a challenge for readers like me: in his opening chapter, he urges his readers "to see in the brutalized bodies of Black individuals their own role and their own selves" (12). For white readers, this ethical provocation is also a warning about the blind spots generated by our biases, the forms of misreading or misremembering that may be attributed to our racial conditioning. When I think of *Titus Andronicus*, for instance, I think of the play's relentless verbal and physical violence; I think, too, about the racism to which Aaron is subjected, a racism that seems to propel his villainy, the racism expressed by Titus, Bassianus, Lavinia, Chiron, Demetrius and the Nurse. I think about Aaron's speeches expressing black pride. But I do not think about arguably the most gruesome image in the entire play, which is the arresting starting-point for Espinosa's analysis: the punishment that Lucius designs for Aaron and his baby son (although the command is ultimately not carried out), "Hang him on this tree,/And by his side his fruit of bastardy" (*Titus Andronicus* 5.1.46-7). Espinosa aptly links this to the "Strange Fruit" in Billie Holiday's famous song about lynching. When we attend to the implications of this image, Lucius can no longer be simply the righteous revenging son, the bringer of order to Rome, nor even the "severely flawed redeemer" of the play.[1]

And what of the "better whites" in Shakespeare? Espinosa reminds us of that moment in *Othello* when a distressed Desdemona, fearful of violence at her husband's hand, and also apprehensive about going with the demoted Othello to Mauritania (where, "with her fair skin," Desdemona will be "the stranger"), recalls her mother's maid Barbary and the song

[1] See Anthony Brian Taylor, "Lucius, the Severely Flawed Redeemer of *Titus Andronicus*" and Jonathan Bate, "'Lucius, the Severely Flawed Redeemer of *Titus Andronicus*': A Reply."

she sang. The various forms of elision – both omission and fusion – in this scene have spurred creative and scholarly responses (Espinosa cites Toni Morrison and Peter Erickson). Desdemona identifies with Barbary as a miserable, perhaps even abject, subject; but she also seems to merge Barbary's blackness with Othello's blackness, by implication lowering the latter to the former's social status. Desdemona's "seeming nostalgia for childhood" is "indicative of an understanding that she is losing standing and privilege because her husband, darker of skin, no longer holds her on a pedestal":

> But while her power seems to fade, the perceived superiority of her whiteness remains … It is a moment where Desdemona must resituate herself, because she is on unstable ground with her Black husband. Recalling her former slave allows her to do that along racialized lines … This is the convenient illusion surrounding Black lives – they exist for the sole purpose of centering and elevating whiteness. We cannot ignore this facet of Desdemona simply because she seems "progressive" enough to enter into a marriage with a Black man … That, to borrow from [Sharon Patricia] Holland, does not give her the right to feel that she has acquired "a kind of purchase on Black life." The deployment of the conveniently dead and silent Barbary to highlight Desdemona's suffering not only privileges whiteness but altogether undermines the absent character. Barbary's sadness matters only because it registers Desdemona's sadness, and is not in and of itself important. Barbary is not in and of herself important. (89–91)

A third cogent example of the dangers lurking within the best intentions of "good whites" is the Stranger's Case speech from *Sir Thomas More*, now commonly attributed to Shakespeare and widely quoted or performed as a critique of xenophobia and the anti-immigrant discourse so frequently heard in populist politics around the world. The problem of white liberal do-gooders reinscribing the centrality of whiteness even in their (our) attempts to oppose racism and bigotry is a well-known phenomenon, and there is a risk of something like this occurring through the much-vaunted Stranger's Case speech. In affirming its call for the recognition of our shared humanity, and invoking Shakespeare's moral authority in doing so, proponents of the speech as a kind of rhetorical panacea end up enacting the same claims for Shakespearean universality that have historically assumed white Anglocentric perspectives to be the basis of the "universal." Employing the famous concluding phrase from More's speech, Espinosa has written elsewhere of the "mountainish inhumanity that so very many people of color are forced to contend with day in and day out" (Espinosa n.p.). The Stranger's Case is often cited or performed to offer hope, the hope that "white rage" will dissipate as its causes and effects are better understood. Yet, Espinosa asked in 2019 – in response to ongoing human rights violations relating to the US-Mexico border, as well as a mass shooting at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, in which Mexicans were specifically targeted – "One might wonder, do we really need Shakespeare to understand this?":

> My firm answer is: No. But I wholeheartedly believe that Shakespeare needs us … It is up to those of us committed to issues of social justice to locate in Shakespeare the moments that will allow for the candid and necessary discussions in our classrooms regarding race, racism, and white supremacy – at every turn, and not just when we teach *Othello*. I did not immediately think of *Sir Thomas More* when contemplating Shakespeare in the aftermath of the shooting, because – quite frankly – I wasn't hopeful. I was angry. I thought of the racist complicity [that] abound[s] in his works … I thought of all the whites in Shakespeare whose value is set against those darker of skin. After all, it isn't really my brown skin that makes me vulnerable – it is the workings of whiteness that imagines me as a threat because of my skin and thus threatens my very existence. It is *your* mountainish inhumanity that haunts me (Espinosa n.p.).

In *Shakespeare on the Shades of Racism*, Espinosa teases out some of this "racist complicity," posing a differently-inflected question. Instead of turning to Shakespeare to advise us on the "alienation, inhospitality, and perceived illegitimacy" that seem to mark white Americans' attitudes to Latinx people, we should instead ask: what can the grim realities of *La Frontera* "teach us about Shakespeare?" (40)

Again, that "us" is significant. This book is by no means parochial. In Chapter 6, invoking Jacques' disdain for an anthropomorphised herd of deer, the "fat and greasy citizens" who sweep indifferently past the suffering of others (*As You Like It*, 2.1.58), Espinosa enjoins his American readers to think about "violated Black and brown people residing not only in our country but also in regions beyond" – beyond Mexico too, to Haiti, Gaza, Darfur, the Philippines (120–21). But what about readers who live in these regions, or in other "elsewheres" in the global South or North? I found it most instructive to reflect on how the provocations presented in *Shakespeare on the Shades of Racism* can be applied to my own position in South Africa. Here, I return to the example of *Titus Andronicus*, a play that was staged at the Market Theatre in South Africa in 1995 (a year after the country's first democratic elections) and received its most significant filmic treatment in Julie Taymor's 1999 version, which was in turn spurred by her stage production in 1994. Arguably, both the Market *Titus* – a co-production with the UK's National Theatre, directed by Gregory Doran – and Taymor's film should be situated against a backdrop of global 1990s (post-Berlin Wall, post-apartheid) optimism about reconciliation after conflict. In the South African version, Lucius' merciless concluding lines condemning the body of "that ravenous tiger, Tamora" to be thrown "to beasts and birds to prey" (*Titus Andronicus* 5.3.194-97) were replaced with the words of a conciliatory invitation from Marcus earlier in the scene: "… let me teach you how to knit again/ This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf,/These broken limbs again into one body" (5.3.69-71). In Taymor's *Titus*, which does not at all appear to share the pre-millennial optimism but instead takes its cue from twentieth century atrocities, the final sequence seems nonetheless to offer a hopeful image of a younger generation escaping the cycles of revenge in which their elders have been locked: the Young Lucius figure walks into a new dawn holding Aaron's baby. It is possible that Taymor is being ironic here. Either way, the effect is the same as in the Market *Titus* – Lucius, the "severely flawed redeemer," is himself redeemed.

Insofar as it enables a return to the historical moment in which these two versions of *Titus* were produced, *Shakespeare on the Shades of Racism* also issues a series of (trans-Atlantic, indeed global) warnings. Be cautious of attempts to promote reconciliation and resolution via Shakespeare. Resist the easy recourse to Shakespeare as a redemptive figure, the liberal humanist who can help us to overcome our worst inclinations towards racism. Instead, seek to understand how Shakespeare is part of these inclinations, and how the teaching and performance of Shakespeare – as well as his wider function in the public imagination – has been complicit in their perpetration and perpetuation for centuries.

It may appear, to those who locate themselves within the field of Shakespeare studies, that this has become a normative approach. One thinks of the impact of premodern critical race studies, of initiatives like RaceB4Race and the broader work of the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, where Espinosa is Associate Director. Espinosa recently became the President of the Shakespeare Association of America. Isn't the job done?, one may wonder. Has the momentum not shifted towards the recognition of race and racism as crucial to our every engagement with Shakespeare? Yet this assertion is too easy. It is inaccurate not only because legislators in certain states in the US would make it illegal to employ Critical Race Studies as a paradigm in the classroom;

the GOP is almost too obvious an opponent here, their crass culture wars self-evidently undertaken to undermine attempts to build awareness of historical and ongoing injustice, and to prevent the attainment of equality. The assertion is also too easy, and inaccurate, because Shakespeare's cultural capital – in the US and globally – continues to be deployed to skirt around frank engagements on the subject of racism as often as it is to enable them. Engrained ideas about "what Shakespeare teaches us" are as dangerous as right-wing culture warriors, as undermining of social justice, because they are insidious. But don't take it from a Best White; read Espinosa's book instead.

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Nicolas Brucker. *Lumières et religion. La transcendance dans le roman : Prévost, Rousseau, Rétif*

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Dans la présente monographie, fruit de sa thèse d'habilitation à diriger des recherches, Nicolas Brucker étudie trois auteurs phares des Lumières françaises, à savoir Antoine François Prévost, Jean-Jacques Rousseau et Nicolas Edme Rétif de la Bretonne, sous l'angle inédit de la question de la transcendance diversement traitée dans leurs œuvres romanesques. Il offre ainsi une contribution essentielle aux recherches, qui ont connu un grand essor ces dernières années, sur le rapport des Lumières à la religion.

Le roman du XVIIIe siècle n'a eu de cesse, en effet, d'« intégrer à sa matière littéraire les questions de théologie ou de métaphysique » alors régulièrement mises en débats. Gage de divertissement, le roman se présente aussi comme un moyen de penser ces questions non pas *in abstracto* mais par le recours aux « cas », aux « exemples », à l'« expérience exemplaire des passions » figurées dans le récit, incarnées dans des personnages où prennent chair les interrogations récurrentes touchant à l'existence de Dieu, à l'immortalité de l'âme, au salut personnel ou à la justification du mal. L'introduction de l'ouvrage devait donc sacrifier à l'exposé de la complexité du roman des Lumières qui, sous l'angle envisagé, semble soulever plus de questionnements qu'il livre de réponses. Nicolas Brucker y fait un tour d'horizon de l'épineuse question du rapport entre les Lumières et la foi et initie son lecteur au discours de la théologie du XVIII[e] siècle.

Afin de présenter sa thèse et les objectifs de son enquête, l'auteur arme d'emblée son lecteur d'une analyse sémantique du terme de *transcendance* et des concepts en relation directe avec ce dernier : *Providence*, *cœur*, *ciel*, etc. pour, *in fine,* expliciter son approche méthodologique qui ambitionne de lier la transcendance, en tant que catégorie herméneutique, à l'essence du roman – compris comme l'expression d'une quête de soi qui s'articule au *point de vue* des acteurs, aux *dialogues* et à l'*action* ancrés dans le temps et l'espace de la fiction. Le *point de vue*, qui suppose l'existence d'une subjectivité, pose la question de la tension entre le générique et le singulier, inhérente au genre romanesque. C'est ensuite dans les *dialogues* que s'articulent les débats au sujet d'oppositions récurrentes : liberté *vs* nécessité, nature *vs* grâce, vie mondaine *vs* vie chrétienne, amour *vs* honneur, vice *vs* vertu, faiblesse *vs* force …. L'*action* du roman pose à son tour la question de la Providence, qui, en tant que « Providence romanesque » engage une « activité réflexive », propre à un genre littéraire qui ne cesse d'interroger « ses propres conditions d'existence en important, transposant, déconstruisant un matériau devenu forme et sens » (35). Ces trois éléments du roman sont ensuite reliés aux formes d'inscription de la transcendance dans le genre romanesque : la « transcendance subjective » qui s'arrime à la question du point de vue ; la « transcendance objective » qui trouve son expression dans le dialogue et les débats à son sujet. En définitive, se pencher sur la relation entretenue entre « transcendance et fiction » revient à explorer l'apport de la transcendance à l'évolution même du genre romanesque. Ce sont ces trois axes qui sous-tendent l'ouvrage et le traitement des concepts et questions essentiels liés à la transcendance dans les romans du corpus – à savoir la trilogie de Prévost (*Mémoires et aventures, Cleveland, Le Doyen de Killerine*), la *Nouvelle Héloïse* de Rousseau et *Le Paysan et la Paysanne perverties* de Rétif de la Bretonne.

Ces œuvres ont été choisies à très juste titre pour les liens de filiation qu'elles entretiennent entre elles : Rousseau a apprécié Prévost, comme Rétif cherche à récrire la *Nouvelle Héloïse*. Tous trois sont débiteurs du roman sentimental de Richardson et interrogent la morale, en se focalisant sur le conflit amoureux. Leurs contributions peuvent, pour cette raison, être considérées comme particulièrement représentatives du roman de leur époque.

La première partie de l'ouvrage analyse ainsi la question de la « transcendance subjective » à partir de la notion d'expérience intérieure, qui est fondamentale dans les moments de crise ou de conflit moral, souvent d'origine passionnelle. Ce sont les termes de *cœur*, de *passion* et d'*amour* qui trouvent ici leur explicitation au sein de l'analyse sémantique et discursive des romans. Les autres concepts clés liés à la « transcendance subjective » sont la conscience et la conversion qui, dans le roman des Lumières, se présentent essentiellement dans leur acception sécularisée. À travers l'étude des personnages romanesques et de leurs destins « extraordinaires », l'auteur démontre de manière convaincante la dimension transcendante de leurs conflits amoureux et son impact sur la manière de les résoudre. Il fait ressortir l'anthropologie des auteurs qui est systématiquement contextualisée et resituée en lien avec les discours philosophique et théologique de l'époque. Mais, ce sont avant tout les lectures des textes, extrêmement convaincantes – comme l'analyse de la métaphore du voile dans la *Nouvelle Héloise* en rapport avec la question de la conscience –, qui permettent une approche inédite de ces œuvres, fort étudiées par ailleurs. Il en est de même pour l'étude de la conversion qui, selon Nicolas Brucker, « permet de mesurer le degré d'imprégnation de la civilisation occidentale par la religion : on observe à quel point celle-ci fournit le cadre mental et les moyens linguistiques de l'expression des attitudes dans l'ordre de la pensée et de l'action » (107). L'analyse thématique du concept de la conversion s'opère par la suite à travers la question de l'altérité, du rapport à l'autre, et trouve dans le dialogue avec l'être aimé un espace particulier où s'exprimer, comme dans le cas de Julie : « en épurant sa relation avec l'autre, et singulièrement avec Saint-Preux, qui est pour Julie l'emblème de l'altérité, cette dernière perfectionne aussi sa relation avec le Dieu invisible » (128). La conversion, qui prend parfois l'allure du drame, peut inciter à l'imitation et produire un rayonnement sur les autres. Les lectures fines des textes du corpus romanesque révèlent en effet de manière extrêmement pertinente le rôle fondamental de la conversion dans le roman des Lumières qui la réactualise et lui confère une dimension herméneutique : « grâce à une réinterprétation des notions d'altérité, de modèle, de narration, la littérature renonce à sa prétention d'édifier le lecteur. Le sujet, réhistoricisé, devient le siège du drame : le roman fait l'histoire de sa conscience, dans ses mouvements infimes comme dans ses crises et ses révolutions » (149).

La deuxième partie de l'ouvrage, placée sous le signe de la « transcendance objective » analyse les débats autour de questions théologiques et philosophiques dans le dialogue romanesque : celles-ci s'y inscrivent souvent en filigranes et confortent le caractère (auto)réflexif du genre littéraire. Ces débats tournent essentiellement autour de la problématique de la croyance, du surnaturel ainsi que de la Loi.

La troisième partie de l'ouvrage examine le concept de « transcendance » dans son rapport à la fiction romanesque, comprise dans sa dimension anthropologique. La transcendance conditionne la représentation spatiale ainsi que temporelle du roman. Et, c'est la Providence qui « convertit la gratuité de l'anecdote en nécessité tragique » (241). La question du rapport de l'homme à Dieu, telle qu'elle se pose à travers les personnages romanesques, est analysée de manière perspicace, et toujours reliée aux discours philosophiques et théologiques contemporains. Plus que la Providence, la notion de prophète se révèle ambiguë : « quand chez Rétif la référence biblique vient spontanément pour auréoler d'une gloire la figure de l'homme providentiel, chez Prévost et Rousseau, le prophète sert surtout de repoussoir. À celui-ci est opposée une figure neuve, anti-prophétique, définie par des lumières naturelles et par une communication non rhétorique » (266). La question du rapport des personnages romanesques à la finitude de l'existence et à la mort est au centre de la dernière sous-partie de la monographie. Les eschatologies des romans conçoivent des espaces et une conception du temps qui leur sont propres et qui s'expriment dans des visions utopiques et prophétiques annonciatrices des grands changements sociétaux de l'âge moderne.

Grâce à ses grandes compétences en matière de théologie, l'auteur de la présente étude révèle l'extrême complexité du roman du XVIII^e^ siècle, dont les lumières restent en effet « voilées » : « les Lumières du roman sont voilées, non par une incapacité à voir ou communiquer la pure lumière de la raison, mais parce que cette lumière même ne saurait être considérée indépendamment des conditions de sa perception » (353). L'analyse démontre le caractère discutable de la recherche traditionnelle, qui se pense à partir de l'opposition binaire entre Lumières et Anti-Lumières. Elle démontre l'impact du concept de la transcendance à tous les niveaux de la fiction romanesque pour des auteurs qui ne comptent pas nécessairement parmi les représentants des Anti-Lumières. Force est de constater, au contraire, que la question de la religion reste au centre de la réflexion anthropologique de l'époque, même si elle se caractérise par son anti-confessionnalisme. Par sa plurivocité, sa polyphonie et son caractère aporétique, le roman des Lumières se fait ainsi porteur de relativité et d'esprit critique. La transcendance et ses notions connexes sont cependant soumises à l'examen de la conscience éclairée et en ressortent dans toutes leurs ambivalences. Le roman en est porteur et répond de cette manière à la vocation prophétique qui lui est propre. La lecture savante, qui lie ici *close reading* et réflexion théologique et philosophique à la lumière du concept de la « transcendance », élargit donc les perspectives de l'approche de romans clés pour le genre et pour la période. Elle rend justice à la complexité et à la pluralité du mouvement intellectuel qui les porte. En cela, l'ouvrage participe de manière originale et inédite à la révision actuelle d'une vision monolithique de la recherche dix-huitièmiste.

Céline Benoit. *Livres rêvés : merveilles de l'écriture et de la lecture dans le conte de fées (1690–1788)*

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Le livre merveilleux peut sembler n'être qu'un objet parmi d'autres dans l'imaginaire des contes de fées. Mais les mises en scène de l'écriture dans les contes des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles ne se limite pas à des grimoires. C'est ce qu'affirme Céline Benoit, dont l'étude magistrale retrace l'apparition et l'évolution de la lecture et de l'écriture dans les contes au long de l'Ancien Régime – période à la fois d'origine et de grand essor pour le genre. Cet ouvrage retrace les instances des « pratiques lettrées », tirées en grande partie de phénomènes soi-disant réels – soit, observables en dehors du contexte fantastique – transformés en merveille. Ce qui ressort est un riche paysage métatextuel, que cet essai met en lumière grâce à l'analyse méticuleuse d'une centaine de sources primaires, truffées de motifs littéraires.

L'ouvrage est structuré autour de trois axes principaux. Le premier met en avant les « objets et formes des pratiques lettrées », comprenant des analyses du livre merveilleux, des échanges épistolaires, et des lieux lettrés. Le livre merveilleux est, d'emblée, un objet protéiforme. Un « caméléon » (27), il apparaît sous divers genres et formes. De la poésie aux œuvres morales, des sciences humaines aux sciences occultes, le livre féerique témoigne d'une grande pluridisciplinarité pour Benoit, qui constitue une véritable « bibliothèque » (108) où les connaissances humaines se côtoient et se complètent : des romans d'amour y figurent, ainsi que des livres de pharmacie (108). L'universalité émergente reflète la poursuite ambitieuse de la connaissance au long du siècle des Lumières. Ainsi le conte se révèle pleinement littérature de son temps.

L'approche méthodologique de Benoit témoigne, également, d'une certaine pluridisciplinarité. L'autrice a recours à une vaste série d'outils qui complètent sa lecture attentive de passages, et ses typologies compréhensives. La sociologie de la littérature est mise en avant à plusieurs reprises, notamment à travers des références au travail de Georges Benrekassa, Roger Chartier, et Alain Viala, parmi d'autres. Benoit s'intéresse à des phénomènes culturels tels que l'émergence des bibliothèques publiques, l'augmentation de l'alphabétisation et la professionnalisation de l'écriture entre le XVII^{e} et le XVIII^{e} siècle. Son originalité consiste dans le fait qu'elle met en lumière la transposition de ces changements dans le domaine purement féerique. On peut en dire autant de l'engagement de l'autrice dans les questions de genre et d'écriture féminine, en plus de ses évocations de l'histoire du livre. Le monde des contes de fées se montre calqué sur le réel mais, comme nous le verrons, cette mimésis n'est pas unilatérale.

Les échanges épistolaires sont, pour Benoit, un des principaux moyens par lesquels le merveilleux reflète et dépasse le vraisemblable. Un chapitre entier est consacré à cette pratique sociale, emblématique de la littérature de l'époque. Benoit fournit une typologie de l'épistolaire féerique dont les exemples et les analyses sont riches et variés. On rencontre des lettres d'amour et de séduction, où les femmes sont les égales des hommes et ont la possibilité « d'exprimer leur sentiment » (122). Les lettres officielles, telles que les communications royales, se joignent aux intrigues de cour ; les frontières entre la fiction épistolaire et le conte de fées s'estompent au fur et à mesure que le XVIII^{e} siècle progresse. Le ludisme du XVIII^{e} siècle n'est pas absent non plus. Plusieurs détournements licencieux mettent en évidence la finalité parodique de certains contes. L'acheminement du courrier passe, par exemple, par des moyens parfois inattendus – les transporteurs de correspondances fantaisistes vont des pigeons, sans trop de surprise, dans *Les Mille et une nuits*, aux batraciens dans « La Grenouille bienfaisante » de Madame d'Aulnoy.

De la lecture-écriture aux lettres, on arrive aux lieux lettrés, qui concluent le premier axe. On voit que la mise en circulation du livre ouvre également la porte à la créativité et à la surenchère merveilleuse. Au cours de son ouvrage, Benoit s'appuie avec succès sur divers outils heuristiques pour approfondir ses analyses. Ici, c'est la notion de « bibliothéconomie » qui lui permet d'éclaircir les spécificités de la gestion des bibliothèques imaginaires, y compris les questions « d'architecture adaptée, de notion de collection, d'accroissement du fonds, de classification et rangement » (169). Les bibliothèques imaginaires s'érigent dans divers endroits, notamment dans un Versailles sous-marin dans « L'Île de la Magnificence » de Madame de Murat. La bibliothèque constitue un lieu à part, comme les cabinets de lecture, qui sont des espaces privilégiés de sociabilité, aussi bien dans le monde féerique que dans le monde réel.

Le deuxième axe porte sur les « usages de la lecture et de l'écriture » et se divise en deux sections, comme l'indique le titre : la lecture, puis l'écriture merveilleuse. Pour se distancier de l'aspect physique du livre-objet tel qu'il est décrit au sein des récits, Benoit se penche d'abord sur les cadres narratifs – telles que les représentations parodiques au XVIII^{e} siècle de la lecture oralisée d'antan – puis sur les paratextes qui entourent les livres imprimés des contes de fées eux-mêmes. Ces paratextes sont, pour la plupart des lecteurs, le premier abord du récit qui suit : ils servent à fournir, à ce titre, des pistes d'interprétation et/ou les clés de lecture, préparant « le lecteur à entrer dans un univers lettré » (213), univers où les pratiques de lecteur, souvent « calquées sur des habitudes réelles », prennent néanmoins diverses formes. Ici, on croise la lecture plus ou moins intensive : les fées qui feuillettent des livres de manière utilitaire entrent en contraste avec d'autres personnages qui « rest(ent) de nombreuses heures sur la même page » (217). Benoit invoque de manière efficace le travail fondateur d'Alain Viala dans *Naissance de l'écrivain* (1985), pour montrer à quel point le conte suit « la modification sociale du nouveau lectorat » (290), qui coïncide avec l'émergence du premier champ littéraire dans le demi-siècle qui précède directement les limites historiques de cette étude. L'alphabétisation croissante de l'époque touche surtout les femmes. Benoit montre que c'est au cœur du co(n)texte merveilleux que la femme lectrice commence à obtenir « un statut qui la rend apte à lutter contre sa destinée » (291) : un père qui lui propose un mariage malheureux, dans « Le Sauvage » de Madame de Murat, par exemple. De plus, les femmes « merveilleuses » deviennent à la fois lectrices et émettrices de savoirs. Des personnages tels que la reine Urraca dans « La Reine des fées » de Préchac, servent d'exemples aux lectrices réelles. Ainsi, le conte devient « un espace de liberté métaphorique pour la femme auteur, et les conteurs hommes, mais aussi pour le lecteur qui peut se reconnaître » (291).

L'essai s'éloigne des livres codex et des parchemins dans le chapitre consacré à l'« écriture merveilleuse » pour privilégier les messages plutôt non conventionnels gravés ou déposés sur les objets quotidiens tels que la vaisselle et les compositions florales. Une typologie, exhaustive à nouveau, permet à Benoit d'identifier cinq caractéristiques ou valeurs qui regroupent ces supports scripturaux diversifiés : le pittoresque, le dramatique, l'épistémè nostalgique, la magie, la métatextualité. Les objets sont partout mis au service de l'écriture « pour convier le lecteur vers un ailleurs où l'écriture féerique est reine » (342). Ce monde fantastique offre, pour Benoit, toute une « encyclopédie des sens » (344) qui permet aux lecteurs, contemporains de Condillac, de prendre « goût » à la lecture.

Le troisième et dernier axe que propose ce travail est celui des « filiations et [de la] réflexivité » du conte par rapport soit à d'autres récits, soit à lui-même. Ayant retracé les relations entre le monde féerique et le monde réel, l'auteur met ici en avant l'intertextualité, révélant la place importante qu'occupe le conte de fées dans la tradition littéraire. Le sixième chapitre de l'ouvrage tisse des liens entre le conte, la nouvelle et le roman. De nombreuses filiations apparaissent à travers des inscriptions qui, pour l'auteur, font entrer le conte dans le monde littéraire des romans médiévaux et pastoraux ainsi que dans l'univers mondain de la galanterie. Aux pratiques sociales et amoureuses typiquement « françaises », décrites notamment par Viala dans *La galanterie : Une mythologie française*, interviennent à nouveau les surenchères fantaisistes. Par exemple, on retrouve dans « Jeune et Belle » de Madame de Murat des vers gravés sur du bois précieux, enjolivé d'or et de turquoise – détournement fantaisiste du *topos* pastoral de l'amour proclamé sur un arbre gravé.

Au terme de son ouvrage, Benoit soulève et ressoude une tension évoquée de manière plus ou moins directe tout au long de son étude. En effet, la reprise de certains *topoï* et de thématiques mondaines, toujours étroitement liés aux actes de l'écriture et de la lecture, souligne la réflexivité inhérente au genre. Plongé dans le monde lettré, le conte est entièrement « conscient de sa production » (397). Cette mise en abyme, par laquelle les auteurs (d)écrivent des écrivains et par laquelle les lecteurs en lisent d'autres, est elle-même enrichie par la présence d'allusions ou de références à des histoires antérieures aux contes étudiés. Imprégné de références intertextuelles, le genre devient « le produit narratif du conte lui-même, à la fois dans les paratextes […] mais aussi dans les histoires pour créer de l'enchantement » (439). Les contes de fées, bien que situés dans des contrées merveilleuses, restent fortement ancrés dans le champ littéraire auquel ils participent, et par lequel ils sont influencés.

L'ouvrage de Céline Benoit réussit pleinement son objectif : accorder une juste place aux pratiques de lecture et d'écriture dans les études sur les contes de fées. L'autrice déploie une méthodologie riche et maîtrisée, mêlant à l'histoire littéraire des aspects de l'histoire du livre – et ce, avec une grande clarté d'expression. Dans une perspective diachronique – de 1690 à 1788 – la constitution de typologies de gestes scripturaux et littéraires divers, incluant la portée socio-culturelle, (méta)poétique, et onirique des pratiques lettrées au sein du genre, servira de référence pour d'autres chercheurs, ainsi que pour les étudiants qui s'intéressent non seulement au « merveilleux », mais aussi au mimétisme et à la représentation réflexive de la littérature par elle-même.

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Masha Karp. *George Orwell and Russia*

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Masha Karp's *George Orwell and Russia* gives us a portrait of a writer completely immersed in the ideological conflicts of his time. In this account he is such a thoroughly political creature that he is constantly weighing the best responses to every twist and turn in contemporary events, as though his very existence requires it. The Spanish Civil War looms large in this narrative, and Karp is at her best on the subject as she expertly sorts through the complexity of the struggle on all fronts. She has uncovered many new details from her study of materials in Russia about Soviet intrigues in Spain. The result is that she has given us one of the best accounts of Orwell's time as a volunteer on the Aragon front, and as a hunted man in Barcelona.

As her title indicates, the significance of Russia in Orwell's life and work is her primary concern, especially from the standpoint of Stalin's tyranny. In fact, Stalin dominates this book as the one political figure whose pronouncements and deeds are of vital concern to Orwell, more so than Hitler or any other leader. In great detail Karp tries to sort out Orwell's efforts to separate the dictator and his evils from the ideals of socialism. In the process, Stalin becomes, as Karp argues, the greatest influence on Orwell's vision of totalitarianism, despite the fact that the British author never visited the Soviet Union. For her, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is primarily an anti-Stalinist work, and she suggests that to see it in broader contexts is to undermine the impact of its sustained attack on Stalin's methods and madness.

Toward this end, she quotes historian Robert Conquest's view that it is unwise to separate *Nineteen Eighty-Four* entirely from its specific attacks on Stalinism. According to Conquest, "If the meaning of the book is distorted to deal with other targets, however deserving, Orwell's intent is lost" (Conquest 187).

It is not clear how either Robert Conquest or Masha Karp discovered that Orwell's "intent" was to "model" his fictional creation on Stalin's Russia. He never said that. In fact, he said just the opposite. Writing in June 1949 to an American labor official – Francis Henson, of the United Automobile Workers – Orwell said that his aim in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was to warn against totalitarian methods in general, regardless of time and place. "The scene of the book," he wrote, "is laid in Britain in order to emphasise that the English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else and that totalitarianism, *if not fought against*, could triumph anywhere." (Orwell *Collected Essays* Vol. 4: 564; the italics are Orwell's).

This letter was published in the 1960s, and is quoted in my biography of Orwell (Shelden 474). It should be familiar to Karp, who is the editor of the journal of the Orwell Society. Yet she does not mention it in her discussion of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Instead, she is so determined to make Orwell's novel relevant to the supposed Stalinist aspects of Putin's Russia that she quickly jumps from her chapter on the novel to a longer chapter on the war in Ukraine and other examples of Putin's efforts to take Russia "back to Stalinist practices."

Despite some good scholarship on Orwell and Spain, this book is ultimately more of an exploration of the West's struggle to see the truth about Stalin's reign of terror. That is a worthy subject for study, but there is no need to drag Orwell into it so that Karp can use his work as a pretext for her anti-Stalinist and anti-Putin commentary. Unfortunately, her approach to Orwell's work is a common one. George Orwell is such a powerful and perceptive writer that everyone seems to enjoy attaching his work to special causes on all parts of the political spectrum. Even arguing with Orwell's conclusions is worthwhile because matching wits with his can be a rewarding intellectual exercise. Over many decades he has become all things to all people, with Orwellian coming to mean just about anything people do not like about powerful institutions.

Again and again, writers and politicians see in Orwell's writings something that mirrors their own views, and are then quick to use his work to advance a particular thesis of their own, despite doubtful or nonexistent connections to anything Orwell said or did. He makes a great ally in any argument because he writes so well, and because he is safely dead, which can allow authors like Karp to speak confidently of his "aims" as though they were exactly the same as hers.

But all this does a great injustice to Orwell's genius, which was singular. He is not like any other writer, which is easily demonstrated by any effort to imitate his style. It cannot be done. The only thing that can easily be done is to borrow his ideas and make them look more stylish or timely by embellishing them. To take a timeless masterpiece like *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and attach its significance so closely to Stalinism is to deny Orwell's own hopes for its broad appeal to defenders of liberty "anywhere," as he put it. There is no denying that this vision of the future was partly influenced by what he knew of Soviet life at the time, but just as important was his understanding of authoritarian trends in wartime Britain and America, as well as his knowledge of oppression in the West's colonial empires. Every so often we need to be reminded of what he thought was his own special appeal.

First, it was not just political. He understood the political debates of his time as well as anyone, and has helped to shape the way that later generations think of the various ideologies popular in the last hundred years or so. But he also saw himself as a literary figure with a talent for shaping memorable sentences and creating compelling stories. Part of him wanted to write old-fashioned poems and novels. A poem of his from the 1930s begins, "A happy vicar I might have been," and goes on to detail his fondness for a life of the imagination in a place of peace and obscurity (Orwell "Why I Write" 27–28). What "turned the scale" of his ambitions, as he put it in "Why I Write," was his experience of political treachery in the Spanish Civil War (Orwell "Why I Write" 28). This turned him into a writer with an eye ever alert to the political implications of any event.

It is important to note, however, that he never could shed his artistic concerns and write merely of politics or other social matters. He was clear in "Why I Write" that art still mattered, declaring, "What I have most wanted to do throughout the past ten years is to make political writing into an art." (Orwell "Why I Write" 28) He never has been given enough credit for that art, which shows itself so brilliantly in the imagined world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, a world teeming with iconic moments, words, and phrases that he invented, and that have endured.

He was not simply putting himself in the place of oppressed people to see the world through their eyes. He was creating a fictional world complete in itself, with its own logic, which is especially detailed in the ideas behind Newspeak. The most disturbing elements of that world have made such a strong impression on readers in so many places precisely because the implications are broad and universal. Though he borrowed heavily from historical and literary examples, his world is ultimately not Stalinist or Fascist or anything else but Orwellian.

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Ce livre présente un intérêt qui va au-delà de ce que son titre semble laisser supposer. La partie principale est sans doute l'adaptation pour le théâtre d'*Abel Sánchez. Historia de una pasión*. Ce roman (« nivola ») de l'auteur espagnol Unamuno décrit la souffrance profonde, provoquée par l'envie, que Joaquín Monegro, un nouveau Caïn, ressent tout au long de sa vie pour son ami, le sympathique, l'innocent Abel Sánchez, à qui tout réussit. Le texte pose le problème de cette passion destructrice, mais aussi celui de la « fama », la « renommée, unique forme de survie pour un être mortel ».

L'auteur de l'adaptation, Robin Lefere – prestigieux hispaniste, bon connaisseur de la littérature hispano-américaine, spécialiste de Borges – nous en donne une version française, suivie de la première traduction en français de la pièce d'Unamuno, *El otro*, ouvrage très explicitement apparenté au mythe de Caïn et Abel. Nous trouvons aussi en annexe la version espagnole de l'adaptation théâtrale d'*Abel Sánchez*, ainsi que deux intéressants *Prologues* de Luis García Jambrina et de Jerónimo López Mozo, dans leur texte original espagnol et leur traduction française. Ils offrent un double regard critique sur cette adaptation, celui du spécialiste unamunien et celui de l'auteur de théâtre, qui connaît bien les enjeux de la création.

Ce qui constitue donc déjà une importante contribution à la bibliographie d'Unamuno est encore complété par une brève présentation de son œuvre dans le chapitre « En guise d'introduction ». Ces quelques pages ont le mérite de montrer ce qui est fondamental pour comprendre cet auteur : ses rapports avec son temps, la richesse et la variété d'une œuvre qui se manifestent dans les genres les plus divers – la poésie, le roman, le théâtre, ce que l'on pourrait appeler les commentaires de Voyages –, le tout en relation avec l'essai littéraire et philosophique. Ces pages mettent en évidence les liens étroits entre ces différents genres, qui expriment, sous diverses formes, plutôt que les idées, toujours contradictoires, les désirs, les préoccupations, les angoisses profondes de l'auteur, sa foi « agonique », ce « vitalisme frénétique » qui répond au sentiment tragique de la mort. Une œuvre dans laquelle on peut découvrir le « personnage » qu'il a créé et qui l'incarne avec ses paradoxes et ses contradictions : « la création intime du moi se double non seulement, comme toujours, de la projection de l'image de l'auteur, mais encore de la création d'un personnage : Unamuno » (20). Une œuvre dans laquelle le penseur, le philosophe se manifeste dans les œuvres littéraires, de même que le poète, paradoxalement, dans les essais.

L'intérêt de ce livre réside non seulement dans l'adaptation de ce roman au théâtre, mais aussi dans les réflexions qui l'accompagnent. Elles cherchent à expliquer les problèmes posés par la transposition d'un genre à un autre. Dans le chapitre « Abel Sánchez (adaptation théâtrale en français) », Lefere nous explique la motivation principale : la dynamique dramatique propre au roman lui-même, l'intrigue en « crescendo » qui conduit à la mort et que l'adaptateur va transformer en onze courtes scènes. Lefere avoue avoir été « frappé par la composante théâtrale et la mécanique tragique » du roman. Il explique ensuite les légères différences d'adaptation entre les deux versions française et espagnole. Pour celle-ci, il indique qu'il s'est souvent limité à transposer certains dialogues, ce qui montre le caractère proprement dramatique du roman. Pour ce qui est de la traduction, il aborde un problème plus difficile, tel le changement de certains prénoms qui ont une charge significative en espagnol, parce que phonétique (Joaquin-Caïn devient Martin, et son pendant féminin Joaquina devient Martine, tandis que le fils d'Abel, Abelin, devient Albin). Il reconnaît que ces choix sont discutables, mais qu'on trouve difficilement des solutions plus adéquates. Dans le travail qui consiste à passer de ce qui est propre au roman, c'est-à dire le récit, à l'échange dramatique, l'adaptateur fait appel à des didascalies qui apparaissent indispensables. En ce qui concerne la transformation du récit introspectif de Martin en scène théâtrale, il confie au personnage de la fille, Martine (qui se tient au fond de la scène), la lecture de ce récit intime ainsi que les pensées qui l'ont torturé tout au long de sa vie et qu'il lui a transmises sous forme de journal.

L'adaptateur complète ses commentaires par un autre chapitre, « Considérations rétrospectives et prospectives » qu'il place en post-face de l'adaptation ; comme le titre le signale, il le fait dans une volonté de dialoguer avec un lecteur qui connaît déjà son texte. Il reprend le problème des prénoms, et il aborde la question fondamentale qui concerne le sens de l'œuvre : la passion qui domine le personnage principal, l'envie, sa nature et sa relation avec le mythe biblique. Il considère comme erreur, à juste titre, l'interprétation fréquente qui consiste à qualifier l'angoisse des personnages unamuniens comme existentialiste : « l'essence de ces personnages reste mystérieuse, et la littérature est un moyen d'exploration de ce mystère » (72). L'adaptation met en relation ce « mystère » avec le daimôn de la philosophie grecque, ce qui nous amène à considérer aussi que la plupart des pièces, peu connues et peu représentées du théâtre d'Unamuno, reprennent des sujets des tragédies grecques : « La esfinge » (La sphinge), « Medea » (Médée), mais surtout « Fedra » (Phèdre), laquelle, comme le Caïn-Joaquín-Martin d'*Abel Sanchez*, se demande pourquoi elle serait coupable d'une passion qu'elle n'arrive pas à surmonter. L'adaptation de Lefere en vient d'ailleurs à confirmer ce que personnellement je pense : ces deux pièces sont très proches. D'une part, en raison de la sobriété, du dépouillement scénique, et de l'absence de référence temporelle. D'autre part, à cause de l'intensité des passions, du conflit entre l'amour et la haine. L'envie, chez *Abel Sanchez,* fait écho à la passion incestueuse chez *Phèdre ;* dans les deux pièces, on assiste à un drame de la vengeance et à une volonté de pardon.

Lefere nous offre une réflexion sur la relation entre le drame biblique et *Abel Sanchez* ; il traite aussi de l'association habituelle entre l'envie de Martin et la fameuse « envidia hispánica », maintes fois commentée dans la littérature espagnole. Finalement, il rappelle très pertinemment le prologue d'Unamuno à la deuxième édition espagnole d'*Abel Sanchez*, en 1928, dans lequel notre auteur prend le parti moral pour son Joaquín Monegro, face à l'« innocence » de tous les Abel. C'est la préférence, même l'admiration unamunienne pour l'homme qui souffre, qui se débat contre une passion insurmontable qui joue le rôle de Destin, un homme « agonisant » qui survit, face à celui qui se laisse vivre, parce que tout lui a été donné.

Dans l'introduction, Lefere anticipe quelques réflexions sur *El otro*. Il est tout à fait pertinent d'associer la traduction de cette pièce de théâtre d'Unamuno à l'adaptation d'*Abel Sanchez*. Nous y retrouvons le crime fratricide, le rappel au mythe biblique, les mêmes raisons passionnelles, le triangle amoureux, le meurtre. Cet ouvrage est volontairement ambigu, comme le problème qu'il pose : celui de l'identité propre, et de l'identité de l'Autre, en raison de la duplicité liée au thème des jumeaux. On sent l'ombre de Pirandello sur ce texte. C'est un ouvrage inquiétant, dont l'intérêt réside dans l'équivoque. Pourtant, je ne dirais pas qu'il s'agit de la meilleure pièce d'Unamuno. *Phèdre* ou *Sombras de sueño – l*e drame de la monotonie, du quotidien, de l'isolement insulaire, inspiré par son exil à Fuerteventura – me semblent beaucoup plus réussies. Il n'empêche que le théâtre d'Unamuno n'a pas été suffisamment apprécié. Lefere lui-même le dit dans son introduction : « Loin de divertir, donc, Unamuno poursuit par d'autres moyens l'exploration des passions et des idées, en maintenant une tension constante, dans le plus grand dépouillement » (20).

C'est précisément l'exploration des passions, la tension constante et le dépouillement dramatique que nous trouvons dans les onze scènes de cette intéressante adaptation d'*Abel Sanchez*, qui vient s'ajouter à l'œuvre théâtrale d'Unamuno. Elle attend, ce qui est le propre du genre, une mise en scène qui la ferait reconnaître pour ce qu'elle est, une véritable œuvre dramatique.

Le mythe biblique du premier crime de l'humanité est lié ici au conflit relatif au destin dans la tragédie grecque que l'helléniste Unamuno connaît bien, ainsi qu'aux mystères de la nature humaine. Le roman, ou plutôt la pièce à présent, pose le problème des passions, de la culpabilité et de l'angoisse. Martin le dénonce et s'en plaint : « Les brebis d'Abel étaient du goût de Dieu, et leur berger trouvait grâce aux yeux du Seigneur, mais les fruits de la terre et Caïn le laboureur ne plaisaient pas à Dieu. Abel était le favori, le béni… et Caïn le disgracié. Comment vivre avec cela ? » (49).

Lidia Morales Benito. *La Habana textual : 'Patafísica y OuLiPo en la obra de Guillermo Cabrera Infante*

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Ce volume s'inscrit directement dans la lignée d'une monographie publiée par Lidia Morales Benito en 2021, auprès de l'Universidad Iberoamericana de Puebla, et intitulée *El arte del funámbulo. Juego, 'Patafísica y OuLiPo, aproximaciones teóricas y equilibrismos literarios*. Ce premier ouvrage, résolument théorique et panoramique, offrait d'abord une révision des méthodologies et des concepts critiques appliqués à l'étude du rapport entre jeu et littérature, avant de proposer une brève histoire transatlantique (anglophone, francophone et hispanophone) de la littérature ludique. *La Habana textual* constitue à la fois le prolongement et l'approfondissement de cette étude en ce qu'on y examine également le jeu comme matière poétique, mais en se concentrant cette fois sur l'œuvre de Guillermo Cabrera Infante.

Le corpus investigué dans la présente parution inclut les œuvres les moins étudiées de l'écrivain cubain, bien que *Tres tristes tigres* soit également pris en compte à plusieurs reprises : d'abord son recueil poétique *Exorcismos de esti(l)o* (1976), ensuite le roman *La Habana para un infante difunto* (1979) et, finalement, ses romans posthumes *La ninfa inconstante* (2008), *Cuerpos divinos* (2010) et *Mapa dibujado por un espía* (2013). Malgré l'absence d'une numérotation des chapitres et sous-chapitres, la progression argumentative est assurée par l'organisation équilibrée des trois grandes parties du texte, qui suivent la chronologie du corpus analysé.

Ce parcours chronologique permet d'examiner les différentes modalités de l'esthétique ludique (d'ascendance essentiellement oulipienne et pataphysique, même si elle puise aussi à des influences anglophones) adoptée par Cabrera Infante au fil de sa carrière et en fonction de ses désillusions politiques, surtout depuis l'exil, face aux dérives totalitaires ayant marqué le régime castriste post-révolutionnaire. *La Habana textual* démontre brillamment en quoi les pratiques textuelles de l'auteur servent un projet de préservation symbolique de La Havane. En mettant l'île en récit (ou en poème, selon les cas), et en la transformant en plateau de ses jeux littéraires, Cabrera Infante l'extrait de ses contingences socio-politiques douloureuses et remplace le contrôle *horizontal* de l'Histoire par le pouvoir *vertical* de la géographie (276), susceptible de déplier des réalités alternatives dans un cadre ludique préservé.

Au fil d'un état de l'art resituant les différentes théories du jeu appliquées à la littérature (essentiellement Caillois, Huizinga, Picard et Wilson), l'autrice commence par proposer différents bilans historiographiques concernant le développement de la 'Pataphysique et de l'OuLiPo, dans leurs continuités et leurs ruptures avec d'autres mouvements littéraires – tels que l'esthétique baroque, la *commedia dell'arte*, certaines avant-gardes ou encore l'esthétique de l'Absurde –. On retrace ensuite l'influence de ces tendances à Cuba et, plus particulièrement, le rôle déterminant joué dans ce contexte par Virgilio Piñera, afin d'expliquer par quels biais Cabrera Infante a pu se familiariser avec ces techniques d'écriture du jeu.

L'analyse d'*Exorcismos de Esti(l)o* (63–136) qui suit ces chapitres introducteurs fait état de la variété des stratégies textuelles ludiques adoptées par Cabrera Infante et relevant de références oulipiennes, via par exemple des allusions à Queneau, des métathèses, des calligrammes, des réécritures d'un même texte en différentes versions ou encore des contraintes de type graphique, phonétique ou sémantique, introduisant dans les textes, entre autres procédés, du multilinguisme, des palindromes, des lipogrammes, des tautogrammes, des homonymies ou des formules mathématiques. Ces processus se combinent fréquemment au sein d'un même texte, allant parfois jusqu'à souligner les apories de la communication langagière. Lidia Morales suggère ainsi qu'*Exorcismos de Esti(l)o* fonctionne en tant que véritable atelier de création oulipien.

Outre ces systèmes de contrainte, une multitude de références intertextuelles parsèment les textes de Cabrera Infante et contribuent à leur caractère ludique. Au-delà de la fonction souvent comique de ces allusions et réécritures, celles-ci se caractérisent bien souvent par un phénomène commun de *choteo*, un mot cubain se référant à une moquerie irrespectueuse, faite dans le but de démystifier divers objets (83). L'autrice utilise ce concept de façon particulièrement opératoire, en soulignant dans quelle mesure l'écrivain subvertit la plupart de ses sources. Les conventions syntaxiques et lexicales de l'Académie Royale Espagnole sont par exemple dévoyées, et même teintées d'une dimension scatologique, tandis que les codes de la tragédie grecque sont, quant à eux, tournés en dérision.

La chercheuse souligne à cette occasion le paradoxe, à la fois dans la poétique et la posture de l'auteur cubain, entre une forme d'élitisme littéraire (de nombreux poèmes de *Exorcismos de esti(l)o* étant particulièrement abscons) et une revendication conjointe du patrimoine culturel populaire (le boléro, le cinéma, les expressions idiomatiques cubaines, etc.). *La Habana textual* démontre d'ailleurs à quel point Cabrera Infante multiplie dans ses textes les intersections entre des sources littéraires canoniques (telles que le théâtre de Plaute et de Tirso de Molina, la poésie rimbaldienne et baudelairienne, les fictions de Lewis Carroll ou de Cervantes) et les références populaires qu'il affectionne. Lidia Morales guide constamment le lecteur dans le décodage des nombreuses polysémies dont font montre les textes de *Exorcismos de esti(l)o* et de *La Habana para un infante difunto*, au fil desquels plusieurs lectures peuvent précisément se déployer en fonction du réseau intertextuel identifié par le récepteur.

La Habana para un infante difunto (examiné plus particulièrement pp. 137–195) actualise pour sa part, toujours dans une logique ludique (touchant parfois au grotesque) de *choteo*, à la fois les exercices de style oulipiens et les jeux langagiers (manipulation lexicale, onomastique et proverbiale, concaténation) revendiqués par le Collège de Pataphysique. L'autrice montre en quoi cette œuvre se pose comme un *game* (au sens de Wilson), défini par un ensemble de règles et situé dans l'espace d'une Havane symboliquement abstraite des contingences historiques. Transformée en *zone* de jeu, la ville cubaine littérarisée invite le lecteur à identifier les règles de son fonctionnement, soit les clefs formelles, sémantiques et intertextuelles présidant à l'élaboration des textes. Ceux-ci se présentent dès lors comme des énigmes à décoder dont la résolution permet dans bien des cas de faire émerger une critique voilée des dérives castristes. Cabrera Infante mêle ainsi habilement les fonctions poétique, métalinguistique et référentielle du langage afin de dépasser la catégorisation, dont Lidia Morales signale le caractère factice, différenciant littératures expérimentales et engagées. La chercheuse souligne à cet égard le rôle essentiel joué par le lecteur (*lectant*), narrataire complice, sans la participation duquel le *game* ne pourrait être activé et que le récit met sans cesse au défi. Aux sources littéraires déjà présentes dans *Exorcismos de esti(l)o* s'ajoutent en effet dans *La Habana para un infante difunto* des références picturales, musicales et mythologiques sur l'identification desquelles repose une bonne part des règles du jeu – interartistique, donc, et plus seulement intertextuel – déployé dans la trame du roman.

Or, comme le développe l'autrice dans la dernière partie de son travail consacrée à l'œuvre posthume de Cabrera Infante (197–274), la poétique ludique de ce dernier est inversement proportionnelle à la mention qu'il fait dans ses textes d'éléments référentiels. Preuve en est que, dans les trois récits posthumes, dont Lidia Morales démontre chaque fois, dans toutes ses nuances, la dimension autobiographique (Alberca), les jeux langagiers disparaissent presque complètement ou sont du moins invalidés par la narration. Dans ces *novelas del yo*, la réécriture de la capitale cubaine s'articule aux souvenirs d'un personnage apparaissant comme *alter ego* de l'auteur. L'autrice investigue les différents traitements du ludique qui caractérisent ces trois récits : si *La ninfa inconstante* fait encore la part belle aux jeux grammaticaux et phonétiques ainsi qu'à la création de néologismes et au bricolage intertextuel (227), ces stratégies disparaissent de *Cuerpos divinos* et de *Mapa dibujado por un espía* où sont racontés des événements majeurs de l'histoire de la révolution cubaine. Le discours unique du régime castriste qui y est thématisé neutralise en effet le déploiement des potentialités langagières, même si, dans *Cuerpos divinos*, le *choteo* reste partiellement présent. En revanche, la dimension référentielle fondamentale de *Mapa dibujado por un espía* va de pair avec un amoindrissement de la richesse sémantique et narrative des œuvres précédemment étudiées : les personnages se font archétypes, le style devient répétitif et dépersonnalisé, et les analogies du récit, loin de la polysémie des premiers textes, convergent dans un même portrait de l'horreur historique.

Le cadre théorique adopté tout au long du travail s'inscrit avant tout dans une perspective de littérature comparée (notamment par le recours aux concepts d'influence et de transfert culturel), tout en mobilisant adéquatement des outils de l'analyse textuelle, des études intertextuelles et des *game studies*. L'ensemble est soutenu par une ample bibliographie secondaire, actualisée et maîtrisée, à laquelle on aurait peut-être pu adjoindre certains travaux de Vincent Jouve concernant notamment l'implication du lecteur dans le processus de co-production du sens littéraire. Il aurait de même été intéressant de développer une réflexion spécifique autour du concept de *mimésis* (mentionné p. 106 et p. 247), dont le questionnement pourrait traduire la poétique contrastée de Cabrera Infante, entre autoréférentialité et prise de position extralittéraire.

Cette monographie est de plus agrémentée de différentes annexes, comprenant notamment une entrevue de l'autrice avec Miriam Gómez, veuve de Cabrera Infante, ainsi qu'un inventaire de la bibliothèque francophone privée de l'écrivain. Ces deux documents fournissent des données précieuses, tant en ce qui concerne les réseaux culturels cubains et européens dans lesquels gravitait Cabrera Infante que pour ce qui est de ses lectures et sources d'inspiration potentielles.

Outre un examen sans faille d'une facette encore largement méconnue de l'œuvre de Cabrera Infante, on saluera le style didactique du travail de Lidia Morales Benito qui parvient à articuler harmonieusement l'étude des éléments contextuels au *close reading* de nombreux extraits reproduits dans leur mise en page originelle. À travers ses analyses pertinentes et documentées, cette chercheuse montre de façon convaincante en quoi la poétique ludique de Guillermo Cabrera Infante réactualise, par delà les siècles et en s'adaptant à de nouveaux enjeux à la fois esthétiques et politiques, les fonctions littéraires ancestrales de *catharsis* et de *pharmakon*.

Andrew Houwen. *Ezra Pound's Japan*

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Ezra Pound's interest in East Asian culture has long been acknowledged but until the past few decades it has occupied a comparatively modest place in the extensive scholarship on his work. These decades have charted the depth and complexity of the American poet's earnest and sustained, if sometimes misinformed, engagement with the languages, literatures, theaters, and visual arts of China and Japan. These studies have, however, largely focused on Pound's relationship to China – especially his interest in the "ideogram," the translations of Tang dynasty poetry in *Cathay* (1915), and the Confucius of *The Cantos* and the late prose – implicitly reenforcing the standard belief of earlier generations of scholarship that Japan was, for Pound, an early and fleeting interest. Although Pound produced numerous translations of nō plays and perhaps the most famous "hokku-like" poem in English, "In a Station of the Metro," immediately before and during the First World War, after that – the story went – he seems to have more-or-less consciously abandoned Japan for the more "solid" cultural achievements of China.[1]

Drawing extensively on Pound's correspondence and manuscripts, in addition to a wide range of published works, Andrew Houwen's *Ezra Pound's Japan* does much to redress this imbalance. The book's twelve

[1] The description of China as "solid" is from a January 1917 letter to John Quinn in which Pound similarly declares "China is fundamental, Japan is not" (Pound 94).

chapters are divided into three sections, respectively covering Pound's relationship to the haiku, his early translation and promotion of the nō, and, finally, the place of nō in *The Cantos* and in Pound's late cultural politics. In addition to providing a richly documented account of Japan in Pound's work, Houwen also emphasizes the importance of near-contemporaneous events in Japan and the distinct backgrounds and identities of Pound's various Japanese interlocutors (some of whom he knew in person, in Europe, some only via correspondence). Houwen convincingly demonstrates that Pound's Japan did not arrive fully contained within the manuscripts of the late Ernest Fenollosa (although Pound did indeed take much from these papers), nor did he invent it out of thin air. Rather, Pound's "discoveries" were prepared and in some ways facilitated by specific – more-or-less contemporaneous – literary, scholarly, and theatrical events in Japan.

For scholars of English-language modernism, the early chapters on the haiku will likely be of greatest interest. One aspect of Houwen's account is simply to determine what Pound might have known about the haiku, and when, and how – a topic on which much has been written, but about which much remains unsettled, with some emphasizing the scholarship of Basil Hall Chamberlain as a source or the poets around F. S. Flint (later known as the Imagists), others giving priority to Pound's correspondence with Yone Noguchi, others still suggesting an assist from Arthur Waley. Houwen provides what should be *the* narrative of reference for a while, carefully sorting, dating, and thoroughly documenting the various sources (and convincingly giving new importance to the British translator F. V. Dickins).

Beyond the question of Pound's sources, Houwen also outlines how, more broadly, "[b]etween 1898 and 1906, [the haiku] had quickly risen to become the most prominent form in Japanese poetry in both the Anglophone and Francophone worlds" (59). One recurrent and compelling example in this story is the repeated English retranslation of a haiku by Arakida Moritake, from its first, somewhat buried, appearance in W. G. Aston's *History of Japanese Literature* in 1899 until Pound's version in his famous 1914 essay "Vorticism," by which time the American poet can refer to the poem as "very well-known": "The fallen blossom flies back to its branch: / A butterfly." Houwen emphasizes the ironies of how the original poem – which "relie[d] in Japanese on its readers' familiarity with a then well-known Buddhist saying" about how fallen leaves can never return to their branch – "loses this conventionality" and through repeated translation becomes a paradigmatic example of poetry "'arresting' the mind with a 'picture'" (62–63).

Houwen also reminds us of the importance of the visual arts in the emergence of this imagistic poetics. On the Euro-American side, the translation, reception, and eventual valorization of the haiku was enabled and shaped by the vast enthusiasm for East Asian and especially Japanese art that had begun in the later decades of the nineteenth century. On the Japanese side – and this is a story less likely to be familiar to readers of Anglo-American modernism – we find the importance of certain aspects of Western-style realism sparking the reforms and renovations that modernized the haiku and created the preconditions for its subsequent rise in popularity and circulation abroad. There are disputes as to how "Western" these artistic influences were and to what extent they involved new ways of looking at traditional Japanese art. What is not disputed, however, is that the canonical founder of the modern haiku, Masaoka Shiki (1867–1902), was inspired by the idea of *shasei* ("sketching from life"), which he encountered through his artist friend Nakamura Fusestu, who in turn had taken it from his training in Western-style drawing and painting practices.

Shiki is the central figure of the modern haiku in Japan and continues to be widely read and studied there and by readers of Japanese literature abroad. Indeed, the use of "haiku" as the standard term for the stand-alone poem we know by that name today was established by him in the early 1890s. Even so, his is a meager presence in most accounts of the origins of English-language haiku, which foreground earlier masters, above all Matsuo Bashō (1644–94). Houwen's emphasis on the influence of Shiki and his immediate followers thus adds valuable context to our understanding of how the haiku was adopted into and adapted in English. This context highlights certain comparative literary ironies, such as the importance, for Shiki, of Herbert Spencer's *Philosophy of Style* (1852), in which the young Japanese poet found an authoritative affirmation of the "vivid image" as central to all good writing. "Through his reading of Spencer," Houwen concludes, "Shiki could observe how aspects of Bashō's *hokku* – concision, concretion, suggestiveness and juxtaposition – marked this poetic form out as not only adhering to an influential Western view of what makes for the 'best' writing but, potentially, as constituting its 'best' example" (27–28). In other words, when modernist minimalism turned to the East in its revolt against nineteenth-century excess, it unknowingly rediscovered the influence of that most eminently Victorian of philosophers, known precisely for his grand narratives and thick tomes. More broadly, Houwen details the "Meiji-era (1868–1912) Japanese contexts that enabled Pound's discovery of the '*hokku*' in the first place," specifically a landmark anthology by one of Shiki's disciples, Mizuochi Roseki (1872–1919), on which many of the pioneering English-language translators of haiku relied (2, 5).

While less widely referenced than his interest in haiku, Pound's engagement with the nō began earlier and lasted longer. As Houwen writes, this too reflected the general arc of Anglophone engagement with Japanese culture: "Whereas the translation of *hokku* mostly took place after Shiki's 1890s reforms, English-language interest in the nō was present from the beginning of the Meiji era. This resulted from the use of nō as entertainment for the visits of foreign dignitaries" (97). When, in 1913, Pound received Ernest Fenollosa's manuscripts from his widow Mary, he almost immediately began translating the plays, elements of which can still be found in Pound's work more than a half century later. These initial nō translations, writes Houwen, "were thus highly influential for Pound's oeuvre to an extent that has not yet been fully realized" (135).

The chapters on nō also bring Japanese contexts to bear. With respect to what was happening in Japan itself, Houwen points out the mythologized character of the recent history of nō that Fenollosa had passed along to Pound. In Fenollosa's telling, the figure of Umekawa Minoru – with whose nō school Fenollosa was associated – almost single-handedly saved the fading theatrical art, "creat[ing] a narrative of the strong but isolated individual's perseverance overcoming adversity that would later appeal to Pound," who largely repeated the story (114). There was in fact, Houwen points out, a broader effort to revive and popularize the art during the Meiji period, with competing traditions (and families) vying for recognition.

Houwen similarly fleshes out the young Japanese men Pound met in Europe, mostly in the mid 1910s: Itō Michio, Kume Tamijūrō, and Kōri Torahiko. These figures are often referenced as simply "Japanese," but Houwen differentiates their artistic backgrounds, talents, and impact on Pound, particularly with respect to the nō. The consequences of these encounters and the Fenollosa papers were numerous and long-lasting. Houwen argues that the whirling world of the dead in the "Noh of spirits" subgenre is an important source for the quintessentially Poundian figure of the vortex as well as the related project of presenting an "energized past" in the present (10–11). Pound even wrote two modern nō of his own as well as two *kyōgen* (a comic theatrical genre related to the nō) (8). a few *kembu* ("sword-dances") during this period, for which, as with the nō, he helped organize performances. As Houwen notes, "It was on the back of seven programmes for these 'sword-dances' and nō dances that the . . . extended drafts of the 'long poem' that was to become *The Cantos* was written" (149).

Houwen offers a sustained critique of the idea that "[b]y 1918 . . . Pound had severed all ties with nō" (181). He emphasizes the ways in which, into the 1930s, Pound's use of the nō echoed that of contemporary Japanese nationalists, who staged the plays "to raise money for the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, composed [new ones] to celebrate Japanese victories" and even had a cruiser named after the play *Takasago* (10; 105). Most important, though, was the idea of "a harmony centered around the emperor's rule" (12). While Fenollosa had "briefly connect[ed] the aesthetic unity he discovers in the nō with the political unity that it serves to praise," this idea "would be of crucial importance for Pound" (114). Pound linked the nō to a mythologized idea of *bushido* and that in turn to the martial spirit of ancient Rome, reborn, in his view, under Mussolini (210, 236). He even mentions the nō in his infamous fascist-era radio speeches, during which time he also led a campaign for performances of the plays to be filmed and recorded for the benefit of future generations. Finally, Houwen offers an extensive discussion of the nō's sustained presence even in the late Cantos, in which we also find a reference to his by then long-deceased Japanese friend Kume.

Pound's Japan will no doubt continue to be a valuable resource for scholars of Anglo-American modernism for years to come and is certainly the most complete treatment of the topic to date (although special recognition should be given to the ongoing series of articles by the Tokyo-based scholar David Ewick, to whom the book is dedicated). I suspect that the excellent work on the haiku is what will stick with most readers, but in many respects nō is the star of Houwen's book, given the number of chapters devoted to it and its implications for how we might reread Pound's famously difficult (and politically toxic) late work. If nits must be picked, I would say that there are stretches that focus on what are, even for specialists, quite minor topics, as in chapter nine, which gives detailed readings of Pound's long-unpublished plays from the 1910s in terms of references to and possible influences of nō and *kyogen*. There is also a bit of redundancy between some of the chapters. The organization of the book into a relatively large number of short chapters alleviates both these issues, however, allowing readers to select the chapters of greatest relevance to them without missing too much of the overall plot. Clearly written, deeply researched, and bringing new insights into familiar topics, *Pound's Japan* makes a persuasive case for the breadth and depth of Pound's Japan and is to be recommended to anyone with interests in Japan/Western literary relations or Anglo-American modernism, but is essential reading for scholars of Pound.

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The purpose of this history is, as its author says, "to provide basic information and knowledge about Chinese literature in its full history to readers who have the curiosity to learn about China and its literature, but have no or very little knowledge of its language, culture, and history" (xiv). It is "a *literary* history, not a social or political history making use of literary texts as corroborative evidence" (xv). It would then seem to be well-suited to extending the faculty of comparison. It might, indeed, be an ideal enrichment for the comparatist who has already acquired familiarity with one or more literary traditions and wants to look around. Such a reader will not be disappointed. Schemata about genres, periodizations, and cultural transitions that may hold broadly for most European cultures find themselves upended when we pursue the era-by-era development of Chinese literature, a development coherent and understandable on its own terms, but strongly individual. The reader is led to reconsider the possibility of general theories about literature, or to "provincialize" to some degree the existing ones.

Zhang's twenty chapters, each divided into five or six subsections, run from the *Book of Poetry* to novelists living today – an extent of some two thousand five hundred years at least. The tone is pedagogical, not controversial: Zhang wants to inform, not to debate or defend a thesis. In keeping with the choice to write for the non-specialist readers, many technical points are omitted that would need to be treated in a work for a Chinese-speaking audience. For example, the discussion of the

Book of Poetry sidesteps the questions raised by the excavation of variant texts in recent years. The early poet-official Qu Yuan is presented as a real individual whose writings testify to his life, although many scholars would contend that the reported life was rather an elaboration on some themes extracted from the poetry. The provenance and dating of the famous "Song of Mulan" are not mentioned. At other points, the author claims the privilege of directing the reader's attention: so for example Tao Yuanming is presented more sympathetically (67–70) than Xie Lingyun (76–77). Admittedly, it is harder to make the case for Xie in translation, but this reviewer would have liked to see a more detailed treatment of Xie's tightly-structured, adventurous landscape poetry.

By and large, this is a history of poetry, and poems by many poets are cited, showing a range of styles, themes, and personalities. For the Chinese tradition, this is the right choice to make, as poetry combined with history-writing make up the most prestigious genre in all periods up to the modern era, drama and fiction remaining for most of that time a subset of entertainment literature. Some of Zhang's presentational decisions have a particular impact on poetry and deserve to be called out here. For one thing, no Chinese texts are given; not only that, but no footnotes point to sources where the originals might be consulted. For another thing, when the poetry is quoted it is in Zhang's English translation, often using rhyme (the originals, of course, rhymed too), e.g.:

> It was early when I came out of the valley,
> But it was sunset when I get on the boat.
> The woods are darkened by dim twilight,
> The clouds are hiding the last ray's note. (Xie Lingyun, cited, 76)

Some may find this language a bit heavy-footed and incompletely expressive. Moreover, all the poetry is translated in the same style, although the twenty-five centuries' worth of poets contain an immense variety of styles and personalities. And finally, the depth of allusion and the subtlety of word choice, avidly noted by Chinese commentators and emulated by later poets, cannot be reflected in this sort of rough-and-ready translation (compare the text and commentary in Tong, Chapter 22, 12b–13a).

As the narrative proceeds and texts become more plentiful, Zhang is forced to adopt a succinct style, summarizing a novel in two or three sentences and moving on to the next. Because of the greater emphasis on poetry (to which this reader at any rate would never object!), fiction and drama here appear to have less continuous histories, although scholars emphasize the high degree of intertextuality among works in these genres.

So, the reader may say, literary histories are selective, they exhibit personal tastes, they are more or less concerned with alleging causal relations among works and periods – did we not know to expect that? Yes, but by pointing to these specificities I have hoped to make it easier for readers to understand what kind of a literary history this is. It is not a textbook, nor is it a survey course. It is more like a friendly round of visits to authors and works who have made an impression on Zhang, and whose contributions he sees as worth highlighting. Anyone who wants to know how Chinese literature works – that is, how an extraordinarily well-informed, sympathetic individual construes it as background knowledge for participating in that culture – will find this well worth reading.

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Haun Saussy. *The Making of Barbarians. Chinese Literature and Multilingual Asia*

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Haun Saussy begins *The Making of Barbarians* by stating that the book presents "outsider" stories of China ("how the *wai* defines the *zhong*," 1) told from the editorial vantage point of insiders. Similarly, this review comes from a disciplinary outsider. An archaeologist by training, I begin by highlighting a few of the book's archaeological features. The author's stated goal is "recovering a multilingual premodern Asia" (135). To those who recover civilizations through the remains of their material cultures, this *longue durée*, anti-canonical project feels both familiar (methodologically) and exciting (to see in comparative literature). As archaeologists also know well, the scanter the traces, the more gaps to fill – and the more creativity necessary in filling them. By confining himself to a limited but highly varied set of sources throughout the course of five case studies, Saussy challenges himself to read between Sinographic lines, excavating voices in and around the shifting borders of Chinese premodernity.

In the first of five chapters ("The Nine Relays: Translation in China"), Saussy establishes the political stakes of literary diplomacy, presenting examples dating from roughly the mid-fourth through the beginning of the tenth centuries. Geographically, his analysis focuses on the steppe-ward side of empire, extending as far as the Japanese archipelago. Emergent voices are those of translators, editors, and other state actors, positioning themselves vis-à-vis the authority of Chinese writing. Most perspectives discussed come from within "China," such as those of the monks Dao'an 道安 (312–85) and Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416), responsible for translating and compiling a Buddhist canon legible to readers of Chinese characters (16–20). A frustrated letter from Emperor Wen of Sui (dated to 590 in the *Suishu* 隋書) to the Goguryeo king (27–28), who ruled most of the Korean peninsula at the time, bolsters Saussy's argument that "to participate in the Chinese written language presumed acceptance of a set of power relations and possible subject positions that were not easily open to renegotiation" (29). Echoes of evidently "outsider" voices here may seem faint, but the point is clear: Chinese text was an ever-mixing vortex, messy but inescapable. This proves most salient in the chapter's ending, a discussion of the earliest anthologies of Japanese *waka* poetry (the eight century *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 and early tenth century *Kokinshū* 古今集). These texts foreground Japanese courtier-writers' elegant but "unruly" (31) relationship to Sinitic and Sinographic transcription throughout early stages of the development of Japanese writing.

Chapter 2 ("Can the Barbarians Sing?") continues to create space for not-quite Chinese poetics within the history of Chinese literature. Readers encounter transcriptions of "barbarian" songs in historical and ethnographic accounts. How much of the original foreignness of these songs survives, one is meant to wonder, and how much do transcriptions and translations rather reflect "exactly how and what the barbarian is supposed to sing" (47)? Saussy's first example is the Yue boatsman's song (*Yueren ge* 越人歌), the only remaining text of a language likely cognate with Thai and Burmese once spoken by members of the Yue kingdom on China's southeast coast. The song is recorded and translated in a retelling of an anecdote dated to the sixth century BCE by Liu Xiang 劉向 in the *Shuo yuan* 說苑 ("Garden of Persuasions," 17 BCE; 43–44). The second example is one of the Bailang songs (*Bailang ge* 白狼歌), the earliest recorded Tibeto-Burman texts, recorded and translated in the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 ("Book of the Later Han," compiled during the 5th century; 46). Moving into texts compiled during the Song and later, Saussy presents a poem purportedly sung by a Xianbei general during the sixth century (the *Chile ge* 敕勒歌 recorded in the *Yuefu Shiji* 樂府詩集, 50); a fourth poem is a later Qing imagining of a Tuyuhun song (the *Agan ge* 阿幹歌) alluded to in the *Jinshu* 晉書, a text compiled in the mid-seventh century (53–54). These diverse poems, in all the dizzying complexity of their textual histories, are woven into canonical discourses on the nature of "Yi and Di"' (foreign, barbarian) music from early imperial texts such as the *Baihu tongyi* 白虎通義. From its title forward, the chapter thus satirizes the enduring over-confidence of musical thinkers of Chinese empire, whose anxiety over "Yi and Di" cultural production pushed them to translate it down to "a shell of former meanings" (56) – a shell worth attempting to outline nonetheless, Saussy believes.

An extended, theoretical meditation on the "intertwining of script, communication technologies, and political influence" (63), Chapter 3 follows the semantic, graphic, and rhetorical borders of the premodern Chinese-character sphere ("*The Hanzi wenhua quan:* Center, Periphery, and the Shaggy Borderlands"). The adoption of Chinese script and literary traditions went more smoothly in some directions than in others. In zones such as Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, where logographic Chinese characters were used alongside local pronunciations, Saussy points out the necessity of considering models of vernacularization and heteroglossia not equivalent to translation *per se.* However, "where the greatest friction between languages and cultures occurs," he contends, "and where the greatest literary legacy is made out of this friction is to the north and west" (75). As examples, we encounter exile correspondence and poetry – see a letter written in the 730s, in response to the Jincheng Princess married off to Tibet, 70–71; or a middle Tang poem composed in the voice of the captive Han poetess Cai Yan (76). The chapter ends with an examination of how friction also manifests in the Chinese tradition's "lack" of a national epic (78), despite the striking distance of Tibetan, Central Asian, and Mongolian examples. In Saussy's opinion, this proximity implies conscious choice to forgo epic, or at least evidence of a lack of interest – although he acknowledges that since the Qing, Chinese culture's absorption of literary traditions along its borders has also allowed the convenient "repackaging of these epics as part of *Chinese* cultural inheritance" (83).

Chapter 4 ("The Formation of China: Asymmetries in the Writing of History") subtly presents a polemic argument of the book: that the long-term formation of Chinese civilization has occurred first and foremost through the asymmetric, dialectical relationship of center and margin to Chinese script. Here, modern politics are inextricable from premodern texts: Saussy juxtaposes Chinese public intellectual Ge Zhaoguang's 葛兆光 Sinocentric reading of the famous *He zun* 何尊 (eleventh century bronze wine vessel) inscription, in which we find the first instance of the use of the characters that now designate "China" (*Zhongguo* 中國; 90–93), and the (sarcastic?) remarks of Uyghur historian Kahar Barat that "without [Chinese] characters there would be no Han ethnicity" (94). Du Fu's 杜甫 poems about the An Lushan rebellion, describing the sack of Chang'an (in 763; 103), are read against the Tibetan side of the story, as told in Tibetan royal histories (106). These vastly different perspectives converge to lead readers to conclude that the Sinographic text, carrying with it a hefty literary-cultural package, has long been at the front lines of China's civilizing missions.

The book's fifth and final case study ("Exiles and Emissaries amid Their New Neighbors: The View from the Edge of the World") is a delightful sojourn through premodern exile poetry and travel narratives. Saussy jumps from the works of Tang-Song poets (109–17) to records of Changchun Zhenren's 長春真人 emissary to Genghis Khan, written by his disciple Li Zhichang 李志常 (*Xiyouji* 西遊記, published in the 1220s, not to be confused with the later novel; 121), as well as the writings of Qing scholar Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724–1805) during his banishment in Xinjiang (125–31). Lively translations of poems by Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824), Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819), and Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) reveal various reactions of scholar-officials to living amongst local cultures and languages. Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan were decidedly "grouchy" (114); Su Shi was a different story. One translation of Su Shi bears quoting:

> If someone will lend me three acres of ground
> I'll thatch a roof and make a house next to yours.
> And if that shrike tongue of theirs can be learnt,
> I'll transform into a child of Mother Li.

Mother Li, readers learn, is a metaphor for the central mountain of Hainan Island, where the poet was exiled. Saussy goes on to explain,

> Did Su Shi actually envision himself "going native" and becoming a Li? Probably not; but the fact that he could imagine, even rhetorically, putting down roots in this way and turning his back on his literary reputation and the life of the capital is already a kind of Zhuangzian reversal of values. (115)

These translations and close readings within chapter five are the book's most luminous moments. In his analysis of Su Shi in particular, the author's self-positioning becomes clear: he also refuses to "take himself too seriously" (112), perhaps casting some implicit disdain on the grumpiness on the canonically-fixated Han Yus and Liu Zongyuans of Sinology.

The Making of Barbarians inspires questions across fields, a testament to the complexity of the project's conceptual stratigraphy: how do technological shifts that enabled the dissemination of (or resistance to) Sinitic fit into this *zhong-wai* (insider-outsider) story? In response to chapter 4, what space does a script-driven understanding of Chinese civilizational development allow for the contributions of cultures that farmed millet, ate pigs, cast bronzes, interacted with peoples they likely saw as "barbarians" in and around central plains long before 1250 BC (the date of the Shang oracle bone inscriptions)? How does Saussy negotiate the place great premodern Chinese vernacular novels such as *Xiyouji* 西遊記 (*The Journey to the West*) and the *Shuihuzhuan* 水滸傳 (*Water Margin*) occupy within his understanding of China's disinterest in epic narrative? Yet ultimately, it is hard to think of a word that better describes this than *dafang* 大方. In Chinese, the adjective carries connotations of generosity, expertise, capaciousness. Any journey through this concise but capacious 192-page book necessitates as *dafang* a reader as an author – a tall order, perhaps – but those who come along will discover much on the way.

William Spurlin. *Contested Borders: Queer Politics and Cultural Translation in Contemporary Francophone Writing from the Maghreb*

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In striving to express what William Spurlin's *Contested Borders* is about, I run headfirst into a problem of terminology that Spurlin's study itself contends with – the untranslatability, or cultural untransferability, of different words for people and acts that are not heterosexual. While it contextualizes its analysis with chapters on two earlier periods in the literary history of the Maghreb, Spurlin's book is primarily interested in autofictional writing in French by contemporary writers from the Maghreb whom Spurlin variously refers to as queer, gay, lesbian, homosexual, and sexually dissident, depending on context. Spurlin acknowledges – indeed, emphasizes – that none of these English-language terms quite encapsulates the resonance of these writers' modes of referring to sexual identity, given the combined challenges of French-English translation (wherein different associations adhere even to seemingly directly translatable words) and the cultural complexities of conceptualizing categories of sexual acts and identities in postcolonial contexts in general, in the Maghreb specifically, and in the context of migration. Indeed, each of the four authors whose writing underpins Spurlin's main argument – Rachid O., Abdellah Taïa, Eyet-Chékib Djaziri, and Nina Bouraoui – spent all or much of their childhoods and adolescences in, variously, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria, but each of them migrated to France as an adult or teenager, and their complex negotiations of sexual identity are necessarily complicated and complexified by negotiating racial and religious/cultural minority and/or immigrant experiences – and prejudices – in the former seat of empire.

To contend with the work of these authors, and how they establish new formulations of self at the intersection of sexual identity and gender performance, race, migration, and postcoloniality, Spurlin dedicates the earlier part of the book to contextualizing their literary explorations and constructions of authorial sexual identity through examining literary representations of sexual dissidence in the Ottoman Empire and in the post-independence literature of Morocco and Algeria. Arguing that queer studies, postcolonial studies, and translation studies are necessarily mutually imbricated through the crossing of borders and boundaries, Spurlin ultimately couches the contemporary autofictional writers he discusses as constructing new models of selfhood in and through contingent spaces of betweenness variously encapsulated, often in the authors' own terms, as *l'entre-deux*, *aller/retour*, *dépaysé(e)*, and *autre chose* – that is outside of singular geographic, temporal, gender, and/or racial/ethnic location.

Spurlin positions his argument in relation to a wide range of postcolonial critics and scholars of sexuality, both those focusing on African and/or Arab Muslim locations and/or contexts specifically and on sexuality and postcoloniality more broadly. He dedicates much of the first chapter of the book to this theoretical positioning and remains in active conversation with some of the key critics he discusses there throughout, which is one of *Contested Borders*' strengths. In so doing, he acknowledges the degree to which negotiations of sexual identities and acts in the Maghreb cannot be reduced to or contained by Western terms and contexts, while contesting readings that see queer theorizing or identities as only ever an imperialist gesture when applied to literary and/or cultural analysis of postcolonial literatures and settings. As Spurlin puts it, such positioning "sets up problematic binary distinctions that position queerness in the West as always already in complete opposition to indigenous forms of sexual dissidence and struggle while neglecting the mediation of cultures where the degree of influence may be of 'more or less' rather than an either/or binary trope where indigenous sexual desires, identities, and practices are completely subsumed to their Western articulations and understandings, or are constructed as complete incommensurable differences" (36). Through drawing on a wide array of scholars of African sexualities more broadly, Spurlin particularly contests the arguments of Joseph Massad. While admiring Massad's historical precision, Spurlin objects to his contention that "the so-called Gay International [is] responsible for (re)producing gay men and lesbians in Arab Muslim societies where they simply do not exist" (32). In the postcolonial – and, indeed, migratory – contexts of the autofictional writers he explores, Spurlin argues that identities are complex constructions that emerge from and build new forms out of multiple cultural trajectories, influences, and encounters. In refusing strict oppositions between Western conceptualizations and theorizations of sexuality and indigenous Maghrebi ones, Spurlin also contests past theoretical positionings of postcolonial and queer in opposition. As he puts it, "The simultaneous enunciations and dissolutions that cross and intersect postcolonial timespaces alongside the remapping of borders, geopolitical and otherwise, help to create a conceptual space … for theorising queer as a postcolonial enunciation that disrupts the oppositional boundary between postcolonial and queer" (40).

However, Spurlin does not only contest these oppositions when reading contemporary authors, but rather advocates for a more complex reading of historical Maghrebi literature that represents same-sex desire. Spurlin's chapter on the Ottoman period from the early sixteenth to early nineteenth century is the only one in the book that deals with non-francophone literature and, as a result, bases its analysis on works in translation. Focusing on poetry that celebrates the beauty of boys and young men, Spurlin puts textual analysis in conversation with legal historical analysis to contest readings that treat desire expressed in literature as completely removed from acts. While *Contested Borders* largely abandons the legal element beyond this chapter, the negotiation between literary and legal analysis in it is compelling. Particularly, Spurlin discusses the differing attitudes of various juridical schools in the Ottoman Empire to the criminal acts *liwāt* (anal intercourse between men) and *zinā* (unlawful fornication between a man and a woman). As Spurlin notes, some schools regarded the former as a variation of the latter, and some punished it less severely and others more. Other sexual acts between men were not considered to be *liwāt* and were often punished far less severely than *zinā*. Spurlin builds on the varying juridical attitude to same-sex acts between men to contest a generalizing idea that such activities were always or inherently less tolerated than unlawful opposite sex acts. While noting the absence of a concept of sexual identity that either conflated desire and acts or constructed monosexually exclusive desire/identity around specific sexual acts, Spurlin uses this legal context to contest readings of homoerotic poetry as solely a matter of desire fundamentally divorced from the possibility of acts. Similarly, he contests a reading of either the celebration of the beauty of boys and young men, or sexual acts with such objects, are merely substitutive – that is, a replacement for forbidden heterosexual intercourse. Spurlin reads the variation in Ottoman belletristic poetry, some of which celebrates what one might read as the more "femininely" coded elements of its subjects, and some of which celebrates more "masculinely" coded physical attributes, as belying a strict substitutive logic, but also as complicating an overly deterministic application of the active/passive distinction – however culturally relevant – and its gendered associations.

The chapter on post-independence literature is perhaps the least rewarding. It serves a relevant purpose in marking how homosexuality is represented in literature in a prior, but adjacent, literary moment to the later autofictional texts, which explicitly claim same sex desire and acts as belonging to the authors themselves. However, arguments in this section are not as complex as those in the chapters on sixteenth to nineteenth century poetry or on contemporary autofiction. Nevertheless, in this chapter, Spurlin does engage in interesting dialogue with Frantz Fanon to position the primary texts it analyzes as a form of *littérature de combat* related to, but importantly different than Fanon's, particularly insofar as the primary texts resist the masculinism and (hetero)sexism of Fanon's writing. The relevance of Assia Djebar's writing, analyzed in this chapter, to the broader project initially seems tenuous, given her representation of homosociality but no overtly same-sex sexual desire or acts, which is present in all of the other primary literature analysed in *Contested Borders*. It is only when we get to the subsequent two chapters that the true relevance of Djebar's text to the central argument becomes clear – that it is a crucial precursor to the *experimental forms* that the contemporary autofictional writers use to explore, articulate, and construct dissident sexual and gender identities and positions.

Indeed, this is ultimately the crux of Spurlin's argument, elucidated in the final two chapters and the conclusion – that formal experimentation is the mode through which the autofiction authors conceptualize and construct their identities between and across sexual and other borders. Per Spurlin, the genre of autofiction itself, which refuses to be reduced to either the novel or the autobiography, is both particularly amenable and comparable to negotiating in-between identities (or identities *entre-deux*) – identities that exist not just between established gender and sexual modalities, but national, racial, and cultural borders. The combination of a genre that refuses binary categorization and experimental writing responding, in part, to the untranslatabilty not only of language, but also sexuality and culture, is, according to Spurlin, "a way to translate the self through the very writing, but only in the most contingent, contextual, and exploratory and less absolute ways," a process that Spurlin also relates to José Muñoz's concept of disidentification (193). Spurlin thus not only posits queer as fundamentally *within*, rather than a supplement to, postcolonial negotiations of borders and (re)bordering, but also as intrinsic to the use and negotiation of and experimentation with literary form and language.

Contested Borders does raise some questions it does not answer. For example, emphasizing the cultural specificity of poetry from the Ottoman period extolling the beauty of boys in counter distinction to European literature and modes of thinking raises the question of how it differs from similarly themed poetry from a similar period in Europe – Shakespeare's sonnets, for example – a question that might at least warrant an explanatory footnote. I also wonder how a more fulsome acknowledgement of bisexuality beyond the passing note that Ottoman Empire era Islamic juridical concepts did not derive exclusive sexual desire from acts might enrich or complicate Spurlin's analysis both in this chapter and of some of the encounters described in the contemporary autofiction that Spurlin mentions in later chapters. Some of the questions that are less fully explored derive from structural choices. Spurlin analyses Bouraoui's work in a separate chapter from Rachid O.'s, Taïa's, and Djaziri's, separating his analysis of gay male and lesbian writing, albeit in a decision also predicated on the greater centrality of racial/national elements to Bouraoui's negotiations of identity, given her mixed French and Algerian parentage and childhood divided between both countries. Bouraoui is, as a result, never fully accepted as "of" either country – the state of being *dépaysée* is central to her work. Nevertheless, this choice results in some less fulsome comparative analysis of Bouraoui's work with that of the other three autofiction authors, and I would have been particularly interested to read more on how her identification with masculinity and masculine spaces in childhood and adolescence compares to the identification with femininity and feminine spaces in the work of the authors discussed in the previous chapter.

Despite some questions that go unanswered or are not fully explored, Spurlin's book is, overall, a welcome contribution to queer studies, particularly at its intersection with postcolonial and translation studies. Indeed, it makes a valuable methodological contribution to thinking queer and postcolonial not merely together, but as fundamentally mutually imbricated. In its exploration of formal experimentation as a modality of constructing the self at the intersection of sexual and racial/postcolonial/migrant identity across and between borders, Spurlin's book engages in nuanced literary analysis and theorization. This framing is especially welcome given a historical critical propensity to highlight literary experimentation as fundamental to identity exploration in Western literatures, but to relegate analysis of dissident sexual identities in postcolonial and non-Western literatures solely to the realm of "representation."

Dominique Haensell. *Making Black History. Diasporic Fiction in the Moment of Afropolitanism*

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Ever since the publication of the essay "Bye Bye Barbar" by Ghanaian-Nigerian writer Taiye Selasi in 2005 in British magazine *THE LIP*, the term "Afropolitanism" has thoroughly shaped academic and public debates about African identity and creativity across the world. Selasi's "Afropolitanism" is committed to capturing the inevitable pluralities and complexities of contemporary African identities; it seeks to defy one-sided and frequently pessimistic images of Africa in favour of "multi-dimensional thinking" (Selasi 530) and multi-local belonging. Departing from Achilles Mbembe (Mbembe), who proposed the term to account for the inherently fluid histories of the African continent, Selasi primarily mobilizes "Afropolitanism" to refer to "the newest generation of African emigrants" in Western metropolises. What sounded like an immediately appealing intervention soon provoked a heated controversy about the classism inscribed in Selasi's understanding of the term. As a matter of fact, for Selasi, Afropolitans are characterized by their stylish "ethnic mixes" (Selasi 528), their multilingualism, "academic successes" and trendy cosmopolitan lifestyles – and hence by a set of privileges that indeed seems to be a far-cry from the experiences of the majority of African migrants in the West. Unsurprisingly, numerous Black intellectuals were quick to distance themselves from Selasi's identity label, criticizing its elitist, exoticizing and commodifying thrust. Note that this criticism was formulated in the years following 2005, and it seems safe to say that, almost twenty years later, the chasm between Selasi's classy Afropolitans and the many forced migrants has hardly grown smaller.

Against the backdrop of this debate, Dominque Haensell's study *Making Black History – Diasporic Fiction in the Moment of Afropolitanism* surely raises curiosity as to where it positions itself and how it revamps "Afropolitanism." As a matter of fact, it largely forgoes polarizing positionings, wisely so; instead, it sets out to suggest a different understanding, or rather understandings, of the term altogether. As Haensell elaborates in the immensely readable introduction, "Writing Race in the Moment of the Afropolitanism," the term is mobilized to reference a "moment of intense resignification of Blackness and diasporic solidarity" (3). According to the author, it is in the US in particular where said resignification of Blackness plays out. Following Yogita Goyal's call to imagine novel concepts of African diaspora beyond histories of transatlantic slavery and the Black Atlantic, Haensell specifies that Afropolitanism may best be approached as a moment in which the pluralized role of Africa has moved to the forefront of "an ongoing diasporic conversation determining the sometimes uneasy negotiations of race, nationality, and Black identity" (7). Conceiving of "Afropolitanism" as a lens or tool rather than a rigidly defined concept allows the author to engage with various and disparate histories as well as trajectories of Blackness in the US, which considerably go beyond the formative impact of the trauma of slavery. While the author stresses that Afropolitanism coalesces neither into comforting practices of cosmopolitanism nor into post-racial configurations, she still seeks to retrieve a normative, future-oriented component: Afropolitanism "hypostatizes in a post-Black discourse," which gestures to a "reconfiguration and regrouping of US-American Blackness" (11). It explores different affective, normative and epistemic facets of Black Diasporas, while also accentuating "the shifting role of Africa in the global imaginary" (7). It is a major achievement of Haensell's study to model "Afropolitanism" in a way that engages with an impressively broad range of recent Black Studies scholarship and fosters synergies between different, at times conflicting positions, such as Pan-African discourses, Afro-pessimism, Black Atlantic as well as diaspora studies. In only a few instances does Haensell's commitment to reconciling divergent approaches come at the expense of conceptual precision, such as when defining the Afropolitan moment as "constituted by optimism *and* pessimism, hope *and* anxiety" (53).

Based on this impressive theorization of Afropolitanism, the author identifies a set of Anglophone novels and short story collections that express Afropolitan sensibilities. Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (2013), NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013), Chinelo Okparanta's *Happiness, Like Water* (2013), Teju Cole's *Open City* (2011), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) and Yaa Gyasi's *Homecoming* (2016) and, somewhat more surprisingly, Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009) are points in case. The author selects three of these novels, namely those by Cole, Adichie and Gyasi, which she sets out to interpret as emblematic of the distinct cultural moment called "Afropolitan." According to Haensell, these three international bestsellers explore, reflect and complicate experiences of Blackness and diaspora in the US from "pronouncedly metahistorical perspectives" (5). At least at first sight, the focus on these three novels might appear slightly surprising – not because it is so unconventional but rather the opposite. *Open City*, *Americanah* and *Homecoming* have already received considerable scholarly attention and have, to varying degrees, also been examined as instances of "Afropolitanism." And yet, it quickly becomes clear that Haensell succeeds in condensing, complicating and moving beyond existing research.

The strength of the suggested understanding of Afropolitanism manifests in the ways in which it enables novel, compelling readings of seemingly well-known texts, illustrating how these texts navigate the complexities of Black positionalities in the US and negotiate forms of diasporic belonging that also activate the presence of Africa in the world. Haensell illustrates how Cole's *Open City* explores the limits of a Black diasporic solidarity and the shortcomings of a cosmopolitanism that is primarily based on histories of trauma. Rather than focus on the narrator's cosmopolitan failures and his refusal to empathize, the author stresses the potential for his "unresponsive observation" to cultivate "heteroglossia and otherness" (98) beyond unifying positionalities. The interpretation of *Americanah* succeeds beautifully in revealing how the creative, almost hyperbolic use of the romance plot translates into a politics of (gendered) hope that is prone to romanticizing Nigeria as a "race-less, futuristic" (147) place. In turn, Gyasi's *Homecoming* thrives on complex Black temporalities, a multi-layered interplay between futurity and historicity, to gauge possibilities of overcoming the ruptures of transatlantic slavery, without negating its devasting effects. All three novels share a thorough commitment to writing Black history; Cole, Adichie and Gyasi, Haensell's readings show, "investigate the historicity of Blackness and the ways in which it implicates them, rather than treating Blackness as a specific condition that automatically includes or excludes them or an ontological fact that is inherited or rejected" (39). The close readings profit immensely from Haensell's deep historical and political knowledge, which she generously shares. By discussing, amongst others, the post-racial discourses of the Obama era, the Black Lives Matter and #SayHerName movements, she not only contextualizes the novels' interventions but also sharpens our understanding of literature's distinct cultural value in our digital and racialized age.

In a 2014 essay, Yogita Goyal perceptively noted that "[i]n the discourse of the Afropolitan, we can see the specter of both the black Atlantic and of Pan-Africanism, which the adherents of the category will have to resolve if it is to name something other than the latest fashionable mobile identity" (xv). It is a major achievement of *Making Black History* to navigate the tensions between these positions and, if not to resolve them, then to forge novel connections between them. In this way, the book enables a deep comprehension of the complexities of Black pasts, presents and futures in the US as well as elsewhere. *Making Black History* is an important, beautifully argued and engagingly written book. It puts "Afropolitanism" (back) on the map of Black literary studies as a timely and relevant concept for investigating a crucial moment in history.

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Marion Coste. *Sankofa Cry : mémoire musicale et improvisation littéraire dans les romans de l'Atlantique noir*

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Marion Coste, enseignante à l'Université de Cergy-Pontoise, consacre ses recherches aux liens entre littérature et musique dans l'espace francophone. Pour son ouvrage, elle explore la relation entre ces deux arts dans l'espace diasporique de l'Atlantique noir, concept emprunté à Paul Gilroy. Cet espace, marqué par l'expérience commune de l'esclavage, constitue un socle culturel dont la musique est partie intégrante, s'inscrivant au cœur des textes étudiés. L'autrice s'est donc focalisée sur « des romans dans lesquels la musique ou les musiciens sont présents sur le plan diégétique et dont les auteurs et autrices décrivent explicitement et régulièrement la musique comme un modèle d'écriture » (15). Ces romans, écrits par Michèle Rakotoson, Scholastique Mukasonga, Daniel Maximin, Léonora Miano, Kossi Efoui et Rachid Djaïdani, font de la musique un référent symbolique et un modèle d'écriture. Elle sert à construire une identité spécifique dans un combat culturel, reliant tradition, interculturalité de l'Atlantique noir et innovations formelles et philosophiques. La musique dite noire y établit un langage signifiant, renvoyant à des éléments du monde, à des expériences de souffrance, à des circonstances de la vie quotidienne et à l'histoire, comme celle du marronnage.

L'ineffable souffrance infuse les romans de ces auteurs et autrices à travers la musique. Cette dernière assume une part d'intraduisible culturel et sert de refuge, articulant la pratique de l'oralité et l'insertion du jazz dans le texte. Genre commun à tous ces producteurs, le jazz rend audible le manque et l'absent dans la littérature de l'oralité. L'autrice emprunte la notion d'opacité à Édouard Glissant pour penser la référence musicale dans la production littéraire. Elle réfléchit ensuite à l'importance de la musique dans les romans de l'Atlantique noir : soit elle est signifiante et renvoie à une pratique de la résistance du marronnage, soit elle signifie ce qui échappe à la forme romanesque. Ce qui confirme le dialogue entre les arts et l'hybridité consubstantielle de la fiction. C'est aussi une manière de donner à voir une vision du monde qui est elle-même fiction. L'autrice propose ainsi de lire l'influence musicale dans les romans comme « une façon de générer des innovations formelles qui sont en même temps des visions du monde minoritaires, capables d'échapper à une forme de logo et/ou d'européocentrisme » (31). Pour ce faire, elle divise son livre en deux parties qui illustrent la métaphore du Sankofa, un oiseau qui incarne le passé et en même temps le futur.

La première partie, intitulée « Résistances musicales », étudie comment la musique appréhende le passé et constitue un mode de résistance. Cette exploration se manifeste dans les œuvres de Michèle Rakotoson, Scholastique Mukasonga et la trilogie caribéenne de Daniel Maximin. Avant d'aborder ces auteurs, l'autrice s'intéresse à la réflexion de l'auteur et musicien camerounais Francis Bebey. Elle analyse notamment sa construction de la musique africaine comme une pratique spécifique accessible uniquement aux locuteurs des langues vernaculaires. Cette idée inspire ensuite sa lecture des œuvres de Rakotoson, Mukasonga et Maximin. Ces auteurs mettent en avant les musiques liées aux territoires et cultures locaux, ainsi que leurs espaces opaques à la compréhension du lecteur occidental. Un pan culturel entier ne peut se dire en français dans la forme européenne du roman. C'est là que réside le sens de la musique comme mode de résistance.

Le premier point de cette partie analyse la relation entre l'œuvre de Michèle Rakotoson et la mémoire de l'esclavage malgache. À Madagascar, la musique omniprésente est indissociable du chant et du poème, véhiculant des messages, notamment politiques, que l'on retrouve dans les romans de Rakotoson. Son œuvre met en avant les chants traditionnels, la musique contemporaine malgache, les musiques populaires occidentales, les cantiques et le jazz. Ce dernier offre l'espoir d'un ailleurs en établissant le lien avec la culture afro-américaine. Ces musiques permettent aux personnages de prendre le contrôle de leur environnement et d'entrer en résistance. Résister à l'effacement de la mémoire de l'esclavage comble les carences du langage. La musique devient l'espace d'expression de la douleur qui dépasse les censures. Face à l'angoisse de la mort, elle garde le contact avec le monde du sacré. Cependant, la musique chez Michèle Rakotoson présente également une « ambivalence » (46). Elle apaise et crée en même temps l'insatisfaction et la frustration, à l'instar du jazz.

Le deuxième point examine la musique comme mode de résistance face aux violences génocidaires dans l'œuvre de Scholastique Mukasonga. La musique évoque le génocide au Rwanda de 1994, dont la brutalité sidérante impose une expression détournée, à la marge. Dans son roman *Cœur tambour*, Mukasonga utilise la musique pour participer à ce détour nécessaire. L'introduction de personnages blancs sert pareillement à transmettre la mémoire du génocide au lecteur et spectateur occidental.

La musique devient le lieu de conservation de cette mémoire, ouvrant à une pensée de l'Atlantique noir. Elle puise dans la création musicale intercontinentale de ces cultures, à travers le rôle figuratif du tambour et les différentes spiritualités évoquées par Mukasonga. Elle perçoit alors la musique comme « un art essentiellement spirituel » à lier « à des croyances religieuses » (88). C'est pourquoi la musique apparaît comme une résistance qui maintient la culture tutsi face aux violences génocidaires. Elle propose une approche spirituelle du monde, une diversité culturelle et linguistique non violente, en opposition au rationalisme occidental. Le chant devient le lieu où s'exprime l'indicible et s'oppose à l'absurde violence entre les cultures de l'Atlantique noir. Daniel Maximin consacre cette résistance dans sa trilogie caribéenne. Il y introduit la représentation du rebelle invisible, incarné par la double figure du crapaud (rebelle de l'intérieur) et du colibri (rebelle absolu). Les deux figures portent la résistance que l'écrivain caractérise comme féminine, avec l'aide de la musique qui influence l'écriture. Chez Maximin, la musique est une force de résistance qui apaise les blessures. Elle pousse les personnages à se construire face à leur douleur et à jouer un rôle de préservation du passé pour relire l'histoire. Chez Michèle Rakotoson et Scholastique Mukasonga, la musique assume habituellement cette fonction de conservation de la mémoire.

La seconde partie du livre articule les musiques et les oralités au concept d'improvisation dans les romans de Léonora Miano, Kossi

Efoui et Rachid Djaïdani. La musique sert alors à se défaire d'un passé encombrant et figé, tant pour le sujet individuel que collectif, et plus généralement à se détacher d'une tradition littéraire. Cette partie contient trois chapitres, dont le premier s'intéresse à Léonora Miano. Cette dernière évoque la légende de l'oiseau Sankofa, qui regarde vers l'arrière tout en marchant vers l'avant. Ce mythe donne à voir comment l'influence musicale s'articule dans l'écriture en prenant en compte le passé tout en ouvrant vers le futur. Les notions d'improvisation et de performance orale, très présentes dans le jazz, conduisent à repenser la fixité de l'écriture et à inventer des formes hybrides d'écriture. Il s'agit donc de voir comment le jazz influence l'écriture de l'Atlantique noir. Il s'insère dans une dynamique d'ouverture à l'altérité dans les romans, qui portent alors la marque de cette influence musicale. Dans ce dispositif, les personnages afropéens symbolisent cette ouverture culturelle et un certain rapport à l'altérité. Leur parcours est balisé par des morceaux de jazz dans l'œuvre de Léonora Miano. Kossi Efoui fait consciencieusement du jazz le symbole d'une manière d'approcher la culture de l'autre dans sa différence.

Kossi Efoui associe le free jazz au marronage et à la déconstruction des modèles d'authenticité culturelle dans son écriture. Il est amené à vouloir faire de l'inédit, à transgresser les règles esthétiques définissant et limitant le domaine du beau, à l'instar du free jazz qui introduit cette transgression dans la musique. Le free jazz est donc une pratique transgressive qui encourage à s'extraire des sentiers battus des pratiques littéraires antérieures. L'improvisation peut alors se développer dans des directions multiples, notamment littéraires, afin de rompre la linéarité de l'écriture. Le jazz consent également à penser une identité ouverte et dynamique, et incite donc à revenir sur l'altérité.

Cette dimension est explorée par l'écrivain Rachid Djaïdani, qui établit le lien avec le rap. Il axe son travail sur le langage qui touche l'intime et assume l'écart par rapport à la norme savante. Le lien avec l'écriture de l'oralité exprime une forme d'authenticité visant à capter puis générer une vision du monde spécifique à la cité : « Ainsi, l'influence du rap permet, dans ce roman, de repenser le lien des littératures des banlieues à la performance et à l'oralité » (213). La production romanesque de l'auteur s'approprie les rapports ludiques au langage du rap, dont son usage rythmique, pour retravailler la relation de l'écriture à l'oralité. C'est là que s'introduit la notion d'improvisation qui, par ce biais, apporte une souplesse à l'écriture en intégrant des traits de l'oralité : « mais plus largement en assumant une forme de liberté, une distance avec les codes de la langue écrite » (238).

Ce livre de Marion Coste parcourt donc plusieurs tendances à travers l'analyse de ses romans : la musique offre une perspective pour repenser la relation au temps et redéfinir l'expérience du présent grâce à l'improvisation et à l'écoute musicale, ouvrant ainsi la voie à une pluralité d'interprétations de l'histoire et à une forme de résistance. Le passage du local au transculturel s'inscrit dans la notion d'Atlantique noir de Paul Gilroy pour repenser l'espace ; l'utilisation de la musique dans l'écriture ouvre des possibilités de résistances diverses. L'ouvrage propose une analyse approfondie des textes, envisageant la musique principalement à travers le jazz, tout en évoquant d'autres genres, tel le rap, comme des moyens d'interconnexion interculturelle. Cette thèse principale est clairement exposée dans l'étude du corpus littéraire de Marion Coste. Cependant, la question de l'improvisation et son application dans l'écriture suscitent encore des interrogations. Bien que l'esthétique sans contrainte soit abordée comme une rupture dans le monde littéraire, son assimilation à l'improvisation dans le jazz reste source de débats. Malgré cela, l'ouvrage de Marion Coste contribue à la compréhension de la relation complexe entre musique et littérature.

Marie Cléren. *Danse et poésie plastiques. Transferts esthétiques en Europe (1909–1933).*

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Dans cet ouvrage, Marie Cléren nous propose une version remaniée pour publication de sa thèse soutenue en 2017, sous la direction de Bernard Franco, à Paris 4 : *Entre figuration et abstraction, danse et poésie plastiques : échanges et influences entre les peintres, les chorégraphes et les librettistes entre 1909 et 1933, en France, Allemagne, Italie et Suisse*. Le titre *Danse et poésie plastiques. Transferts esthétiques en Europe (1909–1933)* publié en 2022 aux éditions « Classiques Garnier ». Il s'inscrit dans la collection « Perspectives comparatistes » (115), dirigée par Véronique Gély et Bernard Franco.

La recherche menée par l'autrice constitue une véritable « enquête » (25) ayant pour objectif d'identifier les influences réciproques des métamorphoses de la peinture et du ballet (26), qui, au début du XX^{e} siècle, se caractérisent, toutes deux, par un abandon progressif de la *mimésis* au profit de l'abstraction. Cette investigation, guidée par certaines hypothèses de départ, permettra de démêler un écheveau de sources variées (affiches, décors, costumes, livrets, poésies, témoignages, articles), jusqu'alors parfois indistinctement conservées, voire invisibilisées. Le travail minutieux et fouillé contextualise donc ces sources ; identifie les connexions, transferts et influences qui les relient ; met en lumières des éléments restés (étonnamment) dans l'ombre ; répond aux hypothèses formulées ; et révèle certains paradoxes, tel que celui retenu dans la préface (15–19) rédigée par Anne Surgers concernant l'incapacité de ces révolutionnaires de la scénographie à sortir de la cage de scène et d'abolir le quatrième mur (248–57).

L'énoncé des objectifs et de la méthodologie, la justification liminaire des choix posés et du chapitrage, et la clarté de l'écriture, associée à chaque fin de section au rappel des questions en suspens et des réponses intermédiaires obtenues, permettent au lecteur de suivre aisément, avec la chercheuse, les étapes qui mèneront aux conclusions ce cette étude. On regrettera cependant l'absence de certaines images pourtant « indispensables à la compréhension [du] propos » (14), sur lesquelles reposent de nombreuses analyses et que le lecteur est invité à consulter en ligne.

Dans son introduction, Marie Cléren souligne que les analyses des formes chorégraphiques sont majoritairement le fait d'historiens de l'art, ou du spectacle, qui éludent la dimension littéraire du texte (36) ; et que si de récents travaux en littérature comparée s'intéressent aux liens entre la peinture et la scène, ces derniers se focalisent sur d'autres époques et/ou s'intéressent peu, voire pas du tout, à la danse. Il s'agit donc de combler cet angle mort de la recherche en s'inspirant notamment de méthodologies comme celle de Clément Dessy (38) associant sociologie et analyse littéraire pour évaluer comment l'abstraction picturale, entendue comme laboratoire remettant en cause certains principes de la Renaissance (27), a pu influencer la danse. Le choix de la période est justifié par le fait que 1909 voit naître différents grands événements artistiques de la modernité (*Gelber Klang* de Kandinsky, Ballets russes à Paris, premier manifeste des futuristes, etc.) dont les développements seront brutalement affectés par l'accession d'Hitler au pouvoir en 1933. Si l'on apprécie le cadre général posé d'un point de vue artistique et politique pour comprendre l'émergence des phénomènes qui seront analysés et le refus d'une « vision traditionnelle de l'Histoire » (34) chronologique et progressiste niant les contextes dans lesquels les événements chorégraphiques occurrent, on regrette cependant une approche assez superficielle et ethnocentrée de la création en danse moderne à cette même époque. Certains chapitres de l'ouvrage de référence *Nouvelle histoire de la danse en Occident* dirigé par Laura Cappelle, soucieuse des mêmes points d'attention, aurait pu apporter l'éclairage indispensable de cette période pour les aspects relatifs à la danse (Capelle 158–202).

La première partie de l'ouvrage identifie les éléments qui ont permis à la peinture et à la danse de se croiser durant cette période, qu'il s'agisse de la nature même de la danse, invitant différentes pratiques à intervenir (livret, décors, costumes, musiques) ; de « nébuleuses abstraites » (69), évènements et circonstances (tournées, salon des artistes, soirées privées, etc.) favorisant les échanges entre artistes ; ou encore des « protecteurs des arts » (103) tels les mécènes, certains poètes qui officieront comme des « passeurs » (122), des personnalités marquantes du monde de la danse, des théoriciens/ fondateurs d'écoles. Outre certains noms déjà connus (Cocteau, Apollinaire, Nijinski, Diaghilev, …), ce nouvel angle d'approche permet de souligner l'importance d'acteurs-clefs moins étudiés, tels que le Comte Étienne de Beaumont, Valentine de Saint-Point, Iliazd ou Canudo. Cependant, cette partie élude ou n'aborde qu'en creux l'importance de certains danseurs, chorégraphes et théoriciens du mouvement (comme l'autrice le mentionne elle-même ; 148) pourtant essentiels dans les mutations qui remodélisent la danse. On pense principalement à Rudolf Laban dont les activités de recherche et initiatives de rencontres interartistiques auraient mérité une attention plus importante tant leurs apports ont influencé le corpus sélectionné, mais également aux échanges culturels extra-européens qui modifient le rapport au corps, à la représentation, au spectacle vivant (Cappelle 190).

Dans la deuxième partie, l'analyse porte, d'une part, sur la représentation de la danse et du mouvement par la peinture, et, d'autre part, sur les apports des arts plastiques à la scénographie. Il est donc question de la danse et des danseurs comme sujets de tableaux (comme chez Degas ou Toulouse-Lautrec), mais aussi de la complexité de la représentation du mouvement et du rythme (comment faire danser l'œil sur la toile comme sur scène et l'importance des futuristes, de la chronophotographie, de théoriciens du mouvement comme Dalcroze). En miroir, se pose ensuite la question de l'apport de la peinture à la scénographie (décors, costumes, maquillages, mais aussi chorégraphie) qui va de pair avec la manière dont les peintres modifient, ou non, les limites de leur art en le déplaçant sur scène. Cette section permet de rendre compte d'initiatives originales et de leurs conséquences sur la chorégraphie (comme des costumes contraignant, libérant, modifiant les mouvements) et la mise en scène (comment sortir du cadre, « triompher du tableau » 239, « proposer un univers mental » 236), concluant cependant sur l'échec d'un réelle révolution du rapport scène/ salle (*cf.* préface). Dans cette conclusion, Marie Cléren reproche également aux chorégraphes des ballets russes et suédois de ne pas être parvenus à penser la danse autrement que comme un « exercice de virtuosité » (256) et que ce n'est qu'avec la *post-modern dance*, à partir des années 1960 que sera questionnée la présence du corps sur scène (257). Ce constat partiellement erroné est émis sans réelle analyse des chorégraphies et en contradiction avec les événements mentionnés dans la première partie (« Nébuleuses abstraites »). Dans son introduction, Marie Cléren annonce que ce chapitre montrera le paradoxe selon lequel, à cette époque, les peintres cherchent le dynamisme, quand les chorégraphes tendent vers des « chorégraphies statiques » (42). Ici aussi, cette partie (la plus courte de l'ouvrage) aurait donc mérité un détour par les questionnements suscités par Laban et notamment son système de notation du mouvement reposant sur la kinésphère (Capelle 190) ; par les apports de chorégraphes modernes comme Duncan, Nijinsky, Graham, Wigman ; et par l'analyse d'œuvres chorégraphiques en prenant en compte l'une de leurs caractéristiques principales, le mouvement.

Enfin, la dernière partie, la plus importante, permet à l'autrice de retracer, grâce à l'analyse minutieuse de nombreux exemples, l'évolution du livret (objet longtemps délaissé par les études littéraires). Le contexte du rejet de la *mimesis* et du naturalisme imposé par Noverre (*Lettres sur la danse*), permet à la narrativité de s'effacer à la faveur de formes plus suggestives et fantaisistes où « la danse apparaît comme un moyen d'explorer les limites de la poésie » (409) et dont certaines formes pourraient figurer au musée (43). Ce riche chapitre permet en effet de découvrir la diversité des thématiques (féeries, bouffonneries, spirituelles…) et de leur évolution, du ballet d'action (pantomime) vers la danse moins narrative mais tout aussi significative ; l'écrasement de la chronologie au profit d'une simultanéité ; ainsi que, et surtout, la multiplicité des variations du langage poétique concomitantes aux avant-gardes chorégraphiques. Cette dernière partie est particulièrement stimulante et invite à poursuivre les recherches sur ces sources longtemps délaissées. Même critique cependant que pour les chapitres précédents, on regrettera ici l'absence des carnets de notes d'artistes dont l'activité principale est celle de chorégraphe. Pour un art dont, contrairement à la musique ou au théâtre, la notation n'est partagée et utilisée ni par ses créateurs, ni par ses interprètes, les carnets de notes et de croquis auraient constitué une source complémentaire permettant de mettre en perspective les livrets mais également les œuvres picturales citées dans la deuxième partie (qui tentent de rendre compte du mouvement) et leurs liens avec les théories du mouvement.

En conclusion, l'autrice confirme son hypothèse de départ selon laquelle « l'abstraction n'était pas seulement un mouvement pictural, mais qu'elle s'était diffusée dans plusieurs disciplines artistiques à partir de 1910, et particulièrement dans le domaine de la danse » (411) et invite à poursuivre cette analyse de liens entre danse et arts plastiques sur la période contemporaine.

Comme annoncé, cette recherche ouvre donc un nouveau champ d'analyse en s'intéressant à certaines sources ignorées jusqu'alors et en apportant un nouvel éclairage sur la création chorégraphique. L'excellent et passionnant travail de Marie Cléren stimulera très probablement le décloisonnement de certaines recherches et la revalorisation de patrimoines précieux. S'agissant principalement d'un travail de littérature comparée (cf. domaine de sa thèse), le spécialiste en danse pourrait être déçu par le titre qui laissait supposer davantage d'analyses de spectacles du point de vue des mouvements dansés. La complexité de la conservation des œuvres chorégraphiques (d'ailleurs évoquée avec le travail de Kenneth Archer et Millicent Hodson ou avec celui de la notation cf. *supra*) ne favorise évidemment pas la prise en compte de cet aspect fragile et par définition évanescent de l'objet (cf. Pouillaude *Le désœuvrement chorégraphique*). Certains spectacles « reconstruits » sont cependant proposés en annexe II (423) pour « accompagner la lecture ». Enfin, le titre original de la thèse correspond davantage aux limites géographiques réelles du travail se concentrant sur l'Allemagne, la Suisse, l'Italie et la France, mais dont la majorité du corpus a pour racines Paris. Cette parisiano-centrisation est en partie inévitable étant donné le contexte artistique de l'époque et les protagonistes les plus influents du corpus, mais cela invisibilise certains courants et acteurs dont l'influence fut pourtant prépondérante dans les transferts analysés (cf. *supra*).

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Charlotte Segonzac. *Écrivains et livret d'opéra au tournant du XXe siècle*

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Le livre de Charlotte Segonzac, issu d'une thèse de doctorat soutenue en 2019, représente une initiative bienvenue dans le domaine encore trop marginal de la librettologie. En effet, contrairement aux aspects musicaux, théâtraux et visuels de l'opéra, l'étude systématique de ses livrets n'a jamais particulièrement intéressé les chercheurs en musicologie ou en littérature, et reste plus confidentielle dans la sphère universitaire francophone que chez nos voisins anglo-saxons, germanophones ou italiens. Pourquoi tant d'indifférence ? Dans son introduction, Segonzac explore les différentes raisons derrière ce « mépris avec lequel on a longtemps considéré le texte des œuvres lyriques » (13). Selon l'autrice, le phénomène ne remonte pas aux origines de l'opéra (début XVIIe siècle), mais il s'agit plutôt d'un problème datant du XIXe siècle, période pendant laquelle le librettiste devient « moins un artiste qu'un artisan » (13), et où la « pièce bien faite » d'Eugène Scribe et la versification opératique de Jules Barbier et Michel Carré font mouche, car elles permettent l'application d'une formule bien rodée à des œuvres produites à la chaîne, maximisant ainsi les profits. C'est bien alors la schématisation, en tant qu'effet secondaire de la visée commerciale du livret d'opéra, qui explique sa non-classification en tant qu'objet littéraire. Sa visée utilitaire, quant à elle, est également une source d'embarras pour les critiques, car le livret n'est pas un texte ordinaire : il doit tenir compte des besoins des chanteurs (prosodie, voyelles ou consonnes expressives et bien placées dans la ligne de chant…) et doit se limiter à des phrases relativement courtes. Si les spécialistes en littérature demeurent convaincus·es de son manque de valeur intrinsèque, pourquoi faudrait-il que les musicologues reprennent le flambeau en accordant leur attention à « un texte littéraire amoindri » (27) ? Le résultat est que le livret se retrouve dans un *no man's land* où aucun de ces deux camps n'ose s'emparer de cet objet de non-convoitise intellectuelle.

La librettologie doit donc braver ces diverses objections afin « d'intégrer le texte opératique dans la sphère de la littérature » (257) avant d'ouvrir « des pistes de réflexion et des perspectives très profondes destinées à moderniser, enrichir et repenser les liens à établir entre musique et littérature » (282). A l'heure actuelle, elle reste un domaine de recherche interdisciplinaire émergent, représenté par des chercheurs aux formations diverses et qui cherchent encore leurs classiques. La contribution de Segonzac pourrait donc intéresser les musicologues spécialistes de la période fin XIXe-premier XXe, bien qu'elle se range dans le domaine de la littérature comparée. Son étude s'illustre avant tout par ses études de cas, centrées sur cinq écrivains – Catulle Mendès, Émile Zola, Jean Cocteau, Paul Claudel et Armand Lunel – qui se sont frottés au genre du livret d'opéra avec succès entre 1883 et 1939. Cette liste a avant tout le mérite d'examiner les œuvres d'auteurs encore obscurs aujourd'hui, comme Lunel ou le « disparu » Mendès, aux côtés de celles d'auteurs dont les livrets sont souvent mis de côté dans leur illustre carrière, tels Zola, Cocteau ou Claudel.

Le corpus est délimité par deux évènements se déroulant à plus de cinquante ans d'écart : la mort de Richard Wagner et le début de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. La première date s'impose, car Wagner représente l'archétype du *Dichterkomponist* ou poète-compositeur au XIXe siècle, dont l'exemple sera source d'inspiration ou d'opposition. Dans son sillage, des compositeurs comme Richard Strauss ou Modeste Moussorgski ont également écrit leurs propres livrets, tandis que Claude Debussy, Paul Dukas, Benjamin Britten, ou Hans Werner Henze ont systématiquement montré un intérêt prononcé pour l'adaptation de chefs-d'œuvre littéraires à l'opéra. Par contre, la date butoir de 1939 se justifie moins. Segonzac indique qu'elle « a été motivée par la volonté de dresser un panorama suffisamment large pour comprendre l'évolution des collaborations et permettre de dégager des analyses pertinentes » (22). Le titre du livre indique que l'ouvrage se concentre sur le « tournant du XXe siècle », ce qui est conventionnellement entendu comme la période du dernier XIXe siècle jusqu'à la fin de la Première Guerre mondiale. Au vu de la liste des œuvres fournie en annexe, qui s'étend à l'année 1886 – année de création de *Gwendoline* d'Emmanuel Chabrier avec un livret de Mendès – jusqu'à l'année 1963 – celle de la première du cycle de *L'Orestie* de Darius Milhaud avec un livret adapté d'Eschyle par Paul Claudel, certes achevé en 1931 – la période retenue par l'autrice aurait pu être plus large afin d'inclure les dernières œuvres d'Alfred Bruneau/Zola (1954) ou de Germaine Claudel (1942). Ou elle aurait pu l'être moins. Dans ce cas-là, il y avait deux approches possibles : l'étude de Segonzac aurait pu se consacrer à l'après-Wagner avec des explorations plus détaillées et abouties de Mendès, Zola, Claudel et Valéry, tous quatre ayant été marqués par leur rencontre avec Wagner et le wagnérisme. Ou elle aurait pu être dédiée au modernisme et aborder les œuvres de l'entre-deux guerres, avec les exemples de Colette, Cocteau, Gide et Lunel. Il y aurait alors plus de cohérence en termes historiques et davantage de possibilités de comparaisons entre les auteurs retenus. Car quels liens créer entre des personnalités aussi divergentes que Zola et Cocteau, deux écrivains issus de périodes totalement différentes et aux préoccupations esthétiques aussi opposées ? Est-ce que le spectre de Wagner était toujours aussi présent pour les jeunes compositeurs et librettistes des années 30 qu'il l'avait été pour eux dans les années 1880, où une alternative francophone à Wagner se faisait ressentir avec urgence ? La réponse est négative, car le compositeur et ses innovations musicales, philosophiques et linguistiques étaient devenus une partie incontournable du patrimoine musical français à partir du milieu des années 1890, même dans un territoire aussi hostile à la culture germanique que pouvait l'être la France après la guerre franco-prussienne.

Les auteurs choisis par Segonzac ont été sélectionnés selon des critères exposés dans l'introduction : ils doivent avoir écrit des œuvres appartenant au genre « sérieux » (22) et s'être distingués « par l'intérêt qu'ils ont porté au genre opératique, mais aussi par la diversité de leurs livrets et de leurs collaborations » (22). C'est ainsi que Claudel est retenu plutôt que Valéry, ou Cocteau plutôt que Colette, car les contributions de Valéry et Colette au genre lyrique ont été moins nombreuses. Le livre de Segonzac est structuré en deux parties, la première dédiée à la question de la collaboration entre musicien et écrivain ; la deuxième consacrée au livret d'opéra en tant qu'objet d'étude littéraire et musicale. Ainsi, l'histoire de la rencontre entre Milhaud et Lunel ou celle entre Henri Sauguet et Lunel est déjà racontée en première partie (49–53), mais les œuvres concernées ne sont abordées qu'une centaine de pages plus loin (233–53). Cette organisation éclatée donne une impression d'inachevé au·à la lecteur·rice, qui se retrouve désappointé·e de voir que certains détails nécessaires à l'exploration systématique des œuvres apparaissent bien trop tôt ou bien trop tard pour que les analyses soient pleinement cohérentes. Il aurait été plus judicieux de procéder de façon plus traditionnelle et d'inclure une première partie plus théorique – y compris sur la question de la collaboration qui reste trop limitée à l'aspect humain et n'est pas rigoureusement analysée sur le plan théorique – avant de rentrer dans le commentaire des œuvres en deuxième partie.

Cette structure trop disjointe reflète malheureusement d'autres problèmes méthodologiques. Tout d'abord, l'étendue de la bibliographie laisse à désirer. Cette envergure interdisciplinaire nécessaire pour un objet d'étude aussi hybride que le livret d'opéra aurait requis des lectures dans des disciplines différentes, comme la théorie littéraire (par exemple, Bakhtine sur le dialogue ou Barthes sur l'auctorialité), la philosophie de la musique (Kivy, Goehr), ou les *opera studies/performance studies* (Parker, Abbate). Mais il y a encore d'autres problèmes de bibliographie. En tout premier lieu, l'autrice ne cite que très peu d'ouvrages étrangers, laissant de côté des références majeures dans le domaine de la librettologie, telles le livre de Carl Dahlhaus, *Vom Musikdrama zur Literaturoper. Aufsätze zur neueren Operngeschichte* (1983), ou encore l'anthologie dirigée par Roger Parker et Arthur Groos intitulée *Reading Opera* (1988), pour ne mentionner que ceux-là. En deuxième lieu se trouve une absence d'ouvrages en musicologie qui auraient pu être bien davantage exploités pour des questions de contexte des œuvres lyriques abordées (conditions de préparation et de représentation, réception) et de postérité ou de non postérité dans le répertoire lyrique. L'autrice aurait pu se mettre en dialogue, par exemple, avec le livre de Steven Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin de Siècle : Wagnerism, Nationalism, and Style* (1999), ainsi que ses articles sur Zola et Bruneau, ou encore *The Composer as Intellectual : Music and Ideology in France, 1914–1940* (2005) de Jane Fulcher pour Cocteau et les Six, sans compter les encyclopédies de Timothée Picard sur Wagner, le *New Grove*, ou encore les travaux de Taruskin. Le résultat est que c'est l'aspect strictement textuel des œuvres qui est exploré, avec trop peu de considération pour la musique qui accompagne ces textes ou les musiciens qui leur ont donné vie. Et, sur le plan purement littéraire, il aurait également fallu davantage de comparaisons entre la production romanesque et poétique des auteurs abordés ici et leurs livrets, comme par exemple le roman musical *Le Roi vierge* (1882) de Catulle Mendès qui témoigne de l'influence majeure de Wagner sur sa pensée. Une analyse croisée aurait permis de mieux comprendre son évolution en tant que librettiste-disciple de Wagner (le sujet de *Gwendoline* est bien d'inspiration légendaire) jusqu'au néo-classicisme d'*Ariane* (1906) et *Bacchus* (1909).

Un autre problème, qui est lui aussi lié au manque d'envergure bibliographique de ce livre, est sa faible contextualisation historique. L'histoire du livret en tant que forme littéraire n'est que sommairement esquissée dans l'introduction, sans donner au·à la lecteur·rice une liste d'ouvrages de référence sur la naissance de l'opéra (Beaussant) ou la tragédie lyrique au XVIIe siècle (Girdlestone). Il s'agit, en effet, de deux époques où le livret d'opéra revendique sa littérarité et est truffé d'allusions aux grandes œuvres épiques, poétiques et tragiques du passé. Bien que l'ouvrage de Segonzac se concentre sur une période plus tardive et inclut des références à quelques ouvrages fondamentaux sur le XVIIIe (Didier) et le XIXe siècle (Fulcher, Yon), il aurait été utile d'explorer la genèse du genre plus en détail afin d'expliquer les rapports conflictuels entre musique et poésie dans l'opéra français de la fin XIXe siècle. Cela aurait également permis de mieux faire comprendre au·à la lecteur·rice la menace posée par Wagner, un compositeur qui, selon Mallarmé, aurait « usurpé le devoir » du poète de consacrer l'union de la poésie et du théâtre afin de communiquer avec la foule moderne. La question Wagner est, de même, trop peu exploitée même si elle est abordée plusieurs fois (dans l'introduction et en début de deuxième partie, principalement).

En somme, le mérite principal de l'ouvrage de Segonzac est d'ouvrir des pistes de recherche sur des auteurs négligés par la critique tout aussi bien que sur un pan de leur production littéraire qui a été mis à part du reste de leur œuvre. Mais les ambitions de ce livre demeurent encore trop modestes et l'ouvrage brille plus par son travail de recherche d'archives que par sa réflexion théorique sur les questions de collaboration à l'opéra.

Mathieu Duplay. *Les œuvres scéniques de John Adams. L'opéra et les frontières du littéraire*

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Dans un entretien de 1992, John Adams déclare : « J'ai l'intention d'écrire un nouvel [opéra], mais j'aimerais en faire quelque chose qui ressemble moins à un 'opéra' ; pour tout dire, j'aimerais échapper au milieu de l'opéra, de manière à ne plus être obligé de respecter ses valeurs et à ne plus devoir subir ses modes de décision qui à mon sens découlent de valeurs sans rapport avec mon travail » (cité par Duplay 124). Ces propos peuvent surprendre de la part de celui des grands compositeurs américains des XX^{e} et XXI^{e} siècles que l'on associe le plus volontiers au genre de l'opéra ; et ils méritent, pour être bien compris, d'être contextualisés et examinés à l'aune de ses choix esthétiques de l'époque, comme le fait Mathieu Duplay. Ils constituent cependant une manière d'introduction aux paradoxes et aux singularités de l'œuvre comme de la carrière de ce compositeur. Car John Adams est un homme de « valeurs », un artiste qui se soucie autant d'éthique que d'esthétique, ce que mettent en évidence les réticences qu'il exprime à l'idée de devoir se conformer au système de « valeurs » régissant à ses yeux les « modes de décision » propres à la scène opératique. Par ailleurs, ces quelques lignes témoignent tout ensemble de l'approche critique des genres musicaux qu'a le compositeur et de son attachement à une forme radicale de liberté qui l'amène à explorer, dans son œuvre scénique, tant le genre de l'opéra que ceux du *musical* ou de l'oratorio, manifestant ainsi son « désir de demeurer insituable » (Duplay 13).

Dans son étude récemment parue aux Éditions Honoré Champion, Mathieu Duplay situe, de fait, la singularité du compositeur dans son « art du détournement et de la surprise » (13), qui n'en fait pas un rebelle imperméable aux influences et aux traditions, mais plutôt un compositeur qui emprunte les sentiers divers de la création musicale et dont le cheminement original participe à un authentique renouvellement de formes parfois sclérosées, balayant au passage les hiérarchies convenues et l'opposition stérile entre culture savante et culture populaire. L'ouvrage de Mathieu Duplay laisse de côté le pan orchestral, concertant et choral de l'œuvre d'Adams pour s'intéresser exclusivement à ses œuvres scéniques, de *Nixon in China* (1987) à *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* (2012), où s'illustre particulièrement bien l'intérêt d'Adams pour le potentiel critique de la littérature, dans la conjugaison de livrets signés par des librettistes talentueuses (quand Adams ne les signe pas seul ou ne les co-signe pas avec le metteur en scène Peter Sellars) et de sujets comme de formes musicales propres à redonner à l'opéra sa fonction critique.

Si dense, toujours érudit et informé que soit cet ouvrage de 353 pages, il ne perd jamais de vue son parti-pris de lisibilité, de clarté et de pédagogie. L'auteur guide ainsi pas à pas son lecteur dans l'exploration qu'il propose de cette œuvre, préférant, à juste titre, à une approche synoptique l'examen distinct de chacune des sept œuvres abordées selon un ordre chronologique, en les éclairant de préliminaires portant sur leur genèse, leur réception et leur éventuel arrière-plan historique. Il nous fournit également d'autres éléments de contextualisation extrêmement utiles, proposant à intervalles réguliers, selon les besoins, de remarquables mises en perspective historiques, qui portent ici sur le *musical* américain, là sur la théorie et l'arme atomiques, pour n'en donner que deux exemples. De même, lorsqu'il aborde *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991), il prend soin de rappeler, outre l'épisode historique (le drame de l'*Achille Lauro*) dont s'inspire le deuxième opéra d'Adams, la controverse qui en a entouré, aux États-Unis, la sortie et les différentes reprises, avant d'examiner dans le détail l'accusation d'antisémitisme portée à l'endroit de l'œuvre, et ce à la lumière de l'arrière-plan géopolitique aussi bien que des positions politiques et religieuses de John Adams et de la poétesse et librettiste Alice Goodman. Il en résulte une analyse extrêmement rigoureuse et éclairante des enjeux politiques, moraux et religieux de l'œuvre comme de la controverse qu'elle a suscitée.

Mathieu Duplay opte, du reste, pour une approche interdisciplinaire de l'œuvre scénique d'Adams, empruntant aux outils critiques de l'esthétique, de la philosophie, de l'histoire politique et religieuse, de la théologie, de la musicologie et de l'histoire de la musique, autant qu'à ceux de la critique littéraire, au risque, écrit-il, « d'une forme d'impureté théorique à la mesure des risques pris par le compositeur » (20). On ne peut que se réjouir de ce choix assumé de l'interdisciplinarité, si judicieux, sinon impératif, non seulement parce que le genre de l'opéra programme, de son côté, le dialogue d'éléments musicaux, littéraires et scéniques, mais aussi parce que l'œuvre d'Adams, comme le montre très bien Mathieu Duplay, ne saurait être abordée sans que soit faite une place prééminente aux livrets notamment – le sous-titre de l'ouvrage indiquant, du reste, l'intérêt premier de son auteur pour la dimension littéraire des œuvres étudiées.

Il convient de se rappeler, à cet égard, que le premier opéra d'Adams, *Nixon in China*, émerge dans le contexte d'une reconfiguration critique du genre de l'opéra, prenant le contrepied du *libretto bashing* (ou « chasse au livret ») qui avait longtemps prévalu chez les critiques d'opéra ou théoriciens du genre (voir Groos 2 et Levin 6–7). John Adams, Alice Goodman et Peter Sellars, soucieux de préserver un équilibre entre les diverses composantes de l'œuvre scénique en débarrassant notamment le livret de son statut traditionnellement ancillaire, ont chacun souligné à quel point les enjeux politiques de l'œuvre issue de cette première collaboration entraient en résonance avec la mise à plat des relations de pouvoir internes au genre de l'opéra (voir Béghain 107–11), comme le signalent ces propos de la librettiste : « Cette collaboration est polyphonique. Nous avons fait de notre mieux pour faire de nos désaccords des contrepoints ; pour que nos voix ne se couvrent pas l'une l'autre, mais qu'elles soient, comme les personnages de l'opéra, chacune aussi éloquente que possible » (Goodman 13). Ce qui fait l'originalité des œuvres d'Adams, écrit de son côté Mathieu Duplay, « c'est le rôle très important qu'y joue la réflexion sur les rapports entre musique et littérature » (18), tandis qu'il évoque plus loin « les liens complexes, et souvent ambigus, que le théâtre d'Adams entretient avec l'écriture littéraire » (324).

Si le compositeur a puisé notamment chez les poètes américains Emily Dickinson et Walt Whitman l'inspiration de certaines de ses œuvres, il confie les livrets de ses œuvres scéniques d'abord à Alice Goodman, pour ses deux premiers opéras, puis à June Jordan, pour le *musical* qui suit en 1995 (*I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky*), avant de co-écrire, avec le metteur en scène Peter Sellars, à partir de sources bibliques (mais aussi plus largement chrétiennes) et de diverses œuvres poétiques d'inspiration chrétienne, voire mystiques (Hildegarde Von Bingen, Rosario Castellanos, notamment), le livret de l'oratorio de Noël *El Niño* (2000). Dans ce « théâtre de l'écriture », « bibliothèque borgésienne où les échos circulent d'un livre à l'autre, sans qu'aucune hiérarchie s'instaure entre l'énoncé et sa glose, entre l'original et sa traduction » (184), Adams s'intéresse, de fait, au premier chef au langage, tel qu'il nous renvoie à une vérité mouvante, foncièrement diverse. *Doctor Atomic* (2005), qui lui avait été commandé à l'origine dans le cadre d'un cycle d'opéras inspirés par le mythe de Faust, traite en définitive de la vie d'Oppenheimer, père de la bombe atomique et du Projet Manhattan qui lui est associé, sans que l'analogie avec Faust demeure centrale. Goodman travaille avec Adams et Sellars sur le livret de cet opéra entre 2000 et 2003, avant de démissionner à la suite d'un différend de nature religieuse et idéologique, ce qui amène le compositeur et le metteur en scène à renouveler l'expérience précédente en travaillant ensemble à partir de sources littéraires (Donne, Baudelaire, Rukeyser), documentaires et philosophiques. Dans l'opéra *A Flowering Tree* (2006), qui s'approprie les codes de la comédie romantique, Adams écrit seul son livret, en s'appuyant sur un conte du poète indo-américain Attipate Krishnaswami Ramanujan, mais en situant l'œuvre dans un contexte panaméricain, ce qui lui donne une « atmosphère de pan-culturalisme » (Adams cité par Duplay 264), renforcée par le choix du bilinguisme. *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* (2012), qui relève du genre de l'oratorio et s'appuie sur un livret écrit par Peter Sellars, puise à des sources similaires à celles qui avaient informé le livret d'*El Niño*, en même temps qu'à des œuvres de Primo Levi, de la romancière et poétesse amérindienne Louise Erdrich ou encore au catholicisme social de l'Américaine Dorothy Day. Cette Passion, qui confronte récit évangélique et réalités américaines contemporaines, traite de la justice sociale, dans une perspective clairement féministe, montrant une nouvelle fois que les préoccupations d'Adams sont tout autant éthiques et politiques qu'esthétiques ou religieuses.

L'ouvrage de Mathieu Duplay montre notamment comment la veine élégiaque parcourt l'ensemble de l'œuvre scénique d'Adams et des co-auteurs dont il s'entoure, si, comme il l'écrit, « par élégie, on entend une œuvre poétique ou musicale destinée à pérenniser le souvenir de ce dont elle reconnaît la perte définitive » (228). Car c'est bien la résonance des événements, plus que les événements eux-mêmes (fussent-ils de grande ampleur et lourds de conséquences tragiques), qui intéresse Adams, en quoi son œuvre est loin de relever du « docu-opéra » qu'y voient certains, comme le montre avec une remarquable acuité Mathieu Duplay. L'actualité de son œuvre réside ainsi dans sa faculté d'interpellation de notre présent, depuis un passé aussi peu lointain en définitive que l'est la Chine de Mao des États-Unis de Nixon, le « lointain » spatial comme temporel, chez Adams, nous étant toujours tendu comme un miroir. Le continuum verbal comme musical du dernier acte de *Nixon in China* paraît ainsi condenser, à la manière d'un *leitmotiv* d'ouverture wagnérien, la vision sans cesse remise sur le métier par Adams, au fil de ses œuvres et si diverses soient-elles, d'une humanité pensée au premier chef comme une communauté, nonobstant l'éloignement temporel ou spatial et les différences religieuses, politiques, idéologiques, identitaires, qu'il prend soin de ne jamais araser, mais au contraire de faire entendre, afin qu'en émergent non seulement la perception du semblable dans le dissemblable, du même dans l'autre, mais aussi peut-être le poids de la responsabilité individuelle.

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Jessica Kohn. *Dessiner des petits Mickeys. Une histoire sociale de la bande dessinée en France et en Belgique (1945–1968)*

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Si certains travaux universitaires ont commencé à approfondir l'histoire de la bande dessinée – on pense à Sylvain Lesage (2019) et à Benjamin Caraco (2020) –, il manquait à ce terrain d'étude assez récent une étude des parcours d'auteurs, qui rende compte des grandes transformations qui ont agité les métiers du dessin, depuis l'après-guerre. On ne disposait vraiment jusqu'à présent que de récits de témoins ou de grands amateurs qui ne pouvaient prétendre à l'objectivité nécessaire pour garantir la qualité de leurs reconstitutions. La thèse d'histoire contemporaine de Jessica Kohn, agrégée d'histoire et docteure en histoire contemporaine, remaniée pour publication, vient combler ce manque.

Dessiner des petits Mickeys est un ouvrage dense qui retrace la constitution du groupe professionnel des illustrateurs et dessinateurs de bandes dessinées de 1945 à 1968 en France et en Belgique. L'autrice y rend compte de leur histoire sociale avec méthode, cumulant archives, documents, entretiens et travail statistique. La construction du corpus de l'enquête a été faite par la sélection de 32 revues et de 4 quotidiens. Chacun d'entre eux a été dépouillé pour en recenser les auteurs (400 au total). Un recueil de données par archives a été établi de la manière la plus exhaustive possible et quelques entretiens sont venus compléter cette approche.

Du côté des outils d'analyse, la typologie générationnelle établie permet de bien saisir tant les différences de parcours (des illustrés catholiques aux revues modernes de l'après-guerre, du capital social au capital culturel, de l'académisme à l'innovation, etc.) que les transformations historiques (statut de journaliste pigiste, extension du marché, mouvements migratoires). Cette typologie permet de montrer, par exemple, que les classes sociales paraissent avoir un impact moindre que la génération et le pays d'origine (France, Belgique – ou plutôt Wallonie –, Espagne, etc.).

Dès les premiers chapitres, Jessica Kohn montre que, dans l'après-guerre, les dessinateurs sont d'abord polyvalents, que c'est la presse illustrée en pleine croissance qui les attire vers la bande dessinée et qui fait que certains se spécialiseront. Mais l'usage de « métiers auxiliaires » est général, découlant de la nécessité de cumuler plusieurs activités pour gagner sa vie, ce qui ne peut qu'évoquer les réflexions très actuelles de Bureau, Perrenoud et Shapiro (2009) sur la polyvalence artistique. D'ailleurs, s'attardant plus loin sur la naissance des syndicats professionnels, depuis le début du XX^{e} siècle, elle montre comment ceux-ci regroupaient les intérêts des dessinateurs (de presse, d'humour, de publicité ou de l'édition selon les syndicats) sans que l'on y trouve spécifiquement les auteurs de bande dessinée.

Elle remet largement en cause la mythologie des artistes de bande dessinée, d'abord par la critique de la mise en avant d'une autodidaxie largement absente de son échantillon. Faire de la bande dessinée, c'est : « saisir une opportunité de travail plus que répondre à un aspect vocationnel » (48).

C'est aussi le mythe de l'auteur qui est ainsi mis à mal : les créateurs sont soumis aux règles du commerce et fortement subordonnés aux éditeurs. La vision souvent mythique des grands auteurs doués d'un talent inné résiste peu à l'analyse : c'est sous la contrainte que s'exerce d'abord leur art et il est rarement considéré comme tel. Cette vision s'est constituée *a posteriori* par l'adulation des fans.

La presse hebdomadaire, notamment, engendre des rythmes de production élevés, où ils sont davantage des exécutants que des artistes. Une certaine compétition est présente, que renforcent référendums et courriers des lecteurs, parfois manipulés par les rédacteurs. Si la plupart des auteurs travaillent pour plusieurs journaux et doivent donc faire face à des commandes multiples, ceux qui bénéficient d'un contrat d'exclusivité avec un journal n'en sont pas moins soumis à des contraintes fortes, qui, en plus du rythme de production, s'exercent par le style de la maison pour qui ils travaillent.

On comprend donc que, dès l'après-guerre, certains dessinateurs-illustrateurs émettent des revendications protectionnistes contre la concurrence des artistes étrangers, qui contribueront à la loi de 1949 installant la commission de surveillance et de contrôle des publications destinées à l'enfance et à l'adolescence.

Cette démarche participe des luttes professionnelles qui sont menées par les syndicats de l'après-guerre. Ceux-ci ont des intérêts à la fois spécifiques et communs. Une meilleure reconnaissance des droits des illustrateurs et dessinateurs et plus précisément des droits d'auteur est une des réclamations collectives et amènera à la loi sur la propriété intellectuelle et artistique de mars 1957, qui garantit que les dessinateurs gardent la propriété de leurs dessins originaux.

De même, la question de la protection sociale est conséquente. Les pigistes, salariés, peuvent obtenir leur carte professionnelle de reporter-dessinateur et donc être affiliés au régime général de sécurité sociale. Ce n'est pas le cas des dessinateurs indépendants, ce qui s'inscrit bien dans la politique de l'époque qui privilégie le salariat comme modèle d'inscription dans la société. Mais cela crée aussi des dissensions et même de la délation entre dessinateurs, certains contestant l'obtention de la carte professionnelle de leurs collègues. Néanmoins, depuis le début des années 1950, de multiples revendications des syndicats visent à faciliter l'obtention de la carte de presse. Plusieurs étapes vont segmenter cette lutte : de la collaboration régulière à un organe de presse jusqu'à la subordination aux rédactions, il faut que les dessinateurs arrivent à prouver qu'ils correspondent bien aux critères retenus. Ces revendications ne prendront fin qu'avec la Loi Cressard de 1974, qui considère que toute convention passée entre une entreprise journalistique et un dessinateur vaut pour contrat de travail. Ces luttes auront eu pour résultat de créer des réseaux et des soutiens entre dessinateurs, à la fois, mais aussi des dissensions inter- et intrasyndicales.

C'est dans la montée des années 1960 que les relations entre les équipes de rédaction et les artistes commencent à s'assouplir enfin : si certains ont depuis l'origine des réunions de rédaction (*Hara-Kiri*), celles-ci se développent chez *Vaillant* et *Pilote*. Des réseaux se constituent, des réunions de travail sont menées, sans pourtant impliquer toujours de relations amicales. Des clans se forment et des tensions les opposent parfois. On peut aussi trouver des studios au fonctionnement tayloriste ou des ateliers, simples regroupements d'auteurs dans un lieu commun. Tout cela marque une grande diversité de situations, selon les journaux et les auteurs.

Cette diversité se retrouve quand il est question de rétribution. Jessica Kohn classe les dessinateurs dans une catégorie intermédiaire entre les employés et les cadres moyens, mais souligne la variabilité des revenus qui, s'ils rendent possible de gagner sa vie, nécessitent souvent la multiplication des employeurs ou des travaux. Indépendants, pigistes ou salariés, leurs statuts sont divers et peuvent changer en cours de carrière ; dans tous les cas, ils sont peu protégés. Ils montrent même parfois un certain mépris de leurs droits et se laissent exploiter, que ce soit par des contrats peu avantageux, des paiements au forfait ou le refus des éditeurs de les considérer comme pigistes, une dimension que l'on retrouve encore aujourd'hui (Aquatias 2024).

L'autrice montre qu'est en jeu la définition d'un métier dont les critères sont multiples (dessins d'actualité ou non, lieu de publication, rôle des dessinateurs, etc.). De cela découle aussi la question de la légitimité des créateurs. Pourtant, si un discours négatif les condamne trop souvent à un statut d'artiste de seconde zone, ils y prêtent moins attention qu'à la recherche de meilleures conditions de vie (c'est-à-dire à la reconnaissance de leur professionnalisation). De légitimation, il est peu question ici. Il faut qu'un auteur travaille pour les journaux pour adultes du début des années 1960 ou possède sa propre série dans les journaux pour la jeunesse pour qu'il bénéficie d'une certaine liberté créative.

Les critiques de la culture de masse se sont aussi attaquées à la bande dessinée et la loi de 1949 trie ce qu'elle considère comme le bon grain ou l'ivraie. La Belgique n'est pas en reste et se dessine alors un mouvement général de contrôle des publications, intégrant une certaine conception de la pédagogie. Les auteurs devancent parfois les attentes de la commission en s'autocensurant ; mais c'est là aussi l'expression des contraintes éditoriales. Ainsi en va-t-il des histoires d'aventure transformées en récits didactiques à l'aide d'expressions savantes, de références et d'autres astuces, des dossiers documentaires ou des rubriques savantes.

Associant la démocratisation culturelle des années 1950 et 1960 au rôle didactique de la bande dessinée jeunesse, l'autrice situe alors les auteurs dans une double position, à la fois disposant de la même culture que leurs lecteurs, à la fois se plaçant en surplomb, du fait de leur éducation générale et artistique. Ils deviennent alors des médiateurs. Cependant, les « Modernes »[1] sont plus présents dans cette fonction : leurs formations artistiques y jouent un rôle, certes, mais aussi les réseaux d'auteurs, et notamment le tropisme parisien, semblent favoriser une nouvelle distance aux canons didactiques de la bande dessinée. C'est aussi que les références des dessinateurs d'après-guerre ont changé, se portant plus sur la bande dessinée américaine, à laquelle s'ajouteront au fil du temps d'autres références étrangères. De manière générale, l'intertextualité des œuvres apparait plus nettement.

Tout cela concourt à ce que les dessinateurs d'après-guerre se fassent à la fois les hérault s et les contributeurs d'une culture juvénile qui commence à s'exprimer. De ce fait, une minorité commence à chercher à s'affirmer comme des artistes de plein droit. En 1964, si Claude Beylie est le premier à évoquer le neuvième art, c'est aussi l'année où Éric Losfeld publie pour la première fois une bande dessinée pour adultes (*Barbarella*), en commençant à affûter son discours sur la bande dessinée comme forme artistique. Ce premier album et les débuts de la collection ne sont pas un grand succès commercial, mais sont largement appréciés par les critiques de bande dessinée (Preteseille, 2024). Ce dernier rappel ne peut que confirmer un processus de canonisation largement hétéronome.

Au final, la reconstruction historique de Jessica Kohn éclaire bien la manière dont dessinateurs et illustrateurs fondent un ensemble de professionnalités qui restent assez perméables et parfois transitoires, ne connaissant une spécialisation dans la bande dessinée qu'à partir des années 1950 et 1960. L'autrice s'attache aussi à laisser une place aux artistes femmes, soit en les citant, soit en notant leur invisibilisation et leur relégation à des tâches moins valorisées (encrage, couleurs, mise en page, rédactionnel, etc.). Mettant en doute les clichés imposés de la profession (l'auteur est un homme, autodidacte, talentueux) et les discours héroïques d'un temps révolu que l'on trouve encore dans certains ouvrages hagiographiques, Jessica Kohn s'oppose largement à la vision de Luc Boltanski d'un « champ de la bande dessinée » et montre combien au contraire les auteurs cherchent bien plus à gagner leur vie qu'à créer un nouveau médium. En replaçant cette histoire professionnelle dans le

[1] L'autrice a divisé les auteurs en trois générations, les Anciens (1900–1943), les Classiques (1944–1950), les Modernes (1951–1967).

contexte historique de l'époque, tant du côté économique et juridique que dans ses aspects culturels et sociaux, l'historienne se rapproche de la sociologie du travail et rend ainsi un travail dont la lecture est indispensable à tous ceux qui travaillent sur la bande dessinée.

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Dona Pursall and Eva Van de Wiele, eds.
Sugar and Spice and the Not So Nice. Comics Picturing Girlhood

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L'ouvrage collectif *Sugar, Spice and the Not So Nice*, sous-titré *Comics Picturing Girlhood* est le prolongement du symposium du même nom, organisé du 22 au 23 avril 2021 à l'Université de Gand. Dirigé, comme ces rencontres, par Dona Pursall et Eva Van de Wiele, il contient une partie des communications présentées alors, mais également des travaux inédits, inspirés par le colloque.

Le livre a pour ambition d'étudier le traitement de l'enfance féminine[1] au sein du champ de la bande dessinée, plus précisément de mettre en lumière la complexité et la nature multiple de cette notion. Au-delà de la simple étude de représentations, il a pour objectif de traiter plus largement d'enjeux matériels et sociaux.

Les directrices, suivies en cela par les auteurs et autrices qui publient dans l'ouvrage, postulent en effet dès l'introduction que la bande dessinée,

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1 Il n'existe en effet pas de correspondance francophone exacte pour *girlhood*, puisque nous ne possédons pour décrire les premières années que l'épicène *enfance* et que *féminité* renvoie à l'âge adulte et serait l'équivalent de *womanhood*. Une alternative serait de construire le néologisme *filletteté* que je mobiliserai avec parcimonie pour éviter les redondances lexicales.

médium en tension, est le vecteur idéal pour porter la voix, l'expression et l'agentivité des sujets dans une perspective de genre, mais plus largement, pour parler du monde. Sa polyphonie, entre récitatifs, bulles de paroles, bulles de pensées et récits par l'image trouvent une résonnance dans la complexité et la diversité du réel. L'effet est aussi vrai dans l'autre sens : lire des représentations multiples en bande dessinée pour élargir l'expérience des lecteurs et des lectrices et leurs représentations d'elles et d'eux-mêmes. En d'autres termes, et en se plaçant en cela dans une longue tradition de recherche, le livre s'ancre fermement dans le postulat que les bandes dessinées parlent du réel et le façonnent en retour. Les caractéristiques spécifiques du médium en font un outil idéal pour interroger, voire pour subvertir les normes et les identités.

Dona Pursall et Eva Van de Wiele ont su convoquer différents domaines de recherche et combiner des approches historiques, narratologiques et esthétiques afin d'offrir une perspective large pour cette étude de l'enfance féminine. De la même manière, les corpus proviennent de champs géographiques, historiques et culturels variés tandis que les exemples mobilisés, s'il s'agit de cas uniques, sont toujours présentés comme le reflet d'une tendance plus large, une illustration typique d'identités partagées bien qu'éminemment subjectives. La place importante accordée à la question des genres littéraires ou à l'identité sociologique du lectorat, en complément à l'étude des représentations, est l'un des points forts de l'ouvrage, d'autant qu'il combine habilement essais visuels et théoriques critiques. Le livre est aussi porté par le soin qu'il met à établir des ponts entre études d'œuvres historiquement datées et discours contemporains, et entre le genre et d'autres enjeux étroitement liés et d'actualité, comme la question de la migration, par exemple.

L'introduction, rédigée par les directrices de l'ouvrage, mobilise la bande dessinée pour étudier les normes et les attentes relatives à l'enfance féminine, et surtout le traitement des écarts et des exceptions face à ces normes. Elle commence par une définition de la *filletteté*, qui s'est historiquement construite en opposition avec l'âge adulte, sur des tensions et des enjeux sans cesse renégociés et intimement liés à des considérations sociales et morales. La représentation des jeunes filles est marquée par une forte idéalisation, celle d'une enfance pure et utopique, mâtinée d'une nostalgie envers une réalité pourtant jamais éprouvée. Cela a un impact fort dans la figuration traditionnelle des jeunes héroïnes, limitées dans leur champ d'action, cantonnées à la sphère de l'intime et marquées par l'importance de leur apparence et de leurs choix vestimentaires, témoins supposés de leur moralité. Mais les conséquences touchent aussi les espaces culturels et sociaux dans lesquels les lectrices sont attendues, avec la création de magazines, de publicités et même de lieux physiques placés sous le sceau du genre. Les autrices concluent néanmoins par quelques exemples de protagonistes qui, conscientes du contexte genré dans lequel elles s'inscrivent et des stéréotypes auxquels elles sont confrontées, ont réussi à s'en affranchir, tout en signalant le prix à payer pour cette autonomisation. Elles nous apprennent aussi que cette étude est essentielle, car l'analyse de l'enfance, c'est aussi celle des relations avec les adultes et nos propres représentations.

L'article de Mel Gibson, « "It's *the* girl!" : Comics, Professional Identity, Affection, Nostalgia and Embarrassment » est un récit auto-ethnographique passionnant qui prolonge avec pertinence les différents points évoqués ci-dessus. L'autrice revient sur sa carrière et montre comment les attentes qui pesaient sur elle – en tant que fillette, fille puis femme – ont multiplié les obstacles et accentué la peine à transcrire la richesse et la multiplicité de son propre vécu, tout en construisant son enfance et, à sa grande surprise, combien elles l'ont aussi accompagnée à l'âge adulte. La perspective située, claire et bien menée, apporte un éclairage bienvenu car elle est soutenue par un appareil critique sérieux. Par le récit personnel, elle apporte preuves, images et un excellent cadrage sociologique.

Le projet du chapitre suivant, « Looking for Queerness » de Martha Newbigging est à mon sens plus confus. Cette recherche basée sur la pratique est une courte bande dessinée qui revient aussi sur la dichotomie entre les vécus propres et les récits subis. Mais le caractère très fragmentaire de l'œuvre, qui a d'ailleurs partiellement été réalisée plusieurs années auparavant, ainsi que sa brièveté, laissent quelque peu perplexe quant à son apport théorique.

Au sein du troisième chapitre, « Harrowing Rites of Passage : Refugee Girlhood in the Wake of Syrian Migrant Crisis », María Porras Sánchez passe de l'auto- à la biographie. Elle compare plusieurs œuvres de bande dessinée mettant en scène des fillettes en situation de migration pour montrer comment la représentation des réfugiés dans ce médium permet d'opposer un contre-discours aux représentations *mainstream* et aux politiques gouvernementales sécuritaires. La bande dessinée permet ainsi de créer de l'empathie et de donner une consistance et de la constance face aux images décontextualisées, aux titres de presse tapageurs et aux graphiques et données chiffrées qui sont la norme pour ces enjeux.

L'article a l'intelligence de ne pas se limiter à cette valorisation du médium, qui serait bon par essence et par la seule volonté de faire le bien mais également de rendre le lectorat attentif aux biais des auteurs et autrices européen·nes dans la représentation de l'autre. Même en essayant de dépasser des stéréotypes, nul·le n'est à l'abri d'en proposer d'autres.

« Comics, Caregiving and Crip Time », le chapitre de JoAnn Purcell, est aussi une perspective située. Il s'agit d'un mélange entre un récit à la première personne sur sa pratique de la bande dessinée et une bande dessinée, créée à partir de l'expérience intime d'un quotidien partagé avec une enfant en situation de handicap. Il met également la subjectivité au cœur de la création – espérée – de l'empathie du lectorat et développe un lien séduisant entre le temps « handicapé », non-linéaire, de son enfant et de sa vie, et le temps de la bande dessinée, fragmentaire et malléable. S'il est intéressant de faire résonner son propos et son vécu en images, le lien avec la question du genre reste abscons, bien que toutes les études récentes montrent que le soin prodigué aux autres, notamment aux plus faibles, reste une activité essentiellement déléguée aux femmes.

Dans le chapitre cinq, « Discussing Gender in a Communist Magazine : *Corinne et Jeannot*, 1970 », Sylvain Lesage se penche sur la série de Jean Tabary pour étudier comment les rôles et les normes de genre sont soulignés ou remis en question dans cette production pour la jeunesse. Il commence par une mise en contexte étendue sur la place des femmes et des filles dans le champ de la bande dessinée franco-belge à travers l'histoire, ou plutôt sur ses nombreuses zones d'ombre. On sait ainsi notamment peu de choses sur le lectorat féminin, dont l'existence est même souvent niée. Cette étude, qui se concentre sur des questions de réception, notamment par l'analyse du courrier des lecteurs et lectrices mais aussi sur la perception de ces lettres par les équipes éditoriales, ou les choix de couverture par exemple est donc plus que bienvenue. Les différents partis pris (choix du magazine, histoire éditoriale, …) sont bien étayés et en font une contribution particulièrement convaincante.

Benoît Glaude, dans son chapitre « The Ambivalence of Girlhood and Motherhood in A Girl-and-Her-Dog Comics Series : *Margot & Oscar Pluche / Sac à Puces* », s'inscrit dans une approche similaire, mais en étudiant une série contemporaine. Il analyse la représentation de Margot, 8 ans, à travers l'évolution de sa relation avec son chien, en accordant une grande importance au contexte et à l'histoire éditoriale et aux différents éléments de langage, ainsi qu'aux discours des artistes. Il montre que malgré l'évolution des normes sociales et les discours encourageant des auteurs et autrices, les représentations féminines n'ont guère évolué. Cette recherche, richement étayée par des données chiffrées, constitue un très bon exemple de dialogue entre études qualitative et quantitative.

Le chapitre sept, « Modernity, Aesthetics and the Active Female Body in *Mirabelle* (1960–1967) », de Joan Ormrod s'inscrit aussi dans une perspective historique. L'autrice analyse la représentation de l'agentivité et des corps féminins dans le magazine de bande dessinée britannique *Mirabelle.* Le mouvement est considéré selon un angle physique, mais aussi spatial et psychologique et son étude de l'histoire des corps féminins dépasse largement celle de ses représentations en bande dessinée. Avec l'appui de nombreux exemples, elle montre les tensions vécues par les adolescentes des années 1960, tiraillées entre les normes sociales en vigueur, empreintes de conformisme et d'assignation à la sphère familiale et les valeurs de modernité et d'émancipation, à l'œuvre dans les pages des magazines, préparant un terreau fertile aux revendications féministes de la génération suivante.

La perspective historique et l'étude du contexte éditorial sont également au cœur du chapitre suivant, « The Demon Girl of Malayali Comic Strip : The (Im)possibilities of Comic Imagination ». Aswathy Senan étudie la récurrence du motif de l'enfance au sein du genre du strip, en montrant qu'il offre un espace fluide dans lequel rebattre les normes attendues ou exorciser des angoisses, et qu'il sert souvent à parler des adultes aux adultes. Elle pointe l'importance du contexte de publication pour la réception et la compréhension d'une œuvre. Pour sa démonstration, elle utilise la série *Bobanum Moliyum* de Toms, en comparant sa parution dans les périodiques *Malayala Manorama* puis *Kalakaumudi.* L'autrice montre avec clarté et plusieurs illustrations comment le changement de média s'accompagne également d'un changement de contenu et de ton et comment les protagonistes deviennent rapidement le support d'un concept plus vaste, dans un mouvement permis par l'inscription dans l'enfance et la quotidienneté partagée avec le lectorat.

Le chapitre neuf, « Reading Girl- and Womanhood in the Classic Flemish Family Comics Serie *Jommeke* : A Conversation with Katrien De Graeve and Sara De Vuyst » est, comme son titre l'indique, basé sur une conversation entre Michel De Dobbeleer et deux chercheuses féministes. L'auteur les fait débattre de leur lecture de la série flamande familiale *Jommeke*. Cette série est extrêmement populaire en Flandres et compte plus de 300 albums, mais elle a été critiquée plusieurs fois pour sa représentation stéréotypée de plusieurs groupes sociaux, notamment les personnes issues de la migration et les femmes. Le dialogue vise à comprendre si ces représentations ont évolué en comparant trois albums, qui thématisent explicitement la question du genre, publiés respectivement en 1960, 1979 et 2019. Le résultat est passionnant et couvre notamment plusieurs notions-clés essentielles dans toute lecture basée sur une approche liée aux questions de genre, comme l'annihilation symbolique ou le *male gaze*, par exemple.

L'essai graphique de Sébastien Conard, « Death and the Maiden : Some Notes Concerning Charlotte Salomon's *Leben ? oder Theater ?* » constitue le chapitre dix. Il s'agit d'un exploration artistique, associant des thèmes, noms, citations graphiques et verbales issues et autour du travail de Charlotte Salomon et de son œuvre principale, *Leben ? oder Theater ?* Comme le chapitre suivant, il s'agit d'un travail visant à étudier comment le langage spécifique des bandes dessinées, ou du moins des récits graphiques – Charlotte Salomon ne s'est en effet jamais revendiquée de la bande dessinée et son ouvrage posthume se situe aux marges du médium –, pour raconter et transmettre. Conard informe cependant que pour appréhender pleinement ce chapitre, il est conseillé de s'être familiarisé auparavant avec le travail de l'artiste allemande. Certes. Néanmoins, l'exercice formel reste intéressant pour les néophytes, bien que le lien avec la question de la *filletteté* soit pour le moins ténu.

Enfin, dans le dernier chapitre, « Developing a Style of Her Own: *Mophead* by Selina Tusitala Marsh (2019) », Marine Berthiot étudie elle aussi les liens entre forme et récit. Elle met en lumière de nouvelles formes de narration. Selina Tusitala Marsh mélange en effet la tradition narrative océanienne et les codes et formes de la bande dessinée, pour créer *Mophead*, un récit à destination du jeune public, basé sur ses traumatismes d'enfance. L'analyse est détaillée et précise, et les références convoquées sont nombreuses et utiles, mais la conclusion manque à mon sens d'une ouverture vers une perspective plus large, au-delà de la seule étude de cas.

En conclusion de l'ouvrage, Eva Van de Wiele reprend les différentes contributions et montre que la plupart, sous des formes et des angles divers, ont mis en lumière des tensions entre les identités vécues et les discours et représentations proposées, entre les adultes et les enfants, les filles et les garçons. Le manque de représentations ou, au contraire, les attentes irréalistes dans un contexte donné, tout comme l'invisibilisation d'un lectorat féminin, l'impact des représentations sur le monde réel font partie des constats largement partagés par les auteurs et les autrices de ce riche volume. Dans son mot final, Julia Round souligne elle aussi, comment les représentations agissent sur les identités et l'agentivité permise par la bande dessinée, nous invitant à nous saisir de cet outil éminemment politique. Elle termine en prophétisant un long avenir de recherche pour le champ, ce que, à la lecture de ces premières bases, je souhaite également.

Eszter Szép. *Comics and the Body. Drawing, Reading and Vulnerability*

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Que se passe-t-il dans mon corps quand je lis une bande dessinée et qui plus est, un ouvrage focalisé sur l'expérience corporelle telle que la naissance, l'abus sexuel, l'anorexie, ou la guerre ? C'est en partant de son vécu incarné lors de lectures de bandes dessinées que la chercheuse hongroise a appréhendé et creusé la question du corps et de la vulnérabilité dans la bande dessinée non-fictionnelle. Dans la rencontre de la lecture de bandes dessinées, nous dit-elle, émerge un dialogue implicite entre l'artiste et le lecteur·rice qui devient une expérience performatrice impliquant l'interaction des corps en présence.

Comics and the Body s'appuie d'une part sur plusieurs travaux théoriques antérieurs comme ceux de Gardner qui considèrent la ligne dans les bandes dessinées comme une marque incarnée de la main de l'artiste. De l'autre, elle inclut des approches cognitives tel l'ouvrage de psychologie de Shaun Gallagher *How the body Shapes the Mind*, mettant en exergue comment le mouvement incarné construit nos perceptions émotionnelles. spectateur.liseuse réagit aux lignes avec une empathie kinesthétique. Enfin, cet ouvrage entre en dialogue avec les travaux de Hague et Scherr qui ont véritablement dépassé les lectures tabulaires ou centrées sur le hiatus pour impliquer le corps dans l'acte d'interprétation bédéistique.

Beaucoup de bandes dessinées actuelles, observe Szép, mettent en scène des corps désassemblés, anorexiques, violentés. Ces représentations nous affectent, lecteurs·trices, corporellement également. En bande dessinée, c'est la ligne qui contient la trace du corps, le geste et la pensée qui y sont associés. Les trauma studies ont contribué à de nouvelles approches du médium en visibilisant la médiation de l'expérience traumatique sur le lecteur. Szép utilise bon nombre d'entre elles : Chute avec *Disaster Drawn*, Polak dans *Ethics in the Gutter* ou Earle avec *Comics, Trauma and the New Art of War*. C'est la vulnérabilité, poursuit Szép en citant Judith Butler, qui se révèle dans ce trait crayonné et qui initie une relation éthique entre les parties en présence. La vulnérabilité n'est pas un état de fragilité mais une condition universelle de chaque individu. La vulnérabilité est envisagée par Szép comme permettant l'interaction, qui peut être liée aussi bien à un geste de soin qu'à des formes d'agression corporelle. C'est le lieu d'une rencontre éthique que les bandes dessinées peuvent mettre en performance.

Szép considère le corps comme central dans le médium de la bande dessinée et ceci à trois niveaux : le corps est dessiné par la main de l'artiste, il est répété dans presque chaque case, et enfin, il est interprété par la réaction physique, haptique de la/du lecteur·rice. C'est cette triple analyse qui rend l'ouvrage de Szép précieux et original car il prend en compte l'influence des textures, hachures, d'une part, et les recherches cognitives qui mettent l'accent sur le corps du lecteur, dans l'interprétation des ouvrages, de l'autre.

Cette étude s'ouvre sur l'analyse des lignes qui révèlent l'intimité et la trace gestuelle de la graphiation – terme avec lequel l'autrice ne dialogue sans doute pas assez – dans deux ouvrages de Lynda Barry. Ceux-ci alternent entre scrapbooking, collages, annonces, différentes écritures, entrées de journaux intimes…créés par les mains et donnant une épaisseur physique qui traduisent diverses formes de mémoire et de pensées. Le lecteur·spectatrice doit associer les images mais aussi se réapproprier l'acte de dessiner car l'ouvrage invite le lecteur·spectatrice à comprendre, voire réincarner, le travail et le mouvement derrière la ligne. Enfin, la dernière section explore comment cette ligne est également en lien avec la vulnérabilité et l'effort (ce qu'observent Baetens et Frey).

L'analyse de *Monsters* de Dahl dans le chapitre deux met en exergue la nature performative de la ligne dans la répétition du dessin du corps monstrueux ; la vulnérabilité émergeant dans la rencontre de l'altérité. La monstruosité dans la contagiosité de l'herpès prend ainsi corps dans la déformation et le grotesque. Le cadre théorique (inspiré de Shildrick) sur le monstrueux met en exergue que le corps constamment redessiné révèle les métamorphoses du corps aux prises avec le tabou des maladies sexuellement transmissibles (représenté comme un monstre externe et par des changements de peau, entre autres), réinscrivant ainsi des versions de soi intime qui deviennent des avatars en métamorphose. Représentée avec grotesque et humour, la monstruosité dans *Monsters* est lue comme fluide et appartenant à une forme de liminalité. Le chapitre trois démontre comment le tracé des arrières-plans dans l'œuvre de Joe Sacco, fait de hachures intenses et sombres, évoque l'intensité et le temps d'écoute émotionnelle de Sacco, son engagement à habiter la vunérabilité des situations dont il témoigne. Les hachures, qui évoquent le labeur de la main qui dessine, et la mise en scène de cette dernière, rappellent sa présence et la temporalité de son geste artistique. Aidée des approches de Laura U. Marks sur la visualité haptique, le visuel est envisagé comme proche du toucher. Sacco donne à ses arrière-plans une qualité tactile et répétitive qui évoque la compassion non-narrée de Sacco pour tous les témoins qu'il a interrogés. Ils constituent une véritable trace épaisse de sa présence et de son écoute. En comprenant cette trace humaine, lecteur et dessinateur se rejoignent dans un vécu commun.

Dans le chapitre quatre, Szép analyse les récits de vie de Miriam Katin, artiste hongroise juive ayant (sur)vécu à la fin de la seconde guerre mondiale. Ses lignes énergiques et courbes de ses crayonnés lui permettent d'évoquer la complexité de ses émotions. Comment ces lignes et la vulnérabilité qu'elles incarnent sont-elles perçues ? Dans ce chapitre « lire et le corps », l'analyse montre comment la figuration des corps torturés ou en souffrance, comme chez Sacco, engendre une empathie kinesthésique (Laura U. Marks) qui conduit à une lecture incarnée. Partant des observations de Gallagher sur le vécu corporel de notre conscience et de Ian Hague qui analyse les caractéristiques matérielles de l'acte performatif et immersif de la lecture de bande dessinée, l'autrice montre comment Katin joue de cette corporalité pour ouvrir à de nouvelles interprétations qui dépendent d'une lecture située. Les éléments autobiographiques mis en avant par l'auteur intensifient cette expérience incarnée. Les lignes dessinées, nettes, rugueuses ou larges et en mouvement apparaissent comme des esquisses que l'artiste a souhaité laisser comme telles pour montrer le processus créatif et émotionnel de son travail. Comme le répète Szép, la ligne traduit l'émotion et une réaction empathique forte. Les changements de style permettent à Katin d'exposer la vulnérabilité de son avatar. Grâce à Kristeva et aux théories de l'abject, Szép analyse comment les crayonnages des excréments maintiennent l'accent sur la vulnérabilité du corps en présence.

Le chapitre cinq se penche sur des ouvrages conçus dans des formats hors-normes et analyse comment la matérialité du médium affecte le lien artiste-lecteur et l'interprétation de l'œuvre. Le poids ou la taille, par exemple, impactent l'acte de lecture et d'interprétation. On se souvient de *Building Stories* de Chris Ware : une grande boite contenant 14 carnets bd de formats différents qui invitaient à des lectures diverses liées à l'interaction avec leur matérialité. *Lighter than my Shadow* de Katie Green est un ouvrage très lourd et épais qui paradoxalement parle d'anorexie et d'abus sexuel. Green utilise des techniques diverses pour renforcer le caractère d'objet matériel du livre, et les frontières entre le corps et le livre deviennent floues lorsque Katie tente de se suicider et que la surface du livre se déchire et se désintègre. Cette expérimentation matérielle prolonge l'idée de la relation interconstitutive entre l'artiste et le corps du lecteur, ici assez rare mais puissante. Si la surface est le point de rencontre tactile entre ces corps vulnérables, la présentation de ces surfaces, leur poids, leur toucher et leurs formes sont importants pour leur interprétation. Les lignes gribouillées donnent à ressentir l'anxiété liée à la culpabilité de manger, par exemple et traversent physiquement les pages de l'ouvrage en interférant avec des événements d'origine traumatique. Le livre devient métaphore du corps de Katie, de sa vulnérabilité, de sa présence/absence. Enfin, dans son analyse de *La grande guerre* de Sacco, Szép montre comment le fait que l'ouvrage doit être étalé en une longue bande de pages reliées met en lien la position du lecteur et celle des corps couchés dans les tranchées ou sur le champ de bataille. Ce dépliement crée ainsi un dialogue de vulnérabilité entre le lecteur et les soldats blessés représentés sur la page. L'ouvrage de Sacco est lu ici comme évoquant directement et physiquement l'espace de la tranchée. Les deux ouvrages analysés montrent leur agentivité en reliant la matérialité des objets livres et les corps vulnérables dont ils narrent les histoires.

Szép conclut son ouvrage avec sa propre bande dessinée. Celle-ci non seulement reprend les idées majeures de cet ouvrage-clé, révélant encore une fois l'importance du geste, de la ligne et de l'écriture manuelle à établir des liens et dialogues entre artiste et lecteur·trice. Cet ouvrage, riche en nombreux dialogues interdisciplinaires, remet la bande dessinée à l'intersection de nombreux genres et médiums, révélant ainsi combien le visuel est multisensoriel. Il ouvre à d'autres méthodes innovantes de lecture et invite à lire dans la lenteur et l'observation que demande l'aspect performatif de la ligne, du tracé, du collage, de la matérialité des ouvrages. L'aspect multisensoriel implique le corps de celui·elle qui lit/regarde/perçoit et reproduit mentalement et inconsciemment le geste de celui qui l'a créé. Il est clair que l'ouvrage reste malheureusement centré sur un corpus anglophone mais il n'empêche qu'il ouvre de véritables pistes à l'intérieur d'un champ qui ne cesse de changer. A l'heure du tournant sensoriel, cet ouvrage révèle combien nos connaissances cognitives sont incarnées. A l'heure du digital, où nos étudiants prennent essentiellement note par ordinateur, cet ouvrage nous rappelle, non sans évoquer et citer Tim Ingold, l'importance du geste d'écriture manuelle. L'empathie, qui joue un rôle clé dans notre être au monde et notre interprétation de ce dernier, implique nos sensations corporelles qui elles-mêmes donnent sens à ce que nous lisons.

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Katherine Kelp-Stebbins. *How Comics Travel: Publication, Translation, Radical literacies*

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Katherine Kelp-Stebbins's *How Comics Travel* was published in 2023 by the Ohio State University Press, as part of the collection "Studies in Comics and Cartoons," which has been home to several important volumes over the past few years, notably Daniel Stein's *Authorizing Superhero Comics*, Christina Meyer's *Producing Mass Entertainment*, or Aaron Kashtan's *Between Pen and Pixel*, to name only three. Comprising around 250 pages, this elegantly designed book includes 19 colour illustrations, giving the reader easy access to works that might not be readily available – indeed, Kelp-Stebbins examines a broad array of texts, from the most canonical works of the field (*Tintin* and *Persepolis* come to mind) to massively understudied texts such as *Metro* or *Samandal*.

The study falls into six main chapters, with an introduction inviting the reader to see parallels between the five case studies it offers. In this sense, its structure is reminiscent of many recent studies where each chapter essentially stands on its own (like, say, Hillary Chute's *Graphic Women* or Chris Pizzino's *Arresting Development*, both of which have four or five case studies supporting a central argument) and can be read in isolation.

The introduction, with its punny title "Graphic Positioning Systems," lays the theoretical ground for the study, making sweeping claims about the importance of world comics in the contemporary era, and introducing some of the key concepts to which the author returns throughout the study. In particular, she contends that comics "provide alternative mapping tools for reading the world in its mutability" (1), and insists that comics can *world*, that is to say supply "tools and practices […] for reimaging and reimagining the world" (20–21). It subsequently becomes clearer that "worlding" is opposed to "globalising": the author refers to scholarship by Saskia Sassen and Aihwa Ong, explaining that the former distinguishes between the global as a new phenomenon and the world as an older reality, while the latter claims that "worlding […] is linked to the idea of emergence, to the claims that global situations are always in formation. Worlding projects remap relationships of power at different scales and localities" (194).

Against the idea that comics, as a visual medium, are an inherently universal form of communication, Kelp-Stebbins insists on their "(un) translatability, cultural specificity, formal or commercial difference" (7), thus advocating in favour of diversity and democracy, based on what she calls "reading for difference." This process corresponds to the "radical literacies" mentioned in the book's subtitle: for Kelp-Stebbins, "radical literacies imply practices that reroot and reroute the process of reading according to different political, locational, and material contexts. […] I characterise resistance, *détournement*, translation, reformatting, decolonial mapping, and flipping as radical literacies" (17). This framework is unapologetically anticolonial and feminist, acknowledging the realm of the visual as the locus of a struggle for representation that maps over political struggles for equality. This makes for an approach which celebrates hybridity and heterogeneity, all the while inviting us to acknowledge our own privileged position as readers (and scholars) from the West.

In the body of the study, Kelp-Stebbins examines a broad array of texts that were produced, published, or read transnationally, namely Hergé's *Tintin*, Magdy El Shafee's *Metro*, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, various works by Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, and the collective comics magazine *Samandal*.

In the first chapter, Kelp-Stebbins confronts the approaches of three Tintin readers, each of whom has a different approach to the text's latent racism. Scott McCloud constructs Tintin, a white Belgian man, as a universal subject. He praises Hergé's *ligne claire*, which he normalises as a graphic *lingua franca*, obscuring its ideological bias towards a white subject, as it literally separates the world into a white subject and a black background (McCloud 43). By contrast, Bienvenu Mbutu Mondondo, a Congolese emigrant to Belgium, took Tintin to court for its use of harmful racial stereotypes, trying to assert his own right to look at the text as an autonomous reader – significantly, he lost the case on the grounds that his was merely a *misreading* of the work. Finally, Charles Burns, with the Nitnit trilogy, provides a postmodern disruption of the work's ideology, through the subversion of the *ligne claire* and the motif of the (white) mask. Burns's broad perspective also sheds light on the many rewritings that Tintin went through as it progressively solidified into the culturally hegemonic album format and simultaneously sought to camouflage its racist subtext.

Chapter Two examines the Arabic, Italian, German and English editions of *Metro*, by Egyptian artist Magdy El Shafee. The book was banned in its country of origin and relied on translated versions for its dissemination, forcing translators to work from incomplete or even pirate copies. Kelp-Stebbins analyses how the book was sold to non-Egyptian audiences, stressing the connection to the Arab Spring, or, astoundingly, instructing the reader to read this "as if it were a Japanese manga" (101). Kelp-Stebbins complicates the dialectics of foreignisation vs. domestication (Venuti), insisting that "translations of comics feature multiple points of translatability that are sometimes at odds with each other" (85). Her comparison of various translations of the same panel reveals different beliefs about image-text relationships and, in particular, about the status of the many subway maps that are used throughout the narrative. Adaptations disrupt the meaning of such pages by flipping them and/or replacing one map with another (unflipped) representation of the same metro network. This begs the question of the nature of the maps and their position vis-à-vis the diegesis. It also disorients the reader, calling attention to "literacy as a spatialized and physical labour" (103).

In Chapter Three, Kelp-Stebbins analyses the cultural currency of the graphic novel in global marketing, paying attention to its "production, consumption, translation, and valuation" (144). She sets out to redress some American simplifications about *Persepolis* by paying close attention to its Parisian publication and its subsequent acquisition by Pantheon's editors in the US, after a botched attempt at securing the rights on the part of Fantagraphics. Kelp-Stebbins examines how Spiegelman's *Maus* and David B.'s *Epileptic* both played a role in the reception of Satrapi's work on both sides of the Atlantic. This was reinforced by assumptions regarding her supposed exoticness, as well as her gender, her narrative themes, and her drawing style, interpreted as childish (a combination which went on to influence public perception of Zeina Abirached's books, creating artificial parallels between the two women's works). The chapter also traces the material (re)formatting of the books for the French and US markets, clarifying that Satrapi's work, far from defying conventions, hems to well-identified standards regarding length, formatting, and generic framing.

The fourth chapter introduces Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, of the Haida First Nation Indigenous people, and his work, which he calls "Haida Manga." The term raises immediate questions, as it replaces "comics," a word so closely associated with North American settler culture, by shifting the reference to Japan, another colonial culture. Kelp-Stebbins argues that the act of naming represents a form of resistance, of destabilizing dominant categories: "rather than a 'useful other,' Yahgulanaas remaps Japan as a place directly connected to Haida Gwaii, just as much as Haida Gwaii might be connected to Ottawa" (167) – in other words, the term enacts a remapping that centres not upon North America, but upon the Pacific waters so central to Haida culture. By normalizing the use of the grid, comics appropriate a way of controlling space that was typical of settler America; conversely, Yahgulanaas's Haida manga eschews the use of grids and gutters in favour of "framelines" (180) that provide an alternative way of (dis)orienting the reader through the work, inviting us to reassess the value we ascribe to the book and the page.

Finally, Chapter Five is devoted to *Samandal*, a trilingual Lebanese magazine published concomitantly in French, Arabic, and English. The magazine is conceived as a hub for community-building and collaboration. Its radical commitment to the free circulation of ideas is evident through the decision to use the Creative Commons license, resisting models of intellectual property that cater to publishers and national boundaries. A lawsuit against *Samandal* editors demonstrates the tensions between national reception in Lebanon and the more global reaction that led to a fundraising and allowed the magazine to go on. Kelp-Stebbins shows that the coexistence of the three languages is a choice that hinders rather than helps the magazine, and serves to foreground political tensions as well as the creative process of translation. In practice, multilingualism is handled through a variety of strategies, one of which entails "flippy pages" signalling the need to physically flip the magazine and continue reading in the opposite direction: "*Samandal* magazines do not presume a universal legibility; instead, the format explicitly marks and materially enacts differential readerships" (217).

Overall, this is a very well-documented book, and I was especially glad to see the author embrace theoretical works produced in Francophone comics studies – not just Groensteen, Peeters and Baetens, but also Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle, Philippe Marion and Jean-Christophe Menu, who bring a useful counterpoint to US-centric approaches. Kelp-Stebbins is careful not to speak for the authors of the comics she studies, and instead incorporates many excerpts from their paratexts and interviews. The result is a stimulating introduction to the individual practices of creators who often work within a complex interpretive framework. I particularly enjoyed Kelp-Stebbins's willingness to foster systematic dialogue between the main texts under study and other related comics of the canon towards which they gravitate – for example, *Metro* is contrasted with Joe Sacco's depiction of Cairo in *Palestine*, and *Persepolis* is examined as a monolith casting a long shadow over the reception of Zeina Abirached's work.

I will confess my initial scepticism of the author's grand claims regarding comics' potential as an entirely new way of making sense of the world. Likewise, I remained unimpressed by her frequent invocation of the post-structural buzzwords – *différend*, *rhizome, hétéotopies* and the like. As soon as the case studies began, however, I was struck by the author's ability to navigate different publication contexts and make them accessible to readers from different backgrounds. I enjoyed the wit and daring spirit of the book, with its fresh takes on old debates: choosing to analyse *Tintin* through its reception by other authors I thought was a brilliant move. Familiar questions, like that of the transnational adaptations of *Persepolis* and *L'Ascension du Haut Mal* (*Epileptic*) were tackled in a clear, synthetic, and abundantly sourced manner. More unfamiliar objects, like the works of El Shafee and Yahgulanaas, provided stimulating case studies of iconotexts that are all, in different ways, transnational.

This book will be of interest to scholars working on comics translation, materiality, print culture, transnational circulation and world comics, canonization, and structural approaches to comics. It is a useful addition to a growing wealth of literature on world comics, and I will return to it in the future, both for my own research and as a possible reading assignment for students.

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Notices Biographiques / Notes on Contributors

Sylvain Aquatias est sociologue, maître de conférences à l'université de Limoges, membre du Groupe de recherche sur les Sociétés contemporaines (GRESCO) et membre du comité éditorial de la revue *Comicalités.* Il travaille sur la bande dessinée depuis de nombreuses années, tant sur le plan des lecteurs, des éditeurs que des auteurs. Il est l'auteur du récent ouvrage *On ne vit pas de la bande dessinée, trajectoires professionnelles d'auteurs à Angoulême,* dans la collection ACMÉ des Presses Universitaires de Liège.

Eugene L. Arva, author of *The Traumatic Imagination: Histories of Violence in Magical Realist Fiction* (2011), is an independent scholar living in Germany. He has taught modern and postmodern American and World Literature at the University of Miami, and his research focuses on magical realism in literature and film, literary trauma theory, Holocaust studies, intermediality, and film philosophy. He has published essays on Caribbean literature and narrative theory, Holocaust literature and studies, James Joyce, contemporary American cinema, and the media spectacle of 9/11.

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Mercè Boixareu est professeure émérite de philologie française à l'UNED (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Espagne). Elle s'est principalement consacrée à la littérature française et comparée, mais aussi à la didactique des langues. Elle est l'auteure d'une vingtaine de livres et d'une centaine d'articles sur divers aspects des littératures catalane et française (roman du XVIIè et XVIIIè siècle), ainsi que sur des questions de littérature comparée, travaux qui lui ont valu des prix d'essai et de recherche.

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Stefan Buchenberger is Professor in the Department of Cross-Cultural Studies of Kanagawa University in Yokohama/Japan. He earned his Ph.D. in Japanese studies from the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich in 2004. He is involved in the study of graphic narratives, being co-founder and co-chair of the standing Research Committee on Comics Studies and Graphic Narrative of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA). His other areas of research are mystery fiction, horror movies, intertextuality, and orientalism.

Christopher Bush is Associate Professor of French and Comparative Literary Studies at Northwestern University, where he codirects the Global Avant-garde and Modernist Studies graduate cluster. He is currently completing a book on the modernist haiku as world literature, and has recently published articles in *Esprit créateur* (on Proust), *T. S. Eliot Studies Annual*, and the *Surrealism Beyond Borders* exhibition catalog.

Yves Clavaron est Professeur de littérature générale et comparée à l'Université Jean Monnet, Saint-Étienne (France). Il travaille actuellement sur les études francophones, les littératures postcoloniales, l'histoire littéraire transatlantique et l'écocritique. Parmi ses publications les plus importantes, il faut citer: *La carte et le territoire colonial, 15 études sur la poétique de l'espace (post)colonial* (2021) et *Éc(h)o-graphies d'une Terre déréglée. Petit traité d'écocritique* (2023). Avec Odile Gannier, il a également co-édité un collectif intitulé *Lieux de mémoire et Océan. Géographie littéraire de la mémoire transatlantique aux XX*^{e} *et XXI*^{e} *siècles* (2022).

Brahim El Guabli is Associate Professor of Arabic Studies at Williams College and currently serves as Associate Professor of Comparative Thought and Literature at Johns Hopkins University. He is an interdisciplinary scholar, working at the intersection of several disciplines, including Amazigh, Arabic and Francophone studies. El Guabli is the author of *Moroccan Other-Archives: History and Citizenship after State Violence* (2023) and *Desert Imaginations: Saharanism and its Discontents* (forthcoming). He is currently completing a book tentatively entitled *Literature and Indigeneity: The Amazigh Construction of an Indigenous Literary Field*.

Jéromine François, est actuellement chargée de cours en langue et littérature espagnoles à l'UNamur (Belgique). Ses travaux de recherche abordent les lettres hispaniques classiques (*La Celestina, La Lozana andaluza* – Premio Duques de Soria) et contemporaines (les uchronies hispano-américaines et les usages publicitaires du littéraire) depuis la problématique intertextuelle, mythocritique et d'histoire de la réception.

Laurence Dahan-Gaida est professeure de littérature comparée à l'université de Franche-Comté où elle co-dirige le Centre de Recherches Interdisciplinaires et Transculturelles (CRIT – EA 3224). Elle est rédactrice en chef de la revue en ligne *Epistemocritique* et directrice de la collection du même nom.

Claire Gantet est professeure d'histoire moderne à l'université de Fribourg (Suisse) et présidente de la Société suisse pour l'étude du XVIIIe siècle. Parmi ses publications récentes, on peut citer: *Le Saint-Empire: 1500–1800* (2018), *Une histoire du rêve: les faces nocturnes de l'âme* (2021), ainsi que *La Guerre de Trente Ans, 1618–1648* (2024). Avec la collaboration de Friedrich Beiderbeck, elle a édité l'ouvrage *Wissenskulturen in der Leibniz-Zeit: Konzepte – Praktiken -Vermittlung* (2021).

Mathieu Govaerts recently completed a Master's degree at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), in which he focused on the early poetry of Allen Ginsberg and his debt to the English Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley through the prism of Nature Philosophy. His research concentrates on the fields of Beat literature, English Romanticism, and their confluences, especially with regard to eco-spirituality. He is currently a doctoral student at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), where he is working on a thesis tentaively entitled, "From Spinozist Ecosophy to

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Jordana Greenblatt teaches English at York University (Canada). Her research interests concentrate on Modern and contemporary literature, experimental literature, and sexuality studies. She is the editor of the book, *Querying Consent: Beyond Permission and Refusal* (2018). She currently serves as the Vice-President of the Comparative Gender Studies Committee of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA).

Adeline Heck est postdoctorante FNRS en littérature et musicologie à l'Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB). Sa spécialité est le wagnérisme fin XIXe-début XXe. De double culture française et américaine, elle a publié dans des revues de littérature et musicologie aussi bien en français qu'en anglais (*Études Mallarmé*, *La Revue belge de musicologie, 19th-Century Music* et *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*). Elle a également rédigé un article sur Colette et Wagner pour le *Routledge Companion of Music and Modern Literature*.

Peter Holland is McMeel Family Professor in Shakespeare Studies in the Department of Film, Television and Theatre at the University of Notre Dame (USA). He is currently editing *King Lear* for the Arden Shakespeare 4th series, for which he is one of the General Editors. His most recent book is *Shakespeare and Forgetting* (2021).

Gaëlle Kovaliv est diplômée en français moderne et en sciences du langage de l'Université de Lausanne et mène une thèse sur la bande dessinée numérique d'Europe francophone dans le cadre du projet interdisciplinaire *Reconfiguring comics in our digital era* financé par le Fonds National Suisse de la recherche scientifique (FNS). Après un mémoire de master consacré aux incipits dans l'œuvre d'Hergé, elle a travaillé pour le festival de bande dessinée lausannois BDFIL et pour la maison d'édition Les Impressions nouvelles.

Tracy Lassiter is Associate Professor of English and Coordinator of Digital Learning at the University of New Mexico-Gallup (USA). She currently serves as co-chair of the ICLA's Standing Research Committee on Comics Studies and Graphic Narratives and is one of its original members. She was a keynote speaker at the "Visual Depictions of the American West" conference held in Venice in 2021. She has previously published about graphic narratives in *Status Quaestionis* and the *International Journal of Comic Art*.

Isabelle Licari-Guillaume est maîtresse de conférences en Etudes Anglophones à l'Université Côte d'Azur. Spécialiste de bande dessinée et d'histoire culturelle anglophone, elle a publié sa première monographie, *Vertigo Comics: British Creators, US Editors, and the Making of a Transformational Imprint*, en 2022. Ses recherches actuelles portent sur l'auto-édition de bande dessinée dans les années 80 et 90. Elle est également traductrice des ouvrages de Craig Thompson, dont *Ginseng Roots* vient de paraître chez Casterman.

Buata B. Malela est professeur à l'Université de Mayotte et membre du RIRRA21 de l'Université Paul Valéry Montpellier. Il s'intéresse aux littératures francophones (Europe, Afrique, Antilles et océan indien) et aux musiques populaires urbaines contemporaines. Il a notamment publié *Les Ecrivains afro-antillais à Paris (1920–1960) : Stratégies et postures identitaires* (2008) ; *Aimé Césaire et la relecture de la colonialité du pouvoir* (2019) ; *La Réinvention de l'écrivain francophone contemporain* (2019) ; *Edouard Glissant. Du poète au penseur* (2020) ; *Les discours littéraires francophones. Réseaux, esthétiques et postures* (2021).

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Laura Michiels teaches English and professional communication at Erasmushogeschool Brussel (Belgium), where she also works as a quality assurance officer. She holds a PhD-degree in Literary Studies from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Her current research focuses on contemporary American political theatre. She is the author of *The Metatheater of Tennessee Williams: Tracing the Artistic Process Through Seven Plays* (2021).

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Haun Saussy is University Professor at the University of Chicago, teaching in the department of East Asian Languages & Civilizations as well as the Committee on Social Thought. His recent publications include *The Making of Barbarians: China in Multilingual Asia* (2022) and *Ruzhihe: Su Yuanxi zixuanji* (*Comparatively Speaking: Selected Essays*; 2023). A translation, *When the Pipirite Sings: Selected Poems of Jean Métellus*, was published in 2019; a translation of a play by Tino Caspanello, *Bounds,* appeared in 2020.

Michael Shelden is Professor of English at Indiana State University, where he has won the top award for excellence in scholarship, the Theodore Dreiser Distinguished Research/Creativity Award, three times. He is the author of six biographies, including *Orwell: The Authorized Biography*, which was a Pulitzer Prize Finalist and a *New York Times* Notable Book. For fifteen years he was a Features writer for the London *Daily Telegraph*.

Rebecca Short est chercheuse postdoctorale à l'ULB, soutenue par la Fondation Wiener-Anspach. Son doctorat, obtenu à l'Université d'Oxford en 2023, examine le façonnage de soi dans la pratique et la pensée de Louis-Antoine Caraccioli. Ses recherches plus générales portent sur la construction de l'image de soi et les relations entre la formation de l'identité, le succès et l'estime (de soi) dans la sphère publique du dix-huitième siècle.

Jyotsna G. Singh is Professor Emerita in the English Department at Michigan State Michigan University. Her research includes early modern literature, including Shakespeare, travel writing, postcolonial theory, early modern histories of Islam, and gender and race studies. Key publications include *Colonial Narratives/Cultural Dialogues. 'Discoveries' of India in the Language of Colonialism* (1996), *Travel Knowledge* (2001), *A Companion to the Global Renaissance* (ed., 2008, 2021) and *Shakespeare and Postcolonial Theory* (2019).

Kirie Stromberg is a Postdoctoral Associate at Yale University's Archaia Program for the Study of Global Antiquity. She completed a PhD in 2023 at the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA. Her current work focuses on the relationship between music and the formation of complex society across East Asia, focusing both on excavated instruments and early texts.

Christopher Thurman is Director of the Tsikinya-Chaka Centre and Professor of English in the School of Literature, Language and Media at the University of the Witwatersrand. He is the editor of *South African Essays on 'Universal' Shakespeare* (2014), *Sport versus Art: A South African Contest* (2010) and thirteen volumes of the journal *Shakespeare in Southern Africa*. With Sandra Young, he is co-editor of *Global Shakespeare and Social Injustice: Towards a Transformative Encounter* (2023). He is president of the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa and founder of Shakespeare ZA.

Elodie Verlinden détient un doctorat en Spectacle vivant de l'Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), où elle est chercheuse en danse, enseignante et première logisticienne de recherche. Privilégiant une approche sémiopragmatique, elle questionne les rapports entre la danse et la réception et étudie l'influence des nouveaux processus de création sur les modélisations classiques. Son livre*, Danse et spectacle vivant. Réflexion critique sur la construction des savoirs*, a été publié en 2016.

Rotraud Von Kulessa enseigne les littératures française et italienne à l'Université d'Augsburg (Allemagne). Parmi ses publications les plus importantes, on compte : *Françoise de Grafigny* : *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*. *Interpretation, Genese, und Rezeption eines Briefromans aus dem 18. Jahrhundert* (1997) ; *Italienische Literaturaturwissenschaft : Eine Einführung* (avec Maximilian Gröne et Frank Reiser, 2007) ; *Französische Literaturwissenschaft: Eine Einführung* (avec Maximilian Gröne et Frank Reiser, 2017) ; et *Entre la reconnaissance et l'exclusion. La position de l'autrice dans le champ littéraire en France et en Italie à l'Epoque 1900* (2011).

Literary Research Stylesheet

SUBMISSIONS IN ENGLISH

1. General Formatting

All works should be submitted in Microsoft Word or .rtf format. Images should be sent preferably in jpeg format with a minimum quality of 300 dpi. Please use Times New Roman font throughout the text, size 12 point, and 1.5 line spacing.

Indent each new paragraph; do not insert a blank line between paragraphs.

The first page should feature the title of the submission, an approximately 250-word abstract in English, and 5 to 6 keywords in English. Please send a short biography in a different file.

2. Spelling Conventions

Submissions in English must choose British or American spelling (e.g. "-ize" vs "-ise") conventions and follow them consistently throughout.

Use only **one space** after periods and colons. Do not capitalise the word following colons.

Numbers up to twenty should be written out in full. After twenty, please use figures.

Centuries should be written out in full as well. For decades, give full number: 1930s (not 30s or '30s, "thirties," or "Thirties").

3. In-text Citations

Please place the quoted passage/word(s) within double quotation marks. Reference the name and the page reference(s) of the author(s) within parenthesis. Examples:

> It was perhaps first put into circulation 30 years ago by Salman Rushdie in his observation that "having been borne across the world, we are translated men" (Rushdie 17).

> Intersectionality has been accused of breaking "groups into even-smaller sub-groups" (Collins and Bilge 127).

In case of several sources by the same author(s), indicate in the parenthesis the first word or group of words of the work cited. Books are italicised; articles are placed within double quotation marks:

(Hall *Theorizing* 244)
(Hall "Cultural" 235; qtd. in Smith 257)
(Fairbank *Trade and Diplomacy* 27)

Please **indent** quotes of 5 lines and more.

Indicate **n.p.** in case of no pagination. Ellipses in quotes are marked by […].

Please do not use "*Id.*," "*Ibid.*," "*Op.cit.*" and other similar abbreviations to refer to a previously cited source. For clarification's sake, please **repeat the source** (name and/or title).

Footnotes are for additional comments only and should be used sparingly. Do not use endnotes.

4. List of Works Cited

The list of works cited appears at the end of the article (not in the notes). The works are sorted in alphabetical order by author and in chronological order of publication in the case of several sources by the same author(s). The first and last names of all authors should be included in full.

For sources written in **French**: use "et" to associate two or several co-authors/co-editors, and "dir." to refer to the editor(s).

For formatting and punctuation standards, please see the following examples:

Books:

Alayrac-Fielding, Vanessa. *La Chine dans l'imaginaire anglais des Lumières, 1685–1798*. Paris : Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2016.

Deleuze, Gilles et Félix Guattari. *Kafka : Pour une littérature mineure*. Paris : Minuit, 1975.

Brown, Wendy. *States of Inquiry: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Parker, Richard and Peter Aggleton. *Culture, Society and Sexuality: A Reader*. London: University College London Press, 1999.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. *In Other Words*. Trans. Ann Goldstein. London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

Edited Books:

Alayrac-Fielding, Vanessa, dir. *Rêver la Chine. Chinoiseries et regards croisés entre la Chine et l'Europe aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*. Tourcoing : Invenit, 2017.

Dominguez Leiva, Antonio et Muriel Détrie, dir. *Le Supplice oriental dans la littérature et les arts*. Dijon : Éditions du Murmure, 2005.

Carroll, John B., ed. *Language, Thought, Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1956.

Maryks, Robert A. and Jonathan Wright, eds. *Jesuit Survival and Restoration: A Global History, 1773–1900*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Book Chapters:

Marx, Jacques. « La Chine des physiocrates ». *Le Mythe de la Chine impériale*. Dir. Colette Camelin et Philippe Postel. Paris : Honoré Champion, 2013. 23–58.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990. 222–37.

Rattansi, Ali. "Just Framing: Ethnicities and Racisms in a 'Postmodern' Framework." *Social Postmodernism: Beyond Identity Politics*. Eds. Linda Nicholson and Steven Seidman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. 250–86.

The name of publishers is written in full:

Berkeley: University of California Press

Journal Articles:

Moura, Jean-Marc. « Anti-utopie et péril jaune au tournant du siècle. Quelques exemples romanesques ». *Orients extrêmes. Les carnets de l'exotisme* 15–16 (1995) : 83–92.

Ibrahim, Hanan. "The Question of Arab 'Identity' in Amin Maalouf's *Les Désorientés*." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 54.6 (2018): 835–47.

O'Brien, Michelle. "English as Racial Embodiment in Shirley Lim's *Joss and Gold*." *Postcolonial Text* 12.2 (2017): 1–19. http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/view/2176/2087. Accessed 15 Aug. 2020.

Normes de présentation de *Recherche littéraire*

SOUMISSIONS EN FRANCAIS

1. Présentation et mise en page

Tous les manuscrits doivent être soumis au format Microsoft Word ou .rtf. Les images doivent être envoyées de préférence au format jpeg avec une qualité minimale de 300 dpi. Veuillez utiliser la police Times New Roman dans tout le texte, taille 12 points et interligne 1,5.

Chaque nouveau paragraphe doit être mis en retrait ; n'insérez pas de ligne vide entre les paragraphes.

Sur la première page doivent figurer le titre de l'article (et sa traduction en anglais), un résumé d'environ 250 mots et 5 ou 6 mots-clés, le tout en français et en anglais. Une courte biographie en français devra être envoyée séparément.

2. Conventions orthographiques

Les nombres jusqu'à vingt doivent être écrits en toutes lettres. Après vingt, veuillez utiliser des chiffres.

Les siècles sont écrits en chiffres romains (« XX^{e} siècle »). Pour les décennies, indiquez le nombre complet : « les années 1930 » (et non « les années 30 »).

Le mot suivant deux points ne prend pas de majuscule.

3. Citations dans le corps du texte

Placez le(s) passage(s) cité(s) entre guillemets. Faites référence au(x) nom(s) et à la /aux page(s) entre parenthèses. Exemples:

> La Loubère (1642–1729), envoyé extraordinaire de Louis XIV auprès du roi du Siam : « Un Ambassadeur par tout l'Orient n'est autre qu'un messager de

> Roy : il ne représente point son Maistre. On l'honore peu à comparaison des respects, qu'on porte à la lettre de créance, dont il est porteur » (La Loubère 327–28).

> « Tout peut coexister avec tout », proclamait crânement Haroldo de Campos dans l'une de ces formules incisives qui ont fait sa réputation (Campos « Da razão antropofágica » 244)

En cas de plusieurs sources du/de la/des même(s) auteur·e·s, indiquez entre parenthèses le premier mot ou groupe de mots de l'ouvrage cité. Les livres apparaissent en italique ; les articles sont placés entre guillemets:

(Hall *Theorizing* 244)
(Hall "Cultural" 235 ; cité dans Smith 257)
(Fairbank *Trade and Diplomacy* 27)

Les citations de 5 lignes et plus sont mises en **retrait**.

L'absence de pagination est indiquée par **n.p**. Les ellipses dans les citations sont marquées par […].

Veuillez ne pas utiliser « *Id.* », « *Ibid.* », « *Op.cit.* » et autres abréviations similaires pour faire référence à une source précédemment citée. Pour des raisons de clarté, veuillez **répéter la source** comme décrit ci-dessus (nom, titre si nécessaire, et page).

Les **notes de bas de page** sont uniquement destinées à des commentaires supplémentaires et doivent être utilisées avec parcimonie. N'utilisez pas de notes de fin.

4. Bibliographie

La liste des ouvrages cités figure en fin d'article (et non dans les notes). Les ouvrages sont triés par ordre alphabétique des auteur·e·s et par ordre chronologique de parution en cas de plusieurs sources par le/la/les même·s auteur·e·s. Tous les noms et prénoms sont repris dans leur intégralité.

Dans les sources en français, « et » associe deux ou plusieur(s) contributeur·e·s ; « dir. » se réfère au(x) rédacteur(s). Inversement, « and » et « ed./eds » sont utilisés pour les sources rédigées en anglais.

Pour les normes de présentation et ponctuation, veuillez consulter les exemples ci-dessous :

Livres (à seul·e auteur·e ou avec co-auteur·e·s) :

Alayrac-Fielding, Vanessa. *La Chine dans l'imaginaire anglais des Lumières, 1685–1798*. Paris : Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2016.

Deleuze, Gilles et Félix Guattari. *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure*. Paris : Minuit, 1975.

Brown, Wendy. *States of Inquiry: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Parker, Richard and Peter Aggleton. *Culture, Society and Sexuality: A Reader*. London: University College London Press, 1999.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. *In Other Words*. Trad. Ann Goldstein. London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

Ouvrages collectifs:

Alayrac-Fielding, Vanessa, dir. *Rêver la Chine. Chinoiseries et regards croisés entre la Chine et l'Europe aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*. Tourcoing : Invenit, 2017.

Dominguez Leiva, Antonio et Muriel Détrie, dir. *Le Supplice oriental dans la littérature et les arts*. Dijon : Éditions du Murmure, 2005.

Carroll, John B., ed. *Language, Thought, Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1956.

Maryks, Robert A. and Jonathan Wright, eds. *Jesuit Survival and Restoration: A Global History, 1773–1900*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Chapitre de livre :

Marx, Jacques. « La Chine des physiocrates ». *Le Mythe de la Chine impériale*. Dir. Colette Camelin et Philippe Postel. Paris : Honoré Champion, 2013. 23–58.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990. 222–37.

Rattansi, Ali. "Just Framing: Ethnicities and Racisms in a 'Postmodern' Framework." *Social Postmodernism: Beyond Identity Politics*. Eds. Linda Nicholson and Steven Seidman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. 250–86.

Le nom des éditeurs est écrit en toutes lettres :

University of California Press ; Presses Universitaires de France

Article dans une revue périodique :

Moura, Jean-Marc. « Anti-utopie et péril jaune au tournant du siècle. Quelques exemples romanesques ». *Orients extrêmes. Les carnets de l'exotisme* 15–16 (1995) : 83–92.

Ibrahim, Hanan. "The Question of Arab 'Identity' in Amin Maalouf's *Les Désorientés*." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 54.6 (2018): 835–47.

O'Brien, Michelle. "English as Racial Embodiment in Shirley Lim's *Joss and Gold*." *Postcolonial Text* 12.2 (2017): 1–19. http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/view/2176/2087. Accessed 15 Aug. 2020.

Brève présentation de l'AILC

Fondée en 1955, l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée (AILC) offre un lieu d'accueil à tou·te·s les comparatistes dans le monde et encourage les échanges et la coopération entre les comparatistes, tant à un niveau individuel que par l'intermédiaire de la collaboration avec diverses associations nationales de littérature comparée. Dans ce but, l'Association promeut les études littéraires au-delà des frontières de langues et des traditions littéraires nationales, entre les cultures et les régions du monde, entre les disciplines et les orientations théoriques, et à travers les genres, les périodes historiques et les médias. Sa vision large de la recherche comparatiste s'étend à l'étude de sites de la différence comme la race, le genre, la sexualité, la classe sociale, l'ethnicité et la religion, à la fois dans les textes et dans l'univers quotidien.

L'Association vise à être inclusive et est ouverte à tou·te·s celles et ceux qui s'intéressent à la littérature comparée, y compris les écrivain·e·s et les artistes. Elle encourage la participation d'étudiant·e·s de master et doctorat et de jeunes chercheuses et chercheurs en début de carrière.

L'Association organise un Congrès mondial tous les trois ans. Elle supervise et apporte son soutien à des comités de recherche qui reflètent les intérêts actuels des membres et qui se réunissent plus régulièrement pour mettre en œuvre des programmes conduisant à des publications dans des périodiques et des livres. La revue annuelle de l'Association, *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research* publie des essais de recherche et propose des comptes rendus d'un grand nombre de travaux scientifiques dans le domaine.

ICLA Mission Statement

Founded in 1955, the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) offers a home to all comparatists in the world and encourages exchange and cooperation among comparatists, both individually and through the collaboration of various national comparative literature associations. To that end, the Association promotes literary studies beyond the boundaries of languages and national literary traditions, cultures and world regions, among disciplines and theoretical orientations, and across genres, historical periods, and media. Its broad view of comparative research extends to the study of sites of difference such as race gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and religion in both texts and the everyday world.

The Association aims to be inclusive and is open to anyone with an academic interest in comparative literature, including writers and artists. It welcomes the participation of graduate students and early-career scholars. The Association organizes a world congress every three years. It also oversees and supports research committees that reflect the membership's current interests and meet more regularly to pursue agenda leading to publications in journals and books. The Association's annual journal *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research* publishes research essays and reviews a wide range of scholarship in the field.

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Evrama51@gmail.com

ICLA Research Committee on Comparative Gender Studies

President: Tegan Zimmerman, Saint Mary's University/Mount Saint Vincent University (Canada)

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ICLA Research Committee: Comparative History of East Asian Literatures

Chair: Haun Saussy, University of Chicago (USA)

hsaussy@uchicago.edu

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President: Helga Mitterbauer, Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB, Belgium)

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For additional information about CHLEL, please consult:

https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/chlel/about-chlel/websites/

For information about publications, please consult John Benjamins' website: https://benjamins.com/catalog/chlel

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