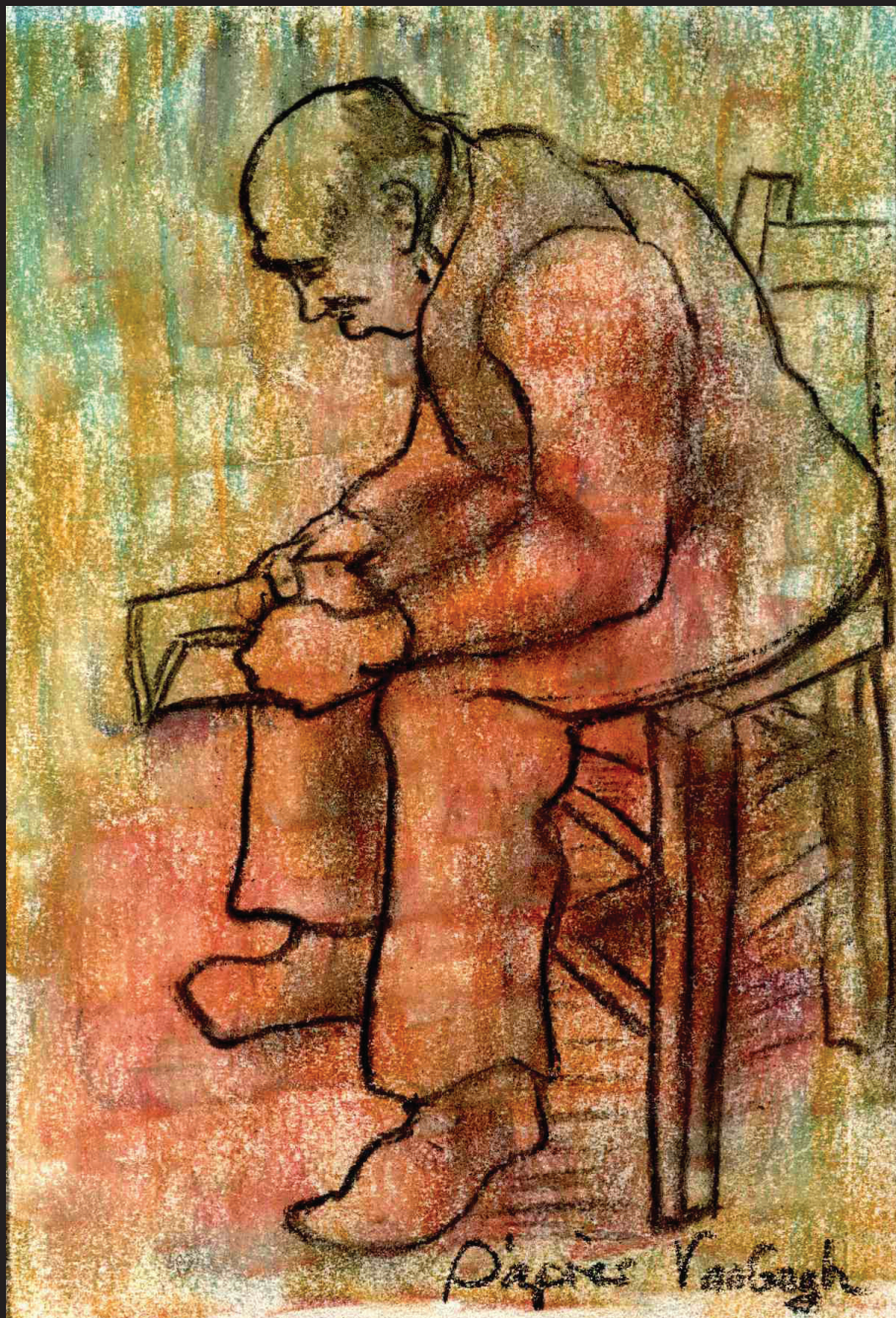


RECHERCHE LITTÉRAIRE
LITERARY RESEARCH



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En tant que publication de l'Association internationale de la littérature comparée, *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research* a comme but de communiquer aux comparatistes du monde entier les développements récents de notre discipline. Dans ce but la revue publie les comptes rendus des livres notables sur les sujets comparatistes, les nouvelles des congrès professionnels et d'autres événements d'une importance significative pour nos membres, et de temps en temps les prises de position sur des problèmes qui pourraient apporter beaucoup d'intérêt. On devrait souligner que RL/LR ne publie pas de recherche littéraire comparée.

Les comptes rendus sont typiquement écrits ou en français ou en anglais, les deux langues officielles de l'AILC. Néanmoins, on pourrait faire quelques exceptions étant donné les limites des ressources à la disposition du rédacteur. En général, un compte rendu prendra une des formes suivantes: des annonces brèves de 500 à 800 mots pour les livres courts ou relativement spécialisés, des comptes rendus proprement dits de 1.200 à 1.500 mots pour les livres plus longs ou d'une portée plus ambitieuse, ou des essais de 2.000 à 3.000 mots portant ou sur un seul ouvrage d'un grand mérite ou sur plusieurs ouvrages qu'on pourrait traiter ensemble. En vue de l'importance des ouvrages collectifs pour accomplir une étude assez large de certains sujets comparatistes, RL/LR acceptera les comptes rendus de recueils d'essais bien organisés, y compris les numéros spéciaux des revues. Nous sommes prêts à publier les comptes rendus un peu plus longs de ces textes quand la situation le demande.

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As a publication of the International Comparative Literature Association, *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research* has the mission of informing comparative literature scholars worldwide of recent contributions to the field. To that end it publishes reviews of noteworthy books on comparative topics, information about events of major significance for comparatists, and occasional position papers on issues of interest to the field. It should be emphasized that RL/LR does not publish comparative literary scholarship.

Reviews are normally written in French or English, the two official languages of the ICLA, though exceptions will be considered within the limits allowed by the editor's resources. Reviews generally fall into one of the following three categories: book notes of 500 to 800 words for short or relatively specialized works, reviews of 1,200 to 1,500 words for longer works of greater scope, and review essays of 2,000 to 3,000 words for a work of major significance for the field or for joint treatment of several related works. Given the importance of collaborative work in promoting broad-based comparative scholarship, RL/LR does review well-conceived edited volumes, including special issues of journals, and will publish somewhat longer reviews of such scholarship when the situation merits.

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Présentation du rédacteur / Editor's Introduction

In keeping with the original format of this journal, the 2014 volume *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research* consists of reviews, book notes, and review essays. These reviews are truly representative of the diversity of this organization. Included in these reviews, there is a cluster examining recent publications coming out of India. Given the activity of the new research committee dealing with the literatures of India and her neighbors, the formation of innovative comparative literature departments in nine recently established Indian state universities, and the increased involvement of CLAI (The Comparative Literature Association of India) in the ICLA, I thought it might be interesting for our readers to have an overview of the current scholarship produced on the subcontinent. India is more than what is often produced in diaspora fiction or critiqued under the optic of postcolonial criticism. I hope these reviews will give readers some sense of the variety and wealth of Indian literary production today. Also in this volume is an extensive report by Anne Tomiche on the 2013 Congress she organized in Paris.

Our readers can also find in these pages updates of the activities of the various research committees. I feel that it is important to publicize their activities to the general membership, so that members can be connected to this important aspect of the organization. The committee chairs are given the opportunity here to publicize to ICLA members their vision, activities and output. They can take this opportunity to solicit new members. Those interested in participating in the work of a given committee can inform themselves regarding its activities and contact the committee's chair for information regarding future panels and confer-

ences. I also direct readers to the call for submissions for the Balakian Prize to be awarded at the 2016 triennial congress to be held in Vienna.

Last year, the journal made the transition to a partial electronic format. This shift has far exceeded our expectations in cutting down the exorbitant costs of printing and mailing to our far-flung membership. I want to thank members for their cooperation in so readily accepting this shift away from the print medium. The willingness on the part of a large segment of the membership to receive the journal electronically has saved the organization a considerable amount of money. It is hoped that these economized funds will be redirected to improve the organization's services and benefit its membership in new and exciting ways.

This present issue has been subsidized by my home institution, the University of Georgia, as well as the ICLA. I want to thank the ICLA members and other literary scholars not affiliated with the ICLA who have contributed reviews to this volume. I also wish to show my gratitude to those members of ICLA who have supplied updates and reports. I request that any member of the ICLA who wishes to write reviews for *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* please contact me (figueira@uga.edu) with a brief sketch of their specializations, so that I might assign reviews judiciously. I also wish to take this opportunity to thank Deans Alan T. Dorsey and Noel Fallows of the University of Georgia for their continued support. I am ever grateful to Jenny Webb of Webb Editorial, Jill Talmadge and Sharon A. Brooks of the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Georgia for their administrative assistance, the production crew in the Office of Print Services at Brigham Young University, and the student assistants at Brigham Young who post the journal online and are integral to the distribution of the print version. I also wish to thank John Schweppe for volunteering his artwork to grace the cover of the volume.

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University of Georgia (USA)

Comptes rendus / Book Reviews

Christiane Solte-Gresser. *Spielräume des Alltags. Literarische Gestaltung von Alltäglichkeit in deutscher, französischer und italienischer Erzählprosa (1929–1949)*. Saarbrücker Beiträge zur vergleichenden Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft 50. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2010. Pp. 435. ISBN: 9783826044175.

The title of Solte-Gresser's book, *Spaces of the Everyday: Literary Constructions of the Quotidian in German, French, and Italian Prose Fiction (1929–1949)*, is pure understatement. In good German academic fashion, this book does so much more than comparatively analyze what might narrowly be considered a "motif" in selected fiction of the period before, during, and after World War II: it offers a rich account of the quotidian as a category of perception, taking its point of departure from Merleau-Ponty and moving on to more recent phenomenological theorizing; almost encyclopaedically, it introduces and discusses literary scholarship on the everyday, and can thus serve as a reference work for anyone embarking on this topic; it explores ancient mythology—the Allegory of the Cave, the punishment of Sisyphus, the story of Odysseus and Penelope, and the vignette of the Thracian Maid—as a form that bridges theorizing about the quotidian and its linguistic construction. Moreover, it investigates how myth engages the fundamental dichotomies and evaluations that structure all attempts to literarily shape the quotidian. It sketches an entire history of the everyday in German, French, and Italian literature from classicism to the modernist period and productively charts the diverging national developments. Building on excellent close readings of prose fiction by Marieluise Fleißer, Madeleine Bourdouxhe, and Natalia Ginzburg, it devises a fully-fledged "poetics of the quotidian."

A number of literary studies take the quotidian to be an equivalent of the “lifeworld” in Husserl’s sense—and thus study basically all aspects of human experience. Others limit their focus to issues that may be said to be metonymically related to the quotidian, such as food culture or labor. Solte-Gresser takes a third path. She rejects the idea of the quotidian as a pre-linguistic given. Instead, her concept of the quotidian is bound, first of all, to the perception of the quotidian by characters, and secondly, to the aesthetic construction of these perceptions in prose fiction. By starting from the literary texts themselves and understanding the quotidian as a function of narrative structure, Solte-Gresser not only positions her work firmly within a post-structuralist theoretical framework, but also successfully escapes the trap of either generalizing and telling a story of lifeworld representation in fiction or narrowing the focus and offering a “mere history of a motif” (56). One of the greatest merits of this study is that Solte-Gresser takes literature seriously, and takes it seriously on its own terms: developing her categories from an analysis of Fleißer’s, Bourdouxhe’s, and Ginzburg’s writings is only one manifestation of this refreshing insistence on the centrality of the “text.”

In a wonderful introduction, Solte-Gresser develops what she later calls a “set” (377) of perceptions of the everyday that its literary construction cannot escape and, short of being structured by it, has to deal with in one way or the other. The introduction takes as its point of departure an ad by the Austrian tourist agency that promises an escape from the everyday. The “seven days of Sunday” that await the visitor to Austria positions a holidaying couple outside in a snowy landscape or snuggled comfortably inside a log cabin. Solte-Gresser develops here how perceptions of the everyday are structured by time, space, and sensual experience. The ad, moreover, is structured by the dualism between every day and Sunday, between the quotidian and the event (which becomes particularly relevant with regard to narrative), or between immanence and transcendence. This dualism, Solte-Gresser shows, is inscribed into the literary constructions of perceptions of the everyday in Fleißer, Bourdouxhe, and Ginzburg, yet made productive for the narration of the quotidian in other ways, for example through instances where the “non-quotidian,” is “folded inside” into the experience of the everyday, so that this experience is rendered as “subtly multi-layered [...] in a complex interplay of *histoire*, *récit*, and *narration*” (373).

Solte-Gresser is at her very best in the three subchapters that juxtapose short works by Fleißer, Bourdouxhe, and Ginzburg and a wide, and sometimes surprising, selection of literary and philosophical texts. These juxtapositions focus on the materiality of different objects, the body's sensual engagement with them, and the access to the quotidian as an experience of fulfillment that they offer or deny. In Fleißer's stories "The Apple" and "A Pound of Oranges," for example, the sensual presence of an apple and oranges marks the possibility of cherishing and inhabiting the everyday, yet at the same time signifies the utter inescapability of the everyday and its symbolic order. Solte-Gresser shows how, in a host of other texts, the contemplation of a fruit also functions to reflect on the way in which human existence in the everyday is poised between *carpe diem* and *memento mori*, between an ability to cherish everyday life and an inability to do so—which leaves death as the one way out. Among them are Ingeborg Drewitz's novel *Yesterday Was Today: An Hundred Years of the Present*, Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*, the pseudo-Aristotelian *Liber de pomo*, Mörike's *Mozart on the Journey to Prague*, or Francis Ponge's philosophy of objects of everyday use in *Le parti pris des choses*. In a careful volte, Solte-Gresser eventually reads Héléne Cixous's "Vivre l'orange" as a life-embracing answer to the orange-induced rupture of the everyday that Fleißer's protagonist experiences as fatal. Her intertextual engagements of Bourdouxhe's story "Blanche" and Ginzburg's essay "Le scarpe rotte," which revolve around pitchers and casseroles as well as shoes and coats as objects through which the perception of the everyday is negotiated, are equally rich and thoughtful.

What is surprising in a study that so carefully lays out its theoretical foundations and traces resonances across texts and literatures is that it does not make more of its title—"Spielräume des Alltags." One might well wonder in light of the fairly recent "spatial turn" in cultural studies, why the concept of "space" is getting short shrift and merely used in the sense of Lotman's narrative theory. More importantly, the German word "Spielräume" means much more than simply "space." It encapsulates, in its polysemy, many of the issues that this book revolves around: To have "Spielraum" means to have time and space to do something and, more literally, it also means to have a space to play—to play with constructions of the everyday.

In a spirit of comparative meta-reflection, it should also be noted by this German reviewer, who was, however, trained in an Anglo-American

context, that the readability of *Spielräume des Alltags* may be judged differently from the perspectives of different national academic cultures. From a German perspective, the book is incredibly succinct and, in a refreshing way, even dares to generalize—for example in the impressive overview of the quotidian in German, French, and Italian literature. From an Anglo-American perspective, however, the book is hard on its readers. Being a revised version of the German post-doctoral dissertation in which the author is asked to safeguard herself against any methodological mis-step rather than present an elegant argument, basic assumptions of the study are reiterated over and over again. Any—even the most basic—of the methodological approaches that are employed are explicated *ab ovo* (such as categories of Genettian narratology). The writing is not thesis-oriented; central issues that are latent from the beginning, such as the selection of texts by only female authors, are first addressed as late as chapter 3. Although the 168 pages that precede the actual discussion of fiction open up fascinating cross-connections, one nevertheless wonders whether the entirety of Western thought on the quotidian needed to be outlined first in such detail—especially since Solte-Gresser’s brief introduction already does an excellent job of developing the central analytical categories by way of the Austria advertisement.

At one point, Solte-Gresser introduces Erich Auerbach as a literary critic who would lead a reader “directly into the world of the text [...] so that she would get to feel what the text is about before she is burdened with a theory” and expresses “sympathy” for such an approach (61). Indeed, in her subchapters of intertextual readings, then, Solte-Gresser does not “frontload” as she does in the overall structure of her book, but engages concepts by thinkers from Ponge to Simmel and Bloch to Benjamin and Heidegger when she needs them. In other words, her book betrays the tension between the desire to directly engage the “pleasure of the text(s)” before and beyond secondary writings and performing the worthy, yet sometimes also excruciating, meticulousness in methodological matters expected by committees approving the post-doctoral dissertation. And this tension translates into a tension that this reviewer experiences: what should one wish for this excellent study? That the German academic system would truly allow for taking the time to turn the second book into a thesis- and result-oriented, readable, pleasurable one—so that it might not lose its readers somewhere on the first 168 pages? Or that there were readers willing to follow Solte-Gresser step by step, who appreciate a slow

unfolding of assumptions and foundations, and who have the patience to watch a book eventually coming together in all its implications as late as page 392? For now, she will have to wish for the latter: be patient, readers—you will be rewarded.

BIRTE CHRIST

Justus-Liebig-University Giessen (Germany)



Christine Meyer, ed. *Kosmopolitische ,Germanophonie? Postnationalen Perspektiven in der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2012. Pp. 410. ISBN: 9783826049347.

Cet ouvrage est l'aboutissement d'un colloque international organisé en mai 2011 par le groupe de recherche "Centre Circulation Savoirs et Textes Allemagne/Autriche—Europe," à l'Université d'Amiens (France).

Comme le souligne Christine Meyer au début de son introduction dynamique, rigoureuse et très bien documentée, il s'agissait d'abord de dépasser la marginalisation—toujours de mise—d'auteurs "biculturels" dans le paysage littéraire germanophone, et d'entreprendre un inventaire critique des mutations constatables depuis les dernières décennies (9). A ce titre, la nécessité méthodique était de tourner le dos aux évidences essentialistes des conceptions culturalistes et de renoncer à tout procédé réductionniste, pour mettre en place une analyse sociale et discursive. En d'autres termes, le but de l'ouvrage est de remettre en question les classifications figées et les entités monolithiques. Meyer précise que pour comprendre comment s'articule dans les textes étudiés la construction de l'identité du sujet, l'analyse se penche sur les systèmes sémiotiques élaborés, les procédés de constitution de l'espace et de mise en perspective, ainsi que sur les moyens d'expression, poétique et narrative, choisis. De plus, dans le contexte de l'étude des lieux de la culture, d'écritures (trans)frontalières, et de la mise en perspective de "soi" et de "l'autre," la réflexion ne doit pas uniquement inclure des auteurs "biculturels"—les ainsi-nommés "auteurs-Chamisso," le prix Adelbert von Chamisso récompensant depuis 1985 des auteurs dont l'œuvre est marquée "par un changement de langue ou de culture."¹ Comme l'annonce en effet Meyer, des auteurs "monoculturels" tels que Sten Nadolny, Herbert Rosendorfer ou Josef Winkler sont également à prendre en compte (11).

Point saillant de l'introduction, l'explication du choix du terme "provocant" de "germanophonie" donne lieu à une contextualisation subtile et fort complète (11–19), au cours de laquelle sont notamment récapitulées les notions cardinales de la critique et de la théorie post-coloniales. Meyer rappelle qu'on ne peut déduire de l'histoire coloniale des différents Etats européens que les Etats germanophones auraient été "épargnés" par les processus coloniaux d'exploitation ainsi que par les stratégies d'oppression racistes et religieuses. Il ressort que l'appui sur le terme délicat de "francophonie" est fécond dans la mesure où il donne l'occasion de problématiser les conceptions coutumières de "l'allemand" tout comme du "germanophone." Il permet donc de mener à bien la démarche annoncée, à savoir la sortie des sentiers battus et la présentation de réflexions stimulantes (15).

Ces réflexions se déploient dans les cinq grandes parties structurant l'ouvrage. La première partie, générale, éclaire les conditions d'une écriture postnationale de langue allemande. La contribution de Manfred Schmeling vise ainsi à donner un aperçu du large spectre des dynamiques transfrontalières dans la littérature, en prenant pour exemple des auteurs de langue allemande contemporains tels qu'Herbert Rosendorfer et Sten Nadolny. La forme narrative du dialogue interculturel est d'abord étudiée dans le contexte du débat anthropologique et culturel (37–42), puis analysée très concrètement dans la structure des textes étudiés (42–51). L'article d'Azade Seyhan, tout aussi complet et équilibré, montre que la traduction constitue une catégorie féconde, à la fois au plan philosophico-culturel et au plan formel, pour appréhender les dynamiques de confrontation à l'altérité. Enfin, Kien Nghi Ha, dans une contribution particulièrement tonique, étudie la réception en Allemagne de la notion d'hybridité : il constate ainsi un entremêlement paradoxal du concept popularisé par Homi K. Bhabha et du discours actuel sur les races masquant justement un racisme sous-jacent, mais omniprésent au sein de la société allemande—racisme face auquel des stratégies subversives sont cependant possibles (76–78).

La deuxième partie se penche sur la question de la formation d'une tradition dans le contexte d'une écriture transculturelle. Christine Meyer, Isabella Parkhurst-Atger et Andrea Lauterwein s'intéressent respectivement à Elias Canetti, à l'anthropologue et poète Franz Baermann Steiner, et à Paul Celan. Chacun de ces trois auteurs est envisagé comme "prédécesseur" des auteurs biculturels contemporains, et chaque article montre avec brio dans quelle mesure ces auteurs ont,

chacun à leur manière, tracé des lignes de force influençant les acteurs de la littérature contemporaine.

La troisième partie esquisse différentes approches des nouvelles “littératures de la migration,” notamment au plan de la réception. Comme dans le reste de l’ouvrage, l’équilibre entre réflexions théoriques ou globales et exemplifications est particulièrement appréciable. Ainsi, Nilüfer Kuruyazıcı fournit une vue synthétique de l’histoire de la littérature germano-turque en Allemagne, qui permet notamment de cristalliser le passage d’une “littérature de travailleurs,” engagée, dans les années 1960, à une diversification des positions et des stratégies d’écriture, en particulier au cours des années 1990. La contribution de Benoît Ellerbach, qui se focalise sur l’auteur germano-syrien Rafik Schami, analyse l’interaction complexe entre l’un des plus anciens représentants d’une littérature de la migration de langue allemande et la presse, et pointe par-là les difficultés de classification des littératures pluriculturelles dans le paysage littéraire national des Etats germanophones, hier comme aujourd’hui. Plus globale, la pétillante réflexion de Myriam Geiser se penche sur la réception, en Allemagne, d’une littérature de la migration en général, et la met en perspective avec ce qui se joue actuellement en France : le lien avec l’idée d’une “littérature mondiale” est ainsi provisoirement posé, puis interrogé (178–81). Une comparaison entre paysages littéraires français et allemands est également présente dans l’article d’Haimaa El Wardy, qui se penche sur la relation entre langue et identité au sein de la “Migrantenliteratur” allemande et de la “littérature *beur*” française en prenant pour exemples à nouveau Rafik Schami d’une part, Azouz Begag d’autre part.

La quatrième partie regroupe les analyses de textes de différents auteurs autour des questions de la construction de l’identité et des lieux de la culture. Dans un premier temps, Bernard Banoun nous présente le cas intéressant de l’écrivain autrichien Josef Winkler, dont les œuvres, qui se caractérisent par une tension entre idéalisation de l’altérité et rejet d’un enracinement local, ont contribué à une “internationalisation de la littérature de langue allemande. L’œuvre de Franco Biondi se caractérise aussi par le décentrement et l’expérience de l’Autre, comme le montre Marion Dufresne, mais ces éléments se présentent de façon différente que chez Winkler : essentielle chez Biondi est notamment la “migration dans la langue,” la lutte avec la langue constituant pour lui le devoir principal de l’écrivain. De son côté, Sieglinde Klettenhammer se penche plus particulièrement, en se référant à l’œuvre d’Ilma Rakusa—d’origine

hongro-slovaque et vivant en Suisse—sur la fonction que revêtent topographies et mouvements dans l'espace dans la construction transculturelle du sujet. L'auteur nippo-allemande Yoko Tawada est enfin abordée par Leslie A. Adelson, réputée pour avoir par ailleurs analysé, en se fondant sur des auteurs germano-turcs, un "turkish turn" depuis la chute du mur. Adelson étudie principalement les motifs de la parallélité dans le roman *Das nackte Auge* (2004), qui renvoient selon elle à une nouvelle orientation du répertoire critique concernant la compréhension du mouvement et de la migration en tant que procédés transnationaux d'une expérience et d'une transformation collectives (292).

Enfin, la cinquième et dernière partie traite la problématique de la culture mémorielle dans un contexte multi-ethnique et transnational. Michael Hofmann se demande dans sa contribution comment les immigrés turcs traitent le sujet de la Shoah, et constate notamment que leur identification avec les victimes empêche, dans une certaine mesure, la mémoire du génocide arménien de 1915. Se pose dès lors la question de savoir si un discours interculturel peut se développer en Allemagne au sujet des génocides—un discours qui ne se limite pas à des mises en accusation réciproques. De son côté, Katja Schubert évoque le traitement littéraire original de la relation entre la minorité afro-américaine discriminée et les immigrés juifs d'Europe de l'Est dans *Ein Sommer in der Woche der Itke K.* (1970) de Jeannette Lander, auteur aujourd'hui quasiment inconnue en Allemagne. Autre cas particulier éclairé par Linda Koiran, celui des auteurs afro-allemands et asiatiques-allemands. Koiran analyse la constitution de modèles identitaires hybrides à partir de textes généralement peu connus (textes d'Hans-Jürgen Massaquoi, germano-libérien, d'Ika Hügel-Marshall, germano-afro-américaine, ou encore d'Abini Zöllner, fille d'une juive Allemande et d'un Nigérian et ayant grandi en RDA). Enfin, Karin E. Yeşilada se penche sur le traitement littéraire d'événements ayant connu un très faible écho dans la littérature "germano-allemande": les attentats racistes, dans une Allemagne tout juste réunifiée, d'Hoyerswerda, Rostock, Mölln et Solingen. Les œuvres cette fois lyriques d'auteurs germano-turcs sont analysées par Yeşilada, qui montre qu'au sein de cette "poésie post Solingen," la mémoire culturelle de la minorité turque en Allemagne prend, dans le contexte de ce traumatisme collectif, une forme littéraire tout à fait particulière.

Les nombreuses contributions de cet ouvrage remplissent ainsi le programme annoncé par Christine Meyer dans son introduction: sortant

des sentiers battus—ne se limitant par exemple pas à évoquer les prolongements du “turkish turn” dans la littérature allemande—leurs auteurs proposent des réflexions originales, innovantes, équilibrées au plan de la répartition entre mises au point théoriques et analyses littéraires de qualité. Nous ne pouvons qu’espérer que d’autres chercheurs se saisiront de ce concept de “germanophonie cosmopolite” pour continuer à l’interroger de façon aussi fructueuse que le fait cet ouvrage.

1. Aras Ören et Rafik Schami ont été les deux premiers auteurs récompensés par ce prix. Pour de plus amples informations, voir <http://www.bosch-stiftung.de/content/language1/html/14169.asp>.

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Eugene Eoyang. *The Promise and Premise of Creativity: Why Comparative Literature Matters*. London and New York: Continuum, 2012. Pp. 235. ISBN: 9781441108647.

Eugene Eoyang is a pioneering figure in modern Comparative Literature studies. He, along with very few others actually *does*, what too many others just *talk about*: they engage in a comparatism that is transcontinental and transcultural.

In this well-organized collection of articles, we can immediately focus on the meticulous and subtle analysis of Francois Cheng (72–84), a Sino-French scholar, poet, translator, and member of the French Academy. This essay perhaps together with “Cuentos Chinos” (57–72) are outstanding examples of the skill and competence of Eoyang in practicing the kind of comparatism that he advocates. The subtle and precise analyses of parallel texts (French and Chinese) are quite impressive.

An important part of the volume (as suggested by the above-mentioned illustrations) is devoted to translation and to multilingualism. While the concluding essay (204–18) is not particularly eloquent or substantial (and, yes, in some ways not radical enough!) its key argument is perfectly sound: “English used, not as an alternative second language, but as a replacement of the native tongue that might make other languages

obsolete ...” is a development that ought to be rejected. Alas, we are impotently watching precisely this kind of unfortunate situation. Keep in mind, reader, that Eoyang does not even approach the even more frightening process of outright disappearance of dozens of vernaculars with every passing decade! Even inside Comparative Literature (or should we by now use inverted commas here?) the “monoglot comparatist” is gaining the upper hand (chapter 14 and elsewhere). At least we have Eoyang’s noble hymn to translation (151–60) that would deserve to be used in classrooms everywhere. We also have a witty, original, and intriguing exploration of the most useful and the least useful types of literary comparison (49–56), again, a rather unique essay.

The other essential dimension in Eoyang’s book is the inclination toward the philosophy of culture. It begins with three chapters that vindicate the indispensable role of literature in any complete education. In the book’s first essay (3–16), we have a spirited and convincing defense of literature (one that reminded me of Umberto Eco’s positions). For Eoyang there are three points that ought to be kept in mind always: “three skills, all of which are essential to success in any field. These skills are 1) creative imagination, 2) vicarious sympathy, and 3) capacious imagination.” It is the reading and study of literature which pre-eminently fosters these skills. Eoyang develops the statement patiently, not only in this essay, but also in the two following ones (17–45), with fine examples culled from European and Asian literatures. This argument is nicely completed by an overview of American anthologies of “world literature” and their treatment (or non-treatment and oversight or non-inclusion) of the richness and abundance of Chinese literature over many centuries (84–94).

What I called the “philosophy of culture” approach reaches high levels in two kinds of more specific analyses. One of them is the brilliant attempt to replace the East/West dichotomy with a North/South one, on a global or planetary level (95–103 and elsewhere). The other is an analysis of “maodun” (115–37; two essays, one of them a highly ingenious study of the poems of Octavio Paz). “Maodun” (often translated by “non-antagonistic contradictions”) is a concept that diverges from the Aristotelian tradition and more generally from any form of binary rationalism. It should be said that this kind of “revisionist” (or dissident) thinking, while not frequent or dominant in Western intellectual life, is nevertheless to be encountered in the scientific essays of the French-Romanian physicists Stephane Lupasco and Basarab Nicolescu, as well as the Chilean biologists Francisco

Varela and Humberto Maturana, or, perhaps even in some of the writings of the great scientist Werner Heisenberg. By the way, I was personally not enthusiastic to see Eoyang's examples drawn from Mao's "meditations," but we'll let that pass—the reader will get the point of the comparatist.

I believe that Eoyang's arguments would have been interestingly enriched by a discussion of the single major Western philosopher who had some competence in and showed genuine curiosity for Chinese thinking (specifically the *I Ching*) namely G. W. F. Leibniz whose efforts have been discussed, among others, by authors such as Franklin Perkins, Donald Lach, and Sun Xiaoli. (See also the volume *La Licorne et le Dragon* edited by Yue Daiyun and Alain Le Pichon, Beijing: Peking University Printing House, 1995). It seems a pity that Leibniz is missing from Eoyang's learned volume.

Eoyang is rightly fascinated by a quote from a leading medieval theologian, Hugh de Saint-Victor, a passage that seems to have much preoccupied Edward Said also: "The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land" (179). This twelfth-century quote from the *Didascalion* written in Latin resembles strikingly insights articulated by Chinese sages. It might be a good starting point for the study of Eugene Eoyang's mode of thinking and, after all, for any project dealing with the globalization of literature and philosophy. This book ought to be widely known and read.

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Rahilya Geybullayeva, ed. *Archetypes in Literatures and Cultures: Cultural and Regional Studies*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2012. Pp. 304. ISBN: 9783631634677.

Archetypes in Literatures and Cultures: Cultural and Regional Studies, edited by Rahilya Geybullayeva, hails as a thought-product of a multinational, interdisciplinary forum intended to expound and expand the topic of "We and Others, Mine and Others"—or more precisely, to determine both the overlaps and the differences between Western and Eastern literatures and ideas through the identification of archetypes

and the study of their utilizations and transformations throughout time and cultures. Originating from the conference “Stereotypes in Literatures and Cultures,” hosted by Baku Slavic University, the collection appropriately includes authors of twelve nations spanning the gamut from East to West, and who, in their individual contributions, have chosen to relate Eastern and Western, as well as past and present, through a variety of literary and non-literary mediums, dually striving to establish original connections and to celebrate distinct cultural identities. Naturally, the constituents of this collection are preoccupied in some way or other, eponymously, with the theme of “archetype,” whether that entails defining “archetype” (generally or in a specific sense of an example) and what is essential and nonessential to “archetype,” exposing an archetype through the use of linguistic, literary, historical, etc., data, identifying the same archetype in a non-original cultural habitat, tracking the evolution of an archetype, or identifying re-interpretations. As the essays progress, we find that the bare, unexciting framework of primacy (from the Greek *arche*=primary + *type*=“a pattern supposing reiteration”) becomes filled with increasingly complex nuances, embracing the Jungian concept of the archetype as a subconscious phenomenon stored in the “collective unconscious” of a culture, ethnicity, or nation and manifested and colored by the “individual consciousness in which it happens to appear.” The resulting dialogue is a multipronged approach that includes semiotic, linguistic, philological, ethnographic, and culturological analyses aimed at tracking archetypes’ permanence and adaptation, how they maintain themselves in sociocultural bodies through time, how they reappear, and how they change.

There emerges in the initial stages of the study a necessity to outline the possible methodological avenues that will fulfill these goals, as well as to categorize several species of “archetype.” In “Part 1: National or Transnational, Source or Interpretation,” Rahilya Geybullayeva’s essay provides an excellent starting point in its categorization of numerous families of archetypes (plots, situations, melodies, images, symbols, genre, words, textual methods, among others) as well as several “methods of formation of archetypes” (canonization, representation, adaptation, translation, etc.). The study goes on to regard compilations of word groups, derived from personal observations, that “reveal and identify the expression of archetypes, that is, the scheme of a primal image or motif, enclosed in words,” or in their roots. Her approach freely spans

languages and time periods, refreshingly prioritizing semantic and ideological links between any two words above strict relatedness of linguistic lineage. Izabella Horvath, producing the third essay in this opening section, achieves an equal level of originality. Through an examination of a multifarious range of sources that includes poetic and pictorial material, she evidences the shared thematic and structural quality of Mongolian and Turkic poetry and Hungarian folksongs. She affirms the overlooked connection of images of nature to physical love in these poetic forms and further grounds the association as a product of Daoist ideas. Kabel Abduyallev, in another approach, considers an archetype's "genetic line." In his essay, he compares Beyrak of the *Kitabi-Dada Gorgoud* to Odysseus of the *Odyssey*, arguing that the *Kitabi-Dada Gorgoud* functions as a bridge, "transferring human society from ancient times to another age." Whether the methods are essentially lateral (Geybullayeva and Horvath) or vertical (Kabel), the pieces unite in seeking to establish intercultural, interethnic, and international connections.

"Part 2: Eastern Archetypes in the West" most actively concerns what defines the essentials of an archetype, and, as an extension, the nature of transmitting those essentials through a translation or as a work born out of an encounter with a foreign culture. Simon Sorgenfrei does not fail to stipulate that what is considered essential depends largely on the prerogative of the translator. Inayat Kahn, Coleman Barks, and Deepak Chopra, as translators of Rumi, have all routed their efforts in divergent directions, departing from the original text; Kahn and Barks have removed Islamic themes from Rumi in the interest of communicating a "universal spirituality" or personal spiritual convictions, respectively; Chopra's "translation" can be described more accurately as a collection of love poems by Chopra himself, Sorgenfrei declares. The remaking of a text therefore involves a subjection to the personal influences, convictions, and intentions of the conveyor. That the true spirit of Rumi was preserved in some or all of these cases is desired but debatable. Still, the migration of ideas depends on just this sort of interaction, either a translation or a meeting between an interpreter and a foreign influence. Lermontov, as Tatiana Megrelishvili argues, was inspired to write his "Ashik Kerib" as a result of his collision with Eastern culture and his subsequent motivation to explore and relate archetype, or "elements of the collective unconscious," between East and West. Many of these elements, as the collection attests, exist as parallels in both cultural

hemispheres, a fact further corroborated in chapter three, “Archetype as a Symbol and Image,” in essays by Gorkhmaz Guliyev and Gonul Bakay. The former compares the characters of the Western Shakespeare’s Hamlet and the Eastern Mammadguluzadeh’s Iskandar and their use of the “persona mask,” while the latter shows the pervasion of the Faustus archetype, a craver of omniscience and power, in the American tales “The Devil and Tom Walker” and “The Devil and Daniel Webster.” Many of these archetypes are ubiquitous and universal: the character who becomes frustrated with society’s imposition of a persona mask (Guliyev), the “archetype of human endeavor and desire for unlimited knowledge” (Bakay), the poet and his various types (Khuraman Musaliev), the Wise Old Man (Sevinj Bakish), and Dostoevsky’s Underground Man (Hatice Övgü Tüzün, Part 5). Beyond the boundaries of a single unconscious, these symbolic characters are shared, recurrent, pertinent, and, as Bakish states, “alive as long as [they are] pregnant with meaning.”

Saddik Gohar’s essay of “Part 4: Archetypes in Language and Translation” focuses our attentions on questions concerning not the integrity and spirit of translation but on what were some of its serendipitous consequences in a single case study. Inspired by the works of T.S. Eliot, poets like Al-Sayyad, Abdul-Sabur, and Al-Bayati, Gohar argues, were able to disenthral “Arabic culture and literature from fossilized traditions and stagnant heritage,” as well as “to discover [and implement] their own indigenous figures [from] Arab history.” By this interaction, Gohar provides an example of a foreign artistic influence spurring the reinvigoration of a native literary soil. Khalida Isa-zada follows with a brief piece on the topic of the inner-configuration of “phraseological units, or idioms, with meanings that are connected to the background knowledge, practical experience, and cultural-national traditions of the native speakers of the language,” with an intent to present a few examples of a shared, cross-cultural inheritance preserved in language. In Part 5, we find further corroborations of such intercommunications but more so as a throwback to previous sections of the collection that aimed at identifying a shared archetypal type. The essays in this section have been appropriated under the label of “New Transformations” and, less stringently, “Fan-Fiction.” Of note is Hatice Övgü Tüzün, who identifies a morph of the archetypal Underground Man in John Barth’s “Lost in the Funhouse.” Elnare Garagyezova, in her essay, postulates on the similarities of widely integrated conceptions and notions of “the mill” as an emblem, while Gunay

Garayeva investigates the transformation and recasting of the primordial images of celestial bodies in an evolving Azerbaijani nationality.

In “Part 6: Mythology Archetypes and Totems,” Anuar Galiev compares and contrasts Indo-European and Turkic societal structures, as resulting from their respective foundational strains of thought gleamed and reconstructed out of the symbols of cultural legend and story. In an essay conscious of its appropriateness to this collection, Irina Modebadze and Tamar Tsitsishvili follow with the statement, “The reason behind focusing on the similarities and differences of Eastern and European cultures is closely related to the search for national identity,” recalling the intention of these works not only to bridge between cultures but to distinguish and empower the poles of that bridge with the knowledge of their unique identities—the “mine” in “We and Others, Mine and Others.” In their parsing of Sanshiashvili’s depiction of Medea, they make the argument that Sanshiashvili casts Medea as a foreigner in a Hellenic society, a composition of a Colchis national identity in a Greek environment, and not, as does Euripides, as a barbarian cast into the midst of civilization. To conclude the collection, Elena Paskaleva, Igor Yankov, and Larisa Piskunova wrap up in the seventh chapter, “Archetypal Images as a Way of Constructing Identity,” with Paskaleva showing that the *four-īwān* architectural plan widely associated with Islamic religious compounds boasts a history that extends prior to the advent of Islam, and was therefore an adoptive and adapted construction. Yankov and Piskunova explore the transition from Soviet to post-Soviet life as a function of reinterpreting the city-space, where monuments, legends, and history are recast or “sacrificed for the sake of an unproblematic present.” Coming near the book’s finale, this argument is a poignant reminder that archetypes can be thrown in a variety of different lights, thereby reshaping identity, and that, if it will, “the dominant narrative extracts from a variety of historical incidents only those that fit into the corresponding matrix.”

The collection’s unified focus on national identity comes as a response to the onset of “more urgent attempts to define national literary and cultural facts” in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European bloc. Yankov and Piskunova’s remark therefore recapitulates a shared urgency of these pieces to identify national and cultural roots—it is preferable to replace a dominant or incomplete national narrative with one that is true, meaningful, and definitively owned. The essays thus aim to contribute to a sense of national pride, richness, and

uniqueness, while simultaneously striving to link cultures and nationalities on a global level through the identification of shared archetypes and the promotion of international dialogue. As Tatiana Megrelishvili writes, “When a person raised in one culture is met with the creative product of a completely different culture, the interest of the first for the second can increase.” It is this sort of interest that *Archetypes in Literatures and Cultures* amply stimulates through its archeological dives into a myriad of ancient and contemporary world literatures and ideas, expanding, bolstering, and sharing cultural identities internationally.

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Peta Mitchell. *Contagious Metaphor*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2012. Pp. 200. ISBN: 9871441132734.

In this relatively brief—the actual text runs to 144 pages—but highly informative study, Peta Mitchell offers what she herself terms a “genealogy,” but what is in fact more of a traditional history, of the metaphoric uses of the term “contagion” in order to explain why its function as a metaphor is so pervasively present in our culture. By way of introduction she first presents a fairly sketchy *tour d’horizon* of theories of metaphor beginning with Aristotle and, after brief stops at the relevant insights of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Nietzsche, and other luminaries, arriving at contemporary cognitive models proposed by Lakoff and Johnson and others.

It was, as Mitchell shows, almost inevitable that contagion would be put to metaphoric uses. After all, while our more remote ancestors knew very well that certain diseases spread through a population through direct or indirect contact, they had no idea what was actually transmitted in these contacts. In cases of indirect contact “air”—an equally ill-understood phenomenon—seemed to play a role in such transmissions, but that was as far as their knowledge went. And so the concept of contagion could easily be applied to dissemination in other domains than disease, in particular if the exact nature of that dissemination, its mechanism, was equally unclear. Immoral behavior for instance could be seen as “contagious,” as “infecting” up until then presumably innocent victims. When in the second half of the nineteenth century mass psychology began to

develop, it seemed logical to see the apparently irrational and will-less behavior of individuals in crowds as the result of another form of contagion. To these moral and social contagions, the early twentieth century added another one. Sigmund Freud, easily the most famous writer to refer to this third form of contagion, joined its British *auctor intellectualis* in speaking of emotional contagion (which he translated as *Gefühlsansteckung*—rather appropriately, I might add, since *anstecken* does not only mean “to infect,” but also to kindle, or set fire to).

Interestingly, the discovery of the bacterial nature of contagion towards the end of the nineteenth century did not make much of a difference, apart, of course, from revealing the purely metaphorical nature of much contemporary use of the term. Perhaps paradoxically, the material, epidemiological character of contagion seems to have made it even more popular. To give one of Mitchell’s examples: newspapers were quick to see the London riots of 2011 as a contemporary instance of contagion (of both the moral and the social sort), with *The Economist* also providing a dubious historical dimension with its claim that “Britain has a history of contagious rioting” (61).

In her concluding chapters Mitchell draws our attention to a further expansion of contagion’s metaphoric range. Its wings now also soar over the world of high finance, where banks whose ill-advised—or worse—practices affect other banks are now seen as “contagious,” and over Richard Dawkins’s meme theory, which, after an unpromising start within an evolutionary context, has more recently been revived within a virological framework, with memes as self-replicating cultural units. I am not sure that the meme-as-virus concept will last longer than the meme-as-gene, but Mitchell also calls our attention to the ubiquitous use of terms drawn from virology in information technology. Ever since a self-replicating and harmful computer program was for the first time called a “computer virus” in 1983, metaphors involving contagion have proliferated. In fact, they have become firmly attached to sudden and explosive disseminations of information (with pictures and videos going “viral” on the internet).

As Mitchell convincingly argues, many metaphoric uses of contagion have a common pedigree in the idea of “contagion by example.” Tracing the origins of the notion that following the example of others does not necessarily involve exercising our free will, but may be prompted by some more obscure force, the author returns to Aristotle (who is

not much bothered by the prospect) and Plato (who disapproves of this sort of mimesis on moral grounds) and then goes on to show that, following Plato rather than Aristotle, later writers, too, tend to see contagion as potentially harmful and give it a permanent place in moral discourse. We find it in Erasmus, but also in far more obscure places such as Mary Pilkington's 1797 novel *The Force of Example* or the highly entertaining American Gothic of Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly* (1799).

Mitchell's brief foray into literature—she discusses “contagion” and in particular the role played by “the element of air” in Daniel Defoe's *Preparations for the Plague*, Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, Albert Camus's *The Plague*, and the Australian writer Janette Turner Hospital's *Due Preparations for the Plague*—does not add much to the argument and her early suggestion that “contagion” “highlights the problem of language: the problem of communication and dissemination” (15) is never really worked out. “Coda: Language is a Virus,” with which the book ends, offers still more imaginative uses of “contagion”—as in the work of William Burroughs, who first conceived of the viral nature of language, in Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* (1992), and in Bruce McDonald's 2008 movie *Pontypool*—but Mitchell steers clear of truly theoretical arguments. Perhaps, however, that is just as well. *Contagious Metaphor* is an intelligent and informative contribution to what Mitchell herself calls “cultural studies of contagion” (9), a study that offers fresh insights and lays open new territory.

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Marika Natsvlishvili. *Naturwissenschaft und Literatur im Dialog: Komparatistische Fallstudien zur europäischen Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2012. Pp. 246. ISBN: 9783826050091.

Les relations entre les Sciences naturelles et la Littérature constituent, actuellement, l'un des domaines de préoccupation du comparatisme international: j'en veux pour preuve l'intérêt et le succès suscités par les ateliers consacrés à ce sujet lors du dernier Congrès de l'AILC à Paris. Avec son étude sur le dialogue qu'entretiennent ces deux grands domaines des

connaissances humaines, Marika Natsvlshvili propose une très utile contribution à cette problématique.

Les rapports entre la littérature et les sciences naturelles sont, bien entendu, anciens et s'intensifient au cours du XIXe siècle: comme le fait d'ailleurs Marika Natsvlshvili, il suffit de rappeler ici, entre autres, l'importance que le modèle scientifique a eu pour l'éclosion du naturalisme et, notamment, pour la théorie du "roman expérimental" d'Émile Zola. Non seulement modèle, les activités scientifiques sont aussi, depuis longtemps, sujets d'œuvres littéraires, et c'est cet aspect que Natsvlshvili met en avant dans ses analyses d'exemples concrets, sept en tout, relevant tous de la littérature européenne du XXe siècle ; ils concernent, dans l'ordre de leur développement: John Banville (* 1945), Gottfried Benn (1886–1956), Mikhail Bulgakov (1891–1940), Primo Levi (1919–1987), Tommaso Landolfi (1908–1979), Ulrich Woelk (* 1960) et Michel Houellebecq (* 1958). Le livre, issu d'une thèse de doctorat soutenue à l'université de la Sarre à Saarbrücken (sous la direction de Manfred Schmeling), est solidement construit: après les obligatoires préliminaires introductifs concernant la définition du sujet, la présentation du corpus et de la méthode de travail, l'auteure propose, avant de procéder aux analyses spécifiques, deux chapitres tout à fait utiles, consacrés l'un (chapitre 2) aux distinctions entre sciences naturelles et sciences humaines (philosophiques, littéraires), l'autre (chapitre 3) à l'histoire de l'image du scientifique et des sciences naturelles dans la littérature.

La question de particularités des deux domaines, mais aussi de leur (éventuels) complémentarité et de leurs (éventuels) points communs occupe, en effet, au moins depuis le XIXe siècle, philosophes, universitaires, littéraires. De Wilhelm Dilthey à Charles Snow, Marika Natsvlshvili évoque les positions de ceux qui insistent, comme Dilthey, sur les différences entre les sciences et l'autonomie des humanités et d'autres qui, comme Snow, appellent à un dépassement du fossé qui sépare les sciences. A travers ce débat, elle illustre l'importance et la nécessité d'un dialogue entre ces deux approches ... débat toujours d'actualité, comme le montre son *Forschungsbericht* portant sur les études récentes dans ce domaine dont elle donne un résumé pertinent et tire un bilan instructif concernant les rapports entre les *Naturwissenschaften* et ce qu'on appelle désormais, en allemand, les *Kulturwissenschaften*. Suit un bref rappel historique illustrant l'image des sciences et du personnage du scientifique dans la tradition littéraire, du *Faust* de Goethe à H. G. Wells, en passant

par Mary Shelley, E. T. A. Hoffmann, et Jules Verne qui amène le lecteur aux analyses concernant les auteurs du corpus.

Il faut préciser, comme le fait d'ailleurs Marika Natsvlishvili dès le début de son travail (17), que les auteurs choisis pour son étude n'ont pas eu de relations directes entre eux, et que les occurrences intertextuelles qu'elle dégage soigneusement dans plusieurs des œuvres analysées (nous y reviendrons) mettent en jeu d'autres références littéraires que les textes de son étude. Néanmoins, les œuvres du corpus présentent un certain nombre d'analogies typologiques en rapport avec le sujet, à savoir les sciences naturelles et les personnages de scientifiques (réels ou fictifs). Cela permet à l'auteure non seulement de procéder à des analyses individuelles, mais d'intégrer dans son travail des chapitres confrontant au moins deux des auteurs du corpus, par exemple Gottfried Benn et Mikhail Bulgakov (chapitre 5), Tommaso Landolfi et Ulrich Woelk (chapitre 7).

Un point commun est cependant souligné dès le début: la plupart des auteurs du corpus ont été, du moins à certains moments de leur vie, très proches du milieu scientifique: si Banville et Landolfi se sont rapprochés des sciences naturelles grâce à leur travail d'écrivain, Benn, Bulgakov, Houellebecq, Levi, et Woelk ont eu une formation scientifique, ont exercé des métiers dans le domaine des sciences, et c'est une position critique vis-à-vis d'elles qui est à l'origine de leur travail littéraire. Dans ce processus, Marika Natsvlishvili soulève à juste titre l'importance de la contextualisation socio-culturelle et biographique de l'œuvre de chacun des auteurs: le temps du fascisme et national-socialisme pour Primo Levi, du stalinisme pour Bulgakov, l'évolution matérialiste de la civilisation contemporaine et la possibilité d'un "clonage globale" dans le cas de Houellebecq, pour ne prendre que ces trois exemples.

Le nombre (important) d'œuvres prises en compte offre un large spectre des différents aspects du dialogue entre sciences et littérature. Dans leur analyse, Marika Natsvlishvili insiste sur les aspects thématiques et narratologique de la présence des sciences et des scientifiques dans des œuvres littéraires. Ainsi évoque-t-elle, par exemple, la confrontation entre vérité scientifique, philosophie de l'Histoire et fiction à travers quatre romans de John Banville, dont deux concernent des personnages historiques importants, Copernic et Kepler, alors que les protagonistes des deux autres sont des personnages fictifs (un historien chargé d'écrire la biographie de Newton et Mephisto), ce qui permet à l'auteure de s'intéresser, entre autres, à l'ambivalence générique du roman historique.

L'analyse de textes de Benn et de Bulgakov donne lieu à une réflexion sur la dialectique du corps et de l'esprit, celle de *Il sistema periodico* de Primo Levi à une autre sur l'exercice de la science, en l'occurrence la chimie, dans des conditions historiques particulières et sur la science comme moyen de lutte pour la survie.

On suit également avec intérêt les analyses intertextuelles, p. ex. dans le cas de Tommaso Landolfi et de Michel Houellebecq. *Cancroregina* de Landolfi s'inscrit en effet d'une part dans la lignée des ancêtres de la science-fiction et dans la tradition des voyages de la terre à la lune (notamment dans celle de Jules Verne, mais aussi, dans celle d'E. A. Poe et de sa nouvelle *The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Phall* [1835] relevant évidemment plutôt de la littérature fantastique), d'autre part dans la thématique romantique des automates telle que l'on la retrouve, entre autres, dans les œuvres d'E. T. A. Hoffmann (notamment *Der Sandmann* [1817]). D'autres références intertextuelles rattachent l'œuvre de Landolfi à Gogol (*Записки сумасшедшего* [1835]; *Le Journal d'un fou*), à Eugenio Montale (*Notizie dall Amiata*, d'où Landolfi tire sa réflexion sur le temps qui passe et les relations complexes entre la vie et la mort) et même à *La Nausée* (1938) de Jean-Paul Sartre, car le protagoniste de Landolfi, un intellectuel vivant en province, connaît le même sentiment de néant, d'ennui et de nausée que le Roquentin de Sartre.

Quant à Houellebecq, les marqueurs intertextuels vont bien au-delà des références purement littéraires: Marika Natsvlshvili y décèle des intertextes scientifiques concernant notamment la théorie quantique et atomique (Max Planck, Werner Heisenberg), son interprétation standard, dite "l'interprétation de Copenhague," par Niels Bohr (1927) que Houellebecq désigne comme un de ses "héros." A côté des ses références scientifiques sérieuses, l'on y trouve aussi des émissions ou retransmissions télévisuelles (le magazine *La Vie des animaux* et le "direct" des premiers pas de Neil Armstrong sur la lune le 21 juillet 1969, Apollo 11). En mélangeant données factuelles et données fictives, Houellebecq joue avec la fictionnalisation de ses sources, explique Marika Natsvlshvili, qui observe ce procédé également dans l'œuvre de John Banville.

De l'ensemble des sept analyses individuelles, l'auteure dégage ce qu'elle considère comme une fonction innovante de la pensée scientifique pour l'art de la narration, une "plus-value poétologique" qui consiste en une dynamisation du processus d'écriture grâce aux réactions des écrivains aux travaux et aux discours des scientifiques. Le livre

de Marika Natsvlishvili confirme la permanence de l'importance des sujets et des personnages scientifiques dans la littérature narrative du XXe siècle. Elle fournit ainsi une contribution intéressante à l'histoire culturelle des sciences vue à travers des échos littéraires. On lit ses différentes analyses avec plaisir, et s'il faut exprimer un seul regret, c'est l'absence d'un index qui, vu l'importance des références utiles qui traversent le livre, n'aurait pas été un luxe.

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Harry Berger, Jr. *A Fury in the Words: Love and Embarrassment in Shakespeare's Venice*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013. Pp. x + 229. ISBN: 9780823241958.

In *A Fury in the Words: Love and Embarrassment in Shakespeare's Venice*, Harry Berger, Jr. unlocks the implications of words within *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* while focusing on the embarrassment inherent in these texts' power struggles. While both plays have often been linked by scholars, Berger's text is not another "guide to Italy," nor does it focus only on the themes of race so often discussed in relation to the titular characters. This examination does involve some analysis of Shakespeare's use of Italian culture, as well as the influence of European stereotypes regarding Jews and Africans. Berger's goal, however, is to discuss how characters employ discourse to embarrass, shame, and "literally 'to embar': to put up a barrier or deny access" to other characters (12–13). In this respect, *A Fury in the Words* opens new ways of considering the intertextuality of these works.

Divided into two parts, one for each play, Berger's chapters focus on episodes of embarrassment, employing close reading to unlock the ways in which speeches become a gesture towards other characters, or even against the self. The discussion within each chapter builds upon another. For example, the role of donation and sacrifice in *The Merchant of Venice* as a means of self-promotion becomes important in the discussion of Desdemona's insistence on speaking for Cassio. By reading speech as gesture, Berger opens up the reader's understanding of perceived acts of selflessness, such as Portia's gifting of herself or Desdemona's dying

words, as acts which are also designed “to make someone feel awkward or uncomfortable, humiliated or ashamed,” as “specific acts of criticism, blame, and accusation” (13).

The issue of “mercifixion,” or the “strict justice” of allowing Shylock to live while seizing his property, is part of a system in which other characters “mercify” themselves. Antonio and Portia are locked in a competition for the indebtedness of the spendthrift Bassanio from the beginning. While Antonio takes out the costly loan from Shylock in order to finance Bassanio’s wooing, the high stakes of the loan—the pound of flesh he agrees to forfeit—is designed “to keep Bassanio permanently in his debt” emotionally, if not monetarily (22). When his ships are lost, Portia’s generosity “is the first move” in a “war against Antonio” (33). She not only reminds Bassanio of his debt to Antonio, but also sends him back to Venice to prove that she is the love that persuades Bassanio to act. Her claim to “stand for sacrifice” (3.2.57) darkens her acts—Bassanio does not win Portia in the casket test; she gives herself to him. The ring, which acts like this play’s handkerchief of infidelity, is “a menacing act of donation” which allows her later to rebuke and embarrass him into pledging his love to her over Antonio (30). Among the Christians of the play, gifts are not simple acts of love.

Berger also examines other complications in the play. According to his reading, Jessica and Lorenzo’s elopement “parodies” the engagement of Bassanio and Portia, with the “prissy paternal precaution,” “thievery” of the daughter and property, and the tricks of the women who cross-dress (62). Shylock’s own deviousness in the transaction with Bassanio and Antonio is detailed, as well. The embarrassing implications of the ongoing references to Jason, Medea, and the pathos of their relationship are also discussed—the implication being that, if Portia is the daughter who helps Bassanio win the “golden fleece,” he is sure to be a disappointing husband, just as Jason was. Likewise, Berger points out the realities of the couple’s economics—how Bassanio freely offers Portia’s cash for Antonio’s debt, and how she, despite her early willingness to pay, later refuses “and instead draws the process out as if to tweak them before she saves them” (77). Such is the power struggle Portia must use to win the upper hand. Donation, then, is not the only way to “mercify” and embarrass in comedic Venice.

In the city’s tragic mode, however, embarrassment seems to be the shame of the self, as *A Fury in the Words* outlines the complicities of Othello and Desdemona in their own downfall. Rather than finding the

cause of the uxoricide in Iago, Berger explains that the villain “has to huff and puff to keep up with his victims” (137). Like Graham Bradshaw before him, Berger discards the theory of “double-time” in *Othello* and explains that the reason for the rapidity of actions is in the prehistory, revealed for the audience and Iago in Act Three. *Othello* starts the play anxious about his new bride and his recently promoted lieutenant Michael Cassio because of their active roles in his courtship of Desdemona. Rather than the suave storyteller he represents himself as, Othello’s speeches are marked by his embarrassment at being an outsider subject to accusations of “witchcraft” and unbridled lust due to his skin color. He hides his emotions for Desdemona in martial self-representation and tries to gloss over her open declarations of sexual excitement for him. Iago may tell the audience that he has decided to make Othello jealous of Cassio, but his lies serve Othello’s preexisting fears.

Berger does not find Desdemona free of fault, either, as her insistence regarding Cassio’s demotion in the face of Othello’s fury complicates her position. Rather than the persistent representation of a friend who has been important to both of them, “her refusal to acknowledge [Othello’s] jealousy modulates into a desire to rise above it—or, to put it more precisely, a desire to show herself rising above it” (156). Her repeated insistence regarding Cassio’s worth and her innocence are also read as a denial of Iago’s misogynist quips and Emilia’s account of the adultery inherent in Venetian marriages. In short, Desdemona—like Othello in his long speeches regarding his martial endeavors or his carefully crafted explanation of wooing by storytelling, and like Iago in his early soliloquies—is consciously aware of her self-presentation and has an agenda behind the emotions she puts on display, including her own “mercifixion” in her final words which acknowledge her role in her own murder while excusing—and thus condemning—her husband. Berger also examines Emilia, who withholds the knowledge of the handkerchief’s whereabouts and Iago’s plots even while attempting to defend Desdemona, and her posturing as the good woman horrified by her husband’s evil deeds.

The readings in *A Fury in the Words* are important, for while we may not be able to find the mode of embarrassment in all of Shakespeare’s works, the uses of speech as gesture and selective representation through speech play a significant role in such plays. There is a tangible interaction with both criticism and theatrical interpretations, what the actor may read and consider promoting as the meaning or meanings of his

or her character's actions and words. Berger not only provides critical new interpretations, but also guides his readers to important scholarship predating his text. The work itself is also engaging, while being highly accessible to students and scholars alike. Anyone wishing to broaden their understanding of these two Venetian plays—or of what Shakespeare's text can do—will find a helping hand in Berger's analysis.

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Jörgen Bruhn, ed. et al. *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions*. London; New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013. Pp. 292. ISBN: 9781441192660.

Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions, provides a survey of the current trends in this field with contributions from some of its leading scholars, John Bryant, Tom Leitch, Kamilla Elliott, among others. The collection has two parts: a series of reflections on, and reconsiderations of, the basic questions of the field (“Rethinking the Core Questions”), followed by a series of case studies (“Rethinking the Case Study”). Editors Jörgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hansen identify five prevailing theoretical preoccupations in adaptation research and represented in their volume: the issue of fidelity; the need to move beyond the classic model of novel-to-film relationship and include more forms and media relations; the shift from a one-to-one relationship between source and result to a multi-level relationship; the idea of a dialogic (two-way) process whereby an adaptation is capable of transforming the “original” text it adapts; and the use of global theoretical frameworks such as genetic criticism in adaptation studies.

Part One opens with a provocative essay by Kamilla Elliott, in which she provides a historical survey of the field, exposing the conflict between formalist approaches and cultural-studies approaches, and argues that theory has failed to provide a coherent or helpful framework for understanding adaptation. It is not adaptation, she concludes, that should adapt to the requirements of theory; it is theory that should adapt to adaptation. Elliott calls “for more robust citation and engagement with prior scholarship” (31) as well as for the need to engage with scholars from other fields,

for the failure of theory to explain or adapt to adaptation is due to the fact that most theories spring from a single discipline and cannot adequately “address intermedial operations” (36). The essay ends by advocating that we put theory into practice by turning on its head that famous aphorism attributed to Martin Mull, that writing about music is like dancing about architecture: “My students have gone beyond translation models that find an equivalent in one form for an expression in another and beyond random, unintentional and unconscious intertextuality to make media be *about* other media. They *have* danced about architecture, drawn about music, played rugby matches about theatre, gamed about films..” (37).

John Bryant’s essay advocates a broader conception of the categories *work*, *creative process*, and *writing*. He discusses *Moby Dick* as a textual object employed by Edward Said in his reaction to the 9/11 attacks, where Said confuses John Ford’s film version for Melville’s novel, thus (ironically) perpetuating the film’s deletion of Melville’s own critique of orientalism. Bryant draws on his notion of the fluid text, which he defines as “an approach [that] detaches itself from the retrospective anxieties that derive from a false sense of originality and respects the textual identities of both adaptation and original, but does so primarily to sharpen the focus on the differences between the identities and how one textual identity may be seen to evolve into the other” (55). His central argument is that in order to keep the memories of texts and their adaptations alive, we need to study the critical distances between these texts, while preserving the memory of each adapted text.

In his own contribution, Jorgen Bruhn seeks to replace the fruitless one-way focus in adaptation studies (e.g., novel-to-film) with a dialogic, two-way model in which source and result influence each other. Taking his cue from Borges, Bruhn argues that a film adaptation not only results in a film version of a novel but changes the way we read the novel. Following Leitch and Stam, Bruhn takes dialogism as the guiding principle of adaptation studies, and proposes that we “de-hierarchize the relation between the primary and the secondary text, the source and the result, in order to make both texts results of each other” (83). Regina Schober draws on Bruno Latour’s actor-network model and combines Hume’s radically skeptical view of causality with contemporary neural research in order to examine the term “connection” itself. She views adaptation as an intricate web of connections with multidirectional avenues of cause and effect. Challenging traditional approaches to transmediality, approaches

based on the assumption that borders between different media are clear-cut and that there exists a unidirectional cause-and-effect relationship between them, Schober argues for “a view of intermediality that emphasizes the dynamic, reciprocal and relational nature of media” (91).

Lars Elleström argues that in order to understand media transformations we need a consistent theory of medium. He offers a new framework for studying media transformations, a framework based on the interrelatedness of all media. Adaptation, in this view, is a kind of transmediation which, unlike ekphrasis for example, is defined not as a media representation but as a specific media product, “the tranmediation of a specific media product into a new specific media product” (129). Eirik Frisvold Hanssen examines the work of French theorist and film critic André Bazin, in the context of his concept of ontology of cinema. Hanssen calls for a return to classical film theory in discussions of the relationships between cinema and other media.

Having opened with a provocative essay by Kamilla Elliott, Part One closes with a provocative essay by Thomas Leitch, “What Movies Want.” Leitch draws on concepts from a related yet distant field, sociobiological adaptation, in order to formulate a view of agency, one in which agency is no longer centered on individual ownership and control, no longer exclusively anthropomorphic, and no longer driven by the distinction between active and passive roles. He borrows from Pier Paolo Pasolini the concept of screenplays as structures that want to be other structures, and he borrows from biological evolution the concept of memes, those “micro units of cultural knowledge” (167) passed from one system or individual to another by nongenetic means, in order to propose a new way of understanding adaptation, one which allows texts themselves to have as much agency as their producers and consumers.

Part Two comprises five illuminating case studies where different theories and methodologies come into play. Hanjal Király discusses the representation of female characters and the intersection of visual media in recent film adaptations of Flaubert and Proust. Anna Sofia Rossholm examines Bergman’s notebooks about *Persona* as source, original, and pre-text, the film being itself an adaptation. Sara Brinch considers Clint Eastwood’s *Invictus*, a film based on various sources—true story, non-fiction book, photographs, poem—and questions what should be considered the original form of historical fiction film, thereby questioning the notion that narratives based on so-called true stories should be

considered adaptations. Anne Gjelsvik examines violent representation in Jim Thompson's novel *The Killer Inside Me* and its film adaptation by Michael Winterbottom in order to ponder some of the basic differences between the two media. Finally, Jonas Ingvarsson uses Orson Welles's radio adaptation of H.G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* to reformulate some of the core questions of adaptation theory—the perfect note with which to end a collection that has stimulated this reader to rethink some of the core questions in his own discipline.

In one of Borges's most celebrated literary jokes, a twentieth-century French *littérateur* named Pierre Menard improves upon *Don Quixote* by copying fragments of the novel verbatim: the text remains the same, but the author is different—of a different age, country, culture, disposition, etc.—and therefore the text itself has changed. Menard is now the author of the *Quixote*, a radically new, different, symbolist *Quixote*. If reproducing a text verbatim, in the same medium, is to be considered an adaptation, then every reading is an adaptation; reading itself is an adaptation. Adaptation thus lies at the heart of literary scholarship, especially for the comparatist, whose business is to draw connections, relationships, influences, associations among and across different languages and literatures, and often across different media.

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Ivan Callus, James Corby, and Gloria Lauri-Lucente, eds.
Style in Theory: Between Literature and Philosophy. London,
 New Delhi, New York, and Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2013. Pp.
 366. ISBN: 9781441128935.

Style in Theory presents a collection of articles seeking to redress the relative lack of interest that theory has shown for style. “Style,” it is said in the Introduction, “as the very aspect of expression which theory might be presumed to be well primed to investigate—especially since one cannot expect other disciplines to do that work—is that which theory has not, in fact, really investigated” (1). In addition to the Introduction, this volume contains fifteen individual essays of around twenty pages each, a format that opens for substantive discussions of the various topics

raised. The collection is well-produced, and the editors, based at the University of Malta, refer to extensive contacts with the contributors, while at the same time emphasizing that the book should not be seen as the outcome of a collective project.

I will begin on a critical note. There is an ostensible ambition behind the collection to have something of a more general nature to say about style, and I cannot find that that ambition has been realized. Broad questions about style occupy parts of the Introduction and of two of the individual essays, but no serious effort is made to further the overall understanding of style or the study of style. In their Introduction, the editors appear to assume that there is in fact something that *is* style, but that that something is “indefinable and elusive” (1). Much the same attitude can be found in Laurent Milesi’s essay “St!le-in-deconstruction,” in which Milesi suggests that style “might be what chances to remain when one has given up all fetishistic hopes and claims of potency and essential appropriation” (231) and that “the singularly plural ‘style-in-deconstruction’ IS style in deconstruction and, for the same reason, IS NOT style in deconstruction” (235).

To me, there is a curiously inverted positivism in that way of thinking and writing. The impression is created that style simply exists somewhere—in a kind of unconstructed reality, as it were, and not as a correlate of our conceptualizations—but that style is so incomprehensible that it eludes your every effort to grasp it. It is certainly possible to view matters in a more pragmatic light. “Style” is a word that has been used over a very long time in very many different senses. Even if one is thinking specifically of styles of verbal expression, there are many types of object one can take an interest in—a multitude of individual styles, period styles, genre styles, and so on—and in dealing with such entities one can have completely different types of problems in mind. The first thing one will have to do if one wishes to study something under the rubric of “style” is to decide what, more precisely, one is interested in researching and why, and by what means. Then, in one’s investigations, fascinating matters may come to light—or perhaps the phenomena under scrutiny may, indeed, prove elusive. But it is not as if style, with a capital S as it were, exists in itself, unfortunately unknowable.

The editors are naturally free to adopt an entirely different perspective. However, it appears impossible for me to attend seriously to the very diverse problems associated with style and the concept of style without

taking account of any other modes of thinking than the demonstratively non-constructive approaches of Theory. The back cover tells us that *Style in Theory* “critically revisits and challenges accepted accounts of style,” but the book does nothing of the sort. The editors remain just as uninterested in “the protocols of stylistics or the algorithms of stylometers” (1) as they assure us that Theory has traditionally been.

With the exception of Stefan Herbrechter’s “Theory ... for life,” the fifteen individual essays all contain the word “style” or its cognates in their titles, but the essays differ greatly in subjects and preoccupations. There are fine contributions by Gloria Lauri-Lucente on Petrarch’s view of style and his attitude to imitation and by Saul Anton on Diderot’s innovative moves in his art criticism. Giuseppe Mazzotta writes about style as polemics in an essay that ranges from Aristotle to Nietzsche. The collection also features texts on Shakespeare’s soliloquies (Stuart Sillars) and style and body in Nietzsche’s philosophy (Douglas Burnham), as well as discussions of Heidegger’s philosophy concentrating on the notion of *Verwüstung* (“desertification”) (Chris Müller) and on *Dasein* as a kind of styling (James Corby). Jean-Michel Rabaté considers vital aspects of modernism with Joyce’s *Ulysses* as his starting point. In a somewhat eccentric contribution, Fiona Hughes weaves together comments on works by the Brazilian visual artist Hélio Oiticica with speculations about the interconnections between meaning and style without entering into any substantial dialogue with current thinking about meaning, communication, and style. The last six essays form more of a cluster, since they can all be said to concern aspects of the tradition of Theory widely conceived. Apart from Milesi’s text about style in theory, already broached, the set contains studies focused on the styles of Blanchot (Mario Aulina), Deleuze (Marie-Dominique Garnier), and Cixous (Janice Sant), and also more overarching reflections on Theory by Stefan Herbrechter and Ivan Callus.

In Ivan Callus’s “Learning to Style Finally: Lateness in Theory,” which closes the collection, the focus is on style in the very last writings of authors. Callus pays special attention to the last interview with Derrida, by Jean Birnbaum, “Learning to Live Finally.” Callus makes the reflection that “theory itself might or might not be waning here,” and he even speaks of Theory as “provisionally bygone” (340), varying a formulation by Derrida from that interview. There is a sense of lateness in Callus’s essay, and also in Herbrechter’s, and an undertone of pessimism. That is perhaps unnecessary. Throughout the collection, Theory is being referred to as “theory,” as

if Theory represented all there is and can be of theory, but that is happily not the case: the waning of Theory would not mean the disappearance of theory, whether of literary theory or of theory in general.

Style in Theory may have little to say about style as such, and the contents of the volume may fan out over a wide spectrum of subjects. But it is a collection offering many interesting contributions and testifying convincingly to the vitality of the field (whatever that field can be said to be). I would like to end by entering a little deeper into two essays that I found particularly impressive, those by Rabaté and Garnier.

Jean-Michel Rabaté writes under the complex title “Crimes Against Fecundity: Style and Crime, from Joyce to Poe and Back.” His essay gets its impetus from the “Oxen of the Sun” episode in *Ulysses*, a chapter famous for its affectionate parodies of historical English prose styles. In the chapter, Mrs. Purefoy is giving birth in a maternity hospital while Stephen Dedalus is waiting there, in a circle of friends including Leopold Bloom, talking about, among other things, sex and contraception. Rabaté notes that Joyce has said that birth-control, conceived of as a “crime committed against fecundity,” is an idea underlying the chapter, and Rabaté asks himself whether *Ulysses* really adopts a Catholic standpoint and can be considered to be pro-life. This query becomes the beginning of an extended chain of reflections on nineteenth- and twentieth-century modernism, with many excursions into secondary literature, a winding odyssey ending up with Samuel Beckett rather than with Joyce. In the final instance Rabaté emphasizes the cool distancing in Joyce, and he quotes Beckett’s dictum that “Mr. Joyce does not take birth for granted” (136). It is then Beckett who gets the last word, or the last word but one, in the form of Dr. Piouk from Beckett’s early *Eleutheria*. Dr. Piouk has a final solution in store for all human problems, namely a ban on reproduction and a recommendation of euthanasia: “I would encourage recourse to euthanasia by all possible means, although I would not make it obligatory” (137). Rabaté puts a surprisingly optimistic gloss on that attitude, speaking of it as exhibiting “a new subjectivity, capable of resisting in spite of all” (*ibid.*).

Marie-Dominique Garnier’s “V for Style: Gilles Deleuze on a Mobile Cusp” is a stylistic study in Deleuze’s *Différence et répétition* (1968) with several sideward glances at Paul Patton’s English translation from 2004, *Difference and Repetition*. Garnier tells us that Deleuze’s style has been characterized as superficially conventional and in reality much more complex, but that its complexity has hitherto been asserted rather

than demonstrated. Garnier's strategy is to pay close attention to surface details of Deleuze's linguistic expressions, reflecting on their deeper motivation. The "V" in her title stands for what Garnier calls the "v-differential-effect" (274) in Deleuze's text, his play with words including the letter and sound "v", occasionally homonyms like *voix* and *voies*, a feature interacting, on another plane, with his overarching theme of difference and repetition. Without being ungenerous to Patton's translation, Garnier points out how it fails to render many of the subtleties of Deleuze's original—sometimes unavoidably, sometimes less so. The "mobile cusp" of Garnier's subtitle comes directly from Patton's translation, where it renders Deleuze's "pointe mobile." Garnier exemplifies the many uses that the word "pointe" has in French and argues that "pointe" carries with it the feeling of a flux—unlike the word "cusp," whose associations, she finds, go in directions unwanted in Deleuze's context. It seems to me that Garnier's essay, overflowing with concrete and convincing observations, represents a genuine contribution to the understanding of Deleuze's style of thinking and writing.

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Ludwig Tieck. *Ludwig Tieck's Puss-in Boots and Theater of the Absurd: A Commentated Bilingual Edition*. Ed. and trans. Gerald Gillespie. Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2013. Pp. 154. ISBN: 9782875740267.

The author succeeds admirably in his project to "bring back in a commentated form [*Puss-in-Boots*] as a helpful-and eminently playable-exemplar of Romantic imagination and one well suited to illustrate the theatrical revolution ancestral to several strands of writing at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century" (10). One must credit the editor and translator for making this seminal play again accessible to English speakers, as the 1974 edition is out of print.

This volume provides an indispensable inroad into a deeper appreciation of Tieck's *Puss-in-Boots* by placing it within a larger context which "includes symbolist, absurdist, and existentialist directions that appeared towards the end of the nineteenth century and continued past World

War I into the post-World-War-II period” (14). Tieck, like some of his contemporaries, deliberately shattered genres as to give free reign to the Romantic artist’s boundless imagination. Tieck’s influence can be traced in Strindberg, who fuses romantic irony with the dreaming mind which is beyond time and space. In contrast to this more meditative orientation of romantic irony, a more pessimistic or darker tone is evident in Büchner’s naturalist *Woyzeck* whose hero suffers from harsh, inescapable social exploitation and oppression.

Regarding the theater of the absurd, Tieck’s significant influence is evident in Grabbe’s *Scherz, Satire, Ironie und tiefere Bedeutung*. In his play, though, the loftiness of the poet who self-dismantles the play in *Puss-in-Boots* gives way to a “bizarre and obscene romp, glorifying brutality and crassness” (20). Gillespie also gives a fine account how the Romantics’ fascination with puppetry or life-like automatons reemerges later in such works as Kleist’s *Über das Marionettentheater* or Hoffmann’s *Sandmann*. Gillespie identifies Tieck as the “forerunner of the drama from Pirandello to Dürrenmatt and Ionesco” (30). *Puss-in-Boots* does indeed stand out in literary history as an embodiment of the Schlegelian dictum that Romantic satire be aesthetically sublimated in jesting playfulness. This notion becomes apparent, for instance, through the play-within-the-play, plus the staged audience within the play, and, ultimately, the actual theater audience watching the (staged) audience watching the play they are watching discussed within the play-in-the-play. Like a mirror mirroring mirrors, such a process leads to the deliberate blurring of the boundaries between what is real and imagined, and the absurd.

Gillespie continues with a succinct and illuminating biography of Tieck whose “manic-depressive swings could be attributed in part to the age’s general heightening of effect in the successive waves of Storm-and-Stress, Rousseauian tender sentiment, and effusive idealism” (23). Such a mirroring of strong conflicting outer (or worldly) forces within the artist’s inner being does seem plausible. In summarizing Tieck’s prolific career as a writer and scholar, Gillespie neatly outlines the major influences and connections in his life, giving due weight to Tieck’s heroes such as Wackenroder or Novalis and the mutual influence they had on each other. This typical “sharing” of artistic ideas and materials among writers, of course, was much more akin to inspired collaboration, or as it were cross-fertilization, than a kind of copyright violation in today’s thinking.

Gillespie deftly summarizes and comments on important scholarship on Tieck's plays, such as the relative modernity of Tieck in contrast to the alienation in Brechtian drama (Thalmann), or the exact nature of Tieck's irony being rather transcendental or immanent (Jost).

Lastly, a fine, insightful scene act-by-act interpretation of the play concludes with the buoyant comment "[b]ut *Puss-in-Boots* remains unspoiled by the cerebral tortures which the Romantic intellect already knew; it remains on the frontier of precocious, free laughter" (45). And indeed, the translator's skill allows the humor and satire to fully emerge in this bilingual edition.

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Donald R. Wehrs, ed. *Levinas and Twentieth-Century Literature: Ethics and the Reconstitution of Subjectivity*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2013. Pp. xvi + 362. ISBN: 9781611494426.

This volume bears witness to the continuing influence of Levinas on the interpretation of literary texts even in these less theoretical days in the academy. It testifies, as well, to the dedication to Levinas's thought of Donald R. Wehrs, who edited both this volume and its predecessor on Levinas and the nineteenth century. Wehrs's contribution to this volume is not limited to the editorial sphere, which would have been taxing enough. He has also contributed three solid essays to this book, including the book's introduction, with its extensive bibliography on Levinas and literature; a detailed essay on the sources of Levinas's thought, including some fresh observations on Dostoevsky's and Tolstoy's fiction; and a chapter that looks at two literary texts (Gabriel Garcia Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*) that, one suspects, had never before been explored—or certainly explored so thoroughly—through a Levinasian lens.

The volume contains seven sections (I: Introductory Matters; II: Levinas and the Fugitive Other: Consciousness, Representation, Affectivity, and Memory; III: Levinas and the Aesthetics of American Modernism; IV: Levinas and the Embodied Voice: Listening and Performance; V: Trauma and

the Loss and Return of Character; VI: Levinas and Temporal Fracturing in New European and Postcolonial Fiction; and VII: Levinas, Apocalypse, and the Non-Imperializing Self) and fourteen essays by Professor Wehrs, Rebecca Nicholson-Weir, Lora Wood, Zahi Zalloua, Benjamin Joshua Doty, N. S. Boone, Todd Avery, Richard Middleton-Kaplan, Mike Marais, Nina L. Molinaro, Norma Bouchard, Merle Williams, and Daniel T. Kline.

The essays are on an exceptionally wide range of authors and topics, so wide that it is not possible to comment on all them in this brief space. In fact, part of what makes this book difficult to review is that its organization feels somewhat forced. The volume appears to be, in truth, an idiosyncratic gathering of informed essays on the topic of Levinas and twentieth-century literature as applied to a remarkable variety of texts: Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*; A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner*; Margaret Duras's *The Ravishing of Lol Stein*; Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*; William Carlos Williams's *Patterson*; Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* and J. M. Coetzee's *Age of Iron*; contemporary Spanish novels by Marta Sanz, Belén Gopegui, and Luisa Castro; novels by Italian authors who had emigrated to Italy in the recent past; contemporary novels about the Shoah written by Anne Michaels and Jonathan Safran Foer; and an ethical approach to Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Road*.

Who are the intended readers of this book? Scholars and critics who wish to think or write about any of the literary texts mentioned above will find the book useful, if they have an open mind about the work of Levinas. If you have not, however, very recently read the literary works being discussed, the level of detail and intricacy of the readings offered by the contributors may sometimes seem forbidding, as is the case in the demanding chapter by Zahi Zalloua on Marguerite Duras's novel *The Ravishing of Lol Stein*. Daniel T. Kline's essay "Against the *Akedah*: Levinasian Paternity in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*" manages to engage the more general reader by addressing a famous biblical passage that drew Levinas's attention. Kline shows the relevance of Levinas's commentary on the *Akedah* (the binding of Isaac), and his notion of paternity, for rethinking the ethical valence of a work by a contemporary novelist known more for his nihilism, or at least for his depictions of relentless sequences of gratuitous and even perverse acts of violence perpetrated in an anonymous and uncaring cosmos. I suppose I need to observe that *The Road*, published in 2006, is a work of twenty-first—rather than twentieth—century literature, which raises

the question of the appropriateness of the title of the book for all of the literary works discussed within it.

Perhaps the most accessible, original, and moving of the essays for the non-specialized reader is Todd Avery's "The Trumpets of Autocracies and the Still, Small Voices of Civilization: Levinas and Radio in a Time of Crisis." Avery tells a riveting story about the significance of radio and its relation to ethics—both in Germany and in England—in the years leading up to the Second World War. Radio had the capacity to be enlisted for authoritarian and totalitarian purposes both in England and in Germany, as we see in the National Socialists' adept use of this medium to whip up Nazi frenzy in the German populace. Avery cites the BBC's laudable Hilda Matheson who, in 1933, says that she heard "the hoarse and strident tones" of Hitler which 'pursued me as I turned my dial,' and [who] went on to link this hoarse stridency," Avery tell us, "with a quickly developing 'spirit of persecution' in Germany" (176).

At the same time, there is an intimacy to the human voice, or at least to many human voices, that can convey, via radio transmission, the irreplaceable uniqueness of the other for whom I am responsible. Avery remarks that Hilda Matheson's "development of the intimate mode of address during her five-year tenure at the BBC ... was simultaneously an aesthetic, an ethical, and a political activity." It was a "critique of German radio under Hitler and Goebbels" (173). As Avery informs us, "Levinas appeared numerous times on radio—he used the medium as a vehicle for the explanation and transmission of his ethical ideas" (174). *Ethics and Infinity*, which is the best and most accessible introduction to Levinas's thought available in print, is a transcription of a series of interviews with Philippe Nemo aired on Radio France in 1982. Levinas's radio address on "The Jewish Experience of the Prisoner" (September 25, 1945), delivered shortly after his release from five years in captivity as a French prisoner of war mostly in Nazi Germany, has recently been published in *Carnets de captivité et autres inédits* (Paris: Bernard Grasset/IMEC, 2009, 209–15). Radio has the capacity to reproduce the intimacy of the speaking voice when the speaker addresses the listener as a unique other rather than—as does Nazi propaganda—as an anonymous member of a crowd or a violent mob.

Avery reminds us (175–76) that, when asked in an interview about Heidegger's relation to National Socialism, Levinas responded that Heidegger's "firm and categorical voice came back to me when I used to hear Hitler on the radio" (*Is It Righteous to Be?*, 36). When he would hear

Hitler's voice on the radio, Levinas says in another interview, he "always sounded a bit like Heidegger to me. I mean in the way in which someone approves of something and proceeds to holler about it" (*Is It Righteous to Be?*, 141). Those of us who have written about Levinas have perhaps not paid sufficient attention to the ethical implications of Levinas's thought for reflecting on the significance of the human voice. With the mind-boggling acceleration of mass communication in our twenty-first century, this is a topic of major importance that calls to us today.

As Wehrs reminds the reader in his introduction, Levinas's thought emerged from the traumas of the twentieth century, particularly "Hitlerism and the Shoah" (1). But Levinas's voice resonates well beyond the century that engendered it. As Merle Williams argues in chapter 13 of this book ("The Prophetic Thought of Emmanuel Levinas: Reading Two Contemporary Novels of the Shoah"), Levinas's voice is a prophetic one. In our increasingly impersonal, media-saturated and media-driven twenty-first century, we perhaps need to hear Levinas's voice today now more than ever.

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Mary Ann Frese Witt. *Metatheater and Modernity: Baroque and Neobaroque*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013. Pp. x + 191. ISBN: 9781611475388.

Metatheater and Modernity, as its subtitle suggests, connects the modern and postmodern theatre with that of the past, the baroque sensibilities of early modernity. The Early Modern stages were full of metatheatrical examples, in which the dramatic performance reflected upon its nature—and upon the illusory nature of “the reality of the outside world” (1). Shakespeare's Hamlet becomes an actor as he assumes his “antic disposition,” a playwright as he scripts “The Mousetrap,” and a director as he manipulates the other characters. Pierre Corneille's *L'Illusion comique* blurs acting and living in its Platonic cave where a father first watches parts of his son's life, and then his son's acting career. In a completely new approach to the subject of metatheater, Mary Ann Frese Witt connects such self-reflective moments of Early Modern drama with what she

terms as the “neobaroque,” or the baroque style found in modern and postmodern texts. Her work contends that these texts “make strong statements on the significance of theater,” constituting a pro-theatrical stance by both creating illusion and calling attention to it (173).

Rather than a survey of what constitutes “metatheater,” the book explores different ways in which metatheater is used in Early Modern and twentieth-century texts. In the first chapter, Witt examines depictions of actors as martyrs and saints, starting with baroque plays, like Jean Rotrou’s *Le véritable Saint Genet*, in which performing the part of a Christian martyr effects the conversion of Saint Genesius. Though the story was staged in other early modern plays, this chapter focuses on Rotrou’s version and its predecessor, Lope de Vega’s *Lo fingido verdadero*, which Witt argues is less subtle in “self-conscious theatricality” (22) and focuses less on the stage within a stage, while Rotrou depicts the concerns of the stage—rehearsals, set decorations, and scripts to learn. These depictions of Saint Genesius not only examine the illusions necessary for theater, nor do they simply portray the ways in which illusion may illuminate truth (in this case, the divine “truth” of Christianity). According to Witt, by writing on *Saint Genet* “in an age in which the church officially still excommunicated actors and frowned on the theater even as the theatricality of the French monarchy and its patronage of the theater through Richelieu were asserting themselves, Rotrou attempted a paradoxical apologia on both the theater and Christianity” (22). Her discussion of “the actor as saint and martyr” (19) continues with Jean-Paul Sartre’s adaptation of Alexandre Dumas’s *Kean*, and concludes with “imitations of saints and martyrs” in Jean Genet’s *Les Nègres*, another text with powerful political implications. In the case of Sartre, Witt argues that the emphasis on Kean’s profession serves as a mirror to the illusions and facades of real life. Declarations in Dumas’s versions become melodramatic farce as Sartre’s depiction turns them to lies; his Kean finds himself unable to cease acting even in retiring to America. On the other hand, the depiction of the characters-as-actors in *Les Nègres* is shown to be a political statement on the colonial gaze as the black actors “are condemned to be performers and can strive for liberation only by assuming and playing their roles to the end” (41). As Witt contends, “The blacks appropriate white power and subvert white culture by means of metatheatrical play that suggests the possibility of a new kind of theater,” but this theatricality illuminates the real culture and power struggles produced by colonization (46).

Chapter Two involves the use of *la comédie des comédiens*, or comedy about actors, such as *L'Illusion comique* and Tony Kushner's adaptation, retitled *The Illusion*, both depictions of a "secular conversion" in which "truth is revealed *through* theatrical illusion" (68)—in the case of Corneille, that theater "is a noble and crucial art" (68), while in Kushner's text, the theatricality of life and love, and the magic of theater are stressed (76). Corneille's father takes the final "illusion" of his son to be truth, when it is simply theater; Kushner's father is so taken in by the depictions of his actor son that he cannot distinguish between his son's real name and the succession of names offered in the romance-driven visions. Witt argues that within Corneille's work, "Theater and life are so carefully imbricated ... as to become at times indistinguishable" (67), while Kushner's text "brings out the inherent theatricality of love relations even more" (70).

The third chapter involves *commedia da fare*, or plays to be made, such as the unfinished text by Gian Lorenzo Bernini known as "La Fontana di Trevi" and various other titles, but here renamed "Una commedia da fare" by Witt, in reference to the subtitle of the next play discussed, Luigi Pirandello's *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*. The chapter argues that these plays, along with Pirandello's *Ciascuno a suo modo* and *Questa sera si recita a soggetto*, highlight the irony inherent in theater's attempt to produce reality. In the case of Bernini's work, this project is achieved through the failure of technical devices, while the successful acting is done in the off-stage love plot. The titular "six characters" of Pirandello also leave the stage without a successful production, as they refuse to let the director control their stories. *Ciascuno a suo modo* (*Each in His Own Way*), which stages a "real-life" story for the more melodramatic version depicted on stage, "radicalizes the metaphor" of theater as the mirror of reality "by confounding and intermingling the notions of theater and life, stressing the mirror's revelation of life's theatricality" (104). The fake death of Mommina in *Questa sera si recita a soggetto* (*Tonight We Improvise*) likewise blurs these notions by presenting "the impossibility of conventional drama as well as the impossibility of tragedy" (109). By revealing that the actress herself has not died, the tragedy of Mommina's death is cut short.

Witt focuses on "Hamlet and Meta-Hamlets" in her fourth chapter—Shakespeare's character, Pirandello's Enrico IV, Stoppard's distorted depictions of Shakespeare and Pirandello's stories, and other Hamlets—in which acting and directing—or being directed, in the case of *Rosencrantz*

and *Guildestern are Dead*—shift the understanding of what it is to be and what it is to seem. Hamlet and Enrico IV put on “antic dispositions” and direct the other characters in the roles they should play, changing “seeming” into “being.” As Witt points out, even Hamlet’s suggestions to his mother in her bedchamber—that she “[a]ssume a virtue” (3.4.117)—constitute a form of directing, as it is “an acting lesson” (121). In the case of Stoppard’s Ros and Guil, however, she argues that they can only seem, as they are “first and foremost *characters*” (133). Other meta-Hamlets also depict this “flattened-out spatiality” in contrast to a deep “theatrical illusion of reality” (140). Witt briefly discusses such examples, such as Stoppard’s fifteen-minute *Dog’s Hamlet* and Heiner Müller’s *Hamletmachine*, in which the character HAMLET BECOMES THE ACTOR PLAYING HAMLET, stressing Hamlet’s performance as an actor.

The last chapter is concerned with the use of *impromptus*—short, quickly composed theatrical pieces usually written as an attack—as theatrical manifestos in their defense of the performing troupe and author through the discussion of the craft and the depiction of writing or rehearsals. Starting with Molière’s *Impromptu de Versailles*, and concluding with the unique case of Samuel Beckett’s *Ohio Impromptu*—written not because Beckett felt the need to defend himself, but because he had been commissioned to write it for an international conference focused on his works—the chapter explores how such depictions of actors and writers demonstrate the important functions of theater for each writer:

[Copeau] advocates both poetic and collective theater in wartime; Cocteau favors a theater of unreality over banal realism; Giradoux defends ‘literary’ theater against its detractors; Anouilh—in the persona of author-as-defendant—speaks in favor of a theater that amuses and entertains; Ionesco, defending authorial originality, attacks what he sees as a theater controlled by dogma and doctrine. (168)

In the case of Beckett, Witt explains that he may not need to defend his work, but that his *impromptu* demonstrates that “drama of the stage need not consist primarily of situation, action, dialogue, or any of its traditional external elements, but may be born from what Beckett beautifully calls ‘profounds of mind’” (166).

Witt’s work is a powerful, in-depth look at the uses of metatheatricity in the texts that she has chosen. The use of representative works, rather than an overview of the phenomenon, wonderfully shows how the baroque and neobaroque texts use metatheatricity for different

purposes. It is particularly nice that her focus does not prevent the discussion of precursors of the texts in question, such as the *comédies de comédiens* which came before Corneille's *L'Illusion comique*, or the fifteenth-century *mystère*, *L'ystoyre du glorieux corps de Saint Genis, à quarante-deux personages* in connection to Rotrou's depiction of the saint. Witt's introduction is also helpful, as it provides an outstanding overview of the theory of metatheater, and a good starting point for those wishing to investigate the history of baroque and neobaroque criticism.

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Comptes rendus de livres indiens / Book Reviews from India

Dheeman Bhattacharya and Suchorita Chattopadhyay. *Ghumantoos: The Roadies of India and Canada*. Kolkata: Centre of Advanced Study in Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, 2011–2014.

Ipshita Chanda. *The Journey of the Namah: A Case Study*. Kolkata: Centre of Advanced Study in Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, 2011–2014.

Sanjukta Dasgupta, Sayantan Dasgupta, and Lakshmi Holmstrom. *Translation: Roles, Responsibilities and Boundaries*. Kolkata: Centre of Advanced Study in Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, 2011–2014.

Dorothy M. Figueira. *Comparative Literature: Where Have We Been, Where Are We Now, Where Are We Going, And Do We Want To Go There?* With response by Syed A. Sayeed. Kolkata: Centre of Advanced Study in Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, 2011–2014.

Jasbir Jain. *Working Through Experience: Writing, Reception and Evaluation*. With response by Tutun Mukherjee. Kolkata: Centre of Advanced Study in Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, 2011–2014.

B. N. Patnaik. *Retelling as Interpretation: An Essay on Sarala Mahabharata*. Kolkata: Centre of Advanced Study in Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, 2011–2014.

In contemporary times Comparative literature, through its disciplinary practices, is engaging with emerging areas such as Culture Studies, Identity Studies, World Literature and so on. Current debates about the efficacy of all these emerging areas designate notions of identity, culture, etc. as important categories of analysis but do not demonstrate how they may form the crux of a literary methodology. They also frequently claim to be able to replace Comparative Literature or “do it better.” Hence, they require careful scrutiny as to their claims and as to their (imagined) construction of the discipline. Comparative literature provides an approach and process through which one can study literature, its form, content and context. Different disciplinary peripheries in humanities such as history, philosophy, and so on may be involved in exchange and enhancement of the study of literature, but cannot substitute a method that claims to study literature. All these issues surrounding the methodology of Comparative Literature gain a “new dimension” when one enters multilingual, multicultural areas like India where notions about language, identity, culture are layered, yet not amenable to easy reduction in slogans such as “unity in diversity.” If a comparatist in India abides by the state-sponsored design of a great unification, then the project of Comparative Literature is lost amidst the mazes of universal humanist approaches. The monographs under review, through foregrounding these issues, discuss aspects of comparative practice and their application in pedagogy and research in India.

Having existed for more than fifty years as the first department of the discipline in India, the Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, in the second phase of its Centre of Advanced Study program, is attempting to emphasise the academic and institutional history and trajectory of the discipline in India. As a centre of “advanced” study, it has a mandate to open up innovative directions for the future, consolidate research initiatives and translate them into pedagogic practices. The publication program of the CAS (Phase II), funded by the University Grants Commission, is geared to this end. In the period between March 2011 and March 2014, the Centre of Advanced Study has published eight monographs in three series which deal with issues of methodology and future directions of method, findings of research projects funded by the program and the future directions they might take, and finally, making available as textbooks or teaching handbooks the results from programs funded by the Centre to add to the pedagogical base of the discipline. Under review here are two of these series, consisting of six publications in total. The other two books

produced are teaching material for courses in Nepali literature, in English and Bangla, and the fundamentals of teaching Tamil to Bangla speakers.

The first series under review is called “Issues in/from Comparative Literature,” under which rubric, four monographs have been published to date. These four volumes take up different aspects of Comparative Literature such as history of the discipline, its future prospects in India as well as in the West and the issues with which it has engaged with and will investigate as a discipline. The design is this: a lead essay on any one of these topics written by a scholar who visited the department under the Visiting Faculty grant provided by the CAS program, and responses from scholars in different fields, including Comparative Literature. The first volume of this series, Dorothy M. Figuera’s *Comparative Literature: Where Have We Been, Where Are We Now, Where Are We Going, And Do We Want To Go There?*, maps the trajectory of Comparative Literature in American universities. Her succinct discussion of the politics, packaging and representation of identities, and their dissemination in mainstream academia and in popular imagination reveals the dubious basis of many emerging areas and innovative research programmes, such as multiculturalism, postcolonialism, and World Literature within academic institutions in America. The clear analysis of their association with identity studies and identity politics shows how the center co-opts the margin/s in the name of selective tokenism. Black, Black-Americans/Native-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans have been used by academic institutions to package, redistribute and classify the hegemonic presence of theorists and critics across the world. She alerts us to these assimilationist policies that give rise to a universalist notion about culture, literature and languages, arguing that the loser in such academic politicking has been the practice of Comparative Literature, where to contextualise the self one needs to understand the other/s with the humility of learning the language of the other rather than being eager to translate the other into one’s own language and according to one’s own theoretical prescriptions. Having outlined the trajectory of Comparative Literature in American academia and mapped the causes of its current condition, she poses a question for the future: will India with its heterogeneity and multilinguality be able to sense these pitfalls and avoid them?

In a short response, Syed A. Sayeed refigures the concepts of identity, difference, and sameness or similarity as defining Comparative Literature from an ethical point of view—without looking for an assimilationist and essentialist message, Comparative Literature envisions a journey

whose objective is not to acquire a pre-destined knowledge but an understanding of the other.

In the second monograph of the series, *Working Through Experience: Writing, Reception and Evaluation*, Jasbir Jain foregrounds a method of reading texts from the marginalised groups in Indian society, showing how individual as well as collective experiences can create narrative strategies. Referring to historical examples of dissenting religious and textual traditions, she argues that Dalit writings also have fostered a different mode of writing, expression and language, creating an experiential plane which may be the basis of an alternative literary aesthetics.

In response, Tutun Mukherjee points out that in spite of the apparent experiential similarity of oppression and deprivation, different groups are differently located and hence products of different contexts: thus emphasising “location” as the basic tool of comparative analysis.

In the third monograph, *Translation: Roles, Responsibilities and Boundaries*, three practising translators—Lakshmi Holmstrom, Sanjukta Dasgupta, and Sayantan Dasgupta—engage in dialogue about issues of relevance to translation as craft, art and pedagogical tool in the Indian context. Holmstrom describes several aspects of translation, i.e the problems a translator can face, the conflict between language and culture, the crucial relations between author, text, translators, editors, and publishers, etc. Sanjukta Dasgupta distinguishes between the problems of translating a literary text and an academic text and brings to the forefront the issue of “dialects” in Indian language literatures. Sayantan Dasgupta addresses the efficacy and politics of translation in present-day India.

The fourth monograph of this series is Professor B. N. Patnaik’s *Retelling as Interpretation: An Essay on Sarala Mahabharata*. Through a detailed study of the *Sarala Mahabharata*, a fifteenth century Odiya text, the author initiates a symposium regarding literary-textual construction, authorial position and reception of inherited texts. In the process, the repertoire of terms relating to genre and reception as well as concepts structuring literary and critical understanding become subjects of discussion between the author and his interlocutors, Pratap Bandyopadhyay, Vrinda Dalmiya, and Syed A Sayeed. Each of them looks at the canonical Sanskrit text through regional versions, as the context of their discussion. The nature of the text and its position in the literary as well as the ethical systems of Indian culture provide an opportunity to discuss the processes of narrativisation and generic ordering in relation to representations of

philosophical categories like action and agency, morality, and human capability, leading to an exchange between comparative method and other disciplinary formations.

The second series is entitled “Work in Progress,” and there are to date two volumes published: *The Journey of the Namah: A Case Study* and *Ghumantoos: The Roadies of India and Canada*. These volumes are preliminary findings of research funded by the CAS program. In the first volume in this series, Ipshita Chanda maps the passage of the text-name *namah* across time and space, from eleventh-century West Asia to different languages of the subcontinent. *Namah* texts are available in India in Persian, from where the word originates, as well as in languages local to the subcontinent. The project aims to take up specific genres in particular subcontinental languages and different modes of transmission to interrogate the idea of fixed generic boundaries and fashion a more dynamic idea of genre itself. Beginning with the assumption that dialogic flows fashion the region’s literary fields, the objective of this study is the multivalent tradition of verbal expression from the perspective of a comparative theory of transcultural contact in a milieu characterized by plural cultures.

In *Ghumantoos: The Roadies of India and Canada*, Suchorita Chattopadhyay and Dheeman Bhattacharya compare two communities—the Chhara people in Gujarat, western India and the Métis people in Canada—and their lives in colonial as well as in postcolonial spaces. This project seeks to relate the politics of colonisation and internal colonisation to performative practices, and performance aesthetics to lived realities.

The crucial question about these monographs is: how do they consolidate the repertoire of methodology. If we return to Figueira’s text and her final question as a starting point, then we can identify the other texts as taking up different hermeneutical positions to engage with literary representation and reception, through which we will be able to substantiate Comparative Literature methodology in its Indian dimensions. But one also should consider the fact that India with its kaleidoscope of languages, literatures and cultures does not offer any easy thematic solutions. Thus the key of Comparative Literature methodology to unlock its treasures is even more valuable, and the monographs are a welcome beginning to a multidimensional engagement in this direction.

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Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta, Goutam Biswas, and Samantak Das, eds. *Literatures and Oratures as Knowledge Systems: Texts from Northeast India*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House 2011. Pp. 194. ISBN: 9788183702805.

Over the last couple of decades the northeastern part of India has received enormous attention due to its insurgency movements, ethnic clashes, human rights violations, political unrest, and the like. The impact of these issues has been such that it has nearly created an impression in academia that if there is anything to be talked about the Northeast India, then it has to have some relation with these issues. The book under review, however, is an exception to this misconception since it effectively deals with northeastern India without delving into the usual socio-political rhetoric of the above-mentioned issues. It concerns itself rather with a new knowledge system that is believed to have emerged out of its art, literature and oratures. The volume deals with the fundamental task of locating and promoting the essence of this system by closely looking at literary and oral texts, artifacts, and other forms of folklore in this region of India.

After a short introduction, the book begins with a solid philosophical piece by Mrinal Miri in which he opens the discussion on the epistemology of knowing the outer world. Taking his cue from Heidegger, Miri maintains that the possibility of knowledge does not depend on the relationship between the subject, object and the process of knowing—as has been widely maintained in the modern philosophical discourse (7). Rather, he views its possibility as grounded in the realization of one's being in the actual world of things. Things make sense to a subject because the subject considers her *beinghood* as a part of this world in which we all exist. Extending this proposition to the issue of knowing the *other* in the context of a predominant tribal world, Miri then emphasizes the role of a deliberative effort through which we project ourselves into the lived-world of a tribesman before seeking to empathize with his feelings.

Before proceeding any further, let me first draw a rough thematic map of all the articles contained in the volume. The role of pictorial art in representing knowledge and understanding of a particular form of life is something that has been widely acknowledged by artists and aesthetics theorists. Such representations not only reveal the essence of what it takes to be in such a human life form, but also they establish its distinctive pattern of living before the knowing world. Focusing on

the representative character of pictorial art, Sujata Miri, in her essay on truth and art, explores the gist of religio-cultural beliefs regarding the inextricable relationship between man, god, and nature among different tribal groups. Meghali Goswami explores the *Hastividyarnava* of Sukumer Barkath, an early eighteenth century illustrated manuscript that depicts the folk knowledge of elephants and their importance in the everyday life of Assamese people. Goswami analyses the literature of the manuscript's folios and shows how they represent the aesthetic values, cultural norms, and the ritual practices of the common people as well as that of the Ahom kings who patronized the whole enterprise. Similar attempts have been made by Margaret Ch. Zama, Soumen Sen, and Esther Syiem in their respective essays on the old sayings and narratives of the Mizo tribe, the oral texts of *Khasis* and *Jaintias*, and aphoristic wisdom of *ki jingsneng tymmen* (the teaching of the elders) of Khasi societies. Zama brings out certain legendary folk characters such as Chhura and Chemtatrawta from the tales and oral narratives of *Mizo* society and analyses their role in the formation of the normative discourse of common people. Taking the same line of analysis, Sen discusses several mythical stories, proverbs and allegories such as *ki hynniew trep, ka pah syntirn* of Kasis and Jaintias. He argues that most of these narratives need to be understood as expressions of asserting and promoting the distinctiveness of their clan, ethnicity and the kinship norms of their matrilineal society. Syiem aims at showing how *khasis' ki jingsneng tymmen* aphorisms have effectively captured the existential core of their society through a normative worldview of the elder.

Extending this literary terrain further, the book accommodates several of essays that deal with some of the latest works by fictional writers from Northeast India. Debashree Dattaray, in her deliberation on the trickster figure in the folklore of Naga society, takes up three short stories "The Jungle Major," "The Pot Maker," and "An Old Man Remembers" by the noted contemporary writer Temsula Ao. She shows how the image of a trickster, with all its ambivalent characteristic traits, informs the very nature of certain fictional characters and reveals the nuances of a traditional community's practical wisdom. Pravesh G. Jung examines the notion of time in the context of the short stories of Sanu Lama and attempts to establish a philosophical interaction between Lama and Merleau Ponty.

Two other essays in this volume by L. Joychandra Singh and Epsita Halder focus on the cultural heritage of Manipur by closely looking at its

contemporary theater and, particularly, a festival called Lai-Haraoba, an important cultural festival in which people celebrate and worship traditional deities and ancestors. Singh investigates the significance and impact of this festival through an examination of the works by contemporary writers of the region. Halder focuses on the works of two prominent theater personalities, Ratan Thiyam and Kanhailal, and analyzes how actors embody characters. The article further examines the significance of indigenous features in theatrical expression with a special reference to the socio-political situation in Manipur. Similar references are also present, but in a much more prominent manner, in the articles by Sukalpa Bhattacharjee, Prasenjit Biswas, and Rimli Bhattacharya where the questions of identity, ethnicity, and historicity are broached. Bhattacharjee examines the traumatic experience of Partition with an alternative historical reading of *Bindu Bindu Jal* (Drops of Water) by Shekhar Das. In a rather long essay on the identity and history of representation, Bhattacharya investigates the politics of difference and identity formation by invoking the multiple histories of the Northeast. Tracing the identity question further, Biswas, philosophically engages the task of developing a hermeneutic strategy of recovering “beinghood” from the lost historical terrain of Northeastern tribes. In this context, Biswas discusses the stories of four important tribal groups—the Ao, Apatani, Angami, and Khasi.

This is indeed an ambitious volume. It touches on almost all the aspects of the the study of human sciences in Northeast India. Focusing on the very essence and identity of a particular geographical community, the book brings to light many significant issues and concerns that are either neglected or ignored in mainstream academic discussions. One such issue is the portrayal of an embedded normativity found in the practices of values, ethos, religious norms, and rituals of various tribal and non-tribal communities. The normativity in question may not be of a secular nature in the standard traditional sense, but has evolved from a world of shared experiences; that it has been sustained through generations of peace loving people is indicative of its underlying efficacy. This book convincingly shows the significance of such normativity with innumerable illustrations. In this regard, contributions from Zama, Sen, and Syiem deserve special mention.

One of the most efficacious ways of connecting literature with the lives of common people, particularly with the people of different regions, religions, cultures, and societies, is to consider it as a knowledge system

that imparts insights for understanding the essence of what it is to be human. Goswami, Dattaray, Bhattacharjee, and Jung consider this legitimacy as their theoretical presupposition for comprehending the complex knowledge systems in the folk literature of Northeast India. They argue that these knowledge systems are so rich, robust and multifarious that the outside world should not ignore them today.

This is an enormously resourceful book, fascinating in its interdisciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity. Despite many attractive features, however, it does suffer from certain defects and limitations. It does not, for example, provide an adequate introduction. There is only a prefatory piece at the beginning that does not satisfy the needs of the ordinary reader. The volume also suffers from editorial and formatting issues in chapter 6 (in addition to suffering from an unfortunate number of typos in almost every chapter). Nevertheless, given its handling of the rich literature and culture of Northeast India and the novelty of its analyses, we must acknowledge that this volume is to be commended for its effort. I am sure readers, not only from the disciplines of literature and cultural studies, but also from others, such as arts, aesthetics, philosophy, and social sciences, will find this volume engaging and intellectually gratifying.

BHASKARJIT NEOG

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Jasbir Jain, ed. *Muslim Culture in Indian Cinema*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2011. Pp. 228. ISBN: 9788131604687.

This book seeks to investigate the representations of Muslims in Indian films not only as characters, be they stereotypes or caricatures, but also through language, architecture, and dance forms. It takes under its purview a large number of productions ranging from films produced in the formative years of Indian cinema such as *Alam Ara*, classics such as *Umrao Jaan* and *Mughla-e-Azam*, and recent movies such as *Chak de! India* and *My Name is Khan*.

The essays collectively offer varied perspectives on all aspects of cinema; the process of creation (in terms of modes of representation and actors who are agents of representation) and the audience's reception of different images of the Muslim.

The collection aptly opens with excerpts from Saeed Mirza's *Ammi: Letter to a Democratic Mother*, which highlight different facets of Muslim culture. Following this essay, Anisur Rahman presents a perceptive study of the contribution of Urdu language to Indian Cinema. Urmil Talwar further deliberates upon the status of Urdu in post-Partition India through a detailed analysis of the film *Muhafiz*. As the "language of the ruler" is now "the language of minority," socio-historical developments in the country do "not allow the languages to become objective mediums of communication" and Talwar reads this film as an exploration of the declining status of Urdu and the culture it signifies.

Ameena Ansari argues for the importance of cinema in reflecting not only the artists but also the audience. Studying Muslim culture as portrayed on film is especially interesting, since this community played a major role in the inception of the industry. Ansari studies the cultural markers employed in the film *Chaudhavi ka Chand* and concludes that in "representation of a minority community, there is an overt tendency to exoticise and covert tendency to patronise." Most films, like this one, "focus on elite, upper class Muslim gentry" and make use of very specific cultural markers.

Divya Walia, Madhuri Chatterjee and Rashmi Attri all grapple with the ramifications of using music as a cultural marker to explain Muslim culture in cinema graphically. Attri's essay serves to inform readers about the various aspects of Qawwali and Hindi cinema and their role in popularizing Muslim culture. Chatterjee looks at the role of Sufi music, its "growing dissociation from its spiritual history" and its relocation in Indian films that have adapted this art form. Walia analyses the use of various aspects of music as a means of establishing cultural identity. "Music and dance are ... an indispensable part" of Indian films, she points out. In her essay, she charts out the development of *thumri* through the century, its adaptation into cinema and how it adds a distinctive flavor to the filmic retelling of the story of Sardari Begum.

This volume also analyzes Muslim courtesan films, the chief genre of Muslim representations in Indian films. Samina Khan's study of *Umrao Jaan* points towards cinema's emphasis on "marketable Muslim culture." Khan believes that such films portray Muslims as a part of a collective entity by arousing nostalgia for the glory of a lost culture.

Bandana Chakrabarty investigates the dynamics of portraying the female body on the screen. In the figure of the *nautch* girl, we find many contradictions such as culture versus commodity, modesty versus pride, material versus emotional, and victim versus victimizer. Her essay is explicitly

devoted to decoding this figure. She applies Laura Mulvey's arguments to study the courtesan as portrayed in *Umrao Jaan* and *Pakeezah*.

S. Asha expands upon this discussion of the courtesan in her essay "Women at Crossroads" by exploring "issues related to the rights of the female to her body" in the films *Bazaar* and *Nikaah*. Her essay is an attempt to make the readers more aware of certain social issues and she is convinced that these two films "succeed in provoking the conscience of the sensitive viewer."

Mini Nanda offers inventive observations on *Mammo* and *Zubeidaa*, the two Benegal films that delineate the problems of etching out personal narratives by individuals whose lives are directed by historical forces beyond their control. Nanda highlights the agency asserted by individuals against inescapable forces.

The essays by Indubala Singh, Charu Mathur, and Santosh Gupta all focus on the portrayal of Hindu-Muslim relations in Indian cinema. Singh highlights the problems of showcasing the sensitive issue of Partition in cinema. Though she wonders "whether nations have matured enough to face the truth of the past" she concludes that films like *Train to Pakistan* ultimately urge the population to "rise above its resurgent fundamentalisms."

Mathur's analysis of *Junoon* and *Pinjar* is equally optimistic and highlights the "role of humanitarian intervention in politically charged situations." It further complicates the situation by adding gender to the equation. Gupta traces the changing perspectives on Hindu-Muslim relations in Indian cinema beginning in the 1960s (in movies like *Dhool ka Phool*) up to the last decade with *Dharm* and *Chak De! India*. She emphasizes the effects that the present political situations have on the image presented on screen.

Gita Viswanath's essay truly stands out. Rather than being film-centric, this essay focuses on the actor, Shahrukh Khan, his identity as a Muslim and how it is implicated in statements he makes off screen as well as through the Muslim characters that he plays on screen. The analysis points out that, apart from the role of the terrorist/villain accorded to the Muslims in the 1990s, the only other acceptable alternative on film remains that of a victim, be it *Chak De! India's* Kabir or *My Name is Khan's* Rizwan.

The Indian film industry is huge and no single book can exhaust all the films relating to the portrayal of Muslims. Yet this collection, edited by Jasbir Jain does a commendable job in managing to touch upon various important themes and probes into diverse issues that provide for

stimulating discussions. As Jain asserts, “the declining graph of Muslim representation and the corresponding rise in stereotyping the Muslim” make the book extremely pertinent. Jain’s own readings of *Mirza Ghalib* and *Shatranj ke Khiladi* in this truly insightful and highly engaging study shows how “the disintegration of the native power centres ... affect(ed) language, culture, moral values and community equations” in the mid-nineteenth century. The rich collection of essays in this volume is, indeed, an important addition to the discipline.

TANVI SHARMA

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Kavita Panjabi, ed. *Poetics and Politics of Sufism and Bhakti in South Asia: Love, Loss and Liberation*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2011. Pp. 312. ISBN: 9788125042976.

The richness and plurality of medieval Indian literature and culture is not sufficiently understood by academics in India and abroad. Of late, there has been greater interest in these traditions largely due to the questioning of Euro-centric traditions of knowledge production in various disciplines. Concepts such as that of “early modernity” put forward by Sheldon Pollock and Sanjay Subrahmanyam have also meant that pre-colonial traditions have come to acquire greater significance. Sufism and Bhakti bring together the three major artistic-cultural traditions of India, namely the Persian-Arabic, the Sanskritic and the Tamil-Dravidian which have evolved in dialogue with each other. The introduction of English into the sub-continent with the colonial encounter disrupted these traditions and the consequent rupture in the dialogue between multiple traditions within the subcontinent is a defining feature of the modernity that characterizes Indian cultural productions in the last two hundred years. Hence any attempt to get back to the pre-colonial modes of imagining the world is confronted with epistemological and methodological problems. The volume under discussion is important mainly because it addresses these problems from the standpoint of the present, taking “South Asian Literatures” as a heterogeneous but mutually interdependent cultural domain. Though Sufism originated in the Arabic-Persian world, it moved beyond the Islamic world into north India by the

thirteenth century. All of South Asia was vitally multi-lingual, meaning that Sufism interacted with the tradition of Bhakti, and also that of Sant poetry in various languages, molding their content and mode, and in turn becoming modified by them.

The present volume, developed out of a seminar held at Jadavpur University in 2006, is divided into two sections, namely "Literature" and "Performance and Cinema" each with six essays. In the first section, essays deal with Kabir's notion of love and femininity, Malik Muhammad Jayasi's *Padmavat*, medieval Karnataka narratives, Guru Nanak's representation in Urdu, the Sufi and the Vedanta, and the ethos of the fakir. The second section has essays on the early Khayal, Thumri and Bhakti poetry, dancing the sacred and the secular, Baul music and two essays on the theme of *viraha* (separation)-one in songs and the other in films. The essays are uniformly engaging and informative; they contribute towards a dialogic understanding of the two prominent cultural traditions of South Asia.

The renewed interest in the Sufi and Bhakti traditions and their appropriation in the Indian popular domain are largely due to rising communal tensions in the last few decades. Kavita Panjabi rightly points out in her introduction to the volume that "the specific transformations of tropes of Sufi and Bhakti poetry reveal the workings of gendered and marginalized desires, aesthetic responses to historical crises, cultural challenges to repressive regimes, and sometimes the politics of strife and strategies of domination" (3). The emancipatory potential of Sufism and Bhakti, as well as Sant traditions, may be located in their resistance to worldly power and their inclusive world-view that enables them to reach out to marginalized experiences and also embodies the dissent against the orthodoxy of high Hinduism and Islam. At a deeper level, the study of these traditions will bring out the ways in which poetics and politics shape each other, the creative and intellectual negotiations of multiple traditions of dissent structuring a deeper interior realm of desire and aspiration in the sub-continent. Their relevance to the present is also due to their radical nature in terms of resistance to the hegemonic aspects of institutionalized Islam and Hinduism, their flexibility that enables them to absorb elements from the local and their ability to address the common people and their everyday world.

The essays in the volume present a more nuanced notion of "syncretism" which is not a mere hybridized or fused version of two separate

traditions. Ipshita Chanda's essay on Jayasi's *Padmavat* raises the question of whether we are justified in interpreting medieval texts in terms of the binaries of Hindu and Muslim, their convergence, and their hybridity without reference to the fluid and porous boundaries that mark them. The modern concepts of the religious and secular may not be of much help in understanding them. In his essay on Kabir, Purushottam Agarwal suggests that the mode of the feminine in Kabir's poetry has a relevance to our times, although we are unable to comprehend its radical nature. It is important to investigate "the possibilities of a politics of love" mainly because we are trapped in the notions of masculinity that do not conceive of love as a mode of self-discovery. "Kabir's importance lies in the way he transforms the love that has been pushed into the world of the 'unreal' into a yardstick to evaluate the 'real' world" (80). T. S. Satyanath argues that in medieval Kannada texts, poets did not represent the world in terms of "dichotomous and binary oppositional categories like the modernist paradigm does" (109). The pluralistic epistemologies and multiple knowledge systems of the medieval period point to shared beliefs, practices and identities which cannot be differentiated in terms of religion and caste as in modern times. Using influential Muslim writings in Urdu, Raziuddin Aquil shows that Guru Nanak has been seen as a Sufi saint by believers of Islam despite the tensions between both Muslim and Sikh communities. In his essay on "The Sufi and the Vedanta," Swapan Majumdar argues that the Baul-fakir heritage grew as a result of the cultural interface with Sufism.

The essays in the second section deal primarily with music, dance, performance, and films. Amlan Das Gupta feels that the origins of *khayal* nurtured within the Sufi tradition of music, are lost in speculative and anecdotal oral history. Vidya Rao, in her analysis of Thumri and Bhakti poetry, demonstrates how gender inflects both spiritual experience and artistic expression. Pallabi Chakravorty discusses the poetic imagery and convergences in Thumri, Qawwali, and Kathak that seek to establish the deep emotions of love and longing. Many of the popular myths about Baul music are deconstructed in the essay by Abhishek Basu. In a well-researched article on the Indian cinema of the '40s and '50s, Kumkum Sangari shows how the various shades of *viraha* are mobilized in the popular films of the period into a vocabulary of nationalism to stage its sentimental, melancholic and idealistic aspects that capture something essential about the Nehruvian era.

The present volume is a useful addition to the study of South Asian cultural traditions and should be required reading for those who specialize in literatures of the Indian sub-continent.

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E. V. Ramakrishnan. *Locating Indian Literature: Texts, Traditions, Translations*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2011. Pp. 215. ISBN: 9788125042211.

The increasing importance of postcolonial theory to the analysis of Indian literature, along with the politics of its (Anglocentric) canonization, has been the subject of a great deal of academic discussion. It is a conversation which has been instrumental in recognizing and revising orientalist ways of representing and legitimizing non-Western literature as well as exploring the relationship between literary production and national consciousness (one thinks of Chandrima Chakraborty, Amiya Dev, Sisir Kumar Das, Vinay Dharwadkar, Sumit Sarkar, to name a few). A veteran poet, translator, and literary critic, E. V. Ramakrishnan adds to this conversation by mapping out the complexities of situating and historicizing Indian literature in *Locating Indian Literature: Texts, Traditions, Translations*. This study makes a significant contribution to Indian literary studies, and indeed postcolonial studies in general by drawing attention to the residual epistemological structures through which Indian literature is commonly contextualized. For Ramakrishnan, it is imperative to rethink literary history by reaching beyond the colonial framework, de-privileging English as the primary literary language, and recovering early traditions that are otherwise excluded from the canon. In many ways, this project is about developing a new methodology invested in a comparative review of literary production in order to challenge the notion of a unified and uncomplicated literary terrain, and to propose instead the “provincialization” of Indian literature by recognizing its formal and linguistic plurality.

Ramakrishnan’s central strategy is to embrace regional voices as a way of pluralizing the existing cannon. By doing so, he hopes to include “the everyday world of the living Indian” manifested in literary works and thereby reflect more accurately on the “multilingual and multi-re-

ligious” richness of the nation. This emphasis on inclusion is a strength of the book; the author is at his best when he outlines the importance of regional literary productions, and presents a wide range of examples that contest common assumptions about the task of creating a unified national literature. His command of the regional traditions as well as his expertise in translation allow him to point to numerous gaps and contradictions in current literary scholarship.

Once Ramakrishnan enters into more complex theoretical terrain—especially when dealing with theories of “the nation”—he is on slightly shakier ground. His arguments throughout the book are clear and concise; the downside of this commitment to accessibility is that his analysis of, say, the role and the authority of the nation-state can come across as reductive. While Ramakrishnan is not wrong to point out the various inconsistencies in the making of the postcolonial sovereign state, his sweeping critiques often feel incomplete. For example, Ramakrishnan argues that, contrary to assumptions, the novel is hardly a vehicle for democratization; for one thing, the genre’s notion of an “implied reader” essentially reinforces the exclusion of certain peripheral groups. Ramakrishnan is not the first to bring up these issues; the elitist notions of the novel have been pointed out repeatedly by other scholars. However, his discussion of the issue (perhaps necessarily) skims over more complex questions (such as the role of the novel in the constitution of new subject positions), and willfully de-emphasizes the novel’s instrumentality in generating a politically motivated discourse, something even skeptics have acknowledged.

There are three main sections in the book. The first, “From the Pedagogical to the Performative,” begins by recognizing the dialogic structure of Indian literature as a legacy of the “argumentative traditions of India” rather than a consequence of the Western enlightenment. This reconceptualization allows Ramakrishnan to draw in genres that have long been deemed inferior or inconsequential—such as oral and folk traditions. As he rightly points out, “the radically oppositional components” of regional traditions make it impossible to create a coherent narrative of literary history; however, he argues, this lack of cohesion must not be viewed as a methodological crisis but as a scholarly opportunity to recognize the true fertility of the field. This task requires maintaining a comparative perspective which allows for a “move towards the national from the regional”—an idea that Ramakrishnan has explored elsewhere (“Is There an Indian Way of Thinking about Comparative Literature?”). He argues persuasively that comparative studies must be attentive to the existing

colonial-era hierarchies through which Indian literature has been constructed, but that it should also avoid using the colonial model as the only mode through which Indian literature is legitimized. This thought leads Ramakrishnan to question the critic's situatedness in certain political and cultural discourses; he considers two different approaches to textual analysis (e.g. Romila Tharpar, arguing for literary meaning determined in relation to context, vs. David Shulman, arguing for the text as a self-contained, autonomous entity), concluding that literary scholarship must be conducted in a self-critical manner, and be mindful of its political biases and methodological shortcomings.

The second section, "Refiguring Region and Resistance" focuses on Malayalam literature to give an alternative account of the nation from a regional point of view. Engaging with a wide range of examples (Kumaran Asan, Narayana Menon, Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, O. V. Vijayan, etc.), Ramakrishnan first sketches the development of "Indian literature" over the course of the twentieth century in order to highlight the strong triangulation of nationalism, modernization, and literary production. It is at this point that the author starts engaging with Benedict Anderson's definition of the nation as an "imagined community," questioning its validity in the Indian context. Ramakrishnan reiterates Anderson's argument about the vitality of the print culture in the formation of national consciousness; he then expresses his anxieties about the implications of such an assertion: the "exclusivist" and "elitist" nature of nation-building that privileges the "upper-caste, urban Hindu male" as the key segment of society—an idea that has been consistently voiced by other critics. For this reason, he sees great value in the postcolonial novel as a genre that destabilizes the centralized authority of the nation-state. Ramakrishnan traces these complications with ease—sometimes with too much ease—by glossing over theoretical and literary texts rather quickly. However, he quickly regains his strength once he starts discussing poetry, the work of Kumaran Asan in particular, which helps prove his point about reinventing a more rigorous scholarly method that can participate in the creation of a "dialogic" exploration of the national project.

The last section, "The Word in the World" draws specific attention to the act of translation as a form of cultural mediation that is often ignored in discussions of national literature. The disengagement between the elite and the lower classes continues to form the backdrop for Ramakrishnan's analysis of a changing literary tradition in India. For the author, translation reflects the desire for regulating the relationship between the self and

the other (it “localizes the alien and defamiliarizes the local”) while also providing a blueprint for resistance (pointing to “contradictions within a society hierarchically organized along caste lines”). In addition to exploring a rich poetic tradition, this chapter contains a thorough discussion of *Ghatakavadham*, a re-appropriation of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which alludes to the dire conditions of the lower castes. Written by Mrs. Collins, an English missionary, the book was later translated into Malayalam by her husband and used as a tool for spreading Christianity among the culturally and the economically disenfranchised. For Ramakrishnan, this new type of prose, structured as a resistance narrative with the specific purpose of proselytizing, announces the emergence of a “new code” through which the lower caste is transformed into “symbolic capital.” The book ends with a comparison of two convergent literary acts: the translation of Shakespearean plays into Indian languages, signaling the adoption of “alien aesthetics” which are gradually internalized and absorbed as new types of subjectivities, and the translation of Indian poetry into English, hinting at the diminishing of orientalist stereotypes that once marked Indian literature as inferior.

By uniting the regional and the national, Ramakrishnan takes an important step towards his goal of a more inclusionary vision for literary studies. His work is timely, important and, above all, forward-thinking.

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Indra Nath Choudhuri. *Medieval Indian Legacy: Linguistic and Literary*. New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 2012. Pp. vii & 89. ISBN: 9789380935609.

Medieval India is a site of rich eco-socio-political and cultural activities, though the use of the term “medieval” as an adjective to India has been contested in terms of the pejorative connotations of “darkness” that it evokes through its associations with European history. Cultural diversity may be discerned in the flourishing of many languages such as Prakrits, Pali, Apabhramsha, and a host of *lokabhashas* (popular idioms), when Sanskrit began to lose its currency and supremacy. The metaphor of *kavyapurush* and the diversity of languages is attested in Rajashekhara’s *Kavya-Mimansa*, written in the ninth century. Bishwanath Kaviraj, a poet and aesthetician in

the court of Gajapati Narsimha Dev IV, called himself “a philander who cohabits with eighteen prostitutes like a serpents entering several holes” (*Astadasa-bhasa-barabilasini-bhujanga*). A poet such as Mira communicates simultaneously in Hindi, Rajasthani, and Gujarati. Abdul Rahim Khankhana composed in Sanskrit, Brij and Persian. These two authors are just two notable examples of medieval India’s multilingualism. Medieval Indian multiculturalism has recently earned the attention of scholars such as Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Kshiti Mohan Sen, and Hazari Prasad Dwivedi. Indra Nath Choudhuri’s *Medieval Indian Legacy: Linguistic and Literary*, the printed version of the Suniti Kumar Chatterji Memorial Lecture that he delivered, is an able addition to this literature.

The book, after putting into perspective the political conditions the “medieval” period, briefly discusses the problem of periodization that often presents problems for historians. It also deals with the linguistic legacy in terms of issues of unity and diversity, the oral and written, and Bhakti (devotional) discourse, poets and saints from varying sects (Siddhas, Nathas, Sahajiyas, Vira Shaivas, Nirguns and Saguns, and Sufis) and their compositions. It considers the various renderings of epics (particularly the *Ramayana*), poetry (Jayadev’s *Geeta Govindam*), secular prose narratives (*Vetala Pancavimsati*), tales and fables (the *Panchatantra*), drama (Subandhu’s *Vasavadatta* and Dandin’s *Dashakumar Charita*), and fairy tales (Bana’s *Kadambari* and Narayana’s *Hitopadesha*). Choudhuri finds great literary merit in the voluminous and multilayered universe of Indian medieval linguistics and literature. He shows how it was enriched by several religious and philosophical traditions. He particularly notes the role played by renderings of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* in various Indian languages that provided images of a unified cultural India amidst political turbulence.

Although it deals directly with the medieval legacy, this book also offers a competent study of India’s living linguistic and literary legacy. Without understanding India’s past, it is almost impossible to understand the present Indian literary scene. Though the book does not change our existing interpretations of the subject radically, it gracefully weaves together the pan-Indian perspective of the legacy for others to supplement.

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Jasbir Jain, ed. *Cultural Narratives: Hybridity & Other Spaces*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2012. Pp. 240. ISBN: 9788131604960.

Cultural Narratives: Hybridity and Other Spaces, a collection of twenty-two essays edited by Jasbir Jain, is a well-planned and scholarly book. It reinforces the conviction that critical theories are the product of critical intelligence that must serve as a lighthouse for exploring thoughts and ideas from various perspectives while creative writing is, among other ideological notions, the product of the creative imagination. The present volume, which is divided into four sections, makes an appropriate use of both faculties. Each section begins with a “Note” from the editor explaining its critical contours, followed by the articles illustrating them. The cultural narratives are clustered together according to thematic divisions and reinterpreted in the light of contemporary critical theories.

The first section is titled “Hybridity,” understood as “a mixture” combining two different elements. Influential critics such as Bakhtin and Bhabha have elaborated the conceptual use of hybridity in post-colonial studies by the use of linguistic models that analyze culture as a process while its political effects in language provide an on-going political process; it is “double-accented” as it contains two styles, belief systems, or social languages. Bhabha discussed the idea of “double-voiced” hybridization in *Location of Culture* (1994). This section of Jain’s collection opens with the introduction of hybridity and is followed by Santosh Gupta’s comprehensive survey of the linguistic and cultural mixing, diversity of India’s pluralism, and emergence of new cultural trends with “fusion” as their creative principle. If Vijay Lakshami’s essay, “Diasporic Imagination,” combines autobiographical experiences of “alternative worlds” through memory creating a kind of “third place,” Gerda J. Unnithan-Kauffman’s article on Miraben, Gandhi’s acolyte, focuses on the postcolonial idea of cultural and racial mixing.

When hybridity maps the connection between new links and communication, it is a rhetorical notion in intercultural relations; the social and personal becomes a “non-contentious” matter. Jasbir Jain’s article, “Working Through Cultural Histories: The Meaning and Politics of Words,” deals with diverse histories to analyze the debate on linguistic culture and the shifting paradigm of meaning in postcolonial multicultural, center-margin situations. The discriminating strategies, “the political directions of the

interpretations” could work for colonization but have no role to play in decolonization. Jain agrees with Nayantara Sahgal’s notion of “equal partnership” while sharing certain values and rejecting others, deemed complacent, in the name of hybridity in the belief that, according to Nicholas Thomas, “Hybridity is almost a good idea, but not quite.” The next essay by Madhuri Chatterjee examines Pico Chatterjee’s travel memoir *The Global Soul* as a voice of collective consciousness searching for “self and community.” Moving through complex ethnic diversity, Chatterjee concludes that we have to be “spatially bounded.” In the world “we are interconnected and disjunctive” and our identity is only “an ongoing process in this global urban space.” The issues addressed here, while significant, have been repeated so often that they have lost their novelty and vitality.

After passing through “trials and tales of Hybridity,” the stage is set for the second section entitled “Personal is Political”—a slogan from the feminist discourse in the late 1960s and early 1970s popularized by the Redstockings and by Robin Morgan in her book *Sisterhood is Powerful*. It begins with the editor’s note highlighting that the issues of women’s personal struggle are the source of consciousness-raising and of politics. Here it is essential to understand that if the word “personal” stands for an individual’s personal problems, the “political” has to do with power relationships and not with the electoral politics. Geetanjali Shree’s essay, “Uneasy Synonyms,” elaborates the seemingly paradoxical stance of “personal is political” through a story entitled “The Walk,” a free flowing mixture of various ideologies. The language also fluctuates perhaps to emphasize a sense of freedom the author wishes to exhibit. For instance, there appear abruptly sentences such as “Defecating where and how? Say it all! Constipation is an elitist malady! Diarrhea may reflect a whole politics” (60), followed by the statement about Milan Kundera and Don Quixote who conceived of the world as a question! Throughout the essay, equations keep changing amidst the refrain “personal is political.” In the end, literary allusions mingle “all spaces into art space” (66).

In contrast, Rajee Seth’s very engaging piece, “Wait, Intezaar Husain,” is a fine and sensitive cultural narrative that combines the personal and domestic with the political through memory. The hero shifts his stance from self to other members of the family, from books to life rituals, problematizing the inner and outer landscapes. He writes about a new but nameless city full of confusion, although the name “Anarkali Bazaar” (Lahore), can be identified and evokes the personal memories of political

upheaval during Partition and causes him to collapse. Jaya Mitra works on similar themes from another angle in “Looking for the Other.” She rambles through vague ideas about caste and religion, indifference and hate, countries and communities, and finally asserts that these given dimensions offer no justification for hatred. The remaining two essays of this section deal with Gandhi and Ambedkar. They examine political issues that problematize notions of personal and private. Jasbir Jain’s essay on Gandhi with its innovative title—“Between Ego and Non-Ego: The Gandhian Struggle”—focuses on two plays, Partap Sharma’s *Sammy* (2005) and Nand Kishore Acharya’s *Bapu* (2005). To bridge the gap in Gandhi’s personal and political life, Sharma creates dual personalities for him, Mohan and Mahatma. His ideals of truth and non-violence, and religion were directed towards the nation first. His statement that he “was in search of God and stumbled upon man” (91) indicates how socio-political phenomena forced Gandhi to reinvent himself and submerge the personal, political, and even the spiritual. Archarya’s *Bapu* attempts to reconcile the moral values with political action but finds their split unacceptable. Hostile forces made it impossible for him to transcend the demands of personal and political needs. However, out of the complex structure of cultural norms the Gandhi in *Sammy* chooses to attain his spiritual self, while in *Bapu* the dichotomy between personal values and political demands remains insurmountable. Charu Mathur’s piece on Ambedkar faithfully projects his struggle to fight caste-based politics, discrimination, and inequality. Ambedkar demanded justice for Dalits through participation in politics.

In “The Bifocal Vision of Home: The Personal and the Political in the Selected Works of Uma Parameshwaran,” Nidhi Singh shows how a concept of home can lie beyond the geographical and physical boundaries and can be reconstituted by the diaspora. In *Mangoes on Maple Tree* (2002) and *Writing the Diaspora* (2007), Parameshwaran’s involvement in ethno-cultural issues leads to a shift from the “original homeland to the present homeland.” Focusing on Parameshwaran’s Indo-Canadian experience, Singh inscribes new dimensions to her bifocal vision of home and diaspora.

The third section, “Community Narratives,” opens with B. B. Mohanty’s “Reading Culture Through Folklore: A Study of an Assamese Folktale and Oriya Folktales,” which presents two-fold tales reflecting characteristic features of society. First, folktales codify cultural values and beliefs and reinforce morality. Second, they prescribe an authoritative adherence to the

patriarchal system to restore social control which is essential to “formulate genuine cultural meaning” in various Indian ethno-cultural societies. Rama Rani Lall’s essay on John Steinbeck’s popular novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, shows how a new community consciousness evolving among the dislocated farmers during their exodus shows their collective strength in the face of the tragedy of homelessness and subsequent loss of identity.

Jasbir Jain’s “Heterotopic Spaces and Community Narratives from *Katha* to *Metro*” applies Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope and Foucault’s notion of heterotopias to Paranjpe’s film *Katha*, Gloria Naylor’s novel *Women of Brewster Place*, and Anurag Basu’s *Life in a Metro*. In *Katha*, the narrative evolves through the simple experience of living in a chawl, which fulfills the multiple demands from “comfort to crisis zone” (138). In contrast, Gloria Naylor’s novel enlarges space through racial memory, presence of the past, and personal choices. In Basu’s novel, the railway platform functions as a symbol of transient relationships and segmented human life. Focusing on these two works, Jain sensitively sums up the meanings of “commune” and “community” to communicate how they constantly reform and reorganize themselves in postmodernist society. In “The Mimetic Eden of Marquez: One Hundred Years of Solitude,” Madhuri Chatterjee examines how this novel traces the history of the struggle of an archetypal man, Jose Arcadio Buendia, and his descendants. Echoes of biblical themes and the double dimensions of time (linear and circular) symbolically present how individual and community together shape history and help us construct a better civilization.

In his contribution to the volume, “Food for Thought: The Dynamics of Community and Culinary,” Nidhi Singh suggests that to appreciate community life one must reconcile the cultures of East and West in order to save immigrants from the identity crisis of “the fractured self.” The experience of living between two cultures can either be a bane in which the weaker section is absorbed in the mainstream culture or a blessing where there is successful acculturation. Food and its cooking process are important cultural markers since the ritual of cooking, like praying, is an act of devotion and love (161). Thus, food as related to cultural traditions forges bonds between communities.

Charu Mathur’s article on Paro Anand’s *No Guns at My Son’s Funeral* exposes the destabilizing impact of militancy in Kashmir and its disruptive influence on the life of Kashmiris who earlier enjoyed the diverse cultural, social, religious, and ethnic landscapes in the valley. In the face

of violence, Kashmiri pundits, who believe in peaceful co-existence and choose to retain the ethos of harmony, have suffered tremendously. Their shock and loss of faith is described in the novel in terms of a bird whose torn wings may prevent the possibility of flight in the future.

The last section, “Urban Spaces,” contains three articles and two of them are based on the texts *Life in a Metro* and *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. Urban experience also forms the background of almost all the articles in this section with few exceptions. Jasbir Jain’s “Flow of Urbanspaces: History, Temporality and Challenges” connects Foucault’s idea of space with Gumbrecht’s concept of presence to illustrate how different cultural narratives build meaning. She takes as an example of this process Khuswant Singh’s *Delhi* (1990), which spans eight centuries with narrators who use diverse dialects in English to suit their narratives. Krishna Sobti’s *Dil-O-Danish* uses Urdu in the dialect used in the 1920s to project the patriarchal society with all its nuances of respectability and lineage. Both Singh and Sobti examine space, presence, and time, the encroachments and changes they undergo, their wars and scars. If there is anything of certain and stable nature, it is “evolving continuity” (198). The volume concludes on this note, leaving a trail of speculative questions behind: could there be any narrative without the supporting structures of culture? Is there any design on the part of the editor to include four articles of her own, two of Charu Mathur, two of Madhuri Chatterjee, two from Nidhi Singh, and allow two attempts on the same texts, when there are a host of critics who are waiting in the wings to find space to be heard? Should we expect a sequel to this substantial volume in other literary genres such as poetry?

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B. Y. Lalithamba. *Tulnatamak Sahitya Aur Anuvad*. Delhi: Aviram Prakashan, 2012. Pp. 160. ISBN: 9788175660779.

Hanuman Prasad Shukul, ed. *Tulnatanak Sahitya Aur Saidhantik Preprakesh*. Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan, 2014. Pp. 288.

In a multilingual country like India, one simply cannot ignore the two priority areas: first, the study of Comparative Literature and secondly, the related importance of Translation Studies. Comparative studies of

literature as a part of academic disciplines are in vogue these days and being introduced in the curriculum of literature departments at the Central and State universities in the country. The prediction made by the giant of Comparative Literature, the late Prof. Henry Remak, during his Fulbright lecture tour of India twenty-five years back, that “Comparative Literature in India is alive, well and kicking” is understandably appearing in its true form in the classroom teaching programs of Comparative Literature. The addition of new books in this discipline are sure to contribute to this process and usher in a newer comparative framework within which various *bhasha* literatures and Indian national and regional language literatures are to be studied.

The book by B.Y. Lalithamba is a refreshing attempt in Hindi that focuses on the current idiom running through the introduction of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies in the modern context. The book contains fifteen seminal chapters out of which nine deal with the various aspects of Comparative Literature and six chapters define translation as a creative and meaningful rewriting process. The author takes up a typical problematic issue in each chapter and examines it within the ethos of the bilingual or multilingual situation that prevails in a particular region. Chapters devoted to the study of literature in Kannada and Hindi help demonstrate the author’s belief that a real comparative study must stem from roots sprouting from soil rich in organic pluralism. She advises the researcher to study Indian oral traditions in order to establish durable connections in a comparative context between multiple texts.

With her hypothesis that social and cultural aspects are important in the development of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies, Lalithamba has divided the contents of her books under the following headings: “The Role of Languages in Social and Cultural Transformation of a Nation,” “Word, Culture and Translation,” “Literary Translation in India,” “Problems of Translation in Creative Writings,” “The Importance of Socio-cultural Background in the Art of Translation,” “Science, Literature and Translation,” “Tradition and Development of Translation in Kannada Literature,” “The Contribution of Kannada writers in the modern Hindi Literature,” “Fiction Literature in Kannada,” “Social Scenario of Abusive Language,” “The Status of Rama, *Ramayana* and Krishna in Kannada Literature,” “Dalit Consciousness in the Contemporary Kannada Literature,” “Inspirational Literature from the National and Dalit Revolutions.”

Some of the chapters provide an important introduction to beginning students of Translation Studies who study it as a part of Comparative Literature program. Lalithamba quotes easily comprehensible illustrations from Hindi and Kannada literatures. Another discussion centers around the important topics including the literary, scientific, and multiple narratives from the domain of Literature, social sciences, arts and pure sciences. The book could be recommended as a useful handbook for both undergraduate and postgraduate students and scholars of Comparative Literature who are versed in Hindi.

Another book most recently published in Hindi is *Comparative Literature and Saidhantik Preprakesh (Theoretical Perspectives)*. Edited by Hanuman Prasad Shukla from the Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University (Wardha, India). This volume is dedicated to the late Sisir Kumar Das who is remembered as a visionary and pathfinder in the field of Comparative Indian Literature. This book can be referred to as the first book in Hindi that has been designed especially to serve the requirements of the Comparative Literature Studies students who need to acquaint themselves with the basic issues relating to the methods, genres, thematology, and historiography of the discipline. Some of the seminal articles by the eminent critics, scholars, theorists in the field of Comparative Literature were originally written in English and have especially been translated into Hindi for this volume.

This volume in part introduces the definitions, concepts, and development of Comparative Literature in the current national and international scenario. It reflects studies such as *Comparative Literature* by Amiya Dev, *Comparative Literature: Origin and Development* by Sourav Chakraborty, *Comparative Literature and its Concepts* by Avadesh K. Singh, *Comparative Literature: East and West* by G. N. Devy, and *Comparative Literature: India and Abroad* by Indra Nath Choudhuri. The second part deals with the sensitive issues relating to methodology, genres, thematology, and the historiography of Comparative Literature. Contributions include *Methods in Comparative Literature* by Indra Nath Choudhuri, *Genre Studies in Comparative Literature* by Subha C. Dasgupta, *Thematology* by Sibaji Bandopadhaya, *Comparative Methodology in Historiography* by Ipshita Chanda, *Comparative Methods in Historiography: Influence and Reception* by Avadhesh K. Singh, *Literature and Other Arts: Interdisciplinary Studies* by Ramesh Kuntal Megh, *Comparative Literature: Indian Dimensions* by Swapan Majumdar, *Constructs of*

Comparative Literature by Sisir Kumar Das, *The Study of Comparative Literature* by Amiya Dev, *The Poetics of the Comparative Literature* by Avadhesh K. Singh, and *Comparative Literature in India* by Sayantan Dasgupta. The third section makes available existing non-Indian works on Comparative Literature, considered seminal to the discipline, through brief overviews of the content of each. This section furnishes the student with modes of thought and means of application prevalent in the last four decades in the West. The texts have been aptly translated by Judhajit Sarkar, Gourab Chatterjee, S. Satish Kumar, and Parthasarathi Bhaumik.

All the essays are important, but the constraints of space restrict me to reflect only on a select few. Amiya Dev places the study of Comparative Literature in India in the perspective of its practice in the Western world, indicating the special place that comparativism has in the multi-lingual plural culture of the country. He asserts that the reception of the coloniser's culture and of neighbouring language-cultures in every Indian state give ample scope to the comparative work in India. He underlines the importance of translation as a tool and branch of the practice of the discipline in this country. The essays by Avadhesh Kumar Singh and Ganesh Devy also stress the pertinence and scope of the discipline in India. Singh claims to reconsider the foundational principles of the discipline as applicable in the Indian situation through a consideration of literary sensibilities "naturally" comparative among the established writers and thinkers of the early twentieth century. Devy emphasizes the continued relevance of Comparative Literature in India despite its reported eclipse in the West, and traces this phenomenon to the natural connectivity between the Indian *bhashas*—a term he regularly uses to underline the plurality of the Indian languages as they have evolved in dialogue with one another and between different classes, castes, and "regional" registers of every language spoken across the country.

The foundation of this "comparative" mentality is traced in classical Sanskrit literature by Indra Nath Choudhuri, who locates the spirit of comparative practice in the Upanishadic tradition, opposing it to the relentless play between "self" and "other" and the tendency to appropriate the "other" characteristic in modern Western thought. Comparative Literature practice in the West may be seen as an attempt to overcome this appropriation, but Choudhuri asserts that different schools of Indian philosophy foreground the relational nature of the self, which is the repository of all selves and in turn participates in all selves. He proposes this

philosophy of the “selfless” self as the basis of Indian comparativism. The methodology section of the volume contains another essay by Choudhuri where the existing methods of practice in the West are enumerated. There is also a second essay by Amiya Dev proposing a method for the practice of Comparative Literature in India.

The essays on reception, thematology, geneology, and historiography, along with an essay on Comparative Literature and the Other Arts (specially written with reference to the rich Indian tradition of visual and plastic arts) gives students a working knowledge of the conceptual and theoretical tools to be used for the practice of the discipline. Sayantan Dasgupta’s “Comparative Literature in India” traces the history of Comparative Literature in India from the time of its formal beginnings in 1956. It discusses critically the form the discipline took in its early years at Jadavpur University and traces how Comparative Literature evolved at Jadavpur and in other parts of India, and how different these spaces were. The essay highlights the importance of the study of Indian Literature within Comparative Literature as it evolved in the late 1970s onwards, and tries to relate it to the universalism-nationalism complex that has been part and parcel of Comparative Literature’s history and which assumes a form in India very different from the form it historically took in Europe. Finally, Dasgupta discusses the role and importance of translation within Indian Comparative Literature, given the multilingual fabric of Indian society. He also discusses historically and critically the role of organizations such as CLAI and the Sahitya Akademi in furthering the cause of Comparative Literature in India.

This comprehensive volume in Hindi will help to introduce the subject of Comparative Literature in a scholarly way to students outside English. CLAI seeks to raise the status of Comparative Indian Literature as a discipline that is yet to attain maturity in the shape of a recognized academic discipline in Indian Language / Literature Departments such as Urdu, Malayalam, Gujarati, and Assamese. The Central University of Kerala’s recently introduced course in Comparative Literature in Hindi is commendable. CLAI’s recent effort to bring the Department of Urdu and Persian at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur to the forefront and its role as a collaborator in organizing the CLAI International Conference on Comparative Literature is indeed a step forward in the development of Comparative Indian Literature.

We therefore welcome these two volumes in the realm of Comparative Literature.

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Amruta Patil. *Adi Parva: Churning Of The Ocean*. India: Harper Collins, 2012. Pp. 276. ISBN: 9789350294161.

In the *Adi Parva: Churning of the Ocean*, Amruta Patil transcreates certain episodes from the *Adi Parva*, the first book of the *Mahabharata*, as a visual narrative in the form of a graphic novel. Although images and paintings have been used to tell stories since time immemorial, these were only aids to oral narration. The graphic novel, growing out of the comic strip, presents some events of *Adi Parva* in a series of pictures in a narrative sequence together with minimal dialogue and commentary. Although India had a rich tradition of telling stories orally with the aid of pictures, the comic book form in India grew out of this encounter with the West. It was largely imitative and did not draw upon its own pictorial traditions, which can be seen dating as far back as 100,000 BCE with the Bhimbetka or Ajanta cave paintings. In folklore also there were many forms of oral narration that used visual aids, like the *chitrakathis*, *kaavads*, *padbachans*, *kalamkari*, and *patkathas* among others. When *Amar Chitra Katha* was launched by India Book House in 1967, it heralded the arrival of comic books to India. Its aim was to make the Indian mythological and religious texts as well as stories about historical events and figures more accessible to children. Its visuals, however, were not modeled on existing Indian traditions but rather on the comic strips of the West.

In the *Adi Parva*, Amruta Patil builds not only on the *Amar Chitra Katha* comics but also on the genre of graphic novel that has matured beyond the comic book format and become a part of the public culture dealing with adult complex issues. This genre is popular because it makes it easy to access complex works in an appealing format. It has become experimental and innovative, presenting both high quality stories and visual art.

Amruta Patil has selected episodes from the epic that deal with both the internal human condition like the management of the self with its ego, anger, pride and greed, and external concerns pertaining to gender and the environment. Both the narration and the visuals are multi-layered and complex drawing from both India and the West. Apart from the influences mentioned by the author, the visuals also reference Egyptian art as well as works by Matisse, Botticelli, and Nicholai Roerich. Although the content is Indian, the *Adi Parva* can be viewed with both Western and Indian eyes. Amruta is a diasporic writer and painter whose work stands at the intersections of religion, gender, class, and ethnicity. Her work negotiates hybridity and hybrid identities. It familiarizes young Indian diasporic adults with the myths, symbols, and stories of their native land and simultaneously appeals to a much larger audience as it embeds these myths in contemporary issues of concern to everyone. The episodes selected and their treatment lend themselves to multiple and even subversive readings.

Gender issues are reflected in a large number of the stories. The narrator, Ganga, a village woman alone in the forest at night, is telling the stories to the common village folk, not the customary *suta* (charioteer) Ugrashrava narrating to the *rishis* (holy men). Hence there is a difference in tone, points of view, and audience response. Ganga evokes the male comment, “Who is this woman sitting brazenly, talking to strangers in the middle of the night?” She begins by telling her own story, her coming down to earth by flowing over Shiva’s body to marry Shantanu so that the eight *vasus*, cursed for attempting to steal Kamdhenu the celestial all-desire-granting cow could be liberated.

The author picks up the stories of other mythological heroines, such as Amba, Satyavati, Shakuntala, Gandhari, and Kunti. Just as Amba’s story is one of revenge, so too is Gandhari’s. She angrily blindfolds herself for life to become a living embodiment of the injustice done to her by marrying her off to the blind Dhritarashtra. Likewise, Kunti, who has been given in adoption by her father Shrutasena to his childless brother Kuntibhoj, suffers all her life for her selfless service to the *rishi* Durvasa. Satyavati, who is born of a fish, is abandoned both by her biological father and by the King of Matsyalok who adopted her brother but sent her away to the chief of fishermen, Dasaraj. Shakuntala too, was an abandoned child raised by the *rishi* Kanva, being born of the union between the *rishi* Vishwamitra and Menaka, the *apsara* (celestial nymph) sent by Indra to disturb the *tapas* (austerities) of the *rishi* lest he become too powerful and pose a threat to the gods. An *apsara* disturbing the austerities of a praying *rishi* is a recur-

ring motif in the *Mahabharata*. This motif raises interesting questions about the overwhelming nature of sexual desire and the fragility of asceticism. In a patriarchal world in which women draw their power and status from their sons, the rivalry between wives is natural as is seen in the stories of Kadru and Vinata, Suruchi and Sunita, and Madri and Kunti.

The narration is laced with humor and irony. The down to earth responses of the simple village people depicted bring a touch of common sense to the narrative. For example, when the *rishi* Jaratkaru marries his namesake Jaratkaru, the sister of the *naga* (serpent) Vasuki in order to beget a son to prevent the annihilation of his race and leaves her as soon as she conceives saying that the reason for of the marriage is over, one of the women in the audience wryly comments that behind all the grand words, the simple truth is that the wife Jaratkaru was short changed. All women are, however, not seen as victims here. They use their sexuality to counter patriarchal gender subjugation. When someone speculates whether Ganga might be a goddess, a woman retorts, "Hang on to a woman's hip long enough, and she'll convince you she's a goddess and make you worship at her altar."

The concerns about environmental pollution are embedded into the myths in a manner that reminds the reader of the intersection between modernity and tradition. For instance, the spirit of the river says, "I surface as little as possible these days, but staying under water isn't much better. The medium is too dense now, riddled with toxins and starved of oxygen."

Apart from external societal issues, the *Adi Parva* also investigates a turning inward to confront the self, its motivations and rationalizations. What really are curses and boons? Are they only an exercise of arbitrary power earned through knowledge and asceticism? What about the wisdom of self control and discrimination? Are all vows manifestations of hubris and ego or indicative of stern moral resolve? Is Janamejaya's sacrifice to avenge the death of his father by destroying the *naga* Takshaka an obsession born of the arrogance of power couched in self righteousness? Do we actually act or is all life an illusion, a glittering network of rubies, as Ganga tells her listeners, in the heart of which are reflected all other rubies? Do we have free will or is everything a matter of chance? Is that why the *yugas* (ages of man) are named after the throws of dice and creation is nothing more than *lila*, or cosmic play.

In a world of such ambiguities, it is difficult to distinguish right from wrong. While the *devas* (gods) continuously cheat and resort to unethical

stratagems, the *asuras* (demons) are capable of righteous action, as in the encounter between Indra and Vali. The gods thwart the demons with all their might, resorting even to falsehood and trickery. Their lives are so perfect in their realm that they live in perpetual fear of losing it. There are no limits between right and wrong. All is only a matter of balance that has to be periodically restored.

Both gods and demons can be seen as the embodiment of ideas. The *sagar manthan* or the churning of the ocean is the ultimate churning of the mind transforming the worldly into the cosmic. Naturally, this event causes both beneficent and harmful effects that have to be addressed. Civilizational memory surfaces through stories. As the kite sitting on a tree at the beginning of the book points out, there are some stories that our forefathers do not want us to forget so they send them down to be narrated by story tellers. In the various tellings they unravel the echoes of the past. Their voices in all their ferocity and tenderness present world-views and motivations with which they sought rationalizations to satisfy their desires and ambitions.

Janamejaya's sacrifice, only two generations after the annihilation and destruction wrought by the great Mahabharata War, points to what happens when the stories are forgotten. When Astika interrupts the sacrifice, Janamejaya very significantly wants him to talk of his ancestors. Why does he not know of them? Because the Mahabharata War had been so destructive that no one wanted to tell stories much less recount what had happened. Hence, the silence was deafening. The *naga* sacrifice breaks the moratorium on story-telling to bring home a vital civilizational lesson that we can only forget at our peril; that every story is not just the story of the other but also of the teller in which he/she confronts the self when "the outer sun goes out and lets us look at the inner sun."

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Avadhesh Kumar Singh. *Revisiting Literature, Criticism and Aesthetics in India*. New Delhi: D.K. Print World, 2012. Pp. 608. ISBN: 8124606277.

India's literary tradition, cultural ethos, literary criticism, and aesthetics have attracted world-wide attention. An international audience is

increasingly discovering, evaluating, comparing and appreciating the great literary heritage of one of the foremost knowledge civilizations of the world.

In this volume, Avadhesh Kumar Singh has tried to deal with Indian literary, critical and cultural realities, the impact of colonization on Indian consciousness and its resistance, the new literary and cultural realities of postcolonial India and responses to it, the reorientation of literary studies in light of its linguistic and literary realities, the “amnesia” of Indian critical tradition, the lack of awareness (even among Indian scholars) of Indian critical tradition and the Indian reaction to the proliferation of Western critical theories.

The four parts of this volume examine all these issues. The first part, entitled “Word, World and Perception,” deals with questions of meaning and interpretation, narrative theory in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, and Indian aesthetics. The author is deeply concerned with the hegemony of Western theory since it “perpetuates the tradition that perceives the West as donor and the rest of the world as receiver.” Western theory, according to the author is the “handmaid of Western intellectual imperialism which over the last couple of centuries, established its supremacy in such a manner that Indians have been convinced about the nonexistence of their own tradition, though the Indian tradition valued interpretation which is more varied and powerful than any other tradition.” To illustrate this point, the author cites many examples from Indian literary narratives. The author, however, notes the near absence of any theoretical formulation in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. He speculates why the authors of these epics did not theorize about the creative processes, but rather constructed mythical narratives as a vehicle for communicating knowledge. They left it for posterity to theorize about them. In this detailed discussion of issues pertaining to Indian aesthetics and ethics, Singh suggests that Indians as well as Westerners should become fully aware of this tradition.

In the second part of the book, “Colonialism and After,” the author discusses the Indian Renaissance in the colonial period. Nineteenth-century Indian literature reshaped the society in many ways in an era of discovering the self and the other. Colonial forces constructed a body of knowledge to serve the purpose of helping the colonizers consolidate their occupation. In that sense, Orientalism was a “cultural project of control” and a “conquest of knowledge.” In this context, Singh discusses the ideas of Swami Vivekananda, Anand Kentish Coomaraswamy, Sri Aurobindo,

B. R. Ambedkar, and Mahatma Gandhi. Among literary figures, he references Bhartendu Harishchand, Munshi Premchand, and Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi. The author laments the fact that in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when Europe was enamoured with Sanskrit, Indians wanted to replace Sanskrit with English. He sees the role of English in India as that of a window onto the world in order to appropriate the knowledge available outside. Indians should not, however, be so enamored by the window that they ignore or close other doors, particularly their own.

The third part of the book, entitled “Literature and Theorizing in India,” deals with the Bhakti (devotional) movement in India and the contribution of women to Bhakti poetry and feminist discourse in Hindi, Gujrati, and English creative writing. In these essays, the author discusses the works of Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, and Gauri Deshpande. In “Constructing an Indian Theory of Feminism: Problems and Potentialities,” the author notes that the real challenge Indian feminist theory faces is to be aware of the invisible, neo-colonial, and neo-capitalist forces which thrive by using women in a consumerist fashion.

In the last section of this volume, “Criticism in India,” the author considers various issues pertaining to Indian literary criticism and theory and argues that there is no amnesia in the Indian critical tradition. According to the author, a “self inflicted cultural inferiority complex, an unprecedented instance of intellectual suicide in human history” characterizes the situation. The chapters on post colonialism, postmodernism, and ethnicity warrant our attention because they view the Western theories in the light of the Indian experience.

This is a comprehensive, in-depth, and well-written work. Presented in a very vivid, lucid and frank manner, the author puts the texts in the right context to make them easy to understand. Though his interpretation may be further developed by others, Singh’s grasp of the ideas contained here is remarkable. He digs deep into ancient and modern Indian literature. He presents his theses in a manner that is assertive, articulate, and sometimes polemical. Yet, Singh has successfully managed to present a vision that purports to be unaffected by colonial propaganda. He knows well and wants others to know the real literary and cultural heritage of India. Therefore, instead of kneeling before the great Western literary tradition, one should know how much they have borrowed from us to be able to demand and successfully receive our acknowledgement and gratitude at every step for their wonderful divinely ordained

civilizing mission and recognize the colonial burden they had to carry on, to the utter gratitude of our great literary adventurers. According to the author, the reason behind our complete submissive approach is that we are unable to appreciate our own literary heritage contained in Sanskrit as well as many modern languages of our diverse country. This work may not be the first but is certainly one of the best among equals. The author challenges Indian academics to reconsider and relish their unique contribution to the world instead of just adopting without scrutiny all that is coming from the West. The work is an eye-opener for those still living with a colonial hangover. They need to revisit the literature, criticism, and aesthetics in India.

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Jiheer Han, ed. *World Literature and the Politics of the Minority*. Jaipur, New Delhi: Rawat Publishers, 2013. Pp. 212. ISBN: 9788131605769.

In her perceptive introduction “Cartographies of World Literature: The Minority Literatures and the Politics of the Minority,” Jiheer Han critiques the Western homogenizing tendencies, rooted in the soil of World Literature. Han observes that Rey Chow in 1995 had made a valid point that while Western comparatists may make way for Indian, Chinese, and Japanese Literatures, they do not change their own thinking and adherence to “Social Darwinian Understanding of the Nation,” and thus do not foster appreciation of literature from non-European countries. The ideology of “Eurocentrism” and “Universalism,” have held sway and literatures from Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam and Tibet have remained the marginalized other. Even when Western scholars like Charles Braider and Susan Bassnett applaud the troika of Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and Anthony Appiah for their global perspective in World Literature, they uphold the idea that the value to the discipline is provided by scholarship in the European Renaissance canon and this theorization consequently keeps their position in the powerful center intact. Deleuze and Guattari can be seen to offer a critique of comparative World Literature as an “arborescent” concept, which branches out in multiple directions but maintains a centered unity.

Gayatri Spivak highlights the problem of the gaze of the Anglo-European comparatists in *Death of a Discipline* (2003), which patronizes from a higher position, the other writings “from below.” Jihee Han notes that Spivak thus maintains the binary oppositional framework of Western metaphysics, situating herself in the zone of her “conventional US comparative literature training.” Spivak’s essay created a divide between the “Global South” and the “Global North” among Western comparatists. David Damrosch took up Spivak’s subsequent essay “Rebirth of a Discipline” (2006) and made the case for the objectivity and inclusiveness of the discipline. Han overturns this defence by invoking the example of the *polis* in ancient Greece, where only men were given the right to voice their opinion, to the exclusion of women, slaves and foreigners. Han thus likens the world republic of letters to the *polis*.

In her introduction, Han evokes Jacque Rancière’s *Disagreement*. In this book, Rancière writes about converting the symbolic *polis* of World Literature to a discursive space, where there is an opportunity to raise one’s voice in resistance to the rigid assumptions of World Literature. The non-Western minority is called upon to raise a new consciousness through their agency and reconfigure the world’s literary space. Han redefines this minority, removing it from a fixed position as the disadvantaged “Other” and posits a new nomadic movement that will mint a new language that will split and surpass the rigid, astigmatic stance of World Literature.

This nomadic fluidity of the new minority comes into play in the very structuring of Han’s book, *World Literature and the Politics of the Minority*. The book consists of nine essays— two from India, two from China, two from Japan, and one each from Korea, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. In “Minority Discourses in/and World Literature: Dalit and Tribal Writing,” Jasbir Jain takes up the two blanket terms appropriated by the Western theory—postcolonialism and globalization, which elide the important categories of difference, individuality and subjectivity of minority discourse. Jain sees in these categories an erasure of literatures rooted in culture and local histories. The writings of the diaspora aided by marketing techniques may get visibility, but the fledgling (and significant) literatures of the marginalized, Dalits and Tribals, get lost in the glitzy “Academic Supermarket.”

In “Diasporic Imagination and the Significance of Home in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh,” Santosh Gupta incisively takes up the issues of home and dispossession. Ghosh traces India’s past much earlier than the

large-scale human transportation taken up by the British rulers. Gupta makes a valid statement when she observes that Ghosh's brilliant narrative lights up the dark spaces of the oppressed, silenced masses who are uprooted by the greed of colonial masters, yet sensitive to their splintered geographical spaces and forgotten histories.

Wang Ning in "Chinese Literature as World Literature" opens the dialogue from the historical standpoint of Chinese literature recognized as World Literature and the manner in which it needs to transform itself in the context of global culture. He points out that globalization, despite its homogenizing tendency, has nevertheless given a rare opportunity to China to bring its literature and culture to the world although quality translations are still needed to achieve this goal more adequately. Wang Ning also raises important questions regarding the visibility, availability, and the circulation of Chinese literary works in World Literature.

Liu Hao's "Shakespeare in China: Past, Present and Future" takes into account the hundred years of Shakespeare scholarship and stage performance in China. She elaborates on their social, cultural, and ideological development and impact on the Chinese dramatic tradition. Hao also examines the enshrined image of Shakespeare and his indigenization, which incorporates Chinese aesthetics and moral instruction.

Myles Chilton in "Global Englishes, Literary Studies, and the Japanese Academy" argues against the instrumentalization of English Studies in Japan, with the focus on the communication aspect, rather than cultural nuance. Chilton emphasizes how the text's and its readers' alterity can initiate a more reflexive and inclusive study. In this situation, Anglophone literary studies intersect with World Literature, Global Studies, and the global spread of English.

Hajime Saito takes up the lesser known Japanese novelist—Ikezawa Natsuki (1945–) also a poet, essayist and translator, with a literary career spanning three decades. Throughout his life, Ikewaza has been committed to critiquing the violence perpetrated by the US and Japan upon the helpless people in Okinawa, on the southernmost tip in Japan. Ikewaza has always lived on the margins of Japan's society, and is therefore extremely sensitive to the plight of this minority.

Jihee Han discusses Korean poetry in her essay, "The Burden of History: Ko Un Poetry as Political and Philosophical Act." A widely acclaimed poet of national and international repute, Ko Un is identified as a Minjung poet—a poet of the masses. Ko Un creates a unique literary space

(*Hwaeom*) to negotiate turbulent Korean history and articulate his own political position. It is a vision of a unified Korea, underscoring an idea of interrelatedness—and toppling the binaries of the Holy and the Secular, the Self and the Other, the Creator and the Created, and the One and the Many. Dismantling power hierarchies, this poet aspires to the Buddhist sense of nothingness. Jihee Han analyses Ko Un's use of the *Hwaeom* paradox of becoming, making and undoing the poetic self, through the narration of the lives of the Minjung people. Marie-Therese Abdel-Messih's "Mutability of Home and Exile: *The Oriental Dance*," examines the Egyptian post-independence fiction, which reflects the existential angst of young immigrants, who, facing dislocation, seek an alternate geographical location. Khaled El Beri lives in London and wrote *The Oriental Dance* in his native Arabic. El Beri discusses the interplay between the local and the global in 1980s and 1990s. In depicting the lives of Middle-Easterners moving between Europe and the Middle East, El Beri shows how global events, such as the Iraqi war, impact private lives by making individuals mere pawns in local/global power intrigues. Abdel-Messih chooses as a metaphor for this process the belly dance that "consecrates male-female iconic roles," where two partners become subject to and subject of role models enacting a discourse of masculinity that extends from the Third World to the First and implicates all its subjects in a hegemonic scaffolding. Abdel-Messih claims that El Beri's focus on the minority discourse disrupts these rooted masculinities.

Saddik Gohar and Doris Hambuch in "Literature of the Arabian Peninsula and Transcultural Literary Exchange in the Post-Oil Era," analyse the minority status of the Gulf Cooperation Council Members, which include Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, and their representation in anthologies of Middle Eastern literatures. This essay offers a significant introduction to the contemporary situation in the UAE and its inclusion in the book makes critical and literary space for the silenced voices from Arabia and other geographical locations.

In conclusion, Jihee Han's book is an illuminating study in minority discourse as it takes its place in the realm of World Literature, showing in the process the intersections and interrelatedness of each unique identity.

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Sudhir Kakar. *Young Tagore: The Makings of a Genius*. New Delhi: Penguin/Viking, 2013. Pp. 238. ISBN: 9780670086474.

Of all the Indian national icons, Rabindranath Tagore remains probably the most sacrosanct, being as *Gurudev* (Teacher-God) even holier than Gandhi the *Mahatma* (Great Soul). One may quake a little therefore at the prospect of the sagely Poet, of the venerable long cloak and white beard, being approached through psycho-analysis and being in the process exposed, laid bare, and possibly diminished.

But Sudhir Kakar, eminent psycho-analyst, is also a novelist, and allays all apprehensions by stating right at the beginning of this new biography that he proposes not to analyze but to empathize, and to dig deep not for hidden facts but for “emotional truths.” He does so mainly through two discursive strategies. Firstly, he reads Tagore’s two autobiographies not so much against the grain as through their interstices, seeking to fill their ellipses, elisions, and erasures with imaginative speculations grounded in his refined professional expertise. Secondly, he freely treats several of Tagore’s poems and novels as if these were cut of the same cloth as his autobiographies. Obviously, he does not subscribe to the theory of the “biographical fallacy” (of the Cambridge or Chicago schools of “New Criticism”), according to which it is naïve if not misleading to interpret a writer’s life in terms of his works and vice versa, in circular authentication.

In this, Kakar is of course at one with the common reader of Tagore who has always believed his fictional works, such as *Nashta Neer* (The Broken Nest) and *Ghare Baire* (Home and Abroad), to be modeled on episodes in his own life. For all admirers of Tagore (and some of Satyajit Ray), the eponymous heroine of the film *Charulata* is the more bewitching for being based on Kadambari Devi, Tagore’s sister-in-law who entered the large Tagore household as a child bride at the age of nine, when Tagore was seven (and his elder brother, her husband, nineteen). The two grew up together in easy familial intimacy but in their teens apparently felt strong intimations of what Tagore called “swirling passions.”

It is characteristic of Kakar’s entirely sympathetic approach to Tagore that he describes Kadambari as “simply ... the ideal container” of the liquid heart of Tagore, and their relationship as something that “garbed his soul in erotic grace” and lent cohesion to his self and identity. She committed suicide four months after Tagore got married, and

Kakar surmises it was possibly out of a dangerously high “dysphoric tendency” already present in her before this “final blow.” Tagore inevitably felt pangs of guilt and kept her memory alive; it also served “to heighten his literary and artistic creativity.”

If this sounds like the woman in a tragic relationship ending up as emotional grist to the exploitative mill of the male genius, Kakar’s account suggests that it may in fact have been just so. It is not for him, as a biographer bound by facts, to stage a fictional feminist rescue of Kadambari Devi such as recently attempted by Ranjan Bandyopadhyay in his widely sold imaginative reconstruction in Bengali, *Kadambari Devir Suicide Note* (2012). At the launch of his book in New Delhi, Kakar said, explaining his focus: “Well, he was a genius, and she was not.” But Kakar also includes in his narrative an ironically poignant little entry made in the family account book at the time of her suicide: “Expenses towards suppressing the news of the death to the press: Rs 52.”

Though Kakar titles his book *Young Tagore*, he ranges over the poet’s whole life and has in fact an entire chapter on Tagore’s paintings which were all done in his last years. The implication, in consonance with Freudian principles, is that one’s early life continues to inform, shape, and constantly underlie the years to come. The subtly apt subtitle of the book, *The Makings of a Genius*, serves to strengthen this belief, as indicating that Tagore had all the “makings” or signs of a genius right from the start. (In contrast, “The Making of a Genius” would have implied that his genius was, so to say, a long accumulative and accretive process, and at least as much perspiration as inspiration.)

That is perhaps just what our common perception of a genius continues to be: that one is either born a genius or not. Another persistent stereotype in this regard is that a genius is not a normal human being, but someone psychologically troubled, if not afflicted. Plato thought poets were mad; Shakespeare (or more accurately his creation Theseus in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*) said: “The lunatic, the lover and the poet, / Are of imagination all compact,” a witty and amusing observation in the context; and Dryden pronounced rather more gravely: “Great wits are sure to madness near allied, / And thin partitions do their bounds divide.” This poetic conceit, often propagated by poets themselves, has lately found some scientific validation, for example in the book *Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament* (1993) by Kay Redfield Jamison, Professor of Psychiatry

at the Johns Hopkins University—who is herself a manic-depressive as well as the winner in 2002 of a MacArthur Fellowship popularly called the “genius award.”

But Kakar—who too had won the “genius award” in 1993—scrupulously refrains from any suggestion that may show Tagore’s genius as allied to madness; in traditional Indian perception, a poet is anyhow more like a sage than a madman. In his Conclusion to the volume, Kakar does, however throw light on the relatively unfamiliar fact that on several occasions in his life-span exceeding three score and ten years, Tagore experienced bouts of melancholia. The severest was the one that began in 1913 when he was fifty-two years old and had just won the Nobel prize, and it lasted for over a year. Tagore himself perceived it as a spiritual crisis, a kind of dark night of the soul at the moment of his great triumph, while Kakar identifies it in professional terminology as “unequivocally a clinical depression.”

It is Kakar’s special distinction as a profoundly Indian psychoanalyst that in this “psychobiography,” which concludes with a discussion of the “Riddle of Creative Genius,” he can entertain both these perspectives together and hold them in balance. In his account of the genius or, in alternative formulation, the “extraordinary creativity” of Tagore, there is room for both the biological-emotional-historical approach and the transcendent-spiritual-unconscious view. This book, written “in the spirit of Tagore” of reconciling dualities, not only illuminates many nooks and crannies of Tagore’s creativity but is in itself an imaginative and luminous meditation on art and life, the body and the soul, and the East and the West.

This is only apt, for despite his common image of being the iconic Wise Man from the East, which W. B. Yeats helped project in his flagrantly orientalist Introduction to *Gitanjali* (1912), Tagore was deeply influenced by the West ever since the formative age of seventeen when he first travelled to Britain as a student. An earlier biographer and critic of Tagore, Edward J. Thompson, said that Tagore was filial to both East and West. In a long and sophisticated meditation on the question, Kakar finds that while Tagore’s early exposure to the West led to a “sensual quickening” and an appreciation of a kind of social freedom available in the West, he also insisted on “positing an Indian civilization” which was quite distinct from the Western civilization and which had for its ideal an ethics of sympathy rather than scrupulous justice. Tagore sought throughout

his life a harmony of East and West, and as if by osmosis, Kakar in his biography is not only just to Tagore but also deeply sympathetic.

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E. V. Ramakrishnan, Harish Trivedi, and Chandra Mohan, eds. *Interdisciplinary Alter-natives in Comparative Literature*. Sage, New Delhi: 2013. Pp. 251. ISBN: 9788132111009.

Interdisciplinary Alter-natives in Comparative Literature is a collection of nineteen essays touching on different areas of Comparative Literature and engaging with recent trends and trajectories in the discipline. The essays together build up a symphony that weaves in themes of resistance to universalist theoretical models, and throws up tantalizing echoes of possible alternatives—alternatives that are often specific and local, but that are sometimes also palpably engaged in trying to move the local to the global.

The essays featured in this anthology were originally presented at the Tenth Biennial International Conference of the Comparative Literature Association of India (CLAI) at the Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, in 2011. They may, therefore, be seen to be symptomatic of larger preoccupations of the Comparative Literature community in India as far as contemporary developments in our area are concerned. There are essays by young scholars as well as by well-known comparatists.

Comparative Literature is at a particularly fascinating juncture in India today. Since its formal foundation (though Sisir Kumar Das has traced a pre-history for our discipline in India) in 1956 until very recently, Comparative Literature remained confined to less than a handful of institutional spaces. Over the last few years, however, we have seen the emergence of a number of Comparative Literature departments and programmes in various parts of the country. These recent developments not only highlight the anxiogenic existence of Comparative Literature, but also call into question the relationship between single literature studies in India, Comparative Literature and other emergent spaces such as Translation Studies and Cultural Studies. It has also thrown into relief the need for redefining notions of “Indian Literature” and “World Literature”

in the context of each other. Admittedly, the volume under review contributes significantly to these debates.

E. V. Ramakrishnan's essay "Comparative Literature: Changing Paradigms" sets the tone for the volume by pointing to the Eurocentric dimensions of Comparative Literature in various parts of the world. The curriculum of Comparative Literature in Europe and North America has limited space for literatures from Asia and Africa. Ramakrishnan laments that "Comparative Literature has to be reinvented if it has to address ideological issues emanating from the inequality of power relations across cultures and society." Several of the essays that follow seek to answer that call, either by attempting to reformulate our objects of study, or by reiterating Tagore's vision of a liberated and holistic study of literature, or by exploring the relationship between established literary genres and genres that are less readily considered worthy of scholarly attention.

Ramakrishnan's essay seems to resonate well with the contributions of Jasbir Jain, T. S. Satyanath, Sieghild Bogumil, and Bhalchandra Nemade. Nemade's essay, for instance, critiques the Indian "penchant for universal standards of comparison" and stresses the need for an Indian theory, or perhaps Indian theories, steeped in the Indian literary and cultural tradition. He wonders why "Indian Literature" is yet to be established as a viable category within "World Literature" and highlights the need for pedagogy to move beyond the European language-literature equation, one which is neither tenable nor profitable in the context of the study of Indian literatures. Nemade would seem to agree with the contention that Comparative Literature seems to be the most viable, perhaps the only way, of doing justice to Indian Literature.

This volume carries quite a few engrossing essays that successfully and harmoniously unite theory with practice, and the local with the global. One such example is to be found in Dorothy Figueira's essay, "The Subaltern can Speak: Letters from the Trenches and *Across the Black Waters*" found in this volume. She strives to read Mulk Raj Anand's *Across the Black Waters* in the light of actual letters written by Indian soldiers stationed in Belgium and France during World War I and finds the latter a more authentic testimony to the material conditions of the cross-cultural encounter that transpired. India provided around 827,000 combatants to the war effort, and most of these recruits were poor or had limited education. The letters they sent home, often written by professional scribes, made for a complicated process of mediation and makes

these letters a fascinating body of texts to be studied for the fractures and contestations they embody. Figueira studies the translations that were made for censorship purposes and are still in existence and concludes that this largely illiterate group managed to devise fascinating strategies to exploit the written medium. The letters are sometimes written in code, and sometimes even have a literary quality to them. They praise the British regime and swear fealty to the imperial centre but also textualise the differences between the Europe and India.

Harish Trivedi's "Comparative Literature, World Literature and Indian Literature: Concepts and Models" takes up for discussion one of the more popular areas of contestation within Indian Comparative Literature in recent years. Indeed, the World Literature-Comparative Literature debate provides the title to an entire section of the anthology under review. Trivedi begins by identifying in Goethe and Rabindranath Tagore, a "well-meaning but vague universalism" and goes on to look respectively at "World Literature and Globalisation," "Western Models of World Literature," "Western Models of Indian Literature" and "Recent Models of (Comparative) Indian Literature" before discussing "Indian Literature and World Literature." Tagore remains an important figure as far as this volume is concerned; his role and ideology come up for closer scrutiny in several later essays. Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta's essay brings up for closer examination his notion of *visvasahitya*, while Amiya Dev's "Tagore as World Literature" firmly and convincingly establishes the poet's relevance and position within contemporary debates in Comparative Literature. Another notable essay dealing with this concern is Indra Nath Choudhuri's poignant account of Tagore's relationship with women in the essay titled, "Letters of Tagore and His Notions of the Feminine."

David Damrosch's essay in this anthology, "Literary History in a Global Age: The Legacy of Sisir Kumar Das," focuses on historiography—one of the Comparative Literature methodology triad—and seeks to identify the relevance of Das's approach in his monumental *A History of Indian Literature*, which he left unfinished. Admitting the incredibly complex and variegated fabric of multilingual "Indian" culture, "Literary History in a Global Age" posits the thesis that the strategies employed by Das in attempting to deal with the concomitant problems of historiography arising out of this diversity could have much to offer for the scholar attempting to write a history of a complex, multilingual world. In certain ways, Das seems to anticipate and engage with the problems of a global

historiography. Focusing largely on his “Prologue,” Damrosch argues that not only does Das here lay the foundations of modern Indian literary history but also works out the basic terms for the writing of a global literary history. Damrosch finds resonances between the dilemmas he faces as a proponent of World Literature and Das’s attempts, on one hand, to emphasize the variety and vitality of the twenty-three modern Indian literatures, and on the other, to combat the regionalism of champions of these single literatures.

The fourth section, on “Creative responses to Region and Resistance,” has some particularly well-researched and thought-provoking essays ranging from Marathi Fiction to Urdu poetry. It also examines attempts to theorize resistance and universals. Anisur Rahman’s “The Interface of the Progressive/Romantic and the Modernist in Urdu Poetry” focuses on the historical context of the 1930s and investigates how this context was related to two very important but very different movements—the Taraqqi Pasand Tehreek, or the Progressive Writers Movement, and the Halqa-i-Arbab-e Zauq, or the Circle of Connoisseurs. Rahman compares these movements and argues that they were perhaps not so much opposed to each other as engaged differently in responding to the demands of the times.

What is particularly heartening about this volume is that it carries several essays by younger scholars working in the arena of Comparative Literature in India, hinting at the good things to come as far as our discipline is concerned.

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Brefs comptes rendus / Book Notes

Josephine Donovan. *European Local-Colour Literature: National Tales, Dorfgeschichten, Romans Champêtres*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010. Pp. xiii + 194. ISBN: 9781442219001.

Today the genre of local color literature is almost forgotten; it has not found much research interest recently and comprehensive comparatist surveys do not exist at all—so Donovan’s book is a ground-breaking study, indeed. According to this author, the genre is defined by “a realistic focus upon a particular [rural] geographic locale, its native customs, its physical and cultural environment, and its regional dialect” (ix). The European heydays of the movement lay in the first half of the nineteenth century; in the United States it flourished between about 1860 and 1900.

In the first chapter, Donovan explains local color literature as a reaction against the main tendencies of modernity: pre-modern rural life serves as a positive foil to criticize the modern strife for rationalization, scientification, centralization, and homogenization by which it is threatened. Examples for this process of the internal colonisation of regional cultures are: (1) the establishment of uniform standards—like the metre in France—and of a close control of the citizenry (e.g. by the universal introduction of last names and censuses); (2) the setting up of universal public education; (3) the replacement of local knowledge or *métis*—“a practical, craft-based knowledge rooted in the particulars of the local environment” (7)—by standard knowledge based upon science and induction; (4) the standardization of language and the suppression of local dialects; (5) the objectification and “disenchantment” (Max Weber) of

the natural world and the denunciation of older world-views like myth and animism as mere superstition; (6) the destruction of local communitarianism and kinsmanship-loyalties and their substitution by modernist egotism; (7) the depreciation of values traditionally considered as “female,” like love and emotion, and the sole appreciation of “male” virtues like reason and self-discipline.

The last item in the list must, of course, remain controversial, as it was modernization that, ultimately, led to the emancipation of women and the questioning of gender stereotypes. Donovan insists, however, that local-color writers (many of whom were female) often depicted “surprisingly strong—in some cases, even Amazonian—women characters in premodern habitats, suggesting that women had considerable power under premodern social arrangements in European peasant cultures” (11).

Against all these tendencies of modern standardization and rationalization, local-color literature tried to preserve and defend pre-modern traditions of regional habits and customs, knowledge, language, and social behaviour, quite often turning these into a quasi-utopian model for the future organisation of societies.

The main section of Donovan’s book traces the spread of local-color literature and its accompanying theoretical writings in four European countries. It originated with Maria Edgeworth’s novel *Castle Rackrent* (1800) in Ireland, which is in a truly colonial situation. Its main Scottish protagonist was, of course, Walter Scott (e.g. *Waverley*, 1814). In Germany, the genre found its most characteristic expression in the *Dorfgeschichten* (village stories) of Berthold Auerbach (e.g. *Sämtliche Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, 1843), but also in novels and stories by Jeremias Gotthelf and Annette von Droste-Hülshoff. In France, the best-known and most influential author of the *roman champêtre* was George Sand (e.g. *François le champi*, 1847–48). In a short “Epilogue,” Donovan finally shows that the regional movement was also widespread in Scandinavia, Spain, Italy, Russia, and the United States (e.g. Harriet Beecher-Stowe, *The Minister’s Wooing*, 1858).

The authors and titles mentioned above are, however, but the tip of the iceberg. In her book, Donovoan introduces us to no less than about 150 stories, collections and novels, proving that local-color literature was a vast, influential and popular movement in nineteenth-century Europe. Its coherence was established by a strong chain of influence—in which Elridge, Scott, Auerbach, and Sand were the main links—and by almost immediate translations of all important texts into many European languages.

According to Donovan, the methodology of her study “derives from the genealogical hermeneutic [sic!] articulated by French theorist Michael [sic!] Foucault” (x). This, however, is as grossly misleading as dutiful references to other fashionable theoreticians like Deleuze/Guattari, Adorno/Horkheimer, and Mikhail Bakhtin. What Donovan provides is conventional content analysis, with only an occasional glance at plot-patterns and narrative techniques. The traditional hermeneutical approach in itself would not be a fault, at least not for me, but the almost sole focus on content is, especially so, as Donovan tends to use the criteria catalogue of her introductory chapter as a sort of checklist—with every new text its items are stereotypically “ticked off” again and again. All other questions are ignored—as for instance the ideological and formal differences which respective affinities with Enlightenment, Romanticism and Realism must have caused.

The great merit of Donovan’s book is the rediscovery of a lost literary continent. But in the end she fails to convince us that this endeavour is really worthwhile. Critique of modernity and defence of regional peculiarities may seem a value in itself for many readers in our age of globalization. But the value of literature does not lie in its content or morale but in its aesthetic qualities. Having read Donovan’s study I remain unconvinced that forgetting so many texts of local-color literature was entirely wrong.

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Matti Hyvärinen, Mari Hatavara, and Lars-Christer Hydén, eds. *The Travelling Concepts of Narrative*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2013. Pp. 311. ISBN: 9789027226587.

The Travelling Concepts of Narrative is a collection of fourteen articles from European and North American scholars that explores the different, and sometimes divergent, ways in which the concept of narrative has transgressed academic boundaries since the 1960s. In an interdisciplinary approach, it thus combines contributions from literary studies, psychology, and political philosophy, among others. Edited and introduced by Mari Hatavara, Lars-Christer Hydén, and Matti Hyvärinen, each of

whom also contributes an article, this volume offers an interesting and engaging overview of the current discussion and applications of narrative in a number of different sciences. It thus aims rather at an audience already familiar with narrative theory.

The structure of the book provides a very helpful approach to the individual essays. There are three sections, addressing the conceptual, material, and contextual levels of narrative theory, respectively. Contributions in the first section thus discuss various ideas about narrative turns. Matti Hyvärinen investigates the changes in the concept of narrative and the importance of the metaphorical connection between life and narrative. Olivia Guaraldo shows the effect of narrative practices in political discourse and reflects on the narrative turn as a broader cultural phenomenon. While the articles of the first section focus more on the theoretical background and the implications of the narrative turn, their authors also draw on both literary and non-literary texts and include, for example, observations on works by Ian McEwan, Günther Grass, and Siri Hustvedt, as well as updates concerning Facebook and Twitter.

The articles of the second section expand this textually-based focus by addressing various relations between fiction and non-fiction in the light of narrative theory. Jens Brockmeier's contribution explores the importance of narrative activity as a way of constructing meaning. In a reading of a letter by the young Derrida, the author shows the various interpretive operations at work in a hermeneutical search for meaning. Mari Hatavara focuses on autobiographical texts, both fictional and non-fictional, but makes a strong case for shifting the textual level back to the focus of narrative studies. Drawing on two texts by Robert Graves, she focuses on the methods of classical narratology to show that literary texts are unique in their ability to embody as well as withhold questions of sense-making. Further contributions in the second section respectively challenge or reaffirm the distinction between storytelling in fiction and in non-fiction. Their textual groundwork mirrors the versatility of the different approaches undertaken in this volume: they range from Jonathan Littell's *The Kindly Ones*, interview sessions with former inmates of German concentration camps, Ahmadou Kourouma's novel *Waiting for the Wild Beasts to Vote*, and examples from an oral history project called *StoryCorps*.

The third section of the volume opens the field even further up to interdisciplinary questions. Drawing on insights from psychology, Lars-Christer Hydén argues for approaching storytelling as an embodied activity, which not only puts its focus on the two participants but also on other

semiotic resources. Brian Schiff challenges the overuse of the concept of narrative in recent psychological research. In the last essay of the third section, Kuisma Korhonen sets out to confront the latest accusations on the excessive and divergent use of the term “cultural trauma” and how concepts of narrative and narration have been applied to it. By drawing on empirical trauma therapy, the author highlights the importance of individual trauma narration in opposition to “closed cultural narratives.” The volume closes with an insightful conclusion that draws on all the previous chapters.

The subject of the volume is broad, its goal—to map the travelling concepts of narrative across different disciplines—ambitious. What makes this approach coherent despite its diversity is a clear structure, which is outlined in the introduction, and a useful, summarizing conclusion. An even stronger contribution to the cohesiveness of the volume is made by the numerous cross references among the individual articles. Each author seems to be familiar with their co-authors’ work, and they continue or anticipate certain thoughts and arguments. They challenge each other’s concepts and standpoints, thus promoting the goal of the volume while at the same time providing a self-reflective, critical perspective. This perspective is also reflected in the individual articles. The contributors thus succeed in creating a consistent whole by providing an overview of the different concepts of narrative and the disciplines that have expanded it. They engage the reader to re-evaluate certain standpoints (for example classical narratology) and identify new connections (i.e. between politics and narration). In its diversity and in the new forms of narrative addressed in some of the contributions, this volume proves to be fruitful for any scholar of narrative theory who wants to reflect on current tendencies.

SILKE VON SEHLEN

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Daniel Syrový. *Tilting at Tradition, Problems of Genre in the Novels of Miguel de Cervantes and Charles Sorel*. Internationale Forschungen zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2013. Pp. 270. ISBN: 9789042037090.

In this book, Daniel Syrový explores Charles Sorel’s *Berger extravagant* (1627–28) and Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*, Sorel’s apparent model,

from literary conventions in European literature of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He draws upon period literature and literary criticism, describes the “literary environment,” and offers a conclusion on genre and literary traditions as a vehicle for understanding literary history. Syrový opens by stating in his preface that *Don Quixote*, “needs to be approached from the tradition of its genre, the chivalric romance,” which includes the *romanzi cavallereschi* of the Italian tradition (7). He also finds that his research on Sorel’s novel illuminates the study on Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* because the book of a young man turned into a mad shepherd from reading bad literature shows an attempt to transform the novel and serves as a research tool in understanding narrative fiction.

This volume offers a study of Charles Sorel’s *Berger extravagant* followed by research on novelistic aspects of *Don Quixote*. Syrový studies the *Berger* and *Don Quixote* separately in an effort to explain why and how each was written from the viewpoint of their period. He traces the novel’s structural and stylistic methods in the context of the authors’ other works, other European literatures, and “the literary environment” of the time. The author argues that “one of the central purposes of our study was to augment the historical investigation of literary tradition with a more open sense of genre, in order to explain from literary tradition itself many of the new or different aspects that can be (and were in part) very well accommodated to genre fiction” (239).

Syrový claims that the *Berger* is not primarily a treatise against the novel. By combining his *histoire comique* and essayistic commentary, Sorel was trying to turn the novel into “something entirely different” as he himself wrote in the *Anti-Roman* (103). Syrový begins his study by describing the *Berger* and *Don Quixote* from seventeenth-century texts and presenting the contrasting voices of modern critics. Syrový then focuses on how Sorel works with the *histoire comique* genre and *imitatio* for verisimilitude and usefulness. He extensively quotes from the *Berger* and other works by Sorel. Syrový also explains how the didactic comments (*Remarques*) at the end of every chapter in Sorel’s revision *Anti-Roman* (1633–34) are essential for comprehending the *Berger*.

In the second part of the book, Syrový explores aspects of variation and transformation of genre in *Don Quixote*. Here he argues for the inclusion of the *romanzi cavallereschi* in the discussion. He dismisses the notion that *Don Quixote* is a parody and explores it rather in terms of Cervantes’s use of irony and shifts in genre. He stresses that the use of irony does not

negate the ideals of chivalry, since humor and irony appear in chivalric romance, in the Catalan *Tirant lo Blanch*, in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, and elsewhere. Syrový also illustrates conventions and strategies in the Italian *romanzi cavallereschi* with which Cervantes would have been familiar. He finds that the "mixture of genres can be perceived to have a generic model in the Italian tradition" (155).

The author draws from extensive secondary literature amply documented in footnotes that this reader found very valuable. Additionally, he provides a helpful appendix on Sorel's terminology, an extensive bibliography, and useful index of authors cited to facilitate further research.

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Comptes rendus de congrès / Conference Reports

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AS A CRITICAL APPROACH?

ICLA XXth Congress, Paris (France)

July 18 – July 24, 2013

Specialists of Comparative Literature have regularly questioned the nature of their discipline, its domains of application, and the possible developments of their field of research. In our era of globalization, the dialogue between theoretical constructs coming from Western countries and those from non-Western nations contributes to diversification and multiplies perspectives. The ICLA XXth Congress in Paris was organized in such a way as to provide a forum for discussions on the specific methods used by scholars in Comparative Literature, and a forum for confrontation between the ways in which comparative methods are used in the literary field and in other disciplines. What are the benefits of a comparative approach compared to other ways of investigation? Which approaches have legitimacy? Assessing the potentialities of comparative thinking, its assets but also its limits, was meant to allow us to better define the future orientations of the discipline, its contribution to the rise of new approaches and the leading role it can play in humanities and social sciences today and tomorrow.

In order to provide an opportunity for discussing what Comparative Literature brings to literary criticism and assessing the evolution of our discipline, the Paris Congress organizing committee had chosen to present the various Sessions of the Congress in the form of questions rather than fixed and assertive directions. Five questions thus structured the Congress Sessions:

1) *Comparative Literature: Just Another Comparative Science Among Others?*

Comparative literature is a discipline where literary texts are considered in terms of their relations to what is “beyond” or “at the border of” literature. Many studies have already explored connections between literature and the arts, between literature and social sciences. Given our orientations for the Congress, we were particularly attentive to adding to such studies an investigation of the connections between literature and so-called “hard sciences” insofar as these also rely on comparative methods (mathematics, geometry, biology, astronomy ...), as well as an investigation of what comparative studies can bring to the definition of the very concept of “literature.” How differently is such a question raised in the different parts of the world?

2) *Comparable and Incomparable Literary Objects?*

This question includes two questions in one. On the one hand, are there incomparable objects? To ask such a question entails exploring the limits of Comparative Literature. It also entails investigating the relevance of a “differential comparative approach”—i.e., a comparative approach that stresses differences, and thus contrasts with the quest for affinities and similarities, which to a large extent lies at the origins of comparative thinking. On the other hand, what can a comparative approach contribute in the context of a monographic study? What benefits can be drawn from comparative methods by criticism when working on a single author? Such questions may allow us to examine the nuances of meaning among the different names our discipline has borne across countries: “general literature,” “Comparative Literature,” “general and Comparative Literature,” “literary theory.”

3) *Comparative Literature and Translation Studies: Is Translation a Critical Approach?*

The recent growth of translation studies is a notable contribution to Comparative Literature, where translations are an essential tool for teachers and researchers. Beyond its immediate usefulness in presenting texts, in what way does translation represent a critical approach in itself? And how can comparative thinking contribute to a better understanding of the translator’s tasks? What role has translation played in the history of the relations between Western and non-Western areas, between “centers” and “peripheries”?

4) *New Theories, How and Why?*

How can Comparative Literature encourage new emerging literary theories? After the “nouvelle critique” in France and “new criticism” in the U.S., both of which raised questions concerning the assumptions at work in any critical approach, Comparative Literature calls for a more general reflection on the processes at work in literary creation. Examining the links between general literature and literary theory, and the relations between Western theories and non-Western theories were aspects of this question.

5) *Nations and Beyond: Linguistic Areas, Literary Continents, Globalization?*

What are the relations between comparative approaches insofar as they endeavor to positively conceptualize differences on the one hand, and “globalization” or the “global village” where it seems that all cultural references are bound to merge on the other? To what extent are categories such as “European literature,” “Western literature,” “World literature” legitimate and useful? How are the broad literary continents defined? Beyond continental borders, are linguistic areas more appropriate than geopolitical or cultural criteria in defining literary identities?



In addition to the Congress Sessions, the Congress also offered a great number of Workshops, organized along 11 themes:

1) *Facing the Old / Affronter l'Ancien* (with workshops such as “Early Modern Constructions of Europe,” “Comparative Early Modernities,” “La Littérature Comparée Périodes Anciennes (LCPA),” and “Antiquity/ Modernity: A Laboratory for Comparative Studies”).

2) *Translation Studies / Traduction, Traductologie* (with such workshops as “Translation and Self-Comparison,” “Translation at the Borders,” “Histoire des traductions et histoire littéraire,” “Atelier Montaigne: la traduction comme essai,” “La traduction comme création et comme critique,” “Traduire les témoignages de violences extrêmes,” and “Modernity and Translation, Modernity(ies) in Translation”).

3) *Multilingualism / Plurilinguisme* (with such workshops as “Translingual Literature” and “Plurilinguisme littéraire 1900”).

4) *Transcontinental Studies / Transcontinentales* (with such workshops as “Les rapports littéraires entre la France et le Brésil,” “Euro-

Amérique: Formation d'une culture médiatique mondiale," "Le comparatisme France/Brésil," "Lectures contemporaines du concept d'anthropophagie," and "Les Francophonies littéraires et les transcontinentalités").

5) *Theory and Practice in Comparative Literature / Théories et Pratiques Comparatistes* (with such workshops as "Comparing Queerly/Queering Comparison," "Critique et malentendu," "Ra-conter la théorie dans le roman," "Why Comparative Literature?," "The Colonial Legacies of Critical Methods," "Concepts and Comparative Criticism," "Comparative Literature in Europe : State of the Art," "La littérature à l'œuvre," "Enjeux méthodologiques et champs d'application d'une comparaison différentielle," "Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature," "The Ups and Downs that Western Literary Concepts have experienced on their Way to the East," "Old Theories, How and Why?," and "The Art of Not Thinking").

6) *Global / Mondial* (with such workshops as "Global Shen Congwen," "Décentrement," "Une littérature globale?," "La nouvelle vague de littérature mondiale," "Littérature (comparée) entre mondialisation et globalisation," and "Comparative Literature / World Literature: Reconsidered / Littérature comparée/littérature mondiale : nouveaux examens").

7) *Literature and the Arts, Intermediality / Littérature et arts, Inter-médialité* (with such workshops as "Les créateurs, la critique et le dialogue des arts," "Comparatisme et intermédialité," "Les arts de l'image et le comparatisme," "Comparative and Narrative Approaches in Comics Studies," and "Littérature et musique").

8) *Digital Literatures /La littérature et le numérique* (with such workshops as "Book—Material—Text," "Comparative Approaches to Digital Literatures," and "Comparable materialities").

9) *Literature and Science / Littérature et Sciences* (with such workshops as "Le mouvement symboliste et les maladies mentales," "Literature and Neurosciences: Consciousness and the Brain," "Literature and Medicine," "Science and Literature (1): Critical Approaches," "Science et littérature (2): XXe-XXIe siècles, transferts épistémologiques," and "Literature and the Life Sciences").

10) *Literature and Social Sciences / Littérature et sciences humaines* (“For a Cultural Comparatism,” “L’altérité comme dimension constitutive de la comparaison,” “Littérature et philosophie,” “Littérature et sagesse pratique de la vie,” “Literatures of Emotion,” “Affective Spaces: Theorizing Space and Emotion in Literature,” “Ethnoliterature and Ethnopoetics,” “Literature and Anthropology of Everyday Life,” “Religion and the Novel,” and “Force et vertu de la littérature face à l’histoire immédiate”).

11) *Literature and Territories / Littérature et territoires* (“Writing ‘Waiting Territories,’” “Geocriticism, Comparative Literature, and Beyond,” “Migration and Literature in Contemporary Europe,” “Orient/Occident (1): au-delà des essentialismes,” “Orient/ Occident (2) : Orientalism and Comparatism,” “Une poésie européenne ? Akhmatova et les poètes européens,” “Aesthetics and Politics in Turkey,” “The Fantastic across Borders,” “Comparative Literature: the Indian Hour,” “Beyond Geopolitical Boundaries: Korean/ Asian Cinema in Parallax Views,” “Literary and Cultural Interrelationships between India, its Neighbouring Countries and the World,” and “Arab Spring and the Perspectives of Arab Comparative Scholarship”).

The Congress welcomed over 1600 participants, of which roughly 1500 delivered papers. They came from all the continents and from about fifty countries. Hosting delegations coming from the Indian sub-continent, China, Korea, and Japan delegations, was a great accomplishment. The presentations were dispatched among 160 Congress sessions, distributed according to the five themes defined to structure the congress, and among 308 workshops organized, in particular but not exclusively, by the network of thirty-five partner universities and institutions.

Four plenary speakers delivered four exceptional lectures. We had chosen them because they come from varied horizons (literature, philosophy, law, neurosciences) and therefore contributed to open our discussions, beyond Comparative Literature, to other domains where comparative methods are also used. The opening lecture, on July 18, was given by Florence Delay, writer, translator, and member of the French Academy (Académie française). Entitled “Paysages et pays,” her talk took us through foreign countries and foreign texts (i.e., foreign to a French speaker), in order to reflect upon the benefits of comparing, of creating links and relations. On July 20, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, University

Professor at Columbia University, spoke at the Grand Amphithéâtre of the Sorbonne. In her lecture, “The Practice of Freedom is not Impractical,” she presented her own trajectory and the way she sees the evolutions of Comparative Literature today. The lecture given, on July 22, by Jean-Paul Costa, former President of the European Court of Human Rights (2007–2011), explored the uses of comparative methods in Law. And on July 23, Jean-Pierre Changeux, Professor of Neurobiology, Member of the Institut Pasteur and of the Sciences Academy (*Académie des Sciences*), presented his neurobiological theory of the artistic experience.

Finally, in addition to this very stimulating intellectual program, a rich program of typically Parisian social events was organized, including the visit of the Sorbonne, a reception at the City Hall, another reception in the Main Reception Room of the Paris University Chancellery, as well as a farewell dinner-cruise on the Seine.

Videos of the plenary lectures as well as pictures taken during the Congress can be found on the Congress website: <http://icla-ailec-2013.paris-sorbonne.fr/>.

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Nouvelles des Comités d'Etudes et de Recherche / Research Committee Updates

RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON LITERARY THEORY

1. *Annual Workshop (2014)*

The 2014 workshop was held at the University of Osaka, Japan on 7–8 April. At the meeting, fifteen papers were given—ten by members of the committee, one by a former member, one by an eminent local colleague and three by nominated candidates. The theme of the conference was *Literature and Policing*: how “policing,” however interpreted, impacts on literature, how literature participates in policing and the consequent implications for literary theory. Over the course of the two days, a wide range of approaches to the topic were presented, which were theoretical as well as historical and above all, cross-cultural.

2. *Future Meeting: Pécs, Hungary (21–23 May 2015)*

Following decisions reached at the business meeting in Osaka, the 2015 workshop will be held in Pécs, Hungary. Peter Hajdu will be host and the topic will be on “Realities of Fiction.” The detailed schedule will be finalized in the next couple of months when the results of local funding requests have been allocated. The Committee will also hold its annual business meeting in Pécs.

3. *Publications*

Papers from the 2013 Paris Meeting “The Art of Not Thinking” has been published as a special issue, titled *Beside Thinking*, by *The Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* (March 2014). Six papers from the Paris meeting and a forum essay by Terry Eagleton comprise this fortieth anniversary issue of *CRCL*. The papers were edited by Sowon S. Park, who also wrote the introduction. The issue is available on Project Muse.

Papers from the 2011 Munich workshop, “Literary Theory and the Sciences,” will be published by the journal *Neohelicon* in 2014.

Papers from the 2014 workshop will be edited by Takayuki Yokota-Murakami and published as a book. He is in the process of negotiating with publishers.

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RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The Research Committee was founded in 2006 and has met at the World Congresses at Rio de Janeiro, Seoul, and Paris, as well as additional workshops held at Ghent, Madrid, Bremen, and Tel-Aviv. Its goals have been to facilitate discussion among comparatists from around the world with an interest in the development of literature in the age of “new media.” While a wide variety of topics have been broached, central areas of individual and mutual research have included preservation strategies, scholarly accessibility, classroom usage of digital texts, and the poetics of new forms of expression in the literary tradition, from audio-visual poetry to digital games. The Committee’s most recent publication has been the special issue “Digital Literature: Aesthetics, Didactics, Technology” of *Literary and Linguistic Computing* (vol. 27, no. 3, 2012). Last year’s workshop, which presented twelve papers from members and non-members of the Committee at the Paris Congress, met with overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic feedback. A collection of seven contributions to the workshop has been commissioned for publication in the Congress Proceedings.

With the end of its mandate approaching in 2015, the Committee is currently working on plans for continuing work in different ways in the future. The favored project is a book, set to chronicle the different developments of digital literature in various regions of the world and their inter-relations, i.e. similar in topic to the final volume of the Coordinating Committee’s CHLEL project, yet with a different focus and approach. As soon as the project moves into its next phase, collaborators will be invited to join directly as well as through a call for contributions published

through the usual channels. For more information on the Research Committee, please contact its chair at hans-joachim.backe@rub.de.

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RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON GENDER STUDIES

The Research Committee on Gender Study addresses critically the comparative study of gender and sexuality through organizing innovative seminar programs at the ICLA and at other conferences, such as the American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA). The Committee supports research and publication in the relatively new fields of comparative gender and comparative queer studies. We have over sixty members representing all six continents of the world. The work of the Committee defines “comparative” in its broadest sense as an approach to the study of literature and culture that includes: a) traditional comparisons across national and linguistic borders as these relate specifically to gender and/or sexuality; b) comparative work across historical, postcolonial, and transnational contexts focusing on gender and/or sexuality; and c) scholarship using gender and/or sexuality as sites of comparison themselves, or in relation to race, class, ethnicity, national and religious affiliation, and other sites of difference. We also support research on the gender and queer politics of textual and/or cultural translation in all historical periods. The work from our seminars is published in international peer-review journals and in edited collections with major academic presses. Anyone with a scholarly interest in comparative gender/queer studies is invited to join the Committee, and we especially welcome graduate students.

Recent work of the Committee includes a three-day seminar “Gender, Sexuality, and Geopolitics: New Affinities/New Comparisons” held at the ACLA annual conference in New York in March 2014. The seminar examined how various forms of locationality impact the politics of gender and sexuality; the extent to which geopolitical space is determined by the nation-state, and the concomitant privileges and limitations from gender and queer perspectives; and how migratory and diasporic movements across borders “queer” hegemonic understandings

of geopolitical spaces. A new publication, which is a special issue of the journal *Comparative Literature Studies* on the gender and queer politics of translation, appeared in June 2014.

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RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON MAPPING MULTILINGUALISM IN WORLD LITERATURE

This project aims toward a mobile cartography of literary multilingualism in different geocultural areas and historical eras of world literature, with special respect to imaginary and ideological paradigms, their convergences and divergences, and their constancy and variability. Furthermore, the project is interested in the concrete stylistic procedures of interlingual discourse, including the added value of multilingual literature in comparison with monolingual and with translated literature, and finally their interaction with audio-visual media.

Recent Meetings and Publications

1) Besides the publication of the volume *Imaginaire et idéologie du plurlinguisme littéraire et numérique* (LIT 2014), based on the homonymous symposium held at Macerata University (2011), a symposium took place at the University of California San Diego (USA, 2012) on the theme of collective and individual “Migrancy and Multilingualism,” including the graphic novel and the *Odyssey*. The symposium dealt with the political, social, psychological, communicational, medial and poetical aspects of multilingual migration literature in the Americas, Europe, and the Near East, with works of Afroamerican, Amerindian, South and North American, Maghreb, Turkish, Jewish and Palestinian, South-Tyrolean, and Chinese authors, in addition to the multilingual rewriting of the *Odyssey* in different eras and areas of World Literature. The contributions to this symposium will be published by the Berlin LIT Verlag, co-edited by the Taiwanese host Ping-hui Liao and Alfons Knauth.

2) A workshop on “Figures of Transcontinental Multilingualism” was held at Jadavpur University in Kolkata (India, January 2013) in the framework of the XIIIth Biennial Conference of the Comparative Literature Association of India (CLAI). In accordance with the Trans-Indian

focus of the conference, the workshop gave a special attention to the ambivalent figure of East-West India and the translation processes between the two Indias in the East and the West. The proceedings of the workshop will be published in India, co-edited by Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta and Alfons Knauth.

3) Members of the Committee participated in the workshop „Plurilinguisme littéraire 1900“ held at the ICLA / AILC Congress in Paris (July 2013). Papers addressed the tension between intralingual and interlingual multilingualism in French symbolism.

Future Plans

1) The constitution of a specific *interlect* through intralingual and interlingual, textual and intertextual, continental and transcontinental multilingualism in European literature, based upon the intrinsic link between creativity and heteroglossy, is the topic of the chapter “The Interlect of European Literature” in the forthcoming CHLEL volume *Conceptualizing European Literature*, edited by Vivian Liska and Thomas Nolden. It has been inspired by the intensive dialogue within the Research Committee on “Mapping Multilingualism in World Literature.”

2) A multilingual series titled *poethik polyglott*, edited by the former chairman and two collaborators of the Research Committee (Britta Benert, Rainier Grutman, Alfons Knauth), has just been launched by LIT Verlag (Berlin). The series comprises critical studies, written in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese or Spanish, on the creative use of multilingualism in literature, media and translation.

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RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON LITERARY AND CULTURAL INTER-RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INDIA, ITS NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, AND THE WORLD

1. Presentations and publication of the papers presented at special workshop at the ICLA Congress at Paris, July 19–24, 2013

Eight articles have been accepted for publication by the Editorial Committee publishing the proceedings of the Paris Conference. Fifteen presentations by the scholars from India and adjoining countries such as Pakistan,

Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, as well as North America focusing on the theme of the project were made at a special session held in Paris. I. N. Choudhuri, Tagore Chair, University of Edinburgh addressed the opening session. The workshop looked closely at literary and cultural relationships from the perspective of socio-cultural and religious consciousness in South Asia and the world.

2. Introduction of three academic courses relating to the development of the project

A course in Nepali Language and Literature at undergraduate level in the department of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University was introduced. The UGC-Centre of Advanced Study (CAS) in Comparative Literature (Phase 2) of Jadavpur University facilitated this course by holding a program with Southfield College Darjeeling and preparing for translation of Nepali stories into English, Hindi, and Bangla through a two week workshop in September 2011. A course text for Nepali literature in translation entitled *Call of the Hills* (eds. Sayantan Dasgupta and Kabita Lama [Centre of Advanced Study, Jadavpur University]) was published in English; a similar volume in Bangla is also scheduled for publication.

A course in Urdu Language and Literature at the undergraduate level was introduced at Comparative Literature Department at Jadavpur University in collaboration with scholars from Jamia Millia Islamia. Translation of literary essays from Urdu into English in collaboration with visiting scholar Bilal Hashmi, New York University was undertaken. Proceedings from the workshop will be published soon.

A course on Literature in Cross-Cultural Contexts, involving Indian literature of the subcontinent and the journey of world literature through translation was undertaken by the Centre for Translation Studies at the Indira Gandhi National Open University in New Delhi with Prof. A. K. Singh as its coordinator.

3. Recent publications related to the project

Travelling with the Namah by Ipshita Chanda (Centre of Advanced Study), Jadavpur University, Kolkata, 2013.

Raatbhor Jharer Tandob: Bharatiya Nepali Sahityer Pathyoboi (The Storm Raged All Night: A Coursebook of Indian Nepali Literature) by Kabita Lama and Seemanitni Gupta is an anthology of Nepali-language short stories in Bangla translation. The book is published by Jadavpur

University under its CAS in Comparative Literature (Phase 2) program and contains twenty short stories by various writers.

Forgiveness: Between Memory and History is a forthcoming monograph that explores the two major discourses of violence and non-violence and explores the cultural and philosophical traditions as well as the contemporary discourses on forgiveness and peace. The special focus remains on the subcontinent and the ethical dimension relating to the other.

4. *Recent Meetings*

A symposium on South Asian Perspectives of Comparative Studies: Humanities and Social Sciences was conducted by the South Asia Study Centre, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur in collaboration with the Comparative Literature Association of India during March 20–21, 2014.

The inaugural session included welcome by Karori Singh (Director, South Asia Study Centre, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur) and then addressed by Dev Swarup (Vice Chancellor, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur). A report followed by Chandra Mohan (General Secretary, CLAI) and the keynote address was by Harish Trivedi, who spoke on “South Asia: New Conceptualization.” Thanks followed by Shashi Upadhyaya (SASC, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur).

5. *Upcoming Conferences in 2015*

Special plenary and panel sessions relating to the Research Committee will constitute a significant part of the academic program of the forthcoming CLAI International Conference on “Culture, Arts, and Socio-political Movements in South Asia: Comparative Perspectives.” It will be hosted by the Centre of Rajasthan Study and the Department of Urdu and Persian in collaboration with the Comparative Literature Association of India at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur during the first week of March 2015.

We are pleased to announce that Hans Bertens, ICLA President, has graciously accepted our invitation to be the Chief Guest at the opening of this conference in Jaipur. A large number of eminent scholars and members of ICLA research committees will also participate in the panel sessions at the conference. This event will attract scholarly participation from neighboring countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Afghanistan, and other SAARC countries. The sub-themes will include the interrelations of polity-economy-culture-arts-literature; religious

and philosophical movements; literary dialogues; socio-political movements; and fragmentation of composite culture in India, South Asian countries, and the world.

A well-planned academic program will be organized in conjunction with the SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation) and with Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). On this occasion we will have a literary festival of writers and poets from neighboring countries and the world. The usage of common languages will be under consideration. It is firmly believed and aptly stated: “We share Urdu and Punjabi with Pakistan. We share Nepali with Nepal. We share Bengali with Bangladesh. We share Tamil with Sri Lanka and we share English with everybody else.” Shared language provides a great scope of connectivity and shared traditions. It involves our culture, our art, and our music and provides vibrancy to the relationships between art and culture in the Indian subcontinent and the world.

CHANDRA MOHAN, CHAIR (c.mohan.7@hotmail.com)

*General Secretary, CLAI and Advisor, International Higher Education,
Central University of Gujarat, Ahmedabad (India)*



RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON SCRIPTURAL REASONING AND COMPARATIVE STUDIES

The Research Committee on Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies has organized several meetings in China to promote the Scriptural Reasoning movement among Chinese academics. In September 2008, at the 9th Triennial CCLA Conference and International Symposium, Yang Huilin established the Committee and conducted a panel entitled “Comparative Literature and Religious Studies” as its first activity, introducing “Scriptural Reasoning” to Chinese scholars in the area of literary studies. In August 2011, the Committee supported “The International Summer Institute on Humanities and Theology,” an annual program run by the School of Liberal Arts, Renmin University of China. This support allowed for a focus on “Scriptural Reasoning” for the first time during the annual event. Scholars from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Switzerland, Slovakia, the United Kingdom conducted lively discussions on the possibility and challenges for Scriptural Reasoning in the Chinese context. Selected papers were translated and

subsequently published in the *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* (issue 26). In April 2011 and October 2012, the Committee combined the visits of two founders of the Scriptural Reasoning field, Professor Peter Ochs and Professor David Ford, into its program and held seminars to foster open dialogues between Chinese and international scholars.¹ In June 2012, Committee members Yang Huilin and Geng Youzhuang attended a conference on “China and the West: Religion, Politics and Ethics” held at King’s College in London, at which Scriptural Reasoning was not only discussed in conjunction with literature and philosophy but also with the logic of relation and modes of reasoning. Following that experience, in August 2012, a group of scholars from Scotland and America came to Beijing and held a Beijing-Scottish Seminar on Scriptural Reasoning, which was also supported by the Committee. These scholars engaged Yang Huilin’s paper on “Scriptural Reasoning and Hermeneutic Circle.” In July 2013, at the ICLA Congress, twelve scholars from all parts of the world gathered together in Paris to discuss Scriptural Reasoning. In August 2013, the Committee supported the 9th “Humanities and Theology” Summer Institute in Shantou, Guangdong Province. Its theme was “Theology and Contemporary Philosophy,” and Scriptural Reasoning was focal point of lively discussion. In September 2014, the 11th Triennial CCLA Conference and International Symposium will be held in Yanbian, Jilin Province, and the Committee will host the panel on “Comparative Literature and Religious Studies.”

Scriptural Reasoning was originally initiated and promoted in the West by scholars of Abrahamic traditions; now it extends to the East and is applied by Chinese scholars in a Chinese context to seek wisdom and self-understanding in a new age. Such an exchange and expansion has broadened the definition and domain of Scriptural Reasoning, something celebrated by both the field’s originators as well as more recent participants. The Committee wishes to establish a platform where philosophers and scholars of Comparative Literature could cross their boundaries and dialogue together. It is a common principle that Scriptural Reasoning does not dictate specific readings or interpretations of scriptural texts. Rather, Scriptural Reasoning provides a way to remind the reader of the need to acknowledge and evade one’s own cultural blindness. Though reading texts is an unconscious action for each reader, the purpose of Scriptural Reasoning is to find how “the presence of the similar perfectness might be variously identified,”² to dissolve any kind

of “pre-assurance,”³ so that one may realize that it is only through one’s own limitedness rather than self-righteousness that one may reach truth.

It has been proved by Scriptural Reasoning scholars at the Paris Conference that a gathering and close discussion among Western and Eastern scholars can be profoundly instructive and eye-opening—the act of one literary religious discourse reading and classifying another can be deeply inspiring. The Committee believes that scripture as literature could expand the interest in Comparative Literature and enrich the literacy of literature students. What is more, comparative scripture could become a sub-field of Comparative Literature. It is believed by scholars from both fields that Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature enable religious scholars to discover their literary roots while simultaneously expanding the field of comparative literature. Therefore, the Committee would support academic efforts that focus on literature, philosophy, and religion. The recent and future issues of *The Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* in 2014 and 2015 will keep Scriptural Reasoning as its main topic, as reflected in the titles of these issues: “Moving Boundaries” (31, Spring 2014), “Trajectories of the Classics” (32, Autumn 2014), and “Controversies over the Translation of Names” (33, Spring 2014).

YANG HUILIN, CHAIR, (yanghuilin@ruc.edu.cn)

ZHANG JING, SECRETARY, (jing.cathy.zhang@ruc.edu.cn)
Renmin University of China (China)

Notes

1. See David Ford, “Flamenco, Tai Chi and Six-Text Scriptural Reasoning: Report on a Visit to China,” October 2012, <http://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/en/resources/papers/sr-in-china>.

2. David Ford, “An Inter-Faith Wisdom: Scriptural Reasoning between Jews, Christians and Muslims.” *Christian Wisdom: Desiring God and Learning in Love*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 273–303.

3. David Ford, “An Inter-Faith Wisdom,” 273–303.



RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON LITERATURE AND NEUROSCIENCE

This committee is continuing its interdisciplinary investigation of higher brain functions such as memory, consciousness and creativity. Since the group sessions on consciousness at the Paris ICLA Congress

that I directed in July 2013, I have been planning and organizing a two-and-a-half-day symposium for this October 21–24, 2014 at the Banbury Center of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory on Long Island, New York.

This next conference brings together comparatist scholars and neuroscientists for the interdisciplinary investigation of creativity. The neuroscientists will describe the functioning of the brain in creative acts of scientific discovery or aesthetic production. The comparatists will describe instances of creativity that they analyze in the composition of major literary works, musical compositions or works of visual art. During the conference, two keynote lectures will be given, one by the musician and composer of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (NY) Bruce Adolphe and the other by filmmaker and molecular biologist Alexis Gambis; each will give an account of his own process of creativity.

Topics covered by the conference will include: 1) mechanisms of creativity: how creativity is linked to brain structure and function; tracking creativity in the brain through neuroimaging; 2) components of creativity: memory, emotion, decision-making and intelligence; 3) outliers and creativity: pathology and genius; 4) creativity and its reception and environment; 5) interdisciplinary methodologies for the study of creativity.

The thirteen committed speakers and participants are: neuroscientists Jean-Pierre Changeux, Robert Stickgold, Paul Matthews, Mark Beeman, Rex Jung, Nancy Andreasen (also a Renaissance scholar); neurophilosopher John Bickle, art critic and history of science scholar Erne Fiorentini; and comparatist/literary critics Suzette Henke, Peter Schneck, Mark Hussey, Donald Wehrs, and Suzanne Nalbantian.

After this conference, I plan to coedit a volume on this topic with my neuroscience collaborator Paul M. Matthews of Imperial College, London. We will use selected papers from this conference and will solicit others as well.

SUZANNE NALBANTIAN, CHAIR (rey.sn@juno.com)
Long Island University (USA)



RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON THE CULTURAL AND LITERARY HISTORY OF THE DREAM

The dream as a basic anthropological phenomenon has fascinated and puzzled people in all cultures and ages. This has led to a multitude of

theoretical writings trying to explain the origin and function of dreams and to decipher their meaning (“dream discourse”) and to factual and fictional representations of dream in literature and many other media.

Our Research Committee aims to study this phenomenon in as many cultures and periods as possible. It began with a workshop on “Writing the Dream” held at the ICLA Paris Congress (2013), which will be supplemented by a second workshop on the same subject in Berlin (March 2015). Our next major project will be a symposium in Mulhouse (September 2015) on “Theorizing the Dream.”

We are actively looking for committee members with a special interest and competence in dream-discourse and literary dreams in Ancient Greece and Egypt, as well as in India, China, Japan, Korea, South America, and Africa.

BERNARD DIETERLE, CO-CHAIR (bernard.dieterle@uha.fr)
Mulhouse (France)

MANFRED ENGEL, CO-CHAIR (manfred.engel@mx.uni-saarland.de)
Universität des Saarlandes, Saarbrücken (Germany)

Nouvelles des Comités / Committee Updates

BALAKIAN PRIZE COMMITTEE

See announcement on p. 127.

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

2014 update on the Work of the Coordinating Committee for the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages. Submitted May 27, 2014, by Marcel Cornis-Pope (mcornis@vcu.edu), President of CHLEL.

1) Publications with Benjamins

At the July 17, 2013 meeting of the Executive Council of ICLA in Paris, Margaret Higonnet and myself delivered a report on the activities of the Coordinating Committee for the Comparative History of the Literatures in European Languages. We stated that there had been many positive reviews of the volumes published by the Committee. We also noted that the five-year report of the International Academic Union on the activities of the Committee was very favorable. Many projects are making great progress, leading to some major expenses for translation, indexing, and editing in 2013-14. Therefore the Executive Council proposed to award the Coordinating Committee a budget of 6,000 Euros. The grant of this subsidy was unanimously accepted.

Regarding the various publications projects that the Coordinating Committee has sponsored recently, the Benjamins website provides blurbs and selective Google reviews of our volumes. Sets of volumes can now be bought at a discount and all volumes can be purchased in digital form. The volumes devoted to the *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe* continue to garner reviews, which have been posted separately on the CHLEL site. Earlier reviews can be found at the website under “Comparative Literature History Series,” where each title appears, followed by links to the reviews. See <http://www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=CHLEL> Our ten current projects continue to make significant progress, as directors gather contributions, translate, and copy-edit them. One volume has been favorably reviewed by two external specialists and one member of the Coordinating Committee and is undergoing final revisions for publication. Entitled *Literary Hybrids in the Age of Multimedia Expression: Crossing Borders, Crossing Genres*, this volume edited by Marcel Cornis-Pope is 750 pages long and covers a broad range of topics (literature and other media such as film, visual art, digital work, sound work, etc.) and geocultural areas (Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, the Orient, Africa and the Americas).

Other book manuscripts that are in advanced stage, some ready to be reviewed by our committee and designated external readers are: the first volume of “The Comparative History of Nordic Cultures” focused on “Scopes and Practices” and edited Steven P. Sondrup and Mark B. Sanderg; vol. 2 of this project will be assembled during 2014. The second volume of “A Comparative History of the Literatures of the Iberian peninsula,” edited by César Domínguez, Anxo Abuín, and Ellen Sapega, is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2014. By the end of the summer we will also receive a full draft of the Orality Project as a challenge to comparative literary history, coedited by Daniel Chamberlain and J. Edward Chamberlin.

Other projects in different stages of elaboration include: César Domínguez’s *Medieval Comparatism / Comparatist Medievalism*; delayed because of César Domínguez Prieto’s work on the Iberian project, this volume will hopefully be ready for outside reader review at the beginning of 2015. Fridrun Rinner and Franca Sinopoli have solicited position papers for the transnational project on *Migrant Literatures* and have collected abstracts for the case studies section of their volume. In December 2014, the editors and members of this research group will meet at Sapienza University (Rome-Italy) to discuss the collected articles and to organize the peer review process. They hope to submit

the volume for review and publication in the summer of 2015. Also targeted for completion in 2015 is the first volume of the “History of Transatlantic Literatures in European Languages in the XXth Century,” edited by Jean Marc Moura. Two more volumes are in advanced stage of conceptualization: “La Nouvelle Cultures” (Renaissance II), edited by Eva Kushner and Conrad Eisenbichler, has most articles in place but some are still pending or in early draft. “Conceptualizing European Literature,” volume edited by Vivian Liska and Thomas Nolden has gone through several reconceptualizations, not unusual for a volume meant for our problem series. In similar ways, another volume targeted for the problem series on realism redefined, edited by Margaret Higonnet, Dirk Götttsche, and Patrizia Lombardo, is currently undergoing a significant overhaul of its conceptual structure. A special conference held in London in the latter part of May and a special panel held at the Aix en Provence Conference in June, helped clarify further the structure of this volume and recruit additional contributors to it.

A listing of our current projects is now posted on our web site at <<http://www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=.CHLEL&n=76849>>. Detailed descriptions of each project are posted at <<http://www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=.CHLEL&n=115749>>. Manuscripts must be print-ready by August, in order to appear the same year.

2) Website and Editorial Review (www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=.CHLEL)

The website maintained at the University of Antwerp by our Treasurer Vivian Liska and her excellent assistant Jan Morrens effectively supports the work of the committee. The “members only” section contains ongoing editorial information such as guidelines for editors, project reports and comments, planning information about our annual meetings, and the history of the committee’s work. On the public face of the website, visitors can find our mission statement, links to the publications by Benjamins together with links to book reviews, a list of committee members, and the by-laws of the committee. In addition, the outgoing Secretary Svend Erik Larsen has gathered and posted short descriptions of each current project to make our continuing work more accessible.

3) Election of Committee for 2013–2016

Secretary Svend Erik Larsen chaired our election committee and conducted the ballot. We thank him as well as Linda Hutcheon and Sandra

Bermann for their work as nominators and as scrutineers, and welcomed the six new members who joined us last year.

The new committee, effective at the end of our meeting on July 15, 2013, will serve between 2013–2016. The new Coordinating Committee owes a world of debt and gratitude to the outgoing officers of the Coordinating Committee: President Margaret R. Higonnet, secretary Svend Erik Larsen, as well as members Inocência Mata, Angela Esterhammer, Anders Pettersson, and Fridrun Rinner.

MARCEL CORNIS-POPE, PRESIDENT

*Coordinating Committee of the Comparative History of Literatures in
European Languages
Virginia Commonwealth University (USA)*



NOMINATING COMMITTEE

CHAIR: TBD



RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The AILC/ICLA Research Committee members are Zhao Baisheng (Peking University), Sibylle Baumbach (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz), Montserrat Cots (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Bala Venkat Mani (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Mariano Siskind (Harvard University), Jola Škulj (Inštitut za slovensko literaturo in literarne vede), Mads Rosendhal Thomsen (Aarhus Universitet), and Hein Viljoen (Noordwest-Universiteit). The Committee is chaired by César Domínguez, who may be reached at cesar.dominguez@usc.es.

According to the Statutes of the ICLA, the Research Committee “aims to examine proposals for research projects under the aegis of the ICLA, monitors activity of existing research projects sponsored or recognized by the Association, and investigates ways to stimulate and support research efforts of special relevance to the work of the Association.”

Scholars who want to submit proposals for new committees under the aegis of the AILC/ICLA should send a document to the Chair of the Research Committee that includes the following:

1. A short description of the proposed project, with a clear statement of the topic under investigation (500 words maximum).

2. A more detailed description of the project field, including an overview of the project field, the project rationale, objectives, and a timeline for implementation (2000 words maximum).
3. Team composition, including brief biographic profiles (200 words per bio).
4. Information regarding project connections and alliances with both local and international institutions.
5. Information regarding the research and teaching outcomes of the project.
6. Information regarding activity plans (a detailed schedule of planned activities for the next three seminars, workshops, etc.) and publications.
7. Information regarding measures to make the project visible (media-dissemination, public outreach).

As for ongoing committees, annual reports on the status of the project (including activities undertaken), publications, and information on dissemination should be submitted to the Executive Council's representative before its annual meeting.

Since 2011, the AILC/ICLA Research Committee has approved the following projects: "Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies" (2011), "Literature and Neuroscience" (2011), "Literary and Cultural Inter-relationships between India, Its Neighbouring Countries and the World" (2011), and "Literary and Cultural History of the Dream" (2013). A new proposal was submitted in June 2014, and is currently under assessment.

CÉSAR DOMÍNGUEZ, CHAIR
Universidad de Santiago de Compostela (Spain)



STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Jean-Marc Moura (*France*) jm.moura@free.fr



TRANSLATION COMMITTEE

The Translation Committee met this year at the ACLA (March 20–24, 2014) where it sponsored a "double seminar" (six sessions) of papers on "Literary Translation in the Capital(s)." The papers were wide-ranging and excellent, including contributions by scholars at many stages of their careers, dealing with a broad sweep of topics and languages. The Committee also met separately for a lunch meeting on Friday, March 20. We

named a Vice-Chair and a Secretary and discussed plans for our next meeting, which will be held at the 2015 ACLA. We also agreed that the title for the set of sessions sponsored by our Committee at next year's ACLA will be "The Rights of Translation." A Call for Papers will be issued over the summer. Anyone interested in contributing to next year's conference or in joining the Translation Committee of the ICLA should write to Sandra Bermann, Chair at sandralb@princeton.edu.

SANDRA BERMANN, CHAIR
Princeton University (USA)

In Memoriam

JOHN BOENING



John W. Boening, a respected comparatist, who contributed greatly to research on the impact of German literature, died June 18, 2014, in Toledo, Ohio. A committed member of the ICLA, he participated in numerous conferences, including the last Congress held in Paris in July 2013. He served the ICLA in several capacities over the years, as its Treasurer, as Editor of the *ICLA Bulletin*, and as head of both the Committee on Structures and the Nominating Committee. We learned of his sudden passing with great emotion and extend our condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues.

John Boening taught Comparative Literature at the University of Toledo on both the undergraduate and graduate level from 1969 until his retirement in 2006. His major work, the commentated ten volumes titled the *Reception of Classical German Literature in England, 1760–1860: A Documentary History from Contemporary Periodicals* (1977), remains the foundational resource for research in the interchange between these two important cultural regions from pre-Romanticism to the Biedermeier and Victorian age and is still an essential reference in

the field. In addition, his works include numerous articles and countless contributions published in international journals and conference proceedings devoted to Comparative Literature. John Boening faithfully fulfilled the administrative tasks entrusted to him by his university, where he served for many years as Chair of the Department of English.

John Boening was born June 15, 1942 in Hamburg (Germany) and soon thereafter moved to the United States with his parents. He grew up in New York where he enrolled at the Stuyvesant High School and at Pace College, where he earned his B.A. He continued his studies at the University of Maryland where he received his M.A. before completing his doctorate in the field of Comparative Literature at Indiana University. He was married in 1983 and had one daughter.

John Boening will be remembered as a man of great erudition and profound humanity, who always offered a listening ear to his appreciative students and colleagues. We deeply regret the loss of a true global citizen and valued friend.

GERALD GILLESPIE AND MANFRED SCHMELING
*Stanford University, Emeritus (USA) /
 Saarland University, Emeritus (Germany)*



GURBHAGAT SINGH



We are very sad to note that Professor Gurbhagat Singh, a veteran scholar and past president of the CLAI (Comparative Literature Association of India), passed away on April 4, 2014 at New Delhi.

Professor Gurbhagat Singh made significant contributions to the development of Comparative Literature in India and abroad. His books: *Western Poetics and Eastern Thought* (1984), *Transcultural Poetics* (1988), and *Literature and Folklore after Poststructuralism* (1991) received high acclaim. In 1990, he hosted the leading comparatists and the expert group from the Executive of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) at an international seminar on Comparative Literature at the Panjabi University, Patiala, where he had been a Professor of English and Head of the Department for a long time. That initiative resulted in publication of his edited volume entitled *Differential Multilogue: Comparative Literature and National Literatures* (1991), which played a key role in the development of Comparative Literature at international and national levels. Until his death, he worked with full passion and commitment to complete his monumental work on the postmodernist translation of *Guru Granth Sahib* in a comparative framework. Professor Gurbhagat Singh's intellectual and academic legacy as well as his selfless pursuit of knowledge will continue to serve as a model for younger scholars to follow. The communities of the CLAI and ICLA mourn his passing.

CHANDRA MOHAN
General Secretary, CLAI (India)



JEAN WEISGERBER

Jean Weisgerber, the internationally-acclaimed Belgian comparatist who worked in close collaboration with the ICLA for many years, passed away on December 8, 2013. Born in Brussels in 1924, he completed a doctoral thesis on W. H. Auden in 1951 at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, where he became Professor of Dutch and Comparative Literature in 1957. His remarkable teaching talents inspired generations of students, including this writer. Jean Weisgerber then rapidly established himself as an authority on Flemish literature, in particular on the work of Hugo Claus. In 1967, he became a member of the Royal Academy of Dutch Language and Literature (Koninglijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde). In 1994, the Flemish Catholic University of Louvain (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) awarded him an honorary doctorate. Early on in his

career, in the 1960s, he served as Secretary General of the ICLA. He presided over the Association's Coordinating Committee on the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages in the late 1980s. He also chaired ICLA's nominating committee in the early 1990s. In the field of Comparative Literature, his work focused primarily on magical realism, as reflected in his seminal edited collection *Le Réalisme magique: roman, peinture et cinéma* (1987). He was also widely regarded as an expert on avant-garde literary movements. He edited two volumes on this topic in the ICLA series on the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages, entitled *Les avant-gardes littéraires au XXème siècle* (1984). He was also deeply interested in intertextual studies, which he reconceptualized in his *Faulkner and Dostoevsky: Influence and Confluence* (1974; first published in French). Later in his career, he undertook research on the rococo style in literature and the arts. His book, *Le Rococo: beaux-arts et littérature* is a major contribution to this field of study (2001). Even as he advanced in age, Jean Weisergerber never ceased to broaden the scope of his research. After turning 80, he wrote a series of monographs on thoroughly new topics, which I was privileged to publish in my "New Comparative Poetics" series. The fourth of these monographs, *L'Épée, la pomme et le mouchoir: Essai sur les objets dans la tragédie européenne du XVIIème siècle* (2009) turned out to be his last book. A few days before his death, a new French version of his earlier book on Faulkner and Dostovesky was republished in Brussels. I cannot imagine a more fitting homage for such an admirable and versatile comparatist as Jean Weisergerber.

MARC MAUFORT
Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium)

Prix Balakian / Balakian Prize

The ICLA and the ICLA Balakian Prize Committee are pleased to announce Aurélia Hetzel as the winner of the 2013 Anna Balakian Prize for her book *La Reine de Saba: Des traditions au mythe littéraire*. An honorable mention was also presented to Shun-Liang Chao for his book *Rethinking the Concept of the Grotesque: Crashaw, Baudelaire, Magritte*.

La Reine de Saba: Des traditions au mythe littéraire

“Of all the books we saw, *La Reine de Saba* by Aurélia Hetzel impressed us the most because of its range: European, African, Jewish, Islamic, Christian cultures and more are covered. We like the way the author moves with ease among the various traditions, which still must remain of great importance in comparative studies. Her knowledge of criticism is impressive, ranging from well-known American-based biblical critics such as Robert Alter to Europeans such as Pierre Brunel and others. It is an ambitious study, a big book, one of the largest we saw. Myth criticism may have fallen by the wayside in recent years, but it remains as an important way to compare and contrast. The writing is fluent and unpretentious. It is a study that is original and innovative and at the same time solidly rooted in a complex scholarly tradition. It is a convincing testimony of scholarly erudition, it deals with subjects from different cultures and traditions in a way that may be regarded as a model for comparative literature studies, and it is based on a broad knowledge from different discursive and aesthetic sources.”

Rethinking the Concept of the Grotesque: Crashaw, Baudelaire, Magritte

“Shun-Liang Chao’s book has an astonishing sweep, going from the baroque and metaphysical Crashaw to the pre-modern romantic Baudelaire and finally settling on the surrealist Magritte. It is a daring work and the inter-artistic connections (Bosch, Arcimboldo, Goya, and many more) are impressive. This selection of the figures for comparison was brilliant, extending over a range of three centuries, two cultures, and two artistic media: a metaphysical poet, a symbolist, and a surrealist. The survey of the history of the grotesque was thorough and generally well conceived, and the analysis of each of the three figures considered was truly a ‘mutual illumination,’ yielding insights into the work of each of the three that would not have been possible without the comparison.”

Appel à soumissions / Call for Submissions

The Anna Balakian Prize, consisting of US\$1000, is awarded to promote scholarly research by younger comparatists and to honor the memory of Professor Anna Balakian. It will be awarded at the 2016 AILC / ICLA Congress in Vienna for an outstanding first book in comparative literature studies by a single author under forty years of age. Books published from January 2013 through December 2015 will be eligible.

RULES FOR SUBMITTING BOOKS:

1. Books can be submitted if they are a first book in comparative literature studies by an author under forty years of age at the time of the book's publication.
2. The book must have a literary-critical approach that deals with areas such as the following through a comparative optic: literary aesthetics or poetics, literature and the arts, literary movements, historical or biographical influences on literature, cross-fertilization of regional or national literatures, or literary criticism on an international plane. Studies that are primarily ethnic or gender-related or that are restricted to single literature are not eligible for the Prize. Electronic publications are excluded.
3. The winner will be invited to attend the AILC / ICLA Congress in order to receive the award. Travel costs will be reimbursed by the AILC / ICLA Treasurer up to a maximum of US\$1000.
4. All material must reach the office of the ICLA President by January 15, 2016. The author should also provide a permanent mailing address as well as their current e-mail address.

AILC / ICLA

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International Comparative Literature Association

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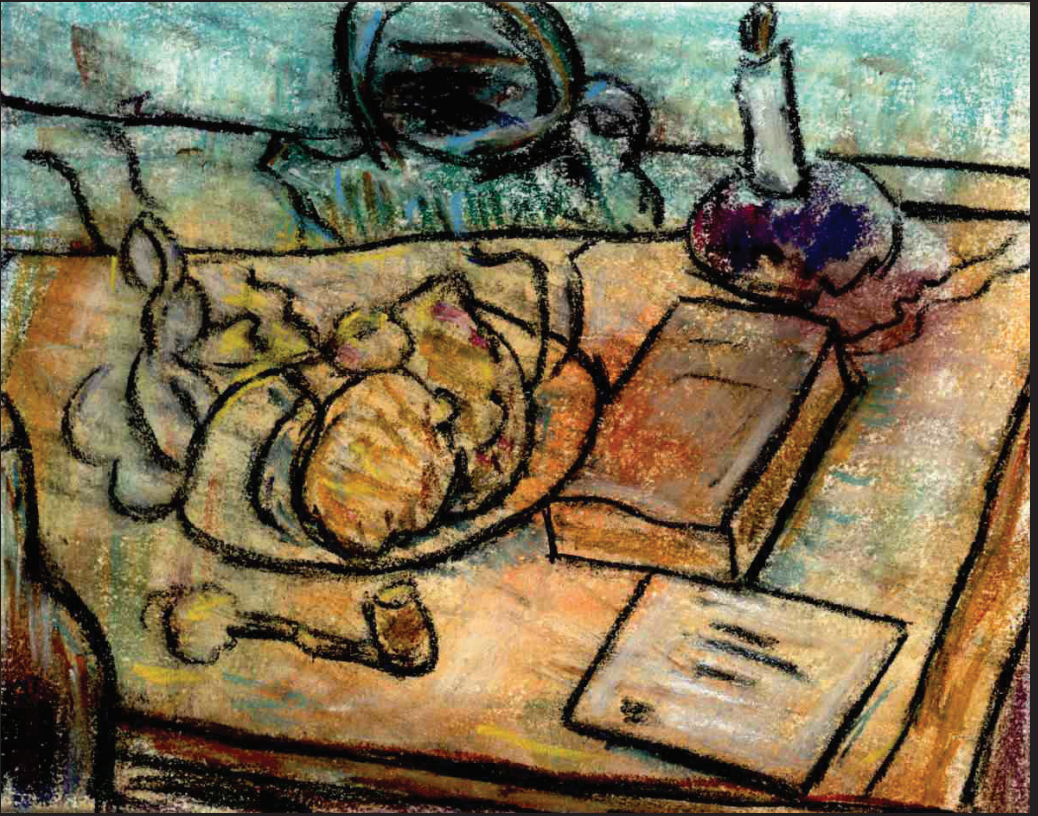
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(China) • Literature and Neuroscience, Suzanne Nalbantian (USA) • Cultural and
Literary History of the Dream, Manfred Engel (Germany), Bernard Dieterle (France)



IN THIS ISSUE

Chloé Chaudet reviews *Kosmopolitische, "Germanophonie" Postnationalen Perspektiven in der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur* edited by Christine Meyer

Hans Bertens reviews *Contagious Metaphor* by Peta Mitchell

Esra Mirze Santesso reviews *Locating Indian Literature: Texts, Traditions, Translations* by E. V. Ramakrishnan

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