

RECHERCHE LITTÉRAIRE  
LITERARY RESEARCH



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## Epiphanic Visions: The Imaginative Power of Comparative Literature

**B**ELGIAN PAINTER RENÉ MAGRITTE'S *The Empire of Light*, of which this issue's cover offers a pastiche, epitomizes the surrealist technique of juxtaposing incompatible elements. While commentators generally view this intriguing conflation between night and daylight as the source of an unfathomable mystery, I would suggest another possible interpretation that could be applied to the field of comparative literature by metaphorical extension. Should one choose to place emphasis on the sunlit sky, this painting could also be read as a veiled allusion to the positive potentialities of art, literature, and imagination, broadly speaking. Viewed from this perspective, the painting thus transcends its initial contradictions in order to suggest various forms of epiphanic visions. By firmly locating the journal's logo in the bright sky, the imaginative power of comparative literature is foregrounded. Indeed, the ability of our field to open up new avenues of thought, thus enlarging our understanding of the world, transpires from the vast range of contributions gathered in this volume.

This issue differs from its two immediate predecessors as it starts with a section devoted to original comparative literature scholarship, which is to become a permanent feature of the journal. These essays, especially commissioned from established scholars for this occasion, shed light on the current state of the field and its developments in a way review essays and book reviews cannot possibly do. The four articles of this initial section deal with topics echoed in subsequent parts of the journal, i.e. postcolonial and Indigenous theater studies, translation studies, gender studies, and historiography. Diana Looser's analysis of the ambivalent influence of Gauguin on Indigenous stage works from English and French Polynesia introduces the notion of intermediality already suggested in the cover's indebtedness to painting. Haun Saussy's contribution reconsiders the vexed issue of translation, a time-honored concern of our discipline.



Jordana Greenblatt's essay, which links queer theory and life writing, addresses matters to which the ICLA Gender Studies Committee devotes its research activities. Echoing Greenblatt, Anne Tomiche examines the ways in which the historiographies of avant-garde literary movements could be reconfigured from the perspective of gender studies.

A similarly rich variety of topics characterizes the "review essays" section. Christian Balliu's discussion of the ambitious project "Histoire des traductions en langue française" offers a useful French-language counterpart to Haun Saussy's essay on translation. Fabrice Preyat's essay on the literary legacy of the myth of Faust includes an examination of hitherto little-studied Belgian material. Finally, Eugene L. Arva's in-depth review essay of a major work on trauma studies straddles Western and Indigenous Australian literatures. Moreover, it establishes a connection between trauma and ecocritical concerns.

The book review section, which collects over thirty contributions, could be divided into two parts: a first one dealing with postcolonial, multicultural, and world literature studies, and a second one concentrating on comparative literature studies in a more traditional sense. The last review, focusing on a book tantalizingly entitled *Writing the Dream*, ironically echoes the epiphanic metaphor evoked by Magritte's painting. In the first part, the initial postcolonial cluster of books reviewed recalls many of the topics dealt with in Diana Looser's opening scholarly essay, as these pieces detail the complex ways in which postcolonial literary studies are reconceptualized today. This cluster is expanded with reviews of books exploring issues related to cosmopolitanism, migration, globalization, trauma, world literature in colonial contexts, and transnationalism. Jean Bessière's review of Ranjan Ghosh and J. Hillis Miller's *Thinking Literature Across Continents* constitutes an ideal transition between the two parts of the book reviews section. Indeed, the two authors of *Thinking Literature Across Continents* hail respectively from non-Western and Euro-American academic circles. The second group of book reviews touches on a wide range of topics, starting with considerations about the growing field of ecocriticism. Interestingly, David O'Donnell's review of *Hope at Sea: Possible Ecologies in Oceanic Literature* offers a subtle link with the first part, given its postcolonial literary corpus. After examinations of books dealing variously with literary theory, literary history, folklore, fiction and translation studies in the broadest sense, this second part moves to reviews of two books dealing with the concept of

posthumanism, an area of increasing prominence in comparative literature studies. While posthumanism inevitably suggests challenges, the last book examined in this part, *Writing the Dream*, perhaps invites us to meet them with a sense of hope. The last section of the journal contains three reports of comparative literature conferences held in Europe and America in 2017 and 2018.

The 2018 issue marks a major turning point in the history of *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research*: as of 2019 the journal will be taken over by the Brussels branch of international academic publisher Peter Lang. It will henceforth be published in a gold open-access format and will appear in the fall of each year. I sincerely thank Mrs Pagacz, Peter Lang's acquisitions editor, for her role in facilitating the negotiation of a publication contract with ICLA. Sadly, though, the 2018 issue is therefore the last one our dedicated production officer, Jenny Webb, will be in charge of. I would wish to extend my warm-hearted thanks to her for her outstanding performance in that role for so many years. As in previous issues, I would also like to acknowledge the help, advice, and support of many colleagues, including Dorothy Figueira, the immediate past editor, the members of our advisory board, as well as John Schweppe who skillfully designed the cover. As always, I thank the ICLA for its financial support of this publication. I truly look forward to the challenges and potentialities ahead, as I continue to edit *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* in its new iteration.

MARC MAUFORT  
*Brussels, May 2018*

## Visions épiphaniques: la puissance imaginative de la littérature comparée

Le tableau du peintre belge René Magritte, *L'empire des lumières*, dont la couverture de ce numéro nous offre un pastiche, illustre parfaitement la technique surréaliste qui consiste à juxtaposer des éléments incompatibles. Si les critiques s'accordent généralement à voir dans cette fusion étrange entre jour et nuit une source de mystère insondable, je suggérerais une autre interprétation qui pourrait s'appliquer métaphoriquement au domaine de la littérature comparée. Pour peu que l'on décide de mettre l'accent sur le ciel éclairé, on pourrait déceler dans cette peinture une allusion voilée au potentiel positif inhérent à l'art, la littérature et l'imagination, au sens large. Dans cette optique, la peinture transcende ses contradictions originelles, évoquant en fin de compte diverses formes de visions épiphaniques. La décision de placer résolument le logo de la revue dans la luminosité met à l'avant-plan la puissance imaginative de la littérature comparée. En effet, la capacité de notre domaine de recherche à nous conduire vers de nouveaux modes de pensée, élargissant ainsi notre compréhension du monde, se manifeste à travers le large éventail de contributions réunies dans ce volume.

Ce numéro diffère de ses deux prédécesseurs immédiats : il s'ouvre avec une section consacrée à de la recherche originale en littérature comparée, une nouveauté destinée à devenir pérenne. Ces articles de recherche, invités spécialement pour la circonstance, ont été écrits par des spécialistes reconnus de la discipline et offrent un éclairage sur l'état de l'art qu'un simple compte rendu ne pourrait fournir. Les quatre essais réunis dans cette première section traitent de sujets qui trouvent un écho à travers l'ensemble du volume, c'est-à-dire les études dramatiques postcoloniales et indigènes, les études de traductologie, les études de genre, ainsi que l'historiographie. L'analyse que Diana Looser nous propose de l'influence ambivalente de Gauguin sur des œuvres théâtrales

indigènes de la Polynésie francophone et anglophone introduit la notion d'intermédialité, déjà suggérée par le pastiche de la couverture. L'essai de Haun Saussy réexamine la problématique délicate de la traduction, un domaine depuis longtemps au centre des préoccupations de notre discipline. La contribution de Jordana Greenblatt, qui étudie le genre du récit de vie par le biais de la théorie « queer », se penche sur des thèmes au cœur des activités du comité de recherche sur le genre de l'AILC. Faisant écho à Greenblatt, Anne Tomiche examine les diverses façons selon lesquelles l'historiographie des avant-gardes littéraires pourrait être reconceptualisée grâce à une approche genrée.

Une variété tout aussi riche de sujets caractérise la section consacrée aux essais critiques. En contrepoint à l'article de recherche de Haun Saussy relatif à la traduction, Christian Balliu nous offre une synthèse critique du projet ambitieux de l'« Histoire des traductions en langue française ». L'article critique de Fabrice Préyat traitant de l'héritage littéraire du mythe de Faust inclut une analyse d'un matériau belge peu étudié jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Enfin, la critique détaillée de Eugene L. Arva d'un ouvrage majeur sur les études du trauma permet de couvrir à la fois les littératures occidentales et indigènes d'Australie. De plus, Arva établit un lien entre les préoccupations liées au trauma et celles relatives à l'écocritique.

La section dévolue aux comptes rendus, qui rassemble plus de trente contributions, pourrait être divisée en deux parties : une première traitant des études postcoloniales et multiculturelles et de la littérature mondiale, ainsi qu'une seconde se concentrant sur les études comparatistes sous un angle plus traditionnel. Ironiquement, le dernier compte rendu, celui d'un livre au titre évocateur *Ecrire le rêve*, fait écho à la métaphore épiphanique de la peinture de Magritte. La première partie de cette section débute par un groupe de comptes rendus rappelant un bon nombre de thèmes traités par Diana Looser. En effet, ces recensions examinent en détail comment les études postcoloniales ont été réinventées à l'heure actuelle. Suivent des comptes rendus d'ouvrages sur des sujets apparentés relatifs au cosmopolitisme, à la migration, à la globalisation, au trauma, à la littérature mondiale en rapport avec le colonialisme ainsi qu'au transnationalisme. Le rapport que Jean Bessière consacre à l'ouvrage de Ranjan Ghosh et J. Hillis Miller, *Thinking Literature Across Continents*, constitue une transition idéale entre les deux parties de la section des comptes rendus. En effet, les deux auteurs de cet ouvrage appartiennent

respectivement aux mondes académiques non-occidental et euro-américain. Le deuxième groupe de comptes rendus aborde un grand nombre de sujets, en débutant par l'écocritique, domaine en pleine expansion de nos jours. Il est intéressant de noter que l'ouvrage dont parle David O'Donnell, *Hope at Sea : Possible Ecologies in Oceanic Literature*, établit un lien subtil avec la première partie de la section des comptes rendus, étant donné son corpus postcolonial. Outre des recensions de livres traitant de la théorie de la littérature, de l'histoire littéraire, du folklore, du genre romanesque et de la traductologie au sens le plus large, cette deuxième partie se prolonge par des comptes rendus de deux livres consacrés au posthumanisme, un champ de recherche d'importance croissante pour la littérature comparée. Si le posthumanisme nous confronte immanquablement à des défis, le dernier ouvrage analysé dans cette partie, *Ecrire le rêve*, contient peut-être des pistes qui nous permettront d'aborder ces défis plus sereinement. La dernière section de la revue contient trois rapports concernant des colloques de littérature comparée qui se sont tenus en Europe et en Amérique en 2017 et 2018.

Ce numéro marque un tournant majeur dans l'histoire de *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* : à partir de 2019, la revue sera reprise par la maison bruxelloise des éditions académiques internationales Peter Lang. Elle sera désormais publiée en libre accès (version « gold ») et paraîtra à l'automne de chaque année. Je remercie sincèrement Mme Pagacz, la directrice des éditions Peter Lang à Bruxelles, pour son rôle décisif dans les négociations ayant conduit à la signature d'un contrat de publication avec l'AILC. Je regrette cependant que le numéro de 2018 soit donc le dernier auquel notre dévouée chargée de production Jenny Webb collaborera. Je tiens à la remercier très chaleureusement pour l'excellent travail qu'elle a accompli pendant de nombreuses années. Comme par le passé, je désire également saluer l'aide, le soutien et les conseils de nombreux collègues, parmi lesquels il faut compter Dorothy Figueira, ma prédécesseure, les membres de notre comité consultatif, ainsi que John Schweppe, qui a habilement conçu la couverture. Cette année encore, je remercie l'AILC pour le financement de cette publication. Je me réjouis à la perspective des défis et opportunités que je rencontrerai dans la poursuite de mon mandat de rédacteur de *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* dans sa nouvelle mouture.

MARC MAUFORT  
Bruxelles, mai 2018

# Theatrical Crossings, Pacific Visions: Gauguin, Meryon, and the Staging of Oceanian Modernities

*Diana Looser*

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS in modern western art is marked by an intriguing, if uneven, dialogue: European artists' cultural translations of Pacific material shaped foreign perceptions of the "South Seas," yet their Oceanian subject matter and experiences furnished some of the prevailing precepts and motifs of European aesthetic modernism. How have these legacies been recalled and repurposed by dramatists from the Pacific, and how might these dramatic works contribute to the articulation of an Oceanian modernity? Taking an approach that interleaves history, art history, and intercultural theatre studies, this essay considers two award-winning Oceanian plays about the mutual influences between nineteenth-century French artists and the Polynesian societies that hosted and inspired them. *Pasefika* (2009–16) by Pākehā New Zealand playwright Stuart Hoar, spirals out from the oneiric Pacific imagery superimposed upon Charles Meryon's gothic etchings of urban Paris, recalling Meryon's sojourn in the Māori settlement and fledgling French colony of Akaroa in the 1840s. Tahiti Mā'ohi dramatist Jean-Marc Tera'ituatini Pambrun's *Les Parfums du Silence* (2003/09) uses the occasion of Paul Gauguin's death in the Marquesas Islands in 1903 as a platform for Gauguin's Marquesan friends and models to debate his life and legacy, as well as their own multilayered past and ambivalent future under French colonialism.

Both historiographic dramas reposition their artists' biographies to privilege indigenous epistemologies and the impact of the Pacific on western art-making, and to present self-conscious meditations on the possibilities and limits of cross-cultural exchange in the colonial past and the (post)colonial present. In so doing, the plays explore facets of different Oceanian modernities emerging from the "New Pacific" of imperial influence, postcolonial independence movements, indigenous rights initiatives, and mass diasporic flows generated by the impact of postwar global economic shifts on small island states. By deliberately juxtaposing European and Oceanian notions of the modern, *Les Parfums du Silence* and *Pasefika* situate theatre not merely as an aesthetic expression of modernity in Oceania but as a reflexive site for investigating and negotiating its terms and conditions. By bringing together these two plays from French Polynesia and Aotearoa New Zealand—one francophone and one anglophone, by one indigenous and one non-indigenous author, this discussion sheds light on how shared concerns are treated in different theatrical sites and contexts across the region, and how they flow into urgent and evolving questions of Oceanian belonging.

#### THE FRENCH CONNECTION: TRAVEL, TRANSITION, TRANSLATION

Long before European advancement into the Pacific, genealogical ties bound the Māori of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Mā'ohi of Tahiti (Society Islands), forming part of a vast network of indigenous Pacific Island communities linked by ancient migratory voyages. In the context of European scientific and exploratory voyages of the late eighteenth century, Tahiti and Aotearoa came more sharply into French consciousness at the same time, following Louis-Antoine de Bougainville's circumnavigation of Tahiti in 1768 (a year after the British explorer Samuel Wallis) and the first French encounter with New Zealand by Jean-François de Surville in 1769 while British explorer James Cook was simultaneously circumnavigating the country—significantly, finding his way and brokering transactions with local Māori with the assistance of his Ra'īātean navigator and ambassador, Tupaia.<sup>1</sup> These two spaces, however, were initially

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1. Ra'īātea is the second largest of the Society Islands, located 135 miles north-west of Tahiti.

defined by their difference from one another in the French imagination, as indigenous connections were overwritten by the vagaries of foreign encounter. Bougainville's popularly acclaimed *Voyage autour du monde* (1771) extolled Tahiti as an earthly paradise populated with beautiful, innocent, and carefree inhabitants, lending credence to the theories of Rousseau and Diderot. New Zealand, on the other hand, became subject to another myth, depicted as a fearsome place of warriors and cannibals, an impression reinforced by the murder and consumption of French explorer Marc-Joseph Marion Du Fresne and twenty-six of his officers and men in the Bay of Islands in 1772 (figure 1). Even though the initial French reprisal left 250 Māori dead, early writers tended to ignore the European role in this tragedy, and it influenced French opinions for a long time (Dunmore, "The First Contacts" 13–16). As Christiane Mortelier affirms, whereas more balanced accounts did exist, French discourse emphasized the "New Zealand-Tahiti opposition," dichotomizing "Ignoble Barbarians" and "Noble Savages" in travelogues, treatises, and material culture, and reinforcing an ethnic and moral cartography that persisted well into the nineteenth century (166; Collins "Maori" 155–56) (figure 2).



Figure 1. Charles Meryon (1821–1868). *Death of Marion du Fresne at the Bay of Islands, New Zealand, 12 June 1772*. Between 1846 and 1848. Crayon, pencil, and chalk on paper with linen backing. Exhibited at the Paris Salon, 1848. Ref: G-824-3. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Meryon's stylized and exoticized reconstruction of du Fresne's violent demise suggests how prejudicial French myths about Māori, stemming from this event, were alive in Meryon's artistic imagination at this point in his career.





Figure 2. Basset, *Jeu Instructif des Peuples et Costumes des Quatre Parties du Monde et des Terres Australes* (Instructive game of the peoples and costumes of the four parts of the world and of the southern lands), 1815. Detail. This nineteenth-century version of the Game of the Goose (*jeu de l'oie*) had players roll dice to complete a spiral journey around the world, from China to France, along 63 consecutively numbered spaces. Players landing on Tahiti (space 19, traditionally represented by an inn) were waylaid for two turns by the hospitality and amorous wiles of the friendly natives, pictured here as proffering breadfruit and breasts with classical grace beside a languid, palm-fringed lagoon. Players landing in New Zealand (space 58, conventionally indicating death) were the feast—the image depicts a despondent European tied to a stake before a fire as a Māori man advances to clobber the captive with his *patu*—and had to return to the beginning. Images courtesy of Kroch Library, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University.

France's nineteenth-century colonial ambitions sought to suture both sites into one geostrategic entity. As Peter Tremewan has explained, the French came extremely close to colonizing southern New Zealand: "If it were not for a few delays in the implementation of French plans, New Zealand could have had a British North Island and a French South Island" (13).<sup>2</sup> After acquiring Banks Peninsula (on the South Island's east

2. This hypothetical situation has inspired contemporary New Zealand dramatists, as seen in Dave Armstrong's ludic play, *Le Sud* (2009). Less a counterfactual history than an irreverent sending-up of various cultural stereotypes, *Le Sud* explores the comic clashes that occur when the beleaguered, conservative Prime Minister of English-speaking North Zealand, Jim Petersen, and his fellow coalition politicians travel down to francophone South Zealand, the richest country in

coast) from local Māori in 1838, whaling captain Jean François Langlois returned to New Zealand in 1840 as an agent of the Nanto-Bordelaise Company with a shipload of colonists escorted by a naval corvette. They put ashore at Akaroa, only to discover that the British had just annexed New Zealand via the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, collapsing French hopes of creating France's only colony in a temperate climate, and Akaroa became a French town in a British dependency (Tremewan 13). Speaking to the colonial web linking Aotearoa New Zealand, Tahiti, and the Marquesas Islands, the failure of the French venture in New Zealand spurred its schemes in the Marquesas (annexed by France in 1842) and in Tahiti (made a French protectorate in 1842); some administrators from Akaroa went on to play similar bureaucratic roles in Tahiti and there was even a proposal to send the Akaroa colonists there (Tremewan 308–09, 302, 290). Consequently, France's lack of fortunes in New Zealand contributed to the making of French Polynesia. These linkages also enabled the crossings and intercultural liaisons of Charles Meryon (1821–1868) and Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), who visited both New Zealand and French Polynesia and drew inspiration for their art from the two locales.

In the intervening years, the two sites have developed distinctively under different colonial auspices. New Zealand was shaped predominantly by British settler-colonialism, which determined its identity as an anglophone polity with ties to the British Empire. It is currently a sovereign state and member of the Commonwealth of Nations that has a 74% Pākehā (New Zealand European) and 15% Māori population, along with growing Pacific Islander and Asian communities (Statistics New Zealand). New Zealand is also a metropolitan state and neo-colonial presence in the South Pacific region. Māori self-determination initiatives have been increasingly visible since the 1970s (allied to global indigenous rights movements), which have led to a renaissance of Māori language and culture and an official policy of biculturalism, although New Zealand's expanding multicultural population, especially immigrant Pacific Islanders, are encouraging a reorientation of the nation toward a more integrated Pacific identity. French Polynesia, of which Tahiti is the most populous island and home to the capital seat of Papeete,<sup>3</sup> is a *collectivité d'outre-mer* (overseas collectivity) of the Southern Hemisphere, to broker an electrical power deal with their libertine, laid-back, socialist counterparts, led by the handsome, womanizing Prime Minister François Duvauchelle.

3. French Polynesia comprises five administrative subdivisions: The Marquesas Islands, the Windward Islands and the Leeward Islands (both part of the

French Republic. In almost direct demographic contrast to New Zealand, the francophone population comprises 78% native Polynesians and 10% local and metropolitan French (CIA), although the French administrative hold remains steadfast. Indigenous independence or self-determination movements have been less visible, although it is in literature and art that Mā'ohi cultural and political expression has been most evident, through local engagement and by cultivating trans-indigenous networks with other Pacific Islanders (Gagné 385–87). Part of this expression is what Daniel Margueron dubs “l'île-térature”: a literary output that reflects the Pacific Island world and that emerges from the encounters between Polynesian cultures and people from numerous other places (26).

In terms of dramatic literature, there are commonalities between Tahiti and Aotearoa New Zealand in the context of a wave of postcolonial indigenous playwriting that has flourished throughout Oceania since the late 1960s. For example, the first produced Māori play, Harry Dansey's *Te Raukura: The Feathers of the Albatross* (1972) was performed the same year that Maco Tevane inaugurated Tahitian popular theatre with his play *Tē pe'ape'a hau 'ore o Papa Penu e o Mama Roro* (*The Incessant Disputes of Papa Penu and Mama Roro*, 1972) (Saura 101). Whereas Jean-Marc Tera'ituatini Pambrun (1953–2011) forms part of a small group of Mā'ohi dramatists such as Henri Hiro, John Mairai, Julien Gué, and Valérie Gobrait, there are a far greater number of Māori playwrights. This situation reflects Aotearoa's relative size and more extensive theatrical infrastructure, although—as with the work of Stuart Hoar (1957)—the local theatre ecology remains dominated by Pākehā playwriting and production. Moreover, while some indigenous dramatists from these two sites have written in reo Māori or reo Mā'ohi/reo Tahiti (Māori or Tahitian languages, which are Polynesian cognates), the majority script their work in the prevailing colonial languages of English or French. This circumstance has given rise to vibrant discussions about how translation might help to bridge the divides of colonial partitioning in the modern Pacific, especially its potential to liberate French Pacific writers as a “conveniently gagged and largely unheard” minority (Nicole 265) and to allow them to participate in the creative, discursive, and political networks from which anglophone writers have benefited. During the past two decades, considerable advances have been made toward inclusive discussions and mutual translations that work towards “constructing a Society Islands), the Tuamotu and Gambier Islands, and the Austral Islands.

shared space that also celebrates local difference” (Walker-Morrison and Ramsay 231).<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, there is far more work of this sort to be carried out, particularly in theatre studies, where critical conversations still tend to be parallel rather than reciprocal and translations or comparative studies of anglophone and francophone play texts are rare, perpetuating the balkanization of French Pacific dramatists. Accordingly, this is one area of research to which this essay contributes.

### STAGING OCEANIAN MODERNITIES

Acts of translation foreground the encounters and passages between (at least) two worlds, each hybrid and heterogeneous, which are evident in the form and rationale of *Les Parfums du Silence* and *Pasefika* as well as in their content and reception. The plays posit the Pacific as a complex, layered space of crossings defined by accelerating mobility, dynamic webs of interaction, and shifting cultural formations, but also tempered and fractured by the fraught legacies of colonial conquest and neocolonialism, and they explore the potential for cross-cultural dialogue during an era of cataclysmic change. Gauguin and Meryon—in the plays, as in life—enter these spaces of turbulent transition through their own communion with Pacific indigeneity to vitalize their artistic visions. These fulfilled or attempted passages create room not only for investigating versions of European (aesthetic) modernity but also Oceanian modernities, forged from the ruptures of imperial expansion but also evolving variously in contexts of postcolonial independence, indigenous self-determination movements, and variegated diasporic networks. Despite the critical deprivileging of Eurocentric frameworks and diffusionist models of modernity (and modernism, its aesthetic responses) in favor of a plurality of different modernities produced and experienced in manifold nodal points in time and space (Friedman 39; Eisenstadt), scholars such as Maebh Long, Mathew Hayward, and Sudesh Mishra have aptly noted

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4. For key dimensions of this debate, see Subramani, *South Pacific Literature: From Myth to Fabulation*; Robert Nicole, “Resisting Orientalism: Pacific Literature in French”; Kareva Mateata-Allain, *Bridging Our Sea of Islands: French Polynesian Literature Within an Oceanic Context*; Michelle Keown, “Littérature-monde or Littérature océanienne? Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing”; Jean Anderson, “La Traduction Résistante: Some Principles of Resistant Translation of Francophone and Anglophone Pacific Literature”; and Deborah Walker-Morrison and Raylene Ramsay, “Mon Whare, Ton Faré: Building a Common House through Translation in Pacific Literatures.”

that Oceania has been largely ignored in modernist studies, and they call for more attention to be paid to the specificities of an Oceanian modernity articulated in a range of artistic forms since the 1960s.<sup>5</sup>

Relevant here is Rob Wilson's concept of the "New Pacific" (akin to Albert Wendt's "New Oceania"), which views the Pacific Islands region since the mid-twentieth century as emerging from "contexts of colonial damages and 'postcolonial' renewals" (1). As such, the New Pacific is enmeshed and engaged with, but also challenges, hegemonic forms of European and American modernity. This vast and diverse decolonizing terrain embraces a modernity that centralizes the world's largest ocean as a medium of dis/juncture, tracking the creative relocations and transformative agencies of cultures deeply inflected by long histories of maritime practices. It likewise reckons with new formations wrought by imperial settlement and partitioning, systems of indenture, and new social configurations galvanized by the rapid and profound impact on small island states of the postwar reconstruction of the world economy, including mass mobilizations of island peoples across the island Pacific and to its industrialized peripheries. These conditions are augmented by late-twentieth-century discourses of neoliberal developmentalism, bound up with the shift from the Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific world as the focus of a global economic future. Given the highly differentiated languages, societies, and structures of state governance that characterize Oceania, the cultural production that arises from and responds to these regional experiences of modernity is similarly heteroglossic and multiple. It is frequently intercultural in its linking of "diverse cultural locations and places of origin across Oceania" (Wilson 1) and in its hybrid combination of formal elements that create variations of western genres infused with novel iterations of indigenous or customary practices, developed in relation to geographical, historical, and linguistic particularities that lend the works distinctive local resonances and significance.

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5. This was the premise for the "Oceanic Modernisms" conference convened by Long, Hayward, and Mishra, and held at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji, in February 2016. I presented an early version of this essay at the conference, and I am grateful to the conference organizers for the fruitful prompt and to the delegates for the generative conversation. Thanks to Doug Eacho for his research assistance. On this topic, see also Erin G. Carlston and Brian Reed's call for a special journal issue of *Modernist Cultures* on "Modernism in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands," scheduled for 2019: [https://msa.press.jhu.edu/cgi-bin/cfp\\_view.cgi?action=view\\_single&single\\_id=471](https://msa.press.jhu.edu/cgi-bin/cfp_view.cgi?action=view_single&single_id=471).

The dramas by Hoar and Pambrun do not merely provide examples of how new local imaginaries and states of consciousness are articulated in specific Oceanian contexts; they also offer a self-conscious analysis of intercultural engagements that have contributed to the making of Oceanian modernities. By deliberately taking up the encounters with Pacific Island cultures that characterized Gauguin's and Meryon's contributions to European aesthetic modernity and reimagining them within an Oceanian modernist frame, the plays present a critical examination of how different ideas of the modern converge in the Pacific, exploring their tensions, possibilities, and unresolved processes. The plays illustrate how, as Denise Varney et al. have argued elsewhere, theatre and performance are "art forms capable of mediating history and modernity" (3), especially through a "reflexive modernity" that critiques the premises and legacies of colonial and settler modernities and that recognizes the conflicted and violent histories that reside within them (Varney et al. 17–18). Both plays, however, go further: even as they wrestle with a troubled past and an ambivalent present, their analyses of modernity's histories advance hopeful possibilities for robust and coalitional Oceanian futures.

In *Les Parfums du Silence*, the indigenous reclamation of Gauguin and his posthumous passage to Havaiki (the sacred Polynesian homeland) reposition understandings of the French artist's modernist legacy while asserting an Enata<sup>6</sup> (Marquesan) modernity fashioned from the violent contact of the 1800s. Out of strategic necessity, Pambrun's characters subvert the destructive impact of western institutions and ideologies by harnessing, adapting, and redeploying indigenous traditions to create new forms of cultural agency that refute the colonial modernity of France. The play's official vetoing in contemporary French Polynesia, however, demonstrates the ongoing and unsettled nature of the legacies that the drama critiques. *Pasefika* stages crossings that link the urban modernity of nineteenth-century Paris with that of twenty-first century Oceania. Whereas the piece gestures to an evolving Oceanian modernity borne out through the layered indigenous, settler, and migrant/diasporic energies that coalesce in the region's metropolitan nodes, and explores the possibility of inhabiting a "Pasefika" identity that might dissolve New Zealand's national boundaries, Hoar's treatment of Meryon's visionary images as incompletely realized and never fully apprehended

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6. Enata ('Enata) means "people," distinguished from "hao'e" (white foreigners). I follow Greg Denning in my use and spelling of the term.

calls for further dialogue in order for New Zealand to confront its colonial history, its contemporary place in the Pacific, and its future path. Accordingly, the plays highlight the theatre as an important forum for debating and negotiating the terms of Oceanian modernities.

D'OÙ VENONS-NOUS? QUE SOMMES-NOUS? OÙ  
ALLONS-NOUS? FIGURING HISTORY AND  
DESTINY IN *LES PARFUMS DU SILENCE*

So much scholarly ink has been spilled about Paul Gauguin and French Polynesia that it could fill an ocean in itself. Gauguin's three sojourns in the Pacific—Tahiti in 1891–93 and 1895–1901, and the Marquesas Islands in 1901–03—are (in)famous for providing the subject matter for the artist's luminous, sensual, and symbolic depictions of Polynesian peoples and landscapes that would have such a profound impact on primitivist and expressionist strands of the European avant-garde, as well as on prevailing popular stereotypes of the South Seas. Appraisals of Gauguin's life and legacy attest to his "complex, polemical, and contested place" in the art history canon (Vercoe 124), memorializing him, variously, as a pioneer, rebellious boundary-rider, or sympathetic advocate for his adopted compatriots; or as a cultural scavenger, sexual opportunist, and self-styled *artiste maudit* complicit in the colonial project that he sought to reject. Regardless of opinion, the strongly biographical focus in many accounts of Gauguin's art has tended to uphold his discursive primacy as a European male modernist, while the tendency to assume a Eurocentric perspective in critical analyses of Gauguin's oeuvre has sidelined discussions of how Pasifika viewing subjects might read his life and works (Vercoe 105–06). Consequently, indigenous Pacific responses to the artist and—more importantly—to the imperiled Polynesian societies that he encountered at the turn of the twentieth century still demand greater consideration. It is this angle that Mā'ohi playwright Jean-Marc Tera'ituatini Pambrun explores in *Les Parfums du Silence*.

Pambrun is one of several major contributors to "[u]ne littérature moderne polynésienne" written in French by indigenous authors (Margueron 65). During his varied career as a trade unionist, researcher, political activist, pamphleteer, writer, and head of cultural institutions such as Le Musée de Tahiti et des Îles (Te Fare Manaha), Pambrun honed a rebellious persona, using the written word to craft passionate critiques of the impact of colonialism on Tahitian/Polynesian society and to advocate

for self-determination and cultural renewal (Margueron 310, 396–97). The play, in three acts and an epilogue, was intended for performance during centenary observances for Gauguin in French Polynesia in 2003. It is set at the time of Gauguin's death in May 1903 in the village of Atuona on the island of Hiva Oa in the southern Marquesas, where the artist had retreated in disappointment from Tahiti's French colonial society to search for a more isolated, "savage" paradise. Instead, he encountered an indigenous population reduced by 98% (the severest population decline in Polynesia) and quickly became aware of the "complicated and compromised circumstances of their lives under the French colonial government" (Shackleford 246). Gravely ill, Gauguin formed alliances with the local Enata (Marquesans), who called him Koké, and until his death devoted much of his energy to fighting the colonial administration, eventually giving up painting altogether to invest in his political struggles against officials, church, and police (Shackleford 248, Hollmann 92).

Pambrun's revisionist project shifts the focus from the painter's life to those of his Enata friends, lovers, and models, who have too often remained extras in Gauguin's "dernier décor."<sup>7</sup> This critical repositioning does not merely repeat the established postcolonial gambit of relegating European characters to the background, but also sidelines the Tahitians, so often the focus of popular and academic accounts, to trouble the status of the Marquesas Islands (Fenua'enata, the Land of the People) as "the last and least important outpost of an old [French] empire" and "the backwater to the backwater of Tahiti" (Dening 289). The value of *Les Parfums* as a piece of Polynesian dramatic literature lies not only in its indigenous views of the artist's life, work, and morals, but primarily in its complex staging of a vision of Enata history and society poised on the brink of cultural destruction. Whereas the play's immediate temporal span covers the two days from the discovery of Gauguin's corpse to the evening after his funeral, its timeframe reverberates with the longer duration of Enata time: its pre-contact iterations as well as the memory of the cataclysmic fractures of the nineteenth century, when foreign religion, administration, and diseases together with extraordinary internecine and external violence decimated the population and decayed its civilization. As Dening sums it up in the elegiac finale to his penetrating ethnohistory of the Marquesas, "To

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7. "[D]ernier décor" (final setting) is a reference to Victor Segalen's essay on Gauguin, anthologized in the posthumous collection, *Gauguin dans son dernier décor et autres textes de Tahiti* (1975).



an outside world, they lived in dumb silence, not having words or gestures to say who they were" (266–67). Gauguin's death, then, is by no means the most important death in the play, but it creates the occasion for his Enata companions to situate his life and art in the context of broader existential questions of Enata history and destiny. Principally, by enlisting Gauguin as a protective ancestor-spirit and curating a posthumous rite-of-passage that speeds him to the sacred Polynesian homeland of Havaiki, the Enata vivify and validate an indigenous worldview that is generative and dynamic. By harnessing tradition strategically to contend with changing circumstances, the characters assert an Enata modernity in resistance to the pervasive encroachment of colonial rule.

Any discussion of these tactics, however, must be prefaced by an acknowledgement of the play's own history of censorship and silencing, which rehearses in the twenty-first century the legacies of the nineteenth. From the advice that the manuscript be submitted to Tahiti's Ministry of Culture under a pseudonym (Étienne Ahuroa) due to Pambrun's "indésirable" reputation as a provocative artist-scholar and cultural commentator, to the show's banning on Hiva Oa (despite having been fully rehearsed with an all-Marquesan cast) because of hostility from Catholic Church representatives over its putatively "irrespectueux" content, *Les Parfums du Silence* has caused controversy among French Polynesia's official institutions. To date, the play has never received a full public performance, although the published work won the Fiction prize from the Salon insulaire du livre d'Ouessant in 2004—an award that, in a bizarre bureaucratic twist, Pambrun was invited to accept on behalf of his pseudonym. Following the text's popularity in the French Pacific, a new edition was released in 2009 under Pambrun's true name, to restore the playwright to "la place qui lui revient dans la littérature polynésienne" ("Préface de l'éditeur" 5), and to encourage potential productions of the play in future.<sup>8</sup>

Like his other dramatic works, Pambrun's densely textured play interweaves its cultural elements in a mode that Stéphanie-Ariiara Richard has likened to Tahitian *tifaifai*, a Polynesian form of tapestry derived from techniques introduced by wives of Protestant missionaries in the eighteenth century, in which applique designs are sewn into a patchwork: "Un assemblage de tissus multiples, dont on ne peut admirer la beauté et l'unité qu'en l'observant avec du recul" (20). To his European backcloth of

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8. Summarized from the Editor's Preface, *Les Parfums du Silence: Gauguin est mort!* Second edition, 4–5.

naturalistic dialogue and conventional arrangement into acts and “French scenes,”<sup>9</sup> Pambrun sutures and mobilizes multiple, finely layered references to and enactments of Enata practices. The text thus becomes a web of resistance and historiographic archiving that testifies to the past presence and surreptitious maintenance of indigenous lifeways during a period of profound transition. The characters constantly perform opposition to colonial French imposition: in the women’s *umu hei* (hair adornment of scented flowers), the application of *eka*,<sup>10</sup> their secret dancing and hunting, the teachings of the *kai’oi* school,<sup>11</sup> their recounting of myths and legends, as well as their calling out of the hypocritical abuses of the church and judiciary, and their satirizing of the Dordillon interdictions.<sup>12</sup>

Just as significant is the *unseen*, which subtends the play’s central focus on the strategic incorporation of Gauguin’s spirit within an Enata epistemology. This association with the intangible is a dramaturgical extension of the play’s preoccupation with and experience of silence and felt absences. Indeed, the play’s single setting (the courtyard in front of Gauguin’s “Maison du Jouir”), relatively static blocking (the onstage action consisting mainly of reportage and conversation among the eight ensemble cast members), and a dead artist who never appears, mean that much of the play’s substance consists of what Andrew Sofer—borrowing from quantum physics—terms theatre’s “dark matter”: “the invisible dimension of the theater that escapes visual detection, even though its effects are felt everywhere in performance” (3). Significantly, the invisible is not the unrepresented: as Sofer reminds us, what playwrights choose not to show is as telling as their *mise-en-scène* (15), and these incorporeal phenomena, “intangible yet omnipresent” (4), play a crucial role in bending the visible action and constructing the experience for the reader or spectator. With its reliance on absent characters, offstage events, the nar-

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9. A convention in classical French drama whereby a new scene begins whenever a character enters or leaves the stage, even if the action continues uninterrupted.

10. Turmeric root used to make a saffron-scented cosmetic, often mixed with coconut oil. The yellow on the Marquesan flag recalls the *eka* dye used by the inhabitants of the archipelago to coat their bodies during traditional festivals.

11. *Ka’ioi* were a group of adolescent boys and girls who were taught the social arts and graces of Enata and were trained to be singers and dancers at *koina* (ceremonial feasts) (Denning 89).

12. A series of prohibitive rules covering many aspects of Enata life, instituted by the French Commander of the Marquesas Islands in 1863.

rated past, the numinous, dreams, and inscrutable signs, Pambrun's play prompts us to push the notion of theatrical dark matter beyond Sofer's postclassical western dramatic purview to consider its possibilities for indigenous performance; in this instance, how those things that do not give themselves up to general observation yet are nonetheless palpable and perceptible become important in recuperating a history of cultural loss in the theatrical and social present.



Figure 3. Paul Gauguin, *L'Enchanteur, ou Le sorcier de Hiva Oa*, 1902. Oil on canvas.

The primary vehicle for the channeling, guardianship, and passage of Gauguin's spirit is the character of Haapuani, the major storyteller (*maître de la parole*) in the play, the custodian of customary lore, and the one with keenest insight regarding the destiny of Enata. Like each of the characters, Haapuani is based on a historical figure: a close friend of Gauguin's and a famous priest, prophet, dancer, orator, and carver, he appears as the model for Gauguin's painting *Le Sorcier d'Hiva Oa* (*Marquesan Man in the Red Cape*, 1902) (figure 3); he appears to us again as Isaac Puhetete, a central resource and cultural consultant for E. S. Craighill Handy's influential anthropological studies, *The Native Culture in the Marquesas* (1923) and *Marquesan Legends* (1930), where he is recognized as "probably the most learned man in all the islands" at a time when "no living Marquesan has more than a fragmentary knowledge" of the "sacred lore of their ancestors which will soon be wholly forgotten" (E. Handy *Legends* 3). In Pambrun's hands, Haapuani is revived as something more than the enigmatic figure of primitivist art or the "native scholar" of American salvage ethnography, restoring his central role as a *tau'a* (inspirational priest) and *tuhuna* (specialist keeper of knowledge). E. Handy's acknowledgement that the site of Atuona (Haapuani's birthplace and known formerly as Vevau) was, historically, renowned as "the great center of lore in the *fenua enata*" (*Legends* 3) also serves in the play to displace Atuona from its touristic association with Gauguin's final days and to privilege its role as a seat of indigenous knowledge. Through memories and stories told and retold, Haapuani repeatedly bears witness to the devastation of Enata laws, customs, and life-ways during the nineteenth century, but always with a view to future revival: "Nos clans ont été décimés par les étrangers, le four, la guerre et la maladie. Il ne reste que notre culture. Plus tard, elle nous aidera à refaire de nous un grand peuple" (49).<sup>13</sup>

For Haapuani, Gauguin's art practice—whatever it may have meant for the Frenchman himself—becomes a potent way of realizing Enata culture by concretizing and perpetuating sculpted and painted images that circulate and have agency in the world; as he affirms: "En peignant mon corps sur sa toile, Koké a sauvé mon esprit. Il m'a déifié de mon vivant. À présent, je peux attendre la mort en paix" (48). In his generative capacity as an artist-creator, Gauguin is identified as an adjunct of the originary ancestor-deity Tiki, and in this sense Gauguin's perception

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13. All subsequent page references to *Les Parfums du Silence* are from the first edition of the play (2003).

is understood to have ventured beyond the visible realm: “C’était pour essayer d’attraper notre passé et ce que nous avons été qu’il nous regardait” (35). When Gauguin’s former lover Marie-Rose complains that the artist’s stylized depictions made his subjects look fat, Haapuani explains that “il nous a fait comme nous sommes: des êtres humains remplis de force. Tout ce qu’il y a en plus dans notre corps, sur notre corps, autour de notre corps, c’est ce que personne ne voit: notre force et le mystère de notre force” (80). In this version, Gauguin is an instrument rather than an auteur, guided in his work by Haapuani, who perceives the potential of this transcultural iconography for advancing self-determination. In conversation with Tioka, Gauguin’s closest friend and neighbor with whom the artist exchanged names (*e inoa*), Haapuani asks:

HAAPUANI: Tu as vu mon tableau? Celui qui est parti dans le monde. Il a écrit dessus Le sorcier de Hiva Oa. Tu sais que c’est moi qui l’ai inspiré pour qu’il me donne une cape en flanelle rouge safran?<sup>14</sup>

TIOKA: Pourquoi cette couleur?

HAAPUANI: Parce que je veux être un guerrier pour demain. Mais un guerrier sans arme. Nous avons cessé de nous entre-tuer. Nous devons nous battre avec notre esprit pour que notre peuple et notre mémoire demeurent. (48)

Fighting with one’s spirit to combat the infrastructures of the colonial administration and stave off cultural annihilation finds its focus in the post-mortem treatment of Gauguin. While the Protestant and Catholic “soutanes noires” (30) squabble offstage about burial arrangements and work actively to exclude the Marquesans, Tioka determines early on that “l’épicopo [*epikopo*, bishop] aura son corps, mais il n’aura pas son esprit” (11). Because the Christian intercessors refuse to allow Enata to conduct their customary rites to honor the dead, including stopping the various holes of the body with clay to prevent the spirit from escaping (Denning 181), Gauguin’s spirit slips out, “il flotte au milieu de nous” (34). This opportunity holds the potential for Gauguin’s spirit to follow a different route, one that retraces the ancient itineraries of the Enata ancestors. Of Gauguin’s lingering spirit, Haapuani vows, “Quand il décidera de partir, je veux le voir monter dans sa pirogue et voguer au-dessus de la montagne Fe’ani vers l’ouest de Hiva Oa, tout là-bas à la pointe Kiukiu pour ensuite sauter dans la mer” (39) and thus to begin his passage to Havaiki,

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14. Red is a sacred color in this area of Polynesia.

the sacred place of origin and return for many cultures across Polynesia, where “il trouvera enfin le bon ciel avec plein de belles femmes et plein de popoi” (39).<sup>15</sup> This course of events privileges indigenous reckonings, repudiating missionary efforts to damn Havaiki as *Havaiki hauhau* (“bad Havaiki,” or hell) (Denning 193). Significantly, however, the rituals enacted by Haapuani to remake and retain Gauguin as an ancestral protector-spirit are also new traditions, improvised in the moment and negotiated in the ambivalent spaces between foreigner and native. In the face of colonial dispossession and the demolition of traditional structures of participation, Gauguin cannot be subjected to the highly formalized Enata funeral practices that existed previously. Instead, his transition must be achieved by different means, via tactics that respond to new circumstances and that adapt, blend, and transfigure diverse elements, pursuing strategies that are yet untested and that, in their dynamism, are as modern as they are ancient. The Enata characters therefore also experience a crossing as they navigate indeterminacies in which new possibilities are furnished forth in unexpected ways: in surprising insights, serendipitous revelations, and accidental signs that the world expresses.

In this working out of an Enata modernity, various performative cultural expressions become key for activating other knowledges, disclosing an interlocking series of practices and understandings that open to one another. In Act III, for example, Tohotaua (Gauguin’s beloved auburn-haired model, Haapuani’s companion, and a *tau’a* in her own right) plays with making a string figure image (*pehe*), once a common pastime in the Marquesas and accompanied by *ha’anaunau*, or metric chants containing often cryptic allegorical allusions (W. Handy 3, 10). She attempts to make a figure that she learned at the “interdite” *kai’oi* school (83), called *te a’anui manamana o Tafai* (the many routes of Tafai) based on a legendary hero who came to a crossroads and didn’t know which route to take. Instead, though a slip of the hand, she inadvertently creates the image *te nonoha o te kua* (the perch of the kua bird) (figure 4). It is through this slip in Tohotaua’s performance that Haapuani has the revelation that Koké’s spirit has taken the form of the kua bird (a native bird hunted in the past for its vibrant, unfading red feathers to make highly prized wreaths, loincloths, and capes) and has descended into the water in the well in Gauguin’s courtyard. Haapuani’s vision tells him that the spirit has fol-

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15. One of the staples of the Marquesan diet, popoi is breadfruit pounded into a pulp or puree.

lowed “le chemin de nos ancêtres” (85) and travelled to Rarotonga (Cook Islands) to gather red feathers to be used as offerings to the gods to secure his passage to Havaiki. Haapuani places a *tapu* (ritual prohibition) on the well and invokes rites to enable Gauguin to complete this journey. Even as news of Gauguin’s interment at Calvaire Cemetery reaches the Marquesans, Tioka and Haapuani await the return of his spirit from Rarotonga. This dual spatio-temporality built into the dramatic action simultaneously overwrites the authority of the Christian ritual while exploding the restrictive boundaries of colonial geographic partitioning. As the artist’s spirit voyages far across the Pacific Ocean to various nodes of an indigenous cartography, it reinforces Enata membership in a dense and expansive network of ancestral connections that span the holistic realm of Polynesia.

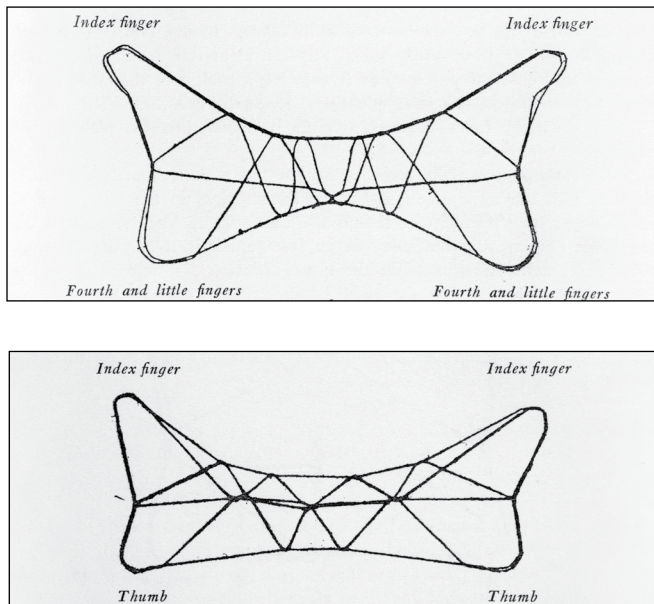


Figure 4. String figures showing (above) *te a'anui manamana o Tafai* (the many routes of Tafai) and (below) *te nonoha o te kua* (the perch of the kua bird). From Willowdean Chatterson Handy, *String Figures from the Marquesas and Society Islands*. Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 18, B. P. Bishop Museum, 1925. Figure 11b, p. 26, and figure 13a, p. 32.

These acts, which subtend and cohere the play's multiple dramatic through-lines, enlist tradition while experimenting with new modes of indigenous knowing and being that might be played out in an ongoing process of resistance and resilience. In the play's epilogue, Haapuani tells Tioka:

Nous n'avons pas pu empêcher la mort de Koké. Nous ne pourrions pas empêcher la nôtre. Mais, si nous nous battons bien, nous pouvons empêcher notre peuple de mourir en lui restituant ce que les étrangers nous ont volé. [...]

TIOKA: Ce sera long.

HAAPUANI: Quelle importance? Les banians ne se soucient pas du temps qui passe pour grandir. Lorsqu'ils seront devenus adultes, tous les oiseaux reviendront. (94)

Pambrun's poignant drama adumbrates a forward-looking vision in the face of deprivation and loss. Toward the close of the play, Haapuani gathers everyone together and distributes sacred red tropicbird feathers that he has been guarding—one for each of the eight major islands in the archipelago: “Prenez-en une chacun, emmenez-la chez vous et nourrissez-là. Plus tard, quand le moment sera venu, vos petits-enfants iront la porter dans chacune des îles de la Terre des Hommes” (91). It is in this context of genealogical continuity that Henriette (another of Gauguin's former lovers) begins to go into labor with her child—possibly Gauguin's, possibly the bishop's, possibly someone else's—and thus the play's final scenes gesture to a symbolic and an embodied investment in the future that carries forward Enata being. Ultimately it is Tioka who has the final word, performing a prayer that speeds Gauguin to Havaiki. The prayer morphs into a haka in Marquesan, bringing forth the language (*'eo 'enata*) and the performance genre on the stage in an expression of challenge, solidarity, and power. This finale is thus not so much an ending as a beginning, in which Enata culture takes center stage, suturing the past with the present and holding out promise for the world to come.

In his treatment of Gauguin, Pambrun eschews more conventional approaches (avant-garde appreciation or postcolonial vilification) to consider the artist's place within a particular community at a moment of profound cultural crisis. By enveloping Gauguin within an Enata worldview, indigenous aspirations are brought to the fore and Gauguin



is assigned a role in an Enata modernity rather than a European one. In its questioning of the assumptions and attitudes of western aesthetics, and its activation and adaptation of repressed knowledges, *Les Parfums du Silence* works against the finality and fatalism of early twentieth-century opinions that the white influence on Enata resulted in “the breaking down of their whole system of life and thought and the elimination of all their natural avenues for expression” (E. Handy *Native Culture* 5). By locating this potential centrally in unseen afterlives and supernatural revelations, the play gestures to the strategic potential of theatrical dark matter—the ineffable, magical, hidden—to resist and reach beyond the quotidian structures of colonial institutions (the western theatre, included) and to present a version of Marquesan culture that is hopeful and robust. At the same time, however, the repression of Pambrun’s drama by representatives of the French Republic demonstrates that colonial modernities die hard, and that the vexed terrain of the New Pacific is replete with overlapping and conflicting claims to knowledge, place, and belonging, which reveal persistent tensions between the region’s evolving communities and entrenched state forms. In this respect, written from a Pākehā perspective, Hoar’s *Pasefika* approaches this complicated intercultural terrain from a different angle to explore how changing settler identities might occupy a shared place in the New Pacific that contributes productively to an Oceanian modernity—a process that demands a reckoning with Aotearoa’s thorny colonial and neocolonial histories.

#### BEING NGĀTI WIWI, BEING PĀKEHĀ:<sup>16</sup> *PASEFIKA* AND OCEANIAN BELONGING

*Pasefika*, a two-act drama by Pākehā playwright Stuart Hoar, won the Adam New Zealand Play Award in 2010, and received a full production, directed by Susan Wilson, at Circa Theatre in Wellington for the New Zealand International Arts Festival in 2014. Hoar is one of New Zealand’s leading stage and radio dramatists; since the 1980s he has authored numerous works that cast a critical eye on histories of settler-colonialism in Aotearoa, as well as plays that offer penetrating biographical interpretations of key figures from the nation’s past. In taking up the themes in *Pasefika*, Hoar taps into a long history of literary and

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16. That is, French: from Ngāti (son of, tribe of) and Wiwi (“Oui, Oui”). A Pākehā is a New Zealander of European descent.

artistic relations between France and New Zealand that have engaged the two spaces as physical or imagined entities—stretching back at least as far as Jean-Etienne-François de Marignié’s fantastical neoclassical drama *Zoraï, ou, Les Insulaires de la Nouvelle-Zélande* (1782)<sup>17</sup>—even if, as Jenny Bornholdt and Gregory O’Brien suggest, this creative traffic constitutes “a discontinuous narrative” rather than “a constant stream of orderly or organised interaction” (10). Hoar’s inspiration for the play came from viewing a collection of prints at the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki by the French painter, sculptor, and etcher Charles Meryon, little known in the English-speaking world, yet recognized as France’s most significant nineteenth-century engraver and as one of the most important French contributors to New Zealand’s visual history (Collins “French Artists” 71, 80). Hoar was fascinated by the Pacific iconography inscribed upon the Parisian urbanscape and intrigued by Meryon’s interactions with Māori, and he conducted extensive research on the project when he travelled to France in 2007 on the Katherine Mansfield Menton Fellowship.

*Pasefika*’s dramatic momentum arises from the footnotes of history: a thwarted artistic courtship, a thwarted romantic courtship, a forgotten moment of defiance, and a personal vision that seeps—sometimes obliquely, sometimes startlingly—into an often-dismissed body of work. The play’s action weaves between Akaroa, on the east coast of New Zealand’s South Island, where Meryon was stationed as a naval officer from 1843–46; and Paris of the 1860s, where Meryon, now an artist, etches strange visions of the city—the distorted perspective, exaggerated chiaroscuro, and looming edifices conjuring the brooding temperament of the city rather than fidelity to its physical contours. In several of these works, Oceanic phantasmagoria erupts incongruously into the Parisian mise-en-scène: whales, albatrosses, and Polynesian and Melanesian canoes invade from the sky and the sea, wheeling past rooftops and obelisks, and riding crashing waves that inundate streets and buildings. A notable feature of *Pasefika* is its cross-casting choices, which serve as a theatrical counterpart to Meryon’s idiosyncratic engravings. The Māori characters from the Akaroa scenes appear in different guises in Paris, giving a sense of the Pacific pressing in upon and modifying a European consciousness. Whereas many commentators then and since have attributed Meryon’s visual inclusions to

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17. Sometimes also cited as *Zoraï, ou, Les Sauvages de la Nouvelle-Zélande*.

his mental precarity (he would eventually die in Charenton asylum), his biographer Roger Collins argues convincingly that they may more appropriately be read as expressions of Meryon's dual vision, "linking Paris to the Pacific and straddling two hemispheres" (*Life* 255). Rather than nostalgic longing for the lost Pacific Eden amid the alienating European metropolis, these staged confrontations and provocative juxtapositions are less about the past than the future; as Collins suggests, "Perhaps Meryon was not a madman, but a prophet, a visionary" ("Ministère" 43).

The nature of this Pacific vision, and its possibilities for our present, are the driving preoccupations of Hoar's dramatic treatment. They are focused and pursued through the play's central relationship between Meryon and the poet, art critic, and flâneur Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), played by the same actor who portrays the savvy, cosmopolitan Māori patriarch Te Rangi. This relationship between the two Frenchmen is based on fact: as a writer who sought to record his own historical moment in a rapidly mutating urban context and to register the idiomatic and fleeting beauty of life in the modern city, Baudelaire found an affinity with a series of Meryon's Parisian engravings that depicted the medieval city on the brink of being destroyed by Baron Haussmann's sweeping urban reconstructions that would speed Paris' Second Empire transformation into the capital of an international modernity.<sup>18</sup> For Baudelaire, Meryon's subject matter and technique—which Baudelaire claimed inspired *Le Spleen de Paris* (1869) and sections of the 1861 edition of *Les Fleurs du Mal* (Weingarden 187; Hyslop and Hyslop 198)—captured "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent" character of *la modernité* while "distil[ling] the eternal from the transitory" ("Painter" 13, 12). Indeed, in a circumstance that Walter Benjamin would later rank "[a]mong those plans whose failure we can mourn like a loss" (117), Baudelaire proposed that he write poetic texts to accompany a new edition of Meryon's etchings. But the collaboration stalled because Meryon would not accept anything other than a factual description of his images; Baudelaire, moreover, was exasperated by Meryon's "mysterious madness" that "has deranged those faculties which seemed as robust as they were brilliant" ("Salon of 1859" 201), and the two men ultimately parted company (figure 5).

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18. This series was *Eaux-fortes sur Paris*, 12 plates, 1852–54.



Figure 5. Charles Meryon (Jason Whyte, left) confers with Charles Baudelaire (George Henare, right) upstage, while the young Māori woman, Ruiha (Aroha White) sits in the foreground. The staging of *Pasefika* shifted fluidly between 1840s Akaroa and 1860s Paris, often merging the two spatio-temporal locales within the same playing area. Play by Stuart Hoar, directed by Susan Wilson. Circa Theatre, Wellington, for the New Zealand International Arts Festival, 22 February—29 March 2014. Photograph by, and courtesy of, Stephen A'Court.

In *Pasefika*, however, this aesthetic disagreement is due to something more profound: Baudelaire's inability to grasp Meryon's vision of the Pacific. In explaining to Baudelaire his purpose in rendering the ancient city through his art, Meryon declares:

MERYON: But what you don't understand is that all this is a mere side effect and not at all the true reason why I am compelled to record what is happening before us.

BAUDELAIRE: No, surely we are agreed that progress is a monster—

MERYON: This? This is not real progress. This rehashing, this hygienic rebuilding, this modernity is just a febrile conjunction of European self-love and all the capital it has accumulated since it realized [that] usury is not really a sin.

BAUDELAIRE: This progress is real!

MERYON: Wait until you see my visions of Paris and the Pacific then you will know what true progress is. (31)<sup>19</sup>

On one level, Meryon rehearses the view of the Pacific as a “new world” whose fresh modes of thinking and being can invigorate the tired representational strategies that circulate within Europe's storied confines. But as a figure emplaced between two worlds—not indigenous but no longer fully European, Hoar's Meryon might be read more richly as a metaphorical device for exploring the ambiguities and aspirations of Pākehā identity in Aotearoa, especially the intricate process of working through the legacy of settler-colonialism in a contemporary, multicultural Pacific nation. The form of the play, with its self-conscious narrators, direct addresses, anachronisms, and postcolonial ironies, situates *Pasefika* as a commentary on the twenty-first century far more than the nineteenth. *Pasefika* is suffused with textual and aural references that percolate the present into the past: rap music, credit cards, mochaccinos, mechanical diggers, cars, and alarms conjure contemporary Pacific cities—like Paris, in the process of being made and remade. From the opening sequence when the Māori Baudelaire dresses himself as a dandy and prepares for a stroll in the arcades, he emphasizes that neither he nor the play are “period piece[s]”; instead, “I am just as modern as you, just as ephemeral, fugitive, contingent” (1). The play's uptake of a Baudelairean modernity queries the European telos that equates the modern with western-style progress and, by extension, undergirds the colonial project. *Pasefika* refuses to relegate the indigenous to a

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19. Unless otherwise indicated, page references to Stuart Hoar's *Pasefika* are from the 2014 post-production draft of the play.

time past and instead brings into constellation the modernities of proto-colonial Aotearoa, Second Empire Paris, and the Pacific present in ways that enable new forms of critical analysis.

The 1840s scenes in Akaroa, here the “squalid and makeshift French Colony called Port Louis-Philippe” (14), occur as a fixture of Meryon’s memory and reveal his partial induction into Māori lifeways—a cross-cultural encounter freighted with frustration, embarrassment, and resistance as well as imbued with revelation and insight. His cynical mentor Te Rangi, who refutes at every turn Meryon’s attempts to discover a primitive cultural authenticity on shore, is also positioned between two worlds: a shrewd negotiator, charming and scheming, he has contempt for “purist ethnic killjoys” (28) and enjoys his French wife, coffee, and croissants as much as he does his French musket and axe (figure 6). For Te Rangi, a modern identity born from a strategic navigation of these cultural interstices is his way to pursue *tino rangatiratanga* (self-determination) and defend his hapū (sub-tribe), even with the realization that these efforts may come “Too too late” (28). Meryon’s process of cultural transition finds material and symbolic affinity in the Māori-inspired waka (canoe) that he constructs from a totara tree obtained from Te Rangi in exchange for a gun. Out of this troubled transaction, this central prop morphs into something more generative, an evolving representation of a new state of being in which Meryon finds himself “becoming different. Not Maori, not of the Pacific. But something else, something not French, something new within myself” (34–35). As a vital instrument of oceanic life binding land and sea, roots and routes, the waka holds great potential as a vehicle for new journeys, connections, and beach crossings. Te Rangi finally points out to Meryon that he has changed too much to ever return to France, encouraging him instead to “Build your vision, break down your prejudices and perhaps we may break down ours. Is this canoe you have made a Maori canoe or a Pakeha waka? I don’t know, it is what it is. Take it and paddle away to a new place” (55). This moment might be interpreted as signalling the prospect of a more meaningful cross-cultural rapprochement—a might-have-been that existed in the early period of encounter before the divisionary infrastructures of settler-colonialism problematized these possibilities. This foreclosure and the deferral of a more inclusive version of Oceanic belonging is allegorized in Meryon’s forced return to France, where intimations of his unrealized vision are inscribed in his hybrid Pacific plates, waiting to be communicated, while Meryon languishes among his ghostly compatriots with their “milky skin” and “shuttered eyes” (22).



Figure 6. Te Rangi (George Henare) praises a French musket as a symbol of western modernity and declares it to be the highest form of European art. In *Pasefika* by Stuart Hoar, directed by Susan Wilson. Circa Theatre, Wellington, for the New Zealand International Arts Festival, 22 February—29 March 2014. Photograph by, and courtesy of, Stephen A’Court.

In the final scenes of *Pasefika* Meryon prepares a retrospective art exhibition, “the show of my life” (21), in which he will share “this vision of the Pacific which haunts me and renders this city as unreal” (22). Meryon displays various etchings to his 1860s companions, culminating in *Collège Henri IV* (figure 7): “see at the edge of the city is the sea, the surging sea of the future, look at our wastrel selves running for our lives for here comes the flood, the deluge, the ocean of the Pacific and see, the waka, the whales, the rising Leviathan that shall bring us to the new world!” (63). Finally, Meryon unveils his “pièce de résistance,” *Le Ministère de la Marine* (figure 8): “In the sky come the waka and the whales and the men and women of the Pacific, they are coming for us and they will sweep us all into the future” (64). Meryon’s figures here would seem to remit a powerful vision of an Oceanian modernity, centered in the ocean as a medium of connection and exchange, tracking ahead of Europe with new ventures and modes of consciousness, and spreading outwards with a global impact. The promise of this vision is of a mobilizing Oceania, gathering momentum from the fraught and fecund traffic between the Pacific’s indigenous and non-indigenous peoples; yet it is also a profoundly ambivalent vision, leaving

open the issue of how we might meet the challenge of the Pacific, on what terms we might be swept up, and how different peoples might participate in this oceanic imaginary.



Figure 7. Charles Meryon, *Collège Henri IV (ou Lycée Napoléon)*, 1863–64. Etching on laid paper, fifth state of eleven. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Anonymous gift, 1917.

What, then, might it mean to dramatize this vision in contemporary Aotearoa? How might we understand this prophesied future in the “now” of the play’s production and reception? These, it turns out, are complex and evasive questions that *Pasefika* never fully resolves. Recalling—literally—Jürgen Habermas’s characterization of modernity as “an unfinished project” (38), Hoar’s meditation on salient issues of national and regional belonging remains a work-in-progress, tackled over successive public versions of the play. Akin to Meryon’s plates, *Pasefika* exists in three manuscript “states” (2009, 2014, and 2016), each of which has a radically different ending in terms of how the characters respond to Meryon’s revelations and how the play operates as a vehicle for dialogue. In this regard, *Pasefika* is an exemplary case study for exploring ways that urban theatre makers are working to negotiate the relationships among various settler, migrant, and indigenous identities in Aotearoa; and it demonstrates the tensions among playwright, production team, and production context over how we might situate New Zealand’s past in our present, and how residents (Pākehā, especially) might enter a shared space and contribute to a common Pacific ecumene.





Figure 8. Charles Meryon, *The Admiralty, Paris (Le Ministère de la Marine, Paris)*, 1865. Etching on laid paper. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1917.

I begin my consideration of these three versions by acknowledging that Hoar is not the first New Zealand dramatist to grapple with Meryon's compositions and their portent. *Qui êtes-vous vraiment M. Meryon?* (*Who are you exactly, Mr. Meryon?*), by Pākehā playwright Vincent O'Sullivan, was translated by Christiane Mortelier for the French 1990 Colloquium in Akaroa. The dramatic monologue, performed against a backdrop of projected etchings as Meryon reminisces from his cell in Charenton, traverses the same broad biographical terrain as *Pasefika*, but the interpretation of the images differs in significant respects. In 1990,

the year of sesquicentennials—of the founding of the Akaroa colony and of the Treaty of Waitangi (the latter trumping the colonial ambitions of the former)—in the moment of a renewed wave of national self-examination and of an ascending postcolonial academy and artistic practice, the Pacific vision is depicted as threatening. In the reading of *Collège Henri IV*, for instance, the “naked classical figures” whom “we Europeans revere” are “confused and afraid” (129). The encroachment of the ocean and the “triangular canvasses of Polynesian canoes” here represent “Paris between its antique dreams, its civilisation, and the rising tide of empire, of a damaged world, corroding its margins” (129). In a subsequent version of the plate, “the Ocean from those outskirts has poured across the city. The canoes are larger. Leviathan is riding to his new home. This is the conscience of France turning on itself” (129). O’Sullivan’s version is shot through with a binarized colonial anxiety: the old world (if deservedly) is under attack from the injured, corrosive forces of empire’s others. But these “others” remain just that: in O’Sullivan’s play the perspective stays firmly with Meryon, functioning as a posthumous confessional that refuses to relinquish the central position of the Frenchman’s European consciousness, even modified as it is by his travels and delirium. Consequently, the people of the Pacific never emerge on stage in embodied form to speak as themselves and remain—as they do in the engravings—shadowy figures on the margins of memory and knowledge; somewhat sinister, reactive presences on the edges of the visual *mise-en-scène* and the global periphery, still waiting to make their proper entrance.

If *M. Meryon* is, inevitably, a product of its time and place, then so too, a generation later, is *Pasefika*. Yet the initial draft that Hoar submitted for the Adam Award (and which received a public staged reading in 2010) evinces similar anxieties and shies away from the positive potential of a mutual Pacific world. Instead, Meryon’s “visions” are explained as the result of madness caused by exposure to etching chemicals. We get a fleeting impression of “the entire theatre [...] flooded from all directions by peoples of the Pacific, all cultures including Pakeha singing, chanting, dancing together” (64), but they suddenly vanish, leaving a silence that is “resounding” (64) and a personal revelation that Meryon can communicate to no-one as he is led away in a straitjacket: “None of you understand what I had. What I lost” (64). Baudelaire also succumbs, semi-paralyzed and aphasic in a wheelchair; the last word goes to the young Parisian woman Louise Neveu (who plays Te Rangi’s daughter Ruiha in the Akaroa

scenes), who reveals that she has been spared from Baudelaire's rampant syphilis due to his impotence. If Meryon's ominous, poetic introspection evoked a European gothic sensibility, then it's here that the postcolonial gothic of uncanny unbelonging asserts itself: in the shambling grotesquerie of its crumbling characters, in its claustrophobic restrictions, in its hallucinogenic visions, in the threat of inherited disease, and in its profound alienation. There is, in this draft, a reluctance on Hoar's part to advance a form of Pākehā identity that is truly able to find itself "at home" in the Pacific, pulling back and away at the last minute to curtail the possibility with ironic closure. It is little surprise, therefore, that the production team for the 2014 show collaborated with Hoar to revise the ending—not least, I suspect, to make it more palatable for New Zealand International Arts Festival audiences.

The ending to the 2014 full production—a validation and celebration of Meryon's vision—makes *Pasefika* a trademark offering for an arts festival invested in promoting affirmative national imaginaries that register New Zealand's changing place in the Pacific as a result of Māori self-determination movements and the reconfiguration of cities like Auckland as major centers of Polynesian immigration. Staged at Circa as a performance within the performance with large projected images upstage, Meryon presents his hybrid visions, frantically exhorting his companions to hear "the bold chants of the men and women, the eerie deep sea songs of the whales" (64). Baudelaire has an epiphany: "Suddenly—suddenly I can see his vision! [. . .] Suddenly I feel pass over me the wing of change" (64). In this finale, the cast members appear on stage in a mixture of their Akaroa and Parisian costumes, suggesting that both European and Pacific characters become subject to this shared vision and expanding consciousness of the coming world of the Pacific. The audience, too, becomes inducted into this zone via theatre's sensory immersion: Meryon's etchings are suddenly animated—the whales and waka stream through the space—the dialogue switches to voiceover, a golden wash spreads over the stage as if of dawn, and we experience the shapes and sounds of birds passing through a sun-drenched sky. This version enlists the phantasmagoria that erupts across Meryon's engravings to present an inclusive vision for Aotearoa and its place in Oceania. In the final lines, Meryon recognizes himself as one of the waka that whirl across the Paris sky, reading the Pacific invasion not as a threatening otherness, but as something that he himself is part of, cemented in his closing statement: "we must open up to the true

substance of who and what we are! We must live here to be alive!” (65). This idealized ending holds out more flexible modes of belonging in the cities that burn with Oceania’s indigenous and immigrant energies, yet there is a sense that this conclusion constitutes an act of wishful thinking that evades the troubled historical entanglements with colonial modernity that remain to be unpicked.

That Hoar felt this conclusion to be unsatisfactory is evidenced by his continued work on the project, which resulted in a third ending that represents for him the most appropriate version of the play (pers. comm. 7 July 2017). If the first ending was a rejection and the second a celebration, then the third represents a negotiation and synthesis. It proceeds from the belief that the intercultural work of theatre, of connecting across difference, is best achieved not by playing out aspirant or utopian scenarios but by creating a common space for meaningful interaction. In this 2016 version, we get an affirmation of a shared Pacific future, with a “brief son et lumière performance” of Meryon’s visions, balanced—notably—by “an evocation of Māori and Pasefika visions of Aotearoa” (64). We witness again an invasion of all the people of the Pacific, “singing, chanting, dancing together, on the stage, among the audience [. . .] invoking the audience and the cast to join them” (64); however, they do not vanish after their sequence but remain fully present in the space. At this point, a spokesperson from the cast (preferably Māori) steps forward and, in a speech improvised for each performance, comments on their experience of being in the play and what the idea of Pasefika means to them. As a theatrical experience, *Pasefika* thus opens into a forum for participants to speak reflexively and critically about the play itself and the world it envisions. It demands that we acknowledge the economic disparities and social inequalities that persist within colonial and neo-colonial modernities and that inflect new mobilities and regional identities, and that we commit to addressing these legacies in order to move forward together. The play ostensibly ends at this point, but then Louise steps forward to deliver a “European coda” (65) that mentions the circumstances of Meryon’s and Baudelaire’s deaths, once again rendering the male artist-creators incapacitated and impotent. This doing away with the European characters is not an ironic invalidation or refusal to engage, but perhaps serves as a timely reminder that Aotearoa’s future is no longer to be found in the visions of Europe; if we want to understand our own modernity, then we must figure it out on our own terms.

*Les Parfums du Silence* and *Pasefika* radically rework the historical cross-cultural passages of Paul Gauguin and Charles Meryon to deliver compelling articulations of Oceanian modernities. In their rewriting of the artists' lives and afterlives and their theatrical reinterpretations of the artists' visual imagery, both plays draw attention to indigenous Pacific epistemologies, aesthetics, and identities that demonstrate how these cultures "are undergoing transformation against the background of modernity and globalization" (Moura-Koçoğlu xix). These dramas are also sites of struggle, reckoning with the persistent histories of colonial modernities and their impact upon various indigenous and non-indigenous identities in the New Pacific, and bringing to the fore attendant issues of state and self-censorship. A focus on French engagements with the Pacific offers a view that is frequently sidelined by more dominant studies of the British and American presence in the region. Moreover, constructing this analysis across anglophone and francophone terrains contributes to a broader project of bridging cultural and linguistic divides in Oceania, yet maintains respect for local difference; the divergent circumstances of French Polynesia and Aotearoa New Zealand reveal how experiences and expressions of Oceanian modernities vary across communities, political formations, and regional sites. In addition to providing new views of the form and content of dramatic literature in Oceania, this discussion emphasizes theatre's function as a critical forum for cultural debate and conscious reflection on our contemporary moment.

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# When Translation Isn't Just Translating: Between Languages and Disciplines

*Haun Saussy*

I WAS RECENTLY ASKED to speak at the fiftieth-year anniversary of the Comparative Literature department at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and as a consequence was led to reflect on the development of the field. Imagine the conditions Comparative Literature faced in 1967. In the United States (the country on which I have the best information) it was a small field, populated by the few students and professors who, by accidents of birth or training, could read and write in three or more languages, usually modern European languages. Many refugees of the 1930s generation were still teaching. Gayatri Spivak, Peter Szondi, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man, just to name a few stars, were at the beginning of their careers or had just written the books that would make them famous. Other noted comparatists were in kindergarten or as yet unborn. The 1960s saw the founding of many comparative literature departments, particularly in the public universities of the US. The discipline had a stuttering start in this country: after an initial short phase of growth around 1900, a second wave of department-founding comparatists emigrated from Europe in the 1930s and '40s. A third wave was carried by the expansion of public universities in the 1960s, the urgency that Americans felt then to learn about and engage with the rest of the world, and the opening-up of immigration after 1965; among men, the prospect of being sent to Vietnam may have inspired a few vocations in multiple foreign languages and literatures. For those engaged in it, and especially provincials like myself, comparative literature offered an expansion of horizons and a way of being a citizen of the world that English and foreign language departments could not provide, partly of course through the mere fact

of having to judge and compare different authors, canons, and histories, partly through the do-it-yourself structure of most comparative literature doctoral programs, where instead of acquiring mastery of a predefined list of obligatory authors and periods, one went searching for the books that fit into a newly stated problem.

Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature*, a widely-taught vademecum, attempted a broad survey of all the methods available for comparative study: largely philology (or linguistic history), literary history, and New Critical close reading (see Wellek and Warren). The problems were stated in the terms made available by the languages and cultures under consideration. Further along, the canon of the young discipline presented a choice between Curtius, showing how the literatures of modern Europe derived from the Latin Middle Ages and strongly suggesting that humanistic learning would be better off in a revived Roman Empire, and Auerbach, offering snapshots from the development of realism and concluding with a grim prognosis for the survival of culture in a world of standardized commercialism (see Curtius and Auerbach).<sup>1</sup> Nostalgia versus uncertainty, options framed by the course of European history from the Bronze Age to 1945. Many languages with long histories of cultural attainment weren't thought of as comparative literature languages. You would have to be an extremely stubborn student or have an extremely lenient supervisor to present a dissertation project involving Chinese, Persian, or Tamil, for example. This was not because of any policy of exclusion, but simply because the conversations necessary to developing relationships and parallels were not yet going on. Academic interest in such fields as those was confined to area studies, history of religions, or anthropology. Perhaps, as well, the lingering dominance of influence-based literary history (comparison being legitimated by common sources) served to limit the range of possible projects. *Sakuntala*'s influence on German Romanticism would have been a possible subject of research at that time, but not Kalidasa's *Sakuntala* in relation to, say, Euripides's *Alceste*. I believe—though probably the history of every institution differs—that the influx of students from countries outside Europe, possessing their own language and another one as well as English, and the prominence of theory in literary study after 1970 or so combined to open up our discipline. It wasn't a purposeful or cleanly concerted

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1. Although Auerbach's is the earlier book, it strikes modern readers as the more forward-looking.

effort, but rather an intersection of two independent dynamics with somewhat ragged results. But fifty years after that exceptional moment of expansion (the wave that brought the UIUC department's founding) in an outward-looking, intellectually-ambitious, confident US culture, it is not at all odd for students to be working in Hindi, Kinyarwanda, or Burmese alongside French, Greek, or German. Although the official culture of the United States is now far more inward-looking and pessimistic, our discipline has continued to broaden its horizons and its ambitions. We comparatists are far from perfect, but we can be proud of our record as would-be cosmopolitans and keepers of the open door.

A history of the discipline, ever more international even in its US form, would have to account for the interrelations of three of the intellectual dynamics that have provided much of the energy in comparative literature since 1967: theory, multilingualism (including translation), and interdisciplinarity. Of these, the last is the latest arrival to be recognized and still the most debated. How do we accommodate investigation of different disciplines without becoming a Department of Everything? It is an administrative question, yes, but also an intellectual one. Understanding it passes through an understanding of translation.

Translation has always shadowed comparative literature—sometimes as one of its prerequisites, sometimes as one of its exclusions. The status of translation in our discipline depends very much on the question, “translation from what?” Some of the same scholars who hold the acquisition of foreign languages to be a non-negotiable defining feature of comparative literature have also “condone[d] . . . courses in minority literatures in which the majority of the works were read in translation” (Bernheimer 44). Clearly the authors of “minority literatures” were not seen as sufficiently important, even by the self-advertised multiculturalists of 1994, to warrant learning their languages. That at least has changed, in some quarters. Yet the popularity of such topics as “world literature,” usually assuming a presentist, English-centered imagination of the world of letters, works against actual polyglottism in the classroom and the scholarly journal. Thus translation (that is, its availability or acceptability) tends to maintain most of the actual practice of comparative literature in its pre-1970s linguistic frontiers.

Translation has another role, in some ways compensatory for the narrowing of linguistic horizons. What underwrites the expansion of interdisciplinary work in comparative literature is, to no small degree,

the translatability of the idea of translation. Historians of science, anthropologists, scholars of religion, philosophers—all have reached for the term “translation” as a relatively domain-neutral, technical description of the work they do (see Talal Asad, Thomas S. Kuhn, and Donald Davidson). If interpretation in general, or epistemic commonality, amounts to translation, then those who understand translation (in the non-extended sense) might find themselves at home in the metaphorical extensions of translation. This has come true in some ways, and in some other ways remains an unrealized promise. The idea of translation—translation as literal practice, as metaphor or as model—has enabled the expansion of concern to realms beyond what English-language culture defines as “literature,” but has also tended to limit it in certain ways.

Conceptual translation eased the previous expansion of comparative literary study to non-European traditions. It is not very controversial today, though it might have been controversial at one time, to say that there are Japanese, Moroccan, or Kalmyk novels, dramas or poems. Perhaps you might stimulate a flicker of resistance by proposing that such-and-such a nation possesses an epic, but that’s a feature of the historical and political investments in epic, which are really a question for separate discussion. Generally speaking, there is literature—we all agree on this—and it appears in all the human languages, as far as we know. To say of some people that they “have no literature” sounds like an arrogant dismissal, on the order of excluding them from humanity. That a people may have no *recorded* literature, or no *written* literature, is not so problematic a statement, for it leaves open the possibility that oral creativity existed among them and thus that the relevant literature might simply have chanced never to be collected. The category of literature applies universally; it would be wrong and bad to deny it to any human group, we feel, as if to do so were to deny them the basic human right of self-expression. I think our moral feelings are in the right place. But how do we construct this category of “literature”? Are we not, in some other way, doing a disservice to other branches of the human family by lumping their verbal productions together with the things we call, in our home culture, “literature”? As is well-known, the restriction of the literary to imaginative or fictional productions is something that came about in the late eighteenth century, partly as an effect of oratory, science and journalism spinning off as separate trades, with their own criteria of success and their own avenues of publication. What poets and novelists do

became specialized, no longer part of the one stream that had contained the sermons of Bossuet and the cosmology of Newton. But societies that had not participated in the European reorganization of letters into these various separate professions, societies that existed before that sorting-out occurred or that went on about their own business unaffected by Western European trends, organized their reading differently. To project our own distinctions on those societies walls us off from the processes by which members of those societies wrote, read and heard their verbal culture. That division of letters into literature and the rest is even not very useful for fairly recent exhibits from societies ancestral to our own (George Eliot, for example, had a much deeper range of specialist knowledge in psychology, history, and philology than most novelists living today). Or consider this. We in the English-language world can now read a wonderful translation of the long Chinese novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* from approximately the year 1750. We can even read it alongside other plays and novels in the Chinese tradition to which it has some relationship: *The Peony Pavilion*, *Plum in a Golden Vase*, *The Scholars*, and so on. This is good: I praise and thank the translators who make this possible. But by turning the *Honglou meng* into a “Chinese novel” (an exhibit of the genus novel, sub-species Chinese), they may have inserted it into a cognitive frame that belongs to our time and place, not to the book’s. What we can’t so easily do without being specialists in Qing dynasty history is to read that novel in the context of all the other things a literate Chinese person of 1750 would have had on his or her desk. But we should try to do that, because the realm of the literary, *wenzhang* 文章 in Chinese, included law, history, philosophy, poetry, geography, medicine, policy, and so on—more or less every verbal artifact that was crafted with literary style and spoke to human interests. The same person might be an authority in all the above domains and more. The isolation of imaginative literature from other forms of writing is unusual and corresponds to the needs of a certain kind of society, the properties of which can’t be generalized blithely across the range of all possible societies. The extension of the domain of “literature” should not come so naturally to us; we have to be able to think, also and concurrently, that the category of literature might include, say, an instruction-booklet or a field guide to the birds. If we hold fast to our pre-existing categories as we go about “comparing the literatures,” we reduce translation or comparison to a one-way relationship. And though we usually describe translation in one-way terms

(as translating *from* language A *into* language B), the act of translating carries with it a certain kind of reflexivity; both languages are affected by it. This seems to me highly important and praiseworthy. One of the finest descriptions of reflexive effects in translation comes from someone who didn't approve of it in the slightest, Dr. Samuel Johnson, who in the Preface to his *Dictionary of the English Language* opined that:

The great pest of speech is frequency of translation. No book was ever turned from one language into another, without imparting something of its native idiom; this is the most mischievous and comprehensive innovation; single words may enter by thousands, and the fabrick of the tongue continue the same, but new phraseology changes much at once; it alters not the single stones of the building, but the order of the columns. If an academy should be established for the cultivation of our stile. . . let them, instead of compiling grammars and dictionaries, endeavor, with all their influence, to stop the license of translatours, whose idleness and ignorance, if it be suffered to proceed, will reduce us to babble a dialect of France. (Johnson 27)

If translation affects the language into which translating occurs, as I agree with Johnson that it does, then it matters what kinds of things we translate. I think of another eighteenth-century Englishman, Edward Gibbon, who wrote eagerly in 1761 of his desire to consult a really exotic sample of writing, say a book from the Iroquois nation:

An Iroquois work, even if it were full of absurdities, would be an invaluable treasure; it would offer an unique specimen of the workings of the human mind, when placed in circumstances which we have never experienced, and influenced by manners and religious opinions entirely contrary to our own. We should be sometimes astonished and instructed by the contrariety of ideas thus produced [. . .] We should there learn not only to own, but to feel the power of prejudices, not to be astonished at what seems most absurd, and often to distrust what seems best established. (Gibbon, cited in Reiss 136–37)

The man of the Enlightenment shows himself here fascinated by what is not like him. His response is divided. He preemptively characterizes the hypothetical Iroquois book as full of “error,” as if to hold the foreign book at a distance: we are the ones who know what the truth is and the exotic informant is bound to be wrong about things. Probably the Iroquois cosmology makes some mistakes; we all do. But once past this easy assumption of epistemological superiority, Gibbon sets himself as reader a more demanding mission: to find the reasons behind the “absurdities”

of the text. *Reddere rationem*: it is a philosophical mission, to understand “the workings of the human mind” in this unfamiliar context. Gibbon does not promise to explain the Iroquois mentality in terms of our own mentality, but to discover, so far as possible, the coherence, system, and implications of the alien mind. It is not our reasons that count as Reason here. By doing this act of interpretation, Gibbon advances, we will come to understand ourselves as “prejudiced” subjects, and to doubt “what seems best established” for people like us. Just as in Vico, the savage or barbarian is the incarnation of another kind of reason that does not correspond to our assumptions, but nonetheless makes sense once you have figured out the starting points of the other mentality. Or consider Friedrich August Wolf, telling us in 1790 that in order to understand Homer’s world we have to throw away all our books, pens, and libraries. These eighteenth-century mental explorers are trying to put us in the position of not knowing what kind of a document we have in front of us. Is it literature? Is it myth? Is it the babblings of an insane person? What is it and what are we to do with it? This is what happens when we read texts written under “circumstances which we have never experienced.”

When we have visited such outer limits, the provincial character of our category of literature is revealed, and the reflexivity of translation is revealed. By the way, I am not saying that the Iroquois experience is incommensurable with that of the Enlightenment Englishman, or that the Iroquois text is untranslatable: such negative epithets (inspired by Thomas Kuhn) are often used out of pure exaggeration, and I think it is always safe to say that some of the experience must be commensurate and some of the meanings must be translatable, otherwise we couldn’t even state the frustration of attempting to bring them across; they would simply be as ineluctably other as Wittgenstein’s lion.

You can find real exoticism not so far from home, I contend—in interdisciplinarity. On the condition, that is, that we do it with reflexivity.

One form of interdisciplinarity happens when literary methods are extended to new objects—the objects traditionally guarded by the watchdogs of a different discipline. It is amusing to watch what happens when literary scholarship makes a raid on such objects. Hayden White’s astonishingly original work *Metahistory*, published in 1973, put under the analytic lenses of literary genre theory the writings of historians and philosophers of history (White). White showed that history-writing obeyed the laws of rhetoric and genre: that the same series of real events might be plotted as an



epic, a bourgeois tragedy, a romance or a comedy, depending on the configuration of characters, events, tropes, and connotations. The response from historians was mostly cranky and dismissive. By treating history as another type of literary rhetoric, they charged, White was playing cavalierly with the all-important questions of the meaning and truth of human events, he was trivializing the whole historical profession, he was reducing research to verbal decoration, he was, in short, some kind of cynic or nihilist.

A few years later, when Richard Rorty proposed, by way of commenting on Jacques Derrida's contributions, that we treat "philosophy as a kind of writing," the response from philosophers was similar, down to the charges of frivolity and nihilism (Rorty).

That is one type of response to the interdisciplinary extension of literary methods to fields of discourse that their practitioners consider not to be literature. It tells us a lot about how literature is defined and valued. That is, not very highly—and precisely because of the identification of literature with the imaginary, the decorative and the merely persuasive. The realm of literature, for historians and philosophers, is a place where the coin they perceive themselves to be dealing in, namely truth, has no currency.

The interdisciplinary conditions are somewhat different with law and medicine. For the former, let the evidence be a splendid article by Julie Stone Peters, "Law, Literature, and the Vanishing Real: On the Future of an Interdisciplinary Illusion" (2005) (Peters); for the latter, the works of the medical anthropologist Arthur Kleinman. Kleinman writes in *The Illness Narratives* about the need of patients to give a narrative shape—a literary shape, we could say without too much exaggeration—to what happens to them. Some patients get a sense of control over their situation by referring to King Lear, for example, unlikely though that may sound at first hearing (Kleinman 141–42). As for the law, a courtroom is of course a site of competition among storytellers, and to their well-paid efforts literature, if we identify it with persuasive storytelling, has little to add except as a form of illustration. Literature is the Extra-Strength form of what they already deal in. As Peter Brooks puts it, some radical lawyers see "narrative [a]s an important tool for individuals and communities who need to tell the concrete particulars of their experience in a way normally excluded by legal reasoning and rule (Brooks)." "Stories are real," say two literature-and-law specialists cited by Peters, "and they are populated by real people" (447). Literature conveys more reality, more

authenticity, more experience than a legal brief, say the people who deal with legal briefs all day long.

In these two kinds of interdisciplinary contact we see literature occupying roles that are complementary to the other discipline's shortcomings—and yet the roles literature plays as regards law and medicine are mutually antithetical. For patients and doctors confronting the messy, random yet fated processes of illness, in the course of which all subjectivity is put at risk, literature represents a saving principle of form, an embodiment of the order and reason to which one might aspire in shaping the account in words of one's own life. For lawyers and their clients, literature is rather the place where a specific kind of content can be extracted: raw, immediate, untheorized, authentic human experience before the protocols of the courtroom have got to it and processed it into standard-shaped sausages. Both these encounters point to functions for literature that do us honor, but however friendly, these modes of interdisciplinarity reduce literature to subject matter, to the thing that literature has in common with the rest of life, not what literature adds to life.

In this regard, I think the historians and the philosophers understood something about literature that the lawyers and doctors did not—even if the former group were frantically suspicious of our tricks and traps. Lawyers and doctors admire literature's ability to construct persuasive worlds of discourse. Historians and philosophers fear that our persuasion is made to seduce people into Plato's cave of illusion. The contrastive contact with law and medicine posits literature as the domain where the Human resides. For medicine it is the Human as form-giver, in relation to unruly matter; for legal humanities it is the human as agency and spontaneity, set against the unyielding rubrics of the law. Perhaps because they are closer to our trade, the historians and philosophers see the profession of letters as an antitype or antidote to conventional humanistic values, and so do us the backhanded compliment of trying to claim those values for themselves.

The works of White and Rorty certainly made it easier for us to perform our dark arts upon texts from history and philosophy, and the experience of representing the humanistic values associated with literature in the realms of medicine and law can be uplifting, but in all these cases we see interdisciplinarity extending the domain of the literary on the terms already consented to literature. Imagine, though, that the contact with law, medicine, history or philosophy were to change the definition

of the literary. Imagine, that is, that reflexivity were to occur. How would that happen? What would transfer over to literature from the other disciplines, what newly acquired methods or viewpoints could be attained? If interdisciplinarity is usually conducted on the model of a translation—the restating of a common content in diverse idioms—then what would most benefit all parties to the conversation would perhaps be the opposite, the stating in a common idiom of divergent contents.

Law and medicine, when they bother to think about literature, conceive it in similar yet opposite ways, one seeing raw material, the other seeing achieved form. A symmetry of the same kind, I think, appears in the opposing attitudes of another pair of disciplines often proposed for our interdisciplinary interest, neuroscience and computer programming. Forgive me here if I go quickly and aim for broad caricatural outlines; I'm trying to paint a billboard, not a watercolor. A number of cognitive-science studies chiefly demonstrate that humans think with their brains, and that the properties of human brains are also seen in literary works. Some studies foreground such properties as recursivity and metaphor as characterizing both human cognition and works of literature written by humans. *Q.E.D.* Such similarities are not, after all, surprising; it would be more surprising to learn that spiderwebs or river deltas exhibit properties of human cognition. We already think like literary works all the time—we attribute motives, we construct storylines, we assess the reliability of narrators, we boil figures of speech down to their simplest meaning. Many people who have never learned how to read can gossip. Much cognitive literary theory, as it presently stands, just repeats the point that the literary mind is the human mind, somewhat vividly and exaggeratedly lit up for exhibition. Probably it would help us as human beings to learn to think *otherwise* than as literary works do. But how?

Some of the work that gets attention from the newspapers as “digital humanities” is on the same plane. I remember reading, for example, some years ago, a now unfindable article demonstrating that a survey of adjectives in American novels from 1945 to the present exhibits an increasing fraction of words connoting anxiety. You didn't need a computer to tell you that, though it must be nice to have the exact proportions. Digital-humanities work that simply does on a bigger scale or at a faster pace work that has long been done by humans wielding index cards—the work of concordances, indexes, library catalogues and dictionaries—does not strike me as being powerfully interdisciplinary. It simply restates

old assumptions in a context of up-to-date machinery. My heart begins to beat faster when I read about work in automated learning, where a set of algorithms is let loose on a corpus of literary works and allowed to discover patterns on its own, extend their chains of similarity, and choose what to foreground as important or exceptional. A really interdisciplinary research program would contrast the automated learning strategies point for point with the interpretive strategies of unaided humans. It is from the non-humans, our own Iroquois, that we can learn something new about the human, all-too-human effects of literature.

I find encouragement in this view from Katherine Hayles, who advocates for an expansion of literary studies to encompass film, image, games, science writing and so forth, but at the same time demands that each medium should get a Media Specific Analysis, or MSA (Hayles). That is, comparing a novel and the movie or game derived from it should not treat them as two different vehicles for the same content, but should focus on how the different vehicles shape the content differently, to the point that in the respects that matter, they are not the same work at all. The notion of media is, I think, capacious enough to admit novels, poems, plays, legal briefs, case histories, algorithms, and the like as forms of “letters,” or inscriptions—even oral recitations can be squished into the category of “inscriptions,” or so I’ve argued in a recent book, insofar as they depend on intersubjectively recognized loci of memory (Saussy).

With this common basis, which by the way gives no special privilege or disqualification to the category of the imaginary, in mind, we can then differentiate the textual universes in prospect. We can do that formally. For the way the documents of a legal universe are organized and interrelated is quite different from the way a medical inscription-world is set up; the historian’s archive, the philosopher’s debating-ground, the double-blind drug study, the film industry, all follow rules of relevance that are infrastructural to what gets said there, what gets a hearing, what constitutes a basis for further discussion. Frequenting as a layperson these often baffling universes gives a person with literary training a sense of the disciplinary specificity (and the bounds) of the universe of literature. As Gibbon speculated, the experience of a mind organized differently from one’s own yields first the sense that everything is wrong, that it’s a landscape of “error,” but this impression then gives way to the sense of an idiomatic coherence arising from its modes of organization, however much of our previous point of view we must sacrifice in order to get there. So

it is among disciplines: if it were simply possible to translate one into the other, to find for every point of the one a corresponding point in the ontology of the other, the process wouldn't be particularly interesting; it's when the whole organization of the discourses is different that mediating the media becomes real work.

In narrating the story of American comparative literature, I may have given the impression that interdisciplinarity is a latecomer, that we turned to it after we had exhausted the readier options. That's not true for the prophets of theory, who seem to have done everything for the first time themselves, out of far-sightedness or instinct. Let us remember Viktor Shklovsky, the inspirer of the Russian Formalist school of criticism, invokes psychology at crucial points of his breakaway essay "Art as Device"—and it's not the common-sense kind of psychology. He's only interested in the results that go against common sense. Another such prophet, Ferdinand de Saussure, based his linguistics on a Darwinian model of change in populations. There the individual will counts for almost nothing, change is never teleological, and the environment fashions the organism: the point being to counter a crude social Darwinism in the mainstream linguistics of Saussure's time, which portrayed languages as organisms and sang of their victories over lesser idioms. A third prophet, Milman Parry, a second-generation student of Saussure who in the 1920s more or less created the field of oral poetics, came to his insights by applying not semantics, not poetics, not philology to the Homeric poems, but statistics, recovering through the corpus method an astonishing degree of economy and exactitude in Homer's heroic jargon: the first database poetics (Saussy 43–73). Each of these discovered in his own way that meaning is an effect of something that is not itself meaningful—and the boundary between meaningful and meaningless is a boundary between our discipline and others. Theory, as they founded it, is about how meanings are produced, not about the meanings themselves. When Shklovsky, in 1914, proclaimed "art" the same as "device," it was to say that what matters in art is not the artwork, but "the way of experiencing how an object is made."<sup>2</sup> Each of the pioneers of theory just mentioned performed what Shklovsky called "the knight's move," not proceeding down the

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2. Or as rendered by Alexandra Berlina: "the means to live through the making of a thing" ("Art as Device," translated in Berlina 80). Test these readings against the original: "Iskusstvo yest' sposob perezhit' delat' veshi, a sdelannoe v iskusstve ne vazhno" (Shklovskii 13). The pivotal word is *perezhit'*, which can be translated as "to experience" or "to go through."

chessboard in the straight line of their disciplines, but turning to another discipline's methods to reconceive their own discipline's old problems.

For this, of course, they have been scolded again and again by the custodians of common sense and of a theory of literature as the photo album of life. Trotsky caused untold trouble for Shklovsky and his associates by attacking them as antisocial aesthetes, one can read in some popular histories of critical theory that Saussure "was not at all interested in the real language used by real people," and Milman Parry's disciples spent sixty years claiming that he didn't mean what he said. Indeed all three figures, and others like them who've had a similar inspiring function in the field of theory, could be accused of a lack of interest in the translatable content of literature. Theory is all about methods, the methods of producing and interpreting literary objects, and thus necessarily treats the things that are important for most readers, the plot, character, sentiments, etc., as mere after-effects.

By arguing that theory begins—has always begun—with interdisciplinarity, I'm contradicting a widely received sense that the purpose of Formalists, New Critics, and rhetoricians was to create a basis for literary studies to become its own autonomous discipline, safe in the defensive walls of a difficult technical vocabulary and tended by a cult of men and women totally dedicated to "literariness," as Jakobson called it. I think that view is partly true, but that the idea of autonomy is not equivalent to total separation, and that recognition of the unusual, counter-intuitive, non-thematic, anti-common-sense qualities of innovative literature and theory would not have been possible without a move outside the realm of texts known, since the eighteenth century, as imaginative literature or *belles-lettres*.

So what does this leave us with? The need of comparatists to sharpen their wits against something not already categorized and understood is one of the things I admire most about our colleagues in the discipline. They are animated by a fine spirit of restlessness. Comparisons are never satisfactory, they are never conclusive, and if they are good comparisons they will leave us doubting what seemed, in Gibbon's words, "best established."

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# Queer/Theory/Life/Writing: Queer Friend-Love in *Roland Barthes* by *Roland Barthes* and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *A Dialogue on Love*

Jordana Greenblatt

A FEW YEARS AGO, I got together with someone whose work had taken her out of town for the preceding months. We hadn't seen each other for a while, so our catching up wasn't just a matter of updates, but of introducing new storylines in our lives. I was noticeably excited about a new friend I had made. Present as I was in the pleasures of "new friend feeling," I forgot for a moment the persistence of affective norms, and my interlocutor's response—"is this a romantic prospect?"—was a cold shock, interrupting both my immediate happiness and my desire to talk about that part of my life at all.

Although there is certainly something odd—something *queer*—about loving in this way, I am not claiming that my kind of intense affective investment in friends *as friends* is one that all queer *people* share or that no heterosexuals have. I do not know if my interlocutor, herself queer, has such feelings for her friends. In the immediate sense, her response may have been nothing but a product of being in a new romantic relationship herself. What she said, however, and its dismissal of the validity and the visibility of the love that *I* was feeling, is consistent with the dominant affective framework, which restricts "large" love to very specific and limited relationship types. This framework participates in constituting affective sociality as most meaningfully realized within the structure of the heterosexual family; even those who will never have or want such a family

often replicate its discursive structures and assumptions. Confining love, or at least its most intense forms, to romantic and familial relationships serves to domesticate it, buttressing the centrality of the heteronormative, reproductive family (with all its associations with maintaining dominant economic, and often racial, systems) to the social order. Refusing such domestication, promiscuous intense love reorders affective and affectional social mapping. In multiplying the risks to the coherent subject in love, it also resists promises of restored coherence through the institutionalized family.<sup>1</sup> Such love defies teleological maturation scripts that identify emotional adulthood with prioritizing *one* (and one kind of) passionate affective investment over others. Institutionalized domesticity mobilizes love, often theorized as a shattering in which the subject feels a part of the self to be lodged in the beloved, through the promise of reunification with the “missing piece” within the space of the family home and the temporal routine of family life. When those “pieces” are scattered over a promiscuous, and often geographically decentralized, range of beloved others, promises of restored coherence through geographic containment and temporal regularity feel much less plausible.

Thus, I *do* posit the kind of friend-love that refuses the dominant drive toward domestication as, itself, queer—queer in the broad sense of resisting, questioning, and proffering alternatives to the sociality of the dominant socio-politico-sexual order. Per Judith Halberstam in *In a Queer Time and Place*, “‘queer’ refers to nonnormative logics and organizations of community, sexual identity, embodiment, and activity in space and time. ‘Queer time’ is a term for those specific models of temporality that emerge within postmodernism once one leaves the temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety, and inheritance” (6). Alternate temporalities and geographies associated with queer lives may well contribute to why this kind of friend-love might be more prevalent among, although not exclusive to, queer people, but friend-love, in turn, also contributes to and produces non-normative temporal and geographic structures. As Kathryn Bond Stockton notes in *The Queer Child*, childhood is socially figured in terms of delay and vertical,

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1. Tim Dean argues similarly for the value of promiscuous (and non-domestic) intimacy, but he conflates intimacy with sexual contact in a manner inimical to the argument I am proposing here. While Dean contends that openness to alterity does not *have* to take place in barebacking, or even sexual contexts, his focus on barebacking as an exemplary model reinforces the very collapsing together of intimacy and romantic and/or sexual relationships that I attempt to dispel.

upwards movement, and retrospectively queer childhoods, in failing to conform to upwards temporality and spaciality, map onto “the horizontal—what spreads sideways—or sideways and backwards,” a directional plenitude which offers less limited conceptions of growth than solely vertical models allow (4). The very act of loving one’s friends intensely in(to) adulthood serves to produce affective mappings in which love is both horizontally geographically dispersed and temporally liberated from the teleological upwards progression toward one’s “one true love,” whose domestication encourages disengagement from others outside the actually or metaphorically familial scene.

Queer friend-love thus creates the ground for (although not the assurance of) strong affective/social connections more inclusive of difference than purely localized schemas, as well as interest in and commitment to domesticity’s others. Queerly loving friendship, which I approach through the life writing of two queer theorists and strive to distinguish from some of the key contemporary theorizations of friendship, suggests proliferating, amplified positive intensity, potentially catalyzed by the marginality of queer lives from what Halberstam calls “reproductive temporality” and realized in the development of alternate relational and affective bonds (4). Both of the unconventional autobiographies I examine offer images of affective lives constellated around friendship that is irreducible to either sexual encounter or conventionally understood romantic love. The intersection of self-documentary (performing, as it does, that which is important to the self to publicly avow about the self) and an affective structure that defies heteronormative (and, by extension, homonormative) ideas of love inspires my engagement with an uncommon literary form—the theorist autobiography—to theorize the queerness of friend-love in conversation with *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, best described as an autobiography in theory by a theorist who is queer,<sup>2</sup> and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s *A Dialogue on Love*, an autobiographical dialogue anchored in the relationship between a foundational queer theorist and her therapist, Shannon.<sup>3</sup> Both of these texts formulate lives whose queerness of affect inheres in a perverse

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2. There is a reasonable amount of work on Barthes’s autobiography, although much of it focuses on his use of photography or the Lacanian Imaginary. Barthes’s theorization/representation of friendship is an element of his work that has thus far been critically neglected. For an overview of existing work on *Roland*, see Rachel Gabara.

3. *Dialogue* is one of Sedgwick’s most critically underexamined works. Although it has recently begun to garner academic attention, work to date is relatively

centrality of friendship that refuses the primacy of domestic (or potentially eventually domestic) and domesticated love—a refusal to prioritize the model of love that is socially coded as the “mature,” “adult,” etc. locus of passionate attachment.

Structurally, these texts differ immensely. Barthes writes in his characteristic theoretical aphorisms, while Sedgwick intersperses personal narration, haiku, and her therapist’s notes. Yet the importance of passionate, affectively intense friendship is undeniable for each. While *A Lover’s Discourse* might tempt readers to assume that Barthes’s concept of love aligns with the erotic relationship, he ends his discussion of the lovability of friends in *Roland* with a statement that “by magic, this fragment has been written last . . . as a kind of dedication,” suggesting that friend-love is the affective framework structuring Barthes’s writing of his own life (65). Indeed, the manner in which Barthes and Sedgwick formulate love of friends in their autobiographies calls into question the assumed applicability of *A Lover’s Discourse* only to romantic love and/or sexual desire: the proximity, in terms of feeling, between queer friend-love and romantic/erotic attachment as more broadly understood—yet felt in relation to different kinds, and different numbers, of objects—is one of its fundamental attributes. Describing her relationship with Michael Moon, Sedgwick writes: “There’d be nothing untrue in saying that I’m in love with him. Our bond is very passionate . . . ; it’s very physical, though we don’t have sex” (24). Something about this passionate experience of friendship is incommensurate with a heteronormative understanding of affectively privileged bonds; evoking the feelings described in more conventional love-stories, it abandons their objects and institutionalized structures. Indeed, Sedgwick’s explanation is a response to Shannon’s assumption that, given the way she discusses him, Moon must be her husband. And Barthes, in turn, refers to such friend interactions as “a perverse pleasure” (*Roland* 65).

Friend-love’s perversity resides in its resistance to the institutions supported by the dominant affective framework and enables it to resist them. While the fundamental feeling is the same as, at least, the beginning of romantic passion as it has been historically constituted—experiencing it with multiple objects, dispersed over a range of spaces—produces a semi-qualitative shift. While structures of affective domestication seek to

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sparse. Several articles are published in a special issue of *Criticism* on Sedgwick, including Cindy Patton’s, to which I will return later.

reunify the subject fractured by love, and thus also to dampen the fracturing and fractured elements of the feeling itself, loving friends queerly embraces those very elements. Such love thus both resists (locational and affective) domestication and reframes reunification with the “other half” as fundamentally impossible and undesirable. Michel Foucault addresses the queerness of friend-love in “Friendship as a Way of Life,” asserting that such “relations short-circuit [institutional codes] and introduce love where there’s supposed to be only law, rule, or habit” (137). Halberstam refers to Foucault in defining queer social structures, commenting: “In Foucault’s radical formulation, queer friendships, queer networks, and the existence of these relations in space and in relation to the use of time mark out the particularity and indeed the perceived menace of homosexual life” (1). Yet she quickly moves on without exploring the specificity of friendship, and Foucault himself focuses exclusively on relationships between men.

While there is certainly work on *types* of queer friendship, it is largely organized by friend object choice, exploring specific friend-combinations categorized by gender and/or sexuality.<sup>4</sup> Although such analyses often emphasize challenges these friendships pose to the dominant frameworks of homo- and heterosociality, they tend, as a whole, to maintain their reliance on object choice as the defining element of a friendship, often either reasserting affectional monogamy, prioritizing (exclusive, often historical) pair-bonded romantic friendship, or dilute the specificity of the love of *each* friend into a celebration of queer community generally. Love of friends numbering between one and a community-sized multitude is rarely given much critical attention. The emphasis on object choice in the history of queer theorizations of friendship seems to encourage the conflation of loving friendships with object specificity and/or community—or camaraderie—organized around shared identity/

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4. Particularly the blurry spectrum of both the homosocial and homosexual among women as well as friendship among gay men, but also, for example, Anna Muraco’s *Odd Couples*, which considers intersectional friendships between gay men and straight women and lesbians and straight men. In “Friendship,” Foucault refers specifically to Lilian Faderman’s *Surpassing the Love of Men*, which is hardly alone in exploring women’s homosocial bonds, so Foucault’s claim that “affection and passion between women is well documented” is not misplaced (138). While he is correct that there is a need for work on friendship between men (and, indeed, such work certainly exists now) in order to understand the nature of queerly passionate friendship itself, I maintain that it is necessary to regard it outside of the frameworks of identity and object choice as the defining elements of a friendship.

identification. Focusing instead on type of affective bond, I argue that intensely loving friendship structures and relationships, intrinsically queer in their resistance to heteronormative affective, temporal, and geographical structures, defy the boundaries between hetero- and homosociality as they balance loving promiscuously and loving specifically.

Queer friend-love's implications for sociality and for the loving subject only become fully graspable through shifting our focus from object to mode of emotional investment. Using object-choice as a paradigm implicitly prioritizes identity, telling us about what different kinds of *people* might have to offer each other—by no means a fruitless pursuit: there has been plenty of valuable work done on what queers gain from loving other queers, women from loving other women, etc. However, approaching type of affect, or affective relationship, as a central concern allows us to investigate the queer forms of sociality that can emerge from *feeling* differently, regardless of whom it is that we love. In not defining a type of affective relationship as residing in either specific shared identity/similarity or specific kinds of differences between friends, we gain insight into what loving friends queerly has the potential to *do*—for subjectivity, for sociality, and for affective cartography.

While affectionally monogamous, pair-bonded friend-love shares some elements of the affective structure I am considering here, as a primary locus of study, it serves to occlude (or simply lacks) pertinent elements of queer sociality associated with promiscuous, but specific, friend-love. Lacking the geographic dispersal and perverse, multiply fracturing proliferation of passionate love of multiple others, monogamous friend-love does not necessarily replicate the return to a family-much-like-the-family-of-origin promised by domesticated love, but it often shares the sense of a restorable “adult” whole and/or prioritization of the home as the primary site of passionate affection. To use Foucault's term, “lines of [affective] force” are still narrowly situated. Queerly loving friendship experienced polyvalently can serve to decentralize geographic investments because it similarly decentralizes and fragments the subject through the vector of these friendships.

Conversely, broadening queer sociality into community, thus dispersing love between subjects into a generalized love of a set of others who share certain identity/ies and/or political orientation/s, risks replicating dominant models of friend-love—ones that are often used in the service of the *polis*—through paralleling love of friends with non-pas-

sionate, but invested familial bonds (e.g., fraternity). Such generalization of love, whether it be the fraternity of countrymen or the camaraderie of political comrades and/or “queer family,” serves to direct passionate investment toward a shared identity or project, one whose definition precedes you. It can also serve to obscure difference/differences of experience and needs deriving from different backgrounds, geopolitical locations, histories of racialization, class, ability, etc., as broader and broader delineations of community extend investments in similitude ever outward. Such love can produce powerful lines of force and systems of support when one is firmly within the identity/norms of the community; however, since the passionate investment is directed toward the thing in common, rather than specific others, it is still narrowly localized. Thus, individuals can easily lose these structures of support just when they most need them: when they face a crisis that puts them at odds with a community’s idea (or ideal) of itself as a unified whole, a whole that parallels the dominant vision of adult emotion life as restored coherence within the home—and that often deploys similar teleological narratives of progress. While queerly loving friendship does not necessarily always actively subvert such centralizing (domestic and/or chauvinistic) systems, its fundamental fragmentation, both of the subject and of the locus of passionate affective investment, often positions it as affectively and ideologically out of step with—and often therefore unconvinced by—them.

Queerly loving friendship, then, fails to adhere to the various emotional, political, and familial maturation narratives that culminate in domesticity and/or “adult” loyalty to group identity, be that nation or community. Failing to fulfill such narratives is often associated with perversion through the trope of arrested development, which appears most notably in psychoanalysis, but also in popular culture. Stockton notes that, in Freud, “perversions are characteristic of people who either extend themselves beyond the normal ‘path’ of ‘copulation’ or linger at midpoints along the way—and both of these diversions appear to be sideways movements or suspensions in relation to the road of copulation to be followed” (25). This observation seems to apply equally well to affective perversion as to the explicitly sexual, and so, to return to Barthes’s categorization of friendship as a “perverse pleasure,” passionate affective investment in friends that refuses to be subordinated to romantic and/or familial love suggests a kind of perversion that cannot be reduced to the explicitly sexual or to the genders, orientations, and/or identities of the friends.



The proliferation, but not diffusion, of friend-love across time and space is intrinsic to its perversion, dissenting, as it does, from the dominant affective/sexual order. As aforementioned, the prevalence of intense friend-love among queer people may well partially be a *product* of alternate temporalities and geographies: having friends when and where more traditional life narratives might place high school sweethearts and family can provide the space to develop one's emotional investments and skills outside of those normative structures.<sup>5</sup> Such interruptions of a teleological progression from immaturity, and the much more common intense attachment between childhood friends, to "mature," "adult" emotional and relational structures and objects can serve to denaturalize the regulation, institutionalization, and domestication of emotional "progress" that takes place over the course of a life.

However, this kind of love-investment in friends also serves, *itself*, to broaden the geographical and temporal range over which one spreads one's love, as such friendships not only potentially stem from interruptions of or delays in one's "maturation" narrative, but also produce them. As Sedgwick notes, "the map is spangled with friends I've been in love with rather like this" (25). Through reorienting privileged affective loci, queer friend-love disperses love investments (with all their challenges to the integrity and discreteness of the self) geographically and temporally without reducing them. Love is not diluted but multiplied. As Tyler Bradway notes, "The redefinition of love in *Dialogue* is . . . premised on an expansive network of relations that precede and exceed the self without a definable limit" (90). Or, as Barthes terms it, while each friendship is privileged, each friend and each relationship unique, "he saw no obstacle to multiplying this privileged relationship: nothing but privileges" (*Roland* 65).<sup>6</sup>

*Roland* is organized roughly alphabetically by topic. However, Barthes periodically interrupts this alphabetical ordering, and the series of out of order aphorisms consisting of "*Les amis*" (friends), "*La relation privilégiée*" (the privileged relationship), and "*Transgression de la transgression*" (transgression of transgression) falls after the (alphabetically ordered) "*La déesse H.*" (the goddess H.), which is about perversion. Appropriately, Barthes's discussion of his experience of friendship, the queer kind of

5. A consideration of how the progressively lowering age at which young people come out and date openly (in an albeit largely Western context) might reduce or modify this effect is beyond the scope of this project.

6. Throughout his autobiography, Barthes variously refers to himself in the first and third person.

friendship that disorders teleological affective and domestic maturation narratives, takes place through a disordering of alphabetic progress. This disordering brings his considerations of friendship and perversion into conversation. While he specifically discusses homosexuality and hashish in “*La déesse H.*,” Barthes’s claim about perversion—“that perversion, quite simply, *makes happy*; or to be more specific, it produces a *more*: I am more sensitive, more perceptive, more loquacious, more amused, etc.—and in this *more* is where we find difference. . .”—resonates with the proliferation of privileged friend relationships discussed shortly thereafter, where “What was wanted was a plural equality, without in-difference” (Roland 64, 65, Barthes’s emphasis). Ultimately, Barthes instructs, in “*Transgression de la transgression*”: “let us now imagine reintroducing into the politico-sexual field . . . a *touch of sentimentality*: would that not be the *ultimate* transgression? the transgression of transgression itself? For, after all, that would be *love*: which would return: *but in another place*” (Roland 65–66, Barthes’s emphasis). This transgressing of transgression through affect calls into question the assumed primacy of the sexual (or the intoxicant) that informs “*La déesse H.*,” suggesting that love itself, when “in another place,” can be transgressive perversion.

And, in its manifestations in literature and theory, love often does seem perverse. Proliferated across other places—sites and subjects outside of the domestic scene meant ultimately to contain and dampen it—love’s perversion is fostered, but not invented. A dangerous and exhilarating force threatening the agency and coherence of the subject, love is both indiscrete and indiscreet. Directives to domesticate love, then, attempt to mitigate its power, removing its urgent intensity from relationships that would otherwise refuse the absolute prioritization of the romantic/biological family group. As Cindy Patton asserts, “I balance my conviction that *love*, as [Pierre] Bourdieu suggests, is an insidiously structured form of obligation, the glue that holds the bad parts of institutions—but especially the patriarchal and homophobic family—together, with Eve [Sedgwick]’s conviction that a post-Proustian love is ‘trans-i,’ that it is possible to love without obligation” (217, Patton’s emphasis). Patton’s formulation is particularly apt for considering queerly loving friendship, although her own paper only passingly engages with Sedgwick’s descriptions of her friendships. The sense of obligation often accruing to domesticated love is one that supports established systems, structures, and institutions. Broadening the scope of intense love interrupts those structures and obligations, those places, as Foucault puts it, of “law, rule, or habit,” with a love that does not feel itself

as obligation, but that, all the same, continues to revel in difficult, obsessional, subjectivity-rattling pains and euphorias (137). That, indeed, is best able (and most inclined) to resist those structures *because* it is painfully, pleasurable, and polyvalently rattling.

The dominant affective framework that deprioritizes and/or renders dispassionate the love of friends formulates sociality in accordance with institutions including, but not limited, to the family. Patton notes Pierre Bourdieu's claim that love is structurally deployed so as to naturalize the *habitus*,<sup>7</sup> but Bourdieu is not alone in noting the uncomfortable convergence of love, friendship, and/or family with those conservative social and institutional structures that Foucault references and that appear as the *doxa* in Barthes's autobiography.<sup>8</sup> Part of this contradiction stems from the fact that love's subjectivity-rattling properties can both be mobilized in the service of familial domesticity, through the promise of mending fragmentation, and also can provide possibilities for resisting it, through embracing and enjoying fragmentation. Love is perverse when it embraces the pains, pleasures, and dispersal of fragmentation and can be fundamentally conservative when validated only in its geographically and temporally narrowing forms, which offer an illusion of adult wholeness. However, the difficult entanglement of love, friendship, and established power structures with which critics of friendship contend also stems from a longstanding discursive conflation of friendship with camaraderie, or community, and of the passionate, anti-institutional love of friends with friend-love as it has been constructed from within the dominant affective order.

Both the potential range of extra-familial bonds and the threats that they can pose to dominant affective frameworks motivate Foucault's contention that the conceptualization of homosexuality purely in terms of the sexual encounter "cancels everything that can be troubling in affection, tenderness, friendship, fidelity, camaraderie, and companionship, things that our rather sanitized society can't allow a place for without fearing the formation of new alliances and the tying together of unforeseen lines of force" (136). Two important issues

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7. For his discussion of love, see particularly *Distinction*.

8. For example, Jacques Derrida notes that friendship itself can serve, contradictorily, both to threaten and to maintain institutional social structures in "The Politics of Friendship." This is a tension that Heather Love also notes and that Tom Roach seeks to overcome in asserting (male homosocial) queer friendship's fundamentally anti-institutional properties.

emerge in this passage, one that Foucault explicitly addresses and one that he does not. The first is that while the kind of institution-threatening affectional sociality Foucault proposes can and does exist in relationships that are also sexual, they are not defined by or reducible to the sexual, and, indeed, overemphasizing the sexual in our consideration of non-familial bonds can be a tactic to negate the anti-institutional elements of affectional promiscuity. Conflating love and sex, or using them to obfuscate each other, obscures those things that can be most powerful about both love and sex.

In her own discussion of friend-love, Sedgwick lays out the extra-sexual specificity of queerly loving affective encounters, reproducing, for our benefit, an email to a friend in which she writes: "Oh, right, I keep forgetting, for lots and lots of people in the world, the notion of 'falling in love' has (of all things) sexual connotations" (168). She further explains: "For me the sex comes in . . . in an instrumental way, if it does at all. Like, it's one possible avenue of intimacy—but if you have other good ones . . . then I can never remember why someone'd bother with sex" (168). Foucault does not share Sedgwick's forgetfulness as to why one would bother with sex, but both theorists agree that love and intimacy between friends—intense love and intimacy—are not beholden to sex, although they may develop in relationships that begin with and/or continue to include sex. The sanitization, or domestication, of love—a sanitization that is also enacted by reducing passionate extra-familial bonds to sex—obfuscates that which is affectively queer or perverted, that which can challenge the politico-sexual order with or without sex.

The second issue that is provoked by Foucault's assertion is crucial for theorizing friend-love as a love of specific objects—as Barthes puts it, "without in-difference"—rather than as synonymous with community organized around shared identity. Foucault refers, above, to "affection, tenderness, friendship, fidelity, camaraderie, and companionship" without elaborating the distinction between them (although listing them separately implies, perhaps, that they are not the same and that they might offer *different kinds* of new allegiances and lines of force). However, distinguishing between these affects, attributes, and relationships is necessary for developing an understanding of queerly loving friendship as a distinct kind of affective sociality. Affection, tenderness, and fidelity are all feelings, but some of them are also behaviors. Affection is a feeling, tenderness can equally be a feeling and a behavior, and fidelity is primarily a behavior that is also

experienced as feeling. Friendship, camaraderie, and companionship are modes of relationship that can involve each of these feelings and/or behaviors. Camaraderie and companionship do not necessitate friendship (or fidelity or tenderness, for that matter), but friendship can exist within them. Certain forms of camaraderie are commensurate with community, a social relationship that is particularly prone to being conflated with friendship, both as it is theorized and as it is (at least temporarily) experienced. But who among us has not experienced the turning away—the fundamental un-friend-liness—of comrades and/or community members when our needs and/or experiences come into conflict with community cohesion and/or the immediate pursuit of the political goals of a movement? Witness, for example, the failures to address abuse and/or sexual assault within queer and progressive communities—particularly when they are enacted by people who do “very important political work”—and the repeated accusations of “destroying solidarity” leveled against those who identify sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, etc. practices within political movements. Camaraderie and community can produce powerful and productive lines of force. But these people aren’t your friends.

In order, then, to disentangle these often-conflated affective experiences, frameworks, and forms of sociality (which is necessary if we are to understand the queer sociality that can emerge from queerly loving friendship), we must investigate some of the ways that friendship has been critically associated with love and with community, and all of them with maintaining established social orders. All of the theorists I mention strive to resist that nexus of institutions and sociality described by a number of the concepts they variously deploy (particularly the *habitus*, the *doxa*, and the *polis*). They are varied, however, in terms of their levels of optimism concerning whether love and/or friendship has the potential to subvert, rather than uphold these systems.

Perhaps the most pessimistic theorist of affective investment in others is Bourdieu, who focuses, in *Distinction*, on love’s most conservative elements. Consistent with my own work, he presents more conventionally understood investments in romantic partners and investments in friends as fundamentally similar on the level of feeling. As he argues that taste is produced in accordance with systems of social propriety that maintain class divisions (231), Bourdieu claims that our feelings of affinity for others are both produced by dominant social structures and serve to reproduce them; “the seemingly most immediate ‘elective affinities’ are

always partially based on unconscious deciphering of expressive features, each of which only takes on its meaning and value within the system of its class variations" (241). That we understand these affinities as likes and dislikes, and experience them as love, serves, according to Bourdieu, to conceal their social implication and to reproduce social strata at the familial level through marrying people of the same class (243). In Bourdieu's formulation, feelings of love and affinity for other people are largely based on experiences of class recognition. Their insidiousness is their ability to reproduce class structure and intra-class sociality via a mechanism that feels apolitical and that is experienced as chance.

Friend-love, from this critical perspective, would be no different than any other form of love-as-obligation, serving only to bring together people of similar social classes and to solidify those classes through affective sociality. However, the moment at which Bourdieu states his pessimistic vision most directly *as* one of love is also the site of its potential subversion. He writes: "The extreme improbability of the particular encounter between particular people, which masks the probability of interchangeable chance events, induces couples to experience their mutual selection as a happy accident, a coincidence which mimics transcendent design ('made for each other') and intensifies the sense of the miraculous" (243). I won't deny that our environment is structured such that we tend, as a whole, to experience "chance" encounters with members of similar social classes and groups, and we are thus most likely to form our emotional bonds within them. However, such homogeneity between friends is not always the case, and, in circumstances where "chance" allows otherwise, there is the possibility for and actuality of affective bonds that both cross and threaten social categories.

The most prominent relationship across social categories in *Dialogue* is one that is fraught with anxiety because it also intersects with Sedgwick's academic work. However, in terms of affective potential, it is continuous with Sedgwick's other loving friendships, presenting a challenge to Bourdieu's pessimistic approach to love and taste. Sedgwick's primary queer friend-love orientation already crosses social categories, although in a way so common as to function as cliché. As she notes near the beginning of *Dialogue*, to contextualize her surprise that Shannon is a heterosexual man, "experience shows that I'm one of those people who when others say to me, // 'I'm just sure you'd get/ along marvelously with/ X'—then X is gay" (Sedgwick 9). However, Sedgwick's friendship

with Gary Fisher crosses lines not only of gender and sexual orientation, but also of racialization. This friendship is not among the most intimate she describes, but it has the potential to be—or it would, if Gary were not dying of AIDS-related illnesses. As Sedgwick informs us, her feelings for him “seem to offer/ joys of a deepening and/ deepening friendship// on only this one,/ simple, wee condition: that/ I may never hope” (134).

Sedgwick’s relationship with Gary is both emotional and intellectual; she edits a volume of his creative writing after his death, presenting parts of it at conferences, which, per Shannon’s notes,

Reminds E that she is the wrong person to be promoting this material. It is about and by a black man and she is white; he is gay and she is not; the material has considerable angry racial material as well as being about sex and about master-slave sexual relationships; finally there is a long “colonial” history of white women patronizing black writers. However, she feels she has always been the wrong person to do things she has done professionally and has some investment in making that work, or in demonstrating the interest of that border-crossing position. (179)<sup>9</sup>

Such a border-crossing position is one that is not only possible, but potentially both emotionally and politically crucial. While there is always the risk, as Sedgwick fears, of further colonization, loving across social boundaries also challenges the forms of class obligation and reproduction that Bourdieu associates so closely with love and taste—at least, it does when it is not exoticizing or patronizing. Indeed, the political potential of friend-love across social boundaries is the motivating thematic of Leela Gandhi’s *Affective Communities*, and her discussion of friendship and community is particularly useful for understanding the distinction between the two. Claiming that “the trope of friendship [is] the most comprehensive philosophical signifier for all those invisible affective gestures that refuse alignment along the secure axes of filiation to seek expression outside, if not against, possessive communities of belonging,” Gandhi contends that friendships that resist such alignment not only exist, but also encourage dissent from dominant power structures on the part of those they privilege (10).

Even when friends do not traverse such obvious boundaries, queerly loving friendship seems, at its best, well characterized by Gandhi’s proposition of “a reformulation of subject-hood that sees the theme of ‘indi-

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9. Sedgwick reproduces Shannon’s notes in all capital letters throughout *Dialogue*, but I have not preserved her convention in referring to them here.

viduality' gradually replaced by one of 'singularity' . . . the latter marked by an irreducible difference which renders it inassimilable within any system of resemblance" (26). While Barthes's friendships are not specifically attributable to Gandhi's love across imperial divides, he positions difference as not only a part of, but also as necessary to friendship as he experiences it. Having already quickly redefined perversion from something that "makes happy" to something that "produces a more," Barthes glosses "more" as "where we find the difference" (*Roland* 64). Barthes describes the way he loves his friends as dependent on their inassimilability to systems of resemblance, claiming that "speaking of them, I can never do anything but catch myself up—catch them up—in a contingency, a difference" (*Roland* 64). Barthes's friend-love resists both affectional monogamy and the generalization of friendship into community that overrides the specificity of individual affective bonds. Claiming that "he realized that the identity of each friend, which made that friend *lovable*, was based on a delicately proportioned and henceforth absolutely original combination of tiny characteristics organized in fugitive scenes," he asserts: "Thus each friend deployed in his presence the brilliant staging of his originality" (*Roland* 64).

While the terms "individuality" and "originality" are implicated in the liberal individualism that institutions such as the family support and Gandhi and other theorists of friendship protest, the manner in which they function within Barthes's queer friendship model tends to subvert, rather than uphold such structures. Representing the singularity of each friend as ineffable, Barthes posits the singularity and contingency of each friend's qualities—each friend's *difference*—as impossible to speak or write. The manner in which such linguistic processes structure the subject as a unified site of utterance is fundamentally inimical to expressing the affective potency, through difference, of queer friend-love relationships. As Barthes writes, "The friends form a network among themselves and each must be apprehended there as *external/internal*, subjected to the question of heterotopia: where am I among my desires? Where am I in relation to desire? The question is put to me by the development of a thousand vicissitudes of friendship" (*Roland* 64, Barthes's emphasis). Beloved friends are related to through a combination of feelings of being inside and outside the self. They force the self to experience its own fragmentation through desire for and by multiple objects and to answer the question "where am I?" not with "home," but with "many places."



They produce an endless writing and rewriting of the thus pleasurably and riskily divided self, as “Hence is written, day by day, an ardent text, a magical text, which will never come to an end, a glittering image of the liberated Book” (*Roland* 64).

This kind of friendship, irreducible to identification and similitude with the self—and also to readerly writing of the self—is fundamentally distinct from community, which tends, as we have seen, to obscure difference. Barthes claims that “he [did not] seek out a generalized, communal relationship,” so “the sphere of friendship was thus populated by dual relations . . . he had to see his friends one at a time: resistance to the group, to the circle, to the crowd” (*Roland* 65). The resistance to the coercive coherence of community intrinsic to Barthes’s “plural equality” resonates with the kind of anti-communitarian community that Gandhi posits.<sup>10</sup> The demand for uniformity/unity inhering in community identity motivates the notable failures of community to accommodate members when they are thrust into positions of difference from the community, a fact that Gandhi recognizes as she asks: “Where do I go when the burdens of my deviancy put me at risk precisely from those who are unquestionably ‘my own’?” (25). Queerly loving friendship, in its fundamental reliance on difference/s as that which produces both its pleasures and challenges, is less likely to suddenly vanish when a given friend deviates from the strictures of communitarian resemblance. Fidelity is not only to the community, but to the beloved friend—although, of course, friend-love is not free from pain and betrayal, nor can it be, based, as it is, on fragmentations of the self.

Given the centrality of fragmentation to passionate friendship, why, then, the frequent critical and social perception that friendship is “trouble free,” as Heather Love puts (and criticizes) it? (81). This perception stems from the conflation of friendship with community that we have already discussed at length, but also from acquiescence to the evacuation of passion (and its associated pains) from friend-love enacted by the dominant

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10. She represents the danger of community as its tendency to reinforce similitude, even within groups that are constituted around shared difference. “Communitarian . . . thought . . . always privileg[es] commitments to those who are either ‘proximate,’ ‘given,’ or in some inalienable way ‘our own’ (of the same nation, family, community, republic, revolution, etc.),” Gandhi writes, “So it is that the most radical communities of difference, founded upon solidarities of class, gender, race, or ethnicity, lapse into a politics of similitude—privileging separation over relationality, demanding uniformity as the price of belonging” (25).

affective discourse. The former can be seen, for example, in Love's references to "the failure of community" (98) when she is purportedly discussing friendship, and the second appears in her reference to "the widespread notion of a friendship network as a gay or queer 'family'" (77)—a notion that is indeed widespread, and one that Love's framing simultaneously enacts and responds to. The confluences of these distinct categories of affective sociality are frequently assumed within queer (and other) communities, but such conflation obfuscates the particularity of queerly loving friendship. Having differentiated between queer friend-love and community, we can begin to consider what queer friend-love actually *is*, a thing fundamentally distinct from the common framing of friendship as filiative and familial, lacking the passionate intensity of the love of lovers.

Paralleling friendship with (and celebrating it as) the less passionate familial relationships, those with (psychoanalysis aside) parents and siblings, is a tactic of domestication on the part of the dominant affective framework. It plugs friendship into teleological maturation narratives aimed at affective "adulthood" through the cyclical social model of family. Friendship is rendered less passionate and more beholden to and constitutive of institutional structures. Indeed, musing on friendship's ability to both maintain "the absolute singularity of the Other and of 'my' relation to the Other, as well as the relation of the Other to the Other which I am to him" and to produce a "relation to the Other [that] also passes through the universality of the law," Jacques Derrida considers the paradox of friendship as that which both resists the polis and is "linked . . . explicitly to virtue and to justice, to moral reason and political reason" (640, 640–41, 642). He relates friendship's conservative mode to philosophies and discourses that constitute it in terms of the family, particularly the schema that "privileges the figure of the brother" (642). This figure is especially tied to nation- and institution-supporting feelings of fraternity—often, indeed, camaraderie—and not to passionate engagement, to the risky loss of the self. Dispassionate fraternity is hardly what queerly loving friendship feels like. Indeed, Sedgwick responds to her therapist's musings on family reunification by asserting that "restoring an intact family of origin . . . [is] probably on the list of things I don't want to happen," specifying that "everything in my whole life, since I've had any say about it, has been about a completely different principle of affiliation" (130). While it is easy to assume that Sedgwick is referring to the common queer concept of "chosen family," it is also quite possible

that her “different principle of affiliation” is one that is not beholden to familial domesticity, even by analogy.

What, then, is the passionate intensity of the singular, but promiscuously perverse friend relationship? Such friendship cannot be grasped through the frameworks of object-identity specificity upon which many theorizations of queer friendship, and also polis-supporting fraternity, rely. Tom Roach argues that the concepts of homo- and heterosexuality serve to restrict our conceptual models of sociality, but so too, I contend, do the categories of homo- and heterosociality when allowed to dominate the terms of inquiry (see especially 11–12). Roach ultimately claims that “Friendship . . . bespeaks the anarchical contingency of all relationality. In its very nature it is *anti*-institutional, indeed it cannot congeal into an epistemological object known as ‘society’” (13, Roach’s italics). In order to be anti-institutional, friend-love must be unfamiliar—undomesticated—so, in many ways, Roach’s formulation of friendship is quite friendly to my assertion that queerly intense friend-love defies institutions and power structures. However, his contention that the centrality of betrayal to friendship is part of what distinguishes it from other kinds of love misses what I maintain is friend-love’s most perversely anarchic quality. What differentiates more socially valorized and recognized love from this kind of love is not its affective *content* (though this changes in the process of domestication), but its institutionalized *objects and structures*.

Foucault himself instructs: “We must escape and help others to escape the two readymade formulas of the pure sexual encounter and the lovers’ fusion of identities” (137). However, this fusion is evaded—indeed, queered—not through avoiding the fracturing of subjectivity and perception that part of the self is in or of the other that is love’s fundamental betrayal, but through proliferation of love. If we experience love’s breaching of our discrete selves in relation to multiple others, then we are not susceptible to the fantasy of repairing the self through love’s domestication and the institutions that it supports. But this alternate affiliative structure does not circumvent fracturing, betrayal, or pain, and in this it mirrors the perversity of more conventionally understood romantic love before it mellows in the domestic family space.

The painful intensity, the risk, the feeling of loss of coherent selfhood intrinsic to love is a major feature of Barthes’s *A Lover’s Discourse*, as well as of other theorizations of love. In *Eros the Bittersweet*, Anne Carson argues that the lover feels that a part of the self has been lost and is now

located in the beloved. This hole suggests not only loss, but also a mixing that takes place when the edges of the discrete subject are both threatened and brought into painful relief. As Carson contends, “Eros’ ambivalence unfolds directly from the power to ‘mix up’ the self. The lover helplessly admits that it feels both good and bad to be mixed up, but is then driven back upon the question ‘Once I have been mixed up in this way, who am I?’” (37). Carson’s formulation mirrors Barthes’s own. Making the inflammatory contention that the extreme situation of love is akin to that of the prisoner at Dachau, Barthes claims that, in love, “I have projected myself into the other with such power that when I am without the other I cannot recover myself, regain myself: I am lost, forever” (*Lover’s* 49).

This projection of the self into the other, a projection that is fundamentally fragmenting—even more so in the context of Barthes’s multiple “privileged relationships”—*necessarily* includes feelings of pain and/or betrayal. Sedgwick describes the end of a close friendship as a “violent hemorrhage” (64). She writes of

the guillotine of awfulness that was the sheer end, four years ago, of a friendship as intimate and passionate to me as Michael’s—

That abruptly. No warning. Every bit of me that was lodged in him was lost to me. I guess forever. And it was very graphic: every bit of Benj that was lodged in me stayed in me. . . . But now it hated me. (64–65)

On the level of feeling, there is little to distinguish this from the conventional trope of the abandoned lover.

Love is painful, both when it is thwarted and when it is realized—and not just in situations such as Sedgwick’s growing love for Gary in the face of his inevitable and untimely death. Sedgwick speaks of the anxiety, fundamental to love and intimacy, that inheres in

how it feels when I’m with people I think are fond of me, and who know me well, and who are making gentle fun of me. I love this sensation. But also feel that I probably love it *too much* . . . ; that this must be visible somehow; and that the excess of it is liable to make my friends’ gentle teasing turn from laughing with into just plain laughing *at* me. (189, Sedgwick’s italics)

Sedgwick’s sense of the potential embarrassment of love—the necessary vulnerability to rejection and the loss of the part of the self projected into the other that it entails—parallels Barthes’s assertion that “the field of affectivity . . . could not be spoken *without embarrassment*” and also his claim that perversion is fundamentally a more, an excess that the doxa

refuses to understand (*Roland* 65, Barthes's emphasis). Yet this kind of risky, intense friendship is also deeply pleasurable and rewarding, even when it is painful. Sedgwick claims that "I'm very addicted to Michael's sunshine. I often think I'd do anything to obtain or keep it" (25). Indeed, Sedgwick feels Shannon's lack of the kind of friendship she has as devastating, referencing "my sense of 'free-floating remediation,' . . . for possessing such a great wealth of good friendships and for his apparently feeling not well-friended in general. . . . it seems so pitiable, not to have plenty of good friends" (169).

Queer friend-love is both irresistibly seductive—pitiable in its absence—and painful in its proliferation of subjective risk. Even when the part of the self that is projected into the other does not disappear forever through traumatic abandonment, fracturing the self by investing in others is painful and unsettling, inevitably resistant (when embraced) to the monologic assumptions of writing the self. Barthes asks: "how to speak of whom, to whom one loves? How to make the affect echo, except by re-lays so complicated that he will lose all its publicity, and hence all its joy?" (*Roland* 86). Threatening the coherence of the subject through the singularity, but not self-identity, of love relationships with multiple others, such queer love of friends is unwritable within the doxical structures of the dominant affective framework. Yet it is also the motivating affective force that leads not only to joy, but to writing. Paralleling Barthes's dedication, and belying the potential suggestion of a return to self-contained domestic affective monogamy in her cohabitation with Moon, Sedgwick includes in her autobiography a list of over forty cherished friends by name, concluding with "and, and, and, the big, spreading field of intimacy where love just grows wild" (213–14). Plural equality, perverse promiscuity, affective perversion as *more*, indeed.

The anxieties induced by the incoherence of the subject in love makes those who love susceptible to its domestication, which promises to reunify the subject through cohabitating always with the one other who holds the "lost piece" and through a return to the family of origin by producing a new one much like it (or one that solves its shortcomings). The self is repaired through domestic (re)unification with one's other half, one's better half, one's (most) *significant* other. We are granted the illusion that obeying the directive toward "adult" affective monogamy and domesticity will reward us with the wholeness whose absence passionate affective investment makes us feel so acutely. But when one loves one's friends deeply, investing in multiple

significant others and perverting the affectional structures that support the institutions that promise wholeness, one fractures the self and projects pieces of it into—mixes it with—a range of others across time and space. While this promiscuous projection can result in its own anxieties (Sedgwick's lost friendship is an extreme example), such anxieties are not amenable to the illusion that the whole will be restored through domestication.

Defining itself primarily through ties other than the sexual, queer friend-love promiscuously traverses boundaries of homo- and heterosociality and sexuality, rejecting structural dictates to which relationships should be affectively subordinated. A given lover may have friend "types," but the mode of friendship can exist between a variety of subjects. To love one's friends so queerly means to accept the pain of a fractured subjectivity and, indeed, to revel in it. To deprioritize subjective coherence along with the social structures that claim to restore it is a queer perversion indeed, the perversion of love that embraces Barthes's "plural equality" and resists "in-difference."

Ultimately, queer friend-love suggests the potential for passionate, insubordinate intensity that refuses the dictates of affective monogamy and domestic geographic circumscription. To come full circle to the question of temporality and perversion, queer people and lives have historically been, and often still are, accused of arrested development. And perhaps this is what queer friend-love really is. Coming late to the kinds of relationships that are affectively prioritized within the dominant discourse (even if they have the "wrong" objects), queer people are particularly, but not exclusively, prone to extending the intensity of friendship we often feel in childhood into adult affective sociality. Sedgwick, indeed, ties her anxiety that her excessive love of friends will become a target of mockery to the fear of being seen as "babyish." But if queer friend-love really is akin to intense childhood friendships, what it offers is an alternate temporal (and geographic) structure that *resists* arrestment. In refusing the domestic cell as the most important and valid site of affective investment, loving friends queerly embraces a risky dispersion of self that makes the bait of institutionalized love seem luminously—seem *pitifully*—conspicuous in its project of social regulation and affective deprivation.

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# Pour une histoire critique genrée de l'historiographie des avant-gardes littéraires occidentales du premier XXe siècle

*Anne Tomiche*

**P**ARLER D'« AVANT-GARDES », c'est entrer dans un terrain de débats et de controverses sur la notion même dont il est question. Dans la mesure où la désignation « avant-garde » est postérieure aux premiers objets qu'elle désigne (les premières « avant-gardes » ne se sont pas définies en tant qu'« avant-gardes » et ce n'est qu'*a posteriori* que la critique les a ainsi désignées), le débat porte à la fois sur ce que la notion inclut en termes d'acteurs du champ artistique (qui met-on derrière le terme ? des groupes ? des pratiques artistiques expérimentales isolées ?) et sur la temporalité de « l'avant-garde » (faut-il restreindre, comme le fait Peter Bürger, la désignation au début du XXe siècle ou faut-il inclure une « avant-garde » apparue après 1950 — quand « naît » et quand « meurt », si elle meurt, l'avant-garde ?). Il ne s'agira ici ni de définir le *concept* d'avant-garde ni de proposer une *théorie* de l'avant-garde. Mais les présupposés et les partis pris de la présente étude portent sur chacun des deux pans du débat précédemment évoqué. D'une part la période examinée sera circonscrite aux décennies 1910 et 1920. En effet, sans pour autant considérer, à l'instar de Peter Bürger, que l'avant-garde apparue après 1950 serait inauthentique, l'analyse se concentrera ici sur ce « moment » chronologique des avant-gardes que constituent les premières décennies du XXe siècle : l'avant-garde des années 1960 se définit très largement par rapport à une notion de l'avant-garde qui



a été construite à propos de la génération des années 1910 et 1920, et son étude implique donc de prendre en compte les modèles élaborés à propos des avant-gardes dites « historiques ». D'autre part elle concernera exclusivement les *mouvements littéraires et artistiques* qui, par des canaux comme les manifestes ou l'organisation de soirées et de manifestations explosives, se sont autoproclamés « groupes » et « mouvements ». Le présupposé qui sous-tend un tel parti pris est celui d'une spécificité de ces groupes — spécificité dans leur fonctionnement et dans leurs dynamiques —, ancrée dans l'affirmation et la revendication à la fois d'une position de rupture, qui concerne une volonté de « changer la vie » en changeant l'art, et de l'importance d'une action collective dans le champ artistique. Cette spécificité, par rapport au fonctionnement et aux enjeux de pratiques individuelles, quels que soient leur « radicalité » ou leur degré d'expérimentation, tient précisément au fait que ces groupes ne peuvent pas être réduits à la somme de leurs membres et que, en conséquence, l'histoire de « l'avant-garde » n'est pas l'histoire d'une somme d'individus.<sup>1</sup> Dans les années 1910 et 1920, les principaux groupes littéraires et artistiques qui se sont autoproclamés « mouvements » et ont fonctionné sur le mode d'une dynamique collective, sont les futuristes (italiens et russes), les vorticistes (anglo-américains), les dadaïstes et les premiers surréalistes. Ce sont ces groupes qui constituent mon objet d'étude.

L'une des caractéristiques de ces mouvements d'avant-garde du début du XXe siècle, c'est qu'ils ont construit eux-mêmes leur histoire, non seulement rétrospectivement, revenant après coup sur leurs activités passées, mais aussi dans le temps même de l'action, dans les actes de fondation, les manifestes et autres proclamations. Michel Murat a ainsi montré à propos de l'histoire du surréalisme comment Breton opère la construction historiographique originelle en 1922, au moment même où s'accomplit la rupture avec Dada. Il s'agira donc ici d'interroger cette historiographie des mouvements d'avant-garde, depuis ses origines, de l'époque même de la fondation et de l'activité des mouvements jusqu'à nos jours, pour mettre en relief l'importance du renouvellement critique apporté par les perspectives qui prennent en compte les enjeux genrés.

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1. Ces deux présupposés sont ceux qui sous-tendent l'étude que j'ai récemment conduite, *La Naissance des avant-gardes occidentales* (2016), et que la présente analyse vise à prolonger.

## LA PROGRAMMATION D'UNE EXCLUSION

L'historiographie des avant-gardes démarre très tôt, et avec elle ses effets d'inclusion et d'exclusion, puisque les premiers chroniqueurs des mouvements en furent les acteurs eux-mêmes. De fait, ces chroniqueurs furent les acteurs et non les actrices, ce qui explique en partie l'exclusion, dans les premières histoires des mouvements d'avant-gardes, de femmes qui furent pourtant actives au sein de ces groupes. En effet, dans le contexte des premières décennies du XXe siècle, les comportements sexistes relevaient de l'attitude commune et acceptée, dans tous les domaines et bien au-delà des groupes d'avant-garde. En témoignent, par exemple, les réflexions, faites *a posteriori*, par Huelsenbeck dans ses mémoires publiés en 1957 :

Die sexuelle Revolution, die man auch die Befreiung der Frau genannt hat, hatte damals noch nicht eingesetzt oder war noch nicht sichtbar. Sie wurde auch in unseren Köpfen nicht gefühlt. Oder zum mindesten ich fühlte sie nicht. Meine Haltung Frauen gegenüber war so primitiv wie möglich [...] In der Schweiz ebenso wie in Deutschland bestand damals noch eine patriarchalische Ordnung, und ein männliches Wesen lebte zum grossen Teil von der Illusion seiner Überlegenheit.<sup>2</sup>

La prise de conscience *a posteriori* de Huelsenbeck souligne les attitudes et les comportements patriarcaux de l'époque et explique, en partie, que les femmes membres des groupes d'avant-garde n'aient pas été considérées par leurs collègues masculins comme dignes de figurer au même titre qu'eux dans le récit qu'ils faisaient de l'histoire du groupe. Le même contexte général explique aussi, en partie, que les femmes aient eu du mal à se considérer comme historiennes légitimes, comme sujets autorisés à écrire l'histoire de leur mouvement.

De fait, les femmes ne brillent que par leur absence dans les premières chroniques des avant-gardes. Marinetti, qui n'a jamais varié dans son rejet du « passéisme », ne laisse pas de mémoires ni de véritable chronique du mouvement futuriste, probablement en partie parce que de tels textes auraient impliqué un regard rétrospectif. Néanmoins, très tôt, certains de

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2. « La révolution sexuelle, que l'on a également appelée libération de la femme, n'avait pas encore commencé ou du moins n'était pas encore visible. Nous ne la sentions pas non plus dans nos têtes. Ou du moins, moi je ne la sentais pas. Mon attitude à l'égard des femmes était aussi primitive que possible [...] La Suisse comme l'Allemagne avaient à l'époque un système patriarcal, et un être mâle vivait dans une large mesure dans l'illusion de sa supériorité » (Huelsenbeck, *Mit Witz* 30 ; je traduis).

ses nombreux manifestes et tracts incluent une dimension d'histoire du mouvement. Dans *Le Futurisme*, qui paraît dès 1911 à Paris et alors que le « lancement » du mouvement date seulement de 1909, Marinetti commence l'un des textes regroupés dans le volume en construisant un historique des débuts du mouvement : l'histoire en est placée sous le signe d'une « bataille » (le chapitre s'intitule « Les premières batailles ») associée à la fois à différents lieux — Trieste, Milan, parmi d'autres — où les futuristes ont « lutté » contre « la vieille Italie dégénérée » et à différents artistes, « de grands poètes de vingt ans », que Marinetti nomme et qui sont tous des hommes. C'est une histoire de « guerres » menées par les soldats Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Buzzi, Cavcchioli, Palazzeschi, Mazza. Le « nous », qui désigne les membres du mouvement dont Marinetti retrace la courte histoire est exclusivement masculin et guerrier.

Si Marinetti ne laisse pas de texte autobiographique, Wyndham Lewis, figure centrale du vorticisme, publie ses mémoires en 1937, c'est-à-dire près de vingt ans après la fin du vorticisme en tant que mouvement. Non seulement les mentions des figures féminines du mouvement sont réduites au minimum, mais, de plus, quand il énumère la liste des signataires du manifeste de fondation publié dans le premier numéro de *Blast* et effectivement signé par deux femmes dont Helen Saunders, il orthographie mal le nom de cette dernière (« Sanders »), reproduisant là une erreur déjà commise en 1914 dans la publication initiale. Pour désigner le groupe il utilise l'expression « the Men of 1914 » (« I call us here 'the Men of 1914' ») et c'est la trace que ces « hommes de 1914 » laisseront dans l'histoire qu'il s'attache à formuler (« what I think history will say about the 'Men of 1914' is that they represent an attempt to get away from romantic art [...] »<sup>3</sup>). Peu de place — c'est un euphémisme — est faite dans cette histoire aux femmes du vorticisme. D'ailleurs, quand pour répondre à l'affirmation de Lewis, dans le catalogue de l'exposition qui lui était consacrée en 1956, selon laquelle le vorticisme s'était résumé à sa propre personne<sup>4</sup> et pour infirmer l'idée, William Roberts peint la toile intitulée *The Vorticists at the restaurant de la Tour Eiffel, Spring*

3. « de ces 'hommes de 1914', je pense que l'histoire dira qu'ils représentent une tentative pour rompre avec l'art romantique » (Lewis 249, 254 ; je traduis).

4. Dans le texte qu'il signe pour le catalogue de l'exposition que lui consacre la Tate Gallery en 1956, Wyndham Lewis affirme : « Vorticism was, in fact, what I, personally, did and said at a certain period » (Edwards 199 ; « En fait, le Vorticisme fut ce que moi, personnellement, je fis et dis à une certaine période », je traduis).

1915, la représentation qu'il offre du groupe vorticiste, dont il veut précisément souligner la dimension collective, est celle de six *hommes*, assis autour d'une table en demi-cercle, avec des coupes de champagne et le premier numéro de la revue *Blast*. Derrière ce groupe, deux femmes sont sur le pas de la porte, et ne font pas partie du repas : on reconnaît Jessie Dismorr et Helen Saunders, qui toutes deux signèrent le manifeste fondateur du premier numéro de *Blast*, et qui semblent être arrivées au restaurant après les hommes. La représentation, qui date de 1961, montre que la marginalisation des femmes par les vorticistes eux-mêmes n'était pas le fait du seul Lewis et qu'elle a perduré bien après la fin du mouvement.

Il n'y a aucun récit autobiographique écrit par l'une des vorticistes, à mettre en regard de ces représentations produites par les acteurs du mouvement. Les femmes étaient pourtant bien présentes dans le mouvement. Jane Beckett et Deborah Cherry vont jusqu'à affirmer que le groupe vorticiste fut la seule avant-garde occidentale à inclure, avant 1914, tant de femmes dans ses rangs. De fait, les deux numéros de *Blast* (parus en juin 1914 et en juillet 1915) incluent un essai de Rebecca West (« Indissoluble Matrimony », *Blast* 1), des « Poems and Notes » et deux dessins de Jessica Dismorr, un poème, « A Vision of Mud », et deux dessins d'Helen Saunders, ainsi qu'une œuvre de Dorothy Shakespear dans *Blast* 2. Mais quand, dans les années 1970, Kate Lechmere s'est confiée à Robert Ferguson, biographe de T. E. Hulme, et à Richard Cork qui la cite dans son livre sur le vorticisme, c'est pour raconter avoir beaucoup servi le thé au Rebel Art Center, le centre d'art qu'elle avait financé, qu'elle co-dirigeait et qui était l'espace central des activités vorticistes : Lewis considérait, explique-t-elle, que c'était là une activité proprement féminine et indigne des artistes qui, en vertu de cette logique, ne pouvaient évidemment être que des hommes.<sup>5</sup> Si, outre ces confidences rapportées, elle a laissé un bref texte intitulé « Wyndham Lewis from 1912 », publié en 1983 par Jeffery Meyers, ni elle ni aucune autre vorticiste n'a produit de récit de l'aventure vorticiste (Lechmere 158–60).

Le constat de l'absence d'histoire du mouvement écrite par une femme et de l'exclusion des femmes des récits écrits par les hommes est le même pour le dadaïsme, qui compte de nombreux récits historiographiques produits par les acteurs du mouvement, à chaud ou avec plus de recul temporel : dès 1920, Tzara ou Richard Huelsenbeck produisaient leurs

5. « I had to do the honours because Lewis insisted that the organizing of tea-parties was a job for women, not artists » (Kate Lechmere citée dans Cork 148).

versions de l'histoire Dada (*En avant*) ; en 1946, c'est Hugo Ball qui retraçait la sienne, et Hans Richter a laissé, en 1964, un récit qui a marqué les études dadaïstes du fait de sa large diffusion (publié en allemand en 1964, en français et en anglais en 1965). Face à ces nombreux récits masculins, il n'existe pas de récits similaires, c'est-à-dire de monographies de Dada, écrits par des femmes. Quand Emmy Hennings écrit, et elle a, de fait, publié plusieurs ouvrages, c'est sur son mari Hugo Ball.<sup>6</sup> Les récits masculins ont en commun une marginalisation du rôle des femmes et une absence de prise en compte de leurs productions. En octobre 1924, Céline Arnould, qui a participé activement aux activités Dada à Paris à partir de 1920, écrivait à Tzara : « Mon cher ami, Je suis étonnée que dans votre historique du mouvement Dada — où vous vous montrez assez généreux même pour vos adversaires actuels — vous oubliez mon effort tant dans le lyrisme que dans l'action » (Arnould). Cette lettre peut être lue comme représentative du sort d'un bon nombre de femmes ayant participé aux avant-gardes des premières décennies du vingtième siècle — leur nom, leur place, leur activité ont été effacés des histoires de ces mouvements d'avant-garde, y compris des mémoires de leurs collègues masculins. Ces omissions en disent long sur leur vision du statut de la femme et sur la place qu'ils accordaient aux femmes. L'histoire de l'historiographie des avant-gardes commence avec les omissions et exclusions dont furent victimes, dans des chroniques écrites par leurs contemporains hommes, les femmes actives dans les mouvements.

Bien qu'elle reproche à Tzara de l'exclure de son historique du mouvement Dada, Céline Arnould se montre optimiste quant à la reconnaissance future de sa place dans l'histoire littéraire puisqu'elle poursuit sa lettre : « Pourtant d'autres que vous ont étudié sans parti pris l'évolution lyrique des dernières années et ne tarderont pas à me donner ma place. Car on peut jongler avec les noms et les individus, selon l'opportunité, mais non avec les œuvres, qui ont du poids et ne se laissent pas manier comme des balles » (Arnould). De fait, entre 1914 et 1948, Arnould ne publia pas moins de onze volumes de poésie, un roman et une anthologie, et son activité fut particulièrement intense dans les années 1920 dans le contexte de Dada à Paris : elle contribua à un nombre impressionnant de revues parmi lesquelles 391, *Ca ira*, *Cannibale*, *Dadaphone*, *Le Pilhauo-Thibaou*. . . Elle lança même et

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6. Hugo Ball, *sein Leben in Briefen und Gedichten* (1930) ; *Hugo Balls Weg zu Gott : Ein Buch der Erinnerung* (1931) ; *Ruf und Echo : Mein Leben mit Hugo Ball* (1953).

édita sa propre revue, *Projecteur* (un seul numéro paru, en mai 1920). Sa place et son rôle était suffisamment reconnus à l'époque pour qu'elle ait été placée entre Tzara et Picabia sur la photo du groupe Dada prise en 1921.



*Photographie inconnu, 1921*

*Photo gracieuseté de The Prodan Romanian Cultural Foundation et The Montparnasse Cultural Foundation*

C'est dire si son optimisme quant à la reconnaissance de sa place dans l'histoire littéraire n'était pas totalement sans fondement. Mais c'était aussi sous-estimer l'ampleur du phénomène dont témoigne son omission par Tzara. Son nom et son visage — comme celui de la plupart des femmes artistes des premières avant-gardes du XXe siècle — ont été largement oubliés et il faudra attendre les années 2000 pour que Céline Arnould trouve la place qui lui revenait dans l'histoire de Dada à Paris.

#### DE L'EFFACEMENT À LA RÉHABILITATION

De fait, à partir de la construction de l'histoire des mouvements élaborée par leurs premiers acteurs et reposant sur une exclusion des femmes, une doxa s'est établie qui a pris pour une évidence que les avant-gardes étaient des « clubs d'hommes ». L'exclusion initiale des femmes de l'histoire des avant-gardes s'est reproduite et n'a commencé à être interrogée qu'à partir des années 1980. Dans cette répétition de l'exclusion originale on peut voir à la fois l'absence de mise en question d'une idéologie patriarcale dominante et ce que les sociologues nomment le « déni d'antériorité »,

procédure de disqualification des femmes à l'échelle de l'histoire littéraire qui consiste à réitérer le caractère inédit de leur présence (Naudier 5–13).

À titre d'exemple, les femmes sont très peu présentes dans les différentes synthèses de Serge Fauchereau. C'est ainsi que dans la réédition de 2001 de son *Expressionnisme, dada, surréalisme et autres ismes*, dont la première publication remonte à 1976, on relève deux occurrences de Céline Arnauld (contre sept pour son mari Paul Dermée), trois occurrences pour Sophie Tauber (contre vingt-cinq et une section entière de cinq pages pour son mari Jean Arp), aucune occurrence pour Suzanne Duchamp (mais huit pour Marcel), huit occurrences pour Emmy Hennings (là où des dizaines de pages sont consacrées à Ball). Dans l'édition, très largement illustrée, de sa synthèse sur les *Avant-gardes du XXe siècle*, si Akhmatova figure en bonne place au chapitre des acméistes, celui qui est consacré au vorticisme n'inclut que deux petites reproductions de Jessica Dissmor dans un ensemble d'une trentaine d'illustrations, et sur les trente-cinq illustrations du chapitre « Dada et le surréalisme », aucune reproduction d'œuvre de femme. De même, les femmes brillent par leur absence dans l'histoire du surréalisme publiée par Maurice Nadeau en 1945, ainsi que dans ses postfaces de 1957 et de 1963.

Dans *L'Aventure Dada*, Georges Hugnet inclut un poème de Céline Arnauld, « Mes trois péchés Dada », et son nom figure parmi la liste des personnages clés du mouvement. Toutefois, au lieu de la courte biographie qui figure sous les autres noms, on trouve la mention : « Céline Arnauld (voir Paul Dermée) » (Hugnet 131). Un tel geste historiographique, qui consiste à ne donner de place à une femme qu'en rapportant son rôle à un homme de son entourage (en l'occurrence ici, son mari), est récurrent dans les histoires des avant-gardes publiées jusqu'à la fin du XXe siècle : Suzanne Duchamp est le plus souvent évoquée en relation avec ses frères, Marcel Duchamp et Raymond Duchamp-Villon, ou à son mari, Jean Crotti alors que l'inverse n'est pas le cas ; Sophie Tauber est présentée comme « compagne de Arp » (Fauchereau, *Expressionnisme* 233).

Le geste qui consiste à penser les premières avant-gardes du XXe siècle comme des groupes essentiellement masculins et à exclure les femmes de leur histoire se perpétue jusqu'à aujourd'hui, comme en témoigne la toute récente « histoire transnationale » des *Avant-gardes artistiques* de Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (1848–1918, 13). Revendiquant une perspective « globale » et un « décentrement » lié à la perspective transnationale, l'auteure note :

Ce « décentrement » n'est pas particulièrement inspiré par les études de genre : je n'ai pas cherché à faire apparaître des femmes qui auraient été d'avant-garde, mais délaissées par les discours historiques. Ce livre parle d'hommes le plus souvent, et le constate : l'histoire des avant-gardes est celle de groupes d'hommes. (1848–1918, 13)

Que le fonctionnement des groupes d'avant-gardes soit modelé sur des pratiques et un imaginaire qui sont ceux d'une société patriarcale largement misogyne, c'est une évidence. Mais que l'histoire des avant-gardes soit celle de groupes exclusivement masculins — avec implicitement l'idée que « faire apparaître des femmes qui auraient été d'avant-garde » impliquerait une survalorisation de femmes qui n'auraient, en fait, pas de place dans le discours historique — est une construction historiographique. Un tel discours n'est d'ailleurs pas réservé aux études sur les avant-gardes : il représente un geste de résistance idéologique dès que l'histoire littéraire et le canon sont remis en cause sur des critères genrés.<sup>7</sup>

De fait, une part importante du travail mené dans le cadre des études féministes a consisté et consiste encore à analyser la façon dont le canon littéraire des avant-gardes s'est construit sur une exclusion des femmes : en étudiant d'une part comment le travail des femmes a pu être exclu des institutions culturelles (comment les femmes ont été empêchées d'accéder à la création) et d'autre part comment celles qui avaient produit des œuvres dans le cadre de ces avant-gardes ont été reléguées aux oubliettes. À partir du début des années 1970 l'effacement des femmes dans l'historiographie des avant-gardes a commencé à être remis en question, d'abord dans l'historiographie du surréalisme. L'étude de Xavière Gauthier, *Surréalisme et sexualité* (1971), est pionnière en ce domaine, suivie par le numéro spécial de la revue *Obliques* consacré à « La femme surréaliste » (1977). Si la perspective consiste alors encore surtout à explorer la représentation de la femme dans l'imaginaire surréaliste (au moins autant que la création par les femmes), l'ouvrage de Whitney Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (1985) puis le volume collectif *Surrealism and Women* dirigé par Mary Ann Caws, Rudolf E. Kuenzli et Gwen Raaberg (1991) et l'anthologie réunie par Penelope Rosemont, *Surrealist Women* (1998), mettent, eux, l'accent sur la place des femmes

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7. Eliane Viennot a ainsi analysé comment l'histoire littéraire française du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle a éliminé du panthéon littéraire les figures d'autrices des siècles précédents. Pour le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle français, Christine Planté a étudié l'effacement des femmes dans l'histoire littéraire.



dans la création artistique et sur leur statut d'artistes. Le renouvellement de l'historiographie initié avec le surréalisme s'est rapidement élargi à l'ensemble des premières avant-gardes du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Après l'exposition organisée par Lea Vergine en Italie en 1980, consacrée aux femmes artistes dans les avant-gardes historiques, puis la publication en 1982 du catalogue, *L'Autre Moitié de l'avant-garde 1910–1940*, les ouvrages envisageant l'historiographie des mouvements d'avant-garde dans une perspective féministe pour réhabiliter le rôle des femmes se sont multipliés.<sup>8</sup>

#### DIFFÉRENTES ORIENTATIONS DU RENOUVELLEMENT HISTORIOGRAPHIQUE

Sans chercher à dresser ici un catalogue des travaux qui redonnent aux femmes une place dans la vie littéraire et artistique — la place manquerait et l'intérêt serait limité —, ce que je voudrais plutôt dégager, ce sont trois grandes modalités d'approche, qui ne sont ni incompatibles ni contradictoires, mais plutôt complémentaires, dans ces entreprises historiographiques, pour en souligner les partis-pris et les implications et suggérer, dans leur complémentarité même, l'ampleur du renouvellement qu'elles permettent.

Une première approche est monographique, qu'il s'agisse de réhabiliter l'œuvre d'une ou de plusieurs femmes artistes, voire d'un groupe d'artistes femmes à l'échelle d'un mouvement. On peut considérer comme une sorte de modèle initial le numéro spécial de la revue *Obliques* consacré en 1977 à *La Femme surréaliste*, qui se présente comme un répertoire de femmes surréalistes, organisé selon l'ordre alphabétique avec des photographies, des bibliographies et des documents sur leur œuvre. De même, l'ouvrage de Lea Vergine, *L'Autre Moitié de l'avant-garde*, fonctionne comme un répertoire des femmes peintres et sculpteurs ayant produit une œuvre entre 1910 et 1940, sous forme d'une succession de fiches de présentation de leur vie et de leurs réalisations.

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8. Pour n'en citer que quelques-uns parmi de nombreux autres : A. Jardine, *Gynesis : Configurations of Woman and Modernity* ; S. Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank : Paris, 1900–1940* ; E. Billeter et J. Pierre (dir.), *La Femme et le surréalisme* ; B. Marcadé et M.-L. Bernadac, *Féminin / masculin : Le sexe de l'art* ; G. Perry, *Women Artists and the Parisian Avant-Garde, 1900 to the late 1920s* ; U. Hörner, *Die realen Frauen der Surrealisten : Simone Breton, Gala Éluard, Elsa Triolet*. Plus récemment : M.-J. Bonnet, *Les Femmes artistes dans les avant-gardes* (2006) ; C. Gonnard et É. Lebovici, *Femmes artistes, artistes femmes : Paris, de 1880 à nos jours* (2007).

Aucun de ces deux volumes ne visait l'exhaustivité et aucun ne cherchait à tirer des conclusions générales sur la place des femmes dans les mouvements d'avant-garde. Mais les deux ouvrages ont contribué à donner aux femmes une visibilité qu'elles n'avaient pas jusque-là.

Dans le sillage de ces ouvrages, les travaux centrés sur un nombre plus ou moins restreint d'artistes femmes se sont multipliés. Qu'il s'agisse de rééditions, de biographies, ou de présentations de leurs œuvres, d'analyses de leur apport spécifique, ou de toute combinaison de ces différentes perspectives, l'intérêt de cette première approche tient au travail de recherche et d'exhumation d'artistes et de productions oubliées. Certaines figures féminines émergent ainsi en termes d'intérêt critique et d'ouvrages qui leur ont été consacrés. C'est le cas, chez les femmes futuristes, de Valentine de Saint-Point,<sup>9</sup> de Rosa Rosà, Enif Robert ou Benedetta (Cappa Marinetti), qui ont fait l'objet de travaux de rééditions et d'études critiques.<sup>10</sup> Chez les vorticistes, Helen Saunders et Jessica Dismorr ont été réhabilitées par les études de Brigid Peppin et Miranda Hickman. Parmi les femmes dadaïstes, Emmy Hennings et Sophie Taeuber à Zurich, Hannah Höch à Berlin, Suzanne Duchamp et Céline Arnaud à Paris sont, à ce jour, les artistes femmes dadaïstes les plus étudiées.<sup>11</sup>

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9. Outre les monographies qui lui ont été consacrées en 2003 et 2007 par Véronique Richard de la Fuente et Barbara Ballard (Richard de la Fuente, *Valentine de Saint-Point (1875–1953) : une poétesse dans l'avant-garde futuriste et méditerranéiste* ; Ballard, *Valentine de Saint-Point*) et l'ouvrage collectif, richement illustré, publié par Adrien Sina en 2011 à la suite de l'exposition organisée en 2009 à New York (*Feminine futures : Valentine de Saint-Point, performance, danse, guerre, politique et érotisme*), un récent colloque international, qui envisageait toute la diversité de ses activités et engagements, s'est tenu à Nantes en mai 2017 (« Valentine de Saint-Point à la croisée des avant-gardes : Art, danse, performance et politique entre Europe et Orient »).

10. Voir, entre autres, les travaux de Claudia Salaris (réédition du roman de Rosà Rosà, *Una donna con tre anime* [1981] ; anthologie d'œuvres d'une quarantaine d'écrivaines futuristes, *Le Futuriste, donne e letteratura d'avanguardia in Italia* [1982]), ceux de Simona Cigliana sur Benedetta Cappa Marinetti (réédition de ses romans, *Le forze umane, Viaggio di Garara, Astra e il sottomarino* [1998]), ou encore ceux de Silvia Contarini sur Rosà Rosà et Enif Robert (« Femme futuriste, femme artiste : L'art de conjuguer nouveau *gender* et nouveaux genres »).

11. Voir Hemus, *Dada's Women* (2009). Dix ans plus tôt Bernhard Echte coordonnait un volume consacré à Emmy Hennings regroupant textes, images et documents la concernant, et Bärbel Reetz lui consacrait une biographie en 2001.

De tels travaux ouvrent la possibilité de construire des contre-cansons des avant-gardes et ils en fournissent la matière, à l'instar des contre-cansons envisagés à l'échelle de l'histoire littéraire dans son ensemble (qu'il s'agisse d'anthologies comme *Les Femmes dans la tradition littéraire* [Mistacco] ou de réflexions sur le statut des femmes en littérature pour reprendre le titre de Martine Reid). L'un des enjeux des « canons de réhabilitation » est d'interroger l'apparente évidence de la nature exclusivement masculine des avant-gardes et de redonner leur place à des artistes femmes qui en ont eu une et ont été gommées de l'histoire. L'interrogation comporte plusieurs facettes : il s'agit non seulement de l'implication des femmes dans la production artistique des avant-gardes, mais aussi et en même temps de l'éventuelle spécificité de cette production au regard de la production masculine. Analyser une telle spécificité a pu viser, dans les années 1980 et le sillage des réflexions sur « l'écriture féminine », à doter les créations réalisées par les femmes de traits identitaires (pour fonder une créativité alternative à la créativité phallique masculine). Mais, depuis les années 1990, cette spécificité est envisagée beaucoup plus en termes de *stratégies* déstabilisant le binarisme des catégories qu'en termes d'identité. La stratégie peut, par exemple, consister à réhabiliter et valoriser des techniques ou des matériaux associés au féminin et au domestique (et donc dévalorisés). C'est à une telle stratégie que Ruth Hemus rattache le travail « fait à la main » d'une Sophie Taeuber ou d'une Hannah Höch, qui récupèrent et s'approprient des matériaux et des techniques (broderie, couture, tissage) liés à l'artisanat et les utilisent au côté de techniques comme le photomontage et l'abstraction qui sont des innovations associées, quant à elles, au masculin (Hemus, « Fait » 65–77).

De tels contre-cansons sont ainsi à la fois la base et le reflet de contre-histoires, qui abordent l'histoire des avant-gardes à partir de l'implication et du rôle des femmes dans ces mouvements. La perspective est ici « gynocentrée », pour reprendre les termes de Susan R. Suleiman qui les empruntait elle-même à Elaine Showalter quand, en 1990, dans *Subversive Intent : Gender, Politics and the Avant-Garde*, elle opérait une distinction méthodologique et théorique entre d'une part ce qu'elle désignait comme une « critique gynocentrée », qui redécouvre l'œuvre d'auteurs méconnues ou oubliées, et d'autre part ce qu'elle appelait « critique féministe », qui relit les auteurs (hommes et femmes) à partir d'une perspective féministe. En ce sens, les nombreux et précieux travaux qui envisagent les activités et les apports de telle ou telle femme dans les

avant-gardes ouvrent la possibilité de construire des contre-canon féminins des avant-gardes et une histoire gynocentrée de ces mouvements, à l'instar de *L'Histoire des femmes en Occident* (Duby).

Parallèlement au développement d'approches gynocentrées, une deuxième approche renvoie à la perspective que Susan R. Suleiman qualifiait en 1990 de « féministe », et qu'il serait plus approprié en 2018 de qualifier de perspective genrée. Il s'agit de relire les auteur.e.s (hommes et femmes) à partir d'une perspective de genre, c'est-à-dire d'aborder les mouvements d'avant-garde — leur fonctionnement, leurs textes fondateurs, leurs manifestes, leurs discours, leurs productions — à partir de questions qui, au-delà du rôle et des productions des femmes, concernent les discours sur le genre tenus par les différent.e.s acteurs et actrices du groupe et les représentations du genre et des catégories « homme » et « femme » qui en émanent. C'est ainsi, par exemple, que quand elle s'intéresse à « la femme futuriste », Silvia Contarini envisage non seulement le rôle et les positions des femmes dans le mouvement mais aussi les discours tenus par les hommes futuristes sur « la femme », « le féminin » et la construction de mythes et de modèles féminins (*La Femme*). De même, dans *The Gender of Modernism*, Bonnie Kime Scott réunit des auteur.e.s des deux sexes pour construire une anthologie genrée de la période 1900–1940 plutôt qu'une anthologie de textes de femmes<sup>12</sup> : aux côtés des aphorismes sur le futurisme de Mina Loy, de textes de Marianne Moore, Nella Larsen ou Virginia Woolf, on trouve donc des compte rendus et introductions rédigés par T.S. Eliot pour les poèmes de Moore et pour *Nightwood* de Djuna Barnes ou encore les lettres d'Ezra Pound à Marianne Moore et son adresse aux suffragettes. Dans une perspective pareillement genrée, Naomi Sawelson-Gorse réunit sous le titre *Women in Dada*, des études portant non seulement sur les femmes dadaïstes mais également sur la figure de « la jeune fille américaine » en tant que fantasme masculin à l'œuvre chez des dadaïstes comme Francis Picabia, sur les collages de femmes de Kurt Schwitters, sur le travestissement de Marcel Duchamp ou encore sur l'œuvre photographique de Man Ray intitulée *Noire et blanche* et juxtaposant la tête d'une femme blanche, son modèle Alice Prin, et un masque africain. L'accent est alors mis non pas tant sur des productions spécifiquement féminines dans le contexte des avant-gardes, non pas tant non plus sur la place des femmes dans les groupes d'avant-gardes, mais sur les discours sur le genre tenus par les hommes

12. Voir Georgiana Colvile, *Scandaleusement d'elles — 34 femmes surréalistes* (1999) ; Pénélope Rosemont, dir., *Surrealist Women* (1998).

et par les femmes ainsi que sur les présupposés et effets produits par leurs constructions genrées.

La distinction entre perspective « gynocentrée » et perspective « genrée » renvoie au débat qui s'est développé, à partir des États-Unis dans le champ historiographique, sur les mérites et risques respectifs de la *women's history* (rendre les femmes visibles, analyser leurs expériences d'oppression et de conquête de l'autonomie) et de la *gender history* (approche genrée des phénomènes, des événements, des sociétés et de la construction des identités). Il ne s'agit pas d'opposer une *women's history* qui constituerait les femmes en objet d'histoire autonome et perdrait de vue la nature relationnelle de la catégorie « femme », et une *gender history* qui serait, elle, une histoire relationnelle. Il s'agit plutôt de souligner, après Joan Scott, que l'on passe d'une perspective qui met l'accent sur les expériences et les productions de femmes à une perspective qui, grâce à la catégorie d'analyse du genre, interroge les processus et les modalités de construction d'identités masculines et féminines et de relations entre les genres (J. Scott).

Les deux perspectives sont complémentaires. L'historiographie des femmes dans les avant-gardes ne peut s'écrire qu'en envisageant leur place, leur rôle, leur production *par rapport* à ceux des hommes : il ne s'agit donc pas de suggérer que les contre-histoires des avant-gardes au féminin oblitéreraient une telle dimension relationnelle. Il ne fait aucun doute qu'une telle historiographie est nécessaire, ne serait-ce que comme contre-poids à toute la tradition historiographique masculine qui s'est construite depuis l'époque des avant-gardes. Mais on peut espérer que les travaux uniquement consacrés aux femmes artistes contribuent à leur réinsertion dans un champ artistique plus ouvert et plus attentif aux positions hétérogènes et contradictoires qui le constituent. Il s'agit alors de penser l'histoire littéraire et artistique des avant-gardes en termes non strictement féminins mais plus globalement genrés, en interrogeant la place relative des artistes hommes et femmes et les discours tenus par les uns et les autres sur les questions de genre.

Une telle interrogation est d'autant plus importante que les premières avant-gardes du XXe siècle sont contemporaines des développements du féminisme du début du XXe siècle, que les hommes autant que les femmes sont parties prenantes dans ces débats sur le féminisme, et que sur cette question les positionnements sont loin d'être homogènes à l'intérieur d'un même mouvement. De fait, les années 1910 sont riches en évolutions et débats concernant le statut des femmes dans la société.

té (vote, travail, contraception). Dans les premières décennies du XXe siècle, en France comme en Grande-Bretagne ou aux États-Unis, on se revendique (ou pas) « féministe », on parle de « femme nouvelle » (*new woman*), de *flapper* et de « garçonne ». En France, on débat du roman de Victor Margueritte qui fit scandale, *La Garçonne*, on discute du costume des femmes cyclistes tandis que les suffragettes se battent pour le droit de vote et que les associations féministes, en Europe et aux États-Unis, réclament aussi l'égalité au travail, dans les salaires et le droit à l'instruction. Le féminisme en tant que lutte pour l'égalité des droits est une question d'actualité en ce début de XXe siècle.<sup>13</sup> Le « féminisme » est également un sujet débattu au sein des avant-gardes artistiques, particulièrement le futurisme italo-français. Dès 1909, Marinetti affirme son « mépris de la femme » et condamne le « féminisme » dans son *Manifestes du Futurisme* (18), même si deux ans plus tard il affirme que les suffragettes sont ses « meilleures collaboratrices » (Marinetti, « Le mépris » 106). Valentine de Saint-Point lui « répond » en 1912 avec un *Manifeste de la femme futuriste*, et la revue *L'Italia Futurista* consacre, en 1917–1918, un dossier à ce qu'elle appelle « le problème de la femme », qui est l'occasion d'un débat au cours duquel certains hommes futuristes s'expriment dans des termes violemment misogynes, qualifiant les femmes de stupides et considérant que la femme émancipée s'apparente à un homme manqué, tandis que des femmes futuristes comme Enif Robert ou Rosa Rosà « ripostent » en revendiquant un nouveau modèle de femme futuriste.

La doxa oppose la misogynie des avant-gardes artistiques, véritables « clubs d'hommes », et en particulier l'antiféminisme réactionnaire des futuristes, au féminisme politique et progressiste de celles qui se battent pour les droits des femmes, en particulier les suffragettes, engagées dans

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13. Les formes politiques et sociales qu'il revêt et les conceptions défendues sont, quant à elles, plurielles. D'une part, la situation n'est pas la même en France et en Grande-Bretagne ou aux États-Unis, où la lutte pour les droits civiques a commencé plus tôt et a pris, dans les années 1910 avec les suffragettes, une forme plus radicale et spectaculaire. D'autre part, en France même, comme Christine Bard l'a souligné, au début du XXe siècle, il faut parler de « féminismes » au pluriel car le terme recouvre des sensibilités différentes, voire opposées, de « l'avant-garde » radicale révolutionnaire dont les propositions critiques sont très puissantes mais qui est minoritaire, aux tendances réformistes, majoritaires, qui concentrent leurs efforts sur les réformes juridiques et sont représentées par les grandes associations féministes (voir chapitre I du Bard, « L'héritage à la veille de la guerre »).

la lutte pour le droit de vote.<sup>14</sup> Sans chercher à contester ni la misogynie réactionnaire des chefs du futurisme ni le progressisme des revendications féministes pour le droit de vote, la perspective du genre contribue à rendre plus complexe cette opposition binaire et à faire ressortir les ambivalences dans lesquelles sont prises tant certaines féministes politiques que les avant-gardes artistiques. C'est ainsi que la majorité des féministes suffragistes françaises, modérées, sont conformistes en matière de normes de genre : elles valorisent une « féminité » conventionnelle, et condamnent le comportement d'une féministe radicale comme Madeleine Pelletier, qui choisit de s'habiller en homme et qui donne un sens politique à son geste. Comme les suffragettes britanniques, elles font passer « l'amour de la patrie » et l'engagement au service du pays en guerre avant les revendications pour le droit de vote. Les femmes futuristes sont, elles aussi, prises dans de fortes ambivalences. Silvia Contarini a bien montré l'écart qui sépare les propositions théoriques de féministes italiennes comme Rosa Rosà ou Enif Robert, pour différentes qu'elles soient de celles de Marinetti et telles qu'elles sont formulées dans le cadre du débat sur la question de la femme qui a lieu dans *L'Italia futurista* et dans les préfaces de leurs romans (Rosa, *Una donna* ; Robert), et la construction au niveau diégétique des figures de femmes censées incarner le nouveau modèle. Si Rosà comme Enif, dans leurs propos théoriques, refusent les modèles féminins existants, revendiquent une libération et une émancipation de la femme, et cherchent à dépasser les catégories binaires pour penser la « femme de l'après-demain »,<sup>15</sup> les trajectoires de leurs héroïnes romanesques, présentées comme la mise en œuvre de la femme nouvelle qu'elles appellent de leurs vœux, se soldent par l'échec.<sup>16</sup>

À ces deux approches, gynocentrée et genrée, dont l'articulation renvoie à l'évolution des *women's studies* vers les *gender studies*, il faut en

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14. Voir, par exemple et entre autres, les travaux de Andrew Hewitt, *Fascist Modernism : Aesthetics, Politics and the Avant-Garde* (1993) ; de Cinzia Sartini Blum qui, dans une perspective féministe et en se concentrant sur les figures masculines du premier futurisme, dénonce la rhétorique marinettienne misogyne et réactionnaire (1996) ; et de Lucy Delap sur l'avant-garde politique anglo-américaine (2007).

15. Concept élaboré par Rosa Rosà, qui publie quatre articles dans *L'Italia futurista* : « Le donne del posdomani », « Risposta a Jean-Jacques », « Le donne cambiano, finalmente . . . », et « Le donne del posdomani (II) ».

16. Voir non seulement Contarini, *La Femme futuriste*, mais aussi plus spécifiquement sur cet aspect, Contarini, : « Femme futuriste, femme artiste ».

ajouter une troisième qui s'inscrit dans une perspective que l'on pourrait qualifier de *queer*, au sens où une telle perspective implique une critique des normes sexuelles et une mise en cause du binarisme des catégories de genre.<sup>17</sup> L'enjeu n'est pas tant de produire une « contre-histoire » ni même une « histoire genrée » des mouvements d'avant-garde que d'ouvrir la possibilité d'une histoire queer, c'est-à-dire la possibilité de « queeriser » l'histoire des avant-gardes. C'est ainsi qu'Amelia Jones propose une réécriture de l'histoire de Dada New York à partir du paradigme que constitue la Baronne Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. Plutôt qu'une opération de réhabilitation de l'œuvre et de la vie de la Baronne, ce qu'entreprend Amelia Jones est une reconfiguration de l'histoire de Dada New York, telle qu'elle est traditionnellement construite autour de Duchamp, Man Ray et Picabia. La vie et de l'œuvre de la Baronne sont l'instrument qui permet de procéder à une telle reconfiguration. De fait, Jones fait de la Baronne, avec son comportement excessif, une figure de la menace et de la déstabilisation des catégories et des comportements sexués et genrés, menace ressentie comme telle par les hommes blancs euro-américains et hétérosexuels du groupe Dada new-yorkais. Ériger cette figure en instrument de relecture de Dada New York permet à la fois de souligner les limites de la pratique des membres du triumvirat new-yorkais dans leur positionnement par rapport aux questions genrées, de faire émerger les contradictions du groupe et en même temps de mettre en relief leur dette à l'égard de figures telles que la Baronne. Même si l'identification revendiquée par Amelia Jones à la neurasthénie de la Baronne n'est peut-être pas nécessaire pour arriver à ce résultat, *Irrational Modernism : A Neurasthenic History of New York Dada* construit une histoire alternative de Dada New York. Il ne s'agit donc pas de construire un contre-canon féminin de réhabilitation (canon de femmes artistes à opposer au canon d'hommes) mais plutôt d'ouvrir à un autre récit de l'histoire de Dada à New York qui se veut plus global puisqu'il intègre la figure et la dimension que l'auteure qualifie d'« irrationnelles », associées à la Baronne, et qu'en cela il se démarque de l'histoire « rationnelle » et officielle de Dada.

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17. Si le terme « queer », qui signifie à l'origine « bizarre », « tordu », a été une insulte homophobe avant d'être réapproprié et revendiqué dans les milieux militants (ACT UP, Queer Nation) comme catégorie servant de support à une mise en cause de l'hétérosexualité et de l'hétéronormativité, dans le domaine de la critique littéraire et artistique le terme permet surtout une mise en question des catégories binaires de genre et de la subjectivité genrée, y compris un décentrement du « sujet gai et lesbien » dominant.



Depuis plus d'une vingtaine d'années, sous l'impulsion des trois perspectives historiographiques — gynocentrée, genrée et queer —, la construction du champ littéraire et artistique des avant-gardes du premier quart du XXe siècle est en train de changer radicalement, rendant visibles des femmes artistes qui ne l'étaient pas, leur restituant leur place, repensant les positions et les rapports entre acteurs/rices et interrogeant les évidences de la doxa en matière de questions de genre. En même temps qu'elle permet de lire autrement le canon et l'histoire littéraire, la perspective des études de genre éclaire les processus de construction du canon et de l'histoire littéraires. Que de tels processus soient des processus d'effacement des femmes artistes n'est pas une spécificité des avant-gardes ; ce qui l'est plus c'est qu'au fond, tout « révolutionnaires » qu'aient été ces mouvements qui n'ont cessé de promouvoir un changement radical de l'ordre social, la dynamique du groupe — avec son organisation autour de la figure du chef, son fonctionnement sur un mode collectif, son agressivité et sa violence revendiquées, ne serait-ce que verbales —, a joué dans le sens d'une exclusion initiale des femmes de l'histoire du mouvement, c'est-à-dire dans le sens d'un renforcement de l'ordre social genré bien plus que dans celui de sa contestation. Au-delà de cette relecture du canon et de ses processus de constitution, reste encore, dans une perspective non seulement féministe mais aussi de genre, à produire une « histoire globale » des avant-gardes artistiques, dans laquelle la « globalité » de la perspective sera à entendre non seulement au sens des historiens (*global history*) et inclura non seulement la dimension transnationale mais également la dimension genrée sans pour autant être une histoire des avant-gardes au féminin.

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## Essais critiques / Review Essays

### ***L'Histoire des traductions en langue française : une compétence référentielle d'un demi-millénaire***

*Histoire des traductions en langue française : XVe et XVIe siècles, 1470–1610.* Sous la direction de Véronique Duché. Verdier, 2015. Pp. 1341. ISBN : 9782864328261.

*Histoire des traductions en langue française : XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, 1610–1815.* Sous la direction d'Yves Chevrel, Annie Cointre, et Yen-Maï Tran-Gervat. Verdier, 2014. Pp. 1373. ISBN : 9782864327745.

*Histoire des traductions en langue française : XIXe siècle, 1815–1914.* Sous la direction d'Yves Chevrel, Lieven D'hulst, et Christine Lombez. Verdier, 2012. Pp. 1369. ISBN : 9782864326908.

*L'Histoire des traductions en langue française* est un vaste projet éditorial placé sous la direction scientifique d'Yves Chevrel et de Jean-Yves Masson. Elle doit comprendre un ensemble de 4 tomes, dont les trois premiers ont déjà été édités à partir de 2012. Le dernier tome, relatif au XXe siècle, devrait voir le jour en 2018.

Il s'agit du premier ouvrage de cette ampleur (les trois premiers tomes analysés plus avant couvrent un total d'environ 4000 pages) à étudier exclusivement l'histoire de la traduction dans le monde francophone. Y ont participé nombre d'universitaires, essentiellement français mais pas uniquement, avec l'ambition de dresser un bilan théorique à la lumière d'une analyse traductographique aussi précise et rigoureuse que possible.

Le premier tome de *L'Histoire des traductions en langue française*, consacré à la fin du Moyen Age et à la Renaissance, envisage l'évolution de l'activité traduisante à partir de 1470, date de création des Presses

de la Sorbonne. Il est curieux que le XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle soit à peine effleuré, alors qu'il est marqué par une vision programmatique de la traduction au plus haut niveau de l'Etat et promue par les rois de France Jean II le Bon et Charles V le Sage. De grands traducteurs comme Nicole Oresme ou Raoul de Presles sont brièvement évoqués, alors que leur contribution à l'enrichissement de la langue française est indéniable. Oresme, disciple de Buridan, introduira de nombreux néologismes en langue française par la voie de l'emprunt, lesquels seront regroupés dans un index qui accompagnera sa traduction de l'*Ethique* et de la *Politique* d'Aristote. Des mots comme démocratie, aristocratie, politique ou encore oligarchie viendront enrichir le vocabulaire français et l'on peut véritablement dire que le XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle est celui des traducteurs créateurs de lexique. Le XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle méritait lui aussi davantage de considération ; c'est lui qui vit la création de nombreuses villes et l'éclosion de plusieurs universités comme la Sorbonne (née de la volonté de saint Louis). Le XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle permet au savoir de sortir des monastères où il était confiné jusque là et ce mouvement d'exportation du savoir est notamment redevable aux traductions. On peut citer à cet égard la *Bible historiale* de Guyart des Moulins (1295), dont la quête d'étymologie du sens<sup>1</sup> marque cette volonté de démocratisation de la culture que l'on retrouvera au siècle suivant. Les Bibles, naguère volumineuses, adoptent alors un format plus réduit, ce qui permet précisément leur transport au-delà des enceintes monastiques.

Les traducteurs des XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles seront au service du roi ou d'une maison princière. Cette pratique est inaugurée à l'époque de Philippe le Bel, qui voit Henri de Gauchy traduire en 1282 *Le Livre du gouvernement des rois et des princes*, version française du *De regimine principum* écrit en 1279 par Gilles de Rome à l'attention du futur monarque. Cet ouvrage s'inscrit dans la lignée des ouvrages politiques du Moyen Age désignés sous l'appellation « miroirs aux princes ». *La Légende dorée* de Jacques de Voragine traduite par Jean de Vignay à la demande d'Anne de Bourgogne, mère de Philippe VI, en est un autre exemple.

Malgré cet hiatus, les auteurs font un rappel bienvenu de la situation linguistique dans la France du Moyen Age. La France se présente comme un territoire hétérogène avec la distinction entre langue d'oïl et langue d'oc et une multitude de dialectes qui compliquent davantage

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1. Le lecteur consultera avec profit l'ouvrage de Xavier-Laurent Salvador, *Archéologie et étymologie sémantiques : La traduction du Livre de l'Exode de la Bible historiale* (1295). Zetabooks, 2017.

encore le panorama linguistique. Le premier débat relatif à la traduction remonte au concile de Tours (813) où la notion de « transférer » est évoquée devant l'incapacité croissante du latin à transmettre le message de l'Eglise. La traduction jouera un rôle essentiel dans l'émergence de la *lingua romana rustica*. C'est ainsi que les Bibles, réalisées dans les *scriptoria* des monastères, sont au départ des volumes imposants et calligraphiés, comme les Bibles cisterciennes du XIIe siècle. Dès le XIIIe siècle, les gloses complèteront le texte sacré ; elles sont l'œuvre des franciscains et des dominicains. Elles enrichissent les premières traductions en vers, fragmentaires, qui verront le jour au XIIe siècle et qui mélangent histoire sainte et profane, à des fins explicatives. La *Bible historiale* de Guyart des Moulins, citée plus haut, est la première Bible en prose, glosée, où se succèdent une version fidèle de la *Vulgate* et une traduction de l'*Historia scholastica* de Pierre le Mangeur. Elle est la première Bible française imprimée et la dernière Bible médiévale ; c'est une encyclopédie historique de la chrétienté où l'« illustration » légitime l'énonciation du texte sacré.

A partir de 1450, l'invention de l'imprimerie et la création des Presses de la Sorbonne autoriseront une diffusion inédite du savoir. La chute de Constantinople (1453) et l'arrivée subséquente en Italie et à Venise de nombreux érudits et savants byzantins, comme Laurent Valla et Jean Lascaris, qui serviront le grand traducteur Claude de Seyssel, annonceront le retour définitif en Europe occidentale du legs culturel gréco-latin, déjà amorcé par les traducteurs tolédans des XIIe et XIIIe siècles. Ces deux éléments préfigurent la Renaissance. A cet endroit, il me paraît nécessaire de souligner que les langues vernaculaires, concurrentes des langues classiques et supports des traductions, renforcent leur position avant le mouvement de la Réforme ; le premier livre imprimé par Gutenberg est une traduction latine des saintes Ecritures, dite *Bible* « à quarante-deux lignes ».

Il convient de rappeler qu'en langue romane, l'ancêtre du français, les *Serments de Strasbourg* (842) sont la première traduction connue (l'original était écrit en latin) et il faudra attendre plus de six siècles pour voir la première traduction imprimée en français. Il s'agit de l'ouvrage de Boccace *De la ruine des nobles hommes et femmes* (1476), traduit par Laurent de Premierfait et publié à Bruges par Colard Mansion. La fin du XVe siècle voit l'entrée en lice des imprimeurs-libraires qui joueront un rôle particulièrement important au XVIe siècle avec Etienne Dolet notamment, et au XVIIe siècle avec Damien Foucault. C'est aussi le temps de l'émergence des outils du traducteur, avec l'apparition de



dictionnaires, de manuels ou même de traités de traduction (le premier en langue française est celui d'Etienne Dolet en 1540). Le *Collège des lecteurs royaux* (le Collège de France), fondé par François Ier en 1530, jouera un rôle prépondérant dans la formation de ces outils linguistiques.

Le livre continue de viser une élite intellectuelle, la connaissance du vernaculaire francilien restant très limitée. Mais insensiblement, c'est un mouvement de démocratisation de la culture qui va se mettre en marche, rappelant l'exemple de l'école de Tolède et de son roi Alphonse X le Sage (XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle). Les traducteurs sont donc engagés, ils insèrent de nombreux paratextes dans leurs traductions sans s'encombrer de préceptes déontologiques ni moraux, la propriété intellectuelle n'apparaissant qu'en toute fin de XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, après la chute de l'Ancien Régime. Comme l'écrivait Edmond Cary, « on ne traduit pas *in vitro*, *in abstracto* et *ne varietur* ».<sup>2</sup> S'il n'y a pas de propriété intellectuelle, il y aura à partir de la Renaissance — et le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle ne fera qu'accentuer le phénomène — un « privilège royal » octroyé à l'imprimeur ou au libraire pour un certain nombre d'années ; on pensera par exemple à Galliot du Pré (1512–1561), le plus grand libraire du Palais.

La « translation », comme on l'appelait avant 1540, a pour toile de fond les chocs culturels, que ce soit la prise de Constantinople par les Ottomans (1453) ou encore les guerres d'Italie. Ce sont les réfugiés de ces événements qui, en Occident, contribuent à la renaissance des lettres grecques. Leur activité de traducteur sonnera le glas du fameux *graecum est, non legitur*, que l'on trouvait dans la marge de nombreux manuscrits du Moyen Âge. C'est ainsi que parmi les 5387 incunables parus en France, 292 sont des traductions.

L'impulsion royale donnée à la traduction, inaugurée au X<sup>e</sup> siècle par Charles V le Sage et poursuivie à la Renaissance par Louis XII puis François Ier, participera à l'affirmation de la langue française et marquera l'aube d'un projet national. Celui-ci se matérialisera dans l'ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts (1539) qui imposera l'usage de la langue française dans les actes de l'Etat et les jugements des tribunaux ; c'est la préemption du pouvoir royal sur la culture.

Le premier tome s'achève à la fin du règne d'Henri IV en 1610 et la Renaissance ne marque pas de rupture avec le Moyen Âge. Les auteurs

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2. Edmond Cary, « L'indispensable débat », *La qualité en matière de traduction : Actes du III<sup>e</sup> Congrès de la Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs (FIT)*. Pergamon, 1963, p. 42.

estiment pour leur part que le prestige de l'Antiquité s'étiolera après la mort d'Henri IV, ce qui est à nuancer à l'aune de l'avènement prochain du classicisme. Il est utile de rappeler à cet endroit que le mot « classique » fut employé pour la première fois par Sébillet dans son *Art poétique françoys* dès 1548.

A la Renaissance, on traduira beaucoup au départ du latin, qu'il s'agisse d'auteurs latins ou de littérature néo-latine. La langue latine servira aussi de relais entre le grec et le français, comme dans la *Guerre du Péloponnèse* de Thucydide versée en latin par Laurent Valla (1514) et l'*Anabase* de Xénophon traduite dans la même langue par Jean Lascaris (1504–1505), ambassadeur de France à Venise et maître de Guillaume Budé. Mais la traduction directe au départ de textes grecs ou de langues vernaculaires ne sera pas pour autant délaissée. J'en veux pour exemple la prose narrative qui sera à l'honneur, alimentée par la grande circulation des romans sentimentaux (les romans de chevalerie) entre la France, l'Espagne et l'Italie. Le *Triunfo de las doñas* de Juan Rodríguez del Padrón (vers 1445) par Fernand de Lucène et la *Celestina* de Fernando de Rojas (1499) illustrent merveilleusement cette inclination. On verra par ailleurs des traductions françaises au départ de l'allemand, du flamand, de l'anglais, de l'italien, du catalan, du provençal, sans oublier l'arabe, le hongrois, le turc ou le tchèque. On ne peut donner plus bel exemple d'humanisme.

On traduit même de français en français, ce que Jakobson aurait appelé la traduction intralinguale, afin de réduire la distance linguistique des textes des siècles passés. Je citerai le *Roman de la Rose. Moralisé clair et net. Translaté de rime en prose*, par Jean Molinet, l'historiographe des ducs de Bourgogne, en 1503. Ou encore la *Conquête de Constantinople* de Geoffroi de Villehardouin, « traduit » par Blaise de Vigenère (1584).

La Renaissance ne traduit donc plus uniquement les *auctoritates*, mais étend son intérêt à une autre typologie textuelle : les écrits utilitaires, la littérature de loisirs, les textes profanes autant que sacrés. La tendance est à l'illustration de la langue française, afin de l'enrichir et de la promouvoir comme le fait du Bellay dans sa *Défense et illustration de la langue française* (1549). Dans cet ouvrage, Du Bellay, lui-même traducteur de l'*Enéide*, critique les mauvais traducteurs et marque l'opposition, essentielle à l'époque, entre traduction et création (ce que l'on appelait « imitation », à savoir une adaptation à la langue et à la culture cibles). La traduction s'emploie à rendre la dimension linguistique de l'œuvre

originale et véhicule moins des contenus que des lexèmes ou des tours de phrase. Du Bellay accorde la primauté à l'imitation qui fait la part belle aux explicitations de termes et aux compléments culturels. Il s'oppose en cela à Sébillot ; c'est une parfaite illustration de l'opposition entre « sentence » et intention » déjà présente chez Oresme. C'est dans la veine de la *Défense et illustration de la langue française* que se situent les *Arts poétiques* comme celui de Peletier du Mans (1555) qui consacre d'ailleurs un chapitre à l'activité traduisante. Et le traité de traduction d'Etienne Dolet (1540) est aussi un plaidoyer en faveur de la langue française.

Les arts et les sciences en viennent donc à occuper une place non négligeable dans la littérature de traduction à partir du XVe et surtout au cours du XVIe siècle. On y voit l'opposition entre technè (ars) et épistèmè (scientia). Les arts sont davantage marqués par des discours pratiques que l'on traduira en abondance, alors que les sciences sont empreintes de discours théoriques et sont de ce fait moins traduites. Rien d'étonnant à cela dans la mesure où le latin règne en maître dans le domaine scientifique et plus largement théorique. On ne traduira pas au XVIe siècle l'*Almageste* de Ptolémée ni le *De Revolutionibus* de Copernic (1543). Cette situation se poursuivra au XVIIe siècle où l'on traduira surtout une littérature de loisirs ou morale. Ainsi, Descartes écrira d'abord ses *Méditations métaphysiques* (1641) en latin pour être adoubé par la communauté des érudits et ce n'est qu'ensuite qu'il révisera une version française donnée par le duc de Luynes (1647), pour se trouver un public.

Cette entreprise de vulgarisation scientifique devait nécessairement s'accompagner d'une réflexion profonde sur la langue et donner de ce fait naissance à de nombreux dictionnaires (les « trésors ») et manuels. Les dictionnaires bilingues n'apparaîtront qu'à la fin du XVIe siècle et les dictionnaires monolingues dans les langues vulgaires européennes ne seront disponibles qu'au début du XVIIe siècle. A titre d'illustration, le *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* de Sebastián de Covarrubias sera publié en 1611.

Il serait malvenu de passer sous silence à cet endroit le rôle central joué par Robert Estienne dans la tradition lexicographique d'apprentissage du latin. Son *Alphabetum* de 1528 (pour le grec) et son *Latinae linguae Thesaurus* de 1531 restent aujourd'hui encore des références.

On assistera enfin aux premières traductions bibliques en vernaculaire qui sont le fruit de la Réforme. On peut citer la traduction allemande de Luther (1522–1534), qu'il continuera de remanier jusqu'à sa mort en 1546 ; le *Nouveau Testament* de Lefèvre d'Étaples (1523) ; *The*

*New testament* de Tyndale (1525), mort sur le bûcher à Vilvorde en 1536 ; la *Bible* suédoise d'Olaus Petri (1541), destinée à Gustave Vasa, ou encore la *Bible* polonaise de Jakub Wujek, publiée à Cracovie en 1599, deux ans après la mort de son auteur.

Comme indiqué plus haut, une accélération des traductions caractérise les premières décennies de l'imprimerie. Les imprimeurs et libraires jouent un rôle essentiel dans cette transmission des savoirs. Les langues cibles des traductions étaient le latin et l'allemand jusqu'en 1480. Puis, les traductions en français connaîtront un développement inédit et Paris deviendra le centre de l'édition et de l'imprimerie, de sorte que la proportion du nombre de traductions au sein de l'entreprise éditoriale augmentera nettement dès 1520. On assistera notamment à une augmentation sensible des traductions au départ de l'italien entre 1571 et 1580, vraisemblablement provoquée par la vogue italianisante sous Henri III.

Comme c'était le cas au Moyen Âge, la controverse *ad sensum/ad verbum* se prolongera à la Renaissance, notamment sur la question des néologismes, introduits en nombre au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle mais contre lesquels se positionnera Dolet. Si la traduction possède une vertu pédagogique, elle fait cependant montre de porosité entre traduction, adaptation, paraphrase et réécriture. On remarque un déficit définitoire qui sera — en partie — comblé au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle par la publication de traités de traduction plus importants, en quantité comme en qualité. Cette dimension pédagogique se matérialisera dans les préfaces de la Renaissance, qui sont en réalité un prolongement de la tradition des prohesmes du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, où le traducteur s'adosse aux autorités classiques pour justifier sa propre pratique. Les prohesmes expliquent les difficultés de traduction induites par les carences lexicales et stylistiques de la langue française ; c'est le procédé de l'*excusatio per infirmitatem*.

Le développement d'une réflexion ordonnée sur l'art de traduire donnera naissance à un métalangage. Le mot — ou devrais-je dire le terme ? - « traduction » apparaît pour la première fois dans la dédicace de *La Touche naïve pour éprouver l'ami et le flatteur* d'Antoine Du Saix (1537). Le mot « traducteur » est introduit par Dolet dans son traité *De la meilleure manière de traduire d'une langue en une autre* (1540).

Insensiblement, on passera à la Renaissance d'une *translatio studii* à une *translatio imperii*. En d'autres termes, on passe de la translation, transfert interlinguistique, à la traduction, qui est un véritable acte politique, qu'il s'agisse d'encenser la monarchie française ou de propager la Réforme.

Enfin, la ventilation géographique de l'activité traduisante en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle ne cesse d'étonner. Paris, Lyon et Rouen sont à l'honneur dans l'ouvrage, alors que le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle français est viscéralement ligérien, tant du point de vue de la littérature que de la traduction. Ce point aurait certes mérité une analyse approfondie.



Le deuxième tome<sup>3</sup> est consacré à ce que l'on appelle communément en histoire de la littérature française le classicisme et reprend lui aussi les contributions de plusieurs dizaines de chercheurs, issus dans leur grande majorité de l'université française.

Les auteurs ouvrent leur étude en 1610, c'est-à-dire au début de la régence de Marie de Médicis. Le classicisme est alors en gestation dans la mesure où les premiers salons littéraires se développent dans la capitale dès la disparition d'Henri IV. Un des salons les plus célèbres est la Chambre bleue de la marquise de Rambouillet. La préciosité est en réalité une réaction exacerbée contre l'inconduite morale de la cour du Vert Galant.

Par contre, ce deuxième tome prend curieusement fin en 1815, date de la signature du Traité de Vienne. Ce traité, dont l'acte final fut rédigé exclusivement en français, fait de ce dernier la langue diplomatique par excellence, et le français conservera ce privilège jusqu'en 1918. Même si le choix des dates est toujours discutable, il me semble que 1789 aurait été un choix plus judicieux, dans la mesure où la Révolution française sonne le glas de la monarchie, met fin à l'Ancien régime et à l'âge classique qui y est indissolublement lié. En outre, le romantisme, dont les prémices sont déjà à rechercher à la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle chez Rousseau ou Madame de Staël, constitue une réaction violente contre le classicisme. Enfin, rien dans l'ouvrage ne semble justifier la date retenue et aucun mouvement particulier, sinon le groupe de Coppet qui reste anecdotique, n'est mentionné entre la Révolution et la fin de l'épopée napoléonienne.

Le livre ne se fonde pas sur une ventilation chronologique stricte, mais interroge d'abord le statut de la traduction, sa conception et ses enjeux, avant d'aborder la typologie des textes et se pencher successivement sur la traduction religieuse, scientifique et technique, littéraire ou philosophique. C'est un véritable panorama encyclopédique qui se dévoile aux

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3. Un compte rendu de ce deuxième volume a été publié dans la revue de la Faculté de traduction et d'interprétation de l'Université de Genève: *Parallèles*, vol. 29, no. 1, avril 2017.

yeux du lecteur, avec plusieurs répétitions il est vrai (inévitables dans ce type d'étude), mais d'une érudition parfaite.

Le premier jalon du classicisme est sans conteste la création de l'Académie française par Richelieu en 1634–1635, dont l'objectif premier est de réguler et de fixer la langue par une grammaire et un dictionnaire. La grammaire sera publiée en 1647 et prendra la forme des *Remarques sur la langue française* de Vaugelas, par ailleurs traducteur lui-même, et le *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* ne sera édité qu'en 1694, soit quatre ans après le *Dictionnaire* de Furetière. L'Académie française est la légataire des salons (Valentin Conrart en devient d'ailleurs le premier secrétaire perpétuel) en matière de pureté de la langue, mais est aussi redevable à Descartes, dont le *Discours de la méthode* imprime une exigence de logique et de clarté dans le style.

Le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle verra une augmentation vertigineuse du nombre de traductions en France, surtout dans les domaines de la religion, de l'histoire et de la prose morale. Ces traductions, en puisant dans l'Antiquité classique, devront fournir des modèles aux monarques contemporains. Elles se feront donc essentiellement au départ du grec et du latin. En matière religieuse, les traductions seront l'œuvre des jésuites (qui contrôlent l'enseignement à l'époque), des dominicains et des bénédictins. Effectivement, comme l'écrivait Gustave Lanson, le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle français est avant tout « chrétien et monarchique ».<sup>4</sup> Les prélats les plus éminents s'adonneront à l'art de la traduction ; Bossuet, chargé en 1670 avec Huet de l'éducation du Grand Dauphin et auteur des recueils *ad usum Delphini*, traduira les pères de l'Eglise et le père Bouhours, polémiste et ennemi juré de Jansenius, traduira le *Nouveau Testament* en s'appuyant sur la *Vulgate* hiéronymienne.

La noblesse jouera aussi un rôle de premier plan dans le panorama traductif du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Il ne pouvait en être autrement puisque l'Académie française est une émanation de la préciosité. A ce sujet, il n'est pas inutile de rappeler que le mot « classique » vient du latin « *classicus* », qui signifie « de la première classe de citoyens ». La première occurrence du mot apparaît dans l'*Art Poétique* de Sébillot en 1548, à l'époque où Jacques Amyot s'attelle à la traduction des *Vies parallèles* de Plutarque. C'est le *Plutarque* d'Amyot qui inaugure — à son insu — le classicisme français.

Les auteurs auraient dû mentionner ici que les traducteurs formeront au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle une partie importante du contingent des membres

4. Gustave Lanson, *Histoire de la littérature française*. Hachette, 1908, p. 615.

de l'Académie, position privilégiée qu'ils ont perdue aujourd'hui. Par ailleurs, l'Académie française incarne la revanche de la capitale sur les provinces. Si le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle était ligérien (pensons à des auteurs comme Rabelais ou du Bellay, et à des traducteurs comme Dolet), le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle sera parisien. Ce sont les dialectes et les patois que l'Académie entend combattre, ainsi que les termes techniques dans la mesure où la noblesse ne travaille pas. En revanche, elle chasse, raison pour laquelle les seuls termes techniques repris dans le *Dictionnaire* de 1694 ressortissent au domaine de la fauconnerie.

Le courant des Belles Infidèles dominera sans partage la première moitié du siècle, emmené par sa figure de proue Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt, dont le *Tacite* lui ouvrira les portes de l'Académie. Les Belles Infidèles connaîtront leur apogée entre 1640 et 1660 et elles formeront le goût classique. Il convient de se rappeler la superbe formule de Chapelain : le classicisme, c'est « rendre la feinte pareille à la vérité ». <sup>5</sup> D'Ablancourt prolonge au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle le topos de l'image du tableau, déjà en vigueur au siècle précédent et que l'on retrouvera encore au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. <sup>6</sup> Au même moment, Vaugelas traduira son *Quinte-Curce* qui lui demandera 30 années de travail et sera publié après sa mort, en 1653.

Le deuxième jalon chronologique de la période classique est 1660, date de parution de la *Grammaire générale et raisonnée* de Port-Royal. La *Grammaire* prône l'universalité de la pensée et promeut le « génie français ». Elle s'adosse à la méthode cartésienne pour s'éloigner du bon usage célébré par Vaugelas. De même, la *Grammaire* impose le concept de traduisibilité, chaque langue n'étant qu'un avatar phénoménologique d'une pensée universelle. <sup>7</sup> C'est cette vision du monde qui va fonder la conception port-royaliste de la traduction et engendrer le deuxième traité de traduction en langue française : les *Dix règles de la traduction française* d'Antoine Lemaistre (1656). Cette conception sera battue en brèche au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle par Wilhelm Von Humboldt qui considérera que la langue est le résultat d'une activité créatrice. Il s'agit d'un renversement

5. Chapelain, *Lettre sur les vingt-quatre heures*. 1630. Dans *Opusculs critiques*, édité par A.-C. Hunter, Paris, 1936. p. 115.

6. Voir à ce sujet mon article : « La traduction française classique : une galerie de portraits ». *Équivalences*, revue de l'ISTI, vol. 31, no. 1-1, 2004, p. 31-45.

7. On pensera aux universaux du langage, cette catégorie logique du Moyen Âge, qui présuppose l'existence d'une langue mère, une sorte de langue-répertoire prébabélique.

des valeurs de la *Grammaire* de Port-Royal, qui pose que les structures linguistiques recèlent une forme immuable de jugement. Dans une lettre à Schlegel de 1796, Von Humboldt écrira : « Toute traduction m'apparaît tout simplement comme une tentative d'accomplir l'impossible. »

La théorie de traduction janséniste prend le contrepied des Belles Infidèles et plaide en faveur d'une conception littéraliste de la traduction, qui s'explique notamment par le projet religieux qui anime les travaux des solitaires. Mais elle inaugurera aussi un essor inédit de la traductologie caractéristique de la seconde moitié du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, avec entre autres les traités de Gaspard de Tende (1660 - peut-être d'obédience janséniste) et de Pierre-Daniel Huet (1661). Enfin, elle influera sur la pensée des grammairiens du début du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, qui s'inspireront dans leurs traductions du concept de transparence véhiculé par la *Grammaire*, et s'opposeront aux rhétoriciens, adeptes de l'affectivité dans l'expression de la pensée.

Port-Royal et son opposition aux Belles Infidèles préfigurent ce qui sera le troisième jalon chronologique du volume, la querelle d'Homère de 1714. En réalité, la fracture est beaucoup plus complexe et précoce qu'il n'y paraît. Dès 1670, la France est empreinte d'une atmosphère « fin de règne » (même si Louis XIV restera sur le trône jusqu'en 1715) qui voit un étiollement du pouvoir royal ; c'est l'heure des premières grandes défaites militaires de la France et des nombreux deuils qui frappent la famille royale. Progressivement, la contestation voit le jour et elle s'incarnera dans le discours que prononcera Charles Perrault en 1687 devant une Académie française médusée. *Le Siècle de Louis le Grand* fait l'apologie des Modernes et lézarde l'admiration outrancière pour les auteurs gréco-latins qui avait cours jusqu'alors. Les modèles anciens sont déclassés.

Deux éléments me semblent manquer dans le panorama dressé par les auteurs de l'ouvrage. D'abord, le passage de témoin graduel entre les salons, à vocation littéraire, et les cafés, dont les discussions prendront un tour philosophique ; c'est une littérature d'idées qui va peu à peu supplanter une littérature de loisirs. C'est au Procope, le plus ancien café de Paris fondé en 1686 (l'époque est significative), que Diderot et d'Alembert rédigeront l'*Encyclopédie*. Ce sont les journaux,<sup>8</sup> particulièrement en vogue, qui véhiculeront les idées nouvelles. *Le Mercure Galant*, créé en 1672, sera le journal des Modernes qui prendront de la sorte une

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8. La première « gazette » fut fondée par Théophraste Renaudot en 1631 et était l'organe officiel d'information sous Louis XIII.



longueur d'avance sur les Anciens, avant que l'entrée de Fontenelle à l'Académie en 1691 ne brise définitivement les espoirs de ces derniers.

La querelle d'Homère est avant tout une querelle de traductions. Madame Dacier, adepte de la traduction quasi archéologique des Anciens, donnera une version d'Homère en prose (1699), considérant que la langue française ne peut rendre en vers le poète grec. À l'opposé, Houdar de la Motte donnera en 1714 une traduction versifiée d'Homère, réduite à 12 chants au lieu de 24, et prendra résolument le parti des Modernes. La querelle des Anciens et des Modernes est aussi celle du littéralisme et de la traduction libre. En ce sens, les Belles Infidèles annoncent les Modernes en matière de style (ciblisme) et respectent les Anciens en matière de sujet (typologie textuelle).

La victoire des Modernes infléchira le courant de traduction à l'âge classique. Le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle se tournera délibérément vers les auteurs contemporains d'autres pays européens, qu'ils soient anglais, allemands, espagnols ou italiens. C'est l'ouverture à l'étranger, l'abandon d'une France centripète et nombriliste qui comprend la richesse culturelle des autres pays. Les directeurs du volume préfèrent quant à eux la tension identité/altérité à l'expression « traductions ethnocentrées » ou « traductions francocentrées » (p. 1285) pour caractériser le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, alors que c'est bien de cela qu'il s'agit. Le regain d'intérêt pour les cultures étrangères, y compris les cultures orientales, se matérialisera par exemple dans des turqueries comme les *Lettres persanes* de Montesquieu (1721). En traduction, les *Mille et Une Nuits* d'Antoine Galland (1704–1717) sont un remarquable exemple de turquerie dans la veine des Belles Infidèles. Le regard extérieur permet aussi à la France de rayonner dans l'Europe entière : c'est le temps de la francophilie, que l'on retrouvera dans nombre de cours européennes, chez Catherine II de Russie, Frédéric II de Prusse ou encore Eugène de Savoie, pourtant l'ennemi juré de Louis XIV.

Vient alors le quatrième jalon chronologique du volume : l'anglomanie (1720–1740). C'est au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle que l'on traduira en français les grandes œuvres de la littérature anglaise, de Shakespeare (traduit par Le Tourneur) à Swift (*Les Voyages de Gulliver* traduits par l'abbé Desfontaines), en passant par Richardson (*Clarissa Harlowe* traduit par l'abbé Prévost) et bien d'autres. Comme l'atteste la présence de l'auteur de *Manon Lescaut* (qui est un roman typiquement Régence), les prélats continuent d'exercer en littérature et en traduction, mais en dehors du domaine religieux. Pour le dire autrement, le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle est

celui de la « civilisation », au sens où l'on veut rendre la société civile, laïque. Il est viscéralement cosmopolite et antichrétien.

Il est important d'indiquer que si l'on traduit de la littérature *stricto sensu* comme au XVIIe siècle, on s'intéresse également à la littérature scientifique, technique et philosophique. C'est ainsi que Pierre Coste traduira l'*Optique* de Newton en 1720, 16 ans après sa parution en anglais. En philosophie, on traduira Bacon, Hobbes, Locke et Hume.

Si l'anglomanie est un phénomène dominant, il ne faudrait pas en déduire pour autant que les traductions françaises au départ d'autres langues européennes sont rares. On traduira Cervantès, Dante, Goethe. Dans le domaine de la botanique, de la minéralogie et de la chimie, le suédois sera à l'honneur.

Si les langues de départ ont changé (le latin et le grec s'effaçant au profit des langues modernes), l'éventail des sujets s'est aussi élargi pour se tourner vers des textes scientifiques et techniques. L'adaptation intraculturelle diachronique du XVIIe siècle français a cédé le pas à une adaptation interculturelle synchronique. Le style classique demeure, même s'il devient plus algébrique en raison de la typologie des textes de départ (spécialisés) et de la personnalité des traducteurs (une présence de plus en plus importante des grammairiens dans leurs rangs).

Le cinquième jalon chronologique renvoie à la période 1770–1780 qui voit un pic du nombre de traductions publiées. L'anglais demeure en tête, mais les traductions au départ de l'allemand augmentent considérablement. Quelques éléments bibliométriques confortent cette opinion.

Enfin, et de manière inattendue, le sixième et dernier jalon retenu concerne le groupe de Coppet (1789–1815) et renvoie aux intellectuels qui se sont exilés en Suisse au lendemain de la Révolution. Des intellectuels, réunis à Coppet autour de Madame de Staël, animent un groupe de réflexion et de contestation qui prône la liberté et l'individualisme. Ce groupe lutte contre la censure qui frappe des publications qui arrivent en France en provenance de l'étranger ainsi que les traductions possibles de ces œuvres. On y retrouve des esprits brillants, dont Charles de Villers, traducteur de Kant.



Le troisième volume couvre la période qui va du Congrès de Vienne (1815) à la Première Guerre mondiale (1914) et étudie une Europe qui se configure avant de se détruire. La France traversera au XIXe siècle une

période de turbulences due aux guerres de la Révolution et de l'Empire. La quête d'une stabilité institutionnelle sera jalonnée par la monarchie bourgeoise de 1830, les printemps des peuples de 1848 et la guerre franco-allemande de 1870, laquelle jettera les bases de la IIIe République et de l'expansion coloniale.

Le Congrès de Vienne sonne le glas de ce que l'on pourrait appeler l'Europe française, ce qui aura pour corollaire une augmentation du nombre des traductions. Le *Discours sur l'universalité de la langue française* de Rivarol (1784), dans la pure tradition de Port-Royal, a vécu. Les belles-lettres couvriront 58% de la production traduisante entre 1815 et 1830, alors qu'elles stagneront à 36% entre 1870 et 1914. L'augmentation enregistrée au début du siècle ne s'est pas pour autant accompagnée d'une réflexion théorique ; la France ne possède pas à l'époque de théoriciens comme Wilhelm Von Humboldt ou Friedrich Schleiermacher pour l'Allemagne. A mon estime, cette constatation n'est pas étrangère au fait que la traductographie assiste entre le XVIIIe et le XIXe siècle à un passage de témoin entre grammairiens (Beauzée, Batteux ou Du Marsais) et écrivains de premier plan (Chateaubriand, Nerval, Baudelaire, Mallarmé ou Leconte de Lisle). En réalité, la traductologie entrera au XIXe siècle dans une profonde léthargie dont elle ne sortira qu'après la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

Si la théorie de la traduction est donc absente des préoccupations de l'époque, le plagiat sera monnaie courante dans la première moitié du siècle. Il sonnera la fin de la théorie de l'imitation, au sens d'une image épurée, corrigée, de la nature, nourrie de l'inspiration des Anciens. L'imitation ne conserve qu'une « manière », mais modifie le déroulement de l'action, la ventilation des parties et les images. La rupture radicale avec les Belles Infidèles incline à la traduction littérale et à la fidélité rigoureuse à l'original ; le traducteur se doit de refléter à la fois son « étrangeté » et son « étrangeté ».

C'est la littérature anglaise qui sera particulièrement à l'honneur pendant la première moitié du XIXe siècle. Cette anglomanie, déjà présente au siècle précédent, va faire du français une langue relais qui autorisera la diffusion de la littérature anglaise dans les autres langues européennes. Shakespeare et Byron doivent leur succès dans nombre de pays européens grâce aux traductions qui y sont faites au départ de la version française. Ce statut de langue relais favorisera également l'enseignement des langues vivantes en France. Autour de 1830, les belles-lettres auront la prééminence,

particulièrement le genre romanesque. Les langues de prédilection seront, dans l'ordre, l'anglais, le latin et l'allemand. Le lent déclin des lettres classiques se fera au profit des littératures contemporaines.

Le XIXe siècle sera avant tout celui de la comparaison : culturelle par le biais des récits de voyage très en vogue, linguistique par la parution de dictionnaires et de grammaires<sup>9</sup> qui participeront de l'éclosion de la grande linguistique comparée de la seconde moitié du siècle. Les revues et les périodiques assureront la diffusion des nouvelles connaissances ; la *Revue des Deux Mondes*, fondée en 1829 et dont le titre est évocateur et programmatique, est sans doute la plus ancienne revue européenne. Son premier numéro s'ouvrait sur une citation de Pope reproduite en anglais et en français.<sup>10</sup>

C'est dans ce contexte qu'il convient d'appréhender la découverte de la pierre de Rosette en 1799 par les soldats de Napoléon lors de la campagne d'Égypte. Les études orientalistes occupent à la fin du XVIIIe siècle et au début du XIXe une place importante en France ; il suffit de songer à la création par la Convention de l'Ecole des Langues orientales vivantes en 1795. Il est regrettable que les auteurs ne contextualisent pas davantage cette création, dont l'enjeu fondamental est en réalité l'instruction publique et la rupture avec l'ancienne Ecole des Enfants de langues fondée par Colbert en 1669.<sup>11</sup>

Il y a là à mon sens un rebond du mouvement des turqueries, typique de l'atmosphère fin de règne que l'on retrouve à partir de 1680 sous Louis XIV. Ce mouvement littéraire se doublera d'une appréhension scientifique de l'Orient *lato sensu* (comprenant le monde musulman et la Chine) qui viendra se greffer sur l'humanisme de la Renaissance par la création de plusieurs chaires au Collège de France. On pensera à la chaire d'archéologie égyptienne confiée en 1831 à Champollion. Cet orientalisme savant favorisera la maîtrise progressive du sanskrit et, dans la foulée, la traduction de textes orientaux anciens. En 1810 déjà, Silvestre de Sacy encourage les traductions dans un discours qu'il prononce à l'Institut. Cela est tout

9. Le lexique montre bien l'intérêt pour les langues, notamment orientales, qui caractérise le XIXe siècle dès ses débuts. Selon le *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* d'Alain Rey, le mot « orientaliste » date de 1799, « sinologue » de 1814 et « indianisme » de 1832.

10. *Party is a madness of many, for the gain of a few.* « L'esprit de parti est une folie de beaucoup d'hommes au profit de quelques-uns ».

11. Voir Christian Balliu, *Les traducteurs transparents : La traduction en France à l'époque classique*. Les Editions du Hazard, 2002.

aussi vrai du grec ancien ; Littré traduira en français entre 1839 et 1861 les Œuvres complètes d'Hippocrate, ce qui lui ouvrira les portes de l'Académie française.<sup>12</sup> On peut dire que les langues deviennent « historiques » au sens où l'histoire revêt un appareil linguistique.

Pour ce qui est des langues modernes, la traduction littéraire est importante en France dans la première partie du siècle, et certainement les romans entre 1816 et 1839 ; on en publie en moyenne plus de 50 par an. Les succès de vente sont incontestablement Daniel Defoe et Walter Scott qui connaîtront une dizaine d'éditions de 20 à 30000 exemplaires chacune. La Restauration (1814–1830) verra la mode des cabinets de lecture (environ 500 rien qu'à Paris), ce qui lancera nombre de nouveaux éditeurs sur le marché, avant la crise de l'édition qui frappera la capitale dans les années 1830.

Louis Hachette importera Dickens en France, ce qui lancera ce que l'on pourrait appeler un « capitalisme d'édition ». Les traductions de Dickens seront protégées par le droit d'auteur et Hachette oeuvrera à la perpétuation de ce droit à partir de 1855. C'est toujours lui qui lancera les traductions juxtalinéaires à visée pédagogique, notamment pour la littérature classique, au milieu du siècle. J'aurais pour ma part indiqué ici que cette approche textuelle éminemment comparative est en opposition totale avec le classicisme dix-septémiste et les Belles Infidèles dont le tout-au-lecteur est la marque de fabrique. Il s'agit en réalité d'un avatar de la tradition jésuite d'enseignement des langues qui fera florès dans les éditions universitaires d'Europe centrale et orientale. C'est dans la veine des juxtalinéaires (parfois même interlinéaires) qu'il convient de lire les traductions archéologiques d'un Leconte de Lisle, qui sont un modèle de décentrement.

Le théâtre n'est pas en reste. Les années 1827–1830 marqueront la disqualification de l'imitation (c'est-à-dire de l'adaptation) dans le domaine théâtral. Le public, de plus en plus érudit, souhaite approcher autant que possible l'authenticité de l'œuvre. Vigny traduit *Roméo et Juliette* en 1828 et *Othello* en 1829. François-Victor Hugo traduit en prose les œuvres complètes de Shakespeare entre 1858 et 1865, et s'emploie à rompre à tout prix avec la version dix-huitémiste de Le Tourneur (1776–1783) qui fit pourtant autorité<sup>13</sup> jusqu'au milieu du XIXe siècle. Hugo en-

12. Emile Littré était médecin de formation et ce n'est pas son œuvre de lexicographe qui lui permet d'entrer sous la Coupole.

13. Le *Shakespeare* de Le Tourneur sera traduit en espagnol, en italien, et en portugais.

tend rester fidèle à l'esthétique élisabéthaine au moyen du romantisme. Chateaubriand rendra le *Paradis perdu* de Milton en 1836 dans une version très servile, comme il le revendique lui-même dans les *Remarques* qui précèdent sa traduction. Qu'il me soit permis d'en citer deux extraits particulièrement éclairants :

Si je n'avais voulu donner qu'une traduction *élégante* du *Paradis perdu*, on m'accordera peut-être assez de connaissance de l'art pour qu'il ne m'eût pas été impossible d'atteindre la hauteur d'une traduction de cette nature ; mais c'est une traduction littérale dans toute la force du terme que j'ai entreprise, une traduction qu'un enfant et un poète pourront suivre sur le texte, ligne à ligne, mot à mot, comme un dictionnaire ouvert sous leur yeux . . .<sup>14</sup>

Me serait-il permis d'espérer que, si mon essai n'est pas trop malheureux, il pourra amener quelque jour une révolution dans la manière de traduire ? Au temps d'Ablancourt les traductions s'appelaient de belles infidèles ; depuis ce temps-là on a vu beaucoup d'infidèles qui n'étaient pas toujours belles : on en viendra peut-être à trouver que la fidélité, même quand la beauté lui manque, a son prix.<sup>15</sup>

Baudelaire — angliciste médiocre — traduit à partir de 1848 et pendant une quinzaine d'années les contes d'Edgar Allan Poe de manière littérale, mais en fait de ce côté-ci de l'Atlantique un auteur de premier plan. La poésie d'Edgar Allan Poe sera quant à elle traduite par Mallarmé (1888). La fin du siècle verra la victoire du « calque à la vitre »<sup>16</sup> pour reprendre l'expression de Chateaubriand.

Cette propension au littéralisme est à placer précisément dans le sillage du mouvement comparatiste qui caractérise la grande linguistique, notamment allemande, de la seconde moitié du siècle, mais qui plonge déjà ses racines dans un enseignement des langues étrangères philologique à outrance, où la langue l'emporte en quelque sorte sur le discours. J'aurais pour ma part insisté sur ce point ; pour citer un exemple, le grand Silvestre de Sacy adoptait dans son enseignement de l'arabe une démarche exclusivement théorique, délaissant une pratique qu'il ne possédait pas, n'étant jamais allé en Orient. Il n'enseignait que l'arabe littéral, livresque : l'écrit, pétrifié, plutôt que l'oral, fugace mais vivace.

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14. John Milton, *Le Paradis perdu*. Traduction par François-René de Chateaubriand, Renault et Cie, 1861. *Remarques*, p. ii.

15. *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

16. *Ibid.*, p. iv.

Dans le domaine allemand, on remarquera que le théâtre germanophone antérieur au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle est absent de la production traduisante française, à l'heureuse exception de Goethe et de Schiller.

La fin du siècle assistera à un engouement pour la littérature russe. Le *Roman russe* de Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé paraît en 1886. Deux ans plus tôt, *Guerre et Paix* de Tolstoï et *Le Crime et le châtiment* de Dostoïevski étaient publiés à Paris. La première traduction est l'œuvre d'une Russe anonyme et la seconde celle de Victor Derély, laquelle confère la célébrité à Dostoïevski.

Le succès de l'activité traduisante s'accompagnera d'une professionnalisation de la profession. La traduction devient un enjeu économique et certains traducteurs obtiennent un statut juridique et administratif : ce sont les traducteurs fonctionnaires qui travaillent dans la diplomatie.<sup>17</sup> Outre ceux-ci, on assistera à l'apparition de traducteurs prestataires dans le secteur tertiaire et de traducteurs dans le monde de l'édition.

En traduction scientifique, quoi d'étonnant à ce que le public, en quête d'érudition, attende une valeur ajoutée, un supplément d'âme par rapport à l'original, sous la forme d'un appareil critique. Dès lors, les traducteurs seront le plus souvent des spécialistes du domaine traduit. Il convient d'y voir l'influence du positivisme d'Auguste Comte. Si le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle était celui du livre, le XIX<sup>e</sup> sera celui des journaux qui autoriseront la diffusion et la vulgarisation des connaissances. Même si tout un pan de l'activité scientifique ne fera pas l'objet de traductions, comme c'est le cas de la psychanalyse de Freud ou de la théorie de la relativité restreinte d'Einstein.

A la fin du siècle, malgré la crise de la librairie qui fera baisser la proportion de littérature étrangère au sein de l'édition, l'eupéanisation de la vie littéraire créera un appel d'air : les traductions de Zola à l'étranger lui conféreront une notoriété internationale comparable au succès des traductions françaises de Tolstoï, Ibsen ou Dostoïevski.



Pour conclure, on peut dire que les trois tomes de l'*Histoire des traductions en langue française* rassemblent une somme documentaire remarquable, adossée à une bibliographie pertinente et assez complète. Ils parviennent à

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17. Le Ministère des Affaires étrangères possède déjà un service de traduction avant la Révolution et soutiendra une politique linguistique au service de l'unité nationale. Il n'y a pas encore de cloisonnement entre traduction et interprétariat.

donner une cohérence référentielle à l'ensemble de la période étudiée qui s'étend sur cinq siècles. L'écriture est fluide et claire. Le texte est agrémenté de plusieurs notices biographiques et de traductions présentées de manière synoptique. On regrettera malheureusement l'absence d'une véritable analyse des traductions à la manière d'un Georges Mounin,<sup>18</sup> qui aurait pu déboucher sur une véritable recherche traductologique. Un panorama bibliométrique plus fouillé aurait aussi été le bienvenu. Cependant, cette somme doit sans conteste être recommandée à tout amoureux de l'histoire de la traduction, mais aussi à l'honnête homme tout simplement.

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18. Voir Georges Mounin, *Les Belles Infidèles*, Lille, Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1994.



## Quand le mort saisit le vif : cinq siècles de Faust

André Dabezies, *Des rêves au réel. Cinq siècles de Faust. Littérature, idéologie et mythe*. Paris : Honoré Champion (« Bibliothèque de littérature générale et comparée », 139), 2015. Pp. 607. ISBN : 9782745328809.

Claude Paul, *Les Métamorphoses du diable. Méphistophélès dans les œuvres faustiennes de Goethe, Lenau, Delacroix et Berlioz*. Paris : Honoré Champion (« Bibliothèque de littérature générale et comparée », 135), 2015. Pp. 306. ISBN : 9782745328151.

« Le personnage de *Faust* et celui de son affreux compère ont droit à toutes les réincarnations », notait Paul Valéry en tête des ébauches d'un *Faust* très personnel — « *Mon Faust* » —, publié en 1945, commencé vers 1940, mais médité déjà depuis les années 1930. « L'acte du génie » de Goethe de les avoir cueilli « à l'état fantoche dans la légende ou à la foire » et d'avoir porté Méphistophélès et Faust, « comme par l'effet de sa température propre », « au plus haut point d'existence poétique », semblait, pour Valéry, « devoir interdire à jamais à tout autre entrepreneur de fictions de les ressaisir par leurs noms et de les contraindre à se mouvoir et à se manifester dans de nouvelles combinaisons d'événements et de paroles ».

Rien, toutefois, aux yeux du poète, ne laissait mieux juger la « puissance du créateur » que « l'infidélité » ou « l'insoumission » de sa création : « Plus il l'a faite vivante, plus il l'a faite libre » ! Et de poursuivre : « le créateur de ces deux-ci, *Faust* et l'*Autre*, les a engendrés tels qu'ils devinssent après lui des instruments de l'esprit universel », au point de déborder de « ce qu'ils furent dans son œuvre ». Pourvus d'« emplois » — « bien mieux que des rôles » —, « il les a voués à l'expression de certains extrêmes de l'humain et de l'inhumain ; et, par-là, déliés de toute aventure particulière ». Valéry pouvait donc « oser » en user à son tour et, puisque tant de choses avaient changé « dans ce monde, depuis cent ans », il « pouvait se laisser séduire à l'idée de plonger dans [son] espace, si différent de celui des premiers lustres du XIXe siècle, les deux fameux protagonistes du *Faust* de Goethe ».<sup>1</sup>

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1. Paul Valéry, *Mon Faust*, Paris, Gallimard (« Folio Essais »), 2007, pp. 7–8.

## HYBRIDITÉS

Cet avertissement « Au lecteur de bonne foi mais de mauvaise volonté » résume assez la fortune ininterrompue d'un personnage historique, tiré vers la *légende*, hissé au rang d'un *thème*, d'un *motif* ou d'un *type*, avant d'incarner un *mythe*, moderne et singulièrement vivace dans le patrimoine littéraire européen.<sup>2</sup> Construit au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, dans le creuset de données factuelles éparses et d'une première manifestation littéraire — l'*Historia von Johann Fausten* (1587) —, le récit de Faust a été l'objet, en un peu plus de cinq siècles, d'actualisations parfois antinomiques, sans d'emblée faire grand cas de la prétendue frontière qui tiendrait artificiellement les manifestations de la culture populaire à l'écart des classiques, reçus comme autant d'illustrations d'un génie individuel ou national. Épinglé par Marlowe dès 1590 (*The Tragicall History of D. Faustus*, 1604), son expansion fut en effet surtout intimement liée, dès le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, au courant des *Volksbücher* et, à travers l'Europe, à la vogue du théâtre de marionnettes. C'est à l'intuition de Lessing (*Faust-Fragmente*, 1759 ; « Scénario de Berlin », 1786) cependant que le personnage doit d'être devenu l'incarnation d'un esprit pur et d'une raison indépendante, soucieuse de dépasser les limites de la finitude humaine, conformément aux principes de l'*Aufklärung*. L'écrivain marquait ainsi positivement à travers Faust l'échec de Méphistophélès : « Vous n'avez pas triomphé de l'humanité et de la science », profère l'Ange contre le démon, avant de poursuivre, « Dieu n'a pas doué l'homme de cet instinct noble entre tous pour faire son malheur éternel »<sup>3</sup> !

Faust s'est vu ensuite, avec plus ou moins de bonheur, embarqué par les aspirations du *Sturm und Drang* et les anti-Lumières romantiques. Habité par deux âmes aux aspirations contradictoires, l'une le tirant vers le monde, l'autre vers les « hautes demeures de nos aïeux » (Goethe,

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2. Ernest Faligan, *Histoire de la légende Faust*, Paris, Hachette, 1887 ; Charles Dédéyan, *Le thème de Faust dans la littérature européenne*, Paris, Lettres modernes, 1954–1967, 6 vol. ; André Dabezies, *Visages de Faust au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle : Littérature, idéologie et mythe*, Paris, PUF, 1967 et, du même, *Le mythe de Faust*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1973 ; Élisabeth Brisson, *Faust. Biographie d'un mythe*, Paris, Ellipses, 2013 ; Marino Freschi dir., *La storia di Faust nelle letterature europee*, Napoli, CUEN, 2000. On se reportera également à la vaste bibliographie présentée dans la synthèse d'André Dabezies (2015), *op. cit.*

3. « Ihr habt nich über Menschheit und Wissenschaft gesiegt ! Die Gottheit hat dem Menschen nicht den edelsten der Triebe gegeben um ihn ewig unglücklich zu machen. », cité par André Dabezies (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 95.

vv. 1112–17), il a endossé le titanisme que lui conféra le peintre Friedrich Müller (1749–1825), avant de puiser, à rebours, au fiel mélancolique du poète autrichien Nikolaus Lenau, puis d’insuffler à Berlioz la musique d’une *Damnation* mal reçue en France (1846), et de guider la main de Delacroix pour une série de lithographies méconnues, longtemps ravalées, par leur éditeur et commanditaire, au rang de féales illustrations (1828). Il a porté encore la biographie fictive du musicien Adrian Leverkühn dans le *Doktor Faustus* de Thomas Mann (1943–1947), après s’être révélé dans les clairs obscurs du cinéma expressionniste de Friedrich Murnau (1926) et avoir incarné, grâce au livret de Gertrude Stein, l’un des rôles phares du théâtre d’avant-garde américain (*Dr. Faust lights the lights*, 1938).

Il a marché, enfin, avec ses « rivaux », dans la pièce du dramaturge belge Albert Lepage, *Faust et Don Juan* (1960), quelques décennies après le film éponyme de Marcel L’Herbier (1922). Mais, ces apparentements sont assurément plus anciens puisque le film repose sur un scénario tiré des œuvres de Christian Dietrich Grabbe (1828) et de Nikolaus Lenau, auteur non seulement d’un *Faust*, mais d’un *Don Juan* également. Lessing, déjà, projetait un drame bourgeois géminant les personnages. Faust hante le *Don Juan* de Tolstoï (1860).<sup>4</sup> *La comédie de la mort* de Théophile Gautier (1838) dressa un bilan commun de leur existence et ils devinrent, chez Michel de Ghelderode, au sein d’œuvres dissociées toutefois, les incarnations parallèles d’une même quête de l’identité<sup>5</sup>. . . Si la connivence avec le Malin situe le mythe faustien dans la longue tradition des tragédies dites « à pacte », tel *Le miracle de Théophile* (XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle), il consacre surtout le lent déplacement de la culpabilité du héros et témoigne d’une originalité et d’une richesse qui sont à la source de sa constante hybridation, voire d’un *tressage* presque systématique avec la mythologie d’avatars plus ou moins attendus. Il se propage volontiers « sous des formes nouvelles » et diffuse, « dans le terreau littéraire, des sortes de rhizomes »<sup>6</sup> : on le lit transposé dans le Peer Gynt d’Ibsen ou le Peter

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4. Sophie Coudray, « Une histoire littéraire de Faust, des origines du mythe à nos jours », *Acta fabula*, février 2017, vol. 18, n° 2, <http://www.fabula.org/acta/document10106.php>.

5. *Don Juan : Drama-farce pour le music-hall* (1926–1928) ; *Don Juan : Les amants chimériques* (1937) ; *La mort du Docteur Faust, tragédie pour le music-hall* (1926).

6. Michel Brix, « Quoi de neuf ? Faust ! », *Acta fabula*, août-septembre 2016, vol. 17, n° 4, <http://www.fabula.org/acta/document9828.php>.

Schlemil de Chamisso, mais il est aussi mâtiné de Don Juan, tout autant de Prométhée, d'Édipe, de don Quichotte, de Léviathan, ou de Job . . .

Encore ne sont-ce là que quelques lignes de crête dans un paysage singulièrement retors à toute description exhaustive. Depuis l'*Urfaust* et les maturations successives du récit de Goethe, qui demeurent les hypotextes qui sous-tendent la plupart des « re-créations », des plus serviles aux fantaisies les plus improbables, l'image de Faust s'est diffractée, selon les médias, pour épouser l'extraordinaire déclinaison des formats et l'éclectisme des supports, des genres, des registres . . . Les spectacles chorégraphiques ont su, comme les « opéras électriques » d'Olivier Cadiot et Rodolphe Burger (2010),<sup>7</sup> tirer parti d'une figure que le manga s'est lui-même appropriée : dans son *Neofaust*, paru en 1988, Ozamu Tezuka ancrerait l'impuissance rédhitoire d'un chercheur en génie génétique et son pacte conclu avec le Malin, au cœur des manifestations étudiantes qui agiterent le Japon au début des années 1970. Il n'est pas jusqu'au *teen-age movie* qui n'ait fait sienne une part des représentations de Faust (*I was a Teenage Faust*, Tom Eberhardt réal., 2002) . . .

Chaque époque a vu dans le héros une manière d'étendard, la manifestation d'une mentalité collective, le symbole de ses tourments, de ses aspirations profondes, de ses combats aussi. Dans la poche ou la besace du soldat, *Faust* a même, littéralement, passé l'épreuve des tranchées de la première guerre mondiale. Le récit de Goethe est devenu le bréviaire du combattant allemand qui, plongé dans la boue et « dans la grisaille héroïque de chaque jour », découvrait un « itinéraire *faustien* à sa mesure », au point que Faust, sorti des classes et du patrimoine littéraire national, fut en passe de devenir « le héros mythique d'un peuple de combattants ».<sup>8</sup> Le mythe ne pouvait guères échapper à l'emprise des idéologies et, si la carrière proprement politique de Faust se cantonne à quelques épigones, à l'instar de la pièce de Vaclav Havel, intitulée *Tentation* (1986), qui dénonce « l'enfermement des esprits » dans les « régimes populaires »,<sup>9</sup> son thème a maintes fois servi l'approche critique de l'actualité et a interrogé les (mal)façons d'écrire l'Histoire.

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7. Cette adaptation du livret de Gertrude Stein en opéra rock a été signalée par Julia Peslier, « 'Leurs Faust', une revue (non exhaustive) de l'actualité faustienne au théâtre, à l'opéra et dans nos bibliothèques », *Reviviscences de Faust*, 2011, vol. 43, pp. 7–9 et Sophie Coudray, *op. cit.*

8. André Dabezies (2015), pp. 268–69.

9. *Id.*, p. 527.

Tisser une trame cohérente à travers cinq siècles de productions artistiques, parfois dans un terreau extra-européen, pour disséquer l'historicité et les variations du mythe tient de la gageure. C'est pourtant l'un des mérites évidents de l'ouvrage d'André Dabezies — *Des rêves au réel. Cinq siècles de Faust. Littérature, idéologie et mythe* — qui, de façon chronologique et forcément brève, reprend les contextes historiques, sociologiques et « (inter)culturels » qui ont pétri le mythe afin de l'inscrire, à chaque reprise, au cœur d'une actualité.<sup>10</sup>

### MYTHE ET MÉTHODE

Une telle pérennité et une si féconde hybridité rendent vaine toute tentative de dénombrement exhaustif, lui-même par ailleurs dépourvu de vertu spécifique. Elles interrogent en revanche les circonvolutions qu'ont empruntées les disciplines littéraires dans leur empressement à s'emparer continûment de mythes et à les envisager en outrepassant les frontières temporelles, culturelles et génériques. La profusion des œuvres trouve en effet un pendant dans la pléthore d'études qui, en tâchant d'explicitier la similitude ou les divergences profondes entre des motifs récurrents, ont rendu indéniablement leur analyse symptomatique d'une quête de légitimité. Faust — comme Don Juan, Antigone, Prométhée, Électre ou Phèdre — appartient, en effet, à cette galerie d'*illustres* qui ont accompagné les tâtonnements méthodologiques de la *thématologie* ou de la *Stoffgeschichte*, selon son appellation germanique, devenue aujourd'hui désuète. À travers eux, les études de thèmes ont arrêté leurs ambitions et leur méthode. Dans les marges d'une *littérature comparée* qui, tant par « le mot » que dans « la chose », a suscité, au long du XXe siècle, la méfiance, le mépris ou la condescendance, elles ont cherché leur raison d'être et ont tenté de justifier leur bienfondé.

Les plaidoyers successifs de Raymond Trousson<sup>11</sup> en faveur de la thématologie ou de la mythocritique ont rappelé, à l'envi, les jugements à l'emporte-pièce dont pâtirent les études de thèmes, de Benedetto Croce

10. *Id.*, p. 7.

11. Cf. Raymond Trousson, « Plaidoyer pour la *Stoffgeschichte* », *Revue de littérature comparée*, 1964, vol. XXXVIII, n°1, pp. 101–14 ; *Le thème de Prométhée dans la littérature européenne*, Genève, Droz, 2001 [1964] ; *Un problème de littérature comparée : les études de thèmes : Essai de méthodologie*, Paris, Lettres modernes, 1965 ; « Les thèmes », dans *Problèmes et méthodes de l'histoire littéraire*, Paris, 1974, pp. 28–35 ; *Thèmes et mythes : Questions de méthode*, Bruxelles, Édition de l'Université de Bruxelles (« Arguments et documents »), 1981.

(1904), Paul Hazard (1914) et Fernand Baldensperger (1921) à René Wellek et Austin Warren (1949), Étiemble (1963) ou Alexandre Cioranescu (1964)<sup>12</sup> : « *Stoffgeschichte* is the least literary history of histories ». Frappée de discrédit, cette branche des études littéraires semblait, au début du XXe siècle, n'avoir que peu d'avenir devant elle : « Moins soucieuse par nature de mettre en valeur et de définir la singularité d'une création que de remonter à des formes simples », confiait Fernand Baldensperger, « cette variété de la littérature comparée était sans doute vouée à quelque défaveur alors que s'affirmaient de nouveau, dans l'esthétique, les droits de l'individualité expressive ».<sup>13</sup>

C'était sans compter l'extraordinaire vitalité des études de thèmes et leur habileté à étudier conjointement la voix de l'individu et son ancrage contextuel. C'était déclarer « mort-née » une discipline qui allait tirer parti d'une « conception assouplie » du comparatisme (comparaison, confluence, influence, relation de fait) et élargir son champ d'investigation en démontrant l'intérêt que revêtent des héros, certes parfois moins glorieux que Faust ou Don Juan, mais dont les avatars se révèlent tout aussi féconds. Refusant à l'avenir de sacrifier aux seuls dénombrements et de dresser le panthéon d'écrivains ou de figures, mythologiques (Narcisse, Iphigénie, Daphné, . . . ) ou historiques (Socrate, Jeanne d'Arc, Napoléon, . . . ), les thématologues resserrèrent leurs rangs autour d'une pratique quasi archéologique qui visait à restituer la continuité du mythe et la foule d'intermédiaires et de *minores* qui l'inscrivaient dans leurs pratiques de la littérature. En s'emparant des études de réception, il s'agissait désormais d'éclairer la dimension proprement ontologique du recours rhapsodique aux mythes.

[ . . . ] l'homme vit de ses mythes où il se retrouve et se poursuit. Pourquoi éprouve-t-il le besoin d'inventorier sans cesse ces ancestrales légendes ?

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12. Benedetto Croce dans un compte rendu de Charles Ricci, *Sophonisbe dans la tragédie classique italienne et française*, paru dans *La critica*, 1904, vol. 2, p. 486 ; Paul Hazard, « Les travaux récents en littérature comparée », *Revue universitaire*, vol. XXIII, 1914, p. 220 ; Fernand Baldensperger, « Littérature comparée : le mot et la chose », *Revue de littérature comparée*, 1921, vol. 1 ; Philippe Van Tieghem, *La littérature comparée*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1931 ; René Wellek, Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1949, René Étiemble, *Comparaison n'est pas raison : La crise de la littérature comparée*, Paris, Gallimard, 1963 ; Alexandre Cioranescu, *Principias de literatura comparada*, La Laguna, 1964, cités par Raymond Trousson, *Le thème de Prométhée dans la littérature européenne*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–10.

13. Fernand Baldensperger, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

C'est qu'étudier leur histoire, se pencher sur le secret de leurs mutations infinies, c'est aussi apprendre à connaître sa propre odyssée dans ce qu'elle a de plus élevé et souvent de plus tragique. [...] En tout homme sommeillent ou s'agitent un Oreste et un Faust, un Don Juan et un Saül ; nos mythes et nos thèmes légendaires sont notre polyvalence, ils sont les exposants de l'humanité, les formes idéales du destin tragique, de la condition humaine. [...] les héros [sont] les pôles de notre être et de notre culture, parce qu'ils incarnent ce qu'il y a en l'homme d'éternel et d'indéfiniment transmissible, la mesure de son humanité, sa grandeur et sa faiblesse, ses combats contre lui-même et les dieux.<sup>14</sup>

Cette dimension « herméneutique » du mythe se retrouve tant dans les instrumentalisations psychanalytiques que philosophiques. Chez Jung, Faust devint l'incarnation d'un cas clinique, pathologique, celui de l'homme déchiré entre son *moi* et ses instincts, tandis que dans les opuscules littéraires de Søren Kierkegaard (*Ou bien... ou bien*, 1843), Don Juan et Faust incarnaient les figures emblématiques du stade esthétique de la *Lebensphilosophie*. Tous deux vivent dans l'instant, l'un pour la jouissance et dans le crime de la chair, l'autre dans le doute et le crime de l'esprit. Tous deux, également déliés de liens et de devoirs, « ne touchent au cercle de la vie que par une tangente », <sup>15</sup> tous deux, enfin, incarnent le démoniaque « en tant que sensualité » ou, chez Goethe du moins et avant la laïcisation du thème, « en tant que principe exclu par l'esprit chrétien ». <sup>16</sup> Un thème littéraire, soulignait encore Raymond Trousson, est présent ailleurs que dans les œuvres organisées qui lui sont consacrées, en particulier lorsqu'il s'agit, non d'un thème de situation, mais d'un thème de héros » <sup>17</sup> :

En réalité, il affleure dans l'histoire culturelle, héritage parfois presque inconscient d'une longue tradition que l'homme porte en lui, produit d'une culture apprise, mais aussi d'une culture oubliée, c'est-à-dire incorporée à l'intimité de son être.<sup>18</sup>

D'où la nécessité afin de comprendre ses résurgences, de ne pas seulement retenir les œuvres (et, *a fortiori*, les œuvres majeures) et de ne pas

14. Raymond Trousson, *Thèmes et mythes : Questions de méthode*, op. cit., pp. 8–9.

15. Frithjof Brandt, « Introduction » à Søren Kierkegaard, *Ou bien... ou bien...*, Paris, Gallimard, 1999, p. XIII.

16. Søren Kierkegaard, *id.*, p. 72.

17. Raymond Trousson, *Le thème de Prométhée dans la littérature européenne*, op. cit., p. 11.

18. *Ibid.*

concevoir ces études comme un catalogue « de monographies » mais bien d'« englober cette poussière de textes qui assurent la continuité du thème à une tout autre profondeur », d'« inscrire le thème dans la continuité de son devenir historique, d'établir les connexions souterraines entre ses manifestations les plus spectaculaires »<sup>19</sup> et d'en tirer les enseignements qui porteront un éclairage nouveau à l'histoire littéraire, à celle du goût, des idées ou de la culture. Le mythe, rappelle André Dabezies relisant Régis Boyer,<sup>20</sup> est d'abord « une image magnétique », « icono-motrice », dans laquelle « cristallise 'une vision du monde', qui en fait une histoire exemplaire, un récit fondamental pour un groupe humain ».

Si Faust a pris valeur de « mythe », c'est parce qu'il propose, parmi bien d'autres, une image symbolique de l'homme impliqué dans un drame bien terrestre : toujours tiraillé entre ses ambitions ou ses rêves et la reconnaissance du réel, entre sa liberté fragile et le face-à-face avec le mal, avec les autres ou avec lui-même.<sup>21</sup>

Plus qu'une fonction d'explicitation de l'inexplicable, le mythe endosse alors, par l'essence du langage, un caractère performatif. Celui-ci lui fait jouer le rôle d'un « modèle symbolique » qui « intègre [toute] attitude personnelle à une admiration (ou une répulsion) commune ». Mieux vaut dès lors « examiner ces 'fabulations' concrètes, poétiques ou sociologiques, dans la fécondité de leurs répétitions », dans la mesure où « toutes les versions successives d'un mythe participent à sa signification globale, quoique inégalement ». Derrière les multiples visions de Faust, peut-on ainsi voir défiler une « histoire de l'humanité ».<sup>22</sup> Mesurer l'écart entre ces manifestations en les resituant face à une « constellation mentale commune », offre à la thématologie une perspective, propice à l'interdisciplinarité, à partir de laquelle envisager l'une des fonctions majeures de l'histoire littéraire.<sup>23</sup> Si depuis la fin des années 1960 et les travaux d'Elisabeth Frenzel, de Claude Pichois, d'André-Michel Rousseau,

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19. *Id.*, pp. 11–12, 14–15.

20. Régis Boyer, « Existe-t-il un mythe qui ne soit pas littéraire ? », dans *Mythes et littérature*, Pierre Brunel éd., P.U. Sorbonne, 1994–1995, pp. 153–65, cité par André Dabezies (2015), p. 8.

21. *Id.*, pp. 8, 12.

22. *Id.*, pp. 9, 12.

23. « Thematology offers one of the perspectives from which the history of literature should be viewed » (Johannes C. Brandt-Corstius, *Introduction to the Comparative Study of Literature*, New York, Random House, 1968, pp. 115–27).



d'Ulrich Weisstein ou d'Harry Levin,<sup>24</sup> la thématologie a bien été réhabilitée, il n'y a rien d'étonnant cependant à ce que, régulièrement, les chercheurs réinterrogent ses fondations, ses développements et les concrétisations esthétiques, idéologiques ou discursives de mythes, au sein desquels Faust continue de jouir d'une présence particulière. Rien d'étonnant non plus à ce que le renouveau des études littéraires, réceptives aux apports de la narratologie postclassique, de la traductologie, de la sociologie de la littérature ou des études intermédiaires, choisissent, comme y invite, à son échelle, Claude Paul, de décentrer leurs questionnements pour mettre en avant d'autres effets de prisme qu'offre le mythe. Soit, en se tournant vers d'autres acteurs ou créatures longtemps restés dans l'ombre ou la dépendance d'un type, d'un héros, soit en réinterrogeant le mythe *par la bande*, en mettant l'accent sur la spécificité de dialogues inter- ou transmédiaires, souvent négligés au cœur de cette « création continue qui accompagne le bourgeonnement d'un mythe vivant ». Pourquoi, dès lors, n'accorderait-on pas la préférence à Méphistophélès, plutôt qu'à Faust, en reliant ses incarnations poétiques, musicales et picturales ? Rien de surprenant, enfin, à ce que la transformation du regard porté sur les textes et une « nouvelle compréhension de l'homme moderne » induisent, comme le confesse André Dabezies, la réouverture d'un dossier qui a épousé, dans son cas, le déroulement d'une carrière et la maturation d'une critique personnelle.<sup>25</sup>

#### LITTÉRATURES NATIONALES, IDENTITÉ ET MÉMOIRE

Les déclinaisons du mythe, au-delà de sa dimension existentielle, questionnent d'autres formes d'identité et de mémoires, explicites ou intériorisées, qui ont accompagné l'avènement des littératures « nationales ». Lessing avait doté le personnage d'un charisme suffisant, à ses yeux, pour

24. Elisabeth Frenzel, *Stoff- und Motivgeschichte*, Berlin, E. Schmidt Verlag, 1966 et *Stoffe der Weltliteratur*, Stuttgart, Kröner, 1976, *Motive der Weltliteratur*, Stuttgart, Kröner, 1976 ; Claude Pichois et André-Michel Rousseau, *La littérature comparée*, Paris, A. Colin, 1967 ; Ulrich Weisstein, *Einführung in die Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft*, Stuttgart, 1968, Harry Levin, « Thematics and Criticism », dans *Essays in Literary Theory, Interpretation and History*, New Haven and London, 1968.

25. André Dabezies (2015), pp. 12–13. Aux ouvrages d'André Dabezies déjà répertoriés ainsi qu'au titre qui fait l'objet du présent compte rendu, l'on ajoutera notamment : André Dabezies, Hans Henning, Pierre Spriet & al., *Faust*, Paris, Albin Michel (« Cahiers de l'hermétisme »), 1977 ; Françoise Mies, *Faust ou l'autre en question : Dieu, la femme, le mal : Étude philosophique de l'altérité dans le mythe de Faust*, préf. André Dabezies, Namur, Presses de l'Université de Namur, 1994.

que ses représentations puissent prétendre à la renaissance des Lettres allemandes. Son ambition consistait proprement à lui insuffler l'énergie dont Shakespeare avait habité ses personnages en rehaussant la littérature anglaise. Dans son sillage, Germaine de Staël lut, chez Goethe, « la parodie des Sorcières de Macbeth » (*De l'Allemagne*, 1810).<sup>26</sup> Le récit de Faust commença ainsi à jouer comme le révélateur paradoxal des désirs d'émancipation et d'autonomie de littératures en plein renouvellement. À en suivre les détours au sein des Lettres francophones de Belgique, une même constatation s'impose et sort renforcée encore à la lecture des textes de théâtre.

À l'instar des autres littératures européennes, le lecteur est avant tout ballotté par la variété des genres où le récit faustien s'est incarné : le *baller fantastique* (*Faust et Marguerite*, créé par Henri Desplaces au Théâtre royal de la Monnaie, 1858) ; la *poésie*, lorsque Marcel Thiry, reprend les premiers vers du *Faust* de Marlowe « Not marching now in fields of Thrasymentis » (« Not marching now » dans *Le Festin d'attente*, 1963) ou quand Georges Thinès prononce sa *Méditation poétique sur Faust* (1980), puis publie ses *Théorèmes pour un Faust* (1983) ; l'*essai* (Georges Thinès encore, *Le mythe de Faust et la dialectique du temps*, 1989) ou la *tragédie* cacophonique d'Anton Van de Velde (*Faust junior*, 1932) qui, en mêlant français, néerlandais et allemand, réalise un centon linguistique dans une création emblématique du Vlaamsche Volkstooneel. Franz Hellens et Marcel Thiry manifestèrent leur prédilection pour le *roman*. Le premier pour camper un intellectuel, Félicien Meurant, qui au soir de sa vie confesse être passé à côté du sens de l'existence (*L'homme de soixante ans*, 1951) ; le second afin de prolonger le matériau goethéen en relatant la quête du fils, né de l'union d'Hélène et de Faust (*Juste ou la quête d'Hélène*, 1953). Thiry en tira, en 1954, une *pièce radiophonique*, deux ans après le jeu radiophonique d'Albert Lepage, écrit en 1950 mais diffusé seulement en 1952, qui réunit Faust et Don Juan, avant d'être retravaillé (1960) puis finalement voué aux planches (1965). Faust fit également les beaux jours d'une littérature au second degré, au fil, notamment d'une *opérette parodique*, détournant la musique de Gounod et le livret de Barbier et Carré, pour évoquer de façon paillard la faim sous l'Occupation et transformer le « marché noir » et le pacte diabolique en une insouciance comédie, noyée dans la ripaille (Max Moreau, *Faust 1944*, 1944)<sup>27</sup> :

26. *De l'Allemagne*, chap. XXIII (« Faust »).

27. Max Moreau, *Faust 1944 : Opéra en 3 actes*. Paris-Bruxelles, Éditions Marion, 1944.

MARGUERITE (chanté)	FAUST
(Air des bijoux.)	Non ! Je veux un trésor
Ah ! Je ris ! Vingt paires de bas dans mes tiroirs !	Qui les contient tous : un porc qu'on engraisse !
Ah ! Je ris ! A tout le pays je les f'rai voir !	.....
Est-ce à toi ? Marguerite ... est-ce à toi ?	À moi les caresses
Réponds-moi, réponds, réponds vite !	Du lard, des rognons ;
Non, non, n'insistez pas !	À moi leur ivresse,
Non, non, c'est un rêve éphémère.	À moi le cochon ! (bis)
Quoi vingt paires de bas ? (bis)	Méphisto
Mais avant tout, vraiment c'est fou !	Fort bien ! Fort bien ! Fort bien !
Hélas ! Qu'exigez-vous	Fort bien !
De la pauvre fermière ?	Je puis contenter ton caprice (bis)
	Faust
	Mais qu'en exiges-tu du kilo ?
	Méphisto
	Presque rien ! Presque rien !
	Pourquoi chercher un bénéfice ?
	Puisque tu seras à moi !
	.....
	Allons, signe !
	Faust (dont l'estomac parle seul)
	Donne !

Derrière cette diversité, transparait néanmoins une constante : la figuration d'une quête d'identité, particulièrement prégnante dans les textes de théâtre qui, de façon unanime, se confrontent à la modernité, à l'incertitude des institutions et, *a fortiori*, celle des institutions littéraires.

En se réservant la rencontre de Faust et de Don Juan, Albert Lepage témoignait de deux influences concomitantes. Celle, dans un premier temps, du laboratoire de recherche théâtrale « Art et Action » dirigé, à Paris, par Édouard Autant et Louise Lara, qu'il fréquenta dans l'entre-deux-guerres et dont les expérimentations entendaient sortir le théâtre de « l'ornière commerciale et de la routine artistique ». La multiplication des « petites » scènes d'expérimentation était alors censée pallier les carences de « l'industrie dramatique »,<sup>28</sup> sensibles également en Belgique.

28. Michel Corvin, *Le théâtre de recherche entre les deux guerres : le laboratoire Art et action*, Paris, La Cité — L'Âge d'homme (« Théâtre années vingt »), pp. 412–13, 462, 270.

Il s'agissait de liquider le vedettariat, de mettre un frein aux tournées des troupes étrangères afin de promouvoir les auteurs nationaux, quitte à se résoudre, à cette fin, à la création de nouvelles structures. Dans cet esprit, Lepage créa, en 1930, à Bruxelles, le théâtre du « Rataillon », dont il annonça, avec engouement, la naissance à ses « mentors » parisiens.<sup>29</sup> Après avoir fui la Belgique et la censure, il entreprit, au lendemain de la seconde guerre mondiale, de dénoncer la fracture observée entre le laxisme moral des élites et la rigueur qui écrasait les masses : « les puissants de ce monde . . . et ceux qui les servent, dénoncent comme étant le mal tout ce qui montre l'illégitimité de leur tyrannie ».<sup>30</sup> Le dramaturge saisit à nouveau l'occasion d'unir sa passion pour le théâtre à son engagement politique, socialiste. Il s'avéra à la fois soucieux de dénoncer la transformation du monde « à ce rythme dont la constante accélération est le caractère le plus évident » et de mettre en relief « l'homme de bonne volonté », « sali par les actes ignobles des uns, jeté dans le bouleversement technique universel et la confusion qu'il apporte », au milieu de « cent autres facteurs [qui] conspirent contre sa raison ». Sa vision, quelque peu nietzschéenne, cherchait alors « une idée, un thème, un mythe, une légende, une 'donnée' enfin, assez riche, assez nourrie tout ensemble de révolte et de tradition pour espérer y découvrir un conseil valable ». La confrontation de *Faust* et *Don Juan* naquit de ces préoccupations :

*Et voir surgir d'une part Faust, engagé dans sa quête d'alchimie et de sagesse, proie du rêve et de la science, et d'autre part Don Juan, dominé par une volonté de puissance acharnée dans le sens unique que l'on sait. Tous deux ils offraient la particularité séduisante d'être héros de légende après avoir été d'authentiques . . . êtres vivants. Et cette autre encore d'avoir été autopsiés par les plus grands génies que nous ayons eus, poètes du théâtre, psychologues et moralistes.*<sup>31</sup>

Achevée en 1960, la pièce fut créée à Bruxelles, au Théâtre 140, cinq ans plus tard. En dépit du temps que Lepage avait passé à la polir, elle restait tributaire d'une seconde influence, tout autant liée aux laboratoires dramatiques parisiens. Le couple Autant-Lara avait en effet monté, en janvier 1928, à l'époque du premier séjour de Lepage à Paris, *La mort du Docteur Faust* de Ghelderode. Ces représentations suivirent, à quelques mois de distance, la première de la version italienne (*La morte del Dottore*

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29. *Id.*

30. André Lepage, *Faust et Don Juan*, Bruxelles, C.E.L.F. (« Les cahiers de la Tour de Babel »), 1960, p. 38.

31. *Id.*, pp. 7–9.

*Faust*), dirigée par Bragaglia au Teatro degli Independenti de Rome, en septembre 1927,<sup>32</sup> et la publication de la pièce auprès des éditions de La Flandre littéraire, en 1926. Ghelderode, qui sut gré à Lepage de monter *Barabbas* au Rataillon et d'avoir opéré quelques coupes sombres dans son texte, salua plus tard la publication de *Faust et Don Juan*, pièce dans laquelle il lisait une « inquiète poésie » et des « impondérables scéniques » qui en faisaient une œuvre qui allait « se dilatant, comme une nébuleuse portant en soi ses désastres et son devenir fatidique : tout un univers en marche ! ».<sup>33</sup> Le succès critique de *La mort du Docteur Faust* marqua durablement Lepage. Dès sa publication, cette « tragédie pour le music-hall » avait en effet été ressentie comme l'une des œuvres les plus fortes, « de haute race, véhémence et multichrome » « en ces modernes années d'après-guerre ». Elle présentait, selon Julien Deladoès, un « faufilé extra-philosophique et surréaliste » qui surpassait « toutes les productions de l'époque » au point d'y voir un acte d'« assainissement du théâtre », « un essai de libération par le burlesque surgi du music-hall », voire, à l'instar de Camille Poupeye, « une fenêtre ouverte sur un nouvel horizon dans le champ immense de la dramaturgie universelle ».<sup>34</sup> La parenté est flagrante entre ces « drames de l'identité » qui stigmatisent la dualité de l'homme et l'aspiration à une nouvelle avant-garde théâtrale :

FAUST — Et vivre c'est continuer à me trahir, car je suis quelqu'un de supérieur à moi-même. [ . . . ] En vérité je ne suis pas à ma place, ni dans mon costume, ni dans mon époque. [ . . . ] Depuis mon enfance, je poursuis quelqu'un de semblable à une ombre, une ombre splendide et hautaine ! Souvent je la piétine avec joie. J'en ai mal et bien. Et elle ne gémit pas.

FAUST — [ . . . ] Nous n'avons pas reçu l'âme pour atteindre à ces hauteurs. Nous avons tout au plus assez d'esprit pour souffrir au constat de ce qui nous manque.<sup>35</sup>

Afin de révéler les fragmentations du *moi*, Ghelderode usa, comme à l'accoutumée, du motif du *masque*, puisé dans la tradition carnavalesque, ravivée par les fresques d'Ensor. Le dédoublement des personnages et des

32. Bragaglia publia, en 1951, la traduction italienne dans *Il Dramma*.

33. Gérard Duboisdeghien et M. Paillez, *Albert Lepage et son temps*, Nivelles, Éditions de la Francité, 1980, p. 105.

34. Julien Deladoès, lettre à Ghelderode (14 avril 1926), dans Michel de Ghelderode, *Correspondance*, Roland Beyen éd., Bruxelles, Labor (« Archives du Futur »), 1991–1992, vol. 1 et 2 ; Camille Poupeye, dans Michel de Ghelderode, *Théâtre*, Paris, Gallimard, 1957, p. 211.

35. *Id.*, p. 216 ; Albert Lepage, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

siècles était tel qu'il les rendait interchangeables. Rien n'étant moins certain qu'une personnalité,<sup>36</sup> entre « Faust » et l'« acteur qui joue Faust » se fane la conscience de soi. Conséquemment la dimension prométhéenne du personnage s'étiole :

L'acteur FAUST — [...] Je ne veux pas être Faust . . .

FAUST — Je ne veux pas l'être non plus ! J'ai menti en disant que j'étais Faust ! Je suis un artiste, un acteur !

L'acteur FAUST — Quoi ?

FAUST — Je suis un comédien, fourvoyé. Mon rôle était de faire l'homme supérieur, le génie ! Ces livres, ces appareils, ce sont des accessoires, je sais réciter. (274)

Ce théâtre, en plaçant Faust aussi bien au cœur des conflits propres à la condition humaine qu'au centre de l'opposition des forces sociales se solde ainsi par l'érosion des mythologies<sup>37</sup> et met en exergue l'ancrage social du discours théâtral.

Dans *Un Faust*, paru en 1985,<sup>38</sup> Jean Louvet greffait au mythe les inquiétudes qui hantent constamment son écriture : la « difficulté à être un homme parmi les hommes », la culpabilité de l'intellectuel face à son milieu d'origine — dans le cas de Louvet, prolétarien et wallon —, l'inscription du politique dans l'affectif, la critique de l'idéologie dominante, . . . Conscient des mécanismes qui « préforment le réel et plus particulièrement les réalités du langage », Louvet a manifesté son refus d'un théâtre mimétique et continua ici d'avancer, comme l'a noté très justement Michèle Fabien, un travail sur les « médiations qui forment les représentations ».<sup>39</sup> Fondateur du Théâtre prolétarien dont il fit son laboratoire personnel, Louvet inscrit *son* Faust au cœur de questionne-

36. André Dabiezies, *Visages de Faust*, op. cit., p. 264.

37. Voir le constat similaire dressé par Paul Aron, à propos du mythe de Don Juan, dans la « Lecture » du *Don Juan* de Charles Bertin (Bruxelles, Labor, 1988, pp. 107–33) et, du même, *La mémoire en jeu : Une histoire du théâtre de langue française en Belgique*, Bruxelles, Théâtre national — La lettre volée, 1995.

38. Jean Louvet, *Un Faust*, Bruxelles, Didascalies, 1985. L'œuvre publiée fut le résultat de plusieurs remaniements et constitue la troisième version d'une œuvre de commande de la part de ses metteurs en scène, Michèle Fabien et Marc Liebens. La pièce fut créée en mai 1985 par l'Ensemble Théâtral Mobile. Les décors affichaient une volonté de situer l'action dans une zone indéfinie censée symboliser l'espace de la métaphysique.

39. Michèle Fabien, « Lire Louvet », dans *Travail théâtral*, avril-juin 1978, vol. xxxi, pp. 75–80 ; Michel Otten, « Un Faust », *Textyles*, 1986, vol. 3, pp. 91–92.

ments politiques et d'un paysage institutionnel dont il dénonçait encore, en 1991, la vacuité :

Pourquoi toujours devoir passer par la France ? Il me semble qu'il y a une sorte d'imaturité dans la situation de l'écrivain en Belgique. Qu'il faut gagner cette maturité [ . . . ]. En même temps il est vrai que la Wallonie me fait peur : il n'y a pas d'institution littéraire, pas de symbolique assez forte pour arrêter la diaspora des créateurs, une francophilie assez provinciale, qui n'apporte que peu de crédit à la littérature francophone de Belgique [ . . . ] j'ai choisi le plus mauvais « terrain », à savoir le théâtre de création en français en Wallonie, qui ne dispose d'aucune infrastructure [ . . . ].<sup>40</sup>

L'auteur situe le drame au sein d'une tradition redécouverte et consciente d'elle-même. De Marlowe à Valéry, Louvet a dépecé les multiples récits qui ont façonné le mythe pour retenir ultimement les variations de Goethe, et proposer à son personnage un parcours « à rebours ». Délaissant la vanité du savoir, retournant vers le « petit » monde, son Faust rappelle celui de Lepage (« Toute mon existence est une injure à la vie ») mais, surtout, le *Faust* 1 de Goethe (« Philosophie, hélas ! jurisprudence, médecine et toi aussi triste théologie ! Je ne crois pas savoir rien de bon en effet, ni pouvoir rien enseigner aux hommes pour les améliorer et les convertir »). Entretemps, le personnage est cependant devenu emblématique des interrogations du postmodernisme. Il résonne désormais des analyses popularisées, en 1979, par les conclusions de Jean-François Lyotard (*La condition postmoderne*) et, plus encore, du constat dressé, en 1983, par Gilles Lipovestky (*L'ère du vide*), devant l'apparition du néo-individualisme et la perte de sens des grandes institutions collectives. Si le Faust de Louvet veut continuer à croire en « un monde meilleur avec et par les hommes », il déplore surtout la ruine des *métarécits* :

FAUST. — [ . . . ] Pauvre Faust, de plus en plus pauvre, et de savoir et d'argent.  
 Psychanalyse, sociologie, marxisme, sciences vaines, au diable !  
 [ . . . ] Tant de révolutions ont jalonné le siècle. Que de grands mots !  
 Je reviens d'un long voyage. [ . . . ]  
 Je rentre.  
 Toute une vie pour rien.<sup>41</sup>

40. Jean Louvet, *Le fil de l'histoire : Pour un théâtre d'aujourd'hui*, Louvain-la-Neuve, P.U. de Louvain (« Chaire poétique »), 1991, p. 49.

41. Id., *Un Faust*, op. cit., p. 13.

La dimension fantastique s'amenuise devant la nécessité du théâtre à « jouer » la vie sociale et à critiquer l'essor d'un capitalisme qui a induit l'idéologie de l'efficacité et une « scientisation » à outrance de la société. Faust épouse ainsi le crédo de *La force du sujet plein* : il doit conjointement remonter aux hommes aliénés la « force dérangement » de leur subjectivité, leur essence « de langage », croiser le fer contre la désubstantialisation de ce même langage, induite par le capitalisme, et rappeler au théâtre, « petit monde en réduction » et « lieu de métaphore », sa « force d'ébranlement » : « le sujet plein n'est pas un homme qui sait tout, c'est simplement un homme à la recherche de lui-même dans une société qui l'entoure ». <sup>42</sup> Proche de Gatti, d'Adamov, d'Artaud, de Dort, Louvet honore surtout sa filiation avec Brecht en ramenant constamment le spectateur « aux mécanismes politiques et économiques qui président au quotidien » et en leur opposant « une vision qualitative du monde, règne de l'amour, de l'échange, retour à l'homme réconcilié avec lui-même, pluridimensionnel ». <sup>43</sup> Ce Faust est-il si éloigné de celui de Hanns Eisler qui, sous l'influence brechtienne, remontait, bien au-delà de Goethe, au théâtre de marionnettes et aux racines d'un Faust, traître à sa condition d'origine, populaire, pour conclure « un pacte avec les possédant ou les impérialistes » <sup>44</sup> ? Le rôle de Méphisto consistera dès lors, chez Louvet, à démystifier les utopies, à les « saper à la base » <sup>45</sup> et à faire en sorte que Faust abandonne toute velléité de croire en l'Histoire. L'effondrement des idéologies politiques accompagne la ruine de l'idéologie religieuse, et Louvet de présenter conséquemment une vision de dieu, qu'il qualifie lui-même de « post-moderne », vide de sens et utilitariste. Marguerite devient dans la pièce le symbole d'une séduction charnelle, « marchandisée », écho à la « démocratisation du libertinage » pointée par Lipovetski et dénoncée jusqu'à la caricature :

MARGUERITE. — Jamais un homme ne m'a parlé comme tu me parles [ ... ].  
J'enlève tout ? Qu'est-ce que je garde ?

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42. Id., « La force du sujet plein », dans *Alternatives théâtrales*, mai 1988, n° 31-32, p. 17.

43. Ronald Pirson, cité par Renée Saurel, « L'homme mutilé », *Les Temps modernes*, 1972, n° 308, p. 1519.

44. Voir l'analyse et la citation de Sophie Coudray, *op. cit.*

45. Jacques De Decker, « Le Faust de Jean Louvet », *Le Soir*, 9 mai 1985.



« C'est le choc de deux êtres », confiera Louvet, le choc « entre deux systèmes de valeurs, même si Faust renie le modernisme »<sup>46</sup> : il s'accroche à l'Histoire, aux idéologies, aux valeurs qu'il a investies, en « intellectuel de gauche »<sup>47</sup> contre l'instant a-historique d'une Marguerite qui lui oppose une vision de la société « repliée sur le corps, l'*ego* » mais qui est aussi « le produit logique de la société à laquelle [Faust] a participé ».

Dix ans plus tard, les *Faustæ tabullæ* de Thierry Salmon et Manuel Antonio Pereira achèveront de clouer le mythe à la perte de la mémoire collective et à l'étiollement des valeurs de la culture occidentale. Si le thème n'est pas neuf et remonte au moins à Oswald Spengler (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, 1918),<sup>48</sup> la « civilisation » faustienne s'actualise différemment et articule ici sa trame narrative à l'intersection du troisième acte de Gounod, du *Voyage d'Anna Blume* de Paul Auster et du *Guérisseur de cathédrale* de Philippe K. Dick.<sup>49</sup> Le tragique y côtoie la comédie, le discours théâtral s'y joint à une représentation orchestrale, doublée du média vidéo ...

### ACTUALITÉS

Penser l'actualité des récits faustiens implique ainsi de les envisager au-delà de la dette qu'ils ont contractée avec le modèle proposé par Goethe. Cela nécessite, note Sophie Coudray, de passer par « une étape de déconstruction de tout ce dont il s'est chargé au fil des siècles, pour retrouver au cœur du mythe ce qui fait encore sens, quitte à réintroduire finalement, après les avoir triés, digérés et choisis, ces éléments composites ». C'est ce qu'ont fait, entre autres, Louvet, Salmon, ou Sylvain Creuzevault et les acteurs de l'*Angelus Novus* (2016), dans un spectacle sous-titré *AntiFaust*, dont l'écriture s'effectue « au plateau et dont la dramaturgie procède par citations et montages, de Walter Benjamin à Boulgakov », pour en livrer ce qui peut encore « être utile » à la « compréhension du présent ».<sup>50</sup> Tous ouvrent des « brèches » dans les lectures et les trames narratives de Faust, que le présent émaille continûment ou par de saillants éclats. À partir d'un corpus, *a priori* assez convenu et selon une démarche qui aurait sans doute gagné à être plus inductive, c'est à semblable déconstruction

46. Jean Louvet, *Le fil de l'histoire*, op. cit., p. 92.

47. S. Govaert, « *Un Faust* à l'E.T.M., entretien avec Jean Louvet », *Le Drapeau rouge*, 07 mai 1985, p. 9.

48. André Dabezies (2015), pp. 270–77.

49. <http://www.thierrysalmon.org/pages/spectacles/FaustaeTabulae/thierrysalmon-FaustaeTabulae.php?lang=FR>.

50. *Op. cit.*

que convie d'entrée Claude Paul, au gré d'une étude érudite et méticuleusement documentée. Les *Faust* de Lenau, Berlioz et Delacroix, déclinés sur des supports de natures bien différentes, manifestent en effet et avant tout — particulièrement à travers le traitement du personnage de Méphistophélès —, la volonté de rupture des auteurs avec le drame de Goethe. Ils relèvent d'une même « communauté de sensibilité ». Le rôle du diable éclaire à bon escient les distanciations et les oppositions au modèle allemand qui, sous le regard attentif de Paul comme sous celui de Dabiez, démontre que son emprise n'a rien de totalement hégémonique, surtout au XIXe siècle, tant l'allusion aux *Faust 1 et II* pouvait s'y avérer payante sur le plan du succès littéraire mais tragiquement vide de sens sur le plan de l'exploitation thématique ou de la signification mythologique d'une œuvre.<sup>51</sup> Lenau, qui insufflait à Faust une part autobiographique et qui voyait en lui une échappatoire, par la poésie, au mal-être existentiel qui accompagnait le déclassement de l'artiste et de l'intellectuel dans son époque en crise (*Weltschmerz*), n'écrivait-il pas à juste titre que « le sujet » était suffisamment « malléable » pour qu'il n'y ait pas de collision »<sup>52</sup> ? Quel est le mythe et la problématique auxquels se sont finalement mesurés Lenau, Berlioz et Delacroix ? Celui des anges déchus ? Celle des conclusions positives de Goethe ? Ont-ils reformulé l'interrogation à l'origine d'un hypotexte (*hypopus*) que d'autres ont filé sans s'y appesantir ? Ont-ils eu recours à des sources antérieures ? Qu'ont-ils conservés, qu'ont-ils tu ? En livrant réponses à ces questions, Claude Paul restitue la richesse d'un « polylogue » entre les artistes, selon une approche inter-/transculturelle et inter-/transmédiale indispensable. Soucieuse de dépasser la seule problématique de la réception, son étude est une mise en garde contre l'approche littéraire traditionnelle souvent aveuglément usitée pour rendre compte d'esthétiques du *visible* ou du *perceptible*. Elle renforce la conviction de Werner Wolf sur la possibilité d'une comparaison entre un récit communiqué par le médium textuel et par le médium plastique.<sup>53</sup> Sacrifiant à un académique détour par les nomenclatures (intramédialité, intermédialité, réplique, variation, version ...) et les écueils de la taxinomie, l'auteure aurait gagné encore à excéder l'approche narratologique de Gérard Genette. L'ouvrage évite néanmoins

51. Claude Paul, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–12.

52. Lettre à Georg Reinbeck (11 nov. 1833), citée par Claude Paul, *id.*, pp. 139–40.

53. *Id.*, pp. 16–0.

la tentation trop sociologique d'une histoire de la lecture pour approfondir chacune des trois œuvres et maintenir l'équilibre entre la part de l'auteur et les déterminismes qui le guident — qu'ils soient d'ordre social, économique, théologique même.<sup>54</sup> Le Faust de Berlioz en ressort plus apparenté au Frédéric de *L'éducation sentimentale* qu'au paragon du héros romantique. Les gravures de Delacroix en tirent une réhabilitation sensible, sous les influences d'une autre traduction que celle qu'elles étaient chargées d'illustrer, sous la parenté iconique entretenue avec les œuvres de Moritz Retzsch, d'Henry Alken ou de Goya, suivant un dialogue aussi avec les réminiscences shakespeariennes qui habitent le drame anglais de George Soane et de Danie Terry, auquel Delacroix a assisté à Drury Lane, en 1825.

Les livres de Claude Paul et d'André Dabezies n'arrêtent en somme aucune conclusion définitive dans le long continuum que constituent les palimpsestes faustiens. Ils demandent, au contraire, à ce qu'on les adosse aux créations contemporaines, et que le lecteur en tire les enseignements nécessaires pour approfondir d'autres dialogues : celui qu'entretiennent les études médiatiques dans un nouvel essor, l'histoire littéraire dans le renouvellement de ses méthodes et les approches narratologiques dans leur ouverture à l'inter-/transmédialité. Ils incarnent autant d'invites à poursuivre le travail au fil des re-crétions : *Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben, der täglich sie erobern muß* (Goethe, *Faust* II, acte v).

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54. On rappellera ici l'intéressante analyse que synthétise l'auteur en regard de l'opposition entre le dualisme augustinien et la résurgence des théories d'Origène (*Id.*, pp. 101 ss.).

## Departure from Literary Criticism or Interdisciplinarity Revisited: the Affect, Writing, and Policies of Familial Trauma Transmissions

**Meera Atkinson. *The Poetics of Transgenerational Trauma*.  
London: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2017. Pp. 224. ISBN:  
9781501330872.**

Over roughly the past two decades, a growing number of literary testimonies, in either memoirist or fictional form (the latter based mostly on second-hand witnessing or vicarious traumatization and often raising moral concerns with regard to the real victims' voices) has brought the phenomenon of trauma transmission and the concept of transgenerational trauma to the forefront of contemporary trauma-theory investigations. With magic-realist novels such as *A Blessing on the Moon* (1999) by Joseph Skibell, a third-generation descendant of Holocaust survivors, and autobiographical fiction such as *Everything Is Illuminated* (2002) by Jonathan Safran Foer, the grandson of Holocaust survivors in Poland, the body of literature by non-witnesses has gained more and more (albeit still contested) moral ground by making the voices of the victims heard through the transmission of familial trauma, and implicitly, by bearing witness to the latency of historical trauma. Without ignoring the larger picture and the implications of historical trauma, Meera Atkinson's book brings familial trauma to the forefront of literary trauma theory, while her exegeses bring an important contribution to the field of feminist trauma theory, their depth and scope revealing "crucial operations at the dynamic intersection of affect and trauma between subject, text, and society" (3). It is not the first time that Atkinson resorts to affect- and trauma-theory approaches in order to draw attention to the importance of affect and familial trauma (often overlooked by trauma theorists) in the transmission of trauma across generations. In her collection of essays *Traumatic Affect* (2013), co-edited with Michael Richardson, Atkinson referenced her own creative work, the prose novel *Luna Alaska*, and used Jacques Derrida's theory of hauntology and Nicolas Abraham and Mária Török's concepts of "introjection" and the "phantom" to show that some writing about trauma may become literature of traumatic heritage (post-traumatic writing); the essay would eventually

become chapter three, “Haunting and the Spooked Text,” in *The Poetics of Transgenerational Trauma* (2017).

Atkinson’s scholarly language, characterized by precision, clarity, and a contagious excitement about each premise, theoretical nexus, and conclusion, gains additional complexity and intensity through the author’s (who is also a poet and a novelist) at times personal artistic style. For instance, her breaking away from the academic canon, by briefly switching to a first-person narrative detailing her personal experience with the 9/11 attacks, does not dilute her argument, but rather engages the reader both intellectually and emotionally by conveying the intensity of her passion for the topic at hand (127). She even begins her essay in *Traumatic Affect* by directly addressing the reader before easing her way into the scholarly argument *per se*: “You are reading—a poem, a novel, a memoir. You may not identify directly with what you are reading . . . And yet. And yet you experience affect . . .” (247). The entire argument is then framed at the end of the chapter, when the author switches back to an artistic style: “You finish reading and put down the book . . . You feel illuminated, clearer, altered, like you remembered something you have never quite known nor forgotten . . .” (269). Although Atkinson insists on distancing herself from formal criticism by reminding her reader—in chapter four, for instance—that “this book is not a work of literary criticism *per se* and nor it is primarily concerned with engaging in dialogue with other criticism” (116), her interdisciplinary inquiries, involving trauma theory, affect theory, gender studies, sociology, psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, etc. speak for a keen analytical mind and a refreshingly original theorist.

In the introductory chapter, Atkinson explains her choice of focusing on familial trauma by denouncing what she sees as a collective denial of its social effects and the general trend of prioritizing and politicizing the fear of global terrorism as if family violence were less consequential—a “dangerous miscalculation,” in her opinion. She further clarifies her use of the term “transgenerational trauma,” which is to “describe both intergenerational trauma transmissions and multigenerational transmissions as occurring outside specific family units.” The book examines the cultural conditions that give rise to transgenerational trauma and the “ways literature elucidates the processes of transmission” (4). The author uses the term “poetics” in the sense of an “art of writing poetically and/or experimentally in testimonies of transgenerational trauma” (18). The introduction also provides brief explanations of the main critical con-

cepts used in each chapter, including their theoretical sources: Baruch Spinoza's affect theory, Jacques Derrida's hauntology, Nicolas Abraham and Mária Török's psychoanalytic concepts of phantom and introjection, and Gilles Deleuze's notion of becoming. Besides theoretical sources, the breakdown of each of the following five chapters includes the authors and the works discussed as case studies.

In the first chapter, "*L'écriture Féminine* and the Strange Body," Atkinson offers a comparative reading of Elizabeth Smart's *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* (1991) and Marguerite Duras's *The Lover* (1992), an experimental memoir set in French colonial Vietnam. The plots of both novels are about passionate love affairs, the former between the author and the married British poet George Baker and the latter between a fifteen-year-old Duras and a wealthy Chinese man. Drawing a thin line between *écriture féminine* and "women's writing," viewing it as a "contemplative model that facilitates consideration of the metaphoric workings and collapsing of the traditional binary of gender in traumatic writing and literature" (46). Atkinson founds her interpretations of the two novels on Julia Kristeva's concept of the "strange body," which replaces gender, not as an absence or oblivion, but as a "space in which gender is shifted out of its moorings and confines" (35). In the context of the poetics of transgenerational trauma, the strange body challenges the gender roles of patriarchy and the popular perceptions of "women's writing" as "chick lit" (40). To Atkinson, Kristeva's strange-bodyness represents the idea that "various metaphoric possibilities—of writing as feminine, as bisexual, as unsexed, and as traumatized—might somehow coexist" (47).

Chapter two, "The Ethics of Writing (through) a History of Familial Trauma," contains interpretations of historical trauma in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006), a graphic memoir (in the vein of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*) of the writer's childhood and early adulthood, and in Hélène Cixous's fictional memoir *Hyperdream* (2009). Bechdel struggles with the trauma of emotional abuse, homophobia, and the supposed suicide of her homosexual father. Cixous's poetic prose represents the tender relationship between an ailing mother and her caretaker daughter, set against the background of a traumatized Europe. In her discussions of the two memoirs, Atkinson draws on Baruch Spinoza's seventeenth-century affect theory. The philosopher defined "affect" as a "causal relation between body and mind that has both productive and destructive potentials," and related it to the "affections of the body by

which the body's power of acting is either increased or diminished"; the concept presupposes cognition because "it is the capacity of the mind to perceive affect that motivates response and action" (58). Atkinson's application of the term to experimental trauma writing leads the argument towards the idea of vicarious traumatization, even though the author does not spell it out as such. In her opinion, "the poetics of transgenerational trauma is an affectively charged textual embodiment of trauma transmissions," which makes her infer that "both writers and readers are rendered vulnerable to being overwhelmed by traumatic affect, possibly to personal detriment" (53). At this point, the critic reaches one of the fundamental theses of her study: "The nexus of trauma and affect theories facilitates exploration of both the ways in which transmission takes place transgenerationally and the ways this process can be written. . . . My casting of transmission focuses on traumatic affect as affect that is bound to, and by, trauma." Atkinson creates critical connections between both trauma and affect and trauma theory and affect theory (61).

The following chapter, "Hauntology and the Spooked Text," discusses the novel *Carpentaria* (2006), a postcolonial and cross-cultural testimony written by the Australian author Alexis Wright. Atkinson opens the chapter with a brief history of the early beginnings of Australia as a penal colony of the British Empire, starting with the 1788 landing in Botany Bay. Wright's novel, whose plot is set in the fictional town of Desperance, on the Gulf of Carpentaria, focuses on the infighting between local Aboriginal communities and the suffering inflicted upon them by colonization, in particular by a multinational mining corporation occupying sacred land. The theoretical tools in the chapter are Jacques Derrida's theory of "hauntology" and concept of "specter" as well as Nicolas Abraham and Mária Török's terms "phantom" and "introjection."

According to Atkinson, the poetics of transgenerational trauma, although unable to articulate trauma in language, "nevertheless speaks of, out of, and to, that which hovers between presence and absence, unnamable, and unknowable in the usual sense" (86). Derrida, who formulated his notion of hauntology based on the figure of Karl Marx, views the nature of the "specter," along with hauntology, as a traumatic phenomenon. For the French philosopher, the specter constitutes the "intrusion of a timeless other (person, work, or point in history) into our world." Because the specter cannot be accounted for in any discourse, experimental traumatic writing assumes a distinctive function. Abraham and Török's phantom "marks the way in which the undisclosed traumas of one gen-

eration influence and disturb the life of another" (92). In Atkinson's view, although the phantom involves deceit and denial, its site "marks the formation of an entrenched traumatic lie in the sense that trauma shapes and changes subjectivity, especially that of children in relation to the familial other" (99). Transgenerational traumatic writing exploits familial life and traumatic experience as well as the affects associated with them, so that writers of transgenerational trauma get to translate stories made up of snippets of history; they "channel the unassimilated trauma [traumatic memories] of familial ancestors and collective history" (100). In Wright's novel, the ancestors' trauma is not a matter of the past, but is operative in the present of the living.

Abraham and Török's introjection is the "driving force of psychic life bound to and by love"; it is the work of love, its living process (104). Because it resists being known, spoken, and written, trauma becomes a challenge to the work of introjection, while in the case of transgenerational trauma, the subject must address not only personal experiences but also traumata from preceding generations, which makes introjection even more difficult. What can be achieved, however, in Atkinson's view, is an "introjection of understanding, a process in which the traumata of forebears and its familial legacies are acknowledged and, in some way, accepted" (107). Essential to her argument is the introjective capacity of the poetics of transgenerational trauma, its "paradoxical refusal of the credence that trauma can ever be entirely reckoned with, or tidily or linearly worked through" (107).

Chapter four, "Family Snapshots to Big Picture: Cyclical Haunting," looks at transgenerational trauma in Pat Barker's *Regeneration Trilogy* (1999): *Regeneration*, *The Eye in the Door*, and *The Ghost Road*, three books documenting British life and suffering in World War I. Barker shows the multigenerational familial transmission of trauma in war time through complex connections between personal, cultural, national, and global trauma. His trilogy is an artistic portrayal of "cyclical haunting." Derrida's hauntology questions the border between the "actual or present reality of the present, and everything that can be opposed to it: absence, non-presence, non-effectivity, inactuality, virtuality, or even simulacrum in general" (119). Hauntology designates the unreliability of what one thinks of as the past, present, and future. Barker's trilogy shows the "ways in which trauma circulates from its most individual experience to its most global enactment" (121). Halfway in the chapter, Atkinson segues into a juxtaposition of traditional warfare, as presented in Barker's



novels, with contemporary terrorism. “Like war,” she writes, “terrorism means to ideologize, kill, and traumatize. Its effects are not just stuff of textbooks and memorials; they are emotional, psychological, and contagious, and the bodily memory never quite fades, no matter how distant the events become” (127). She brings her point home by recounting her personal experience as a witness of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, in, as mentioned above, a somewhat unorthodox manner, as far as academic writing protocols go.

It was also a day in which traumatic affect—primarily fear and sadness, but also anger—seemed to speed around the world instantaneously, transmitted electronically via television coverage, Internet exchanges, frightened, grieving bodies in proximity . . . It was also a day in which the personal (subjective experience of the event, wherever one was physically located) smashed headlong into the political, into decades-old struggles, a culmination of centuries of war, imperialisms, and micro and macro traumas in the lives of individuals and families. (127)

E. Ann Kaplan points to the same phenomenon of media-induced traumatization by proxy in her book *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (2005):

People encounter trauma by being a bystander, by living near to where a catastrophe happened, or by hearing about a crisis from a friend. But most people encounter trauma through the media, which is why focusing on so-called mediatized trauma is important. . . . The phenomenon of 9/11 was perhaps the supreme example of a catastrophe that was experienced globally via digital technologies (Internet, cell phone) as well as by television and radio, and responded to in a myriad of ways depending on people’s national and local contexts. (2)

Like many others on the political left, Atkinson politicizes the attacks of 9/11 by pointing out that, far from being an isolated event, they were the consequences of US foreign policy, and of British colonialism before it, the “‘comes around’ in a what goes around comes around cycle of suffering ordained in the political arena with high-impact fall-out in daily life, body blows to actual lives” (128). Not so long ago, in her book *Frames of Memory after 9/11* (2015), Lucy Bond remarked the peculiar appropriation of the moniker “Ground Zero” as a signifier for the ruined Trade Center site in the aftermath of 9/11; the term, coined in response to the American bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, evokes the epicentre of a nuclear blast. “The invocation of Hiroshima as historical precedent complicates the narrative of 9/11 in problematic—and potentially pro-

ductive—ways, blurring the boundaries between perpetrator and victim to problematize the overly simplistic construction of the contemporary world as a binary universe of ‘good’ and ‘evil’” (Bond 127). Thus, besides trauma, the poetics of transgenerational trauma also testifies to the “work of recognizing traumatic gaps within the self and culture and reinstating life within those gaps through the acts of witnessing and living attention” (Atkinson 143). Barker’s trilogy is “literature as political act, as covert, yet formidable political activism” (144).

In the final chapter, “Provocations Beyond the Human,” Atkinson’s thematic expands to gender, race, environment, and nonhuman animals as represented in Alexis Wright’s novel *Carpentaria* (2006) and in its follow-up, *The Swan Book* (2013). The critic shows that human trauma transmissions may routinely impact both the environment and other sentient beings, and sounds the alarm on nonhuman animals being in jeopardy and becoming extinct at an unprecedented rate. The chapter makes use of Patricia Hill Collins’s concept of intersectionality, viewed as a “framework that allows examination of the ways in which gender, race, class, etc. ‘mutually construct one another’” and are not to be treated as “distinctive social hierarchies” (148). It is, thus, unethical to work on any category of inequality or discrimination without acknowledgment and the intention to address others. In *The Swan Book*, Wright tells the often untold story of nonhuman animals for which “both contact with humans and human-influenced environments are a traumatizing catastrophe” (164). Atkins recognizes the newly emerging intersectional scholarly approaches to critiquing interspecies relations between humans and nonhumans. Lab experiments on primates, millions of animals being held in captivity or killed in the mass production of meat and dairy foods, zoos, circuses, racing, and breeding constitute all so many examples of cultural uses and abuses.

In Wright’s novels, extreme weather turns into climate change, and the limits of the humans’ capacity to adapt to extreme changes are tested. We are about to find out, in a not-so-distant future, the full extent of the transgenerational impact of climate change, which is expected to affect the most vulnerable of us. In addition to her scathing political remarks, Atkinson denounces corporate and political leaders by putting them on the proverbial therapy couch. Observation of their behavioral characteristics “indicates a range of attributes commonly associated with addiction: denial, minimization, rationalization, justification, obsession, and compulsion . . .” (182) Before concluding the chapter, she voices her concern about striking some “as eccentric” through her descriptions of

traumatic affect “as informing the multilayered rampant consumerism of contemporary saturation capitalism,” which nevertheless does not prevent her from ending the chapter by stating that, “literary encounters with affect unsettle the entrenched and historical denials patriarchal imperialism and saturation capitalism depend on” (186–87).

The conclusion, entitled “Becoming Trans-formed,” in which Atkinson ties up all the threads that inform each chapter, including literary themes and theoretical concepts, leads up to a few cautiously optimistic statements: “The idea that along with wreaking havoc and causing distress, trauma comes with decidedly positive aspects and creative potentials is implicit in my argument—assuming trauma is sufficiently survived (physically and fundamentally psychically). Even when it is not survived, these positive and creative potentials exist for surviving others” (192). Referencing the Rwandan genocide and her personal interactions with its witnesses, Jennifer Yusin concludes her recent book, *The Future Life of Trauma* (published in the same year as Atkinson’s), on a similar note: “Trauma does not just invent its subject; the critical posterity of trauma invents and transforms its relations to that which comes before it. Trauma, or else life begins anew. . . . Life arrives to interrupt the destiny of trauma’s future” (147).

Atkinson brings an undeniably original contribution to literary trauma theory through a solid grasp and efficient use of multidisciplinary sources, insightful cultural analyses and close readings of the supportive literary texts, and last but not least, through an engaging writing style that offsets, at times, scholarly orthodoxy. *The Poetics of Transgenerational Trauma* provides valuable information and an intellectually challenging as well as enjoyable reading experience to multiple categories of readers, including trauma scholars, literary critics, creative writers, and students alike.

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## Comptes rendus / Book Reviews

**Kai Mikkonen. *Narrative Paths: African Travel in Modern Fiction and Nonfiction*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2015. Pp. 324. ISBN: 9870814252024.**

Kai Mikkonen's *Narrative Paths: African Travel in Modern Fiction and Nonfiction* bears a slightly misleading title. The book's exclusive focus is indeed on white Europeans journeying to Africa, while Africans traveling across their own continent are nowhere to be found (those going to Europe or coming back to Africa make a brief cameo appearance in the conclusion to the study). This opening observation might well be considered nitpicking by scholars in comparative literature, the field of research to which Mikkonen belongs, but such an objection would merely testify to the chasm that often separates representatives of the comparative field from those of the postcolonial one: while the former scholars tend to reproach the latter their obsession with empire and its aftermath, the latter regularly reprove the former for their focus on aesthetic matters at the expense of a firm ethical and political engagement. The present review, written from a postcolonial perspective, conforms to this predictable pattern, though it also aims to appraise Mikkonen's contribution within his own field of expertise.

The introduction to *Narrative Paths* outlines the main argument of the book. Focusing on a corpus of generically diverse texts—whether travel writing, journal keeping, or fiction—published by European writers in the late nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth, Mikkonen's study sets out to investigate interactions between genres *within* these works so as to gain a fuller picture of the formal “cross-fertilization” promoted by these texts, even as their individual classification as either fiction or nonfiction remains relatively uncontroversial. More specifically, the author of *Narrative Paths* proposes to draw on narrative theory to examine how nonfiction borrows techniques more readily associated with

fiction (such as free indirect discourse or narrativization) and how, by contrast, fictional texts may for example use rhetorical strategies pointing to their referentiality outside the fictional world. It is precisely such an overall “expectation of referentiality,” according to Mikkonen, that distinguishes novels from nonfictional travel narratives, for in the latter the assumption is that “the author bears truthful witness to the real world” (11)—even if, the scholar concedes, the traveller has a “necessarily subjective and limited perspective” (15).

*Narrative Paths*’s interest in subjectivity, it gradually becomes clear, resides in its scrutiny of the “self-reflection, self-analysis, and self-fashioning” (303) that the travellers under examination engage in, rather than in the historical consequences of the dissemination of their biased worldviews on the inhabitants of the continent that they write about. The opening chapter, for example, focuses on scenes of arrival in Africa in works by Blaise Cendrars, André Gide, and Graham Greene, paying particular attention to the writers’ mental processes as they portray the spaces around them. Because the focus is clearly on the travellers’ subjectivities, dubious comparisons between black people and objects, animals, and plants in the work of Cendrars are hardly commented on (44–48), and the same applies to Gide’s descriptions of Africans as “children all alike” and “droves of human cattle” (59). More baffling still, after stating that, “In his *Travels in the Congo* Gide makes explicit the relation between primitive mentality and Africa” (119), the author of *Narrative Paths* goes on to support another analyst’s view that “Gide is never racist nor does he despise the indigenous Africans”; Gide’s approach, we are told, merely “recalls earlier forms of exoticism” (144n29).

My objection to the above assertion is not just ideological, though obviously Mikkonen’s tendency to mitigate or ignore some of the prejudiced comments made by the writers he examines is, in my opinion, a problematic aspect of his work. (The second part of the book is more nuanced in this regard, though the impulse to endorse some of the travellers’ colonially tinged comments never entirely disappears.) More crucial from a methodological perspective is the author’s choice to leave aside postcolonial theories such as those proposed by Edward Said in *Orientalism* because of the latter’s scant attention to generic issues (25) or because, in the more precise context of African studies, the reading of European texts through an “Africanist” lens “has often resulted in monolithic images of the Western mind” (26). These are well-known criticisms

levelled at postcolonial theories, as Mikkonen makes clear. However, in my estimation, the author misses an opportunity here to offer a corrective to these generalizing approaches, something that might have been achieved by preserving some of the basic tenets of postcolonialism while also devoting attention—as the author indeed does—to the subjectivities of the European writers that make up his corpus. For instance, in his discussion of Cendrars's poetry, Mikkonen refers to the Frenchman's disability (he lost an arm during the First World War) to justify the writer's "description of the fullness and optimism of the black body, and the desire to identify with the Africans" (49). No mention is made, however, of the possible paradox involved in the fact that the mutilated body, an abject component in many European cultures, is put in the service of oppressive discourses of power and appropriation. Along similar lines, British writer and war correspondent Evelyn Waugh's depiction of the festivities around Ethiopian Haile Selassie's coronation ceremony as a "preposterous *Alice in Wonderland* fortnight" (154) would have justified more than a few comments situating Lewis Carroll's fictional text as "a kind of model for the absurd juxtapositions . . . that Waugh was trying to capture" (161)—for, surely, the comparison with *Alice* says at least as much about Waugh's inability to apprehend foreign cultures as it does about the Ethiopian emperor's access to the throne. Here, the limitations of Mikkonen's analysis are methodological rather than strictly political, for he too regards some of the views defended by Waugh (who supported Mussolini's intervention in Ethiopia) as "racist" (181).

These reservations aside, Mikkonen's study deserves to be praised for a number of reasons. First, it deals with a sizable corpus, which encompasses more than a dozen texts across two languages, English and French, which the author navigates with equal ease, sometimes offering personal translations when no official versions exist. From a more markedly qualitative perspective too, *Narrative Paths* offers many valuable insights, especially in the chapters where it most clearly exploits the possibilities offered by narrative theory. Among the most successful sections in the book is the analysis of Graham Greene's *Journey without Maps*, in which Mikkonen explores the connection between causality and temporality in fictional and nonfictional narratives, concluding that Greene's travelogue, interspersed as it is with seemingly digressive memories and reflections, owes much of its complex structure to that of a modern novel. Equally engaging is the section on Pierre Loti's *Le Roman d'un spahi*,

in which Mikkonen starts from an isolated passage in the narrative that asserts the factuality of a fictional incident to go on to discuss the interaction between fiction and nonfiction in the French writer's work. A similar cross-generic enquiry is conducted about Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, in which the protagonist Marlow's discovery of an old (non-fictional) navigation book provides Conrad with the opportunity to hint at different styles and modes of narration within his fiction.

Perhaps the most compelling chapter in *Narrative Paths* is the one focusing on Georges Simenon's fictional and nonfictional texts about Africa. Here Mikkonen successfully demonstrates how the writer uses free indirect discourse with a variety of effects in his novels, ranging from the exposure of his characters' limited knowledge to the portrayal of the mental disintegration of one of his protagonists. In this chapter, the scholar equally convincingly shows how Simenon supposedly rejects exoticism but simultaneously falls prey to it, most notably by retaining the idea, in his fiction and nonfiction alike, that Africa is synonymous with "a forgotten archaic past" (190).

The other chapters in the book offer interesting observations too, either by opting for perceptive thematic groupings or by adopting stimulating methodological approaches. Thus, one of the early sections puts together descriptions of African forests in the works of Joseph Conrad, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, and Graham Greene, and shows how the three writers present these landscapes as spaces that break down the barriers between rationality and madness. The part of the book devoted to Waugh, despite the reservations mentioned above, manages to illuminate some of the links between his fiction and his travel writing, especially in a passage dealing with focalization. A chapter on Michel Leiris's *L'Afrique fantôme* elucidates an intriguing list of Africa-related images included in the ethnographer's travel journal, ranging from references to European operas to bloody events in French colonial history; and the final section discusses Karen Blixen's use of storytelling to relate her experience in colonial Kenya in her memoir *Out of Africa*.

The final two chapters, as many others in the study, establish a fruitful dialogue between the structural, formal, and thematic aspects of the works under examination. Ultimately, it is in this territory—the probing of the poetics of genre through case studies—that Mikkonen's book is at its best, and it is on these grounds that *Narrative Paths: African Travel in Modern Fiction and Nonfiction* may prove to be an

inspiring read for scholars interested in travel writing, fiction, and all the generic spaces in-between.

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**Anke Bartels, Lars Eckstein, Nicole Waller, and Dirk Wiemann, eds. *Postcolonial Justice*. Leiden and Amsterdam: Brill/Rodopi, 2017. Pp. 376. ISBN: 9789004335035.**

*Postcolonial Justice* is a substantial collection of essays originating from an ASNEL (now known as GAPS, Gesellschaft für Anglophone Postkoloniale Studien)—GAS (Gesellschaft für Australienstudien) joint conference held in Potsdam and Berlin in 2014 (a second volume, *Postcolonial Justice: Reassessing the Fair Go*, was co-edited by Anja Schwarz and Gigi Adair). The opening discussion, which describes how the handling of human remains in Berlin's imperial collections reflects a continuing disregard of indigenous knowledge resulting in modern forms of epistemic violence, serves to illustrate the importance of foregrounding questions of justice in present-day postcolonial studies. The concept of postcolonial justice should not be universal, but rather should promote utopian ideals "bound to local frames of speaking from which they project the world" (xi). This new idea of justice, which is not limited to legal aspects but extends to knowledge at large, should move "beyond eurocentric confines" (xii) and address past injustices as well as the "neo-colonial injustice" (xiv) presently prevailing both in the global South and in Western countries through a so-called "boomerang effect" (xvi) of colonial practice that takes the form, for instance, of austerity policies. Therefore, the "global economy of dispossession" (xiv) and the universality of capitalist exploitation make the quest for postcolonial justice a crucially important issue for citizens around the world.

The seventeen essays that make up the volume are presented in five thematic sections. The first one, entitled "Decolonizing Regimes of Knowledge," investigates the link between knowledge and power and underlines the need to de-Westernize the frame of reference that brought about the idea of universal justice. In the first article, David Turnbull argues that for the rule of law to appear rational and objective, it requires



“closure and separation” (6), and that Western justice rests on a sedentary conception of space. Vagrancy and wandering, by contrast, were equated with non-civilization, so that Australia’s Aborigines, for example, were denied any rights, and the concept of justice could be used to support colonization. Turnbull consequently supports the creation of a common, shared space as a possible basis for countering the enclosure and colonization of neoliberal capitalism. In the second article, James Odhiambo Ogone contends that hidden forms of colonialism are still at work in today’s academia, leading to the marginalization of African indigenous knowledge and of African scholars, who have to seek validation from their Western counterparts. The commercial exploitation of Maasai culture by international companies exemplifies both an imbalance of power and differing conceptions of property, which is regarded as individual and time-bound in Western societies, but as collective and timeless by indigenous peoples. Ironically, the Maasai have to defend their rights before courts of law whose underlying principles are at odds with their own cultural fundamentals. Ogone hence advocates “epistemic diversity” as a way to attain postcolonial justice. In the section’s next article, Anindya Sekhar Purakayastha and Saswat Samay Das fiercely criticize present postcolonial theory, which they discard as self-indulgent, outdated and out-of-touch, and accuse the (Indian) academe of being passive and complicit with the discourses of globalized neoliberalism. Calling for a new radical academic activism that would revive the postcolonial agenda by practically engaging with instances of subjugation (such as the state-sponsored expropriation of Indian tribal territories), they turn to the works of Badiou, Agamben, and Žižek for theoretical support. In the section’s fourth article, Mahmoud Arghavan looks at how Iranian women are represented by Iranian American diaspora intellectuals and writers, for instance in Azar Nafisi’s memoir *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. While depictions of the condition of women in Iran have been exploited by neoconservatives to justify an imperialist agenda, the urge to resist the latter has led some critics to turn a blind eye on the regime’s oppressive nature. Arghavan thus promotes a “diasporic, queer [and] anti-imperialist” (88) vision which, moving away from the Orient-Occident, colonizer-colonized, imperialism-anti-imperialism binary inherited from Orientalism (famously theorized by Edward Said), would recognize the struggle of Iranian men and women to lead happy lives despite the hardship caused by an autocratic government, while still addressing hostile policies against Iran.

The second section, titled "Literary Trials of Justice," looks at ways literary texts can contribute to justice and confront injustice, since justice is closely linked to the idea of representation. In his article titled "Poetic Justice," Frank Schulze-Engler examines the imaginary trials conducted in three African works of fiction, *The Trial of Christopher Okigbo* by Ali Mazrui, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo, and *The Trial of Robert Mugabe* by Chielozona Eze. The different ideas of justice emerging from these works show that there can be no unitary concept of "postcolonial justice" in African literature, as it may be used for such various agendas as exalting nationalistic discourse in the name of resisting colonialism and imperialism, fostering self-reflexivity in order to move beyond the "rhetoric of blame" (96), or showing how the revolutionary dream may actually turn into an oppressive nightmare. In the second essay, "The White Man's Justice," Lotte Kößler examines Wulf Sach's psychoanalytical case study *Black Hamlet*, in which a man named Mdlawini is found guilty of murdering someone he was manipulated by his spiritual healer (John, who is also Sach's patient) into taking for a ghost. A connection is established with the Oskar Pistorius case, where the accused claimed he believed he was shooting at an armed (and presumably black) intruder. While Sachs professes to be favouring a psychoanalytical confession of absolution over a punitive and positivist version of justice, this is ultimately negated by his refusal to let John confess his responsibility in Mdlawini's crime, sacrificing the latter for the sake of his larger revolutionary cause. In the section's third essay, Kerstin Sandrock engages with the representation of justice in literature and its narratological features in Salman's Rushdie's *Joseph Anton*. While the use of a third-person narrator may give rise to a Bakhtinian multiplicity of viewpoints, it is also shown to convey a false impression of objectivity. Indeed, Rushdie—who also takes issue with cultural relativism and expresses a belief in universal values—is calling the shots as to what is presented as right and wrong, not only in connection with the fatwa and its grim consequences, but also with fellow writers, politicians, and relatives. Finally, Christine Vogt-William discusses two American novels (*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* and *The Help*) by white women writers (Rebecca Skloot and Kathryn Sackett, respectively) who set out to provide justice to real-life black women by making their voices heard. However, these laudable intentions do not prevent the perpetuation of racialized stereotypes, such as the figure of the good-natured black Mammy (who was actually often a very young

woman living under the constant threat of violence, with no time left to look after her own children), so that those novels are seen as instances of “textual colonization” and “appropriation of black women’s experiences” for the purposes of “white textual projects” (141).

The third section, which engages with the gendered dimension of postcolonial (in)justice, opens with an essay by Julia Hoydis, who convincingly interrogates the extent to which justice can be done to women against whom crimes were committed “in the name of politics or tradition (including abuse, rape, and sexual mutilation)” (184). Focusing on Nnedi Okorafor’s *Who Fears Death*, whose plot is based on the genocide perpetrated in an area—Darfur—where rape was also used as a weapon of war, Hoydis shows how this dystopian, radically feminist novel, which questions the notions of forgiveness and reconciliation, posits violence as a means of empowerment allowing women to escape victimization. In her analysis of *The Embassy of Cambodia*, Beatriz Pérez Zapata examines how Zadie Smith’s novella, which explores current forms of slavery by shedding light on the predicament of a female domestic worker from Ivory Coast in contemporary London, denounces the injustices faced by these exploited immigrants, who are presented as modern victims of processes whereby a Western propensity for subjugation has tended to perpetuate itself. Importantly, Pérez Zapata points to the text’s reflection on the reader’s responsibility: witnessing the fictional representations of these (often invisible) neo-colonial practices may indeed induce him/her to take action, thereby contributing to bearing the burden of justice. Slavery also provides the framework of Karin Ika’s discussion of Caryl Phillips’s *Cambridge*. In her essay, Ika resorts to the concept of resilience to describe the respective trajectories of Phillips’s two protagonists, who both reclaim the restoration of justice for themselves and/or others. An interesting (though daring) parallel is drawn here between the injustices brought about, on the one hand, by the Victorian patriarchal system, which the daughter of a British plantation owner seeks to escape, and, on the other, by slavery as an institution, which leads her to support—unlike her father—the abolitionist cause. Slaves of African descent and their quest for agency, which can be partly achieved through writing but sometimes involves a reliance on violence, thus come to be related to “the situation of another marginalized group, or ‘underclass,’ in European and English society at that time—women” (223).

The first piece of the volume's fourth section (entitled "(Post)Imperial Orders of Travel and Space") addresses the interplay between justice and corporate business. More specifically, Lianne Van Kralingen investigates Jan Van Riebeeck's *Journal* (1652–1662) so as to determine the type of justice that was likely to be expected from an economically driven entity such as the East India Company (VOC). She emphasises the limitations of a sense of justice based on a "logic of capitalist accumulation" (260), concluding that, in the Cape region, "trade relations with the natives" prevailed over "justice or even the well-being of the Company's employees" (255), who were subjected to unacknowledged forms of slavery. According to Prudence Black, "one of the aspects of considering nations coming together under the auspices of postcolonial justice" has to do with "the practicalities of how this can happen" (261). In her essay dedicated to the 1955 Bandung Conference, she highlights what she perceives as the latter's major paradox: despite the event's resolutely anti-colonial undertones and the chosen location's obvious material means (reflected, for instance, in the city's colonial architecture), she argues that insufficient technical assistance was offered to African and Asian delegates, even if she recognizes that the Conference marked the beginning of an era in which mobility could no longer be equated with forced migration. As for Monica Van Der Haagen-Wulff, she deplores Germany's unequal approach to the various genocides it is historically responsible for. In a compelling contribution, she intimates that the enormity of the Holocaust and the resulting sense of historical guilt blind an entire nation to other, equally grave crimes, which are nevertheless "part of the same histories of racism and imperialism" (290). For example, aspects of Germany's violent colonial history, such as the genocide during which the Herero, Nama, Damara, and San were exterminated in German South-West Africa, remain unresolved, thus enabling the country to abrogate "any responsibility by tying the atrocities to a racist colonial mind-set located in the past" (284–85).

The idea of postcolonial justice cannot be dissociated from the revision of past and present injustices that were nonetheless institutionalized as lawful by the West. The final section ("Justice Within and Without the Law") challenges the legitimacy of some supposedly unquestionable colonial legacies even as it exposes the Eurocentric nature of on-going, yet legally objectionable, practices. In her critique of Australia's stance in the context of the twenty-first-century migrant crisis, Carly McLaughlin discusses the instrumentalization of asylum-seeking children to political

ends. In keeping with traditional Western representations of child-like innocence, these children are indeed naturalized as innocent victims with a view to demonizing their parents as barbaric and, in turn, to legitimizing the Australian government's punitive asylum policies. By contrast, McLaughlin pleads for a recognition of these children's agency through an acknowledgment of their status as political subjects. In the next essay, Hanna Teichler casts doubts on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's ability to redress former injustices against indigenous communities (such as the territorial dispossession of First Nations), insofar as the religiously informed concept of reconciliation it promotes, rooted as it is in a hegemonic belief-system, can only restore justice from a Western perspective. From an aboriginal viewpoint, such a process is nothing but "its own version of (post)colonial ideology" (330), a mere "manifestation of unchallenged power hierarchies" (325). Finally, Jens Temmen analyses the circumstances of the United States' annexation of Hawai'i, demonstrating that while the Morgan Report attempted to justify this acquisition by translating "the legal discourse that legitimized the incorporation of Native-American territory into the USA" (336) in the days of westward expansion, the local Queen Liliuokalani's autobiographical account sought to contest American imperialism and "the perceived inevitability of U.S. dominance" (350) by asserting her native island's sovereignty.

As a whole, this volume, which broaches the topic of postcolonial justice from a wide variety of angles, constitutes a valuable contribution to scholarship, although further steps will obviously need to be taken, on a global scale, to counter the countless injustices caused by colonialism, past or present.

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**Robert Clarke. *Travel Writing from Black Australia: Utopia, Melancholia, and Aboriginality*. London: Routledge, 2016. Pp. 196. ISBN: 9780415729208.**

Anthony Trollope was the most significant British writer to visit the Australasian colonies in the nineteenth century. Arriving in 1871, within

two years he assessed their progress in his massive *Australia and New Zealand* (Trollope 1968). Here he consolidated his reputation for solid, “inspection”-like travel writing, contrasting the more breezy style with which he began this aspect of his literary career (by way of contrast see his *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, 1859 [Trollope 1999]).

For Trollope it was white Australia and New Zealand that “counted.” For these territories were annexed and governed not for the advantage of the natives (as, he claimed, was India) but for the British themselves, encapsulating in their success or otherwise the advance of an Anglo-Saxon people across the globe, bringing qualities of sober civilisation, loyalty and slow-moving (non-revolutionary) social progress. Trollope was attuned, then, to how the colonies were faring in their making of new kinds of professional gentlemen and plucky ladies: and notoriously deducted marks from Australians for a propensity to boast (which he summarised using a colonial Australian colloquialism: “Don’t blow”).

Trollope’s opinions on Aboriginal peoples are legion in *Australia and New Zealand*. But to summarise: their reputed deportment is null; their original culture is cannibalistic; attempts to civilise them are absurd; violence against them is justifiable (ruthlessness being the inevitable result of the self-evident need to remove them from arable land); the idea of bringing them to formal justice impractical; the wish to connect their welfare to the Abolitionists’ cause deplorable; and the desire to “smooth the dying pillow” with Christian charity probably meaningless.

The late twentieth-century travel writers surveyed by Robert Clarke are far less ruthless in their assessments of “black” Australia—and correspondingly they tend to be outspoken in their condemnation of white Australian racism—but they re-invent the wheel when it comes to stumbling around what to do “with” Aboriginal Australians.

For there are, it seems, two countries one visits as a foreign travel writer when coming to Australia, broadly black and white: and then, as Clarke shows, one has the difficulty of deciding which one is to go where. Does one relegate First Nations peoples to a single chapter or section? Or is the book going to be all about one’s encounter with “Aboriginality,” relegating comments on white Australia to its all-too-self-evident racist dismissal of the principal interests of the enlightened foreign observer?

It seems, then, that not only did colonists “not know” what to do “with” Aboriginal peoples in military, social, cultural, and economic terms—unless murderousness was on the agenda—but that late twentieth-century travel writers still struggled with how to “integrate” or “relegate” Aboriginality in

an account of "Australia." One cannot help thinking that the issue is the terms themselves, and that the terms themselves emerge from thinking only ever with one side of the equation.

There is some evidence of this "generic" problem also in the organisation and titling of Clarke's otherwise insightful and thoughtful account of "travel writing from black Australia." The travel writing is patently *not* "from Black Australia," except for chapter five's justified re-imagining of Sally Morgan's *My Place* (1987) and Ruby Langford Ginibi's *Don't Take Your Love to Town* (1988) as works of travel writing. Instead, it focuses on the ways in which non-Aboriginal writers confront "black Australia," raising or prompting the questions I outline above.

Without this title, such a focus needs little justification given the insights Clarke's work affords into individual texts, and I found particularly fascinating the chapter where he moves on to the dodgiest of travel-writing engagements with "black" Australia, "Chapter Six: Aboriginality and Australian New Age Travel Books." But perhaps what concerns me most is the degree to which Robyn Davidson's *Tracks* (1990) and Bruce Chatwin's *The Songlines* (1987) dominate the book and indeed its author's thinking when placed under this particular title. (In his introduction, Clarke notes: "*Travel Writing from Black Australia* is in many respects the product of a long conversation with those two books since I first encountered them in the early 1990s.") I will admit it is all too easy, when reviewing a book, to task a writer with what s/he didn't do. But this one sits on the borderline of demonstrating awareness of potential critique and its opposite. On the one hand, the sheer transnational cultural power of *Tracks* and *The Songlines* makes them more than justified as a source of conversation. But it also means the conversation will unfold on non-Aboriginal terms.

Is there any alternative that can still fall within the conventions of postcolonial criticism of travel writing? Perhaps not, or not without breaking the genre of what travel writing criticism consists of. Clarke goes some way towards this, notably in the chapter that deals with Aboriginal writing, giving a nuanced account of how we might read "country" and "home" in Morgan and Langford Ginibi. But in another light, this is "shoehorning" life-writing about identity, history, trauma, and survival into a convenient postcolonial critical category ("Routledge Research in Travel Writing").

What would happen if we began with the numerous Indigenous “songlines” themselves which feature journeys and travel? Who or what are *these* “travellers”? If “country” is immanent in the body, what happens to it at the border? Where do such travellers travel “from” and “to”? How is “travel” conceived in such circumstances and where might we then find “real” “travel writing from Black Australia”? Would it be something that an international publisher would care to hear about? Would it be “write-able” in the manner demanded of contemporary experts in “Australian Studies”? Might it appear instead as a painted mark on the skin? How then would we publish it? Read it?

I realise this may sound over the top but my point is that true engagement with the intellectual expertise, insights, structures and forms of “Black Australia” necessarily warp those of the “European” traditions into which we still think and write. And that anything other than a “relegation” of Aboriginal cultures manifests also in generic distortion.

It is for this reason that those moments in Clarke’s book that strain under the category of his critical field are the more interesting for me. He has marvellous things to say via his deep engagement with Davidson and Chatwin, for example, and the many other “serious” non-Aboriginal travel writers he covers. But the greatest contributions of this work, for me anyway, register this strain. And they are the chapter on Langford and Ginibi, when we get a sense of how specific Aboriginal women’s experiences and writing can alter the way we understand the conventional “journey home;” and the other on the new agers, exploring where often outrageously distorted versions of Indigenous Knowledge “land” in Western culture . . . with the suggestion that these perverse points of connection may be alarmingly telling of what we nearly all of us do when we engage with Aboriginal traditions from the outside.

But let this not detract from Clarke’s achievement on his book’s own terms. His introduction gives a succinct account of shifts in Australian culture in the period discussed (broadly 1980s-early 2000s). He highlights the broad significance of travel writing for understanding the history and present of postcolonial societies, and makes a case for how Aboriginal writers resist the forms of exploitation found in the work of visitors to their nations. He contrasts the utopic motivations of many writers and the development of their disappointments in the form of pervasive melancholia. He dips back into historic travel writing (Trollope gets a mention), though perhaps neglects some of the ways in which



deeper histories inform the writing so well contextualised by the contemporary history that interests him. He is excellent on the peculiarities of recent British accounts of Australia, and on the “Aboriginal chapter” that this often gives rise to, in the manner I have outlined above. And he concludes with thoughts that have driven even my critiques. So altogether this is a highly stimulating book which, couched in the conventions of contemporary literary criticism, reaches out towards their transformation: working, perhaps, towards a slow moving revolution in what we understand the study of Australia, and “writing” about it, to be.

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**Cecile Sandten and Annika Bauer, eds. *Re-Inventing the Postcolonial (in the) Metropolis*. Leiden and Boston: Brill/Rodopi, 2016. Pp. 440. ISBN: 9789004322851.**

Scholarly studies of urbanity and cityscape have been flourishing for quite a while, as the creation of new megacities, planned from scratch, in the middle of nowhere, is increasingly making the headlines.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the focus of attention has clearly shifted away from London and New York to Manila and Lagos, which has enabled Teju Cole to make the telling observation, during a visit to his hometown:

At the artery of the CMS junction (sc. in old Lagos), which is always dense with rapidly moving human bodies, my mind makes a heavy and unexpected connection: the secret twinship this city has with another,

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1. Think, for instance, of the \$500 billion NEOM project in Saudi Arabia, thirty-three times the size of New York, as well as comparable projects in China and in Nevada.

thousands of miles away. The thought is of the chain of corpses stretching across the Atlantic Ocean to connect Lagos with New Orleans. New Orleans was the largest market for human chattel in the New World. (112)

In his reflection, Cole further emphasises that both cities equally disregard their slavery past. These events are deleted from the collective memory, in the absence of any museum to keep the recollection alive. It makes sense, therefore, to try and steer away from that amnesia. As editors Cecile Sandten and Annika Bauer contend in their introduction to this timely publication, the preoccupation with sociology should be left behind while emphasis is laid on the urban imaginary, thus enabling a dialogue between the politics and poetics of urban spaces in a postcolonial context. They have recourse to Walter Benjamin's *flânerie* as well as Gérard Genette's *palimpseste* in order to better examine the textual reinventions and the literary renderings of the various layering *of the* and *in the* postcolonial city.

In the five sections, which are comprised of I. Citizenship and (alternative) Market Economy in the Postcolonial Metropolis, II. Political Change and Contested Spaces in the African and South African Metropolis, III. The Asian and South Asian Metropolises on the Move, IV. Reframing the Australian / Canadian Settler Metropolis, and, V. Senses, Sounds, and Languages in the Postcolonial Metropolis, spatial geographical categories overlap with thematic ones drawn from cultural and media as well as from literary and linguistic studies. As the editors point out, the volume has its origin in a 2013 ASNEL conference, held at the Chemnitz University of Technology.

Melissa Kennedy's opening essay sets the tone, providing a compact, well-documented overview, which brings together Western Europe and North America in a successful attempt to bridge the divide between economics and literature, urban planning and critical textual reflection. She thereby seeks to compensate some postcolonial studies deficiencies. In doing so, her focus lies on the organized precarity of the impoverished during a global trend towards gentrification, in the context of "the new urban colonialism" (Kennedy 6, quoting Rowland Atkinson & Gary Bridge, 2005). She convincingly demonstrates the existence of "uncanny commonalities" (14) between ex-colonies and "our own back door." The fire which engulfed Grenfell Tower, in June 2017, leaving over eighty dead, proves her point dramatically. From a textual perspective, her inclusion of Patrick Chamoiseau from Martinique is a welcome extension

of the otherwise dominant anglosphere.<sup>2</sup> Regrettably, a handful of relevant postcolonial novels are only mentioned in the endnotes. Perhaps more emphasis on Mignola and Wallerstein, at the expense of Marx and Engels, might have helped the critic to extend her perspective.

It stands to reason that narrative theory should be applied to the analysis of novels. However, the collection offers additional approaches which are used as springboards, such as monetary considerations and the “debt-trap” (as in Enda Duffy’s contribution on Yeats), cultural geography on second-generation immigrant Brit-Asian experience in London (in David Tavares and Marc Brosseau’s piece on Dhaliwal and Malkani), the role of isiZulu and sePedi in the deconstruction of orality (in Annika McPherson discussion of Mpe’s work), class issues in the work of university-trained young writers (in Michael Wessels’s essay on Mpe, Mzobe, and Sithole), trauma studies in the counter-narrative to TRC rainbow optimism (Danyela Demir discussing Moele’s work), chaos theory applied to dangerous androgyny (Chris Dunton dealing with Dibia’s work), hyperculturality providing an optimistic view of the city’s possibilities (Chielozone Eze examining Atta’s work), as well as the use of a far-fetched foil text with post-apartheid queer visibility in Cape Town (Verena Jain-Warden’s essay on Duiker’s work). The section on African literature foregrounds (debut) novels by (angry) young male writers, of whom many—though university-trained—eke out a precarious existence in Hillbrow/Johannesburg under post-apartheid capitalist consumerism. These writers often hail from a rural background in the North, which explains the lingering presence of witchcraft and diviners (*ngaka*) in the city. Moreover, Xenophobia (*makwerekwere*) is directed against immigrants from other African countries. Women writers are marginally present in the collection. Only women authors from Nigeria receive some attention, as they are considered against the backdrop of a deplored exodus of artists to the United States. Ironically, Sefi Atta’s international success, as well as her Mississippi background, are overlooked in this section.

In the following discussion of (South) Asian metropolises, an underlying skeptical perspective vis-à-vis the postcolonial can be discerned in the essays by Roman Bartosch, Pia F. Masurczak, and Raj Rao. As these contributors emphasise globalisation, they presuppose the existence of World

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2. The considerable echo this writer enjoyed among English readers was presumably helped by Percy Zvomuya’s translation. Cf. the review in the South African *Mail&Guardian*, 24 August 2012.

Literature. For Bartosch, fiction teaches us how to read cities. Bombay and Bhopal, in the works of Rushdie and Sinha, are characterized by “deliberate estrangement” (227). Masurczak identifies the “subversion of regularised space” (238) in the global metropolis. In her reading of Adiga’s and Dasgupta’s works, “experiment(ing) with identity” (232) is foregrounded and global mobility exemplified through references to Bangalore and an unidentified airport. This internationalisation can be made more plausible by the fact that both writers are Oxford-socialised. However, Dasgupta’s *Capital, the Eruption of Delhi* should be read as an antidote. In his essay, Rao expresses reservations as far as the diasporic writers from the US, UK, and Canada are concerned. Although he mentions *bhashas* (Indigenous, regional languages), he distances himself from any crude nativism. Instead, he advocates the in-between space of the “metropolis-in-the-province” (200). He lauds Kolatkar’s description of “low caste shepherd people” (205) in Jejuri, a village situated a bus ride away from Bombay. He praises bilingualism in the works of authors such as Dilip Chitre, whose Marathi poetry belongs to the province, as he claims, whereas his poetry in English expresses the Metropolis-in-the-Province. Unfortunately, Rao does not illustrate this assertion by referring explicitly to individual Chitre poems. Further, Rao detects a potential comparable to bilingualism in homosexuality’s tendency to “anti-essentialize” current assumptions in the city. In his essay, Rajeev Patke explores six aspects of urban poetics. In truly emphatic readings, for instance in his discussion of “Pi-dog,” he demonstrates enthusiasm for poetry in general and for Kolatkar’s carnivalesque depiction of the daily life on Bombay’s sidewalks in particular.

Subsequently, Bill Ashcroft, Agnes Lam, and Mala Pandurang discuss on-the-spot research results concerning the city-states of Singapore and Hong Kong, as well as the train system in Mumbai. In these hubs of global capital, Ashcroft distinguishes between the transnation (which refers to the outside image and effect) and the transnational (this implies the perspective of the insider). Under the latter rubric, he examines the language struggle between Mandarin, Putonghua, and English. He demonstrates the latent subversive potential of the communal (spoken) Singlish in local poetry. He further identifies a kind of “contrapuntal cosmopolitanism” in poems by Eddie Tay in Hong Kong, who uses Chinese pictograms alongside English. Lam then reports on the findings of her project of interviewing fifty poets in Macao, Hong Kong, Singapore, Manila, Mumbai, and New Delhi. Objecting to “postcolonial curiosities,” she advocates cosmopolitanism

and universal ethics, in order to avoid exaggerated “politicisation.” In her contribution, Pandurang describes the gendered use of public space in India. She introduces the reader to habitual group formation in ladies compartments, thus suggesting that trains function beyond caste and religion. The perceived callousness of the city from the outside is wilfully transgressed in writing, as is the case in Jaideep Verma’s *Local*, in which an immigrant from Madras voluntarily lives solely on commuting trains.

Included in the section “Reframing the Settler Metropolis,” Frank Schulze-Engler’s contribution retains the somewhat polemical style of his conference presentation. He rails against the routinely drab slum representation of indigenous urban dwellers in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand/Aotearoa both by backward (aboriginal) writers and benighted scholars. He draws examples from the works of Thomas King, Drew Hayden Taylor, Patricia Grace, and Larissa Behrendt to foreground successful textual representations of indigenous city subjectivities. Moreover, to prove his point, Schulze-Engler quotes the end of Samuel Cruishank’s famous poem, in which Maoritanga and English are mixed. However, a reference to the poet’s earlier line, “the city is our marae” would have been welcome. Likewise, an allusion to Taone Tupu Ora (an official enterprise with Maori participation) might have provided some concrete evidence of Maori involvement in urban planning and development to build sustainable cities. In her essay, Marijke Denger describes the tension between globalised modernity and geographical uniqueness in Melbourne, where renovated glass façades abound, and numerous plaques create “a picturesque sense of the past” (297) thereby transforming history into heritage. She draws from Michelle De Kretser’s *The Lost Dog*, to illustrate the process of difficult identity formation experienced by an Indian immigrant. However, her discussion of a Chinese descent female painter’s art-work in this context remains relatively abstract. In her exploration of Sydney’s psychogeography, situated at the intersection between global exchange and haunting past, Sue Kossew concentrates on Bennelong Point and Circular Quay in Sydney Harbour. She also examines Gordon Syron’s painting “The Way It Was,” pointing out how this aboriginal painter describes the 1788 invasion from an Indigenous perspective. Finally, she engages with Gail Jones’s *Five Bells*, which, in the wake of the author’s motto, she regards as, “excavating spaces behind the present” (280). As was the case with Kretser’s, a girl with a (traumatised) background from China plays an important role in this work.

In the final section, devoted to “Senses and Sounds,” Rolf Goebel seeks to dethrone Bhabha’s notion of postcoloniality through the use of theories drawn from Baudrillard, Virilio, and Han. The global metropolis, characterised by global media technologies and rhizomatic hyperculturality, can only be ever destabilized, Goebel claims, by the echo of some other materiality that defies digitisation. Goebel chooses DeLillo’s *Cosmopolis* to illustrate his point. This work can be construed as a cyber version of New York City and its global financial flows. In the following essay, Christin Hoene offers a well-documented introduction to the not so well-trodden field of aural representation. Unfortunately, the alienating function of sounds in Forster and Conrad is described more convincingly than the familiarising effect of the “pinpricks of sound” in Chaudhuri’s *Calcutta*. Oliver Lindner subsequently tries to pin down the glitzy side of London through the study of music videos. A close look at Ghetto, Murs, and the Cornershop band allows him diagnose a progression from a fourth-world ghetto to a kind of postcolonial utopia, and finally some post-postcolonial resistance. In the band’s video, shots from a Free Tibet demonstration appear next to well-known markers like Downing Street. However, this reviewer finds it problematic to interpret this as an expression of a transnational city that not only allows the denunciation of Chinese aggression but also signals the readiness to provide safety for political refugees. Linguistic findings in Cameroon lead Eric Anchimbe to assert that the status of Kamtok (Pidgin) has been upgraded over the last two decades thanks to the impact of expanding metropolises. Michael Westphal, on the other hand, finds that the influence of the British metropolis still lingers on in Jamaica. However, Standard Jamaican English has now relegated the status of Patwa (Jamaican Creole) to an astoundingly low level.

All in all, this volume provides a good overview of the complexity of present-day global urban postcoloniality. Nowadays, the *flâneur* of yore has unmistakably been turned into a mall rat.

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**Jane Hiddleston. *Writing After Postcolonialism: Francophone North African Literature in Transition*. London: Bloomsbury, 2017. Pp. 291. ISBN: 9781350022799.**

Jane Hiddleston's *Writing After Postcolonialism: Francophone North African Literature in Transition* was published in 2017 in Bloomsbury's series "New Horizons in Contemporary Writing." The monograph is the sixth title in a list featuring national and diasporic contexts from around the world and dwelling most especially in the contemporary. For her part, Hiddleston surveys francophone writing from the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia) published since 1980, and therefore post-dating the generation of writing that led into the independences and crossed over into the post-independence era. She moves with precision and sophistication across an extensive corpus, in part measuring post-1980 writing against what came before it, and in so doing showing its own properties as they relate to writing and the literary imagination. At the same time, she engages with some of the liveliest debates within the field of francophone postcolonial studies in the current moment.

In the Introduction, Hiddleston defines and defends her use of postcolonialism as a theoretical lens in the face of the fact that it has come under scrutiny and charges of desuetude by scholars working in anglophone settings. However, as she points out, it is important to remember that as postcolonial studies were being discussed as *passé* in anglophone settings and being replaced by transnationalism, transcolonialism, and new debates about World Literature, postcolonial studies were only just beginning to enter francophone settings in earnest. Here the "after" in *Writing After Postcolonialism* is ambiguous: Hiddleston does not intend to release her study from the considerations of postcolonialism, but rather to show them in transition as "a continuation and a development" (1). Specifically, she considers the post-1980 writing from the vantage point of second-wave postcolonialism or as "postcolonial remains" (37). In turn, the study itself can be seen as transitional within the field of francophone postcolonial literature, which at present seems to be searching for its way forward.

Rich and ranging, the Introduction covers considerable ground. In the first instance, it focuses specifically on the socio-political contexts of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia since 1980, covering most notably "les années de plomb" (The Lead Years corresponding to the reign of Hassan II,

1961–99) in Morocco and “la décennie noire” (the Black Decade corresponding to the Algerian Civil War, the 1990s) in Algeria. Hiddleston also alludes to the emergence and manifestations of contemporary Islamism in the Maghreb and then to the Arab Spring. Then, she provides a short history to writing and language debates (the push for Arabization and the place of Berber languages) in the Maghreb before arriving at what will retain her main attention: “literature is examined here as if it were a character itself and certainly as a significant aspect of the subject’s mode of interacting with the world” (17). This affirmation leads into the question of literature’s relation to the world, and attendant considerations around literariness, engagement, and literature and politics. To what extent can literature intervene in the world? Can writing that promotes freedom of expression contribute significantly to such freedom within a transitional democratic society? Do literature and democracy operate in the same sphere, or does literature, as Jacques Rancière has argued, occupy a juxtaposing sphere and operate on the level of metapolitics (23)? Against the backdrop of these questions, the study examines the value and reach of literature and freedom of expression in the context of transitional democracies.

Chapters one and two are engaging chapters that lay the groundwork for chapters three through eight, in which authors and texts are paired through close-readings. In chapter one, which explores the currency of postcolonialism, World Literature, and the tradition of *The Thousand and One Nights*, Hiddleston settles on Edward Said’s “worldliness” as an informing theoretical concept for her study. “Worldliness” usefully opposes the universalization and neutralization that sometimes qualify World Literature: “The worldly text . . . both knows its own contingency and demonstrates its connectivity with the world or worlds from which it is born” (43). Throughout, Hiddleston focuses significantly on the contingency of writing—writing that shows its own limits—and how in self-reflexively exposing its own boundaries and obstacles, certain human tendencies and truths come to light alongside the complex relationship between the individual and society. But, importantly, writing’s avowed contingency is not meant to detract from its importance and stakes, but rather to call attention to the socio-political landscape in which the writing has been produced and its effect on authors and writing. Chapter two, “Why Write? Literature According to its Authors,” focuses on how the authors position themselves with respect to writing—including how to write violence, how



to work with “the inherent trickery of all language” (81), how to write against the orthodoxy of the monocultural. Hiddleston suggests that here writing does not signify one lone process or product, but rather provides a kaleidoscopic view on the change-power *and* contingency of writing.

One of the study’s strengths is assuredly its breadth: in chapters three through eight, Hiddleston discusses nine authors (Salim Bachi, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Kamel Daoud, Tahar Djaout, Assia Djebar, Jacques Hassoun, Abdelkébir Khatibi, Fawzi Mellah, Leïla Sebbar), in a range of their literary production, often placing them in relationships with other authors. In comparing the 1950–1980 “revolutionary” generation to the post-1980 generation, it becomes obvious that the second gives rise to a darker, more probing, and more suspicious literature, but one that nonetheless retains an inventiveness that inspires the literary imagination and contradicts social and historical assumptions. In this way, it could be productive to see post-1980 writing as having been issued from an *ère du soupçon*.

In this vein, a highlight is chapter five, “‘Creating ‘Reality’: Literature and Life,” which focuses on Fawzi Mellah’s *Le Conclave des pleureuses* (1987) and Kamel Daoud’s *Mersault, contre enquête* (2013). The first features a journalist-character who must investigate a series of rapes reportedly committed by the “saint de la parole” (“saint of speech”) in the neighborhood of Montagne Rouge, Tunis. He gathers a series of accounts that each points in its own direction—ultimately, the journalist does not believe he can produce an article on the inquiry as there is too much doubt, and he admits that he himself is not unbiased. There is no “story” because there is no single and verifiable account of what happened. (An interesting point of comparison on the level of narrative and truth-finding is the 2013 Tunisian film *Le Challat de Tunis*). In *Mersault, contre enquête*, Daoud returns to the murder with which Albert Camus’s *Etranger* commences to write from the perspective of the brother of the Arab murdered on the beach. Both novels function as investigations seeking the truth behind crimes; both conjure up “provocative questions about culture, politics, and religion” (168) in their respective contemporary societies; and both conclude with the reader’s inability to know the truth. Some of what explains the latter is that the narrators are not entirely reliable and both knowingly and willingly partake in the activity of storytelling with its part of invention; and so, perhaps the lone “narrative truth” to emerge through Hiddleston’s paired reading is self-reflexive—

the power of narrative to imagine and re-imagine, and, conversely, the danger of the single story in the case when there is a lone narrative.

The chapters provide compelling readings that point in myriad directions, in some cases new directions that the field of francophone post-colonial studies needs for reinvigoration. However, they do not always get pursued or fleshed out. For instance, Hiddleston uses Salman Rushdie as a point of comparison for Daoud's *Mersault, contre enquête*. But what could have become a transcolonial analysis outlined as a valuable new direction in the field of research by Hiddleston in chapter two never materializes. Elsewhere, she points to the need to place francophone and arabophone writing in the Maghreb in a dialogic relationship "as it is also perhaps becoming increasingly artificial to distinguish francophone from arabophone culture in the Maghreb" (261). She makes an overture in this direction with Ahlam Mosteghanemi's *Zakirat el Jassad (Memory of the Flesh)* and *Fadwa el Hawas (Chaos of the Senses)*, both referenced at the outset of chapter five, which could have led to an interesting theoretical discussion on language of writing and intercultural, particularly as they are juxtaposed with francophone Moroccan author's Touria Oulehri's *Les Conspireurs parmi nous*, but they end up serving as a preface to the novels by Mellah and Daoud. Something related to language of writing that is not discussed is place of writing and residence. Some of the authors have made France their home (i.e. Assia Djebar, Leïla Sebbar, Tahar Ben Jelloun), while others (i.e. Boualem Sansal, Kamel Daoud, Abdelkébir Khatibi) have continued to live in the Maghreb, and this no doubt has an impact on them, insofar as cultural and literary politics influence authors and writing.

For this reader, one regret is that a fair amount of the "recent writing" examined is well worked over and not all that recent. It is also hard to imagine that there is no scaling to the almost forty years of writing since 1980. In the Introduction, Hiddleston maps out the historical setting in which she locates her study. Using the same historical markers from that Introduction, is there not a pre- and post-Lead Years literature, a pre- and post-Algerian Civil War literature, and a pre- and post-Arab Spring literature? Given the parameters and the aims of the study, it is particularly disappointing that nothing is done on writing relative to the Arab Spring. One fitting example might be *Printemps* (2014) by Algerian Rachid Boudjedra.

In sum, *Writing After Postcolonialism: Francophone North African Literature in Transition* provides uniquely focused lenses in narrative activity-in-narrative and the literary-in-literature through which Hiddleston explores literary and democratic transitions in the Maghreb. Ultimately, and most importantly, the study leads back through its own viewfinder to an affirmation of the literary imagination. As such, it has a broad and vital implication: it will remind students and researchers, specialists and non-specialists alike of why writing and the literary imagination are indissociable from the human experience and as such compelling objects of study.

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**Lisa Tomlinson. *The African-Jamaican Aesthetic: Cultural Retention and Transformation Across Borders*. Amsterdam: Brill/Rodopi, 2017. Pp. 210. ISBN: 9789004338005.**

This monograph is a remarkable and timely extension of previous works on the African-Jamaican aesthetic, such as Edward Kamau Brathwaite's *Folk Culture of the Slaves in Jamaica* (1970) and Mervyn Alleyne's *Africa: Roots of Jamaican Culture* (1996). The book also builds on Carolyn Cooper's *Noises in the Blood: Orality, Gender and the 'Vulgar' Body of Jamaican Popular Culture* (1995) and *Sound Clash: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large* (2004), and on Hugh Hodges's *Soon Come: Jamaican Spirituality, Jamaican Poetics* (2008), to argue that there is such a thing as an indigenous African-Jamaican aesthetic even as it transforms across geographical borders.

Lisa Tomlinson makes clear that it is not her "intention to 'fix' or homogenize Jamaican literature and culture as they are expressed in the diaspora," but rather to assert "that a close examination of Jamaican literary productions reveals both a persistent continuity of African and Caribbean aesthetic modes and a dialogue with local and diasporic realities" (70). This is no mean feat, considering the plurality of ideologies, philosophies, and religions in Jamaica. Moreover, she incorporates into her work anticolonial discourse, pan-Africanism, black feminism, and diasporic studies. Tomlinson focuses on Jamaican-Canadian and

Jamaican-British diasporas, specifically in Toronto and London. She also extends her analysis to Francophone and Hispanophone literatures across the Caribbean and to Anglophone diasporic literatures in the US. The study challenges previous scholarship in many ways and, even if readers do not agree with the author's arguments, this book will compel them to revisit and rethink commonly held assumptions.

As the introduction indicates, this monograph is resistant to black diasporic scholarship privileging Eurocentric discourse. Instead, Tomlinson uses marginalized interdisciplinary frameworks in order to focus on local, embodied and anticolonial forms of knowledge, including Jamaican Patwa, folk culture, and a Rastafarian sensibility. Furthermore, she analyses the intersections of race, gender, and class in the immigrants' predicament in their adopted country. Instead of providing a sociological reading of the diasporic works under scrutiny, Tomlinson seeks to delineate a cultural aesthetic.

The first chapter opens with a rather surprising personal account of the author growing up as a Jamaican-Canadian in Canada. Rather than detracting from the book's intentions, this section demonstrates the importance of the Jamaican oral tradition in rectifying the cultural alienation that the children of the Jamaican diaspora can experience when the education system of their adopted country fails to represent them and their reality. Tomlinson then proceeds with a scholarly study of Jamaican work songs and proverbs, thus recharting orality's "trajectory in the genesis of a national literature" (3). In performing this task, the author disagrees with Paul Gilroy's proposition in *The Black Atlantic* (1993) that slavery is "the crucial moment defining North American black experience" (9). Tomlinson instead claims that "in the case of Jamaican music, it is crucial to recognise the African indigenous foundations upon which it is built" (9). After reconceptualising the foundations of the Jamaican oral tradition, Tomlinson examines the transformation it underwent when Jamaican men started working on the Panama Canal, an experience that led to "the notion of 'America'" as "a shared diasporic space" (10). The songs reflect these people's new environment while reflecting upon the old and serving as an "economic and political critique" (10).

The study also concentrates on the way songs and proverbs have shaped women's literature. As Tomlinson explains, the early songs sung by enslaved women, unlike those sung by their male counterparts, were not recorded for posterity, as they were performed in private. However,

women's later songs about their experiences of working as street vendors have been recorded. In her discussion, Tomlinson engages with existing criticism, first disagreeing with Martha Beckwith's claim in *Jamaican Proverbs* (1925) that these proverbs are only about "poverty, hunger and injury and want. Love is not celebrated nor is heroism or beauty" (15). She then leans on Carolyn Cooper's argument in *Noises in the Blood* to outline the humour involved in expressing hardships. To demonstrate the breadth of themes in women's poetry, Tomlinson analyses Louise Bennett's proverbs and focuses on Bennett's and Afua Cooper's use of storytelling figures such as Anancy and the duppy.

Chapter two deals with the ways in which Claude McKay and Una Marson incorporate African-Jamaican knowledges, pan-Africanism, and anti-colonialism into their work. While examining McKay's poetry and *Banana Bottom* (1933), Tomlinson argues this novel confirms Frantz Fanon's observation in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) that "an artistic renaissance must often be preceded by deep research into the pre-existing local culture" (31–32). Through McKay's use of Patwa and his portrayal of Bitá, Tomlinson demonstrates how this is undertaken: "Bitá's journey represents the possibility of (re)searching and (re)connecting with the folk cultures of black Jamaicans as a path to indigenous self-identity" (33). Turning to Una Marson's work, Tomlinson underlines the importance of Patwa and African American vernacular. In addition, she argues that Marson's pan-Africanism is influenced by Marcus Garvey, African American jazz and blues. Marson's pocomania, Tomlinson contends, does not constitute an "authentic" link to Africa. Rather, it works as an archive of repressed African traditions. Tomlinson thus suggests that African-influenced religions become "living archives" (55). The last section in this chapter suggests that similar practices later resurged in the Rastafari and reggae style developed by dub poets Matabaruka and Mikey Smith.

Chapter three specifically explores dub poetry in Canada and the UK. In this section, Tomlinson argues against what she perceives as the ahistoricisation of the "continuity of the Afro-Caribbean aesthetic and culture" (69–70) in Rinaldo Walcott's *Black Like Who? Writing Black Canada* (1997). She also posits that Gilroy's valorisation of cultural exchanges in *The Black Atlantic* undermines "the locality and indigeneity of cultures that are so central to an anticolonial framework" (70). Tomlinson further examines the way in which Toronto-based Lillian Allen and Afua Cooper foreground reggae and dancehall in their work. In this regard, Tomlinson maintains

that re-imagining Jamaican dancehall offers an example of “de-territorialization” (75). She also explores these writers’ engagement with African-Caribbean religions. Similarly, in the UK, religion also features prominently in the works of Linton Kwesi Johnson and Benjamin Zephaniah. Although Tomlinson acknowledges that Kwesi Johnson’s aesthetic is not inherently religious, she demonstrates that he does depict the importance of black spirituality in the lives of the African-Caribbean diaspora, while employing language from Rastafari. Tomlinson further emphasises his reliance on Patwa as well as his depiction of violence against South Africans. She thus likens Kwesi Johnson to Walter Rodney, who applied pan-African tenants to other ethnic and radicalised groups. Zephaniah, she asserts, “employs Rastafarian political and spiritual discourse” (99) to “envision a promised land free of racial oppression” (101).

Chapter four examines how women’s dub poetry reflects the intersections of race, gender, and class. To this end, Tomlinson discusses Afua Cooper, Ahndri Zhina Mandiela and Lillian Allen in Canada, and Jean ‘Binta’ Breeze in the UK. Male dub poets, she explains, have maintained close ties with black-nationalist and pan-Africanist discourse. Female poets, she contends, approach the lives of African-Jamaican women in the Caribbean and the diaspora from a black feminist and anti-colonialist perspective. As Tomlinson indicates, these writers allude to male artists such as Langston Hughes and Bob Marley in order to voice a gendered experience in the diaspora. Yet again, she emphasises the presence of African spirituality and folklore in their texts. Significantly, she argues that Claude McKay’s works do explore intersections of gender and race, which has been given little attention in the critical literature on his work.

The last chapter focuses exclusively on novels. When dealing with McKay’s *Home to Harlem* (1937), Tomlinson points out that Harlem became a transnational and black cross-cultural dynamic space during the Harlem Renaissance. Instead of analysing McKay’s depictions of African Americans, which have been the main focus of much critical discourse so far, Tomlinson outlines the ways in which the Haitian Ray shares his knowledge of Caribbean history and cultures, as well as of pan-African and anticolonial discourses, with the African American character, Jake.

Tomlinson then turns to work by women novelists, namely Makeda Silvera’s *The Heart Does Not Bend* (2003) in Canada and Joan Riley’s *The Unbelonging* (1985) in the UK. She examines how these authors aesthetically integrate proverbs, dialogue in Patwa, and religion into their fiction.

For both writers, remembering does not entail nostalgia, as the Caribbean is a site of lived experience rather than a mythic one. Nonetheless, Tomlinson maintains that romanticising Jamaica can prove helpful when faced with racism and isolation. The decision to place these two texts in conversation may at first appear rather strange, given the eighteen-year span between their respective publication; however, she connects these works by stressing that they are both dealing with sexual taboos (Silvera with lesbianism, and Riley with incest and rape).

The limitations of only comparing one novel by one female writer in two different geographical spaces and time periods are somewhat rectified in the conclusion, in which Tomlinson discusses Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000). She sheds light on how Smith's inclusion of other ethnicities links her to other Jamaicans who also adopted a transcultural viewpoint. According to Tomlinson, Smith belongs to the Jamaican aesthetic as her predecessor Louise Bennett did before her. What is more, Tomlinson's formulation of the African Jamaican aesthetic is a useful analytical tool for further scholarly research on other Jamaican diasporic writers.

Undoubtedly, Lisa Tomlinson's *The African-Jamaican Aesthetic* will become a crucial text for students and scholars working on Jamaican literature. Thanks to the author's inclusion of such literary artists as Haitian American Edwidge Danticat, Trinidadian Merle Hodge, and African Americans Toni Morrison and Zora Neale Hurston, this monograph will familiarise readers with the similarities, differences, and cultural exchanges between black women's writing in the Americas more generally. In addition, Tomlinson's meticulous exploration of Claude McKay's work will prove of interest for specialists. Perhaps most importantly, it will compellingly assert McKay's importance in understanding African-Jamaican literature.

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**Stephanos Stephanides and Stavros Karayanni, eds.**  
***Vernacular Worlds, Cosmopolitan Imagination*. Leiden**  
**and Boston: Brill/Rodopi, 2015. Pp. 230 + xxvi. ISBN:**  
**9789004300644.**

It has become customary these days when holding conferences under the umbrella of the Association of Commonwealth Languages and Literatures Studies (ACLALS), to unsettle the concept of the Commonwealth from its traditional geo-political moorings and centre-periphery framings: one way is through a re/positioning of culture and literary tradition as agents for change. The editors of this collection of essays, Stephanos Stephanides and Stavros Karayanni, aim to do this by asking how “post-colonial” commonwealth literature mediates between two informing categories—the cosmopolitan imagination and vernacular worlds (with their attendant tensions and synergies)—and what forces make cultural products circulate around either one or the other. In an introduction that comprises a web of theoretical mediation, poetic voices, and intercultural connective tissue, Stephanides and Karayanni, poets as well as critics, elide geopolitics with geopoetics in seeking new discourses for reimagining the island space of Cyprus. Cyprus was the location of the ACLALS Conference held in 2010, from which the essays in this volume are largely drawn, “an ostensibly minor” (xii) island where “culture and language appear caught between the nation state that nationalises and territorialises” and the various global flows—of immigrants, of finance and capital, of cultures and languages.

In laying down references for their search for “a new poetics of the imaginary and imagined” (xii) that might contribute to the re-formation of a World Literature from the diverse perspectives of contemporary Cypriot culture, Stephanides and Karayanni use terms like “transculturalisation,” “cultural translatability,” “incorporation,” “dispersion,” and “border



thinking,” terms which fittingly evoke Cyprus’s unique and complex political landscape, that of a nation-state that has been deeply rifted between a fervent vernacular nationalism, and the cosmopolitan imaginary since the 1974 war and subsequent de facto partition. An overdetermining of ethnic origins appeared in the Greek Cypriot majority being confined to the south and the Turkish army occupying the north; but from 2004 when Cyprus was incorporated into the EU, the nation began to identify as a modern supranational, post-Enlightenment cosmopolitan player. In inviting contributions to this volume, the editors advocated advancing Walter Mignolo’s mandate for “border thinking” (xii), an apt image for the lifting of barriers between north and south after the first checkpoint crossing was opened in 2003. Thinking across and between the vernacular and the cosmopolitan helps create a “layered transculturation” (xii), as they point out, and to revive awareness of the traditional cultural cosmopolitanism that was in held in check by nationalist rhetoric, symbolised by the checkpoints that marked and enforced the divide in the decades following 1974.

The configuration “vernacular cosmopolitan,” used in postcolonial discourse and theory by Homi Bhabha, Sheldon Pollock, and anthropologist Pnina Werbner, has its roots in diachronic linguistics, but as the editors emphasise, pointing to their own transcultural interventions, vernacular languages are not “natural” states but self constructions, “willed” by dialogue with and appropriations from cosmopolitanism (xiii); this is most starkly seen in the “birth” of European romance vernaculars from the parent language, Latin, as the colonies of the Roman Empire broke away and dispersed. In supranational, postnational Cyprus, a rich melange of vernaculars and cosmopolitan languages uneasily coexist, reflecting power inequalities due to historical waves of conquest, colonialism, and changing demographics: the two vernaculars, Cypriot Greek and Cypriot Turkish, intersected with the global language of English after the island became a British Crown Colony in the early twentieth century, and in the postcolonial nation state have emerged as Modern Greek and Modern Turkish. This mutation and modernisation of the island’s vernaculars in the reterritorialisation process, the editors argue, has enabled remediations of cultural and nationalist narratives such as theirs.

This densely theorised opening gains a sharper focus when the editors discuss literary texts, pointing first to the separatist thinking behind the collection *27 Centuries of Cypriot Poetry* which follows just one

vernacular tradition. By contrast, in their new poetics of habitation, the vernacular worlds and cosmopolitan imagination function as “spatial and cultural markers” (xiii), identified with reference to Deleuze and Guattari’s linguistic model of the functions of language, enabling a creative convergence between spatial and temporal dimensions. In a poem by Stephanides, “Broken Heart,” the encountering of the “shadows of grandmothers” as spectral, uncanny presences “marks a transition between one dimension of experience into another” (xviii). This new discourse acknowledges disjuncture rather than continuity, identifying arrivals and departures as non-finite and non-linear and as part of “a process of cultural translatability and memory” (xviii); yet it also witnesses the crisis of remembering caused by the dislocation between past images and present day mandates.

Such readings stem from the editors’ deep immersion in the entangled multilingual, literary genealogies of Cyprus as they seek new articulations of its chequered and layered history in the contemporary moment: recognising the haunting presence of uncanny voices that seek to claim a place; the coexistence of unresolved pre-existing forces that destabilise any single statement or position; the interconnecting trajectories of loss. They point to the opening up of new imaginative space for cultural transfer by the queering of cultural norms such as home, as with the Greek poet, Constantin Cavafy, whose permeable identity enables him to resist post-enlightenment notions of Hellenism in his poem “Returning Home from Greece” (1914), and the Cypriot poet, Andriana Ierodiconou, whose poem “Journey” is another encounter with border thinking that shows a translational perspective on culture and history.



The ten essays that follow point to some of the new tensions and mobilisations in local and regional spaces when intersected by the global, so illustrating the instability of the overlapping categories of vernacular worlds and cosmopolitan imagination. With reference to local and global contexts, they provide insights into new synergies and possibilities of agency, whereby the cosmopolitan imagination may give new life to indigenous, vernacular worlds and vice versa through transcultural borrowing and cross-cultural patterning, or alternatively when authors identify the gap between them and point to the need for new knowledge and understanding in approaches that aim to reconcile literary and critical

scholarship with social conscience. The collection is organised to show-case different methodologies and research approaches used in postcolonial/globalization studies: action-based research, grassroots community work and field work, and cross-cultural comparison, literary criticism and theory as frames for text-based study.

Geoffrey V. Davis in "Doing the Right Thing" opens the collection with an overview of two projects in which he has been involved that illustrate how ethically responsible initiatives can build bridges between cosmopolitan and vernacular perspectives. The first involved pedagogical work and capacity-building in India among the tribal (*adivasis*) communities in constructing an Adivasi Academy as a centre of tribal studies at the Bhasha Research Centre in Baroda. This decade-long project inaugurated and managed by the cultural activist Ganesh Davy, featured major international "Chotros" ("to bring together") or conferences involving many ACLALS members and resulting in five substantial, coedited essay collections published between 2009 and 2015. The second project involved ACLALS with the Commonwealth Organisations Committee in Zimbabwe (COCZ) in 2010, and in 2012 Davis represented ACLALS with the Commonwealth Association of Museums, as a "commonwealth cluster" (11), in undertaking a needs audit of the cultural sector in Zimbabwe as it sought to return to the Commonwealth. Davis points to crucial new research directions for ACLALS, prompted by social participation and the hope for tangible improvement in civil society. A more explicit, tactical positioning of the researcher as anthropologist appears in the essay by Diana Wood Conroy, "Vernacular Patterns in Flux." Conroy uses autoethnography in the form of fieldwork diaries in her study of how the design and printing practices of the Tiwi Aborigines of Australia enable this nomadic indigenous community to develop a cosmopolitan awareness. She simultaneously records reflections on her participation in the project as enlightened by her awareness of another pattern: the intercultural and intersubjective process of observing and being observed. Two other essays, by contrast, note the gulf between cosmopolitan and vernacular perspectives as indicative of the barrier between current researcher participation and vernacular knowledge. Elsie Cloete, upon examining a seventeenth-century engraving with students at Johannesburg University, noted the limits of metropolitan English in the face of vernacular understanding of the local environment when an isiZulu-speaking student presented a particular linguistic interpretation of the

image. She advocates interlanguage study and environmental learning to retrieve a vernacular knowledge of the environment. Felicity Woods's study, "Wealth-Giving Mermaid Women and the Malign Magic of the Marke," examines the dangerous synergies between global international economies and the local, occult practices of the *mamlambo*. Originating in southern African belief systems, this supernatural force promises wealth but offers disaster, confirming the destructive power of globalised corporate capitalism for those who blindly subscribe to it. But Woods can only observe rather than attempt to reconcile these oppositions. The *mamlambo* exists as a deadly occult spirit in its own right, even though complicit with the seductive forces of western consumer culture. It functions in different form in East African societies as well, inciting the urge to migrate and the compulsion to reach the west and indulge the lust for profit and material gain—as found in Abu Bakr's novel *African Titanics* (2014) which images this force as a dark sorcerer.



The six essays that follow examine literary and cultural productions from different nations, involving cultural cross comparison, alternative, non-canonical genres and local-global intersections and tensions, and together they consist of a mapping of hybridity and cultural dissemination in the context of world literature and cosmopolitanism. Inevitably, the analytic framework of cosmopolitan imagination and vernacular worlds outlined in the introduction comes to function as a binary structure through which to examine culturally specific instances of cultural change and indigenous-western intersections.

The historical colonial binary that enforces marginalisation and Othering of indigenous peoples is revisited by Debashee Dattaray in "Travelling Knowledges," a pedagogically-informed study of indigenous stories from the North East of India and Canada. In this cross-cultural comparison between the reception of Native Canadian written narratives in India and the traditional struggle for survival of the tribes, castes and Dalits of the Indian subcontinent, she points to a new cosmopolitan paradigm in indigenous literature, one that rewrites their position as victims of internal colonisation, and that reflexively examines the process of narrativity and self-construction. As a "subversive ideological project" (91), this literary repertoire is ongoing and fluid, circulating in order to attract new readerships. Padmini Mongia

also problematizes the boundaries between vernacular worlds and the cosmopolitan imagination and offers a new way of reading between these two points. She introduces a new research topic for Indian literature—pulp fiction—whose non-canoncity and unacceptability as IWE (Indian Writing in English), its easy, extensive marketability and mass consumption are expanded by the new modes of global dissemination. Paradoxically, the genre of pulp fiction, like chick lit, endorses conservative gender norms, operating below the threshold of the seductive rhetoric of cosmopolitan celebrity and consumer culture. Paul Sharrad, in “The Vernacular Imagination of Papua New Guinea Fiction” also examines the tensions and exclusions inherent in the binary of the nativist, vernacular writings and the cosmopolitan anglophone writing of the literatures of Papua New Guinea, which he points out have been left on “the literary-critical margins of postcolonial studies” (129). Identifying the vernacular of Papua New Guinea in terms of Deleuze and Guattari’s minor literature, he argues that this is in fact the majority mode of writing, whereas English as a conduit to cosmopolitan, anglophone diasporic expression is available only for an elite intellectual minority. In the works of the novelist and academic, Regis Stella, and of his colleagues, the relocated diaspora poet, Stephen Winduo, and the writer, Russell Soaba, however, Sharrad detects a “consistent fictive vision” that contributes “untranslatable” elements (142) of a postcolonial vernacular to a vernacular cosmopolitan globality. Paul Steward offers a cross-cultural comparison between two canonical postcolonial writers, Samuel Beckett and J.M. Coetzee, that examines their innovations in the aesthetic practice of the novel through the lens of their resistance to national frames of identity and hence to an explicit vernacularism. Although both create characters whose transcultural leanings are sustained or transfigured in vernacular or cosmopolitan contexts, Steward suggests they withdraw from positions of power (both authorial and political) that might impose any identity within the text from either local or cosmopolitan perspective, in order to avoid reinstating their objects of postcolonial critique. The Canadian scholar and past chair of the Canadian Association of Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies (CACLALS), Victor Ramraj, whose untimely death in 2014 is registered by the dedication of this volume to his memory, writes on “Language and Perception.” Asking how life writing can record a local subjectivity with reconfigured cosmopolitan paradigms as evidence of

a complex individual psyche, he points to the models of Edward Said and V. S. Naipaul. His subjects are the Indo-Caribbean writers, Sase-narine Persaud (Guyana) and Sonny Ladoo (Trinidad), Caribbean migrants to Canada. Ramraj finds evidence of both the cosmopolitan and vernacular in their work—in Persaud's use of Hindu philosophy and Ladoo's use of the vernacular, generic formats of Trinidadian culture.

The concluding essay by Russell McDougall bookends the introduction and opening essay by Davis, by asking questions about the place of Indigenous Studies today, so addressing a thematic that runs throughout the volume; and it suggests a reconfiguring of the cosmopolitan and vernacular binary through the reconceptualising of concepts of race, cosmopolitan, the exotic and indigenous. McDougall asks how far indigenous knowledge systems can take us now that they seek change at the global level, when resistance to oppressive nationalisms is overlaid by the search for "global connectivities and dialogic methodologies." He points to attempts to promote "broader understanding of the relationships between indigenous communities" (185). Arguing that the category of indigeneity traverses both human and animal worlds, he introduces a cosmopolitan and posthuman perspective with reference to the indigenous Australian species of the brumby (wild horse) and dingo (wild dog). Ultimately, McDougall argues for an integrationist point of view that situates the terms of indigeneity outside colonial, imperial, or cosmopolitan connotations to see indigeneity itself as a category of identity, enabling a reimagining of what it is to be human.

*Vernacular Worlds, Cosmopolitan Imagination* is an impressive collection for its recondite arguments and relevant case studies of translational transcultural exchange that collectively endeavour to reconfigure the vernacular and the cosmopolitan. In sum, it expands and challenges cosmopolitan's post-Enlightenment positioning and embrace of hybridity, transculturalism, and citizenship in relation to the vernacular, while McDougall's concluding integrationist angle moves the debate into another, related realm of enquiry. This excellent scholarly volume is a tribute to its ACLALS editors and contributors and a worthy successor to others in the Cross/Cultures series.

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**Sneja Gunew. *Post-Multicultural Writers as Neo-Cosmopolitan Mediators*. London and New York: Anthem Press, 2017. Pp. 157 + vii. ISBN: 9781783086634.**

The title is a bit of a mouthful but the argument behind it is quite compelling, all the more so since it limns Sneja Gunew's autobiography and her status as a polyglot. Behind "post-multiculturalism," where "post" functions as the Lyotardian future anterior, lies in filigree multilingualism. This is a condition that Sneja Gunew is familiar with, since she was born in Germany and her native tongue is German.<sup>1</sup> As if that could be questioned, she proudly tells us that she owns a photocopy of her great-great uncle (Will)'s memoirs originally handwritten in German as well as an English-language translation typescript of it; both await the author's reinvocation and archival touch.

At the age of four, the somewhat precocious Sneja, equipped with already some rudimentary written German, migrated to Australia, where her parents were classified as "refugees but then called 'displaced persons' or DPs" (86). There she learned English and studied Russian to come as close as she could to her father's native tongue, Bulgarian. After spending some thirty years in Australia, she moved to Canada and became a Canadian citizen in 2010. Throughout her forty-five-year career, she was always reminded, even by well-intentioned colleagues, in both English-speaking settler countries, that she was not "native." However, she concedes that her affirmation of other Englishes went down less smoothly in Australia with its strenuous monolingualism than in Canada's officially bilingual cultures. Gunew, who experienced displacement over three continents, is therefore also the post-multicultural, neo-cosmopolitan writer of her eponymous title.

This slim book of some 120 pages reads as the *summa* of her research over the past three decades, which foregrounded diasporic, immigrant, multicultural, and ethnic minority writers, as they continued being located "in a kind of cordon sanitaire around settler-colonial national cultural formations" (5). The book is thus predicated on a *glocal* type of cosmopolitanism at the interface of the global and the local. She presents what she calls "a stammering pedagogy" (2) to refer to the fumbling process of pointing to differences without "producing comprehensive answers" (9). It is true

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1. See her statement on YouTube on 20 July 2010: Sneja Gunew, "Prof Sneja Gunew, English and Women's and Gender Studies," uploaded by UBCArts, 20 July 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiN3W2sZf3c>, accessed 24 March 2018.

that the book “fumbles” that way and gropes, as with shaky fingers, towards some positioning past the last *post*, some sort of “post-Western” fulcrum, where the West is understood, in Neil Lazarus’s words, as “an ideological category masquerading as a geographical one” (Lazarus 44, qtd 20). Possibly Gunew marshalled too much material and as a result, the book ends up being dense and hard to follow in places, which obfuscates the premise according to which “post-multicultural writers offer a cosmopolitan mediation and translation between the nation-state and the planetary” (11).

Falling into six chapters, the book introduces the reader to these mediators. The first chapter (“Who counts as Human within [European] Modernism”) makes a case for “peripheral cosmopolitanisms,” as Europe “continues to function as an imperial or colonial metaphor that evokes modernity and civilization” (19). As is customary throughout the book, Gunew’s argument taps into her own background, as her European parents and then herself were displaced by an Anglo-Celtic version of “Europe” in Australia, where Southern and Eastern Europeans were perceived as “black.” She therefore deems that both non-Anglo-Celtic settlers and Indigenous peoples still need to have their history told through an Oral History Repository, even though some works have explored white Aboriginality. In Greek-Australian writer Christos Tsiolkas’s *Dead Europe* (2005), whose title betrays the wish for “Europe” to stop being such a haunting presence, the Greek-Australian queer male character goes back to the old Europe and discovers there an anti-Semitism that he acknowledges was part of his formation; he then morphs into a vengeful vampire preying on European imperial guilt.

The second chapter on “Vernacular Cosmopolitanism,” after Homi K. Bhabha’s oxymoronic coinage (Bhabha 25), considers the representational avatars of post-Soviet “Eastern” Europe in recent writing, which Gunew contrasts with depictions of “Asia” and “Eur/Asia,” making use of Gilroy’s three-tiered conceptualization of the stranger: a) imagining the stranger; b) imagining oneself as the stranger; c) being interpellated as stranger in the place one calls home. Thus, writing about the central and eastern margins of Europe, Olivia Manning (*Balkan Trilogy*, 1960), Rose Tremain (*The Road Home*, 2008), and the Indian author Rana Dasgupta who writes an English text set in Bulgaria, *Solo*, imagine the stranger. Among those who see themselves as the stranger, she numbers Dubravka Ugrešić whose “yugostalgia” in *Nobody’s Home* (2007), however, Gunew sees as “self-balkanizing” (38). Because of her German background, Gunew feels more affinities with Herta Müller who, in *Hertztier* (in German) and in its



English version, *The Land of Green Plums* (1998), describes a community of German speakers in Ceausescu's Romania, where the inedible green plums with their soft pits are poisonous metaphors for the toxic contamination of the surveillance state. Antigone Kefala, born of Greek parents in Romania, is a non-Anglo-Celt in Australia where she now resides. In *Sydney Journals* (2008), she engages with being interpellated as a stranger at home. In the second half of the chapter, Gunew focuses on the work of diasporic "Eur/Asian" artists: the Canadian novelist and cultural theorist Kyo Maclear, who, in *The Letter Opener* (2007), articulates a "trans-memory" and "palimpsests of affect" (46). The visual artist Fiona Tan, whose father was Chinese and her mother an Anglo-Scottish Australian, who was born in Indonesia, grew up in Melbourne, Australia, and now lives in Amsterdam, describes herself as a "professional foreigner" (47). Last, Canadian filmmaker and graphic novelist Ann Marie Fleming in *The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam* (2007) documents the life of a world-famous magician born in China who married an Austrian and took his vaudeville troupe all over the world between the two world wars. These Eurasian ancestors, who confound prescriptions of identity, join the other vernacular cosmopolitans in introducing "minoritarian interjections that disrupt the business as usual of certain forms of globalization" (50).

"The Serial Accommodations of Diasporic Writings," which make up the third chapter, attempts to scrutinize the ways in which women writers accommodate serial diasporas, often in multiple languages. Anita Rau Badami was born in India but immigrated to Canada and focuses on a diasporic, Sikh community in Vancouver, haunted by memories of reprisals after Indira Gandhi's assassination; Shani Mootoo was born in Ireland, was raised in Trinidad and then moved to Canada, and explores the lives of Caribbean Indians complicated by a transnational queer Nation; Yasmine Gooneratne immigrated to Canada from Sri Lanka, where she then returned. In their mediated relationship to India, all three women writers share "new grammars of subjectivity" (66). Shani Mootoo's question in her short story, "Sushila's Bhakti"—"What is my point of origin? How far back need I go to feel properly rooted? I must be looking for an Indian Cro-Magnon?" (64)—echoes Avtar Brah's critique of fixed origins in *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contested Identities* (1996) as well as Vijay Mishra's caution in *The Literature of the Indian Diaspora* (2007) against upholding the supposed purity of the home country or comforting the denial that the homelands of diaspora are themselves contaminated.

In the fourth chapter ("Indigenous Cosmopolitanism: The Claims of Time"), Gunew endorses Pheng Cheah's postulate that "the unity and permanence of a world are thus premised on the persistence of time" (Cheah 2), which is on a par with US critic Wai-chee Dimock's concept of "deep time" usually associated with geological time. She considers the work of two Australian Aboriginal writers, Noongar Nation Kim Scott, in *That Deadman Dance* (2010), and Alexis Wright, who, in *Carpentaria* (2006), gives a rejoinder to canonical Australian writer Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia* (1938). Surprisingly, Gunew connects "the Dreaming" in Australian Aboriginal belief systems with the Islamic concept of *haqq*, the Arabic word for "truth," which is here reinterpreted in Spivakian terms as "a birthright that confers the responsibility to care for others" (80). Of note is Gunew's exploration of Canadian Cree writer Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the fur Queen* (1999) as an instance of indigenous cosmopolitanism excavating a cannibalistic and sacrificial Christianity. Indigenous cosmopolitanism also joins forces with Andean anthropologist Marisol de la Cadena, whose "pluriversal politics" (2010) includes other-than-human actors or "earth beings," such as rocks and points towards the posthuman currently at risk.

"The Cosmopolitanism in/of Language: English Performativity" or fifth chapter is titled after Robert J. C. Young's contention that English was made deliberately performative for the diaspora. It examines the ways in which "English" works as both an "Asian" and a global language in four recent novels from both China and the Chinese diaspora: Yu Ouyang's *The English Class* (2010); Gang Wang's *English* (2009); Xiaolu Guo, *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers* (2007); Ruiyan Xu's *The Forgotten Languages of Shangai* (2010). For all four novelists, too much English leads to Westoxification (Wang); hampers masturbation (Ouyang), and is not considered as an alternative to Broca's aphasia (Xu). Except for Wang's, all protagonists pursue English as "a linguistic woman," the object of heterosexual desire.

The sixth chapter ("Acoustic Cosmopolitanism: Echoes of Multilingualism") takes its cue from musical theorist Martin Daughtry's "acoustic palimpsest" (99) and resonates with Barbadian Kamau Brathwaite's "Nation Language, and with Jacques Derrida's *Monolingualism of the Other* (1998).<sup>2</sup> It deals with nomadic languages, that is, "languages untethered from their supposed originating territory" (17), as they traverse

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2. I would add my own *African Palimpsest* (Zabus). It is surprising that Bill Ashcroft's work, along the same lines, as in e.g. *Caliban's Voice* (Ashcroft) is not

Australian Brian Castro's *The Garden Book* (2005); Christos Tsiolkas's *Barracuda* (2013); and Maxine Béneba Clarke's short story, "The Slit Fishermen of Kahaluwa" from her collection *Foreign Soil* (2014).

The Conclusion ("Back to the Future and the Immanent Cosmopolitanism of Post-Multicultural Writers") pits the multilingually diverse cultural terrain of Canada against Australian letters' increasing world linkage thanks to its growing multicultural stance. Gunew exhorts students from non-Anglo-Celtic families or from a NESB (non-English-speaking background) with its connotations of linguistic deficiency, like her younger self, to research into Australian postwar migration and further her own work—*Displacements: Migrant Writers*, published in 1981, at a time when "migrant" signified temporary or simply passing through, before it became "ethnic" and then "multicultural."

The book is written in dense prose and is occasionally redundant, as some passages from the Introduction are lifted verbatim from the detailed analyses in the chapters (for instance, see page 17 and page 56). However, its message is crystal-clear. The world, according to Gunew, can no longer be contained by nation-state, hermetically tight boundaries and aspires to what Paul Gilroy has termed a planetary consciousness to refer to "becoming more reflexively critical of one's own culture by cultivating an estrangement from within (80). At a time when global media and markets give us the illusion of belonging to a shared world, the book acts as a sober reminder that the nagging question to the "strangers," which are now, as I write, the iconic refugees huddled at the gates of the European Union, has shifted from "where are you coming from?" to "what do we do with them now?" This question in turn triggers off, at least in my mind, a series of "linguistico-cultural" misunderstandings akin to that of Kialo Guo's female protagonist "Z." In *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers*, "Z" mistakes her future lover, an older English gentleman's innocuous phrase—"Be my guest"—as an invitation to move in with him.

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even mentioned in passing. Neither is Anjali Pandey's *Monolingualism and Linguistic Exhibitionism in Fiction* (Pandey).

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**Mireille Calle-Gruber, Sarah-Anaïs Crevier Goulet et Christine Lorre Johnston, dir. *Écritures migrantes du genre : Croiser les théories et les formes littéraires en contextes comparés*. Paris : Honoré Champion, 2017. Pp. 269. ISBN: 9782745334398.**

L'ouvrage s'inscrit apparemment à la frontière de deux traditions critiques qui ont connu un regain d'intérêt ces dernières années. D'une part — son titre l'indique — il traite d'écritures migrantes. Cette notion est née dans le contexte québécois, sous la plume de l'écrivain haïtien Robert Berrouët-Oriol : elle sonne comme la revendication d'une reconnaissance, de la part de l'espace littéraire de la « Belle Province », des auteurs qui s'y sont installés en portant dans leurs textes une autre histoire que strictement québécoise.<sup>1</sup> La critique s'est très vite emparée de ce terme pour désigner des écrivains, c'est-à-dire, la plupart du temps des trajectoires, des positionnements et des postures, mais

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1. Voir Daniel Chartier, « Les origines de la littérature migrante : L'immigration littéraire au cours des deux derniers siècles », *Voix et images*, vol. 27, n°2, 2002, pp. 303–16.

aussi un certain travail thématique et un rapport complexe à l'espace. Cette dimension québécoise est très présente dans le volume dirigé par Mireille Calle-Gruber, Sarah-Anaïs Crevier Goulet et Christine Lorre-Johnston. En effet chacune des grandes parties du livre est scandée par l'intervention d'un-e intellectuel-le lié-e à l'espace culturel québécois : Nathanaël, Ying Chen, Régine Robin et l'historienne Yolande Cohen ouvrent ainsi des perspectives aux propos théoriques des contributeurs du volume. Les articles d'ailleurs font aussi la part belle à des écritures qui ont émergé dans l'espace québécois : Mireille Calle-Gruber fait de Nicole Brossard la ligne directrice de son texte, en la mettant en relation notamment avec Assia Djebar ; Jelena Antic part elle aussi de l'écrivaine algérienne, mais pour la confronter à Anne Hébert ; Sarah-Anaïs Crevier Goulet livre quant à elle une très belle étude de l'œuvre d'Anne-Marie Alonzo. Le livre témoigne ainsi de la productivité de cette notion d'écriture migrante qu'il étend bien sûr bien au-delà du contexte québécois. Il fait alors écho à une situation politique contemporaine, déconstruisant la figure du/de la migrant-e telle qu'elle apparaît dans le discours médiatique<sup>2</sup> — l'article de Chantal Zabus est sans doute celui qui explicite le plus cette mise en perspective critique. Cependant, il faut d'emblée relever que l'ouvrage tourne le dos à des définitions sociologiques de la migration pour préférer un travail théorique qui conduit à faire de la migration d'abord une dynamique de différenciation, abordée dans une perspective derridienne par la majorité des contributeurs, qui met en jeu et en question la constitution de sujets pris entre plusieurs ensembles de normes sociales. De ce fait, la notion de la migration est déterritorialisée et rencontre celle de genre comme une manière dynamique de comprendre les processus de subjectivation à l'œuvre dans des écritures littéraires.

D'autre part, le livre interroge la notion de genre. Il s'articule donc à une longue histoire plurielle : celle des pensées féministes. Jean Bessière, pour les besoins de son propos théorique, revient sur cette histoire dont il réarticule différents moments ; Yolande Cohen fait elle aussi retour sur le féminisme des années 1970 dans son témoignage. En centrant le propos sur la question du genre plutôt que sur la femme, les auteur-e-s de l'ouvrage tendent à mettre en avant, une fois encore, les dynamiques

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2. Une autre manière de réinterroger cette figure du migrant peut se lire dans le beau livre de Catherine Mazauric, *Mobilités d'Afrique en Europe : récits et figures de l'aventure*, Karthala, 2012.

de subjectivation complexes à travers lesquelles des individus se font et se défont en interaction avec des groupes sociaux. *Écritures migrantes du genre* met au cœur de son projet la méthode du croisement : on retrouve une logique qui va dans le sens de l'intersectionnalité, conceptualisée à partir des travaux de Kimberlé W. Crenshaw,<sup>3</sup> mais elle prend une forme et une direction tout à fait différentes. En effet, de nouveau, il ne s'agit pas de penser le genre à proprement parler en termes de sciences sociales, mais bien selon l'axe d'une théorie de la communication littéraire et de la subjectivation. Cette double perspective justifie pleinement la construction de l'ouvrage et la scansion des articles théoriques et critiques par des interventions d'acteurs du champ culturel : les entretiens et témoignages d'écrivain-e-s et intellectuel-le-s n'ont pas pour fonction d'illustrer les propos académiques ou d'y ajouter ; ils contribuent à la réflexion générale menée dans l'ouvrage. Le texte de Nathanaël et son entretien avec Myriam Suchet ne viennent pas confirmer par l'exemple les propos précédents de Mireille Calle-Gruber et Jean Bessière ; ils les complètent en proposant la notion d'« exulant » (49), qui résonne avec l'exil en plaçant cependant au second plan la dimension spatiale de la notion pour mettre l'accent sur sa dimension psychique et subjective de séparation et de dynamisme tout à la fois — le terme intègre alors pleinement le discours théorique puisqu'il intègre le titre de la troisième partie de l'ouvrage.

C'est sans doute la grande originalité de l'ouvrage : l'enjeu est de séparer la notion de migration de son acception spatiale pour la comprendre d'abord comme un processus subjectif de construction, de mise en scène et de transcription de soi. Le livre débute ainsi par trois textes qui opèrent ce déplacement : l'article de Mireille Calle-Gruber, en croisant migration et genre, montre combien la première est incarnée dans l'écriture, devient un certain rapport au corps, qui permet de redéfinir les catégories de genre ; Jean Bessière revient sur le féminisme français pour montrer en quoi la question du genre émerge comme « rapport à soi comme hors de soi » (38), situant la migration dans cette dynamique de déplacement de l'identité ; les propos de Nathanaël complètent cette perspective avec la notion d'« exulant ». Dans ces trois textes, il apparaît que le genre ne peut se penser et être productif qu'en

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3. Voir Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, « Cartographie des marges : intersectionnalité, politique de l'identité et violences contre les femmes de couleur », traduit par Oristelle Bonis, *Cahiers du genre*, n°39, 2005/2, pp. 51–82.

considérant une double articulation : d'une part, la nécessaire articulation de l'individu, jusque dans sa plus stricte intimité, celle du corps, avec le collectif ; d'autre part, l'articulation des sujets entre eux, selon des dispositifs textuels de dialogue. Ce dernier point apparaît aussi bien dans « le rapport à soi comme hors de soi », théorisé par Jean Bessière comme une tension entre spécificité individuelle et altérité qui induit une forme d'universalité, que dans l'écriture même de Nathanaël qui par le biais de l'intertextualité fait se confondre sa propre voix avec des voix autres ou est travaillé de résonnances dans le protocole particulier d'entretien mis en place avec Myriam Suchet. En d'autres termes, penser le genre implique de penser une altérité et la notion de migration vient insuffler un dynamisme, une circulation dans cette pensée qui ne peut se réduire à une simple opposition du masculin et du féminin, de l'origine et de l'arrivée.

Ce déplacement des problématiques de la migration et du genre conduit, dans la deuxième partie de l'ouvrage, à repenser ces catégories d'abord comme des stratégies de discours : Maribel Peñalver Vicea interroge ces stratégies sur un plan énonciatif en réfléchissant aux décalages métalinguistiques ; Xavier Garnier réfléchit au genre comme mise en scène de soi, comme performance au sens de Judith Butler, à travers les œuvres de Werewere Liking et Ken Bugul ; Karina Marques étudie la dimension subversive et contrapunctique du féminin migrant dans le discours national portugais du début du siècle à travers l'œuvre d'Ilse Losa ; enfin, dans un entretien avec Christine Lorre-Johnston, puis dans une prose, Ying Chen revient sur son parcours, de la Chine au Canada et à l'intérieur du Canada, déterritorialisant l'espace pour faire de cette trajectoire d'abord un travail d'écriture, remplaçant les termes « origine » et « arrivée » par « source » et « destination », qui prolongent l'idée de mouvement sans l'arrêter.

La migration comme le genre apparaissent donc d'abord comme des figures de discours ; ils n'en demeurent pas moins des réalités incarnées, qui tout à la fois déconstruisent et construisent des sujets, double mouvement qui est exploré dans la troisième partie du livre. Simon Harel et Sarah-Anaïs Crevier Goulet s'intéressent ainsi à la tension interne qui pousse l'écriture à conserver la trace de la douleur, de la séparation et de la perte en même temps qu'elle tente de se faire « hébergement » et « support » (Harel) ou travail de pansement d'un corps blessé (Crevier Goulet). L'écriture ne peut être simplement pen-

sée comme une manière de sublimer et rédimier la douleur qu'implique bien souvent la migration, et/ou la marginalisation liée à la condition féminine ; elle apparaît plutôt comme ce qui doit porter trace de cette douleur ineffaçable en même temps que ce qui tente, sans y parvenir totalement, de la conjurer. Jelena Antic poursuit cette interrogation sur le rôle de l'écriture tandis que le texte de Régine Robin met en œuvre cette réflexion sur l'identité par le biais de procédés de fragmentation textuelle qu'elle commente.

La quatrième partie interroge la coprésence, dans les dynamiques d'écriture qui ont auparavant été mises en évidence, d'éléments de différents horizons : les écritures migrantes du genre sont des écritures de friction. Le mouvement n'implique pas seulement deux points séparés, mais il met en présence des identités, impliquant de ce fait des formes d'écriture nouvelles. Les articles de cette partie le démontrent à travers des corpus peu traités, la littérature postcoloniale italophone (Chantal Zabus), la biographie fictionnelle portugaise (Sarah Carmo) et l'hybridation de la fiction et de l'histoire (Seza Yilancioglu). À la spécificité des parcours répondent des genres d'écriture nouveaux et hybrides qu'explorent ces textes.

*Écritures migrantes du genre* déterritorialise radicalement la notion de migration pour la poser comme une dynamique d'écriture qui donne tout son sens au genre, conçu lui aussi comme un mouvement discursif qui crée des réalités pour panser des pertes et des manques. Ainsi les deux termes permettent d'approcher des formes de discours poreuses en les faisant échapper aux catégories ; ce premier volume initie ainsi une étude des « dérives des identités » et des « genres mutants »<sup>4</sup> que l'équipe de chercheurs poursuit dans un second volume publié aux Presses Sorbonne Nouvelles, prolongeant la réflexion sur la circulation de ces notions entre des formes esthétiques diverses.

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4. Mirelle Calle-Gruber et Sarah-Anaïs Crevier Goulet (dir.), *Écritures migrantes du genre (II)*. Langues, arts, inter-sectionnalités génériques, Presses Sorbonne Nouvelles, 2017, p. 14.



**Alexis Nouss, Crystel Pinçonnet, et Fridrun Rinner. *Littératures migrantes et traduction*. Marseille : Presses universitaires de Provence, 2017. Pp. 265. ISBN : 9791032001080.**

L'ouvrage collectif *Littératures migrantes en traduction*, paru en 2017 aux Presses Universitaires de Provence, rassemble vingt-cinq contributions sous la direction d'Alexis Nouss, Crystel Pinçonnet et Fridrun Rinner. Comme l'expose l'« Introduction » (5–9), ce travail choisit de cerner la notion fuyante de « littérature migrante » depuis l'efficace perspective des divers problèmes de traduction qui lui sont inhérents. L'enjeu de l'analyse est ici de défendre la pertinence de cette notion, dans le contexte de la globalisation : à moins, en effet, qu'on ne se résigne à la diluer dans la catégorie discutable de « littérature mondiale », la « littérature migrante » peut être entendue comme une catégorie générique spécifique, susceptible d'offrir « de nouveaux modèles pour une construction identitaire » (5).

Les auteurs commencent par rappeler les trois cadres d'analyse en cours dans le champ des recherches sur les littératures migrantes : le premier est centré sur l'opération de « translation culturelle » caractéristique de ces littératures et s'intéresse aux problèmes de traduction qui se posent à l'écrivain (lorsqu'il choisit d'écrire dans la langue du pays d'accueil) ou au traducteur (dont la marge de liberté est plus problématique), confrontés à la difficulté de faire comprendre à un lectorat qui les ignore toute une série de codes et modes culturels « autres ». Le deuxième interroge les difficultés terminologiques qui compliquent les efforts de la critique pour produire un discours homogène sur les « littératures migrantes », épithète intraduisible en allemand, tandis que les connotations de l'adjectif « ethnique » en français rendent inacceptable le calque de la notion anglo-saxonne d'*ethnic literature*. Enfin, une troisième branche — sociologique — des études sur les littératures migrantes s'intéresse au marché de la traduction de ces littératures et aux effets que la traduction induit sur la réception de ces textes.

L'ouvrage se propose d'apporter une contribution originale à ces questions en examinant « les diverses fonctions qu'assurent ces productions dans les systèmes littéraires et que révèle leur traduction », ordonnées en trois catégories — et trois parties — « selon une gradation allant du plus au moins subjectif » (7) : le premier chapitre — « Constructions identitaires » — étaye l'idée que les littératures migrantes contribuent « à

des processus de construction identitaire qui mêlent l'individuel au collectif » ; le deuxième examine les « Stratégies d'écriture » déployées par les écrivains ; le troisième, intitulé « Circulation des textes », travaille à « dessiner des espaces littéraires transnationaux » (*ibid.*).

### CONSTRUCTIONS IDENTITAIRES

Dans la première des huit contributions que rassemble le chapitre « Constructions identitaires », Myriam Geiser (« *We are translated men*. Translation culturelle dans les écritures de la post-migration ») s'appuie sur la célèbre formule de Salman Rushdie décrivant la condition de celui qui a été « mené au-delà » — étymologiquement : « traduit » — du lieu de sa naissance : partant de l'idée que « les enjeux de l'écriture migrante résident essentiellement dans les modes de traduction de soi » (15), elle examine la « condition translatore » d'écrivains issus de l'immigration en Allemagne (comme les auteurs germano-turcs Zafer Senocak et Feridun Zaimoglu) et en France (Rachid Djaïdani, d'origine algéro-soudanaise, et Faïza Guène, née en France de parents algériens), pour montrer que, chez ces « auteurs translateurs », « l'écriture hybride, et souvent multilingue, constitue en soi une critique de l'essentialisme culturel et des concepts monolithiques de l'identité » (22).

L'article d'Anna Proto (« Le plurilinguisme, une stratégie littéraire pour déjouer la traduction ? Variations entre plurilinguisme et traduction à partir de la littérature italienne de la migration ») suit un cheminement comparable en prenant l'exemple d'auteurs italiens issus de la migration (par exemple Gabriella Ghermandi, Cristina Ali Farah, Ornela Vorpsi), parvenant à mettre en évidence le fait que « l'écriture migrante, en ébranlant la distinction entre auteur et traducteur, le rapport entre original et traduction et les frontières entre les langues, déstabilise le lien entre la langue, la nation et l'œuvre » (33).

Dans « Traduction et "traduction interne" chez Stephanos Stephanides, poète chypriote de langue anglaise », Sara Greaves s'appuie sur la notion de « traduction interne » (Bill Ashcroft), qui désigne le processus d'appropriation de la langue du colonisateur par l'écriture post-coloniale, pour évoquer ses propres stratégies de traductrice, dans son effort pour faire sentir en français — par des effets de déterritorialisation — le décalage linguistique caractéristique de la langue anglaise telle que la pratique Stephanides dans sa poésie.

Szilvia Jakab, quant à elle, étudie dans « Sándor Márai, phénoménologie de l'exil » le fossé manifeste entre l'œuvre originale de l'auteur hongrois et le célèbre « Marai » des traductions françaises, animées d'une visée intensément « cibliste » ; non pas pour le déplorer, mais pour reconnaître dans ce type de phénomènes des « symptômes des systèmes littéraires et de leur dynamique » (53).

La contribution de Nguyen Phuong Ngoc, intitulée « Anna Moï, ou la langue migrante comme liberté », montre que le choix du français permet à Anna Moï de se construire une nouvelle identité « perpétuellement en migration » : « Étrangère partout, partout chez elle, Anna Moï explore les frontières qui ne sont pas que géographiques et nationales [. . .]. Transgresser la frontière pour aller vers l'étranger, ou amener l'étrangeté chez soi, dans la langue elle-même, est à la base de son projet de création » (63).

Simona Elena Bonelli (« Hybridité du corps-texte dans l'autobiographie de *Princesa* ») s'intéresse ensuite à l'insolite « autobiographie à trois » qu'est *Princesa*, mémoires d'un transsexuel brésilien parti pour l'Europe racontés par lui/elle avec l'aide d'un berger sarde, dans une langue qui mêle le portugais et le sarde, puis traduits/réécrits en italien par un brigadiste rouge et assortis d'un glossaire. Ici, l'« hybridité des genres (sexuels, littéraires) et la rencontre entre l'oralité et l'écriture [. . .] donnent vie au mouvement du va-et-vient, le mouvement du nomade » (73).

Dans « L'écrivain libanais de l'exil : récupération de genres et choix de langues européennes pour traduire un récit intime et collectif », Dima Samaha montre comment Rabih Alameddine, écrivain libanais exilé en Grande-Bretagne puis en Californie et ayant fait le choix d'écrire en anglais, parvient dans ses romans à traduire « un état d'entre-deux permanent, une conscience complexe, et une distance critique dont seul l'exilé fait l'expérience, un état qui recoupe ce qu'Edward Said a appelé la "conscience contrapunctique" » (85).

Le dernier texte du chapitre s'intitule « Entre les montagnes et les confluents, les chants du pays natal voyagent : comparaison de traductions de poèmes tibétains migrants ». Yue Yue y compare des traductions de poèmes tibétains portant sur le thème du conflit (différents selon que le poète exilé en Inde a conservé sa langue d'écriture, ou bien s'est installé en Occident et écrit en anglais, ou encore appartient aux communautés tibétano-sinophones vivant au Tibet ou dans les villes chinoises). Face à l'urgence de « faire comprendre le conflit que modèle l'expression poétique, en le fai-

sant passer d'une langue à l'autre », le courage et l'honnêteté intellectuelle du traducteur apparaissent ici comme des valeurs cruciales (98).

### STRATÉGIES D'ÉCRITURE

Le deuxième chapitre de l'ouvrage interroge les « stratégies d'écriture », qu'il s'agisse de stratégies traductives ou du choix de la langue d'écriture, avec les conséquences que ce choix implique en termes de positionnement dans le champ littéraire national.

Dans « Traduire le monde extralinguistique, ou l'espace créatif du traducteur », Antonietta Sanna souligne la dimension éthique inhérente à la tâche du traducteur, dont la responsabilité se trouve décuplée dans le cas des littératures migrantes. En effet, comme l'écrit Barbara Cassin : « La traduction qui s'installe dans l'espace entre les langues et le franchit nous servira de modèle pour apprivoiser les frontières et fabriquer du commun » (107).

La contribution de Sandra Vlasta (« Littérature migrante en Autriche : la transformation d'un champ littéraire ») analyse ensuite les mutations du marché éditorial autrichien qui, depuis les années 1990, a fait une place de plus en plus grande aux auteurs issus de l'immigration, parfois au prix d'un étiquetage de leur production comme « *Migration-literatur* », au détriment de la reconnaissance de chacun dans sa singularité d'auteur.

Le geste du traducteur est d'une telle importance qu'il suscite parfois la création de personnages romanesques : Tatiana Calderón Le Joliff (« La figure du traducteur dans *Señales que precederán al fin del mundo* (2009) de Yuri Herrera et *Butamalón* (1994) de Eduardo Laba ») examine ainsi « les reconfigurations identitaires générées par le phénomène de la traduction dans les zones de passage » (119) en s'attachant à deux romans qui abordent la problématique de la frontière au nord du Mexique et au sud du Chili. Dans les deux cas, la figure du traducteur-interprète suscite « un processus de connaissance de soi », oscillant « entre folie et régénération, entre histoire nationale et histoires sans mémoire » (127).

Noël Dutrait revient quant à lui, dans « *La Montagne de l'âme* en français, traduction ou réécriture ? », sur sa propre traduction du célèbre roman de Gao Xingjian, Prix Nobel de littérature en 2000, et sur les difficultés posées par la force poétique du texte, nécessitant « à la fois une minutieuse recherche sur chaque terme et une recherche de mots

équivalents, dont la juxtaposition contenait un même potentiel poétique en français et en chinois » (134).

La difficulté peut même friser le constat de l'intraduisible : quelles stratégies trouver pour traduire vers une autre langue les interférences linguistiques qui « tordent » l'espagnol de José María Arguedas, s'interroge ainsi Rosana Orihuela dans « Traduction impossible ? L'affrontement de l'espagnol et du quechua chez les migrants andins dans *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* ? » La solution, explique-t-elle, tient dans une nécessaire infidélité du traducteur qui, ne pouvant pas « suivre à la lettre » les « subtils désordres » opérés par Arguedas, se voit confier « la tâche créatrice de faire naître dans sa propre langue des écarts signifiants » (147).

Avec « Entre *Gastarbeiterliteratur*, *Migrationsliteratur* et *letteratura migrante* : comment classer l'œuvre transnationale de Carmine Abate ? », Angelo Pagliardini examine ensuite le parcours singulier d'un écrivain de langue italienne qui se joue des étiquettes tant critiques que culturelles.

L'article d'Alexandre Prstojevic (« Traduire l'identité culturelle : à propos de *Cadeau d'adieu* de Vladimir Tasic ») revient à la question posée par la contribution de Rosana Orihuela : celle des limites de la traduction dès lors qu'elle est confrontée à une « culture mineure » — ici la culture serbe telle qu'elle était partagée par les habitants de l'ex-Yougoslavie pendant la dernière décennie de paix (1980–1991), objet de la remémoration nostalgique dont est fait *Cadeau d'adieu* (2003) et dont « rien (ou presque) parmi les objets, habitudes, manières de vivre [...] ne trouve de correspondant idéal dans le réel du lecteur français ou américain » (163).

Enfin, Charles Zaremba, dans « La “langue exilée” d'Imre Kertész », se penche sur la notion d'exil telle que l'entend l'écrivain hongrois, Prix Nobel de littérature en 2002 : indépendante de données biographiques, la conscience de pratiquer une « langue exilée » (Paul Celan) se confond, comme l'écrit Kertész dans *La Langue exilée* (2009), avec le constat que « l'écrivain de l'Holocauste est partout et dans toutes les langues un réfugié de l'esprit qui formule toujours dans une langue étrangère sa demande d'asile intellectuel ». L'exil, conclut Charles Zaremba, c'est ici « le monde entier hors Auschwitz, c'est-à-dire le monde du compréhensible » (171).

#### CIRCULATION DES TEXTES

Comme le montrent les neuf contributions réunies dans le troisième chapitre, une caractéristique paradoxale des littératures migrantes tient à la difficulté qu'elles rencontrent à s'imposer sur la scène littéraire inter-

nationale, alors même que le franchissement des frontières nationales est dans leur nature.

Richard Jacquemond (« Le retour du texte. Jalons pour l'histoire de la traduction arabe de la littérature maghrébine d'expression française ») commence par s'interroger sur le caractère problématique de la notion de « champ littéraire » entendue comme espace national, « dans un contexte où il n'y a pas, tant s'en faut, de coïncidence entre un espace national et l'usage d'une langue » (175), en l'occurrence la langue arabe. Son enquête conclut à un mouvement de relatif rapprochement entre les productions maghrébines arabophones et francophones.

C'est en traductrice de littérature maghrébine que Regina Keil-Sagawe réfléchit dans son article : « La Khadrature du cercle, ou comment traduire les auteurs du Maghreb pour le public allemand ? » Le tableau qu'elle dresse des phénomènes relatifs à la traduction des littératures maghrébines l'amène à souligner le changement de statut qui affecte le traducteur de ce type de littérature : de marginal, il devient « médiateur, créateur, communicateur, spécialiste, [...] avec un degré de visibilité jamais vu sur l'échiquier de la "République mondiale des Lettres" » (197).

Dans « *La Ceinture / Alhizam* ou l'autotraduction à l'épreuve du collectif », Bashair Alibrahim et Sathya Rao se penchent sur l'œuvre d'Ahmed Abodehman, poète saoudien qui, installé en France en 1979, a choisi d'écrire en français son premier roman, *La Ceinture* (2001) : dans son autotraduction du roman en arabe, Abodehman se trouve aux prises avec des effets de censure politique et linguistique que le recours au français lui avait permis de contourner.

La contribution d'Émilie Geneviève Audigier (« Lettres tupi-guarani en français : un cas de littérature migrante du Brésil ? ») se penche sur la littérature amérindienne de tradition orale, d'origine tupi et guarani, largement ignorée du public brésilien et que l'ouvrage édité par Max de Carvalho, *La Poésie du Brésil* (2012), tente de faire découvrir au public de langue française.

Dans « Littérature migrante ou littérature universelle ? », Inès Oseki-Dépré, mettant en regard la figure canonique de Samuel Beckett et celle de Kati Molnár, poète *performer* d'origine hongroise ayant également choisi la France comme lieu de vie et le français comme langue d'écriture, montre comment a lieu chez l'un et l'autre « l'appropriation de la langue d'accueil pour un usage littéraire qui dépasse la simple question de la migration pour viser et atteindre le "patrimoine" littéraire universel » (218).

Avec « Le retour des intrigues policières migrantes d'Arthur Upfield et Robert Van Gulik », Romain Richard-Battesti s'intéresse au genre du roman policier « ethnologique » et aux questions spécifiques relatives à sa traduction comme à sa diffusion. Cela l'amène à conclure à la prééminence de la langue anglaise dans ce genre littéraire voué à la migration et au retour vers le pays d'origine, mais aussi à l'idée que la visée du genre policier ethnologique dépasse le simple divertissement pour tendre vers « une confrontation des cultures » (232).

Dans « *De East of the West, a Country in Stories à À l'est de l'Ouest, histoires d'un entre-deux-mondes*, en passant par *Ha usmok om sanada* de Miroslav Penkov : stratégies auctoriales, éditoriales et (auto)traductives dans la "République mondiale des lettres" », Marie Vrinat-Nikolov prend le cas de l'auteur bulgare Miroslav Penkov, résidant aux États-Unis depuis 2001, pour étudier les variations des effets d'exotisation qui affectent son œuvre (animée d'une forte nostalgie pour la « bulgarité ») dans ses versions anglaise, française et bulgare. L'article met en lumière la double stratégie de l'auteur, qui écrit d'abord en anglais un texte « prêt-à-exporter » — ce qui assure son succès aux États-Unis —, avant de pratiquer une autotraduction en bulgare qui multiplie à l'inverse, à destination de son nouveau public, tous les signes d'appartenance à une bulgarité « originelle ».

Alexandra Vrânceanu-Pagliardini s'intéresse quant à elle, dans « La littérature migrante et le canon de l'histoire littéraire roumaine », au conflit latent entre le canon littéraire roumain et les écrivains migrants qui, en dépit de leur importance, ne sont pas intégrés à l'histoire littéraire nationale, laquelle s'est construite au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle selon le modèle de Herder (une langue, un peuple, un esprit), excluant ainsi d'office les auteurs qui, tel Emil Cioran, ont fait le choix de langues de circulation internationale (244) — laissant en fin de compte aux comparatistes la tâche d'« écrire l'histoire transversale de ces écrivains transnationaux » (250).

La conclusion de l'ouvrage revient à Alexis Nouss qui, dans « Le grain des littératures migrantes », s'attache à déconstruire la notion de littérature migrante, dont le succès, explique-t-il, repose sur un malentendu : « Il ne suffit pas que l'écrivain soit migrant pour que ses œuvres les soient » (253). Inversement, un auteur sédentaire peut produire une littérature migrante — au sens d'une littérature « de migration », où la « migration » est « considérée comme une modulation esthétique de l'exilience, faculté humaine de coupure d'avec un lieu original pour

poursuivre un vécu ailleurs » (252). Or, c'est à la traduction qu'il revient de « révéler le grain des littératures migrantes [...] : penser le traduire demande de penser l'inconnu dans la langue, car c'est lui qui nourrit la signifiante. » (260).

On ne peut que saluer l'importante avancée que réalise cette réflexion collective — servie par la constante qualité des contributions individuelles comme par la rigueur méthodologique du projet d'ensemble — dans un champ de recherche que ses enjeux et implicites politiques et idéologiques rendent aujourd'hui aussi nécessaire et passionnant que délicat à explorer.

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**Chloé Chaudet. *Écritures de l'engagement par temps de mondialisation*. Paris : Classiques Garnier, 2016. Pp. 392. ISBN : 9782406060918.**

Docteure en littérature comparée, Chloé Chaudet nous livre dans son ouvrage une réflexion sur la possibilité et les modalités de l'engagement en littérature dans le monde globalisé d'aujourd'hui. *Écritures de l'engagement* se constitue de cinq parties. Après une introduction qui discute notamment de la notion, telle que définie par Sartre et entérinée par la critique, ainsi que du choix du corpus, l'étude se poursuit en déployant quatre axes, chacun renvoyant à un type d'engagement exhibé par l'un ou l'autre des textes littéraires sélectionnés et par leur auteur.e, l'engagement du texte étant considéré comme l'avvers (ou le revers) de l'engagement de la personne.

Stratégies de l'accusation, du dépassement, du décalage, du témoignage, telles sont les tendances dans lesquelles les écrivain.e.s s'inscrivent « plus ou moins explicitement, plus ou moins consciemment, dans une double dynamique de rupture et de continuité par rapport à l'idéal-type sartrien de l'engagement en littérature » (62). La contribution essentielle de Chloé Chaudet réside dans le fait qu'elle confère à l'engagement littéraire une dimension éthique (plutôt que politique) allant de pair avec la dénonciation d'un *inacceptable* — ce



qui lui permet d'appréhender les textes de façon transhistorique (la notion d'inacceptable variant d'une époque à l'autre) et transculturelle (l'inacceptable variant d'une société à l'autre).

*Desert Flower* (1998<sup>1</sup>) de Waris Dirie et *Rumeurs de haine* (2005) de Taslima Nasreen servent à illustrer la première des quatre stratégies (la moins subtile), celle de l'accusation, apparentant ces écritures de l'intime à une « littérature de combat et de controverse », selon la formule de Benoît Denis (voir bibliographie). Ces textes déploient en effet « une rhétorique accusatrice centrale au niveau de la diégèse et directe au plan du discours » (89), dénonçant notamment, pour l'un (*Desert Flower*), les MGF/E (Mutilations génitales féminines/Excisions) et, pour l'autre (*Rumeurs de haine*), « le mauvais traitement systématique des femmes au sein de la société bangladaise » (109). Etant « des femmes d'une part, non issues à l'origine d'un milieu littéraire, d'autre part » (147), elles contribuent, selon Chaudet, à une « extension plus vaste » de la notion d'engagement de l'auteur.e.

La stratégie du dépassement serait, quant à elle, manifeste dans *Dangerous Love* (1996) de Ben Okri et *Historias marginales* (2000) de Luis Sepúlveda, un roman et un recueil de nouvelles où la dénonciation de l'inacceptable (à savoir, l'oppression/la répression étatique) n'est plus l'« enjeu central du texte » (151), celui-ci témoignant davantage d'une « force de proposition » positive, voire d'un « élan utopique » (183). Ainsi, « la valorisation de l'amour [. . .] et des capacités de résistance de l'individu, qui s'associent à l'élan vers l'avenir qui parcourt les deux textes, prennent le pas sur la dénonciation polémique de l'inacceptable » (180), révélant une autre forme de l'engagement littéraire contemporain, « un engagement se voulant universel, touchant à la vie et à l'humain dans leur totalité » (202) et nous invitant « à nous engager hors de la littérature, dans cette réalité qu'ils [les écrivains] critiquent autant qu'ils la célèbrent » (203).

Dans *Shame* (1983) de Salman Rushdie, *Neige* (2002) d'Orhan Pamuk et *A Mercy* (2008) de Toni Morrison, pourrait se lire une stratégie décalée de l'engagement, agissant tant au niveau thématique que discursif — ces deux niveaux n'allant pas forcément de concert. Ainsi, par exemple, les passages de dénonciation directe, peu nombreux dans *A Mercy*, « n'en sont pas moins incisifs » (257) tandis que dans *Neige*,

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1. Les dates indiquent à chaque fois la première parution, dans la langue originelle.

l'association décalée entre le contenu polémique et la forme comique ou absurde, ne rend pas la dénonciation moins « percutante » (257) — pourvu que les lecteurs saisissent les clins d'yeux. De même, l'implication du lectorat est davantage sollicitée lorsqu'il s'agit de repérer les « interdiscours et intertextes » (258) qui participent à/de la dénonciation. Le renouvellement de l'engagement se marque à différents endroits : dans les textes, par une extension de la sphère du politique incluant la prise en compte des droits des femmes (276) ainsi que par la thématique de l'Histoire « rendant compte d'une oppression qui traverse le temps » (277) ; au niveau des auteur.e.s, et suivant les cas, par « le “dégagement” de l'auteur.e de son texte vis[ant] à engager le lecteur » (264).

La dernière stratégie de l'engagement envisagée par Chaudet est celle où, en définitive, la visée primordiale des textes, tels *Winterliche Reise* (1996) de Peter Handke et *Révolutions* (2003) de Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio, est de « faire émerger et entendre la voix de l'Autre » (282). La dénonciation de l'inacceptable — l'impérialisme occidental chez Le Clézio et le manque d'objectivité des médias dans le traitement des conflits yougoslaves chez Handke — s'effectue de façon indirecte dans la mesure où elle suit la formation et l'évolution de l'opinion et des idées du personnage principal, pour lequel « le voyage joue un rôle structurant » (298). Ni agents ni victimes, le personnage comme l'écrivain se positionnent davantage comme spectateurs et témoins. Leur dénonciation, « notifiante » (281) et véhiculée par une « poétique de la retenue » (353), est une invitation à « céder la parole à l'Autre, afin d'interroger les valeurs du groupe dont il se détache sans nécessairement faire l'objet d'une idéalisation » (353).

On reprochera peut-être à l'étude le sentiment paradoxal qu'engendre la sélection du corpus et ce, malgré sa justification (trop ?) pertinente. En effet, le choix semble, d'une part, être complètement *ad hoc*, c'est-à-dire destiné à « illustrer » les quatre stratégies, et d'autre part et tout à la fois, il ne semble pas échapper à un certain arbitraire. Pourquoi ces auteurs-là et, de ces auteurs, ces textes-là ? Pourquoi pas une Djébar<sup>2</sup> (une autre femme) ou un Modiano (un autre prix Nobel) ? Pour éviter cette confusion des sentiments, il aurait sans doute été préférable que l'auteure as-

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2. La chercheuse a, du reste, consacré en 2014 un article sur l'engagement de Djébar dans le numéro 4 de la revue *ELFe XX-XXI : Revue de la Société d'Étude de la Littérature du XXe siècle*. On s'étonne d'ailleurs de ne pas le voir figurer dans la bibliographie finale.

sume une certaine sérendipité dans ses choix. Car l'on se dit que la constitution du corpus résulte, en définitive, d'une savante combinaison de contraintes, externes et discutables : pour être politiquement correcte, il fallait des femmes ; pour que la Littérature ne demeure pas affaire d'élite, il fallait des best-sellers à côté des prix Nobel ; et surtout, puisqu'il s'agit d'une étude relevant de la littérature comparée, il fallait des œuvres de langues et cultures variées.

Bien entendu, cette remarque n'empêche nullement de saluer cette étude qui, écrite élégamment, contribue intelligemment au renouvellement de la notion d'engagement. Particulièrement, on y appréciera les intuitions (ou hypothèses) de la chercheuse se vérifiant par une analyse minutieuse des textes, elle-même corroborée par des faits biographiques pertinents.

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**Fatim Boutros. *Facing Diasporic Trauma: Self-Representation in the Writings of John Hearne, Caryl Philips and Fred D'Aguiar*. Leiden: Brill/Rodopi, 2015. Pp. 146. ISBN: 9789004308145.**

In five chapters, *Facing Diasporic Trauma* (2015) studies subjectivity, diaspora, trauma, and representation in novels by Fred D'Aguiar (*The Longest Memory* and *Feeding the Ghosts*), John Hearne (*Sure Salvation*) and Caryl Philipps.<sup>1</sup> After a first chapter discussing imagined African homelands, two consecutive sections consider the Middle Passage as a foundational experience of dislocation and cultural interaction in slave societies. Before the conclusion, two final chapters examine post-abolition interaction and the influence of slavery on contemporary diaspora.

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1. Six of his novels are discussed by Boutros: *Higher Ground*, Cambridge, *Crossing the River*, *The Nature of Blood*, *A Distant Shore*, and *Dancing in the Dark*.

Through its analysis of neo-slave narratives<sup>2</sup> of the Caribbean diaspora, Fatim Boutros's volume, among its other contributions, builds on the Postcolonial turn in trauma studies. A developing field since the 1980s spearheaded by deconstructionist scholars at Yale—primarily Cathy Caruth—trauma theory emerged at the same time as Holocaust Studies. Consequently, Trauma Studies privileged discourses that focused on the Shoah. As a recognised paradigm of European trauma, the Holocaust can be regarded as a “cosmopolitan memory” which “harbours the possibility of transcending ethnic and national boundaries” because its changing representations have become politically and culturally symbolic (Levy and Sznajder 4). Other authors, however, have sensed its dangers of acting as a screen memory (Huyssen) that might hide other episodes of history also deserving attention.

Indeed, since the Postcolonial turn in trauma studies, the paradigmatic status of the Shoah has been put into question,<sup>3</sup> thus opening up the field to other trauma models in the world. Toni Morrison's allusion to “sixty million and more” in the epigraph of her novel, *Beloved*, is a reminder to the “other” Blacks who underwent trauma long before the Jewish pogroms.

This is why Mengel and Borzaga's volume, *Trauma, Memory and Narrative in the Contemporary South African Novel* (2012), not only fills a gap in the field but underscores four African views on trauma which differ from the European experience: the importance of long-standing events, such as apartheid and colonialism; the value of resistance, a hallmark of the Postcolonial imperative; the significance of the sacred in processes of coming to terms with the past; and the necessity of re-examining their own Black intellectuals such as DuBois, Césaire, and Fanon.

Following in the wake of such developments, Fatim Boutros examines how the idea of a *diasporic trauma* may enrich conceptions of trauma and trauma studies. Working from a perspective similar to the South African situation and different from a more Western concept of an event-based trauma, such as 9/11, Boutros highlights not only the importance of the Middle Passage, definitely a long-term experience, but also

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2. Citing Bernard W. Bell, in *The Afro-American Novel and its Tradition*, Boutros defines “neo-slave narrative” as a “fictional narrative which, adapting the documentary mode of testimony, exposes the horrors of slavery” (ix).

3. For example, in his book *The Meanings of Social Life*, Jeffrey Alexander asks: “Is the Holocaust Western?”

other forms of systemic and insidious suffering. Boutros argues that even after, or especially after colonial interaction in New World environments, physical violence and racism still continue so that “subjects who are part of a traumatized community cannot escape the haunting of their collective past, even if they settle in a new environment and try to extricate themselves from their cultural roots” (xxii). Such a condition reminds one of Maria Root’s notion of insidious trauma operating in cultures which consciously or unconsciously display persistent racism, violent sexism, or rape (Brown 1995). However, stereotypization can also be self-inflicted, as manifest in Boutros’s scrutiny of *Dancing in the Dark*. In this novel, the ambivalent “success” of the protagonists, who are performing minstrels, is achieved, unfortunately, through self-exoticization and the “humiliating mockery of their own community” (106).

At the same time, some of Boutros’s analyses of Philipps’s *Higher Ground* detect the presence of cross-traumatic affiliation. The latter offers “a way of bringing different historical traumas into contact in an ethically responsible manner” (Craps 17) since it “allows one party to relate to the trauma of another based on the former’s own trauma experience while, at the same time, recognising the uniqueness and difference of each culture’s experience” (Martin 821). In *Higher Ground*, cross-traumatic affiliation is foregrounded in the relationship between Irina and Louie, the former being a Polish Jew who has escaped from Nazi Germany; the latter being a black immigrant from the West Indies: “[U]nified in their shared experience of social isolation and foreignness, they provide each other with the kind of affection and mutual respect that had been lacking ever since they arrived in England.” As such, their “collective trauma provide a shared basis of cultural affiliation” (Boutros 91).

*Facing Diasporic Trauma* also reflects two newer trends in memory studies: the interest in perpetrator studies and the turn towards the notion of “unbound” memory. The foundation of the perpetrators studies network in 2015 and the first volume of *The Journal of Perpetrator Research* in 2017 have institutionalised the growing interest in the subject since the 1990s (Critchell, et. al). Questions on what Arendt has called the “banality of evil” as well as representations of victims and perpetrators are only some of the points of interest in this new branch of study. Similar interrogations and topics can be found in Boutros’s volume. In his analysis of *Sure Salvation*, Boutros remarks how all “of the white characters in the novel show symptoms of perpetrator trauma” (34). Examining

*The Nature of Blood*, he wonders how it is possible for victims to develop a kind of sympathy for perpetrators. Looking into the “psychological patterns of rape and kidnap victims,” it becomes possible for victims to feel “a deep sense of shame about their own experience, also known as survivor guilt.” Consequently, they “search for reasons to excuse the behaviour of perpetrators” (95).

The oft-described rootedness/routedness of Caribbean identity and narrativity also comes into congruence with the “travelling turn” in memory studies. If for a long period of time, memory was considered in terms of social frameworks (cf. Halbwachs) or *lieux de mémoire* (cf. Nora), as something “contained,” one can now observe a recent move towards thinking of memory as processual, discursive, unbound, trans-cultural, transnational, transmedial, and transdisciplinary. This is why a study of Afro-Caribbean memory and trauma from the perspective of the diaspora, which in itself evokes transnationality, is certainly relevant.

However, what then is *diasporic traumatic memory*? How is it different from other traumas? Does it subscribe to the post-traumatic stress disorder paradigm? Or are there departures from it? Is the trauma about, as the subtitle of the volume suggests, “self-representation” and thus, agency? While it remains uncertain that the volume answers such questions explicitly (unless, of course, these were never questions in the first place), Boutros’s notion of “trauma(d)iction” might give us a lead:

The term has two implications: Caribbean literature . . . as a form of poetic diction struggling to express the traumatic past of the Afro-Caribbean. . . . the second ‘d’, however, makes a . . . much less optimistic suggestion: If the backward glance, and thus the return to the historical role of the victim of colonization and slavery, becomes an addiction . . . emphasis on past trauma may mean socio-cultural paralysis. (109)

Thus, a diasporic trauma of this kind seems to find itself in an oscillation between, on the one hand, capacity for discourse; and, on the other hand, victimization: an ability and inability to narrate. This harks back to Cathy Caruth’s description of trauma as something that “demands to be, yet, cannot be read” (Baxter 6). While some might find Boutros’s allusion to an “addiction” to victimhood a problematic criterion for identity formation, the author also warns how the “‘backward glance’ can degenerate into a kind of obsessive navel-gazing that focuses exclusively on the community’s suffering without opening up any possibilities for positive future change” (111).

What Boutros is very clear about, however, is the role of literature, and more specifically the neo-slave narrative that “facilitates empathic access to the history of slavery that can help us get beyond the facelessness of public statistics” (123). As he reminds us, “diaspora cannot access African space in any unmediated way. The community depends on discursive representations of Africa [and] literature has a crucial function in this process” (26).

Lastly, in his analysis of *The Nature of Blood*, Boutros argues that in “cases of spatially dispersed communities the most important source of shared identification is neither territorial nor ethnic; it is, instead, the traumatic past of the community” (103). In this way, Boutros echoes Cathy Caruth’s vision for trauma studies, which, hopefully, “may provide the very link between cultures” (2).

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**Nicole M. Rizzuto. *Insurgent Testimonies: Witnessing Colonial Trauma in Modern and Anglophone Literature*.**

**New York: Fordham University Press, 2015. Pp. 272. ISBN: 9780823267828.**

Situating Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* against the literary backdrop of modernism, Nicole M. Rizzuto argues that Ngũgĩ's modification of Conrad's form—specifically, the embedded narrative structure of *Under Western Eyes*—is at once reverential and deeply subversive. Deployed by Ngũgĩ to infuse the burgeoning project of Kenyan nationalism with an aesthetic dimension, modernist form allows *A Grain of Wheat* "to address the past in ways that would bolster the nation against a future shaped by [neo-colonial] historical amnesia" (183). Aesthetics, then, informs what Rizzuto refers to as an "orchestration of testimonial speech," itself offset by "testimonial silence" (183), resulting in a novel that both enacts and resists the trauma of decolonization. In other words, Ngũgĩ's use of Conrad, a highly ambivalent figure in both modernist and postcolonial studies, is eminently suitable for expressing the "impasse of witnessing," in which "confessions to the past [are] at once necessary and difficult, if not impossible" (182). This claim, broadly speaking, guides and shapes *Insurgent Testimonies*, which is organized chronologically around careful close readings of modernist and colonial fiction, beginning with Conrad and subsequently encompassing writers both well-known (Rebecca West) and obscure (H.G. de Lissier and V.S. Reid, whose complicated views of colonialism in Jamaica, Rizzuto suggests, are part of why they occupy no pride of place in postcolonial literary studies). The book's final Ngũgĩ-centered chapter refracts testimony through the "unverifiable" nature of the novel's ethical discourse, suggesting, ultimately, that testimony is "an act discontinuous with proof" (221).



Such an organizing principle risks promising more than it can deliver: readers might conceivably wonder whether anything of note is left to be said on the over-studied topic of Conrad and imperialism, or whether a book on colonial trauma can avoid the similarly old argument that literary representations of trauma have ethical value because they are temporally belated and formally indeterminate. Rizzuto avoids these potential pitfalls through the depth and consistency of her engagement with literary detail, an engagement that the book neither hides nor minimizes. Indeed, in the introduction, Rizzuto argues that close reading “at its best, allows one to draw connections in a way that prevents universalizing historicism, on the one hand, and on the other, impedes the tendency to reduce literarity on the basis of preprogrammed historical knowledge” (33). Attending to textual detail has the added advantage of allowing Rizzuto to consider colonial and postcolonial trauma without treating the novels in question as mere convenient reflections of trauma theory, an entirely salutary response to the current critical tendency to reduce, quantify, and instrumentalize literature.

Nowhere is Rizzuto’s acumen more apparent than in her nuanced treatment of the Morant Bay rebellion, as it finds representation in the antinationalist de Lisser’s *Revenge: A Tale of Old Jamaica* and the nationalist Reid’s *New Day* and *Sixty-Five*. Because both authors, she argues, are obliged to exculpate colonial law in order to establish their respective cases, our attention is drawn to the tension between the violence of colonial law and the appeals made to that same law to resolve conflict in their respective texts. Here, and throughout the book, Rizzuto references the foundational work of Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, Shoshana Felman, and Dori Laub to characterize testimony as a means of bearing witness to trauma that exceeds its discursive formation in (and as) literature, emphasizing “the need for reader-witnesses to enable the submerged past to surface” (84). Alongside this invocation of trauma theory, Rizzuto’s analysis balances the disruptive potential of her chosen literature—West’s *Return of the Soldier* and *The Meaning of Treason*, in particular—with a poststructuralist awareness of how and where each text falls short of its own mandate to represent the affective and ethical complexities of trauma. If West’s work compels the reader to “dispute representations of the European wars as ruptures of otherwise stable and peaceful eras” (76), it also reveals its own blindspots on the subject of colonial law (103), just as de Lisser’s work inadvertently demonstrates that

supposedly “fraudulent” cultural practices in Jamaica communicate real truths about colonial violence (151). In this way, *Insurgent Testimonies* sets up an enduring “crisis of interpretation” (79) as the critical frame for considering trauma in literature.

The methodological composition of such a framing, though, sometimes attenuates the book’s connection to its chosen subjects of testimony, trauma, and witnessing. The opening chapter, for example, presents a lengthy excursus into the relationship between confession and Conrad’s complex relationship to language (English and Russian, in particular) that, at times, may leave the reader struggling to keep the book’s motivating questions in view. If close reading is a priority in *Insurgent Testimonies*, substantive critical engagement with trauma theory as a body of scholarship is not, and Rizzuto’s methodology for reading colonial and postcolonial trauma may present problems for certain scholars, particularly in light of recent challenges to the universalism and viability of “classic” trauma theory.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the book’s tenacity, analytic sensitivity, and critical insight constitute a brave and necessary intervention, of particular interest in the fields of trauma studies, modernism, and postcolonial literature.

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1. See Borzaga (2012), Craps (2012), Durrant (2012), Eaglestone (2013), Leys (2000), and Pederson (2014) for a range of perspectives on trauma theory’s foundational tenets, as well as its future in literary studies.

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**Michael Allan. *In the Shadow of World Literature: Sites of Reading in Colonial Egypt*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2016. Pp. 180. ISBN: 9780691167831.**

*In the Shadow of World Literature* reconsiders conditions of literacy and national exclusions in the field of world literature. In contrast to the widespread interest in the uncommon in Arabic literary traditions, or modes of adhering to generalities of world literature, Michael Allan calls for a new reading in response to the global rise of religion and what he perceives as a decline in secular movements. This requires considering reading as a worldly activity across interpretive communities. His argument is based on the ethics and meaning emerging in nineteenth and twentieth centuries Egypt. His interest lies not in literary texts as objects, or as part of an international amalgam, but on the reading practices that globalize world literature.

Allan postulates that introducing secular learning to Egyptians in the nineteenth century was based on a developmentalist approach foregrounding Europe as the dominant model. As such, it triggered a clash with Egypt's tradition. Drawing on Talal Asad, Saba Mahmoud, Charles Taylor, and Michael Warner, Allen contends that secularism is based on Protestant reformations in the Christian West, which may not be compatible with a cultural environment based on Muslim teachings. Subsequently, Allan argues that the colonial encounter in Egypt has raised "colonial concerns with the methods of Qura'nic education and the extent of illiteracy in the colonized population" (13).

Based on these premises, the three axes of inquiry he puts forward in his first chapter resonate throughout the book. The first axis examines the impact of pedagogical reforms implemented by the modern Egyptian state on acts of reading and critical literacy, in relation to earlier forms of memorization. The second axis explores modes of literary engagement on the part of the interpretive community, demonstrating how secularized

forms of literacy have set divisions between literacy and illiteracy, thus creating exclusions. The third axis problematizes the secularization of world literature, embedded in Christian European culture, among the predominantly non-Christian Egyptian majority, whose education is based on religious conventions. Allan is concerned with the impact of modern academic education and the dynamics of reorienting literary study and cultivating sensibilities which can critically engage with the world. Subsequently, he warns against the risks of universality and of any mediated reading that does not acknowledge difference. Against that backdrop, he questions the standards upon which the Nobel Prize committee based its qualitative assessments of world literature, when evaluating Tagore in 1913 and Naguib Mahfouz in 1988. In the same vein, he refutes universal concepts in Pascale Casanova's textual readings, affirming that the process of *littéralisation* binds the writer more to an international commerce of literary texts than to a public.

Along these lines, Allan disapproves Sabry Hafez's condemnation of protests led by militant radical students in the 1990s against Hydar Haydar's *Banquet for Seaweed*, a book they had not read (1993). He accuses Hafez of setting critical thinking, modernization and literature against tradition, fanaticism and obedience. He counters Hafez's secularism by citing Talal Asad's commentary on European protests in support of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. Asad interpreted these protests as a "fundamentalist" position on the part of secular liberals, who were not aware of the references made in Rushdie's book. Drawing on Asad, Allan conjectures that the "literary" or "religious" aspects are not key factors. On the contrary, the ways in which texts acquire meaning and matter to the public in terms of their sensibilities and ethics are of paramount importance. Furthermore, Allan rebuts Edward Said's secularist criticism, which he views as the source of a binarist vision. If one follows Said's argument, secular humanism gives preference to the material world over the cosmological vision of a religious tradition. Allen defends himself against accusations of dismantling secularism. Rather, he claims to be questioning its mediating force, which unnecessarily opposes literate and illiterate, modern and traditional, secular and fanatic. Instead, he pleads for a more inclusive world literature, enabling a reconsideration of the paradigms under which non-Western traditions ought to be recognized.

Allan further elaborates on mediated secularizing processes in Egypt in the second chapter, as he interrogates the translation processes of the

Rosetta stone, which dealt with a “stone” as if it were a world literary text. He contends that leveling out differences between the linguistic registers of the sacred and the political carved on the Rosetta stone disregarded the phenomenological character of language. A similar phenomenon occurred in interpretations of Arabic poetry taking into account Quranic verses by French scholars accompanying the French expedition to Egypt (1798). Allen condemns the publication of these translations in the Napoleonic journal with the aim of promoting a generalized theory of literature, while Muslim scholars had different readings of these texts. Nonetheless, Allan’s contention that a text should be assessed in accordance with the native sensibilities of the literary culture in which it was produced overlooks the fact that the Rosetta stone carvings pertain to a distant historical era when natives held other beliefs and had other “sensibilities.” Allan does not claim that native texts are untranslatable but believes that other techniques than those used for the Rosetta translation should be developed. However, he fails to propose an alternative method for translation.

In the third chapter, Allan explores changing educational policies in Egypt, which tend to privilege technical over literary education in order to favor economic development. He dismantles the logic of the modern educational system. He regards it as an attempt at unsettling the moral presumptions of the civilizational rhetoric of modernization that emerged in nineteenth-century Egypt. For Allan, this rhetoric failed to acknowledge the ability to critique inherent in civilization, as it inconsistently enforced abstention from critique. He traces modernization on the institutional level in the fourth chapter, in which he comments negatively on the establishment of the national library, Dār al-Kutub, in 1870 and the inauguration of Dār al-’Ulūm, in 1871. He contends these events contributed to the promotion of a modernized literary curriculum by European scholars countering the scholastic tradition taught at the Islamic University Al-Azhar. According to Allan, this marked the rise of modern literature as a discipline, implemented by a colonial project supported by Arabic-language scholars. Conversely, he endorses Jurjī Zaydān’s definition of *adab* (literature) in *Tārīkh ādāb al-lughah al-’Arabīyah* (1911–14), distinguishing between literature understood as a corpus of knowledge and literature perceived as a pedagogical process. Allan reiterates that *adab* constitutes a form of education, not simply an accumulation of canonical texts. Consequently, he finds it necessary for the study of *adab* to move away from Edward Said’s and Timothy Mitchell’s semiotic

templates. He suggests the benefits of using models propounded by Talal Asad in *Genealogies of Religion and Formations of the Secular* (2003), which merges ethics, embodiment, and discipline in its redefinition of literature. He also endorses Saba Mahmoud's arguments in *Politics of Piety* (2005). Although Allan admits he does not know what literature is, he hopes to make readers think about it differently. While it is unlikely that he answered the questions raised about the nature of literature in his book, he expressed his wish to pursue this line of inquiry.

The impact of secularism on literature is traced in the fifth chapter, which explores public responses to Darwin in the Levant and Egypt. Allan focuses on Naguib Mahfouz's novel *Qasr al-Shawq* (1956–57), discussing the generational family discord sparked by Kamal's publication of an article on Darwin. Allan construes this family rupture as a confrontation between literate and illiterate, which in his view testifies to the limitations of literary narrative in delineating sensibilities beyond the literary world. In that sense, representation is inseparable from the systems that produced it or made it known, especially as so-called realism as a mode of writing is unknown to the illiterate. Although Allen concedes that Mahfouz's representation of the family argument does not take sides, he remains disconcerted by a debate segregating the secular modern intellectual and the religious, traditional, fanatic. Allen considers this fictional episode as an example of modernity's exclusion of illiterates.

In the final chapter, Allan undermines the position of the cosmopolitan intellectual, whom he regards as provincial. In this context, he deals with Taha Hussein's French education as well as his exchange with André Gide. He underestimates the importance of their encounter, considering it as an instance of contact between Western and non-Western literary modernity, which distances the writer from his literary tradition and his public. He challenges their imaginary representation of both Egypt and France, because it reflects an understanding of world literature based on an inherited German idealism. Likewise, he discredits the avoidance of theological issues characterizing the Gide-Hussein relationship. Thus, he reiterates the provincial limitations of world literature that "brackets theology in the service of global literacy" (123). Allen then speculates over the limitations of literary modernity as regards the ethics of the man of letters. He rejects the model of the cosmopolitan intellectual distanced from the public. In doing so, he refers to Taha Hussein's epistolary novel *Adib* (1935), which he considers as illustrative of alienation and displacement

within a shared location and tradition. In his view, the unspoken experiences of the protagonists' rural world in *Adib* convey the limitations of literary imagination, excluding the commoners' experiences from the modernist dream.

In his conclusion, Allan states that his objective was not to redeem a depiction of Islam in world literature but to examine its parameters and exclusions. This has prompted him to interrogate secular transformations and the subsequent rise of modern Arabic literature in Egypt during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In his view, modernization has marginalized what he terms a "poetics of hearing, listening, and possibly empathizing differently" (137). His claims intend to subvert the assumption that modernization necessarily constitutes a liberating agent for those abiding in ignorance. Allan was motivated to embark on such a project by what he regards as the failure of world literature to suture gaps between disciplinary reading and imagined traditions excluded from the humanist approach to literature.

*In the Shadow of World Literature* is to be commended for covering a vast array of sources on Egypt in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in an attempt to reconsider the limitations of world literature. However, postulating an Asadian paradigm for reading literature establishes a Western/non-Western or Christian/Muslim binary throughout the book. It foregrounds the figure of a standard assimilated Muslim or Christian, disregarding more diverse discursive identity formations. Such standardization conflates institutionalized religious practices among radicalized students protesting against freedom of expression at the turn of the millennium with the commoner's religious beliefs in Mahfouz's *Qasr al-Shawq* in the early twentieth century.

Overlooking the disparity between institutionalized radical populism and the popular fails to do justice to the role of the continuous infiltration of various institutional "domestic colonies" in Egypt in different historical epochs. Moreover, representing secularization as a discipline enforced by the West and Arab elites on a passive public in the nineteenth century overlooks published studies on early processes of secularization, which involved vernacularizing Arabic in everyday practice. Popular culture has always been a shared space making the boundaries between native and non-native social groups quite porous. Contrary to Allan's claims, religious instruction based on memorization was not the only pedagogical method in Egypt. Informal education had been achieved at

mushrooming coffee houses since the sixteenth century and vernacular writings were disseminated among the public. Along with the revival of pre-modern revolutionary figures in the works of Taha Hussein and Naguib Mahfouz, these factors laid the basis for modern culture in Egypt. Thus, the unorthodox stance cannot be classified as elitist. All in all, *In the Shadow of World Literature* raises questions about whether secularisms are derivative of the Western model. Debating this issue may eventually determine the dynamic role of popular culture in straddling the secular/religious divide in the various trajectories of world literature.

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**Pramod K. Nayar. *The Transnational in English Literature: Shakespeare to the Modern*. London: Routledge, 2015. Pp. 315. ISBN: 9780415840026.**

In his "Preface" Pramod Nayar immediately summarizes the argument of his book: to demonstrate that England's literary history is a "legacy of its transnational linkages," and that "right from the 1550s, the racial-cultural Other was not simply 'out there': it was very much constitutive of English domestic, social and cultural imaginary, life and discourse" (vi). In what follows, Nayar makes good on these claims in six large chapters that address, respectively, "Globality and Englishness," "Worlds and Voyages: English itinerancy and the spaces of Otherness," "Difference and desire: the exoticized Other," "Consume and commodify: the objectified Other," "Disease and degeneration: the pathologized Other," and "Civilize and collapse: improveable Others, disintegrating English."

In his first substantive chapter, introducing his subject, Nayar announces that his "book makes a case for treating England's literary history, from the Renaissance and Early Modern period to the modern, as a *history of its transnational engagements*" (emphasis in the original). In the context of this endeavour he sees the "transnational" as "a way to think about England's varied connections through the 400 years starting with the early voyages in quest of trade routes and colonies to the twentieth century when its Empire began to break up." In every period of English literature, he



suggests, “we can locate major movements, authors and texts who/that define English identity and nationhood via a dialectic, a negotiation with Arab, Indian, Chinese and other Asian regions and cultures. Literature is a site where the engagement with difference marks a discourse of Englishness within a discourse of ‘globality.’” (2) “Globality” for Nayar manifests itself as “the theme of transnational Otherness,” and as such is “itself a national project of English identity-building” (3). All of which sounds very much like an application and extension of Edward Said’s famous “Orientalism.” It must immediately be said, though, that although Nayar at various instances insists upon England’s engagement, in literature, with “its racial-cultural Other, Chinese, Asian, African, Arabic and also, on occasion, Europe’s internal Others such as the Romany (gypsies) and East Europeans (notably from Transylvania, in *Dracula*, 1897)” and that “English literature was inextricably bound up with the globe” (4), Nayar’s main interest is with Britain’s colonial Others. His book, therefore, situates itself, next to in the field of the transnational, also in that of the postcolonial. Consequently, he proposes re-reading and re-constructing England’s literary past as not exclusively a national concern, but as very much shaped by its “cultural encounter with Otherness” (5).

In his second chapter, Nayar traces how “globality” in English literature is the “*cumulative set of imaginative constructions of (other) places to which the Englishman materially or imaginatively travels*” (11). For illustration, Nayar draws upon a wide array of literary texts, from Francis Bacon, Thomas More, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, John Donne, William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, John Dryden, Abraham Cowley, Aphra Behn, Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, Daniel Defoe, William Cowper, William Beckford, Tobias Smollett, Charles Maturin, Felicia Hemans, Mary Shelley, Charles Dickens, Charlotte and Emily Brontë, Alfred Tennyson, R. M. Ballantyne, G. A. Henty, Wilkie Collins, Bram Stoker, Rider Haggard, Arthur Conan Doyle, H. G. Wells, Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, E. M. Forster, Graham Greene and William Golding. To many of these Nayar returns in the chapters to follow, usually extensively quoting passages from their works. In fact, these abundant and extensive quotations I count as one of the most attractive, and useful, features of Nayar’s volume, although it also has to be said that occasionally the same passages are quoted, and a certain amount of overlap in this regard, as also in some of the arguments made all along, is to be noted.

The third chapter focuses upon how the difference between the English Self and the Other engenders repulsion and attraction, next to curiosity. All these, Nayar suggests, are aspects of the exoticization of the Other. One form of interest in the exotic took, according to Nayar, was its sentimentalization, in which the author, or her/his characters/focalizers, dwell upon the feelings provoked by the Other. The categories in which Others were placed were those of the "savage exotic," akin to the bestial and inhuman, "the Noble Savage," and the "erotic exotic," in which the Other is either, or both, temptation/seduction and threat. The latter applies particularly to the position and conduct of English women in colonial settings. Here Nayar makes excellent use of little-known, or at least these days little-read, but in their day quite popular fictions, such as the early twentieth-century novels of Alice Perrin, in which the issue of "domesticity," or how to behave according to expectations, takes center-stage. A different picture emerges from Mary Montagu's 1725 *Letters*, in which she writes about her experiences while at the court of the Ottoman Sultan, in Istanbul, and in which she pictures Ottoman women as enjoying greater freedom than their English counterparts because of their wearing the veil, which allows them to pass unnoticed, and anonymously, and as such to even—Montagu intimates—indulge in illicit affairs. And especially the Other woman could also be the subject of compassion, as instances of what Nayar terms "the vulnerable Other," with examples from Felicia Hemans and Robert Southey. But he also fruitfully discusses the sexualized Other in Haggard's *She*, as well as in a number of early seventeenth-century plays, Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, Beckford's *Vathek*, Byron's *Oriental Tales*, and—again a little-known text—Charlotte Dacre's 1806 Gothic novel *Zoflora*, in which the eroticized Moor is an incarnation of Satan.

Chapter four addresses what is a much-researched subject these days: how foreign objects and commodities entered European, and in this case English, domestic life as a result of ongoing "globalization." Nayar mentions, and discusses the actual introduction, spread, and popularization of "tea, cotton, china/porcelain, tapestries, coffee, Kashmiri shawls, tobacco and cocoa, accompanied by appurtenances and rituals of consumption such as teapots or china" (130). But also perfumes, precious stones, ivory, and "chinoiserie" find their place here. A famous example, which Nayar does not forego mentioning, is Belinda's boudoir, in *The Rape of the Lock*, where many of these things come together. William

Congreve, Aphra Behn, Jane Austen, Walter Scott, William Hazlitt, and James Joyce also provide telling examples, as do James Grainger with his 1764 *The Sugar-Cane* and Maria Edgeworth with her 1804 story "The Grateful Negro." Particularly interesting in this chapter is the extensive discussion of how slaves are objectified as "bodies" or commodities. Here, texts by Defoe, Cowper, Carlyle, and Conrad come into focus, as do poems by Helen Maria Williams, Amelia Opie, William Wordsworth, Ann Yearsley, Charlotte Dacre, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

In his fifth chapter Nayar traces how the engagement with the Other, especially during the nineteenth century, almost increasingly came to be cast in terms of invasion and infection of the English homeland by foreign diseases. Part of the reason for this was that, whereas until then Britain's engagement with the rest of the world had largely been a matter of Brits going abroad to trade with, invade, conquer and occupy the land of the Other, now more and more specimens of that Other were coming to the British Isles themselves. Undoubtedly, though, it also had to do with the increased discourse of purity, ethically and nationally, that accompanied the generalization of Romanticism, with its emphasis on homogeneous nationhood. A famous instance of the fear generated by the Other invading the privacy, wholeness and health of an English "home" is the passage in Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* when a Malay sailor turns up at the author's rural cottage, and later continues to haunt the latter's opium-induced nightmares. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, with the figure of Bertha Mason, and her sister Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, with Heathcliff, also point to invasions, and threatened take-overs by Others, in the first case a Creole woman, in the second case by someone who is referred to as a Lascar and a gypsy, and who is also often likened to the devil or a vampire. The latter, of course, most famously features as Dracula in Bram Stoker's eponymous novel. But disease and degeneration could also be ascribed to foreign products, such as tobacco, undermining the Englishman's health, as in a famous anti-tobacco treatise by King James I, or sapping that same Englishman's manly strength by leading him to indulge all kind of exotic luxuries. Or women dissipating their energies and attentions in tea-drinking, or in their passion for "china," as in John Gay's 1725 "To a Lady on Her Passion for Old China." With abolitionism, slavery came to be seen as a disease affecting England's health, and in the Kurtz of *Heart of Darkness* this disease has turned the man who set out to bring the light of Christendom into a heathen idol, and London into another "heart of darkness." Kurtz

is the supreme example of “going native,” backsliding from the heights of civilization to the deepest depths of savagery. Kurtz dies on his way back from the heart of Africa, but Marlow, who in many ways is a double of Kurtz, does make it back, though gravely ill himself, and at least potentially a threat to the homeland. Kurtz stands as much for the darkness inside the European Self as for the threat of the Other. In the figure of Mary Shelley’s and Frankenstein’s monster European man’s own creation raises a threat, Dracula, Europe’s internal Other, threatens to take over London, while Mr. Hyde takes over Dr. Jekyll.

In his final chapter, Nayar discusses how the realization of what Kipling memorably called “the white man’s burden” created the moral imperative to at least aspire to raise England’s and Europe’s Other to its own level of “civilization.” In first instance, this led to changes in colonial regimes, if not necessarily to the intention of giving up colonialism altogether – this is what Nayar sees as informing not just Kipling’s writings but also Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. Increasingly, however, this led to what Nayar terms “discrepant geographies,” where the world no longer corresponds to the “English” point of view, obeying or responding to the latter’s call, but where England and the English themselves increasingly become objectified and scrutinized, and where the English Self dissolves under the foreign gaze, in a world that is now alien. Such dissolution of a confident “Englishness” Nayar finds in Conrad, Forster, Greene, George Orwell’s *Burmese Days*, and Paul Scott’s *Raj Quartet*. We might well add Anthony Burgess’s *Malayan Trilogy*, or William Boyd’s *A Good Man in Africa*, and countless other texts. In essence, what we get here is a peek at literature’s way of accounting for the rise of England as a British, colonial and imperial power, over the course of four centuries, and its implosion into Little Englandism over the last century or so.

Because of its many apt quotations, and because the argument it consistently develops, Nayar’s book, notwithstanding some of the overlaps and repetitions, is a most worthwhile addition to the fast-growing library of volumes on how English literature engages with the country’s colonial and imperial past.

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**Ranjan Ghosh et J. Hillis Miller. *Thinking Literature Across Continents*. Durham : Duke University Press, 2017. Pp. 316. ISBN : 9780822362449.**

Cet ouvrage offre un abondant dialogue entre J. Hillis Miller, universitaire américain, largement connu, commentateur des littératures britannique et américaine, théoricien lié à Derrida et cependant indépendant de bien des thèses du philosophe français, et Ranjan Ghosh, qui enseigne à l'University of North Bengal en Inde, et a récemment publié *Transcultural Poetics and the Concept of the Poet : From Philip Sidney to T. S. Eliot*.

Ce dialogue s'organise autour de cinq questionnements : « Matière et importance de la littérature » (« The Matter and Mattering of Literature »), « Poème et poésie » (« Poem and Poetry »), « Enseigner la littérature » (« Teaching Literature »), et « Ethique et littérature » (« Ethics and Literature »). J. Hillis Miller est la seconde voix de chacun de ces dialogues ; l'« Epilogue », univocal, appartient à Ranjan Ghosh. Ce dialogue a une longue histoire, faite d'échanges et de reprises à travers des messages électroniques. Ni la distance géographique, ni les évidentes identifications continentales de chacun des dialogueurs — Amérique et Asie — n'ont été abolies.

Dès lors qu'aucun des deux dialogueurs n'abandonne ses positions culturelles et critiques, il s'agit bien, comme le dit le titre, *Thinking Literature across Continents*, de penser la littérature selon la distance et selon la différence, d'une part, et, d'autre part, de retenir qu'on peut la considérer dans sa généralité ou son universalité — remarquons l'utilisation du singulier, « literature ». Hors d'un accord sur les thèses critiques, ce dialogue sur la littérature et la critique littéraire se confond avec un exercice de don, comme le suggère l'épilogue qui n'utilise pas cependant ce mot. Chacun des dialogueurs donne quelque chose à l'autre et accepte, prend ce que celui-ci lui donne, selon les termes de Rajan Ghosh. Malgré ce don croisé, malgré certaines références littéraires partagées, la différence subsiste.

Cette différence peut certainement s'interpréter de manière culturelle et selon ce qui distingue des poétiques, des *ethos*, d'un côté, occidentaux, et de l'autre, indiens et chinois. La différence culturelle est plus essentiellement le moyen de construire un questionnement contemporain et partagé sur les usages et le statut de la littérature, sur son enseignement. Cela justifie les formulations des cinq grandes questions, déjà notées. J. Hillis Miller, sans doute la proie d'un certain pessimisme, met particulièrement

en évidence les enjeux auxquelles elles renvoient : la littérature face aux media, aux univers numériques ; face à sa propre disparité et à la diversité culturelle du monde ; face aux problèmes de l'enseignement, qui sont à la fois ceux de la minorisation de la littérature et ceux d'un affaiblissement institutionnel des humanités ; face aux engagements éthiques, qui supposent la reconnaissance de leur propre lettre et, en conséquence, celle de la lettre de la littérature.

Aucun des deux dialogueurs ne conteste l'urgence de ces questions, ni ne refuse une référence à la littérature dans sa généralité. J. Hillis Miller dit « literature », et souligne que l'usage du terme en Occident date du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle ; Ranjan Ghosh utilise le terme sanskrit de *sahitya*, qui veut dire « united together » et dont l'usage « littéraire » — IX<sup>e</sup> siècle — est largement antérieur à celui du terme de littérature en Occident. Cette différence temporelle se double de deux identifications distinctes de la fonction de la littérature (on dit fonction, et non pas définition, car la littérature a reçu bien des définitions). J. Hillis Miller : la littérature défait l'idéologie ; Rajan Ghosh : elle défait toute limite d'un horizon, et indique l'infini de la finitude, en même temps qu'elle pratique la « fusion » — il faut ici renvoyer au sens premier de *sahitya*. Au-delà de la différence culturelle, l'opposition de ces deux approches présente l'intérêt d'offrir deux façons de considérer les manières dont la littérature peut répondre de notre présent — de quelque lieu que celui-ci soit.

Cette différence que ce dialogue construit initialement, trouve sa pleine illustration dans les parties qui traitent de l'éthique, de l'enseignement et de la « world literature ». Pour J. Hillis Miller, l'éthique de la littérature suppose la reconnaissance de l'autorité de celle-ci. Cela ne veut pas dire que la littérature soit prescriptive, normative, qu'elle indique quelque règle précise, mais qu'elle expose toujours, dans la *singularité* d'une œuvre, une perspective éthique. Celle-ci ne peut être identifiée que si on lit l'œuvre selon un « close reading », selon l'autorité qu'elle possède par sa singularité, selon les techniques formelles de l'œuvre, qui sont les moyens de son autorité. Dans la reconnaissance de l'autorité de l'œuvre, le lecteur est amené à s'interroger sur sa propre autorité morale — J. Hillis Miller illustre cette perspective par une lecture de *Framley Parsonage* de Trollope. Pour Rajan Ghosh, il n'est d'éthique que par la reconnaissance de l'altérité — le lien est ici manifeste avec la notation initiale de l'infini de la finitude — et par ce qui en est indissociable : la faim (« hunger ») — faim d'autrui, du monde, que l'œuvre expose, que

le lecteur ressent et qui attend qu'elle soit exposée. Ainsi, deux modes de lecture s'opposent-ils. J. Hillis Miller : lecture inductive du particulier au général ; Rajan Ghosh : lecture qui reconnaît la singularité de l'œuvre selon une perspective générale — faim, fusion, transculturel —, elle-même adéquate à la condition que se reconnaît le lecteur, affamé.

La différence que les deux dialogueurs dessinent entre leurs façons de caractériser l'enseignement de la littérature, est entièrement analogue à celle qui vient d'être notée à propos de l'éthique. En même temps qu'il indique la dégradation de l'enseignement des humanités et de la condition des universitaires aux Etats-Unis, J. Hillis Miller défend un enseignement contextuel de la littérature, qui suppose l'identification de la singularité des œuvres — cette singularité implique une lecture et un enseignement à la fois précis et contextuels. Rajan Ghosh voit l'enseignement et la lecture comme indissociables d'une vision des choses — autrement dit, de nos propres environnements et des matérialités qu'évoquent les œuvres — qui aille au-delà d'une perspective anthropocentrique et utilitaire, et qui fasse de la littérature et de l'enseignement des manières de co-activité, de co-actualisation — rappelons que la faim, déjà nommée, est intersubjective. Une telle lecture, éventuellement née de la perte de sens, est multiple et suggère *ce qui n'est pas encore*. De manière habile, Rajan Ghosh cite l'exemple de son enseignement sur Beckett, nombre d'écrivains (dont Kafka), d'artistes, de théoriciens ou de critiques occidentaux. Telle remarque occidentale sur la pédagogie lui permet de souligner, en une défense d'une pédagogie éversive, que tout enseignement repose sur deux ignorances : étudiants et professeurs ne savent ni leurs propres résistances, ni celles de l'autre. Où l'on revient à l'infini de la finitude.

Le dialogue sur la « world literature » répète ces oppositions. J. Hillis Miller s'interroge sur la pertinence de la « world literature », affirme la nécessité d'études contextuelles précises, et évoque le risque, à travers des renvois à Nietzsche, que la « world literature » devienne une manière d'antiquarisme. Rajan Ghosh souligne que la « world literature », indissociable du constat de la faim, de ce qui n'est pas encore, de l'infini du fini, doit aller comme au-delà d'elle-même et faire reconnaître notre monde, sa globalité et tous les infinis que celle-ci porte.

Le second chapitre, qui traite de la question du « poème et de la poésie », désigne le souci commun que partagent les expressions de ces différences. Les deux dialogueurs s'accordent sur le fait que les littératures circulent, qu'elles sont les littératures de tout le monde et que le singulier

du mot « littérature » traduit ce fait de l'universalité et de l'unité — cette unité à laquelle renvoie l'étymologie de *sahitya*. Cette circulation et cette unité font la question des littératures, de la littérature. A cette question, la critique et la théorie, quelles que soient leurs références culturelles et leurs perspectives méthodologiques et leurs paradigmes — et sans référence aux deux dialogueurs —, ont apporté bien des réponses. J. Hillis Miller et Rajan Ghosh tentent de rendre compte de cet universalisme sans universel explicite, qui caractérise(ra)it la littérature. J. Hillis Miller cite les thèses de Wolfgang Iser sur l'imaginaire — celui-ci serait le fonds commun des littératures. Notons que ce renvoi à Iser est habile : celui-ci n'a pas défendu une vision archétypale ou essentialisante de l'imaginaire. Rajan Ghosh dit ses perspectives préférées — l'infini du fini, la faim —, cite et analyse Tagore, et lit ce jeu de l'infini de la finitude chez bien des philosophes ou écrivains occidentaux contemporains. La différence culturelle subsiste entre les deux dialogueurs ; elle est au plus proche de son effacement dès lors qu'il s'agit de caractériser la littérature comme ce qui appartient à plusieurs cultures et à plusieurs poétiques. Le dialogue littéraire intercontinental est, de fait, sous-tendu par un débat sur ce que peuvent être les meilleures vision et figurations de l'universalité littéraire, hors de toute domination, par la littérature même — où il y a inévitablement une compétition et une rivalité critiques.

Cette logique sous-jacente du dialogue n'est pas toujours explicitée. Elle commande cependant les interrogations et les arguments des autres chapitres et suscite la différence de lecture des « Daffodils » de Wordsworth par les deux dialogueurs — herméneutique ouverte ou herméneutique limitée et contextuelle. Elle suppose aussi que toute discussion de poétique comparée et toute reconnaissance de différents paradigmes culturels puissent être associées selon un universalisme paradoxal.

Un premier mérite de ce dialogue, outre le détail des références à des poétiques, à des œuvres, des analyses littéraires, est de montrer que, quel que soit le don, dans ce cas critique, qu'on accepte de l'autre, on n'est pas dispensé de situer sa propre pensée de la littérature.

Le second mérite est d'indiquer qu'on ne peut se dispenser quand on parle de l'universalité de la littérature de considérer ses contextes — sans contextes, l'universalité n'est qu'une abstraction. C'est pourquoi le débat entre J. Hillis Miller et Rajan Ghosh tourne autour de cette réalité du contexte. Pour le premier, aucune généralité n'est contextuelle — l'œuvre n'est universalisable que par sa singularité, cependant contextualisable. Pour le



second, des œuvres peuvent être à la fois singulières et universalisables parce qu'elles sont riches, par leurs représentations anthropologiques — il faut redire les références à Tagore—, d'un contexte. Résumons dans des termes qui ne sont pas ceux des dialogueurs, mais qui rendent les enjeux critiques explicites : l'universalité de la littérature est intensive selon J. Hillis Miller ; selon Rajan Ghosh, elle est extensive. Chacun des types d'arguments appelle ses propres références à des œuvres et à des poétiques.

Le débat est donc ouvert. On peut imaginer d'autres réponses que celle de J. Hillis Miller et Rajan Ghosh. Pour construire une autre réponse, en tenant compte des arguments des deux critiques, on suggère, parmi bien des possibilités, d'identifier dans les littératures occidentales des équivalences — et non pas des données identiques — des œuvres et des poétiques asiatiques qui sont évoquées dans *Thinking Literature Across Continents*. On doit en trouver.

On ne propose aucune critique restrictive de cet ouvrage, ni aucune analyse des représentations larges des divers types de poétiques et de critiques littéraires qui sont impliqués, ni de l'idée même d'identifications continentales de la littérature, des littératures et des exemples qui en sont donnés. Ces représentations et cette idée sont, de fait, directement liées aux ordres d'argumentation qui viennent d'être décrits. Une remarque restrictive s'imposerait alors et initialement : est-ce que ce large comparatisme et la dichotomie qu'il illustre à travers les réflexions opposées de deux personnalités est le meilleur moyen de rendre compte de ce qu'impliquent les notions de littérature et de *sahitya* : une unité d'hétérogènes — on revient ainsi à l'étymologie de ce terme, que note Ranjan Ghosh.

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**Teresa Shewry. *Hope at Sea: Possible Ecologies in Oceanic Literature*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. Pp. 247. ISBN: 9780816691586.**

As I write this in Aotearoa/New Zealand in 2018, environmental concerns in the Pacific region have escalated, with unprecedented public debate on the impact of climate change as we witness alternating cycles

of drought and flood, increasingly destructive storms, rising sea levels, polluted waterways and threatened eco-systems. In Aotearoa several communities have been devastated by abnormal flooding and owners of coastal properties are finding their homes have become uninsurable. The low-lying island nations of Tuvalu and Kiribati are likely to be uninhabitable in future due to rising sea levels. While visiting the island of Hawai'i (the Big Island) I witnessed chunks gouged out of the coastal highway as a result of rising tides and fierce storms. All of this makes Teresa Shewry's study *Hope at Sea: Possible Ecologies in Oceanic Literature* not only timely but perhaps essential reading. Shewry refers to the current prominence of dystopian narratives, but rather than accepting environmental apocalypse as inevitable, she argues that a fuller theoretical understanding of hope can lead to an improved environmental future. To prove this, she examines a selection of Oceanic novels, poetry, short stories, and journalism, putting fiction into dialogue with non-fiction and with the visual arts, mining texts for expressions of hope. In examining the literary heritage of Oceania she references utopian representations of the Pacific from Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) to James Cameron's populist re-imagining of Indigenous environmentalism in the movie *Avatar* (2009). Throughout the book she considers the complex relationships between humans and non-human creatures and elements such as birds, fish, weather and the ocean itself. She asks the loaded question, "can the future of the environment be regarded with optimism rather than resignation?"(5).

Shewry begins with a thorough and illuminating discussion of theories of hope and observes that hope is "a controversial term" (11) seen by some as passive and/or naive. She contends that the artistic imaginings of the Pacific, which Shewry describes as "a profoundly amphibious expanse of the planet" (23), often revolve around water. In the first chapter, historiography weaves with ecocriticism as she considers the relationships between colonial forces and the environment. Her comparative analysis between a novel from the colonial era, Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872), and the Booker-prizewinning *The Bone People* by Keri Hulme (1984) enables us to read both works in a new light. She demonstrates how Butler's novel reflects European colonial values by associating utopia with "eco-systems that are controlled and productive" (38), but also notes the emphasis on the non-human in *Erewhon*, and argues that the novel ultimately demonstrates the marginalization of human and non-human welfare in utopian colonial projects. In *The Bone People*, Shewry finds an

emphasis on endurance that she suggests “may enable promising environmental futures” (42). She explores the relationships between political change and endurance. While reading Shewry’s cogent analysis of the “politics of endurance,” I was reminded of the New Zealand Green Party, who have held seats in parliament since 2000 but had never been in government until becoming part of a Labour-led coalition in October 2017. Under a confidence and supply arrangement they gained three ministers outside cabinet and an under-secretary role. Greens leader James Shaw became New Zealand’s first Climate Change Minister, with the power to affect positive environmental change. The synchronicity between widespread public concern about environmental issues and the Greens being part of government for the first time reflects not only the hopes of many environmentalists but also the endurance of the Green political movement. Although Shewry observes that environmental upheaval is a negative force on the characters in *The Bone People*, ultimately she finds that its politics of endurance lead to an evocation of hope for the future.

Chapter two examines the connections between hope and water as expressed in Hawaiian literature. Shewry observes that water “is almost everywhere tangled in environmental struggles in the Pacific” (59–60). She notes the contradictory forces of water, which is both life-giving and dangerous (60) and illustrates how the diversion of water for capitalist enterprise undermined the ability of Native Hawaiians to continue customary agricultural and fishing practices. Focusing on detailed textual analysis of Gary Pak’s short story “Language of the Geckos” (2005) and Cathy Song’s poetry collection *Picture Bride* (1983), she argues that both associate hope with water. She suggests that Pak’s writing proposes hope for a “more viable environmental life” in the future (66). Song’s work highlights the role of Hawai’i’s plantation history in determining relationships between people, the land and water. In the work of both writers, a focus on everyday work and everyday creativity provides a source of hope, and a “continued curiosity” about “how people might live well with water” (84).

In chapter three Shewry shifts the focus back to New Zealand, bringing three poets—Ian Wedde, Hone Tuwhare, and Cilla McQueen—into conversation with each other, demonstrating how their work balances bleakness with the possibility of “promising futures” while critically examining forces of transnationalism and capitalism. Drawing from Wedde’s art criticism as well as his poetry, she explores the notion of a “fractured ocean” from which hope can emerge from

present-day realities. Her reading of Wedde's poem "Letter to Peter McLeavey: After Basho" (2005) opens up differing perspectives on the present "that might allow for hope, a relationship with the future that includes openness and promise" (97). Shewry illustrates the degree to which Oceanic life has been "disrupted by colonial institutions" (98) and reminds us that simplistic Eurocentric views of the Pacific as remote and insignificant overlook a multitude of cultural connections throughout time and space. She contends that Pacific peoples are "shapers and theorists of an ocean that binds as much as it isolates" (98). She usefully touches on the work of influential Māori painter Ralph Hotere whose work resonates with that of these three poets in its environmental themes. Her discussion of Tuwhare is particularly pertinent to the book's overall argument, as his *Shape-Shifter* poems (1997) feature conversations between human and non-human beings (101) including narrators who speak directly to the ocean as the Māori sea-god Tangaroa (102). Representing it as "wily, volatile and playful," Tuwhare respects the agency of the ocean and complex systems of interaction between human and non-human life. Similarly, McQueen's collection *Markings* (2000) focuses on those who live intimately with the ocean, but her work forms an incisive critique of capitalist industrial practices that contribute to climate change and pollution. While these works may paint a negative picture of the current state of the ocean, they also highlight struggles for "survival, justice and repair" (112).

Chapter four develops Shewry's analysis of human/nonhuman relationships and interactions in the Pacific through a close reading of Australian Richard Flanagan's *Gould's Book of Fish: A Novel in Twelve Fish* (2001), inspired by the journals and fish paintings of convict William Buelow Gould (1801–1853). Flanagan's historiographic novel examines the impact of colonial enterprises such as fishing and forestry on the Indigenous people and the ecology of Tasmania during the nineteenth-century colonial era. The novel reminds us that part of the project of colonization was the cataloguing of the nonhuman beings of the Pacific, adding knowledge of these natural phenomena to European perception and domination of the world. The de-humanizing labour enforced on convicts in the novel further enhances the links between human, nonhuman, water, and the economics of an island colony. Shewry convincingly demonstrates how the novel "associates empire, capitalism and urbanization, among other processes, with marine environmental change" (141).

Towards the end of chapter four, Shewry touches upon Flanagan's more recent work, *The Unknown Terrorist* (2006), in which an innocent woman is mistakenly identified as a terrorist, linking human rights concerns with environmental decay. In contrast with the imaginings and ambiguities of *Gould's Book of Fish*, this bleak novel seems devoid of hope, raising questions about the relationships between "hope, loss and responsibility" (145). This point neatly segues into the final chapter, which focuses on literature dealing with the fallout of nuclear testing by France, the United Kingdom and the United States in the Pacific. Here Shewry evokes the Oceanic legacy of nuclear experimentation and associated apocalyptic literature such as Australian Neville Shute's *On the Beach* (1957). Her discussion of Samoan Albert Wendt's *Black Rainbow* (1992) and Hawaiian-based Robert Barclay's *Melal: A Novel of the Pacific* (2002) opens up monumental questions. Wendt's dark novel "reveals histories of environmental loss" and Barclay considers the impact of nuclear and military activities, such as displacement and disease, on Pacific peoples. Yet Shewry argues that both novels "evoke hope through engagements with worlds that have been heavily altered by nuclear weapons" (153). In particular, Barclay's "expressions of love, playfulness, and humor" (169) contribute a sense of hope, fully informed by the dark realities of environmental destruction, countering the despair of "dark ecologists," using optimism as a force for positive action in future responses to environmental crisis.

Early in *Hope at Sea*, Shewry quotes philosopher Ernest Bloch who says that "hope is as unexplored as the Antarctic" (11), but by the end of the book that exploration has been conducted precisely and engagingly through Shewry's methodical, in-depth analysis. Her conclusion draws together the strands of her argument by demonstrating how hope has been constructed in the past and how it may provide a positive force for the future. In Shewry's view, hope is not passive, it is an active agency for activism and change. In *Hope at Sea* she interrogates every dimension of hope, linking endurance, persistence, survival, resilience, and resistance, moving us towards a deeper understanding of the resonances and usefulness of hope as a critical term. Key terms and points are helpfully reincorporated throughout the book, leading to a unified and coherent thesis despite the variety of texts and cultures discussed. Her argument reminds me of Bertolt Brecht's statement that "Our books, our pictures, our theatres, our films and our music can and must contribute decisively to the solution of the nation's vital problems" (Brecht

223). Shewry fruitfully revives the notion that art can affect social change, identifying an “aesthetics of hope” where creativity in itself is a form of hope and tool for change. She argues for “the importance of hope [which] lies in the relationship it forges with a future that is open, or that is a site of possibility rather than locked into one trajectory” (178–79). Her critical focus enables us to read familiar texts in new ways and it is notable that although some texts in her corpus were written several years ago they remain remarkably pertinent to current ecocritical debates. She convincingly situates the Pacific within wider environmental discussions and illustrates that Oceanic literature has much to contribute to global eco-critical discourse. Shewry’s impeccable scholarship, featuring excellent historical and sociographic contextualization for her close comparative readings, and supported by a substantial bibliography, illustrates how humanities research can contribute to solutions for what seem like unsolvable scientific problems. *Hope at Sea* contains an elegantly structured argument, alive with vivid examples, demonstrating that from the utopian construction of the Pacific to the dystopian present, the concept of hope becomes a necessary strategy for imagining the future. Given the very real environmental challenges facing humanity, this is timely and relevant work that makes a compelling and original contribution to Oceanic, postcolonial, Indigenous, and ecocritical literary studies.

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**Josephine Donovan. *The Aesthetics of Care: On the Literary Treatment of Animals*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016. Pp. 244. ISBN: 9781501317200.**

“CARE:” this word visually stands out in bold capitalized letters on the cover of the book, thus readily indicating its central concern. Josephine

Donovan already resorted to the notion of “care” in order to reconsider animal behavior in one of her previous works, *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics* (2007). In the case of *The Aesthetics of Care*, the author concentrates on an “aesthetics” foregrounding “care” as a reading grid to discuss the portrayal of animal figures in literature. A footnote alluding to “feminist approaches to environmental and ecological issues” (2) laconically reveals the ecofeminist orientation of Donovan’s “care theory.”<sup>1</sup> Imbalances between humanity and the nonhuman world (in this instance, animals) have generally been examined through the acknowledgment of a gendered relation to nature informing intra-human connections between males and females. Mind/body dualism clearly underpins this relation. Consequently, abstraction is usually associated with manhood and superior culture, whereas the body is associated with femininity and inferior nature. Quite at variance with this framework, the book envisions “re-conceptions of physical reality” rooted in an attitude of “care” conflating the plight of women and that of animals (1). Three chapters of literary criticism centered on “Tolstoy’s Animals” (chapter five), “Local-Color Animals” (chapter six), and “Coetzee’s Animals” (chapter seven), alternate with others offering illuminating insights into numerous theories developed by philosophers, writers, sociologists, and scientists. Those chapters seem to intersect in a nonlinear fashion so as to unveil two sides of Donovan’s demonstration. On the first hand, the author offers an interrogation on the scope of “the Aesthetics of Modernity” (chapter one) that is confluent with that on “Metaphysical Meat: ‘Becoming Men’ and Animal Sacrifice” (chapter eight), as well as on “The Transgressive Sublime, *katharsis*, and Animal Sacrifice” (chapter nine). Secondly, “Willa Cather’s Aesthetics Transitions” (chapter two), “The Aesthetics of Care” (chapter three), “Animal Ethics and Literary Criticism” (chapter four), and “Caring to Hear, Car-

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1. Since its emergence by the end of the 1980s among women activists involved in misogynistic anti-nuclear movements, this critical perspective has interrogated the intimate correlation between the overexploitation of natural resources and females’ enduring social disadvantages. In *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth* (2014), Donovan openly mentioned her ecofeminist approach to animal ethics. Besides, ecocritic Chris Cuomo remarks that an ecofeminist reflection is predicated on “compassion and caring:” “ecofeminism begins with awareness of the beauty of the natural world, and the human tendency toward compassion and caring” (6).

ing to See: Art as Emergence" (chapter ten), are meant to voice Donovan's "alternative epistemology" (73).

As the major hallmark of the seventeenth-century "Enlightenment hubris," the Cartesian-Kantian paradigm is reckoned to have conditioned "the aesthetics of modernity" to this day (see Descartes and Kant, 1790) (43). This "dominative 'I-it'" paradigm has legitimated the primacy of the human subject observer over the 'it' object other, whose body is regarded as a "thoughtless mechanism" (44). Donovan highlights the continuity of the mind/body dichotomy through Sartre's distinction between the gendered "*en-soi*: immanence and everyday contingency—feminine attributes" and the "*pour-soi*: the transcending, creative consciousness [that] is masculine" (20; see Sartre). Today's neo-capitalist and rational model of "economic man . . . as a separate, autonomous detached, competitive and primarily self-interested individual" (McMahon 164) keeps considering the body as "a site of chaos, disorder, and danger" that is "intrinsically corrupt" (Selam 79, Jones 142). Interestingly enough, Donovan traces the repression of the body associated with nonhuman entities back to the pre-Christian rite of "animal sacrifice" (chapter eight). The Latin etymology of the very term "sacrifice" ("*sacrificium/sacer facere*") clearly correlates the act of making "sacred" with transcendence from the body. The act of voluntarily shedding blood in animal sacrifice recalled the rite of passage through which males came to experience "a kind of self-evisceration" marking the singularity of masculine identity (174, see Ehrenreich and Beers). In that context, both the animal and the female womb were dismissed as weak "meat" from where blood and organic fluxes are shed involuntarily. Therefore, verbal language was manipulated as a human prerogative meant to circumscribe the animal figure to mere "stand-in' or surrogate" (46). The following example is quite telling in this respect: the phrase "the ballerina leaped with gazelle-like grace," enhances how everyday language indeed positions the animal as an object of metaphor illustrating human qualities, rather than the other way around (47). In keeping with a vision of the "sublime" advising people to behold the "life-threatening" body of nature securely from a distance (191; see Kant), Aristotle's "*mimesis*" conceives of the work of art as a crafted composition replicating a surface reality whose role is to tame the uncontrollable passions of the body. The gaze of the reader is thus meant to be passive, voyeuristic, and even complacent in the face of acts of physical brutality, and animal suffering in particular. Tim O'Brien's



*The Things they Carried* (1990) exemplifies the expression of “aesthetic closure” as “a deadening of the emotions, an affective cutoff, a polishing up and rounding off that precludes the messy, interactive, unresolved process of compassionate, sympathetic engagement” (185). In this novel, a GI soldier ruthlessly kills an innocent baby buffalo in order to vent his frustration about the death of a fellow soldier. In the same way, male upper-class viewers used to perform Aristotle’s “*katharsis*” so as to put “wild” energies of the body at a distance.<sup>2</sup> In sharp contrast, Donovan suggests “a reconceptualization of key literary critical terms *mimesis* and *katharsis*” (xiii).

Interestingly enough, Donovan transforms the traditional concept of “*mimesis*” into “empathetic *mimesis*,” implying that “the artist or writer should not impose forms upon nature to conform to those forms, but rather respond to nature as she is” (27, 24). The reader, in turn, is invited to experience “empathetic *mimesis*” when acknowledging the animal other as a subject worthy of respect and dignity. In this regard, Theodor Adorno’s “mimetic comportment” strips the human self out of his/her ego in the act of “yielding attention to the subject matter being perceived” (91). Referring Martin Buber, Donovan foregrounds fictional works testifying to an “I-thou” relationship between protagonists and animals engaged “in a subject-subject way . . . interacting actively and reciprocally” (43). She provides several examples of this process. In Tolstoy’s *Strider: The History of the Horse* (1861), or *Master and Man* (1895), the master feels deep kinship to the horse and dog figures whose viewpoints are underlined (114–17, 121–23). In Rose Terry Cooke’s *Dely’s Cow* (1865), Biddy, the cow, sympathizes with the distress of her mistress as her absent husband soldier is fighting in the Civil War (142). Moreover, in Coetzee’s *The Lives of Animals* (1999), Elizabeth Costello is a professor of philosophy who makes the reader aware of animal torture as a form of “flesh holocaust” in “drug-testing laboratories . . . factory farms . . . abattoirs” (164). The “animal-standpoint” in those stories suggests a “mode of aesthetic prehension” differing from the “intellectual apprehension” of animals as agents endowed with feelings and to which humans in turn feel corporeally connected. The “encounter with another subject” thus morphs into an experience of “emotional *qualia*,” of the qualitative properties derived from intermingling mind-body poles, a process whereby the body be-

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2. The plot of Sophocles’s *Oedipus Tyrannus*—in which Oedipus is plagued by natural disasters for murdering his father and marrying his mother—contributed to morally regulate the social order (194).

comes matter endowed with self-awareness. In this respect, Donovan conveys an eco-spiritual reading of the end of Sophocles's play: Oedipus finds solace and redemption in the "spirit" of the purifying spring water of "the sacred grove of the matriarchal Eumenides" (198). Thus re-attuned to nature's energies, Oedipus heads back to Thebes where he manages to re-integrate society. The reader's "*katharsis*" then leads to the sensory integration of a "sub-surface nonphysical communicative medium" immanent in the physiology of both humanity and nonhuman nature (204, see Von Uexhull). The attitude of "care" toward the human and nonhuman beings is thus predicated on a vision of art as an "aesthetics of emergence." The latter discloses the invisible bonds of a relational symbiosis with nature's cycles and forces that makes the environment a "dwelling world" instead of a mere envelope surrounding us (139).

Throughout her book, Donovan successfully maintains a cohesive relation between her chapters dealing with the "aesthetics of modernity," and those focusing on the "aesthetics of care." The "aesthetics of modernity" considers animals as oppressed "surface signposts" (205), whose bodies are evaluated according to their "monetary worth" (136). This "subject-object dualism" between humans and nonhumans is rooted into the very perception of the human body as sinful and easily commodified, especially in a society where the de-materialization of relationships is increasing. In this context, art is still regarded as a tool for amusement, unable to address crucial environmental issues. By contrast, Donovan's own notion of "aesthetics" stresses the urgent necessity to first address the environment of the human self through the experience and acceptance of one's sensory animality. The latter's energies embed humanity as individuals-in-the-world. The engagement of the reader in a "subject-subject continuum" where animal subjectivity is "cared about" enables the reconfiguration of the body as a site of creation without which the mind cannot work properly. The human subject's intuitive awareness of trans-mutating energies between humanity and non-humanity suggests a vision of the Earth as a benevolent force with which it is crucial to co-operate. Seen as a co-evolutionary environment thanks to the "aesthetics of care," the work of art holds the promise of a spiritual awakening that can help unlocking the boundaries between gender, socioeconomic, and ecological imbalances.

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**Hubert Zapf. *Literature as Cultural Ecology: Sustainable Texts*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016. Pp. 301. ISBN: 9781474274654.**

Since its commonly-regarded inception in the late 1990s, ecocriticism as an academic field of enquiry has evolved in many different directions,

diversifying its analytical methods and theoretical paradigms. What perhaps unites these various ecocritical trends, which are also often regrouped under the label “Environmental Humanities,” is their core examination of “the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature” (Glottfelty xix). In most Euro-Western cultures, the rationalist (i.e. reason-centred) philosophies inherited from the Enlightenment period established a clear-cut duality between “Nature” (“non-human” life forms and processes) and “culture” (human skills and products, supposedly developed outside Nature). Often adopting trans-disciplinary perspectives, ecocritics have continuously reconfigured this artificial dualism: the human and non-human, as well as the natural and cultural, spheres intersect in myriad ways in everyday life, physical activities and in the thematics and aesthetics of artistic production. Donna Haraway even devised the notion of “naturecultures” to reflect this intense interpenetration, or, in her terms, the fact that human and non-human entities (and their characteristics) are entangled in “co-constitutive relationships” (Haraway 12). Hubert Zapf’s *Literature as Cultural Ecology: Sustainable Texts* further develops these investigations of the Nature-culture interface.

As Zapf explains, cultural ecology represents an entirely new trend in ecocritical studies, a recent move undertaken mostly in German criticism and more discreetly in Anglophone spheres (Zapf 3). Seeking to tackle this demanding task, Zapf devises a “theory of imaginative literature based on the paradigm of cultural ecology” (3). Thus, two major and interrelated arguments seem to run through this book: a re-evaluation of the role of fictional literature in this Nature-culture dialogue on the one hand, and the correlation between natural and cultural processes on the other. Working from the perspective of literary studies, Zapf seeks to demonstrate how the internal dynamics of “imaginative” texts also function according to processes characterising non-human biological entities found in the ecosystem. Indeed, “a cultural ecology of literature is based on a functional-evolutionary view of cultural and literary history” (4). For instance, the important concept of sustainability may be transferred from ecological/biological to cultural spheres: “If sustainability in a *biological* sense means the ways in which living systems remain alive and productive over time, then the cultural ecosystem of literature fulfills a similar function of sustainable productivity within cultural discourses” (4, emphasis in original). Conversely, a cultural kind of sustainability suggests that literary culture

too maintains a systemic relationship with “the ecological processes of life that it both reflects and creatively transforms” (4). These initial statements bespeak Zapf’s sustained effort throughout his book to maintain a balanced, two-way conversation between Nature and culture issues. From this notion of “sustainable” text(uality), the scholar develops the thesis that fictional literature is endowed with and creates an “ecological force.” These key notions of sustainability and the “ecological force” of literature constitute two of the most interesting aspects of Zapf’s project.

In the section entitled “Sustainability and Literature,” the scholar advocates a re-inclusion of literary culture (with its thematic and aesthetic richness) into the predominantly technological, social, economic, and ecological definitions of “sustainability.” Indeed, only recent studies and research groups have approached this concept as “a phenomenon of culture” (17), i.e. through the lenses of cultural and literary studies. Zapf offers us a thought-provoking overview of these endeavours, ranging from university curricula (“sustainability studies”) to forms of “eco-art,” and discussions of literary texts and aesthetics in the Humanities (17–22). Alluding to reflections by Stacy Alaimo, Rosi Braidotti, and Gert Goeminne, Zapf explains how the concept of sustainability has sparked controversy in some Humanities circles, precisely “because of its usurpation by primarily economic-technological models of environmental epistemology and agency” (18). In brief, the discussions about urgent environmental issues and sustainability must also include socio-cultural considerations (from the fields of philosophy and history, for instance) so that ecologically-sustainable solutions can be effectively correlated to human structures, modes of thinking, and everyday practices. Thus, sustainability must become “a more complex, self-reflexive, and ethically responsive concept” (19). Zapf adds that this reconfigured sustainability actively participates in the “generative potential and transformative function” of literature and art (19). The scholar even goes further, as he later posits that literary art itself “constitutes a form of sustainable aesthetic and textual culture” (21). Throughout Zapf’s book, the question of aesthetics is primordial to a cultural ecology of literary texts: “Aesthetic forms of communication represent a special potential as a sustainable cultural practice because of their ‘heightened sensibility’ for the connectivity and complexity of the natural as well as the cultural worlds” (20). For Zapf, this type of sustainability bespeaks “a *potentiality*” of texts, rather than a “set of properties” (26, emphasis in original): it is detectable in the way imaginative literature pays double attention to

long- and short-term perspectives, “*multi-layered forms of relationality*,” “*diversities*,” and “patterns of connectivity,” to mention but a few of such “sustainable” features (25, emphasis in original). Zapf concludes that his notion of sustainable text(uality) is not central to but rather “co-emerges” with the thesis of a cultural ecology of literature (26). The features delineated above can be found again in Part IV, which analyses selected fictional texts through the lenses of “relational polarities,” i.e. “Texts and Life,” “Order and Chaos,” “Connecting Patterns and Creative Energies,” “Matter and Mind,” “Solid and Fluid,” “Wound and Voice,” “Absence and Presence,” and “Local and Global.”

By contrast, the remainder of Zapf’s theoretical and analytical discussions about cultural ecology are predominantly based on his argument that “imaginative literature *acts like an ecological force* within the larger system of culture and of cultural discourses” (27, emphasis in original). On the one hand, the ecological force of texts is “continuous with material biophysical forces,” while, on the other, it “gains its artistic potency through the *imaginative translation* of natural into cultural energies, of elemental forces of life in to the communicational, self-reflexive space of language, culture and aesthetics” (29, emphasis in original). In other words, fictional texts are attuned to the natural dynamics inherent in biological life forms, while their human (cultural) components also transfigure these processes through various aesthetic experiments. At this point, one can detect the major theoretical influences on Zapf’s cultural ecology, which the critic outlines in more detail in sections 9 (“From Natural Ecology to Cultural Ecology”) and 10 (“Cultural Ecology and Material Ecocriticism”). Indeed, Zapf manages to maintain a rigorous balance between natural and cultural considerations thanks to the specificity of his concept of cultural ecology. The latter skilfully combines arguments in favour of the interrelatedness of the human mind into the environment (Zapf is particularly inspired by Gregory Bateson’s *Ecology of Mind* and Peter Finke’s *Die Ökologie des Wissens* [*The Ecology of Knowledge*], see 77–80), with the special emphasis material ecocriticism lays on the non-human agencies participating in the storytelling process (81–87). Central to these philosophical views, and to Zapf’s cultural ecology, is the acknowledgement of a mutually-influencing entanglement between all actors (human and more-than-human) of the ecosystem not only through physical involvement, but also at the level of the aesthetic dynamics of literary texts. Most important is his particular attention to connectivity and difference that qualify the ever-shifting dynamics between ecological and cultural considerations. Thus, Zapf’s notion of

literature as “an ecological cultural force” seeks to blur traditional Nature-culture binaries, while also nuancing simplistic, homogenising models of culture-Nature fusion (92).

Section 12, entitled “Triadic Model of Literature as Cultural Ecology,” reflects these complex relations. Indeed, the scholar explains how the function of literature as an ecological force is both “deconstructive and reconstructive” thanks to its three interrelated discursive procedures: i.e. “a *culture-critical metadiscourse*, an *imaginative counter-discourse*, and a *reintegrative interdiscourse*” (95ff, emphasis in original). In the first function, literary texts expose the dynamics of “repression, imprisonment, and the paralysis” of “vital”—i.e. intra-human and interspecies—relationships at work in certain civilizational systems. The counter-discursive function conversely re-empowers the marginalised characters of the literary narratives with literary or creative energy (108). Finally, the reintegrative interdiscourse function of literature “brings together the civilization system and its exclusions into new, both conflictive, and transformative ways, and thereby contributes to the constant renewal of the cultural center for its margins” (114). To illustrate how these three functions work, Zapf compares excerpts from classical American fiction, such as *The Scarlet Letter*, *Moby Dick*, and *Beloved*. Most importantly, Zapf’s triadic model of literature recurs throughout his numerous close-reading analyses contained in Part IV.

As regards the nature of the case studies contained in this part of the book, the author himself admits to selecting an almost exclusively English-speaking and American corpus, for the sake of the argument’s coherence. Nineteenth-century canonical works are explored, such as Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, Melville’s *Moby Dick*, Thoreau’s *Walden*, and poems by Whitman, Dickinson, and Poe, in alternation with contemporary works, notably by Linda Hogan, Cormac McCarthy, Leslie Marmon Silko, Faulkner, and Robert Frost. A few exceptions to this American corpus include Witi Ihimaera’s *The Whale Rider*, Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* and Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*, although those specific novels have by now become common topics of ecocritical enquiry. Original inclusions include Zakes Mda’s *The Whale Caller*, Eden Robinson’s *Monkey Beach*, and Ian McEwan’s *On Chesil Beach*, while Zapf occasionally alludes to non-Anglophone literature (Kafka, Tasso Torquato, Wagner). Although some might object to this decision to rely on a predominantly American corpus—a recurrent choice in ecocritical studies—one must applaud Zapf’s remarkable comparative technique: despite the cultural-historical diversity of the texts

examined, the various sections of Part IV organise them around thematic and aesthetic axes in a clear fashion so that the reader can smoothly navigate these different narratives and techniques. Zapf's comparative perspective is not limited to intratextual analyses only, as it also ties in with the transdisciplinary methodology inherent in cultural ecology's attempt to consider both biological and cultural dynamics (see above).

However, the internal and overall structure of the first three parts, devoted essentially to theoretical and methodological concerns, might prove quite complex to navigate for the reader discovering the concept of cultural ecology for the first time. I personally fail to see any clear difference in content between Part I ("Cultural Ecology and Literary Studies") and Part III ("Literature as Cultural Ecology"): the former is intended as a programmatic chapter, while Part III constitutes a logical amplification of the concepts (cultural sustainability and the ecological force) delineated in Part I. The latter, nevertheless, already appears rather substantial, so that the reader's discovery of Zapf's key concepts is somewhat interrupted by an (otherwise excellent) overview of ecocriticism (Part II). In short, in a slightly frustrating and artificial fashion, the reader does not get more information before Part III. For instance, a reader unfamiliar with the notion of cultural ecology could find it a bit perplexing to learn about the origins and the progressive transformation of this concept only in the first section of Part III (77–80). Furthermore, because Part I already introduced us to the major arguments of cultural ecology in an eloquent and rather substantial fashion, some passages in Part III run the risk of appearing redundant (e.g. section 11, "Literature as Cultural Ecology," which again discusses the "ecological force" of literary texts, already delineated in section 4 entitled "Literature as an Ecological Force within Culture").

Zapf's theoretical argumentation and analytical insights outlined in the four Parts of this rich book undoubtedly bespeak the scholar's erudition. Zapf is very careful to make his point clear to the reader thanks to abundant philosophical documentation. Yet, if pushed to the extreme, this rigorousness may prove a double-edged sword: the strong theoretical grounding of *Literature as Cultural Ecology* definitely enables Zapf to avoid the charges levelled against the budding ecocriticism as a field of enquiry lacking a clear theoretical paradigm. Simultaneously, the abstract theoretical language time and again makes the reader wish for concrete clarifications and exemplifications. In the programmatic/methodological first chapter, not before page twelve does Zapf concretely outline what type of texts will be analysed, thus implicitly delaying a clear articulation



of what he means by “ecology” and “ecological texts.” Even in Part IV, some of Zapf’s literary analyses remain succinct and abstract. This lack of descriptive language makes it challenging for the reader to fully comprehend the concept of “ecological force” at work in the selected narratives.

Devising a new theoretical paradigm is no easy task. Zapf’s nuanced argumentation convincingly demonstrates the rich potential of cultural ecology. Because the latter is still a burgeoning ecocritical trend, the huge amount of original concepts and analytical methods developed in this book may at times unsettle the lay reader. Nevertheless, Zapf’s in-depth discussions never fail to provide inspiration for new comparative or transdisciplinary methods of literary analysis. All in all, then, this monograph will certainly become an indispensable tool for scholars wishing to undertake further research in this promising field of enquiry.

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**Michel Beaujour. *De la poétologie comparative*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2017. Pp. 204. ISBN: 9782406066255.**

Michel Beaujour (1933–2013), who at the time of his death was Professor of French at New York University, is best known for his books on Rabelais (*Le Jeu de Rabelais*) and autobiography (*Miroirs d'encre*), but from his earliest publications he showed an interest in ethnography and surrealism, two concerns that meet in the person of Michel Leiris. (To this

reviewer's way of thinking, Beaujour's essays on Leiris [Beaujour 1968, 1987, 1990] coincide with the object of *De la poétologie comparative*.) Although Leiris is mentioned only a handful of times in the book under review, his anxious, self-critical ethnographies of language must have given Beaujour a model for the investigation of ideas about verbal art in cultures other than one's own.

This investigation advances under Montaigne's banner: *Que sais-je?* If, as far as we are aware, every human group, from civilization to tribe, creates linguistic artifacts (songs, jokes, fables, hero-stories, and so forth), it is by no means so obvious that these creations fall into universal categories, even the most abstract (poetry versus prose, fiction versus history, lyric versus narrative or drama). Before we can talk about "comparative poétologie" (a double neologism in French, where it would be more conventional to call it "poétique comparée"), we need to do an ethnography of poetic behavior from the ground up, eliciting from the testimony of informants and texts a locally meaningful set of categories, with no assurance that they will match the types or purposes familiar to us. "Literature" no less than "poetry" or "the novel," or indeed all of our commonsense classifications, comes under question and appears as the product of determinate historical processes.

With a title so broad, the book could not possibly cover the whole territory it marks out. It raises problems first and then examines a set of particular cases. The "poetologies" considered here are those of the Kaluli (Papua New Guinea), Dogon (Mali), ancient Greece pre-Aristotle, China, the Arabic world, and Yemen; a long fragment on "the limits of Occidental poétologie" concludes the work.

"Poetology" differs from "poetics" in that one could derive a poetics from implicit properties of works and their effects, but "poetology"—the ideology of poetic creation—is the realm of beliefs, illusions and explicit statements about the art, about its rationale and virtues (42–43).

Beaujour carries out extended critiques of studies by Stephen Feld on Kaluli poetics and Geneviève Calame-Griaule on Dogon poetics. Beaujour readily concedes the authors' honorable intentions: we have outgrown colonial superciliousness, at least in the realm of arts and letters. "Nowadays we recognize the existence of alien arts, we give them our enthusiastic appreciation, and even endorse their equality [with our own] in principle. The 'imaginary museum' [cf. Malraux] grows to include an imaginary library and an imaginary concert-hall" (41; my translation,

as elsewhere below). The problem with this “recognition,” this “extension,” is that it is performed on the basis of pre-existing categories, with the risk of a “vicious circle” that offers, “in the name of generality, an only slightly altered reflection of the categories structuring the poetics derived from the study of Occidental literatures” (48). This way of proceeding Beaujour designates an “exo-ethnopoetics.” Earl Miner’s *Comparative Poetics*, a groundbreaking study in its time, falls under the same judgment. Beaujour treats it as a projection into cosmopolitan literary space of English-language Aristotle reception (24–26). Moreover, Miner’s general thesis that “a systematic, explicit, originitive poetics emerges in a culture when a gifted critic defines a conception of literature from the genre thought most prestigious” (23–24) is here found inadequate: it may be that taboos forbid the articulation of a theory of poetic creation (as among the Dogon, who hold that invention is tantamount to lying and blasphemy), or that the genre thought most prestigious benefits from very little theoretical treatment precisely because it saturates cultural life (that would be the case for epic in ancient Greece). Poetology, as a province of cultural ideology, rarely tells the truth about the motives of poetic creation, but it can be handled in such a way as to tell us something accurate about the relationship between artists and their audiences. Beaujour’s investigation gives us a critique of overly facile “ethnopoetics” and some brief summaries of ideological constellations surrounding the art of letters and the genres of composition in different cultures. In these summaries, Beaujour is concerned to draw out of the critical sources a sense of the defining issues in each distinct tradition (and not the issues that define it as distinct from “ours”). For instance, the incomparability of the Quran leads to paradoxes in the appreciation of poetic language among Arabic-speakers that have no real equivalent elsewhere (143–56). Yemenite poetology, as described by Steven Caton, weights more heavily than classical Arabic poetics the features of the latter that recall oral recitation (157–67). In China, Beaujour sees a kind of trauma inflicted on the traditional literary corpus by Western models and terms, as a result of which comparison is reduced to either lamenting a “lack” (the absence of epic, of the novel, etc.) or to exaggerating a corresponding fullness (Chinese poetics as anchored in the very reality and immediacy that have been denied to Western literature since Plato). These short chapters, really sets of reading notes, show Beaujour’s flair for detecting the sub-surface polemics in a secondary literature. One regrets all the more that he was unable to complete the work. We should be grateful to Elizabeth Klosty Beaujour

and her assistants for preparing the manuscript so that a wider readership may benefit from Beaujour's thoughts on ethnography, comparison, and poetics—and the epistemological quandaries besetting all three.

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**Anders Pettersson. *The Idea of a Text and the Nature of Textual Meaning*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2017. Pp. 196. ISBN: 9789027201348.**

Anders Pettersson's *The Idea of a Text and the Nature of Textual Meaning* explores and deconstructs widely held views about text and textual meaning that pervade not only the ways in which non-specialists talk about texts but also the careful theorising of specialists in a variety of fields concerned with text and texts. Pettersson formulates an alternative conception, intended to enable scholars to reflect on texts more perspicuously and without contradictions.

A text is ordinarily conceived of as a "unitary object" that integrates qualitatively different aspects. Let me illustrate with an example that Pettersson discusses elsewhere (Pettersson 2017), that of *Madame Bovary*. *Madame Bovary* is a physical object (and a set thereof). It was written by Flaubert and still sells in bookshops across the world. It is also a "complex" of signs, mainly words. Should you rearrange the words, you would probably no longer be dealing with "the same text." Finally, *Madame Bovary* is also a mental object, a network of meanings. If you consider some early

readers' negative response to *Madame Bovary*, it is unlikely that what they found obscene was the physical object, or the sequence of words; what they were shocked by can best be captured by the term "meaning."

So here we have the ordinary conception of a text. *Madame Bovary* is a physical object that contains words, which in turn have a meaning. As Pettersson rightly observes, however, the gap between signs and meaning is often overlooked. Words, he argues, are abstractions, resulting from conventions within a linguistic community. They are not located in any particular person's mind. Meanings, on the other hand, are mental entities existing in individual minds. Words and meanings are therefore ontologically different. Often neglected too is the ontological difference between the ink marks on a sheet of paper and a sequence of words. Not just ordinary readers but scholars too are commonly inclined to assume that the words are directly given.

The ordinary conception of a text works hand in glove with a widespread model of human communication, which Pettersson also regards as inadequate: a sender entertains mental representations (meanings) which s/he inserts into a physical object (e.g. sounds, or ink marks on paper) from which the receiver can retrieve the original thoughts. The physical object that travels from sender to receiver is assumed to contain the meanings thought by the sender; it is a text as ordinarily conceived. The model gives rise to useful metaphors (*putting ideas into words* or *getting meaning out of a text*), but the notion of a text that emerges from it is inconsistent, and, as Pettersson stresses, unsuitable for sound theorising. A scholar seriously concerned with texts cannot be content with an object that is at once physical and non-physical—e.g. a sheet of paper with ink marks on it *and* a meaning—and both one and many—an original utterance and its many exemplars.

Pettersson's solution is deceptively simple: replace the unitary object of the ordinary conception with a cluster of entities. These entities correspond closely to the fused components of the unitary text, but do not, together, form an object that can be called "the text," because there is no such thing as the text in the customary sense. However, this, Pettersson insists, does not prevent any putative truths about texts from being rephrasable in the language of the cluster conception (174).

Whereas the introduction of the competing conceptions is the main concern of the first two chapters, chapter 3 tackles the central issue of textual meaning, which resurfaces regularly in the remainder of the book.

Pettersson argues that it is a mental phenomenon, at least in its two core varieties: the sender's meaning and the receiver's meaning. These exist as (momentary) mental processes in the minds of individuals, and there can be no guarantee that they coincide (47). There's another variety, commentator's meaning, subordinate to the first two. This is meaning seen from a third-person perspective, a public rather than a private fact. Commentator's meaning is what literary scholars and linguists usually have in mind when they supply "the meaning" of a text (utterance). To Pettersson, who defends a brand of "conceptual relativism," there is no variety of meaning that prevails, least of all commentator's meaning.

In the next two chapters, Pettersson illustrates how both models can be implemented in text analysis. He first deals with a couple of non-literary texts (chapter 4), then with Emily Dickinson's poem "I heard a fly buzz when I died" (chapter 5). The first examples enable him to explore at greater length the distinction between varieties of meaning proposed in chapter 3, showing notably that, although they are both mental, sender's meaning—as an intention to achieve some goal—and receiver's meaning—as an attempt to understand combined with a mental reaction to the meaning perceived—are structurally different. The examples also allow him to demonstrate the relevance of non-verbal elements, notably visual, to the physical utterance, a consequence of which is that textual meaning is "something that cannot really be captured in words" (69).

Pettersson's discussion of Dickinson's poem provides him with an opportunity to drive home the point that the ink marks on a page must not be confused with a complex of signs. Editors involved in establishing a text, i.e. determining which complex of signs can be associated with the ink marks on a sheet of paper, face numerous tough decisions. For example, what, if anything is the relevance of Dickinson's atypical use of capitals, or of her ubiquitous recourse to dashes? A similar point can be made about the gap between the complex of signs and the meaning with which it can be endowed. That there is work to be done there, and that that work may be taxing, is no surprise to any literary scholar. Still, as Pettersson forcefully argues, the distinctions between the various types of meaning made out in chapter 3 are often overlooked, to such an extent that "it is at bottom not clear what the critics are talking about" (86). This contentious remark encapsulates Pettersson's conviction that critics often fail to recognise that what they produce is post-hoc commentator's meaning. It seems to him that critics (and linguists when dealing with an

isolated sentence) take their descriptions to capture “the meaning” of the text (or sentence). This, Pettersson thinks, is misguided; what the critic and the linguist supply is “in effect a description of the imagined consensus meaning that could be expected to be shared between a possible sender and a possible receiver” (86).

The following three chapters are devoted to outlining the main respects in which Pettersson’s views diverge from those of linguistics and philosophy of language (chapter 6), analytic aesthetics (chapter 7) and “standard literary theory” (chapter 8), by which he means the dominant poststructuralist paradigm. It is inevitable for this sort of exercise in which a whole rich field is compared with one’s own views within a mere fifteen to twenty pages to lead to some simplifications and distortions. Even so, these chapters “do the job.” They are successful in raising important issues, in highlighting deep-set presuppositions held by at least some representatives of the respective fields, and in showing how these conflict with the picture advocated in the book.

As this reviewer is a linguist, it seems legitimate to use chapter 6 to comment on the kinds of issues that can arise in the comparative chapters. In choosing to talk of the “standard linguistic perspective,” Pettersson does little justice to the variety of views on meaning and text in linguistics. There are linguists, the influential school of generativist grammarians, who would simply dismiss the idea of the text being an object worthy of linguistic investigation. And this they would do not because they were negligent but because there is no room for text(s) in their scientific programme. What’s more, being “internalists” about meaning—like Pettersson—they would not subscribe to the view that meaning is an abstract object, which Pettersson claims is ubiquitous in linguistics. At the other hand of the disciplinary spectrum, there are linguists who are very much concerned with the minutiae of texts, and have championed “text linguistics” (e.g. M.A.K. Halliday). Those do not come up at all in Pettersson’s discussion. Another criticism concerns Pettersson’s central point in this chapter, the claim that linguists almost systematically conflate the physical utterance and the complex of signs. I do not deny that many do, if only as a convenience, but the chapter nonetheless underestimates the range of concepts and tools available to capture many of the intuitions defended in the book. For instance, Austin’s distinction between a phonetic act, a phatic act, and a rhetic act (92–93) is largely consonant with Pettersson’s three components of the text as

cluster. Even some brands of formal semantics make allowances for the processes involved in going from the raw physical material to an interpretable string of words (cp. Kaplan's 1989 "pre-semantic processes").

I have other quibbles, which it would be too tedious to list here. And I am sure that analytic aestheticians and literary theorists will feel the same when they read their respective chapters. Still, this does not detract from the overall relevance and merits of chapters 6–8, which bring up for discussion a host of crucial issues that *have* been ignored by at least some of the practitioners of the disciplines reviewed. These chapters are recommended reading even for those who, like me, are bound to disagree, sometimes forcefully, with some of the claims made.

In chapter 9, where Pettersson returns to the main threads of his argument, he takes up again the views of analytic aestheticians. He discusses their understanding of the text as a historically situated complex of signs, and rejects it as proceeding from an arbitrary decision, as a text can be something else too. Nevertheless, the analytic aestheticians' position is not clearly illegitimate. They are realists who seek to answer the question of "what a text really is," and their answer is carefully argued. As a matter of fact, Pettersson's rejection here does not rely on the uncovering of contradictions internal to the theory. It is motivated by little else than the fact that they *must* be wrong. Here, therefore, Pettersson proves to be less of the conceptual relativist that he rather consistently is throughout the book, as he appeals to some true or primary conception of a text: "Yet, in my view, if one identifies a historically situated complex of signs with a text, *one has not understood the concept of a text*" (162; italics mine). It follows that Pettersson may not have been entirely successful in debunking realism about text and in demonstrating the incoherence of questions as to the "real" nature of texts.

This being said, the strengths far outweigh the weaknesses. Among the great assets of the book is Pettersson's style of argument. Here is an author who is determined to confront issues head-on, systematically going for clarity and explicitness, while making no concessions to dullness. The reader does not have to wonder what on earth the author's exact point might be; hence it is easy to agree or disagree with the views expressed, and often a pleasure to do so. Another strong point, and as far as I can judge a rather original feature, is Pettersson's concern with ontology. Drawing from Searle (1995), he identifies the physical utterance as a "brute" fact, but so also are the sender's and receiver's



meanings, which are mental particulars. All three stand in contrast to words and complexes of signs, which are “institutional” facts. Appeals to ontology definitely help Pettersson make the point that the text as ordinarily understood is an illogical object indeed.

In the end, whether or not the reader feels compelled to endorse Pettersson’s theory, the book is a success, as it does an excellent job of reminding scholars of the complex nature of what we ordinarily call “text,” and of the ontological contrasts between the three main components of this complex nature: the physical utterance, the complex of signs, and textual meaning. If dissecting and explicating texts is your bread and butter, that is a lesson you will not want to forget. And that is true even though you will probably continue, at times, to talk about texts in the terms of the ordinary conception, as this writer sometimes did in the present review.

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**Elisabeth S. Anker and Rita Felski, eds. *Critique and Postcritique*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017. Pp. 329. ISBN: 9780822363767.**

*Critique and Postcritique* is an interesting and stimulating although ultimately disappointing response to what Anker and Felski, in their lucid and even-handed introduction, see as the waning influence of critique, that is, the analysis of (literary) texts—literary criticism, if you will—on

the basis of what in the United States is often referred to as “theory.” That introduction tells us that “[t]here is little doubt that debates about the merits of critique are very much in the air and [that] the intellectual or political payoff of interrogating, demystifying, and defamiliarizing is no longer quite so self-evident” (1). Apart from that, critique’s default mode of “dismantling and demystification” has robbed it of “a vocabulary and set of established rationales” (19) that might be brought to the defense of humanities disciplines finding themselves under ever increasing pressure. What is worse—from the perspective of the faithful—is that there seems no denying that “the ethos of critique is losing its allure for a significant number of younger scholars as well as many established critics” (20). Although not (yet) terminal, the patient is clearly in a serious condition. After Anker and Felski’s introduction, which should be on the reading list of every literary studies graduate, *Critique and Postcritique* presents eleven essays that offer analyses of critique’s historical origins, its rhetoric and disposition, its intellectual habitat, its star system—to mention some focal points—or that offer tentative alternatives to critique. However, these alternatives do not involve radical new turns. They seek to stop leaks, so to speak, rather than to replace critique’s apparatus with a brand-new set of tools.

So what exactly has led to critique’s fall from grace, a fall that few would have predicted in its fairly recent heyday? Anker and Felski offer a long list of factors that may have alienated both seasoned practitioners and novices to critique’s ways and means. They point at a growing disbelief in critique’s political efficacy and an increasing uneasiness with the self-congratulatory “romantic image of the critic as heroic dissident” (8); at critique’s preference for self-reflexive texts and its “cult of formal as well as philosophical difficulty” (9); at its “absolutizing of a semiotic model of analysis” (11) that ignores the demands of biology and physiology and thus the realities of affective life. They call attention to the charge that critique, in spite of all its protestations, has not really overcome a deep-seated Eurocentric bias, to the fact that its “rationalist orientation”—in spite of its professed uneasiness with rationalism—prevents a serious engagement with manifestations of religious beliefs, to its neglect of art’s formal qualities and of “the sensuous dimensions of aesthetic experience” (16), and, last but not least, to its elitism, its unquestioned assumption that those who do not see things in critique’s light are the

unwitting and willing dupes of socio-cultural forces that the critic has no trouble seeing, identifying, and resisting.

Damning as this is, it is hard to disagree. Yes, critique as often as not is self-congratulatory, operating from a moral high ground which it takes to be politics. And reading critique's analyses often is a deeply irritating if not infuriating experience, not unlike wading knee-deep through a particularly sticky syrup. Moreover, in their predictability those analyses remind one of figure-skating's pirouettes: dazzling motion, yet a standstill. Then there is the exasperating star-struck attitude of all but a few of critique's practitioners. Even the most mundane and self-evident observations must be buttressed by a quote from a recognized star critic (a practice once again in evidence in this volume). And, to add yet another point of concern that Anker and Felski do not address: some of critique's heroes have within their own field the sort of reputation that climate change deniers have among climatologists. Inexplicably, such a reputation does not seem to worry their admirers. Toward the end of their introduction, Anker and Felski tell us that they increasingly see "a recognition that scholars have much to learn from engagement with nonacademics" (19). That is a hopeful sign, but an open engagement with academics from other disciplines, especially from outside the humanities, might even be more fruitful. To be fair, such an engagement would seem to be underway. Various contributors to *Critique and Postcritique* (Toril Moi, Heather Love, Jennifer L. Fleissner) mention Bruno Latour's interventions as having been instrumental in that engagement (although I fail to see why anyone would need Latour for a "stubbornly realist" engagement with reality or the sciences) and empirical reality as it is, and not as an object for decoding, is cautiously allowed to re-enter critique's field of vision.

With the exception of Simon During's look at critique's historical origins (which leads him to the tentative conclusion that critique's "more persistent" modes are those in which it is "[m]ore conservative and literary than rational and ethical" [92]), *Critique and Postcritique's* essays illustrate how difficult it will be to go beyond critique or to rebuild critique while remaining true to the positive things it has brought us. For Toril Moi, whose essay opens the collection, "[i]n the encounter with the literary text, the only 'method' that imposes itself is the willingness to look and see, to pay maximum attention to the words on the page" (35). This is surely a commendable attitude, but like her all-purpose question

"Why this?" it is perhaps not very helpful. Heather Love, quite rightly questioning "some persistent assumptions in the humanities about the epistemology, ethics, and politics of research in the sciences and social sciences" (69), calls our attention to Donna Haraway's feminist interest in an empiricism that is not positivist, but the distinction between positivist empiricism and non-positivist empiricism is more theoretical than practical (and does not much interest the scientists I know, who, by the way, are invariably modest in their claims). Judith L. Fleissner demonstrates how Ian McEwan's 1997 novel *Enduring Love* thematizes both critique's hermeneutics of suspicion and the "fundamentally anti-Romantic turn" (102) against critique that has been building over the last twenty-odd years. Ellen Rooney, defending those hermeneutics of suspicion, argues that "symptomatic reading invites us to read to the letter, intimately and aloud," although "in the contentious, invigorating, and unpredictable company of other readings" (127), and maintains that "'sympomatic' reading remains the most supple problematic for rereading critique, taking as [her] proof Louis Althusser's account of 'guilty' reading and his own (guilty) attention to form" (129). C. Namwall Serpell argues that "cliché [. . .] resists our interpretive habits" (154) and "jams our usual tools for critique" because "cliché is a *signifier of non-signification*" (165), a highly questionable claim that makes him turn to phenomenological reading and Roland Barthes. Elisabeth Anker demonstrates by way of a reading of Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus*—the sort of text critique loves—that ethics, in particular deconstructive ethics, can "appear to reside within a strikingly rarefied sphere" (195) and that theory, in its self-satisfaction, may "blind us to not only the people around us but also to the challenges of existing in the real world" (206). Continuing this focus on critique's "disposition," Christopher Castiglia argues that what is wrong with critique is mostly "the *attitude* with which it is approached" (212), an attitude that he describes as "a combination of mistrust, indignation, ungenerosity, and self-congratulation" (214). Castiglia would like to see critique's default negativity replaced by "idealism and imagination," a project that has my full sympathy, although I would like to add respect and even a certain humility. But perhaps Castiglia would argue that respect and humility come with exercising one's imagination.

Russ Castronovo thinks that "decoupling critique from the demand and desire that it be immediately relevant" (232), that to understand it "as the impossible pursuit of political relevance and meaning, one that

anticipates but is destined never to achieve its exigent ends" (235), will paradoxically allow critique to make a new start. Equally paradoxically, it is "only by miscalculating, mistaking, and just plain missing out on the political" that critique does "acquire political possibility" (247). Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" offers to John Michael the answer to the question of what role critique can play "in a world where a belief in rational discourse as a contribution to progress, enlightenment, and emancipation" (255) is under severe pressure and where democracy is simply another tool in the hands of global capitalism. The poem presents "a welter of meanings among which the poet moves and chooses without ultimate arbitration" (263) and it is its resistance to "the pull of meaning toward abstraction," to "the lure of the signified as fixed significance" (265) that suggests to Michael that critique should remodel itself after translation, with its "awareness of the provisional nature and final inadequacy of any meaning made" (268)—no matter how attentive translation is to a text's signifiers and its audience(s).

*Critique and Postcritique* ends with a cry from the heart, Eric Hayot's "Then and Now." Dismayed by the "endlessly self-renewing succession of academic stars" and "the continued production of new neologisms and new schools" (288), Hayot has been worried by the thought that he has put his life "into something I don't believe in anymore" (293). For Hayot critique must break out of the breathless trending-now matrix in which it seems trapped. Again, it is hard to disagree, but Hayot's reaction to his frustration perfectly illustrates how hard it is to shake critique's habits. He tells us that he wants to be suspicious of his own disappointment with critique "in a gesture that for me is pretheoretical, and whose desire has not yet been fully understood," and that he wants "to remember the Gramscian lesson of the optimism of the will" (293). We do not have to theorize our impulse to change the world for the better, and if it has to be theorized we had better leave it to disciplines better equipped to do so than literary studies. And we do not need Gramsci to counter the pessimism suggested by our intelligence with an optimism of the will. Like Hayot's contribution, many of the essays collected in *Critique and Postcritique* strike a sympathetic chord, but they also illustrate how difficult it is to abandon critique's more unfortunate habits, let alone to go beyond critique.

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**Frédéric Sounac. *Modèle musical et composition romanesque : Genèse et visages d'une utopie esthétique*. Paris : Classiques Garnier (coll. « Perspectives comparatistes »), 2014. Pp. 568. ISBN : 9782812430404.**

Le présent ouvrage est la version remaniée d'une thèse soutenue à l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, en 2003, sous la direction de la regrettée Françoise Escal. Bien que l'auteur annonce que son livre est considérablement plus court que sa dissertation et que plusieurs analyses de textes contemporains ont été retirées et parfois publiées par ailleurs, l'ouvrage demeure imposant. Sans doute trop encore et plusieurs sections — nonobstant leur qualité intrinsèque et leur pertinence — auraient gagné à connaître le même sort. On peut douter que les spécialistes de Roland Barthes ou de Roger Laporte — qui vient truffer la conclusion — aient l'idée de venir chercher ici des analyses pourtant éclairantes. Cela est d'autant plus regrettable que ce gros livre est un grand livre, d'une lecture particulièrement jouissive et qui sera féconde pour quiconque s'intéresse aux rapports entre musique et littérature, bien au-delà des XIX<sup>e</sup> et XX<sup>e</sup> siècles ici centraux. Cette étude à la fois littéraire et musicale atteste d'une double maîtrise autrefois fort rare et qui — l'on s'en réjouit — est de plus en plus fréquente. L'auteur, conscient que son livre s'adresse à un double public, évite tout jargon, sans pour autant que la rigueur scientifique en pâtisse : un pari relevé haut la main et qui se doit d'être salué. Gourmandise ? Inconscience ? Sounac ne se contente pas de maîtriser ces deux disciplines, et déploie encore sa démarche comparatiste sur un temps long allant de 1750 à aujourd'hui, et chorégraphie un stupéfiant pas de deux entre Allemagne et France. Qui trop embrasse mal étreint ? La lecture démentira l'adage. Rarement il a été donné de lire un ouvrage de littérature comparée — selon les deux voies que suit désormais la discipline — où la maîtrise des deux domaines culturels paraisse aussi équilibrée.

La lecture de la table des matières laisse à penser que l'ouvrage se compose d'une succession de dix chapitres, alors qu'en réalité, il s'articule nettement en trois sections, une superstructure qui aurait mérité d'être explicitée.

Dans un premier temps, la focale se centre sur l'émergence d'un modèle musical proposé à l'imitation des écrivains, tel qu'il a été formulé par les frères Schlegel et leurs comparses d'Iéna, aux confins des XVIII<sup>e</sup> et

XIXe siècle. Pareille conception renversait la hiérarchie classique établie entre les arts, telle qu'elle venait encore d'être redite, pour les arts plastiques, par Winckelmann. Depuis la Renaissance, la musique, même instrumentale, n'avait été que l'humble suivante de la littérature et s'était efforcée, à grand renfort de figures rhétoriques, de se doter d'une dimension imitative qui pût lui conférer des pouvoirs cognitifs. Et voilà que la servante prétendait régner à son tour. La musique apparut — précisément parce qu'elle ne livrait pas de message dénotatif — comme seule capable de dire l'essentiel : alors que la musique s'envole vers l'Idéal, les mots sont autant de boulets au pied du poète. Cette refondation copernicienne du Parnasse classique, bien entendu, ne surgissait pas de rien et Sounac rappelle l'importance primordiale du dialogue noué par Goethe avec Diderot autour du *Neveu de Rameau*. Le détour par le *Manuscrit trouvé à Saragosse* de Potocki, en revanche, ne convainc pas et l'analyse recourt, cette fois imprudemment, à la terminologie musicale (182–89 et 205–09). Le rôle de Germaine de Staël dans la diffusion en France de cette théorie spéculative de l'art est ici contextualisé et dès lors, sinon nié, du moins justement nuancé (150–60). Aussi le romantisme français — rejoignant en cela la sensibilité de Kant (84) — demeura-t-il fidèle à l'esthétique de l'émotion promue par Rousseau. Pour les auteurs de l'*Athenaeum*, en revanche, « le poème romantique n'est pas, idéalement, verbal, il tend inconsciemment vers une forme non-verbale de signification, vers cette musique (instrumentale) qui à ses côtés s'égale peu à peu à l'Art » (77). Cette affirmation de la suprématie du langage musical s'accompagne de celle d'une esthétique du fragment, conçu comme surgisement du *Witz* et ami de l'arabesque. De la méditation de Friedrich von Schlegel sur le *Wilhelm Meister* de Goethe (88 ss), il ressort que ce poème idéal est avant tout narratif et que la « théorie romantique a voulu se confondre avec une théorie du roman » (38–39).

Le modèle musical de ce Roman — avec une majuscule marquant son idéalité par rapport aux romans —, n'est plus l'opéra, mais la musique pure, cette musique instrumentale qui est au cœur de la démarche créatrice d'un Beethoven en voie de canonisation. Ses derniers quatuors, ses dernières sonates livrent une leçon d'art absolu dont les écrivains doivent s'efforcer de suivre les préceptes. Peut-être le long développement consacré aux *Variations Diabelli* était-il inutile, au sein d'un ouvrage qui, par ailleurs, présuppose que son lecteur ait lu tout roman convoqué, des romans souvent bien moins connus que l'illustrissime opus 120. La mise

en lumière de l'importance du modèle beethovénien permet à Sounac de relativiser celle de Wagner, souvent surévaluée.

Pour étudier la manière dont ce modèle iénaéen s'est réfracté, tant en France que dans le domaine germanique, Sounac s'inspire fort opportunément de la tripartition du discours « sur » la musique proposée par Timothée Picard (41). La « musicalisation » du littéraire s'opère selon trois modalités : *logogène* (discours positif sur la musique), *mélogène* (production de musique verbale par désémantisation) et *méloforme* (constitution d'une œuvre dont le modèle est musical). Peut-être n'est-il pas indispensable d'imposer au trope *logogène* de recourir, de manière nécessaire, à la désémantisation : la célèbre phrase de Proust sur les mélodies de Chopin n'y recourt pas, alors qu'elle entremêle dimensions *logogène* — par la production d'un discours sur les principes constitutif de la mélodie chopinienne —, *mélogène* — par les procédés imitatifs mis en place pour conférer à la syntaxe cette même spécificité —, voire *méloforme*, cette phrase étant elle-même paradigmatique de l'ensemble d'*À la recherche du temps perdu*. Sounac en convient qui, en conclusion, nuance ses définitions : « la triade [...] n'est pas composée de catégories étanches mais d'une sorte de *continuum* théorique des effets de musicalisation » (476). Quoi qu'il en soit, le recours à ces trois tropes permet de distinguer le Roman *méloforme*, du roman qui « peut fort bien parler de musique, voire en faire son sujet, sans s'inscrire dans le *devenir* du genre poétique romantique » ni rejoindre les ambitions des Iénaéens (144). Cette première section de l'étude se conclut sur une synthèse très claire des premiers acquis (217–18).

Constatant qu'à ce stade, l'« idéalité musicale », certes infuse dans la pratique des romanciers, n'était pas encore objectivée, Sounac oppose Hegel qui affirme la supériorité de la *Neuvième symphonie*, en raison de l'émergence finale d'un texte, en l'occurrence celui de Schiller, à Schopenhauer qui, se fondant à rebours sur le modèle la *Grande Fugue* et de la musique pure, affirme : « La musique, qui va au-delà des Idées, est complètement indépendante du monde phénoménal ; elle l'ignore absolument, et pourrait en quelque sorte continuer à exister, alors même que l'univers n'existerait plus » (236). C'est la répercussion large de Schopenhauer qui a instillé l'*idéauté* musicale d'un roman conçu comme un *organon* (239). Après ce tournant, la seconde section de l'ouvrage s'intéresse à la réfraction de ce modèle paradigmatique chez une série de théoriciens (Adorno, Nietzsche, Heidegger) et de romanciers



(Romain Rolland). Ces pages font ressortir combien *À la recherche du temps perdu* — « l'objet poético-critique le plus proche du Roman » (278) — a été considérée, à l'instar du *Wilhelm Meister* avant elle, comme une référence en fait de roman *méloforme*. Sounac met aussi en évidence le fait que l'œuvre de Proust, sans doute par son inscription dans le sillage de Schopenhauer, a été féconde plus tôt en Allemagne qu'en France : Adorno notait déjà combien « sa composition formelle semblait si allemande aux Français de l'époque, et pas seulement à cause de ses longues phrases obscures, possède, malgré ses qualités essentiellement visuelles, et sans aucune analogie facile avec le travail du compositeur, une impulsion romanesque » (266). Dans une France où la littérature tient alors le premier rang, l'intrusion d'un paradigme musical ne se fit pas sans contestation, et c'est à regret que Mallarmé se voit contraint d'enregistrer que la musique instrumentale s'est substituée au verbal en tant que représentation de l'idéal poétique (274). Sounac entame ensuite une étude approfondie de la tentation *méloforme* au sein du quatuor de géants dont l'intérêt commun pour le *méloforme* est à l'origine de son projet : Marcel Proust, Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse et André Gide. L'accent y est mis sur les chassés-croisés féconds entre les deux littératures, plutôt que sur de stériles « influences ». Il en ressort une « distinction fonctionnelle entre les contrapuntistes classicisants (Gide, Hesse) et les symphonistes wagnériens (Proust, Mann) » (454). Sur cette manière d'arc-boutant que serait *À la recherche du temps perdu* — « sans doute la dernière des utopies heureuses » (282) —, s'appuient et butent les œuvres désenchantées, désacralisées, de ses successeurs. Au terme du parcours, *Le docteur Faustus* présente certes encore, au prisme de la tentation *méloforme*, « une ossature dodécaphonique, analysable comme la projection sur la structure du récit de la métaphore musicale » (408). Mais si ce roman écrit par Mann entre 1943 et 1947 est une « inestimable tentative, la dernière peut-être, en direction du Roman » (400), il est aussi le premier à « poser la question du sens de l'art et de sa possibilité après l'Apocalypse » (410). *Le docteur Faustus* « sonne naturellement le glas de l'utopie méloforme, le glas du Roman », conçu comme un *organon* narratif dont l'idéalité est musicale (411).

L'ouvrage aurait pu s'achever là. Sounac, après une nouvelle synthèse des acquis (422) choisit d'y adjoindre une troisième partie. Si, après *Le docteur Faustus* qui pense et met en scène la fin du Roman, il est désormais impossible « de considérer l'art comme une théophanie de

l'Être, l'influence de la musique sur la production romanesque se perpétue et s'examine » néanmoins (415). L'hypothèse de Sounac « est que l'idée du caractère exemplaire de la musique survit à l'intention délibérée de rompre avec toute métaphysique de l'art » (424). L'exposé change alors de structure et aux vastes perspectives tracées par les deux premières parties, succède une approche morcelée portant sur divers écrivains, notamment Ludwig Wittgenstein ou Claude Lévi-Strauss — qui, plus que tout autre, sacrifie « à la célébration de l'excellence musicale » (438). L'étude s'attarde sur Paul Celan, Hermann Broch ou des Forêts, mais fait l'impasse sur William Faulkner ou John Dos Passos, ce que l'on peut regretter puisque le corpus des auteurs pris ici en considération s'étend au-delà du cadre initial. Ces permanences ou résurgences du modèle musical avaient déjà été relevées par Jean-Marie Schaeffer qui en concluait que « dans la mesure où, en Europe continentale du moins, cette conception a dominé les réflexions sur la relation esthétique durant presque deux siècles, elle en est venue à être pratiquement synonyme de l'esthétique philosophique comme telle » (533). Si le philosophe en infère qu'il faut désormais renoncer à l'esthétique comme discipline, Sounac conclut, dans la perspective historique qui est la sienne, que « si la pensée d'inspiration post-ïénaëne se révèle toujours fertile, l'esthétique de la réception a sans doute définitivement brisé l'identification de l'œuvre d'art au seul pôle subjectif rencontrant par la vertu d'un *organon* saturé de Witz la conscience universelle » (534). On le voit, au-delà de son objet spécifique, l'ouvrage, remarquablement conduit, parvient à retisser le fil d'une histoire de l'esthétique, qui née en Allemagne vers 1750, a survécu, parfois de manière quasi subliminale, jusqu'à aujourd'hui.

La volonté d'élever le regard qui est celle de l'auteur et qu'on ne saurait assez louer, ne va pas toujours — comment pourrait-il en être autrement, dans un ouvrage d'une telle envergure ? — sans un certain éloignement des textes, ni dès lors sans quelques déformations. On ne peut attribuer à Proust le persiflage à l'encontre de l'idéalisme allemand mis dans la bouche du pédant Brichot, lors d'une soirée chez Mme Verdurin (69). Lorsque Sounac déclare que « le romantisme n'invente certes pas le roman, mais organise l'éveil de sa dignité spéculative » (79), l'affirmation est, pour le moins, à l'emporte-pièce : comment dénier toute pratique réflexive à Cervantès — qui, lui-même, en avait hérité de Chrétien de Troyes, père fondateur du roman moderne —, *a fortiori* à Sterne et Diderot qui, eux, en avait hérité de Cervantès. Tous ont en

partage avec les romantiques allemands la même exigence d'un discours critique sur le genre du roman, au sein-même d'un roman, comme Sou-nac le concède par ailleurs (111). Lorsqu'à propos de Diderot, l'auteur prétend que celui-ci serait « esthétiquement attiré par l'idée que la véritable modernité est ailleurs, paradoxalement du côté de l'Académie royale de musique » (163), l'affirmation ne tient pas face aux textes : s'il est vrai que les *Entretiens sur Le fils naturel* présagent la « révolution » gluckiste, jamais le nom du compositeur viennois n'apparaît sous sa plume, alors qu'il se montre d'un enthousiasme pour le moins prolixe à l'égard de l'opéra-comique : ce genre nouveau transportait le modèle dramaturgique du drame bourgeois sur la scène lyrique et, pour le coup, celle de la Comédie-Italienne, et pas de l'Académie royale de musique.

L'attention portée à la forme est sensible dans la présente étude qui se singularise par sa grande qualité d'écriture, et dès lors par un grand bonheur de lecture. Peut-être cependant, certains morceaux de bravoure reposent-ils sur des comparaisons plus enchanteresses que raisonnables. Prenons un premier exemple : « Avec ses entrelacs d'harmonies, la coda de l'*Arabesque* de Schumann revêt soudain un caractère improvisé rappelant le *parlando* énigmatique de la dernière pièce des *Scènes d'enfants*, et les deux *Arabesques* de Debussy, souvent jouées, sont significativement dépourvues [...] de mentions verbales suggestives » (117). Il est au moins loisible de contester qu'*Arabesque* ne serait pas un titre suggestif, voire très suggestif chez un compositeur qui, par ailleurs, a composé les *Bilder aus Osten* et même musicalisé l'interruption d'une parole conteuse dans sa *Sheherazade*. Par ailleurs, si l'on concède volontiers que l'*Arabesque* opus 18 s'achève sur une « intervention d'auteur » citant celle qui conclut la pièce *Der Dichter spricht* sur laquelle se referment les *Kinderszenen* opus 15, cette section « *parlando* » n'est pas confinée en *coda*, mais ponctue plutôt — à deux reprises et sous une forme évolutive — les deux sections *Minore*. Second exemple : « Il n'est pas jusqu'à l'étiollement en "paperolles" du manuscrit proustien, mimant pour l'œil les couches superposées et la verticalité de la page musicale, qui ne rappelle le hiéroglyphe beethovénien, émaillé de nombreuses mentions verbales » (334). Outre un usage incontrôlé des métaphores que l'auteur dénonce à raison chez d'autres critiques, on peut difficilement parler d'étiollement, à propos de l'écriture de Proust qui, tout à rebours, se gonfle et se renforce à grand renfort de paperolles . . . Comme on l'aura remarqué, ces critiques relèvent de la brouille et ne sont, pour l'auteur d'un compte rendu, qu'une façon de

montrer qu'il a lu attentivement l'intégralité de l'ouvrage. . . Surtout que ces réserves ne découragent pas le lecteur. Quiconque prendra le temps de lire ce livre dans sa continuité en sortira convaincu, enrichi et les idées plus claires : solidement enté sur une assise philosophique, l'ouvrage est, à la fois et sans conteste, l'une des études comparatistes les plus audacieuses, mais aussi les plus convaincantes qu'il nous ait été donné de lire et, depuis la célèbre exposition *Marianne et Germania (1789–1889) : Un siècle de passions franco-allemandes*, en 1997, la contribution la plus originale et la plus féconde sur les échanges entre ces deux cultures.

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**Pieter Vermeulen. *Contemporary Literature and the End of the Novel: Creature, Affect, Form*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015. Pp. 182. ISBN: 9781137414526.**

One might say that in the twenty-first century the novel hasn't had it easy—or perhaps, it's had it too easy, with a surfeit of concerns. Millennial anxieties have been compounded by 9/11 and its subsequent, apparently perpetual wars; by the ever-increasing signs of irreversible climate change; by artificial intelligence that confounds the borders of the human; by new, disorienting culture wars and too-fast changes of perspectives continuously impelled by the new media. If, as Ezra Pound once said, literature is news that stays new, what can literature's role be in a world where nothing stays new for long? And how can the novel—the product of a modernity that postmodernism declared dead some decades ago—make sense of and respond politically, socially, ethically, as well as formally, to these anxieties tumbling upon each other?

In his excellent and wide-ranging *Contemporary Literature and the End of the Novel: Creature, Affect, Form*, Pieter Vermeulen tackles multifarious strands of contemporary fiction and criticism to test “the productivity of the idea of the end of the novel” and argue that contemporary fictions “dramatize the end of the novel in order to reimagine the politics and ethics of form in the twenty-first century” (2). The sense of the belatedness and emptying out of the novel is indeed what enables contemporary

fiction to rethink and reconfigure the relationships between human life and literary form. As Vermeulen himself emphasizes, this is no news: the history of the novel, whose demand for originality and innovation is inscribed in its name, is strewn with such moments of crisis. The most obvious precedent for the current idea of the novel's demise might have been that of the late 60s, when John Barth famously turned the "exhaustion" of contemporary literature—the inescapable fact of everything having already been said—into its thematic and formal solution, and Roland Barthes just as famously declared the text to be a tissue of blending, clashing, unoriginal quotations; Umberto Eco would later assert in the "Postscript to the Name of the Rose" that if everything had already been said, it could only be repeated, but with irony, to signal the awareness of one's own belatedness. Vermeulen however chooses to explore the contemporary sense of an ending in relation, mainly, to four earlier texts. Two are located around the First World War, and share a similar feeling of having reached an impasse: Eliot's denunciation, in "Ulysses, Order and Myth" (1922), of the novel form as no longer able to serve, due to the fragmentation of contemporary history; and Lukács's description of the novel, in the mid-1910s in *Theory of the Novel*, as already failed since its inception, marked by an aspiration to formal integrity that the modern world cannot grant or sustain. The other two are located around the Second World War: Ian Watt's classic *The Rise of the Novel* (1957), with its faith in the ability of the form to represent the individual and valorize the everyday, regulating at the same time the interactions between individual and society; and Auerbach's *Mimesis* (originally written during the war, and an important intertext of Watt's), with its insight into the emergence of excesses that disturb the continuity of literary history under war conditions, generating new literary forms that attend to new forms of life.

Vermeulen calls attention to the novel's two main interrelated dimensions, the emotive and the epistemic: the epistemic ability to describe and understand individual psychology and social world is made possible by the corresponding ability to engage readers at an emotive level. Emotive identification, in turn, reinforces the social structure and promotes the values of individualist modernity (one is reminded of Hélène Cixous's critique of character as a vehicle for social control in her 1974 essay "The Character of Character"). The postmillennial fictions studied in this book, Vermeulen argues, reject these premises. The validation of emotion is denied in favour of the foregrounding of "affect." Affect

“serves as the name for *formal operations that aim to undo emotional codification*” (9). The affects generated by these fictions remain outside cognition and identification, leading to disorientation and, ultimately, to questioning the possibility of aligning individual and social community, feeling and understanding. Under this scrutiny, human life as we have understood it in modernity and as has been represented and instigated throughout the novel’s history, is found to be no longer adequate. This insight leads to the examination of what Vermuelen calls the “creatural”—what we are left with when the emotional and psychological individuation that enables identification and social integration is stripped off. Similarly, the assumption that empathetic understanding enables the bridging of cultural, national and ethnic difference (in another striking analysis Vemeulen shows that this can be traced back to Kant’s identification of literature’s role in providing a narrative of progress) is exposed as hollow when devoid of actual and effective political, ethical, or social engagement. Finally, in the much larger, geological scale of the anthropocene, together with the post-9/11 sense of pervasive war, the question posed to the novel is how it can register the post-human and the more-than-human when its ethos is centred on the sovereignty of the subject. What Vermeulen shows, however, is that even as this sovereignty has been abandoned and the novel can no longer take upon itself its traditional cultural task, the ethical role of the form is not discarded, and form becomes the vehicle of experiments that try to articulate a response to the contemporary condition. “Declaring the end of the novel has proven to be a productive gesture in modern literary culture” (19).

Various case studies, rich with examples of insightful close readings, support the argument developed throughout the book. (If I have a niggle, it is that all the texts examined are Anglophone; given the focus on cosmopolitanism and the anthropocene, it would have been illuminating to see whether the concerns discussed are specific to the Anglophone cultural sphere, more generally Western, or world-wide.) The first chapter, “Persistent Affect (Tom McCarthy, David Shields, Lars Iyer),” analyses how literature, and the novel in particular, once deposed from its position of authority, can dedicate itself to an exploration of the unheroic and the pathetic aspects of life. McCarthy’s rejection of “sentimental humanism,” his clearing out of subjectivity in *Remainder*, opens up a space for “subjectless affects” and enables the investigation of what happens to the novel when everything novelistic has been

excised. Yet readers can't give up caring without feeling something: this dysphoric, diffuse, uncomfortable feeling of non-feeling—this after-affect—remains, and enables a remainder of non-humanist depth to be articulated in narrative. Shield's *Reality Hunger* declares the failure of the novel to capture the complexity of twenty-first century life, yet its realist ethos and the continuous consciousness that holds its fragments together end up relying on the form that it tries to expel. For Iyer, literature, unconcerned with its own perpetuation, is left free to attend to other matters, to experiences not concerned with sovereign selfhood: to "gloomy farcical life" (44). These works, Vermeulen argues, sound rather like the novel they are burying, and their "protracted attempt[s] to bury the novel" "cannot help but reanimate it" (22).

In the second chapter, "Abandoned Creatures (J.M. Coetzee)," Coetzee's fiction, deprived of all novelistic elements, is shown to be unable to articulate suffering for our empathetic understanding; unarticulated, suffering overwhelms and remains intractable affect. Coetzee's protagonists can no longer rely on the social, moral and political values transmitted by the modern novel; his novels expose the vulnerability of creatural life, divest the subject of sovereignty and leave it dependent on the care of others, in a liminal position that echoes that of the traditional novel, at its end. Coetzee's fictions "assert the persistence of a zone in which the former powers of the form, and of the selves and communities that it used to imagine, can be recalled and confronted" (78). The paradox, again, is that although the novel no longer represents and grounds the human and the social, no radical alternative is offered, and it remains the form through which its own impossibility is explored.

As Vermeulen points out, the authors discussed in the first two chapters are white, male, metropolitan, and current or former university professors influenced by poststructuralism's critique of the modern subject. The next two chapters turn to more explicit worldly concerns, and explore cosmopolitanism, transnationalism, human right discourses as foremost thematic concerns of global literature. The third chapter in particular—"Cosmopolitan Dissociation (Teju Cole)"—queries the possibility of enlisting the traditional novel into an assessment of how international justice, inequalities, and intercultural relatedness can be effectively critiqued in narrative. Cole's *Open City* may at first seem to belong to the sort of cosmopolitan novels that celebrate cultural openness, but ends up exposing a more sinister form of life. The assumption

being punctured here is that cultivating intercultural curiosity can promote connections across ethical, cultural, and national divides. "Cosmopolitanism," Vermeulen argues, has often become a label for literature's own sense of continued relevance in the globalized world (83). Vermeulen demonstrates the extent of Kant's contribution to the development of modern literary criticism, including tasking literature with assisting the narrative of human rights and of political institutions "beyond the boundaries of ethnic, cultural, and national borders" (86). Cole's protagonist's experiences fail to forge any such connections; the *flâneur* is revealed to be, rather, a *fugueur*, another figure of nineteenth-century urban life that walked away from his or her life, turning the increasing opportunity for mobility and tourism into a rejection of modern life. Cole's evocation of this figure reveals the emptiness of the notion that mere intercultural understanding and empathy, without specific action, can bring about real-world change. Cosmopolitanism emerges as the ally not of a liberating and emancipatory humanism, but of the structures of power that have shaped the inequalities that still dominate the world today. The question is how to do justice to the myriad traumas and experiences without turning everything into an indistinct blur; how to envisage and make possible a posthumous time in which the present will one day be read: "such an imagining of a posthumous reader is an important strategy for contemporary fiction in its attempt to figure life and affect after the end of the novel" (99).

The idea of militancy and the possibility of registering the contemporary is tested in the fourth chapter, "Epic Failures (Dana Spiotta, Hari Kunzru, Russell Banks)," in relation to Lukács's *Theory of the Novel*, written before the critic turned into an uncompromising defender of realism. In *Theory*, the novel was described as constitutionally exhausted; the desire for formal integrity could only be found in the totality and immediacy of the epic, where "epic" named not so much a genre that existed in the past, but the present desire for unachievable totality. Lukács thus denies the novel the possibility of fully representing contemporaneity. Yet, the novels analysed in this chapter—Spiotta's *Eat the Document*, Kunzru's *My Revolutions* and Banks's *The Darling*—show that approaching the present through a sense of the belatedness of the form can be a strategy to become contemporary: to capture, as in Agamben's definition of contemporariness, "*that relationship with time that adheres to it by means of being out of synch and anachronistic*" (108). This is achieved



also through the interrogation of other media, such as photography and film, meant to capture immediacy better than the written word. These fictions use the political militancy of the 1960s and 70s, often spilling into terrorism, to map political and cultural developments of the last decades and of the post-9/11 world. Vermeulen's conclusion is that "In the early twenty-first century, when the end of history has decidedly failed to materialize, a suspension of all-too-present concerns and staging of the end of the novel seem surprisingly powerful strategies for tackling the question of the politics and ethics of form" (133).

The "Coda: The Descent of the Novel (James Meek)" focuses on "a more excessive otherness" (136), a shift in scale effected by concern with the anthropocene, cultural geology and the posthuman: that is, with perspectives for which the human, no longer the measure of what matters, belongs to the same order of non-human agencies capable of reshaping the world, such as volcanoes. The case study for this chapter, Meek's *We Are Now Beginning Our Descent*, shows that human life is left suspended, both *implicated* in a power that the novel's traditional social and psychological categories cannot account for, and *exposed* to the effects of that power (152); the effects and outcomes of such predicament are registered, but remain to be captured or figured. This final chapter returns to Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* and Auerbach's *Mimesis*, showing how the former's suppression of his own war experiences leads to an erasure of the latter's recognition of "creatural realism" and of the emergence of its excesses under war conditions. War, Vermeulen states, is both man-made and yet more-than-human, like the anthropocene. Under these conditions, the novel's domestication of creatural life fractures, letting excess, vulnerability, and affect replace emotion, sovereignty, and social control: once this proposition is explicitly outlined, Vermeulen's choice of theoretical references for his exploration of contemporary fiction (two sets of two critics writing around each of the World Wars) reveals its cogency.

*Contemporary Literature and the End of the Novel* is a lucid, wide-ranging, and illuminating study. While its focus is on postmillennial fictions, its analyses give us precious insights into the history of the form, demonstrating how recent fiction's concerns elaborate key moments in this history and its theorizations. This is a book that critics and students of the novel, whether contemporary or traditional, should read.

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**César Dominguez, Anxo Abuín Gonzalez and Ellen Sapega, eds. *A Comparative History of Literatures in the Iberian Peninsula*. Vol. 2. *Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages, XXIX*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2016. Pp. 765. ISBN : 9789027234650.**

Ainsi que le rappelle opportunément la préface de la Présidente Karen-Margrethe Simonsen, ce deuxième volume d'une Histoire comparée des Littératures dans la Péninsule ibérique représente l'aboutissement d'un projet commencé il y a plus d'une dizaine d'années, qui lui-même constitue une étape — la vingt-neuvième publication — dans le très vaste et ambitieux projet d'une « Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages », lancé par l'AILC en 1967. Une spécificité fondamentale de la série consiste dans l'approche géographique ou régionale (plutôt que politique ou nationale), qui était déjà manifeste dans les titres des « sub-series » *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe* et *A History of Literature in the Caribbean*.

Les coordinateurs de ce second fort volume (765 pages) de la présente Histoire, César Domínguez, Anxo Abuín González et Ellen Sapega, soulignent la continuité et la complémentarité avec le premier (dans la coordination duquel figuraient d'ailleurs les deux professeurs de l'Université de Santiago de Compostela) : le tout s'organiserait en fonction d'une combinaison de « three vertical and seven horizontal boreholes ». Etant donné que le concept de « borehole » n'est jamais défini, ni explicitée la méthode de « geotechnical investigation » dont s'inspire la métaphore, il sera plus clair, pour donner une idée des matières abordées, de mentionner les sections qui encadrent les chapitres. Si dans le volume I, publié en 2010, on en comptait cinq (« Discourses on Iberian Literary History », « The Iberian Peninsula as a Literary Space », « The Multilingual Literary Space of the Iberian Peninsula », « Dimensions of Orality », « Temporal Frames »), dans ce second volume les sections sont au nombre de quatre, que l'on peut rapidement préciser : 1°) « Images » comprend dix chapitres et deux axes imagologiques : « the prototypical Others in opposition to which cultures in Iberia have defined themselves », et d'autre part « the complex interplay of regional identities within the Peninsula » ; 2°) « Genres » offre douze chapitres, chacun consacré à un genre spécifique, du livre de chevalerie à l'essai ou au journal intime, en passant par le sonnet, le roman historique et la littérature pour enfants contemporaine ; 3°) les « Forms of Mediation »

sont déclinées en dix chapitres, qui traitent de réécriture, traduction, formation de canon, censure, systèmes d'éducation, maisons d'édition, etc. ; 4°) « Cultural Studies and Literary Repertoires » propose douze chapitres qui traitent de romans et spectacles populaires, du phénomène de *best-seller*, de roman graphique et de fiction post-digitale, des rapports entre musique populaire et littérature, du canon cinématographique, de la télévision et de la radio. Au terme de ces quatre sections, le lecteur trouve un « Epilogue » pluriel : successivement huit perspectives diversement conçues sur les deux volumes de cette Histoire comparée ; elles se caractérisent soit par leur fondement régional (respectivement les littératures basque, catalane, galicienne, portugaise, « espagnole » — il serait plus exact, et moins connoté, de dire « en castillan »), soit par leur fondement disciplinaire (histoire, littérature comparée), et certaines — en particulier celle de Santiago Pérez Isasi (« A view from comparative history, II: A comparative history of literatures in the Iberian Peninsula? ») — se distinguent par leur lucidité critique.

On voit donc qu'il s'agit d'une somme, qui embrasse une matière extrêmement vaste (de par l'extension temporelle et la diversité des corpus) et offre une grande richesse de matériaux et de perspectives. Le risque est évidemment celui d'une excessive hétérogénéité, qui en principe ne pourrait être évitée, ou du moins compensée, que par la rigueur des textes cadres des éditeurs, et des coordinateurs de section (respectivement Dorothy Odattey-Wellington, Maria Fernanda de Abreu, Cesc Esteve et María José Vega, Anxo Abuín González). Si la plupart des chapitres introductifs assument ce rôle avec succès, on peut regretter l'absence de récapitulations et de conclusions de la part des éditeurs, qui ont opté pour des « épilogues » confiés à des tiers, et très hétérogènes dans leur conception.

On voit aussi qu'il s'agit d'une oeuvre qui participe des grandes tendances de l'historiographie littéraire des vingt dernières années : substitution des approches nationales — pour ne pas dire nationalistes — au profit d'une perspective transnationale (au sens de suprarégionale, et non mondiale), promotion des régions et périphéries (ou du moins centres périphériques), déplacement de l'attention vers les contextes (en particulier ceux que privilégient les « cultural studies » et la sociologie), marginalisation des auteurs classiques constitutifs de canons littéraires nationaux et promotion de « l'autre » littérature (la « paralittérature », orale et populaire, ou celle de minorités culturelles), ainsi que de productions « transmedia » (où le texte dialogue avec l'image, le son, la musique).

De ces diverses options, discutables mais légitimes et désormais communes, celle qui est le plus explicitement revendiquée, est la perspective transnationale ou géographique, dans l'esprit de la série mais en l'occurrence au sens d'un régionalisme qui, d'une part, envisage comme un tout la « région » Péninsule ibérique et, d'autre part, au sein de celle-ci veille à prendre en compte les diverses réalités culturelles et littéraires (sous-)régionales ainsi que les dynamiques d'échanges. Il convient de rappeler que cette approche, qui se présente encore comme originale, est devenue néanmoins habituelle dans l'historiographie littéraire hispano-américaine : en 1995 déjà José Miguel Oviedo proposait de distinguer, dans le vaste continent de la littérature hispano-américaine, cinq grandes régions (le Río de la Plata, la région andine, l'Amérique centrale, les Caraïbes et le Mexique) et quatre zones « intermédiaires » (c'est-à-dire qui partagent, chaque fois dans des proportions variables, les traits des grandes régions dont elles sont voisines). Ensuite, on ne peut que s'étonner de ce qu'une perspective littéraire *ibérique* ne soit pas problématisée. Si, d'un point de vue géographique, la Péninsule ibérique est une évidence, il n'en va pas de même du point de vue culturel et littéraire. La question est de savoir si la réalité géographique a engendré une réalité littéraire ou, comme le formule très justement Pérez Isasi, « if it exists as a cultural system with enough coherence and cohesion to constitute a scientific and academic object », « a cultural (sub)system with stronger literary and cultural ties than the rest of the European (or Western, or world) literary system » (656). La non-problématisation de cette question de la part des coordinateurs indique un postulat ibériste, qui correspond avant tout à une aspiration et un courant culturels (très minoritaires au niveau péninsulaire). C'est d'autant plus étonnant qu'on pourrait montrer sans peine que bien des auteurs espagnols sont davantage tournés vers la littérature américaine (en langue espagnole ou anglaise) que vers la portugaise, ou les littératures en catalan, basque ou galicien, et bien des auteurs portugais sont davantage liés à la littérature brésilienne ou française qu'à l'espagnole. Il aurait mieux valu présenter la perspective ibériste comme une hypothèse de recherche, de caractère exploratoire; elle a en tout cas le double mérite de constituer des matériaux en vue d'une hypothétique histoire de la littérature ibérique, et d'attirer l'attention sur des aspects (corpus, dynamiques) ordinairement négligés. Son bénéfice le plus évident, et bienvenu pour l'hispaniste, est de mettre en valeur les littératures basque, catalane et galicienne, contre

la représentation dominante d'une littérature espagnole qui se limiterait à celle écrite en castillan.

Peut-on maintenant vraiment parler d'une « histoire » (cf. *A Comparative History*) ? Il serait plus exact de parler de « *Perspectives sur une histoire comparée* », ou « *Matériaux en vue d'une histoire comparée* ». Au lecteur ne se propose en effet aucune configuration chronologique, et aucune véritable narration (grande ou petite), en dehors des narrations partielles et hétérogènes des chapitres introductifs. Il est vrai qu'il s'agit cette fois d'un choix assumé (cf. « an explicit renunciation of those chronologically organic and narratively omniscient histories which attempt to cover all fields and all periods » [vol 1, XI]), qui est tout à fait légitime mais devrait conduire à renoncer du même coup à la désignation de l'entreprise comme « histoire »... sauf à dûment argumenter pour que le lecteur puisse, éventuellement, la recevoir comme telle.

Ces réserves fondamentales exprimées, il faut souligner qu'en dépit des inévitables difficultés pratiques signalées par les éditeurs (recrutement, disponibilité, respect du cahier des charges), les contributions sont de qualité, et apportent une grande richesse de *matériaux* (on relèvera le titre scrupuleux « Notes on the cinematographic canon... », qui détonne dans la « table of contents »). Ceux-ci sont bien fragmentaires: vu l'extension spatiale et temporelle du corpus, il fallait nécessairement, au sein de chaque section, faire des choix, mais il eût été bon de les motiver davantage, en particulier en ce qui concerne, pour telle matière choisie, le corpus sélectionné par le contributeur. Par exemple, dans le présent second volume, pourquoi limiter la riche diversité de l'écriture autobiographique au journal intime ? Cette limitation n'est sans doute pas arbitraire, mais bien contingente (les intérêts des contributeurs). De même, pour le roman historique, si fécond et varié, pourquoi l'aborder exclusivement sur base de la « dichotomy between I/the Other and the implications arising from it » ? Inversement, en ce qui concerne la littérature picaresque, il semble que le corpus portugais ne puisse se constituer qu'à partir d'une extension abusive de la notion de pícáro... qui universalise la littérature picaresque, et cesse d'en faire un genre censément représentatif de la Péninsule ibérique.

D'un point de vue strictement philologique, il faut saluer la qualité des traductions et de l'édition, qui ne comporte que très peu d'errata (concentrées dans les citations en langues étrangères). Il aurait cependant été plus transparent (scientifiquement), et plus pratique pour le lecteur, que les références bibliographiques apparussent à la fin de chaque

contribution (plutôt que dans une bibliographie finale exclusivement alphabétique) ; plus significatif aussi que l'index ne fût pas constitué mécaniquement (voir les nombreuses références, inattendues, pour les mots « Spain » et « Portugal ») ; et plus équitable, enfin, que les profils biographiques fussent uniformisés (ils comprennent de une à treize lignes, et pas toujours de façon proportionnelle à la densité de la trajectoire).

Je ne puis clore ce compte rendu sans soulever la question de la langue, qui ne relève pas des coordinateurs mais des normes de la collection. Pourquoi ne pas avoir opté pour un sain plurilinguisme ? Outre le fait qu'en littérature comparée celui-ci est en principe d'usage, dans le cas présent il est franchement incongru pour un romaniste — typiquement le profil des lecteurs potentiels d'une publication comme celle-ci — de lire en traduction anglaise des textes écrits pour la plupart en espagnol ou en portugais, et portant sur des auteurs espagnols ou portugais, toujours cités en traduction anglaise (et, pour les textes qui ne relèvent pas de la critique ou l'essai, en langue originale en note de bas de page — pourquoi pas l'inverse ?). Plus grave que cette troublante aliénation culturelle érigée en norme (ce qui ne manque pas de piquant, s'agissant d'une collection si sensible aux impératifs postcoloniaux et à la revendication des périphéries) : contrevenant aux règles élémentaires de la philologie, la langue originale d'écriture des contributions n'est jamais mentionnée (ni d'ailleurs les noms des traducteurs), *naturalisant* ainsi l'usage de l'anglais... et consacrant sur le plan académique un simple rapport de forces.

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**Dominique Peyrache-Leborgne, dir. *Vies et métamorphoses des contes de Grimm : Traductions, réception, adaptations*. Rennes : Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2017. Pp. 202. ISBN : 9782753553811.**

Entrés au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO en 2005, les contes rassemblés par les frères Grimm, puis publiés en sept éditions augmentées et révisées entre 1812 et 1857 attirent aujourd'hui l'attention croissante des critiques et des exégètes : des travaux récents proposent par exemple

un panorama complet de la réception de ce riche matériau en France (Christiane Connan-Pintado et Catherine Tauveron, *Fortune des Contes des Grimm en France : Formes et enjeux des rééditions, reformulations, réécritures dans la littérature de jeunesse*, Clermont-Ferrand, Presses de l'Université Blaise-Pascal, 2013) ou s'attachent à l'analyse approfondie des modifications stylistiques des différentes versions des contes (Cyrille François, *La Voix des contes. Stratégies narratives et projets discursifs des contes de Perrault, Grimm et Andersen*, thèse de doctorat de l'Université de Lausanne, 2015). Si le volume dirigé par Dominique Peyrache-Leborgne s'appuie sur les dernières découvertes philologiques et les analyses contemporaines de ce corpus, son ambition est toute différente : on n'y trouvera ni cartographie exhaustive des traductions, réécritures et transpositions (de fait, seul le cas roumain est convoqué par l'article de Muguraș Constantinescu), ni étude génétique *per se* de contes individuels, mais avant tout une interrogation proprement comparatiste sur ce que les contes de Grimm apportent à l'analyse littéraire.

En effet, ce qui donne leur cohérence aux études de cas présentes dans le livre est qu'elles prennent acte du nécessaire décroisement des méthodes herméneutiques qu'exige le corpus grimméen. Ainsi de la multiplicité de ses transpositions à d'autres domaines de l'art, des actualisations de *Cendrillon* ou *Blanche-Neige* à l'opéra sur lesquelles se penche Béatrice Didier aux étonnantes adaptations de Grimm à l'écran, qu'il faut selon Alain Montandon davantage appeler des « traductions cinématographiques » de la part d'un Méliès ou d'une Charlotte Reiniger. Car cette riche matière intermédiaire n'est ainsi pas simplement un signe de la modernité de ces histoires : elle constitue aussi un défi interprétatif pour le chercheur, amené à penser des œuvres où le verbe, la voix et la figure s'interpénètrent pleinement, au point de produire, nous dit Anne-Sophie Gomez au sujet du livre illustré et du cas de Janosch, un « iconotexte », objet littéraire hybride, qui met en relief le caractère particulier d'une situation de recreation où « l'image devient le deuxième langage des contes » (8). Pour répondre à cet appel, le volume consacre notamment toute sa dernière partie au livre illustré ancien et contemporain et aux problématiques de « l'intericonicité » (François Fièvre) qui s'y posent.

Si les contes de Grimm ne se transposent pas forcément là où on les attend, ils ne correspondent pas non plus toujours à ce qu'on croit qu'ils sont : un autre axe du volume consiste à adopter une perspective génétique et intertextuelle, non simplement pour élucider les conditions

de création ou les sources auxquelles puisent les contes, mais pour tordre le coup à certaines idées reçues et engager à déplacer les catégories par lesquelles on a l'habitude d'appréhender ces textes. Ainsi, si Bernhard Lauer propose un retour aux sources en isolant les multiples couches dont sont constitués certains contes, c'est pour mettre en relief la volonté des deux auteurs de faire de leur livre un manuel pédagogique à destination des familles, dont le contenu se trouve progressivement adapté et comme domestiqué par des Grimm animés par bien autre chose qu'une simple ambition philologique et folkloriste. De même, feuilleter les différentes strates de la composition dévoile, selon Frédéric Weinmann, le travail d'oralisation et de stylisation effectué par les auteurs et qui conduit paradoxalement à faire que la version la plus tardive des histoires est celle qui produit le plus grand effet d'authenticité. Enfin, Pascale Auraix-Jonchère achève d'arracher les contes à leur destin de « formes simples » (A. Jolles) en mettant au jour dans *Blanche-Neige* le réseau intertextuel érudit qui en fait une réécriture de l'antique et du mythique bien plus qu'un pur conte pour enfants. Alors qu'ils sont à la fois un classique de la littérature de jeunesse et un texte fondateur de la folkloristique, les contes de Grimm servent ici de cas d'école pour montrer comment une perspective génétique et générique peut sortir de ses certitudes le lecteur trop enclin à enfermer le texte dans une catégorie univoque.

C'est aussi à une défamiliarisation que procède le dernier axe du volume, qui se concentre sur des contes laissés pour compte : en effet, que faire de ceux qui n'ont rien d'histoires enfantines, qui font mentir le titre de *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, ces contes cruels et inquiétants qui proposent des figures cannibales (« Le Conte du genévrier », étudié par Catherine d'Humières ainsi que par Elvira Luengo Gascón), des filles-mères et des princes aux yeux crevés (« Raiponce », sur lequel se concentre Christiane Connan-Pintado) ? Relativement peu étudiés, ils sont pourtant fondamentaux pour donner sens à l'œuvre dans son ensemble : maîtresse d'œuvre du volume, Dominique Peyrache-Leborgne rappelle que les contes de Grimm sont en réalité traversés à la fois par « la violence et la douceur » et qu'il faut leur restituer cette polarisation antithétique, si importante pour comprendre ce qui se joue quand, comme dans les contes restés les plus célèbres, l'issue de l'histoire est réparatrice.

Par-delà sa grande variété, la fine sélection d'exemples étudiés ici permet ainsi de penser les Grimm *hors du cadre*. Dans un champ de recherche depuis longtemps ouvert aux influences des autres sciences humaines, de



la psychanalyse à l'histoire de l'art en passant par l'ethnologie, ce précieux volume parvient à relancer l'enquête sur les enjeux épistémologiques de ces fictions en montrant comment les outils comparatistes (traductologie, intermédialité, intertextualité) permettent eux aussi d'ouvrir le corpus à des influences insoupçonnées et d'en renvoyer des images nouvelles.

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**Paulo Lemos Horta. *Marvellous Thieves : Secret Authors of the Arabian Nights*. Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 2017. Pp. 363. ISBN : 9780674545052.**

*Les Mille et une nuits*, un ensemble d'histoires merveilleuses savamment imbriquées les unes dans les autres, ont inexorablement marqué l'imaginaire européen, depuis leur première traduction au début du 18<sup>e</sup> siècle par le célèbre orientaliste français, Antoine Galland (1646–1715), jusqu'à notre époque, jouant même un rôle prépondérant et durable sur notre perception de « l'Orient », quoi que puisse bien signifier ce terme. Après le succès — immédiat — de cette première traduction, bien d'autres suivront, notamment dans d'autres langues européennes, en particulier en allemand et en anglais. Le succès de l'œuvre ne se démentira jamais, donnant lieu encore aujourd'hui à nombre d'articles et de monographies scientifiques, tantôt sur l'œuvre dans sa totalité, tantôt sur certaines de ses histoires seulement, mais aussi à de nouvelles traductions — mentionnons par exemple celle de Lyons,<sup>1</sup> un grand spécialiste de la littérature populaire arabe, parue en 2010.

Il a été souvent rappelé dans la littérature scientifique qu'au moment de leur « découverte » par les Occidentaux, les *Mille et une nuits* étaient loin de constituer une œuvre majeure aux yeux des intellectuels arabes. En effet, pour ces derniers la seule littérature digne de ce nom était l'impressionnant héritage poétique en arabe classique accumulé depuis la période préislamique jusqu'à la période médiévale, patiemment récolté, commenté, étudié et partiellement appris par cœur par des généra-

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1. M. C. Lyons et U. Lyons, *The Arabian Nights : Tales of 1001 Nights*, Penguin Classics, 2010.

tions de lettrés arabes. Les *Mille et une nuits* faisaient partie d'un autre corpus, celui de la littérature populaire, transmise pendant longtemps de manière orale par l'intermédiaire de conteurs professionnels, des bardes errants qui se produisaient sur les places publiques, et plus tard dans les cafés, avant d'être couchée sur le papier. Rédigée dans une langue moins soutenue, oscillant entre l'arabe classique et l'arabe dialectal et que l'on a désormais coutume d'appeler le moyen-arabe, cette littérature était méprisée par la plupart des intellectuels, et même parfois interdite par les autorités religieuses, comme l'attestent plusieurs fatwas médiévales. Mais même au sein de ce corpus, les *Mille et une nuits*, issues en réalité de la tradition persane comme l'indiquent d'ailleurs les noms des principaux protagonistes de l'œuvre, à commencer par Schéhérazade, n'étaient pas l'œuvre la plus importante, certaines grandes épopées comme celle d'Antar ibn Shaddad ou encore celle des Bani Hilal étant les plus notoires. Aujourd'hui toutefois, les romanciers arabes se sont parfaitement réapproprié cet héritage, auquel ils font très régulièrement référence, comme l'illustre bien une étude récente,<sup>2</sup> allant de la simple allusion à la réécriture moderne des contes, comme l'a fait par exemple la romancière libanaise Hanan el-Cheikh.<sup>3</sup>

L'approche de Paulo Lemos Horta est extrêmement originale, puisqu'il s'intéresse à la manière dont les premiers traducteurs français et britanniques des *Mille et une nuits* se sont approprié l'œuvre en lui donnant souvent une touche très personnelle, mais surtout en passant sous silence les intermédiaires, orientaux et occidentaux, qui les ont aidés tantôt à établir le texte — en effet plusieurs versions des *Mille et une nuits* circulaient, comme cela est souvent le cas dans la littérature populaire, anonyme et due à l'art de plusieurs auteurs différents ajoutant chacun sa touche personnelle, parfois sur plusieurs générations — tantôt à le traduire. Ce faisant, Lemos Horta n'hésite pas à égratigner l'aura de certains de ces orientalistes devenus parfois mythiques — Antoine Galland en France, mais surtout Richard Francis Burton (1821–1890) en Grande-Bretagne, officier-voyageur excentrique et polygraphe s'étant bâti une étonnante légende personnelle en vantant lui-même les connaissances qu'il avait accumulées lors de ses voyages, en particulier sur le plan linguistique — toujours de façon con-

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2. Robert Van Leeuwen, "A Thousand and One Nights and the Novel," *The Oxford Handbook of Arab Novelistic Traditions*, édité par W. Hassan, Oxford UP, 2017, pp. 103–18.

3. Hanan el-Cheikh, *La maison de Schéhérazade*, Paris, 2014.

vaincante et avec force arguments, montrant la formidable maîtrise qu'a l'auteur de ce vaste corpus d'informations.

À propos de la traduction d'Antoine Galland, Lemos Horta nous rappelle ainsi le rôle fondamental qu'a joué l'un de ses informateurs, un Maronite d'Alep répondant au nom de Hanna Diyab, qui vécut plusieurs années à Paris avant de retourner en Syrie, où il finit par rédiger ses souvenirs de voyage, un ouvrage extrêmement instructif dont la traduction française a été publiée récemment.<sup>4</sup> On connaissait déjà le rôle joué par Hanna Diyab, que Galland avait rencontré en 1709 par l'entremise d'un célèbre collectionneur parisien de l'époque, Paul Lucas, et qui lui avait fourni certains des « contes orphelins » (*orphan tales*) de sa traduction. En effet, n'ayant plus assez de matière première dans ses sources manuscrites, Galland fit appel aux talents de conteur du Maronite, incluant dans ses *Mille et une nuits* certains de ses contes les plus célèbres, notamment celui d'Aladin et la lampe magique. Mais Lemos Horta va plus loin en soutenant notamment que certains des éléments censés émerveiller les lecteurs de l'époque ne découlent pas de l'étonnement de Galland devant les beautés de l'Orient, comme on l'a toujours répété, mais plutôt de celui de Hanna Diyab devant celles de la France. Il cite notamment en exemple la description de la fontaine dans le conte du prince Ahmed, qui correspondrait non pas à un modèle oriental, mais à ce que Hanna avait pu voir à Versailles et aussi dans les décors de théâtre de Paris (49).

Dans le domaine anglophone, après avoir montré comme d'autres avant lui comment la récolte puis l'édition et la traduction de textes dans les langues de l'Empire britannique faisait partie de la politique coloniale, permettant ainsi de mieux comprendre les mentalités des peuples subjugués, Lemos Horta rend justice à la première traduction originale des *Mille et une nuits*, publiée en 1838 et due à Henry Torrens (1823–1889), largement tombée depuis dans l'oubli notamment parce qu'elle était incomplète. Il aborde ensuite la carrière d'un autre grand traducteur britannique des *Mille et une nuits*, Edward William Lane (1801–1876), un nom important des études arabes du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle dépeint par Edward Said comme le prototype même de l'orientaliste. Après un premier séjour au Caire, de 1825 à 1828, Lane rédigera d'abord son fameux livre intitulé *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, publié en 1836,

4. Hanna Diyab, *D'Alep à Paris : les pérégrinations d'un jeune Syrien au temps de Louis XIV*, traduit par B. Heyberger et alii, Sindbad, 2015.

un ouvrage extrêmement intéressant pour analyser la vie quotidienne de la capitale égyptienne de l'époque. Quatre années plus tard, paraîtra sa traduction des *Mille et une nuits*. Ici encore, Lemos Horta souligne combien cette traduction fut une entreprise collective, mettant en évidence les personnages-clés ayant aidé le traducteur britannique, qu'il s'agisse de se procurer le matériel à traduire ou de le gloser : Osman Effendi, un ancien esclave écossais converti à l'islam, cheikh Ahmed, un libraire cairote, ou encore le lettré cheikh Muhammad al-Tantawi. Le premier aida grandement Lane lors de son premier séjour au Caire pour percer les arcanes de la société locale, tandis que le dernier lui fournissait des annotations au texte original qui lui permirent de mieux le comprendre, et qui furent souvent intégrées à la traduction anglaise.

Lemos Horta se penche longuement sur un autre cas intéressant, celui de la traduction des *Mille et une nuits* due à John Payne (1842–1916) un poète pré-raphaélite londonien qui avait également traduit la poésie de François Villon. Sa traduction, parue en 1882–1884, était née de l'insatisfaction du poète face aux traductions existantes, jugeant notamment que celle de Lane était « illisible » (224). Pourtant, Payne ignorant vraisemblablement l'arabe et n'ayant d'ailleurs jamais voyagé en Orient, semble avoir produit sa propre version des *Mille et une nuits* en se basant essentiellement sur la version anglaise de Lane ainsi que sur les autres traductions disponibles alors en anglais, en allemand et en français. . . Ce subterfuge ne berna toutefois pas ses contemporains, et les critiques à son égard furent acérées, notamment de la part de Stanley Lane-Poole et de l'arabisant George Percy Badger, professeur d'arabe à Oxford.

On en arrive à un dernier cas de vol manifeste, en l'occurrence celui perpétré par Richard Francis Burton. Célèbre explorateur — il partit notamment à la découverte des sources du Nil avec John Hanning Speke —, auteur polyglotte et polygraphe ayant circulé en Inde, au Proche-Orient, dans la péninsule Arabique et en Afrique, Burton s'était bâti une légende personnelle tout au long de sa vie aventureuse, mêlant réalité et fiction. Si certains de ses travaux s'avèrent extrêmement instructifs et précis — pensons par exemple à son récit de voyage vers les sources du Nil — d'autres sont moins crédibles, et sa traduction des *Mille et une nuits* (1885) fait vraisemblablement partie de la seconde catégorie. Sollicité par Payne pour l'aider à établir sa traduction et ainsi profiter de l'autorité d'un arabisant qui lui manquait totalement, Burton accepta. Mais assez rapidement, ce dernier proposera sa propre version des fameux contes arabes, qui

s'avérera en réalité être non pas une traduction originale, mais bien le remaniement sans vergogne des traductions de ses prédécesseurs, en particulier celle de . . . Payne ! — ce que Lemos Horta démontre admirablement, sur base d'extraits choisis et même d'une reproduction d'une page de la traduction de Payne annotée par Burton (250) — plus ou moins modifiées selon les passages concernés, dans un style particulier saturé de néologismes, et surtout munies d'un savant appareil critique faisant appel à la « science » de Burton à propos des us et coutumes des Orientaux. Pourquoi Burton a-t-il procédé de cette manière ? Apparemment, plusieurs raisons peuvent être invoquées. Le manque de temps d'abord, Burton étant un polygraphe effréné déjà embarqué dans d'autres projets d'écriture et de traduction — notamment celles de la poésie lyrique de Luis de Camões, l'auteur des *Lusiade* — mais également une connaissance insuffisante de l'arabe, malgré ses prétentions à ce sujet l. L'officier qui avait d'ailleurs échoué à un examen d'arabe lors de sa carrière militaire ne confie-t-il pas à Payne, dans une lettre adressée à lui : « *Of course I don't know Arabic but who does? One may know a part of it, a corner of the field, but all! Bah!* » (242) Mais vraisemblablement, Burton n'en était pas à son premier coup d'essai : comme le souligne Lemos Horta, le récit de son pèlerinage à la Mecque déguisé en voyageur persan, paru en 1856,<sup>5</sup> contenait déjà de nombreux emprunts au récit du voyageur suisse Jean-Louis Burckhardt, qui avait accompli le même voyage quelques décennies avant lui et qu'il avait décrit dans un ouvrage publié en 1829<sup>6</sup>. . . .

Ce formidable travail de démystification accompli par Lemos Horta peut s'appliquer à d'autres traductions de la période coloniale, il le rappelle d'ailleurs lui-même à propos de la « traduction » (1859) très libre des *Robaiyât* du poète persan Omar Khayyâm par FitzGerald, et de la parution en français des *Mille et un jours* (1710), que François Pétis de la Croix disait avoir traduits du persan, ou encore à propos des prétendues traductions de certains auteurs de l'époque qui n'étaient en réalité que des forgeries dues à des auteurs européens inspirés par un Orient imaginaire, fantasmé : *Les aventures d'Abdalla* (1710) dues à Jean-Paul Bignon ou encore la *Kasidah* de Haji Abdu el-Yezdi traduite du persan en 1880 par Frank Baker, en réalité un pseudonyme de Burton lui-même. Mais cela s'appliquerait aussi à bien d'autres domaines du savoir de l'époque, au-delà de la littérature.

5. R. Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah*, Londres, 1856.

6. J. L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Arabia*, Londres, 1829.

Pensons aux « explorations » du continent africain, dont les héros ont très souvent suivi les pas de leurs guides et interprètes arabes ou africains sans toujours les nommer — les fameux *dark companions* des explorateurs européens.<sup>7</sup> On pourrait aussi mentionner nombre de grammaires de langues locales établies par des missionnaires ou des officiers coloniaux, qu'ils soient belges, français ou britanniques, généralement sans citer encore une fois les noms de leurs informateurs locaux.

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**Louise Nilsson, David Damrosch, and Theo D'haen, eds.**  
***Crime Fiction as World Literature*. London: Bloomsbury,**  
**2017. Pp. 301. ISBN: 9781501319334.**

*Crime Fiction as World Literature* offers an insightful comparative study acknowledging that “crime fiction is certainly one of the most widespread of all literary genres” (2). Composed of no less than twenty essays, organized in four different sections—“Global and Local,” “Market Mechanisms,” “Translating Crime,” “Holmes Away from Home”—the volume embraces a wide range of topics related to the reading of crime fiction as world literature.

Early on in the introduction, readers are reminded of what is meant by “world literature” in the twenty-first century. For the editors, “world literature” appears as the result of a process: the globalization of literature, that is, the distribution of texts worldwide through different media. These texts are usually canonized *œuvres*, works rather associated with what is commonly called “high” literature. Yet, the editors remark, crime fiction is not traditionally considered “elite” writing, even though it is still very widely spread and read.

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7. À ce propos, voir notamment D. Simpson, *Dark Companions : The African Contribution to the European Exploration of East Africa*, Elek, 1975 ; et Jean-Pierre Chrétien, « Les premiers voyageurs étrangers au Burundi et au Rwanda : les « compagnons obscurs » des « explorateurs » », *Afrique et Histoire*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2005, pp. 37–72.

The book indeed makes two important claims with regard to the field of crime fiction. First, studying “crime fiction as world literature” necessarily implies the abolition of a distinction that has weighed upon literary studies for decades: the alleged gap that would exist between “high” and “low,” or “popular,” literatures. In other words, the volume tries to go beyond the preconceived ideas reducing crime fiction to a set of fixed rules. One can think, for instance, of S. S. Van Dine’s “Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Fiction” or of Tzvetan Todorov’s “Typology of Detective Fiction” in which the latter explains that “Detective fiction has its norms; to ‘develop’ them is also to disappoint them: to ‘improve upon’ detective fiction is to write ‘literature,’ not detective fiction” (43).

*Crime Fiction as World Literature* ends this controversy by restating that “while crime fiction is among the most popular of genres, it has a long history of interrelation with more elite productions as well” (3). In this perspective, however, one can regret the lack of distinctions made in the volume between specific subgenres of crime fiction. As illustrated by its last section devoted to the different translations, adaptations, and rewritings of the Sherlock Holmes saga, crime fiction is roughly understood throughout the book in a way that barely distinguishes between classical whodunit and hard-boiled, spy fiction, thriller, and postmodern mystery narratives. Having in mind the stimulating goal of affirming the strong literary qualities of crime fiction, one might also have wanted to include the more recent studies on the metaphysical detective story as a genre in itself, distinguished, as Merivale and Sweeney contended, “by the profound questions that it raises about narrative, interpretation, subjectivity, the nature of reality, and the limits of knowledge” (1). One exception to this small oversight can be found in Delia Ungureanu’s chapter on “Surrealist Noir” in which she offers an enlightening reading of Orhan Pamuk’s *The Black Book* and Louis Aragon’s *Le Cahier noir*, two texts that she relates to Poe’s “William Wilson,” a subversive short story revealing the obsession of the father of detective fiction with doubles and changed identities.

The second goal that the volume reaches is to define “crime fiction” in the field of “world literature” as a “glocal” phenomenon. “Glocalism” is indeed a recurrent key word and notion of the book. The concept, previously introduced by David Damrosch, accounts for a peculiar “mode of literary creation and circulation” (4) that combines “global patterns with local themes” (14). The glocal nature of crime fiction lies in some of its distinguishing features such as the importance of the detective

figure enabling the recognition of the genre worldwide, the marketing and translation issues related to its distribution, and the adaptations and appropriations by different cultures and media. Crime fiction, at least in its most classical whodunit or hard-boiled forms, is “glocal” because it exports “local situations abroad” and imports “global situations at home” (20). It is both stylized (based on a shared and recognizable set of rules)<sup>1</sup> and localized (located in a particular place and time, rooted in the social and cultural contexts of the different countries where it develops).

Nevertheless, the general purpose of *Crime Fiction as World Literature* is not so much to address different types of crime fiction. Rather, it explores the different places where crime fiction has been “retold, resold, and transformed” as titled in another recent collection of essays concerned with the globalization of detective stories.<sup>2</sup> The book offers a panoramic view of crime fiction elaborated in the periphery, whether dealing with the specificities of Nordic Noir or the adaptations of the genre in Mexico, Bulgaria, Russia, China, and Southeast Asia. “Crime fiction as world literature” apprehended through the lens of “glocalism” has the merit of confronting critical views of the concept of world literature itself. The volume indeed proposes close readings of texts produced in a wide range of countries and cultures, thereby addressing the specificities of national philologies and social contexts, the importance of relevant translation theories adapted to the issues linked with globalized literature and, finally, the need to adopt a political stance when it comes to dealing with crime fiction written or taking place in postcolonial countries.

The volume’s interest does not only lie in the questioning of its eponymous concepts. Its second and third sections plunge into the mechanisms of the literary industry and the role translation plays in its globalization. As Karl Berglund remarks in his article dealing with the global market of Swedish crime fiction, the contemporary book trade is defined by its propensity to spot, produce, and sell bestsellers in the manner of Stieg

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1. Jacques Dubois, for instance, has defined the “classical” detective story along the lines of six main propositions:

- there is a crime and there is a criminal;
- a detective is commissioned to investigate;
- the detective is external to the drama;
- the detective investigates;
- the detective finds the criminal and brings him to justice;
- the detective is himself innocent. (178; my translation)

2. See Gregoriou et al.



Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy. Accordingly, many aspiring writers of detective fiction hope to find the one recipe that will help them produce a bestseller of their own. This has led, as Anneleen Masschelein and Dirk de Geest explain, to the development of a "literary advice industry" (91) mainly composed of handbooks which prefer "a conservative and safe stance over innovation and extension of the genre" (92). In the same way, Louise Nilsson argues that crime bestsellers require appropriate covers to be immediately recognized by the public. Covers represent a good way to "understand how a domestic literature circulates in a transnational context" (108). The paratext of a crime novel thus often points at its own macabre, violent nature (in such novels, colors are black and red, full of shadows, and images of weapons, corpses, abandoned houses, etc. abound) that the target audience must instantly be able to identify. These tropes are, most of the time, adorned with a hint of local elements (e.g. the snow in Nordic mysteries), which represent an additional value for the foreign readers who enjoy these novels for their settings and atmospheres more than for their criminal plots.

The book's third section concerns translation. In most parts of the world, translation is what enables one to have access to a literature, which, in the process, has become global. Whether they deal with the Catalan appropriation of the hard-boiled novel or *novela negra* to promote a Catalan idiom and culture, or whether they discuss Bulgarian translations of Agatha Christie, or the rise of the genre in Israel, or the Thai rewritings of some of the Sherlock Holmes stories, the essays gathered in this section share the common idea phrased by Susan Bassnett, following on Ann Steiner, that "translation, along with the publishing industry and the global book trade help to shape what readers choose to read" (149). Reception plays an important role in translation studies and although the success of a particular novel is hard to predict, the publishing industry always has its potential audience in mind, offering crime novels gravitating towards the same set of transnational ingredients and local themes.

The final part of the book, titled "Holmes Away from Home," confirms what has been described in the three previous sections. The Sherlock Holmes novels, short stories, movies, and series probably epitomize what is meant by "crime fiction" around the world. If one had to name but one detective figure, it would be Holmes. What better example, then, could be used to illustrate the global market mechanisms and translation

issues affecting crime fiction as a genre? By studying the colonial mission that was assigned to the Holmes texts, Michael B. Harris-Peyton not only reveals the “mythologized” originality of Conan Doyle’s work, but also pleads for a “shift value from an archaic notion of originality to the notion of circulation, adaptation, and growth” (228). The last chapters shed a different light on a character that should have been drained by the excessive rewriting undergone throughout the years. Its Chinese, Tibetan, or Russian versions discussed in the three concluding essays clearly show otherwise, equally pointing to the historical, social, and political impact of the detective’s perpetual revivals.

Today, Holmes, like crime fiction, is everywhere. *Crime Fiction as World Literature* carefully deconstructs the “glocal” nature of a genre defined by a combination of rather fixed tropes reflecting local themes, which provide both unique and comfortingly recognizable atmospheres. If, as Andreas Hedberg concludes, “Crime fiction is a travelling structure, applicable everywhere and thereby a world literature par excellence” (21), then the genre still has a bright future, which, hopefully, will not be lost in translation or obscured by the shadows of market mechanisms.

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**Raphael Zähringer. *Hidden Topographies: Traces of Urban Reality in Dystopian Fiction*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017. Pp. 277 + xii. ISBN: 9783110533910.**

Raphael Zähringer describes his research project as an attempt to combine three disciplines: spatial-turn literary criticism, science fiction studies, and system theory. As the Greek word in the title (topography, i.e. place-writing) indicates, the book tries to explain how dystopian fiction describes places, first of all urban spaces. Zähringer draws the notion of dystopia from Tom Moylan's monograph (2000), subtitled *Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*, which uses the term in a non-consensual meaning. In this theoretical framework, a utopia presents a harmonious, perfect alternative (future) reality, anti-utopia a completely negative one, while dystopia suggests an in between state of affairs: a different reality which is partly better, partly worse than ours. In the usual academic discourse, dystopia corresponds to what Moylan and Zähringer call anti-utopia, namely a reversed utopia, which is how John Stuart Mill used the word when he coined it in 1868. Anti-utopia, however, usually means an (satirical) attack on utopian thinking or writing (see Vieira). This modification of the terminology creates a spectrum of good/bad alternative realities, in which dystopia stands far from either extreme. However, Zähringer does not adopt all of Moylan's terminological nuances; when he speaks of the dystopian turn, he does not mean an academic paradigm (in the way we speak of spatial, linguistic etc. turns), but an unfortunate event in the history of the worlds represented in science fiction. Those worlds used to be more or less identical with ours, but the dystopian turn caused something to go wrong and therefore they became the repulsive universes represented in fiction.

The book analyses the presentation of space in five science fiction novels, approaching them from four different theoretical angles in four consecutive chapters (chapters III to VI), following the introduction (chapter I and chapter II.1) and the plot summaries (chapter II.2). The novels studied comprise (in the chronological order of publication): John Berger, *Lilac and Flag: An Old Wives' Tale of the City* (1992); China Miéville, *Perdido Street Station* (2000); Rupert Thomson, *Divided Kingdom* (2006); Kevin Berry, *City of Bohane* (2011); and, China Miéville, *The City & the City* (2011). Each of the analytical chapters is prefaced by a theoretical introduction of its own (whose length varies between seven to seventeen pages).

In the analyses, Zähringer tests the introduced theories on some or all of the five novels. As not all the theoretical approaches can be applied to all the novels, in two of the analytical chapters there are only three applicative sections. *Lilac and Flag* is dealt with only in two chapters, while *Perdido Street Station* and *Divided Kingdom* feature in all of them.

Chapter III focuses on the maps printed in some of the novels discussed. As a paratext, a map can support or contradict the text. Even if maps of fictional areas can never be congruent with actual world maps, they similarly generate “cartographic lust” (Stockhammer 66–67), deriving from the viewer/reader’s acceptance of the invitation to verify the map. Zähringer presents his results most splendidly in his analysis of New Crobuzon’s map in Miéville’s *Perdido Street Station*. The similarity of the fictional city’s paratextual map to an actual place (in this case London) is simply misleading. The map does not really help imagine or visualise the fictional space, the city’s atmosphere: it indicates only the names of major streets, but does not enable the reader to localise many places mentioned in the book. The experience of space offered by the text is therefore quite different from that of the actual map. However, Zähringer does not think that these paratextual maps are superfluous or counterproductive: on the contrary, they can give one the purest form of cartographic pleasure.

Chapter IV “Urban Spaces: Taking a Stroll,” numbering ninety pages, can therefore probably be regarded as the most important. The theoretical basis relies on a combination of Henri Lefebvre’s ideas set forth in his *The Production of Space* and Richard Sennet’s tenets about the city as a (human) body. The ways in which those theoretical insights can shed light on how city space is produced in fiction are also illustrated through a chart (“Fig. v: City Space Model,” 86). The spatial practices, the daily routines of city dwellers, and their bodily experience produce a “perceived space,” which can be conscious or unconscious, and in fiction can be mediated both through figure and narrator. Representations of space (like city planners’ designs, developers’ models, statistics) lead to “conceived space,” which is ideologically loaded, always conscious, and in fiction linked to the narrator’s perspective. Spaces of representation, the symbolic use of objects in memories, dreams and daydreams create the “lived space,” which can be conscious or unconscious, but in fiction always tied to the figure’s viewpoint. The three kinds of space interact with each other: perceived place triggers lived space, while lived space overlays and symbolically uses perceived space; lived space appropriates conceived space, while conceived

space dominates lived space (or at least tries to); conceived space has an impact on perceived space through communication and media, and perceived space can comply with or oppose conceived space. They all influence both the human body (its perception, experience, and performance) and the city body (its size, density, and heterogeneity or homogeneity), which partly overlap, since people are part of the city. Sennet had recourse to the metaphor of the city as a human body to tell a story of deterioration which originated in ancient Athens where citizens could feel completely at home. Accordingly, the Athenians' "custom of public nakedness" constitutes a strong indication of their feeling at home in their city—which suggests a vast misunderstanding of the ancient world on Sennet and Zähringer's part. Another phase of this development involved the symmetrical city planning of ancient Rome, according to Zähringer, as an equivalent of the symmetry of the human body. However, this may be true of many cities in the Roman Empire, but actually not the city of Rome. Further, the story ends with nineteenth-century London and twentieth-century New York, the centreless cities that continuously destroy themselves, finding nothing important enough to be preserved. Relying on this narrative as a point of departure of theorising, it is hardly surprising that in Zähringer's analyses dystopian cities strongly value the past—seeking to retain it, to have access to it, or to deny it. This point provides as an overall conclusion, as Zähringer formulates in the section of the chapter devoted to *Divided Kingdom*: "In order to create new identities in a dystopia, the past has either to be falsified or to be erased completely" (157).

Chapter V discusses borders and border-crossing. Modifying Monika Fludernik's typology (1999), Zähringer identifies four types of borders: (1) strict separation either by a borderline or a partitioning zone, (2) intersection, which may mean either overlapping areas or a contact zone, (3) a separation between interior and exterior, and (4) a crossing leading to new potentialities. In fiction, characters can perform actions across, on, along or at the border (176). It goes without saying that all the above-mentioned types contribute to shaping the space of a city. It is therefore hardly a surprise that dystopian novels tell us a lot about borders, separation, and restrictions of movement (although only three of the five novels are analysed in this chapter). In concluding, Zähringer boldly claims that the border-related performances of outsider protagonists (i.e. those who have crossed the exterior/interior border) express most poignantly "the subversive potential of dystopian narratives" (221). Zähringer's astute reading of

Miéville's *The City & the City* will not fail to interest readers. In this novel, the cities Breszel and Ul Qoma both occupy the same physical space, although citizens of each are trained to "unsee" the other. Border-crossing is thus understood as a (dys)function of perception.

Chapter VI examines the relevance of dystopian fiction. Departing from the assumption of systems theory that literature concerns the reality it is a part of, Zähringer focuses on literature's function, performance, and reflexivity. While, generally speaking, literature prompts readers to face a fictional reality and thus enables them to realise the contingency of the actual world (223), dystopia is a basically didactic genre (despite the modern development of the natural science system, which has freed literature of its educational role). From the viewpoint of performance, sci-fi operates along the lines of "compensation, criticism, change" (Moylan 86). Literary reflexivity concerns both the world outside fiction's own system ("reality") and the inner-systemic self-reference to the literary or generic tradition. Actual and fictional realities cannot be congruent, not even in the most realist representations. The depiction of a possible or more or less probable future in science obeys similar rules. Zähringer makes a strong case for the relevance of dystopian fiction. In doing so, he further builds on Michael Löwy's concept of "critical irrationalism" (2007) and Elena Esposito's analysis of the parallels between novel and probability calculation, whose development has apparently been concomitant (2014). While neither sci-fi novels nor probability calculation can predict the future, only the probabilities of the present, they may provide an inspiration for productive discussion. The mechanism of reality reference in dystopian fiction is best illustrated through the example of Miéville's *The City & the City*, which introduces us to a city with only two of the groups usually separated in a modern metropolis. As these two groups have no contact or communication with or perception of each other, the novel offers a useful model.

The author's attitude towards his corpus of novels can aptly be summarised with the following two quotations: "Dystopian worlds are so fascinating because they are so different from ours and can still be relevant with regard to criticism—and, due to their presentation as coherent worlds which follow a particular inherent logic, they become even more fascinating in their realistic irrationalism" (232); and "[dystopian fiction] takes the basic uneasy (realist) relation between the individual and the world and, by modification, explores it on new grounds, most

importantly by genre-blurring and by focussing on irreal worlds, while at the same time retaining the realist fashion of presentation with a strong emphasis on urbanity as the crucial component of postmodern lifestyle and identity" (235). Some readers might find the models proposed by Zähringer's corpus too simplistic; they might object that the worlds represented in these novels remain too coherent; they might regret that aesthetic considerations are by and large absent from the author's discussion. Nonetheless, the solid methodology Zähringer has developed to understand the representation of space in fiction will likely be of use to scholars interested in this highly important aspect of literature.

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**Douglas Robinson. *Exorcising Translation: Towards an Intercivilizational Turn*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2017. Pp. 176. ISBN: 9781501326042.**

The postcolonial turn in translation studies (exemplified in pioneering works of the 1990s by Susan Bassnett, André Lefevre, Gayatri Spivak, and Maria Tymoczko, among others) lent traction to and cleared space for critical perspectives that examine hierarchical relations such as colonial/colonized, West/East, male/female, original/translation, and author/translator in literary and cultural figurations. While drawing attention to and challenging unequal power relations remain vital currents in the field, a number of scholars working in and around translation studies have tasked themselves with complicating these oppositional dichotomies by emphasizing their permutations.<sup>1</sup> In *Exorcising Translation*, Douglas Robinson both conceptualizes and models such an approach by bringing together seemingly disparate figures such as Sakai Naoki, Friedrich Nietzsche, Harold Bloom, and English-language translators of Daoist texts to destabilize cultural and ideological representations and to show translation's role in muddying the waters. As Robinson posits, "[t]he line I want to pursue in this book runs through a challenge to the kind of either-or thinking that binarizes East and West, draws a big fat line between them, and derogates all apparent crossovers between them to 'ethnocentric' 'appropriation'" (ix). He ushers in what he terms an "intercivilizational turn" in translation studies, an outgrowth or "offshoot—or perhaps even the main branch—of postcolonial translation theory" (142). By examining the either willful or unwitting misunderstandings of critics and translators who reinscribe East and West binaries, he illustrates the messy, intercivilizational contours of translation and intercultural studies.

Robinson's initial point of departure stems from a 2010 article by Sakai Naoki, in which Sakai discusses the tensions and "apparent oddity" surrounding the notion of an "Asian theorist" (vii). Robinson draws

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1. Robinson emphasizes the contributions of "critical translation" or "CTS scholars" (2) working in and adjacent to translation studies who have helped advance a historically-driven skepticism toward monolithic or firmly oppositional notions of language, nation, text, including theorists Sakai Naoki, Lydia Liu, and Jon Solomon. Robinson also recurs to ideas of Judith Butler and Michel Foucault, whose theorizations of gender and performativity enable him to formulate the "configurations" of translation.



from Sakai's suggestion of a "*civilizational spell*" (vii; emphasis in original) "that associates theory with thought and modernity, and excludes Asia from that association" (ix), and he extends the idea of a spell or haunting to intercivilizational exchanges, especially, translation and cross-cultural dialogue. In chapter 1, Robinson expands on Sakai's claim that an invisible translation praxis "idealizes [. . .] the complexities of real-world communication" and serves the illusion of what Sakai terms "homolingual address" (10), the idea of a shared and homogenous language that, in turn, serves the construction of a unified nation state (which ideal was famously forecasted by German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher). However, more than Sakai, Robinson emphasizes the opportunities created by the "[c]onfigurative regimes of translation" (xiii), the "group-plausibilized *constructions* of reality" (xiii) that are exorcised by the "heterolingual" (xi) negotiations of the translator. The significant distinction here is that these figurations are "co-" rather than "con-" figured. Robinson explains that while "'[c]onfigurative regimes of translation' tend to be negatively valenced in Sakai's thought," they "can also be usefully theorized in the attitude of heterolingual address," in that such configurations supply forceful "counterevidence to the East-is-East-and-West-is-West dogma" (xiii). Accordingly, he revisits Schleiermacher's nationalist formulations in Sakai's terms of configuration and extrapolates Sakai's claim of a "civilizational spell" by pairing it with Schleiermacher's apparent "existential angst" (28) at the "imposture" of heterolingualism.

In chapter 2, Robinson pairs Friedrich Nietzsche and Harold Bloom to show how Bloom's arguments in *The Western Canon* are inflected with Nietzsche's Occidentalist configurations. Robinson describes Nietzsche's theorizations of the "civilizational spells" (39) of master and slave morality, the former of which consists of values that were famously coopted by Nazism, and the latter of which consists of the oppositional "revaluation" (40) or "passive-aggressive" (63) *resentiment* of the strengths and values of the master. As a corollary, Robinson implicates Bloom as writing himself into the role of the Nietzschean "Strong Man" or "Strong Poet" (63) who stands apart from the "slave morality" of both "conservative moralists" (59), those who defend the Western canon on account of a largely moralistic conception of aesthetic value, and "cultural relativists," those who seek to "expand" and thus "*destroy or overthrow*" the canon (60; emphasis in original). Robinson reads Bloom's condemnations of both "moralizers" (65) and the leftist "School of Resentment" (61) alike as a

thinly veiled reprisal of Nietzsche's ideas and, as such, as clear evidence of the persistent and "intergenerational" (65) character of master and slave spells in Western culture and society. For Robinson, Nietzsche's formulations are not a means of establishing influence so much as they are a means of conceptualizing the Bloomsian "anxiety" that such spells have cast over intercivilizational encounters. As Robinson argues, "in addition to theorizing the shaping influences those spells have had on who we are and how we act and why we take our assumptions to be universal truths, Nietzsche also tracks the influence of those spells on our inclination to deny such things—our tendency to disembody and desituate our knowing, to universalize" (85). Robinson reads Bloom through Nietzsche and Nietzsche through Bloom to underscore the extent to which intercivilizational spells are mutually and communally constituted or "cofigured."

Translation comes back into play as one of the primary reminders of how culture and ideology are always situated or "cofigured." To this end, one of the most evocative moments in *Exorcising Translation* is when Robinson indicates how, in his discursive and citational praxis, Bloom willfully "elide[s] the socioaffective contribution made to the stabilization of the Western Canon by *translators*" (92). Robinson emphasizes Bloom's implicit assurance that translators' mediations have not shaped or "distorted" the formation of the canon: "The commensurability between the source texts and the translations Bloom cites is so perfect that the distortive effects translating might conceivably have had on the canon that he wants to stabilize as *the* Western Canon never come up. The Canon is what it is—in English" (93). Moreover, Robinson signals Bloom's less than careful paraphrasing of statements by Russian literary theorist Viktor Shklovsky (98). As a counterexample, in his own prose, Robinson models how to engage the "heterolingual" (xi) cofigurations of translation. When recurring to the theoretical claims of Nietzsche or Foucault, he compares competing English translations and, on occasion, indicates how the choices of the individual translators complicate his conclusions. In other words, he models how to read, interpret, and cite translated literary and philosophical texts.

In chapter 3, cofigurative translation becomes an explicit discussion point as Robinson turns to the case of U.S. sinologist Russell Kirkland and his impassioned claims about how Western translators have misrepresented or secularized the *Laozi* or the *Tao Te Ching*. Robinson calls for "a more nuanced account" (112) of the projects of the individual translators

and argues that “Kirkland collapses several centuries of Western intellectual (and social, etc.) history into far too monolithic a whipping boy” (112). He insinuates that by oversimplifying Western history in the guise of guarding against Western appropriations of Eastern culture, Kirkland, rather, disregards a “powerful Western dissident tradition that has been intensively and extensively influenced by Asian ‘theory’” (107). Kirkland’s oversimplifications create an opening for Robinson to illustrate and reiterate the multidirectional or intercivilizational permutations of Orientalist projects. As Robinson suggests, “What makes [Kirkland’s] lecture a useful case study of this anti-cofigurative project is that his own examples relentlessly prove him wrong: cofiguration is everywhere at work in them” (xxiv). Both Kirkland’s sweeping postulations about Western distortions of the *Laozi* and the historical particularities of the individual translations evidence the extent to which “Orientalism [. . .] is a hierarchical cofigurative schema in which ‘the Occident’ and ‘the Orient’ mutually cofigure each other in a relationship of inequality” (110).

In short, *Exorcising Translation* is a wide-ranging and incisive study of how seemingly foundational cultural dichotomies are constituted. Robinson actively resists easy summations of “Orientalism” and “Occidentalism” and underlines the extent to which writers, scholars, and translators are complicit in maintaining and, also, reversing and obscuring said oppositions. The new vocabulary with which Robinson theorizes the “cofigurations” of translation and the “intercivilizational spells” of the East and West could be formidable to readers unfamiliar with previous iterations of these terms or concepts. However, Robinson’s claim that new terms are warranted inasmuch as the book “is about boundaries, and leakage across them” (xxii) is persuasive. Robinson’s book privileges a deeply historical genealogy of the cultural and ideological concepts that inform West and East divides and clears space for multidirectional examinations of questions of influence, reception, and translational and literary history.

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**Dorothy M. Figueira and Chandra Mohan, eds. *Literary Culture and Translation: New Aspects of Comparative Literature*. Delhi: Primus Books, 2017. Pp. 325. ISBN: 9789384082512.**

In 1989, the volume *Aspects of Comparative Literature* provided a seminal illustration of the livelihood of Comparative Literature in India. Nearly three decades later, *Literary Culture and Translation: New Aspects of Comparative Literature* resumes that conversation, with an eye to revisit and extend the themes in *Aspects*, especially in light of the development of Translation Studies as a formal discipline in India and elsewhere. In between *Aspects* and this new volume, many influential developments have occurred in the field of Comparative Literature, most notably Gayatri Spivak's declaration of the "death of the discipline" in 2003. This new volume, as Dorothy Figueira notes in the Introduction, does its part to counteract the Westernized myopia of this claim by illustrating the unflinching vibrancy of Comparative Literature in India—born out of the necessity of comparative methodologies for navigating cultural pluralism and multilingualism in the subcontinent (1). Chandra Mohan emphasizes this sense of comparative living in the Preface with his claim that "the concept of interdisciplinarity and pluralism has been part of the Indian psyche from time immemorial" (ix).

*Literary Culture and Translation* reprints three essays from *Aspects*—those of Sisir Kumar Das, D.W. Fokkema, and Harish Trivedi, which provide echoes of past discussions as points of departure. Das and Fokkema's perspectives, reissued posthumously, serve as tributes to these forward-thinkers and provide a thematic grounding for the pieces that follow. Their perspectives on methodology and morality appear newly current alongside those of scholars who have developed their careers in the field since the publication of *Aspects*. With these initial writings on disciplinary praxis and definition, the volume establishes itself as a state-of-the-discipline in South Asia and beyond, taking up issues and challenges central to the discipline, and to the more general study of the Humanities.

Das condenses his expertise from the three-volume *A History of Indian Literature* into a fundamental exposé on the development of Comparative Literature in India as necessary praxis for navigating multilingualism and cultural plurality. Thus, he illustrates the concept of necessary comparison that forms the cornerstone of the volume: "The

medieval Indian reader almost intuitively felt the existence of links between the text written in different languages" (13). In moving towards the contemporary, Das establishes another central theme: the link between "the unity of Indian literature" and Orientalism (21). His caution against the recent author- and market-driven move towards a singular Indian literature that erases or minimizes essential differences of language, custom, and theoretical framework, foreshadows the critiques of other Orientalisms, such as institutional multiculturalism (Figueira) and Sheldon Pollack's "vernacularization" (Ramakrishnan), which follow in subsequent sections.

The reprinting of Fokkema signals a rare, and daring, commitment to considering the moral motivations of Comparative Literature. Fokkema argues for the necessity of interdisciplinarity, especially scientific praxis, in the discipline as a way of complementing and tempering this foundational morality. "It is perfectly defensible that our discussion of intercultural studies has a moral impulse," he writes. "What is indefensible is to let our moral impulse interfere with the rules of analytical argument or scientific exploration" (25). It is useful to bear this stance in mind while continuing to read other perspectives on interdisciplinarity, including those of Jüri Talvet, Haun Saussy, Anisur Rahman, and others.

Das and Fokkema are apt opening choices in that they quickly establish the thematic framework for the entire volume, which includes the history, praxis, and disciplinary boundaries of Comparative Literature, using the Indian subcontinent as a central model. They also exemplify the volume's general practice of grounding modern theoretical concerns in the context of Sanskrit tradition and regional histories. Indeed, themes established early on resurface in all sections of the four-part collection: Part I: Aspects of Comparative Literature; Part II: India and Elsewhere; Part III: General Translation Theory; and Part IV: Case Studies. In this organization and classification, Figueira's leading editorial vision is clear. The attention to author selection and arrangement allows, as I have mentioned, for the pieces to dialogue with one another directly. All of these factors produce the text's cohesive feel. Additionally, the selection of authors broadly and adequately represents "India and elsewhere," including such names as Ipshita Chanda, Jasbir Jain, and Ganesh Devy alongside Haun Saussy, Gerald E.P. Gillespie, Marc Maufort, and Eugene Chen Eoyang—to name a few (2). Although all essays appear in English, the manuscript maintains a uniformity. Stylistically, the texts fit together for

a pleasant reading experience; the consistency and quality of language reflect Figueira's comprehensive efforts.

In addition to making possible connections between scholars separated by time or geography, several articles also offer windows into larger bodies of work. In addition to Das' aforementioned condensing of *A History of Indian Literature*, Jabir Jain's writing on difference alludes to her prolific work on the ethics of encounter, such as in *The Diaspora Writes Home* and *Forgiveness: Between History and Memory*. Dorothy Figueira's perspective in "Comparative Literature in the United States" fits into her broader critique of institutional efforts towards Multiculturalism, World Literature, and Postcolonial Literature in *Otherwise Occupied*, *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion*, and elsewhere. These and others create an environment such that new or experienced readers might find wide ranges of new material with which to work.

The third section, "Translation Studies," lies at the nexus of the entire volume. Against the backdrop of the rise of Translation Studies worldwide, the section illustrates how the long history of the practice in India, out of necessity, laid the groundwork for the formal codification of the discipline today. The authors in this section frame translation as a necessary, even natural, practice for navigating comparative lives in a culturally plural society like India. They explore translation in the full scope of its definition—translation of texts between languages and cultural contexts (Choudhuri, Jain, Ramakrishnan), of concepts between disciplines or media (Rahman), and of various levels of cultural consciousness within a single individual (Camps, Kumar). Choudhuri's initial call for an "Indian Theory of Translation" makes explicit the ways that the practice of translation in India pre-dates and offers a way around the paralysis of popular Western theories of translation such as those proposed by Lawrence Venuti (188–89). The ancient history of translation in India, as demonstrated by Choudhuri and Ramakrishnan in particular, makes vivid and undeniable the ways that trends towards World and Postcolonial Literature are ill-suited not only to the Indian context, but to any setting that harbors multiple linguistic or cultural contexts. Assumpta Camps, for example, borrows from Ganesh Devy the idea of a "translating consciousness," exploring its impact on "trans-cultural" authors and literatures. She argues that for authors informed by multiple linguistic realities, narrating can be a form of translating. Jasbir Jain considers these themes through the broader epistemological relationship between Self and Other. Her piece, "The Epiphany of Difference: From

Linearity to Simultaneity,” implicitly cautions against practices that adhere too closely to identity as an end goal, such that it inhibits “the manner in which we relate to the Other” and prevents the discovery of “the Self, which is an individualized consciousness, responding to or resisting its environment” (197). These conversations build neatly upon the previous chapters, many of which question or resist the development of disciplines that facilitate an evasion of difference. The crucial importance of these chapters in Part III lies in their devotion to locating a praxis with which to negotiate difference, proving the crucial relevance of Translation Studies and its partner, Comparative Literature, in the navigation of a modern world.

Significantly, the volume also leaves space for comparatists to apply an Indo-centric comparative praxis to literatures and authors. The placement of Part IV: Case Studies at the conclusion of the work is a strong logical choice, as it proves the effectiveness—and dare I say, liberation—of a non-Eurocentric approach to literary analysis. Marc Maufort’s chapter “Indigenous Playwriting and Globalization,” for instance, expands the book’s overall discussion in geography and discipline to Aboriginal plays from North America and New Zealand. The chapter not only states, but *demonstrates* how a non-Eurocentric focus frees other non-Indian regional texts from the constraints of national literature frameworks or postcolonial theories. This section is also where Harish Trivedi presents a new Afterword to his previously published article “The Urdu Premchand: The Hindi Premchand.” Here, Trivedi brings questions of the “threats” posed by one-dimensional approaches of World Literature and Postcolonial Theory to Premchand’s change from Urdu to Hindi composition around 1916 (271–72, 255). In the final chapter, Sieghild Bogumil-Notz uses Calvino’s *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveller* to open up an essential epistemological question: “How does the relationship between the Self and the Other impact on the aims and methodology of Comparative Literature?” Bogumil-Notz concludes, on a fitting final note for the volume, that the comparatist must persist in the desire to encounter the Other “in its many forms” (310).

Perhaps the most crucial success of this new volume is the way it enables access to esteemed Indian thinkers as an alternative and complement to more centralized Western voices in the discipline. It provides an essential handbook for new and experienced scholars of Comparative Literature, Translation, and Cultural and Interdisciplinary Studies alike. It has the depth to hold its own inside Indian academe and the thematic connections

to join conversations happening in Comparative Literature departments across the world. *Literary Culture and Translation* provides a vital, vibrant state-of-the-discipline both conscious of historical context and suited to the present moment. In reasserting India's centrality to conversations regarding disciplinary boundaries, translation, and alterity, this collection from Figueira and Mohan also ensures that these themes remain active sites of discussion in Comparative Literature.

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**Joseph Campana and Scott Maisano, eds. *Renaissance Posthumanism*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016. Pp 336. ISBN: 9780823269563.**

Posthumanism has become an important focal point for interdisciplinary debates, thus qualifying as a concept to which multiple definitions and agendas are tied. A very brief (and flawed) history of its emergence would claim that humanism, which originated in the Renaissance, foregrounded human beings at the expense of God, while posthumanism seeks to abandon this anthropocentric worldview. Fueled by human-made and potentially apocalyptic environmental challenges as well as an ever-faster implementation of new technologies, the idea of the human in relation to its environment is changing very fast. Suffice it to mention in this respect the complexity of the notion of gender, which some decades ago was perceived as a stable binary. In contrast, it is now widely regarded as a much more complex and polymorphous aspect of human existence.

*Renaissance Posthumanism* provides an inspired and well-researched contribution to these debates, which challenges the certainties of contemporary posthumanism by shedding light on the complexities of Renaissance world views, particularly as expressed in literature and art. The editors rightly criticize that "contemporary work in posthumanism presents itself as a rejection of Renaissance humanism when what it rejects is a straw man—albeit a straw Vitruvian man—that bears



little, if any, resemblance to Renaissance humanism *qua* the skeptical, critical, and irreverent close readings of ancient texts and cultures.” (3) Overall, the volume successfully demonstrates that Renaissance humanism was far from being purely anthropocentric. Actually, it did explore the same issues as those of concern today: the individual’s complex entanglement with the inanimate world and the relations between humans and animals. The latter provide many sources of fascination, including attraction and partnership.

In the first chapter, Kenneth Gouwens’s nuanced contribution focuses on common misconceptions about the Renaissance. However, his concluding remarks on the Christian influence on the Renaissance, which is also well-documented among the more skeptical thinkers such as Michel de Montaigne, could seem irrelevant to many contemporary posthumanism scholars, who consider their approach to be well-beyond religious belief or concerns. Nonetheless, others would find inspiration in revisiting sources of enchantment from a posthumanist perspective: is the focus on other species and materiality also rife with potential for positive visions of a world that cannot be explained rationally? Stephen J. Campbell offers a detailed account of Titian’s expression of a new world view through his portraits of Satyrs. Like a number of other articles in the volume, this essay underlines the artist’s creative and profound engagement with complex human-animal relations. Further, Judith Roof forcefully illustrates the wild and carnivalesque side of the Renaissance, as manifest in the way Francois Rabelais’s work playfully engages with identity, time, and images of the world: “In *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, all phenomena are simultaneously enclosed by and enclose others. There is neither linearity nor chronology, but always a relativity—something that always exists because the other is there, an inside that exists because of an outside and vice versa.” (105) Holly Dugan’s article “A Natural History of Ravishment” is a spirited contribution about the *Life of Alexander*. It articulates the challenges of navigating a world where new animals, not mentioned in the Bible, have been discovered and need to be classified, in particular the simians blurring the distinction between humans and animals. Other articles also study the relationship between humans and other species. Noteworthy in this respect is Erica Fudge’s work on farmyards and Julian Yates well-informed article on Shakespeare and non-human species. In this analysis,

Yates brings Shakespeare into a fruitful dialogue with contemporary figures such as Bruno Latour and Jacques Derrida.

The essays concerned with human relations to the inanimate are equally successful. Vin Nardizzi creatively relies on the concept of the “wooden actor” in Renaissance theatre to show how the failure to act in a lifelike manner would blur the distinction between the human and the non-human. This can be seen as a very early form of posthumanity, foreshadowing modern day actor-network-theory, where not only humans can have agency. Lara Bovilsky concentrates on the relationship between objects, in particular minerals, and emotions, in her study of Shakespeare, which convincingly indicates that the present-day rhetoric of human being entanglement with the world is not a new insight.

The contributions collected here are mainly historically oriented, rather than related to current debates. Although not absent, this contemporary contextualization is only partly taken care of in the introduction and Campana’s long and lively postscript. This close engagement with the source material, well-framed by the editors, has its merits. Still, some urgent debates and concepts fail to get much or any attention in the volume. The Anthropocene, which has emerged as a significant notion for discussing human agency and responsibility across a larger time-scale, is simply left out of the discussion. While the focus on human-animal relations dominates the book, it would have been interesting to include perspectives on technology, which currently fuels debates on human identity, and was also flourishing in the Renaissance. Although Leonardo da Vinci is referred to, his essential role in striving to expand human capacity through technology could certainly have been explored in greater detail. However, these minor weaknesses do not detract from the general impression of an engaging, learned revaluation and recontextualization of Renaissance art and thinking in our contemporary world.

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**Mads Rosendahl Thomsen. *The New Human in Literature: Posthuman Visions of Changes in Body, Mind and Society after 1900*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. Pp. 258. ISBN: 9781441183194.**

In *The New Human in Literature*, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen undertakes not one, but two ambitious projects that are, by their very nature, lacking in both firm boundaries and clear endings. As one would expect from the title of the book, the first project concerns the question of what is the human, and specifically, how do the various discourses surrounding the new human and the posthuman develop throughout the twentieth century and on into the twenty-first within the aesthetic field of the literary. It is literature itself that is taken up in the secondary portion of Thomsen's argument. In exploring the thematic development of the new human within a specific body of literature, Thomsen simultaneously develops an understanding of literature's potential and ability to probe figural complexes through fictive exploration. In other words, the specific aesthetic texture of literature as a medium for overlapping fictions forms, in Thomsen's view, an ideal strata in which and through which the shifting borders and fluid contents of conceptual constructs (such as the new human and the posthuman) can be productively examined.

The terms used within the book are given relatively clear and precise definitions throughout. Right upfront, Thomsen clarifies that while he sees the new human and the posthuman as related, they are not, in fact, identical for his purposes. He uses "the term 'the new human' in a wider sense than 'the posthuman.' Whereas the latter refers to a break with the human species at the genetic level, the new human also covers idea [sic] of changes in human mindset and culture" (2). Using this broad definition of the new human allows Thomsen to effectively argue that the spiritual modernization at the start of the twentieth century and the political appropriation and use of this modern, secularized hope in the mid twentieth century can, in fact, be connected to the latter emergence of an awareness of humankind's biological heritage as both replicable and malleable within the horizon of technological possibilities that arose in the latter half of the twentieth century (and, of course, that continues on into the present day).

In order to accomplish these goals, Thomsen organizes his project into four main sections. The first, "The Triune Human," traces the

development of the concept of the human and the increasingly accelerated tempo at which the motifs of novelty and transcendence sound as the cultural, political, and technological fruits of an emergent modernity ripen. The second section, "Self-modernization," contains specific readings of the works of Virginia Woolf, William Carlos Williams, and Louis-Ferdinand Céline. Thomsen reads these authors not as conscious advocates for the new human, but rather as authors conscious of both a problematic past and an unknown future, and as such, authors whose works present new ways of being in the (new) world of the early twentieth century. Thomsen thus sees the new human emergent here in terms of "a modernization of human consciousness that would occur gradually and without overarching control" (127). This gradual, evolutionary change contrasts with the self-conscious quest for change that Thomsen traces in the third section, appropriately titled "The Grand Projects." In it, Thomsen looks at projects with an explicitly political dimension, which sought to create the new human through the societal and cultural change at work in colonization (Chinua Achebe's *West Africa*), non-totalitarian cultural evolution (Orhan Pamuk's *Turkey*), and totalitarian cultural revolution (Mo Yan's *China*). Finally, in the aptly-named fourth section, "The Final Frontier," Thomsen turns to the ways the new human has been bodily (de)-constructed through ongoing scientific and technological advances. While Thomsen does look briefly at the genre of science fiction, in which such speculative constructions of the human can be traced back to Mary Shelley and beyond, he focuses this section primarily on the works of Don DeLillo and Michel Houellebecq, whose works demonstrate the potential and power available when an author utilizes a new-human body in an otherwise non-science fiction texts.

Against this four-part structure, Thomsen also constructs an argument regarding the ability of literature, and specifically literary fiction, to explore complex themes. For Thomsen, "literary discourse is distinguished from other discourses by putting subjects into a narrative where it is not a matter of whether this or that feature seems preferable in isolation—longer life, higher intelligence—but whether it is possible to tell actual stories of how it would be to live with this or that feature, in all its complexity" (218). In other words, fiction can contain extended narrative threads that follow the various possibilities raised by the hypotheses of the sciences, politics, and philosophy. Whereas a physicist may posit some new type of matter, the lived significance of that matter upon a human life remains unthinkable

to a certain extent without the space and structure provided by literary fiction to essentially play with the potential relationships and effects this hypothetical matter could have in and on a human life.

Thomsen is in many ways just as interested in the interaction between literature and the human as he is in the emergence of the new human as a literary theme. Literature's capacity to "1) scrutinize the potential for re-enchantment and risk of alienation, 2) connect individuality and collectivity in a coherent artistic rendition, 3) connect ethical questions and aesthetic expression, and 4) include cultural or collective memory in a presentation of the complexities of human existence" are what, in Thomsen's view, make it the ideal vehicle through which to explore the thematic evolution of the new human (9). Therefore, while the project's overarching four-part structure (which traces the literary emergence of the new human) is somewhat reminiscent of the various nodal/mapping approaches employed in more recent literary histories, Thomsen also makes continual reference to five central theses focused around the ways a literature rooted in cultural history influences certain forms of considering transcendence.<sup>1</sup> In the end, the exploration of the new human is just as much a vehicle to undertake a reconsideration of the value of literature as it is the subject under consideration in its own right throughout Thomsen's book. The fact that Thomsen initially prioritizes literature in the introduction of his subject underscores its importance in the project: "the object of this book is to demonstrate how literature, particularly fiction, contributes to creating a richer and more complex idea of the contexts and issues arising from the idea of a posthuman or new human, and that the idea of the new human is not just something that relates to technology, but has a long history of fascinating humanity" (2).

I began this review by noting that the subjects Thomsen engages in this project are intrinsically difficult due to their lack of definitive boundaries and their ongoing (and thus continually changing) nature. Another

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1. These theses are as follows: 1) Both alienation and the possibility of a re-enchantment of the world are important reactions to the visions of a change in human identity; 2) Literature has an extraordinary capacity to link the individual with the collective, in a transformation of the past and a vision of the future; 3) Aesthetics possesses an ethical dimension, when it connects imperfection and beauty; 4) Cultural memory is essential to making continuation and discontinuation work in the creation of a future-oriented identity; 5) The theme of the posthuman can reinvigorate the status and use of canonical works of art and literature (11–12).

way of speaking about this difficulty would be to place the discussion in terms of opposing tensions: within both the subject of literature's unique expressive abilities and the subject of the human's seemingly inevitable evolutions, permeable boundaries facilitate both the push and the pull of thematic structures built around seemingly opposing subjects through their mutual relationality. Thomsen thus circles his subjects relationally: the relationship between individuality and collectivity, the relationship between aesthetics and imperfection, the relationship between immortality and death, the relationship between the alien and the human, the relationship between the past and the future, the relationship between alienation and re-enchantment, and on and on. Ultimately, the central tension of the project emerges as what Thomsen defines as the "key paradox" of the human itself: "the human represents both the highest most absolute values, and is a being that is subject to improvement" (215). If we hold the human up as the centering and central object of meaning-making value within the narrative of our anthropocentric age, then the increasing awareness of and hypersensitivity to the human's simultaneously expanding capacity for enhancement, and even secularized transcendence,<sup>2</sup> inevitably produces an unsettling sense of simultaneous retrenchment and anticipation. Clearly, any project that helps us to read more carefully, comparatively, and with greater attentiveness to the ways in which we both shape and are shaped by minds, cultures, and bodies is valuable both within and without the field of comparative literature. Thomsen has produced a work well worth the effort to engage, and one that is useful for a variety of scholarly fields and foci.

But in addition to this strong recommendation, I do have several reservations. There are, as there are in any project, the various small mistakes that can cause occasional momentary confusion: for example, in the chapter on Louis-Ferdinand Céline, the name is at times spelled "Celine" (116), and comma errors complicate reading comprehension.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, the writing itself is, as a whole, uneven and a bit clunky, at times to the point of distraction.<sup>4</sup> There were simple changes that could

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2. The transcendence of the human via posthuman channels; i.e., the leaving behind of the human for something constitutively new.

3. E.g., "All's well that transcends well, is the most that this narrative offers the individual" (219).

4. E.g., "But literature has the capacity to present nuanced positions, because it does not have to convince and draw conclusions, but can operate through

have been made to clarify the internal logic, such as in the third section, in which the introduction clearly set up an expected chapter sequence of Achebe/Africa, Pamuk/Turkey, and Mo Yan/China. However, the actual section was instead ordered Achebe/Africa, Mo Yan/China, and Pamuk/Turkey. Given the clarity of the initial set up (“three types of societal change are explored here, through their expression in literature: colonization, non-totalitarian cultural evolution, and totalitarian cultural revolution” [135]), these types of logical inconsistencies were simply confusing, and needlessly complicated the communication between Thomsen and his audience.

While the above issues are often resolved through more effective editorial guidance and feedback on a project, my final reservation has to do with Thomsen’s decision to, for the most part, forgo the discussion of science fiction. While I understand the need for this limitation (without it, the project would have necessarily tripled in size and become unwieldy), I feel that Thomsen could have simply stated this necessity and moved on. Instead, he makes several arguments for its exclusion: because literary fiction is ostensibly more widely read and thus more popular, science fiction will be excluded; and because science fiction takes up the topics of the new human and posthumanism more directly and with a kind of bald exuberance, they are not as useful to the more nuanced analysis at hand and thus will be excluded. And yet the theoretical framework established in the first section, as well as the consideration of the technological/biological potential available at the end of the twentieth century each address various works of science fiction, thus creating an odd internal tension between literary fiction and science fiction—they are rivals, but rivals rooted in similar roots of romanticism, the speculative, and the uncanny. Ultimately, Thomsen’s decision to justify and argue for the exclusion of science fiction rather than to simply delineate the scope of his project works to his disadvantage, muddying the waters more than this reviewer found comfortable or compelling.

To be clear, the work Thomsen does in *The New Human in Literature* is suggestive for a wide range of literary and theoretical fields. The complexity of the literary, cultural, and relational networks involved is significant,

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multiple perspectives and in different registers within the same work, ranging from seriousness to dark irony” (73) does communicate the thoughts and ideas at work, but would benefit from a bit more polishing to rearrange the clauses and tighten up the prose.

and Thomsen's ability to see these connections and weave them together such that they invite further reflection and connections in his readers is distinctly to his advantage. The volume contains a useful bibliography and a serviceable index, items that of course add to the project's overall utility and potential longevity. And despite several reservations, it is a project that many will find well worth the time and effort to engage—it is certainly a book that this reviewer will be considering and returning to time and again.

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**Bernard Dieterle and Manfred Engel, eds. *Writing the Dream / Ecrire le Rêve*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2017. Pp. 358. ISBN: 9783826061202.**

*Writing the Dream / Ecrire le rêve* is the first volume in a series of the Cultural Dream Studies (Kulturwissenschaftliche Traum-Studien / Études Culturelles sur le Rêve) directed by Bernard Dieterle and Manfred Engel. A number of volumes are in the works as I write this review. In the spirit of transparency, I should mention that I am a member of this project, having joined it subsequent to this first volume. The Cultural Dream Studies project works under the auspices of the ICLA Research Committee on Dreams which, to gauge from the yearly conferences and pending publications, is among the most active research committees presently at work in the organization. The aim of this project is to examine the features and culture significations of dream discourse and the historical development in factual and fictional dream writing. It reads literary dreams as part of dream work—a field that other disciplines, such as theology, philosophy, medicine and psychology also investigate.

Section I of this first volume in the series deals with systematic considerations, beginning with Manfred Engel's essay on the poetics of dreams and dream-visions as they appear in myth, fairy tale, allegory and modernist literature and express the dialectics of familiarization and defamiliarization. This essay sets the parameters of the investigation of the book as a whole in its concern for cultural and textual patterns found in dreams and their various representations. This essay is followed by Bernard Dieterle's



examination of the role of poetry in dream research, in particular, the role of authentic and allegorical dreams in lyric. Ritchie Robertson then looks at actual dreams and their narrated versions in Freud.

Section II broaches historical case studies in the Hebrew Bible (Jörg Lanckau) in the context of Near Eastern (Babylonian, Assyrian, Hittite, Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian) dream culture. Gerhard Langer extends this investigation to look at the Talmudic “dream book,” the *Berakhot*, and how the specific hermeneutics of rabbinic dream interpretation tends to reduce dreams to their core symbolism. The analysis of dreams in the Near Eastern context is further developed in Angelika Brodersen’s examination of Islamic dream narratives from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries. These particular narratives are noteworthy for the presence of message-dreams, where the dead communicate with the living or dreams where two individuals (often lovers) experience the same dream separately. In the Chinese context, as Zhang Longxi shows in his treatment of the famous butterfly dream of the fourth century BC Taoist Zhuangzi, we find the philosophical example of the “life is a dream” trope, replicated elsewhere in Chinese literature and throughout literature as a whole, as also noted in Karlheinz Shierle’s examination of dream as life in Dante’s *Commedia*. Bernard Dieterle looks at the role of dreams in Fontaine’s fables, where they provide a primarily didactic function negotiating issues of morality and human failing.

The Enlightenment and Romantic periods are rich in evocations of dreams. Monika Schmitz-Emans looks at Jean Paul’s amalgamation of factual dream narratives in his diaries and his depictions of dream journeys in such works as *Traum über das All* and *Der Komet*. Marie Guthmüller offers a new perspective on Manzoni in her examination of the role of prophetic dreams in *I promessi sposi* and Manfred Engel, in his second contribution to the volume, carries the investigation from the Enlightenment through Realism to Modernism. He focuses specifically on the dream reports in Ulrich Bräker, Gottfried Keller and Arthur Schnitzler. Dreams in Japanese modernism are then examined by Franz Hintereder-Emde’s analysis of the work of Natsume Sōseki, whose work found inspiration in Romantic, Pre-Raphaelist, and Symbolist painting and literature. Here dreams provide a trope by which Sōseki examines his relationships to the non-rational self he had first encountered in his reading of Western literature.

Dreams come into their own, so to speak, in Surrealism. Susanne Goumégou focuses on Paul Eluard's "psychic automatism," where the dream report strives to minimize the influence of the waking ego. Julien Blank looks at dreams in pop culture, particularly in comics such as *Little Nemo* and *The Sandman*. Yvonne Wübben examines techniques of dream reportage and hybridity in Kipperhardt's *Traumprotokolle* and *März*. Tumbo Shango Lokoho investigates literary dreams in contemporary francophone African novels while Rose Hsiu-li Juan's work deals with the function of dreams among the north Californian indigenous Pomo.

The volume concludes with a return to the use of empirical dream work that marked the latter half of the nineteenth century and is retooled in post-Freudian psychology. Micheal Schredl examines how dream narratives are marked by the various methods employed by science to collect data.

The initial essays of Engel, Dieterle, and Robertson quite adequately provide the necessary grounding for the reader to be able to appreciate the masterful analysis of dream case studies culled from literature that comprise the remainder of the volume. I understand that subsequent volumes in the series will deal with specific issues regarding dreams, their historicity, and expression in various genres. All the essays in this volume are of very high quality. However, what is so wonderful about this volume is the breadth of the cultures—German, French, Italian, tribal North American, African literatures and genres (poetry, novels, fables, psychological notation, scripture, and comics)—examined and its coherence as a collection, thanks to the theoretical grounding of its editors. Such a compilation represents the best of German comparative scholarship, made possible by the freedom with which German research can be carried out, collaboratively with a team of professors and their *équipe* of research assistants to deal with issues of source checking, compilation, formatting, and editing—something that we in other countries can only contemplate in our dreams! The editors of this volume are to be commended for their conceptualization of the project articulated in their introduction and its execution. The comprehensiveness of the volume and the breadth of the material examined point to their careful planning. One looks forward to upcoming volumes in the series, the second of which has just seen the light of day.

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# Rapports de colloques

## Conference Reports

### **American Comparative Literature Association Conference, Utrecht, The Netherlands, 6–9 July 2017**

The American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA) held its annual conference in Utrecht, the Netherlands, from July 6 to July 9, 2017, under the leadership of ACLA President Joseph Slaughter and the co-chairs of the local hosting committee, Kiene Brillenburg Wurth and Birgit Mara Kaiser. The conference was several years in the planning. An all-female scientific committee composed of faculty members from Leiden, Amsterdam and Nijmegen as well as Utrecht planned the conference with support from a number of Deans, Vice-Deans and department Heads from their universities. The conference was a wonderful success, with over 2200 participants listed in the program and three full days of parallel seminars arranged into recurring streams. Utrecht proved to be a welcoming host city with inspiring cultural attractions and a wonderful embodiment of history in the venues in which seminars took place. This kind of outreach by the ACLA is an extension of its earlier programs held in Toronto, Puerto Rico, and Mexico, which were intended to take the “American” in the American Comparative Literature Association seriously by moving beyond the United States and into broader North America. That American contingent has now made productive contact with its European colleagues as well.

The keynote speakers at the conference, including Trinh T. Minh-ha, Rey Chow and Mieke Bal, inspired enthusiastic responses from listeners and spoke to sold-out auditoria. Trinh T. Minh-ha spoke on “The Everyday Interval of Resistance” as well as presenting a screening of her film “Forgetting Vietnam.” Rey Chow turned her attention to “Foucault, Race and Racism,” while Mieke Bal focused on “Emma Exposed: Flaubert as Contemporary, Intermediality, and Grounds of Comparison.” In addition to

the keynote addresses, the conference hosted additional film screenings of Trinh T. Minh-ha's "Forgetting Vietnam," a video installation "Precarity" by Mieke Bal based on Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, and a virtual reality poetry experience. All of these events were appreciatively attended by conference participants.

The keynote speakers were complemented by Joseph Slaughter's Presidential address and his moderating of the ACLA Presidential Panel on "Comparative Literature and the Law." The ACLA Vice-President's Panel, "How to Call It? Gender Pronouns, Safe Spaces, 'Microaggressions' Across Languages," hosted by Emily Apter, examined the ways in which language and translation function in terms of "safe spaces," "microaggression," and inclusivity in the classroom. These issues have become even more central as American culture functions under its current political administration and a very different sense of what is acceptable language in the classroom and out of it.

The conference program ranged from the practical such as panels on "Publishing Your First Article" or "Teaching Today: Pedagogy in Challenging Times" to more theoretical topics such as the plenary session "50 Years of Derrida's *Of Grammatology*." Several ICLA research groups (including the Comparative Gender Studies Committee and the Committee on Translation) held meetings and sessions at the conference. Seminars included interdisciplinary topics that paired film, photography or music and literature as well as those that explored popular genres such as crime fiction from new literary and cultural perspectives. Part of the success of the ACLA conferences remains the unique seminar format originally designed by David Damrosch in which colleagues interested in a particular topic meet together over three days. This allows for deeper conversations among a wider group of scholars than the more familiar single-meeting model can accommodate. Many productive interchanges of research materials and insights develop over the three-day discussion and filter back into the research and publications of the participants. These interactions often lead to longer academic and personal exchanges among seminar participants. In addition to attending one's own seminar, the other time slots spread across the day allow for the more traditional drop-in participation in other seminars of interest.

In an attempt to make its broader work known among the ACLA participants, members of the ICLA executive committee presented a panel on "The Plurality of Comparative Literature." This panel, chaired by

the ICLA president Zhang Longxi, examined the conditions of comparative literature in different geographical locations and differing cultural conditions in order to encourage a discussion of the plurality of Comparative Literature as a discipline. Vice-President of the ACLA David Palumbo-Liu served as the commentator for the session which engendered a lively discussion among those in attendance. It is encouraging to see this positive interaction of the ACLA and the ICLA since reaching out to the world is such a central part of Comparative Literature's history and identity and since working to understand other literatures and cultures is more crucial now than ever.

The 2017 ACLA conference presented a program aimed at inclusion of a wide range of geographical locations, historical periods, interdisciplinary approaches and theoretical views. It included seminars on ecology, gender, disability studies, politics, translation, and poetics, among many others. The participants represented universities throughout the Americas as well as many European, African and Asian nations. It was also attended by interested colleagues and students from local universities.

The 2018 American Comparative Literature Association Conference will return to the United States and to the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles. The productive academic interactions begun in Utrecht will undoubtedly be continued in this new venue.

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## **7e congrès du Réseau Européen d'Etudes Littéraires Comparées / European Network for Comparative Literary Studies, Helsinki, août 2017**

Le 7e congrès du REELC a eu lieu à l'université d'Helsinki (Finlande), du 23 au 26 août 2017, sur le thème de Fear and Safety/ Peur et sécurité.

Après un discours de bienvenue de la part de Kai Mikkonen (University of Helsinki, organisateur principal du congrès) and Brigitte Le Juez (Dublin City University, Irlande, Coordinatrice Générale du ENCLS-REELC), le congrès s'est ouvert avec la conférence plénière d'Anne Duprat (Université de Picardie-Jules Verne, France) sur « Hasard et littérature : le

risque en question ». La conférence plénière de Johan Schimanski (Université d'Oslo, Norvège): « Migrant Utopias, Migrant Dystopias » s'est tenue le lendemain.

Le congrès a réuni plus d'une centaine de participants. Les contributions ont été présentées en français et en anglais. Les ateliers, pour la plupart bilingues, ont abordé le thème à partir de diverses perspectives:

Narratologiques et génériques : « Narratologie du risque et de la catastrophe », « Narrating History and Trauma », « Nothing to Fear but... ? Political and Social Fact(or)s of Horror Fiction », « The Terrorist Novel/ Le roman terroriste », « Peur et sécurité dans la littérature dystopique/ Fear and Safety in Dystopian Literature », « Fears and Phobias in the Fantastic/Peurs et phobies dans la littérature fantastique », « Grow up! Fear and Safety in Young Adult Fiction/ Grandis donc! Peur et sécurité dans la littérature de jeunesse »,

Littéraires générales : « Light and Dark: Positive and Negative Emotions in Literature/ Lumière et ténèbres: émotions positives et négatives en littérature », « Terrorism and Literature/ Terrorisme et Littérature »,

Géocritiques: « Geographies of Fear and Escape », « Ecocriticism and the Novel », « Eco-catastrophe, Ecology and Literature/ Éco-catastrophe, écologie et littérature », « Fear and Terror in Enclosed Spaces / La peur et la terreur dans les espaces fermés »,

Impliquant les arts visuels : « Intermedial Approaches to Fear and Safety/ Peur et sécurité: approches intermédiaires », « Between Fear and Safety: PostMemory in European Comics and Graphic Narratives », « Arctic and Glacial Environments/ Milieux arctiques et glaciaires »,

Identifiant des problématiques identitaires : « Framing New Identities through Fear, Insecurity and Anxiety in Contemporary European Literatures: Provocative Case Studies/ Délimiter de nouvelles identités à travers la peur, l'insécurité et l'anxiété dans les littératures contemporaines européennes: étude de cas provocateurs », « Utopia, Dystopia and Identity/ Utopie, dystopie et identité »,

... et relationnelles : « Fear and Safety in Interpersonal Relations », « Gendered Fear in Changing Societies »,

... ainsi que plus généralement culturelles : « Political Crises, Economic Insecurities and Cultural Transformations », « Religion and Faith as Sources of Fear and Means to Overcome it », « Subversion and Agency in the Totalitarian Regimes of 20th-century Europe / Subversion et pouvoir dans les régimes totalitaires de l'Europe du 20ème siècle », « Fear and Nostalgia in Migration », « Freedom and Transformation/ Liberté et transformations »,

« Literary Responses to Political and Cultural Crises / Réponses littéraires aux crises politiques et culturelles »,

. . . ou basées sur des comparaisons entre cultures : « Ghostscapes and Crises of Nations: Ireland and Japan », « Existential Anxieties in European and North African Literatures/angoisses existentielles dans les littératures européennes et nord-africaines ».

Lors de l'Assemblée Générale qui s'est tenue en fin de congrès, il a été voté que le réseau deviendrait la Société Européenne de Littérature Comparée / the European Society of Comparative Literature. Notre société est depuis devenue officiellement une association loi 1901, dont l'adresse est : Bibliothèque Georges Ascoli, Université de la Sorbonne-Paris IV, 1, rue Victor-Cousin, 75005 Paris, France (voir <https://escl-selc.eu/> pour plus de détails). La création d'un *Journal of the European Society of Comparative Literature* a également été votée. Cette revue devrait voir le jour en 2018.

Enfin, le lendemain, une excursion en bateau (suivie d'une promenade et d'un déjeuner sur l'eau) à l'île de Vallisaari, au large d'Helsinki, à la fois parc national et lieu propice à la continuation de nos discussions puisque ce fut longtemps une base militaire dont les premières fortifications datent du 17<sup>ème</sup> siècle. La visite a permis de consolider les anciennes amitiés et d'en forger de nouvelles parmi les membres de la première heure et les plus récents (de plus en plus nombreux), comme à chaque rencontre placée sous le signe de la comparaison, et en particulier au REELC. Le prochain congrès aura lieu à Lille en 2019.

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### **American Comparative Literature Conference, Los Angeles, US, 29 March – 1 April 2018**

The 2018 ACLA Conference hosted by UCLA in Los Angeles, California from March 29 to April 1 was attended by over 2,000 scholars who participated in 217 seminars each of which met for two or three sessions to encourage discussion, covering a wide range of research fields from translation studies to transnationalism, from gender and ethnic formations



across time to East-West cultural encounters, and from human rights to the medical humanities. Some seminars explored emerging disciplines, including the Environmental Humanities, Disability Studies, and neuroscientific approaches to literature; many interrogated the political in culture or aesthetics; still others explored questions of poetics, or philosophical approaches to narrative or poetry. Some seminars were devoted to authors such as Cervantes or James Baldwin; and others addressed issues of gender, sexuality, or their intersections with trauma studies and psychology. An impressive range of geographical coverage from Africa and South Asia to the Latina/o/x experience in the United States was evident, and translation studies featured prominently, as did transnational and interdisciplinary concerns. The program included pre-conference and plenary events, opening with an inspiring poetry reading by Jennifer Scappettone and Keston Sutherland, billed as a "Poetry Event."

While the conference did not have a specific theme, each of the plenary sessions touched on the role of art, translation, and cultural labor in building a global civil society as a space to address or contest the vicissitudes of globalization. The first plenary session on March 30, chaired by Ali Behdad (UCLA), and featuring Hamza Walker (Director of LAXART) and Josephina Saldana-Portillo (NYU), addressed the representation of political realities and the social challenges of violence. Walker made a vigorous case for bringing the political dimension of abstraction and representation to the foreground of conversations about modern and contemporary art, as he discussed works from abstract expressionism, documentary photography to installations, and beyond. Saldana-Portillo delivered a powerful talk on "The Violence of Citizenship in the Making of Refugees," underscoring the predicaments of political refugees from Central America. Drawing on her scholarship, but also on her volunteer work with Central American women seeking asylum and refugee status in the nation's largest detention center (in Dilley, Texas), Saldana-Portillo traced a seventy-year history of US-military interventions, trade agreements, and immigration policies in Central America. In the process, she showed how the United States exports gang violence to Central America, underscoring the threats and intimidation suffered by the most vulnerable, and rejecting the way powerful interests coopt the language of victimhood. Taken together, these talks were an invitation to move beyond a cultural critique of unmasking to one that listens to the political in art and to the voices of the most vulnerable.

For the first time at ACLA 2018, the ICLA Committee on Translation organized a special Plenary Session on March 31, titled “Translators and Authors in Dialogue,” chaired by Sandra Bermann (Princeton), featuring two pairs of translators and authors: Puerto Rican author Eduardo Lalo and translator Suzanne Jill Levine (UC Santa Barbara); Chinese author Yan Lianke and translator Carlos Rojas (Duke). The session’s purpose was, according to the program, to “explore the ongoing dialogues between translators and authors, beginning with the decision to translate—and continuing through and beyond publication.” The translators read selections of their work, and the speakers each addressed connections between translation, the geopolitics of literature, and the contexts of production and reception of both originals and translations. Lalo stated that, as a Puerto Rican, his citizenship status constitutes a form of alienation, citing the sorry response of the United States to the ongoing tragedy of the recent Hurricane Maria during which he was personally displaced; and more broadly, the political status of having American citizenship without being an American. While translation provides him with a “literary passport” to circulate more widely, his spare, intellectual, and sometimes difficult to classify works are not always readable within global notions of Caribbean literature. He quipped that he may be the first Puerto Rican author to be described as “too intellectual for the German public” when seeking a contract with a German publisher in search of Puerto Rican local color. Yan Lianke described his own history with censorship by the Chinese government. At first, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television approved some of his works for publication, but not others; more recently, Lianke himself has been banned from publication in Mainland China. Yet he continues to consider his readership to be mainland Chinese, fellow citizens he no longer reaches directly but rather through publishers in Hong Kong and Taiwan—and through translation.

The annual Presidential Address delivered by ACLA president Emily Apter (NYU) offered an impressive account of the political and theoretical scope of the notion of “untranslatability.” Apter’s listed title was “Untranslatability in a Cosmopolitical Frame” but in an open-ended gesture, she introduced other possible titles for her audience’s consideration, including “Theorizing the Untranslatable” and “Comparative Literature on the Barricades.” Her remarks moved beyond the theoretical and historical account of the discipline, as she challenged the field

to respond to Trumpism and to Arabophobia. Citing Etienne Balibar, Apter recommended a view of translation that serves as a critique of the idea of a universalizable concept of citizenship. Drawing on Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "global criticality," Apter challenged her public to consider what a study of entanglement and dialogic interdependence would look like. Her talk was as much an account of urgent theoretical conversations that address translation studies as it was a call for the engagement of comparatists in questions of citizenship and belonging.

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# In Memoriam: Zacharias Sifalekis

Zacharias Sifalekis, Professor of Comparative Literature and Literary Theory in the Department of Modern Greek Literature, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, authored several books on Comparative Literature and Literary Theory. He worked intensively in the field of the relations between modern Greek literature and other European literatures. He was elected member of the Executive Committee of ICLA (1994–2000) and co-founded the Greek Association of Comparative Literature (1986), for which he served for as Vice-President and President (2006–2009). In addition, he headed the Editorial Board of the journal Σύγκριση/*Comparison*. He passed away suddenly on 18 April 2017, at the age of 64. Zacharias will be greatly missed by all of us.

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## Notes on Contributors

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## Brève présentation

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

L'Association vise à être inclusive et est ouverte à tous ceux qui s'intéressent à la littérature comparée, y compris les écrivains et les artistes. Elle encourage la participation d'étudiants de master et doctorat et de jeunes chercheurs en début de carrière.

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



## Mission Statement

Founded in 1955, the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) offers a home to all comparatists in the world and encourages exchange and cooperation among comparatists, both individually and through the collaboration of various national comparative literature associations. To that end the Association promotes literary studies beyond the boundaries of languages and national literary traditions, between



cultures and world regions, among disciplines and theoretical orientations, and across genres, historical periods, and media. Its broad view of comparative research extends to the study of sites of difference such as race, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and religion in both texts and the everyday world.

The Association aims to be inclusive and is open to anyone with an academic interest in comparative literature, including writers and artists. It welcomes the participation of graduate students and early-career scholars.

The Association organizes a world congress every three years. It also oversees and supports research committees that reflect the membership's current interests and meet more regularly to pursue agenda leading to publications in journals and books. The Association's annual journal *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research* contains essays and reviews a wide range of scholarship in the field.

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En tant que publication de l'Association internationale de littérature comparée, *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research* a pour but de faire connaître aux comparatistes du monde entier les développements récents de la discipline. Dans ce but, la revue publie des comptes rendus de livres significatifs sur des sujets comparatistes, des rapports concernant des congrès professionnels et d'autres événements d'importance pour les membres de l'Association ainsi qu'occasionnellement, des prises de position sur des thématiques relatives à la discipline. *RL/LR* publie de la recherche littéraire comparée uniquement sur invitation.

Les comptes rendus sont écrits en français ou en anglais, les deux langues officielles de l'AILC. Un compte rendu proprement dit comptera entre 1.500 et 2.000 mots. Un essai sur l'état de l'art, sur un ensemble d'ouvrages ou sur un livre ambitieux pourra dépasser 3.500 mots. Des ouvrages collectifs et des numéros de revues spécialisées pourront également faire l'objet d'un compte rendu.

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 comparative literature conferences and events of major significance for comparatists, as well as occasional position papers on issues of interest to the field. *RL/LR* publishes comparative literary scholarship by invitation only.

Reviews are written in French or English, the two official languages of the ICLA. Book reviews should be between 1,500 to 2,000 words. Review essays about the state of the art, about several related books, or about a work of major significance for the field will be allowed to exceed 3,500 words. Edited volumes and issues of specialized journals will also be considered for review.

## Renseignez-vous auprès de / address inquiries to:

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