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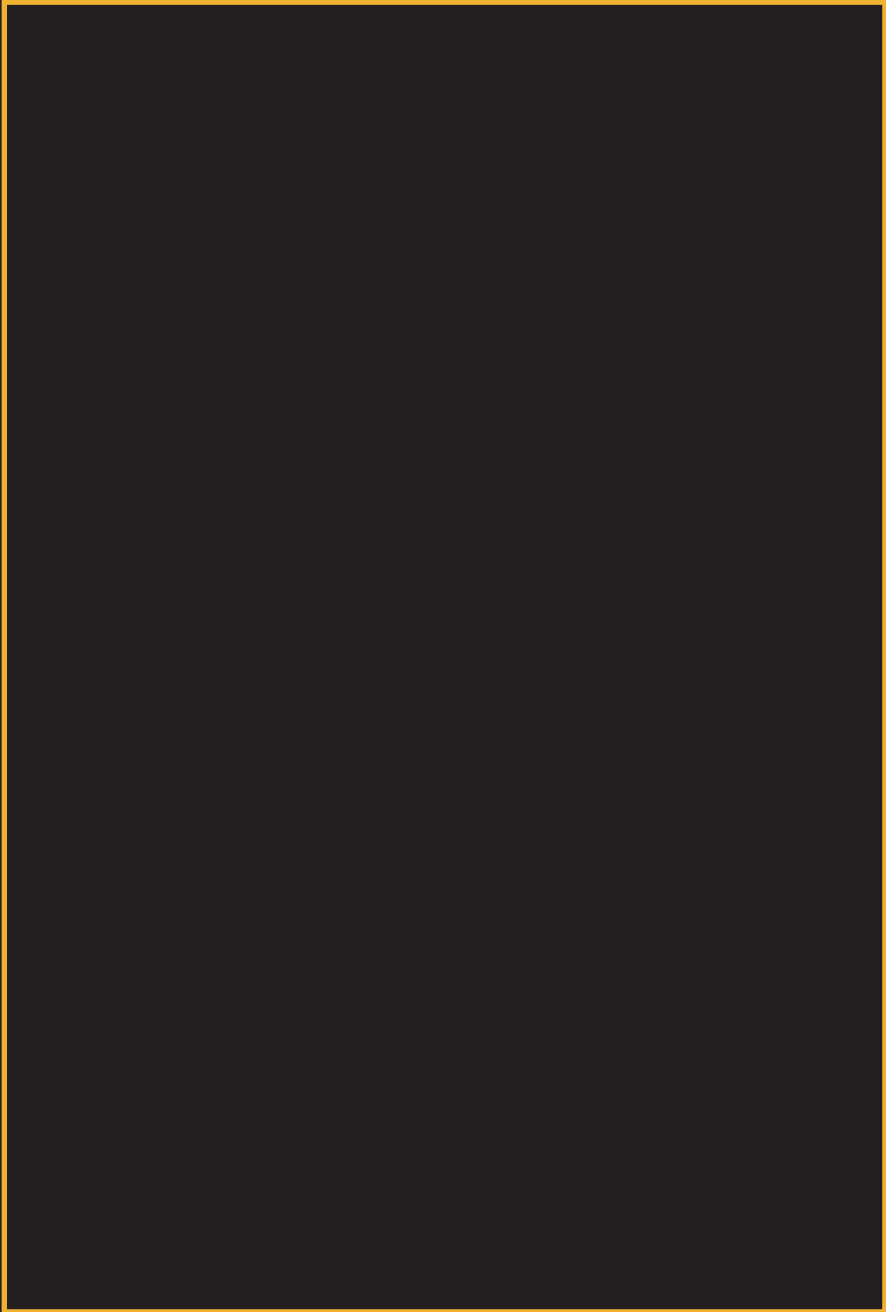

33 (Été 2017 / Summer 2017)

Recherche littéraire
Literary Research
Volume 33 (Été 2017 / Summer 2017)

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The Fascination of Comparative Literature

As the 2017 Executive Council of ICLA is convening in Utrecht, The Netherlands, it seems fitting that the cover art for this year's issue of *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* should feature a pastiche of a work by Rembrandt. This revisited version of the Dutch artist's well-known *Belshazzar's Feast* is endowed with ironic overtones. In the original painting, Rembrandt depicted a famous episode from the Old Testament. After Belshazzar had revelled in the pleasures of an overly indulgent feast, God appeared to the Babylonian king and, through his writing on the wall, announced impending doom. However, Belshazzar found it difficult to ascertain the exact meaning of God's cryptic Aramaic text. Similarly, the cover's pastiche could also lend itself to several interpretations. Here, God's ominous foreboding is replaced by a vision of the logo of *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research*, which I choose to regard as a potential epiphany. The intensity of Belshazzar's gaze suggests the fascination inherent in the discipline of comparative literature, which bespeaks enlightenment rather than apocalyptic disaster. Moreover, as the essays and book reviews collected in this issue will make abundantly clear, the idioms of comparative literature can be deciphered in multiple ways, an echo of God's obscure message in Rembrandt's painting.

Issue 33 of *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* constitutes a contrapuntal variation on its predecessor, which foregrounded world literature as a prelude to debates about the state of the discipline and concluded with considerations related to postcolonial literatures. By contrast, the first part of this issue examines current trends in postcolonial literary studies, while its last section tackles world literature. Despite their different structure, the two issues share a common interest in the perennial concerns of comparative literary studies, such as literary theory, translation, as well as literature and other arts.

This issue opens with Geoffrey V. Davis's review essay about recent developments in postcolonial literary studies. While this discipline remains by and large a product of the English-speaking academic world, Davis indicates that French researchers have recently contributed significantly to this scholarly project. In his conclusion, Davis stresses the need to extend the boundaries of postcolonial literary studies beyond the Anglophone world. A second review essay, by Kathleen L. Komar and Ross Shideler, concentrates on a topic that, in my view, continues to receive too little attention in comparative poetics, i.e. theatre and performance. This contribution considers Asian drama in local and globalized contexts. Gerald Gillespie's opinion piece, "Dictionary Notes for Comparatists," concludes this introductory section. In contrast to Davis's review essay, Gillespie's contribution focuses on terminology issues related to world literature.

The book reviews section of the journal is divided into three major parts: the first cluster of reviews further explores the field of postcolonial literary studies; the second concentrates on comparative literary poetics in a more traditional sense; the final cluster, which reverts to world literature, contains echoes of Davis's review essay.

A review of Chantal Zabus's programmatic collection of essays, *The Future of Postcolonial Studies*, appropriately opens the postcolonial cluster. It is followed by a discussion of *Interprétations postcoloniales et mondialisation,* a critical anthology which fulfils Davis's exhortation. Indeed, it examines postcolonial literatures not only in English but also in French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and German. In subsequent reviews, regional aspects of the postcolonial phenomenon are also considered, such as developments affecting India and the Caribbean. Reviews by Julia Nawrot and Thierry Dubost explore concepts related to (post)colonialism, as they deal with transnationalism and the representation of otherness in theatre. Multi-ethnic, transcultural and migration issues, which can be construed as sub-sets of the field of postcolonial literary studies, are foregrounded in contributions by Vlad Jecan, Mirjam Gebauer, Thomas Ernst and Cyril Vettorato. Interestingly, the books reviewed by Gebauer and Ernst focus in part on the German cultural context, which is not readily associated with postcolonialism. Likewise, Ágnes Györke, in her assessment of Pucherová and Gáfrik's *Post-Colonial Europe? Essays on Post-Communist Literatures and Cultures*, suggests further regional extensions of the discipline. This first cluster concludes with reviews of Abossolo's *Fantastique et littérature africaine contemporaine* and Sasser's

Magical Realism and Cosmopolitanism, books reassessing magic realism both as a genre and a mode of writing closely related to postcolonialism.

The second cluster of reviews covers a multiplicity of topics, including literary theory, translation, periodization, gender studies, as well as literature and opera. Moreover, the geographical and cultural spread of the works examined here deserves a special note: it ranges from the Latin American to the Russian, Nordic, Japanese, Indian, Arabic, South Asian, and Chinese contexts. These reviews thus testify to the vitality of comparative literature scholarship.

A review of Domínguez and D'Haen's edited collection, *Cosmopolitanism and the Postnational. Literature and the New Europe*, ushers in the third cluster of the book review section, devoted to world literature as well as to the related notions of the postnational, cosmopolitanism, and intercultural reception. César Domínguez's discussion of Pheng Cheah's *What is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature* suggests an intriguing link between postcolonial literary studies and world literature. Cheah's book, Domínguez points out, pleads for new modes of engaging with philosophical definitions of the universe. This would enable a more productive dialogue between world literature and postcolonial fiction.

This issue is further complemented by John Foster's review of the inaugural issues of the *Journal of World Literature*, reports about conferences that took place in Austria, India, Estonia and Belgium, as well as short annual updates about the activities of the Research Committees of the ICLA.

Needless to say, I could not have edited this issue of *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* without the support of many friends and colleagues. I am grateful to Dorothy Figueira, the immediate past editor, for her helpful and friendly advice. Jenny Webb proved to be the ideal production officer: not only did she offer efficient technical support, she also provided valuable editorial advice. Gregory Watson's and Jessica Maufort's editorial assistance was very much appreciated. I owe a debt of gratitude to John Schweppe, whose genuine talent once again contributed to the quality of our cover art. I also thank the members of my dynamic advisory board for their ever useful suggestions about titles that could potentially be reviewed. Naturally, my deepest debt goes to the ICLA for its continued financial support of the journal.

Marc Maufort
Brussels, May 2017

La fascination de la littérature comparée

Le Bureau de l'AILC se réunissant cette année à Utrecht, aux Pays-Bas, il semble approprié que la couverture de ce numéro de *Recherche littéraire/ Literary Research* nous offre un pastiche d'une oeuvre de Rembrandt. Cette réinterprétation du célèbre *Festin de Balthazar* de l'artiste néerlandais révèle des connotations ironiques. Dans la peinture originale, Rembrandt évoqua un épisode bien connu de l'Ancien testament. Après que Balthazar se fut adonné aux plaisirs d'un festin complaisant, Dieu apparut au roi de Babylone et, dans une inscription murale, annonça un malheur imminent. Toutefois, Balthazar éprouva des difficultés à déterminer la signification exacte du texte divin, écrit en araméen cryptique. De même, le pastiche du tableau de Rembrandt pourrait être interprété de diverses manières. Ici, la prédiction fatale de Dieu est remplacée par une vision du logo de *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research*, ce que je considère comme un symbole épiphanique. L'intensité du regard de Balthazar suggère la fascination inhérente à la discipline de la littérature comparée, qui tient davantage d'une illumination que d'un désastre apocalyptique. De plus, comme les comptes rendus publiés dans ce numéro le montreront très clairement, les idiomes de la littérature comparée peuvent être décodés de multiples façons, ce qui en soi constitue un écho du message obscur délivré par Dieu dans le tableau de Rembrandt.

Le 33ème numéro de *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* nous offre une variation contrapuntique du volume précédent, qui mettait en avant la littérature mondiale comme prélude à des débats sur l'état de la discipline et concluait par des considérations sur les littératures postcoloniales. Inversément, la première partie de ce numéro examine les tendances actuelles dans le domaine des études littéraires postcoloniales, tandis que la dernière section aborde la littérature mondiale. En dépit de leur différence de structure, les deux numéros partagent un intérêt

commun pour les préoccupations traditionnelles de la littérature comparée, à savoir la théorie littéraire, la traduction, ainsi que le rapport entre la littérature et les autres arts.

Un essai de Geoffrey V. Davis concernant les développements récents en études littéraires postcoloniales ouvre ce numéro. Même s'il est vrai que les études postcoloniales restent dans une large mesure un produit du monde académique anglo-saxon, Davis indique que des chercheurs français ont récemment contribué de façon significative à cette discipline. Dans sa conclusion, Davis affirme la nécessité d'étendre les frontières des études littéraires postcoloniales au-delà du monde anglophone. Un second essai, rédigé par Kathleen L. Komar et Ross Shideler, se penche sur un sujet qui, à mon avis, reste marginalisé dans le domaine de la poétique comparatiste, à savoir le théâtre et sa représentation. Cette contribution analyse le théâtre asiatique à la fois dans son contexte local et globalisé. L'article d'opinion de Gerald Gillespie, « Notes de dictionnaire pour comparatistes » conclut cette section introductive. Contrairement à l'essai de Davis, la tribune libre de Gerald Gillespie tente de clarifier des problèmes terminologiques ayant trait à la littérature mondiale.

La section de la revue consacrée aux comptes rendus de livres est composée de trois grandes parties : la première continue d'explorer le domaine des études littéraires postcoloniales ; la seconde se concentre sur des aspects plus traditionnels de la poétique comparatiste ; la troisième et dernière a trait à la littérature mondiale et contient des échos de l'essai de Geoffrey V. Davis.

Un compte rendu du volume programmatique de Chantal Zabus, *The Future of Postcolonial Studies*, introduit de façon appropriée la partie consacrée à la littérature postcoloniale. Cet article est suivi d'une discussion d'*Interprétations postcoloniales et mondialisation*, une anthologie critique qui obéit à l'exhortation de Geoffrey V. Davis. En effet, ce livre analyse des œuvres postcoloniales écrites non seulement en anglais, mais également en français, italien, portuguais, espagnol ainsi qu'en allemand. Dans cette partie de la revue, les aspects régionaux du phénomène postcolonial sont également pris en compte, au travers de comptes rendus d'ouvrages concernant le sous-continent indien et les îles des Caraïbes. Julia Nawrot et Thierry Dubost, quant à eux, explorent des concepts apparentés au (post)colonialisme, tels que le transnationalisme et la représentation de l'altérité dans la forme théâtrale. Les questions liées au pluralisme ethnique, au transculturalisme et à la migration, sujets qui

peuvent être considérés comme des sous-domaines des études littéraires postcoloniales, sont abordées dans les contributions de Vlad Jecan, Mirjam Gebauer, Thomas Ernst et Cyril Vettorato. Il est intéressant de noter que les livres dont parlent Gebauer et Ernst traitent en partie du champ culturel allemand, qui n'est habituellement pas étudié en relation avec le postcolonialisme. De même, Ágnes Györke, dans son évaluation du livre de Dobrota Pucherová et Róbert Gáfrik, *Post-Colonial Europe ? Essays on Post-Communist Literatures and Cultures*, suggère la possibilité d'étendre la sphère d'influence postcoloniale. Le premier groupe de comptes rendus se conclut par des recensions des livres de Pierre Martial Abossolo, *Fantastique et littérature africaine contemporaine* et de Kim Anderson Sasser, *Magical Realism and Cosmopolitanism*, deux ouvrages qui ré-examinent le réalisme magique à la fois comme un genre et un mode d'écriture étroitement liés au postcolonialisme.

Le second groupe de comptes rendus couvre une multitude de sujets, passant en revue des ouvrages concernant la théorie littéraire, la traduction, la périodisation, les études de genre, ainsi que le rapport entre littérature et opéra. De plus, les champs géographiques et culturels concernés ici méritent une mention particulière : ils comprennent les contextes latino-américain, russe, nordique, japonais, indien, arabique, sud-asiatique et chinois. Ces recensions témoignent ainsi de la vitalité de la recherche en littérature comparée.

Le compte rendu de l'anthologie critique de César Domínguez et Theo D'Haen, *Cosmopolitanism and the Postnational. Literature and the New Europe*, introduit le troisième groupe de recensions, consacré à la littérature mondiale ainsi qu'aux notions proches du postnational, du cosmopolitisme et de la réception interculturelle. La discussion que nous offre César Domínguez de l'ouvrage de Pheng Cheah, *What is a World ? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*, suggère un lien intriguant entre les études littéraires postcoloniales et la littérature mondiale. Cheah, comme Domínguez l'indique, plaide en faveur de nouvelles définitions philosophiques de l'univers. Ce permettrait de créer un dialogue plus productif entre littérature mondiale et fiction postcoloniale.

La revue est complétée par le compte rendu de John Foster à propos des numéros inauguraux du périodique *Journal of World Literature*, par des rapports de colloques s'étant tenus en Autriche, Inde, Estonie et Belgique, ainsi que par des nouvelles relatives aux activités des Comités de recherche de l'AILC.

Il va sans dire que je n'aurais pu mener à bien la rédaction de ce numéro de *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* sans l'aide de nombreux amis et collègues. Je suis reconnaissant envers Dorothy Figueira, l'ancienne rédactrice de la revue, pour ses conseils utiles et amicaux. Jenny Webb s'est avérée être une chargée de production idéale : elle a offert un soutien technique efficace ainsi que des conseils éditoriaux précieux. J'ai beaucoup apprécié l'assistance éditoriale de Gregory Watson et de Jessica Maufort. Une fois de plus, le grand talent de John Schweppe nous a permis de bénéficier d'une couverture de haut niveau artistique. Je remercie également les membres de notre dynamique Comité consultatif pour leurs suggestions quant aux ouvrages qui pourraient faire l'objet d'un compte rendu. Enfin, je tiens à renouveler ma reconnaissance envers l'AILC pour son soutien financier de cette publication.

Marc Maufort
Bruxelles, mai 2017

Essais / Review Essays

"Opening things up"[1]: Some New Trends in Postcolonial Studies

> Criticism worthy of its name arises from commitments deeper than professionalism. —Lawrence Buell[2]

> La vivacité du débat actuel fait honneur à l'ensemble disciplinaire des études postcoloniales, qui a le mérite de ne pas laisser indifférent. —Yves Clavaron[3]

One of the most challenging features of Postcolonial Literature at the time I first embarked upon it—and at that time it was still known as "Commonwealth Literature"—was the way in which, even in its infancy, the field broadened one's view of what constituted English literature and gradually opened one's mind to the literature of the wider world. The field turned out to be populated by such pioneering scholars as Anna Rutherford, Hena Maes-Jelinek, and Helen Tiffin who had brought a remarkable degree of personal commitment to a nascent discipline and who no doubt felt, like Peter Hulme, that "the appearance of that field in the late 1980s gave … a

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1. I have borrowed this phrase from Graham Huggan's article "Notes on the Postcolonial Arctic" in Chantal Zabus, ed., *The Future of Postcolonial Studies* (New York and London: Routledge, 2015), 131.

2. Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticisms,* Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, 97, quoted in the opening line of the Introduction to Helen Tiffin, ed., *Five Emus to the King of Siam: Environment and Empire* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), xi.

3. Yves Clavaron, "Histoire d'un retard" in Yves Clavaron, ed., *Études postcoloniales* (Paris: Société Française de Littérature Générale et Comparée, 2011), 14.

real sense of belonging" (41).[4] It was also, as one soon realized, a field of study which, although it dealt with literatures from overseas, had for a British person like myself much to do with one's own background. When the Empire wrote back, it was not only rewriting the history of one's own country, it was also reminding one of that Empire's still unresolved legacy. As Hulme asserts, "Britain itself, and Europe more generally, is deeply marked by its postcolonial condition, even as—and especially because—it has such difficulty recognizing that condition" (54). It is not for nothing that one's perspective on the field often tends to be so personal. I will be approaching the topic very much from the perspective of one who has worked primarily in the field of literature, albeit with a particular interest in political and social aspects of literary practice.

My aim in this essay is to consider some of the directions in which postcolonial studies, and particularly postcolonial literary studies, currently seem to be moving and to review some of the debate which has initiated these developments. As Neil Lazarus has it, we need to "reorganize our thinking about 'postcolonial' literature" (19) and this essay would like to contribute to that process.

In recent years opinion has been divided as to the health of postcolonial studies. The field has always been "frenetic and argumentative," as Bill Ashcroft has conceded (Ashcroft 235), and others, like Ania Loomba, agree that the field has been "riven" by controversies from the start (2). There has been no shortage of predictions of doom either: Graham Huggan referred with irritation to "those who, with tedious regularity, gather to pronounce on the obsolescence of the postcolonial field" (2015: 131); a controversial MLA roundtable on "The End of Postcolonial Theory?" speculated on "the potential exhaustion of postcolonialism as a paradigm" (Yaeger 633); while Ashcroft spoke of "the plethora of critics sounding its death knell" (Ashcroft 236). This supposedly imminent demise was attributed by some, such as David Scott, one of the more radical critics of the field, to a "loss of critical force" (Loomba 386). Casting doubt on the very point of postcolonial studies, he wondered whether

4. On the continent of Europe the subject first got underway in the late 1970s.

a viable intellectual case could even be made for a new approach to the subject (385–86), while the editor of the volume in which his article appeared went so far as to describe his contribution as "something like an obituary for the field" (32). Some critics identified a possible "loss of critical force" in the fact that core theories of postcolonial studies no longer seemed relevant. Huggan, for example, supposed that "writing back to the centre," as famously diagnosed by Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths back in 1989, was falling out of fashion (2010: 130). Loomba put it rather more cautiously, when she suggested that "a certain historical urgency … may have been leached from postcolonial studies during the period of theoretical refinement and institutional consolidation" (5).[5]

Such misgivings have been countered, however, by other critics whose confidence in postcolonial studies remains undiminished. In the face of misrepresentation and travesty, Patrick Williams refuses to be cowed by scholars who prove "too ready to believe that there are problems that need to be apologized for, remedied and atoned for somehow" (86). In 2003 Terry Eagleton confidently described postcolonial studies as "the most flourishing sector of cultural studies today" (quoted in McLeod 2007: 6), while Chantal Zabus found in 2015 that the field, having gone through what she described as a "near-death experience," had now "entered a convalescing period of recovery" and was ready to "interact with other fields" (5). In this essay I shall refute any notion that postcolonial studies is moribund and shall point to some of the more encouraging and profitable directions in which it is currently moving.

First, however, we need to recall some of the criticisms that have been levelled at the field, for it is certainly true, as McLeod maintains, that postcolonial studies have been "dogged from the beginning by scepticism, fierce criticism and, at times, hostility" (6). Writing from a Canadian perspective, Diana Brydon confirms that "postcolonial theories are often given short shrift, at best considered a minor branch of postmodern approaches and at

5. By "institutional consolidation" she is referring primarily to the rapid development of the subject in US academia, which occurred largely in English studies.

worst either dismissed or ignored" (106); many scholars in other countries will doubtless have had similar experiences.[6]

Perhaps it is advisable to begin with one of the more basic problems of the study of postcolonial literature, which has always been that of the very terminology we use to describe the field. There is indeed truth in John McLeod's remark that "Many new readers are often put off by the excessive engagement with, and sometimes quite baffling vocabularies of, postcolonial theory" (2007: 13). The terminology has constantly been interrogated (Huggan 2001: 230) and seemingly interminable theoretical discussions have taken place as the field morphed from Commonwealth Literature to Postcolonial Studies and then—perhaps—to Transculturalism or Transnationalism. The result of such terminological discussions has often been confusion rather than enlightenment. Michael Chapman provides a telling South African example for this: how, he asks, could the concept of "transnation" possibly be applied to many young black South African writers whose experience of the world is largely confined to their own immediate environment (66)?

A number of scholars have confessed themselves unhappy with the flights of theoretical fancy which have often seemed to characterize postcolonial studies—and I would number myself among them. Arguably, too, the overwhelming attention to theory at the cost of the literary has exercised an alienating influence on potential students. In his book *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* Huggan, referring to "self-serving critics who call for the latest paradigm shift" (2001: viii), is dismissive of "the blandishments of abstract theory" (2) and the "infinite spiral of indeterminate abstractions" (3). Similar reservations are expressed by Neil Lazarus in a memorable formulation: "There has been a great deal of formidable philosophizing," he writes, "which has led to the elaboration of some rather grand and categorical propositions" (114), and in his view these are "concepts and theories which lack accountability" (1).

What such criticisms are referring to is the reorientation of the field towards theory and particularly the espousal of poststructuralism which occurred in the 1990s and which, in the view of some critics, has been

6. Silvia Albertazzi reports on Eurocentrism and parochialism in Italian academia in her article "'We've Done Our Bit Too!': Crossover Literatures, Postcolonial Studies, and the Reception of Postcolonial Writing in Italy" in *The Future of Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Chantal Zabus (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015), 31–47.

at the expense of the traditional focus on the literary. Huggan cites John Thieme's concern that the place of literature is becoming "increasingly imperiled" and himself expresses the view that "some of the most recent work in the field gives the impression of having bypassed literature altogether" (2001: 239). Evidence for this he sees in Williams and Chrisman's anthology, *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader,* which "pays little more than lip service to literature" (255). Thieme and Huggan are by no means the only critics to be worried about what Lazarus terms, "the gap or disjuncture between the purviews of 'literature' and 'criticism'" (36). At the MLA roundtable Simon Gikandi rightly stressed that "a rethinking of the relation between theory and literature" is "imperative for a critical project of the future" (Yaeger 636).

What is at stake here is the implied disavowal of the political and social issues which were once among the foremost concerns of postcolonialists and which has led some scholars in questionable directions. As McLeod comments, "the concentration on conceptual, cultural, and epistemological issues has sometimes uncoupled them from the historical and material realities of countries with a history of colonialism" (2007: 13).[7] It has also led to a situation in which postcolonial criticism has become, in Chapman's view, "self-generating" (60).[8] Among the scholars disturbed by this dominance of postcolonial theory is Neil Lazarus, who in his *The Postcolonial Unconscious* takes exception to the constant recourse of postcolonial critics to French theory: "there is so much that we *fail* to attend to when we programmatically refer Coetzee's novels to Lacan, Foucault or Levinas," he writes, "or Caribbean literature as a whole to the Deleuzean concepts of extraterritoriality and the rhizome" (25). Likewise he is concerned that viewing the work of Ivan Vladislavić, for example, in terms of an abstract postmodernism "is to fail to see how committed it is to representing the psychosocial dynamics of *South African* life during the last years of the apartheid era" (74). For Lazarus such approaches, which derive their method from entirely Western models, serve to blind critics to the local, historical, social, and political contexts of the text.

7. See also David Murphy, who suggests that "the move away from the political to a focus on textual issues [was] at the expense of historical issues" (2007b: 183).

8. Or as Susie Tharu puts it: "postcolonial studies is … an exceptionally self-reflexive field. At least half the pages in any reader discuss the field itself" (Yaeger 643).

A telling example of a writer whose work has excited a great deal of attention and has been much discussed in frequently highly theoretical terms is of course J. M. Coetzee. His work is often misread in concepts of "continental philosophy" (63) in the manner noted by Lazarus above: Coetzee the South African, Chapman alleges in fairly scathing terms, is being transmogrified into Coetzee the postcolonial or world writer. The protagonist of his novel *Life and Times of Michael K.*, for instance, is being "understood as a Derridean trace, a signifier that is related only arbitrarily to a referent" rather than as "the vulnerable outcast trying to survive the devastated landscape of apartheid's death throes" (63). And he concludes bluntly: "We, as literary critics, do not do justice to Coetzee's tactile prose by subsuming his texts beneath disquisitions, however erudite, on abstract otherness" (66).

Just how inappropriate some writers consider such criticism to be was exemplified for me when I witnessed the radical Australian Aboriginal poet Lionel Fogarty attending his first conference in Europe. He vociferously took great exception to an American critic who had delivered a highly theoretical paper on Aboriginal writing for appropriating the literature of "his" people in a way he could not even begin to understand.

There are a number of collectively written volumes which suggest useful ways of thinking about the current direction of postcolonial studies and which testify to the ongoing vitality of the field. Overall they open up a formidable range of possibilities for future discussion and research. Chronologically the first of these is *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (2005) edited by Ania Loomba et al., which provides a useful conspectus of the views of a number of largely US-based scholars, whose thinking has been conditioned in part by the Iraq invasion and "the signs of galloping US imperialism,"[9] which in the editors' view "make the agenda of postcolonial studies more necessary than ever" (1). Accordingly the volume aims to assess how useful postcolonial studies are in analyzing not only the colonial past but also "the new empires of our times" (2). The editors are equally aware of the way globalization has come to dominate contemporary society and see an urgent need for postcolonial studies to engage critically with it. Unlike the other volumes mentioned here, this

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9. The MLA roundtable referred to took place very much in the shadow of what one participant termed "post 9/11 resurgent imperialism" (Yaeger 637).

one also provides insight into the role of postcolonial studies in the US academy. *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies* (2007) edited by John McLeod aims "to open up a sense of what constitutes postcolonial studies" (12) beyond the Anglophone focus. Accordingly the geographical sweep of the volume goes well beyond the familiar to include North Africa, East Asia, and Latin America. It includes chapters whose authors "think comparatively across different European empires" (14) and takes particular account of work now being done in the areas of Francophone, Hispanic, and Lusophone studies. *Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for the New Millennium* edited by Janet Wilson et al. (2010) aims to "reground" postcolonial studies (12) by extending the conceptual and geographical boundaries of the field in a contemporary context shaped by ideas of globalization, environmentalism, and transnationalism (3). In spite of what its editors concede is the "surface eclecticism of the essays," it does indeed pioneer new territory from postcolonial perspectives on Chinese and Eastern European literature to calls for a new multilingual approach to the field (3). *The Future of Postcolonial Studies* edited by Chantal Zabus (2015) similarly "ventures into other postcolonies outside of the Anglophone purview" and proposes "a radical geopolitical shift away from Euro-American dominance" (2). The volume makes a very real contribution to rethinking the field through its comparative and interdisciplinary approach, its innovative engaging with religion, its embrace of a postcolonial ecocriticism, its contribution to queer theory, and its exploration of utopian notions in postcolonial writing. Taken together these four volumes show how (to borrow Arundhati Roy's phrase) postcolonial scholars are "thinking on their feet" (quoted by Loomba et al. 11).

One feature of postcolonial literary studies which has excited critical comment is its relatively narrow focus on the Anglophone. "Is postcolonial literature a branch of English literature?" Briault-Manus provocatively asks (Zabus 48), while Loomba identifies the "centrality of an Anglophone model" (7) as one of the lacunae of postcolonial studies. This has much to do with the development of academic disciplines, of course, but nevertheless we have to remind ourselves, as Brydon has done, that postcolonial studies is "not a solely Anglophone endeavour" (Zabus 109). We need to recognise, as does Huggan, that there are "so many different empires to choose from, so many different centres" (2015: 130). Unfortunately this

focus on Anglophone writing has hitherto largely led to the exclusion of non-Anglophone writers and vernacular literatures from consideration.

There has been widespread criticism of critics' privileging of a small number of authors and theorists. Hulme, for example, takes scholars to task who "simplify and narrow its [postcolonial studies'] range to the work of a handful of theorists and a handful of novelists" (42). Much critical work gets "tangled up in deciphering the key terms of the three major figures of Bhabha, Said and Spivak," as McLeod concedes (2007: 15). Dismissed by Chapman (and others) as the "holy trinity of northern institutional postcolonialism" (63), these three have become, in Loomba's estimation, "more important than the field itself" (quoted in Huggan 2001: 258). And indeed, how often at conferences has one heard a younger scholar dutifully reciting "chapter and verse" from one or other of these theorists before proceeding to develop ideas of their own?

There has also been comment on a tendency among critics to consider primarily the work of only very few novelists,[10] those usually cited in this connection being Achebe, Rushdie, and Coetzee. "Literary scholars working in the field have tended to write with reference to a woefully restricted and attenuated corpus of works" (22), Lazarus alleges, and he adds, "I am tempted to overstate the case … and declare that there is in a strict sense only one author in the postcolonial literary canon. That author is Salman Rushdie" (22). His point is graphically borne out by Nirmala Menon, who has calculated from the *MLA Bibliography* that between 1980 and 2006 no fewer than 794 articles have been devoted to Salman Rushdie, a truly astonishing statistic (222). Lazarus is of the view that scholars are basing their conclusions on all too few texts and finds overall that postcolonial literary studies are characterized by "the same questions being asked, the same methods, techniques, and conventions being used, the same concepts mobilized, the same conclusions drawn, about a remarkably small number of literary works" (22).

There is, as Lazarus acknowledges, a degree of polemical exaggeration in such an argument. For, if we survey the field, it will become clear that a restricted focus is certainly not the whole story. At the 2016 tri-

10. We must perhaps acknowledge that there has been too much focus on the novel as "representative of postcolonialism *per se,*" as Nirmala Menon argues (219). (On how many occasions at conferences have presentations seemed to focus primarily on the most recent fictional publications to the detriment of other genres like drama and poetry?)

ennial conference of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS) in Stellenbosch, South Africa, for instance, presentations were offered on over one hundred authors, which hardly betokens narrowness.[11] Likewise at the 2014 European ACLALS conference in Innsbruck, the work of some sixty writers was discussed. The reason for this breadth of focus may of course lie in the very nature of ACLALS as an organisation which maintains branches across the world and whose members pay much attention to the literatures of their respective regions.

"What is the field of post-colonial studies beginning to look like in the twenty-first century?" Ashcroft asked in his introduction to *Literature for Our Times: Postcolonial Studies in the Twenty-First Century* (xv). Postcolonial scholars, he responded, were "pushing into ever more expansive intellectual territory," and "venturing across boundaries of all kinds—not just disciplinary, but cultural, racial, ethnic and linguistic boundaries" (xvi, xix). Janet Wilson makes a similar point, when she notes that "the postcolonial has become ever more porous in the past two decades, moving away from area and regional studies and a reliance on literary texts to almost every conceivable field in social sciences, media studies or international relations" (11). Accommodating to this rapid expansion can pose considerable problems for some of those who took up Commonwealth or postcolonial literature many years ago.

It is no doubt not an easy process to venture beyond familiar territory, and academics are no exception. When Neil Lazarus speaks of the need to develop "a new approach to postcolonial literature" (35), one of the challenges he is thinking about is that posed by the reluctance of scholars to venture beyond the literatures in English or indeed in European languages. The consequence is that writing in other languages—Lazarus names Arabic, Zulu, Yoruba, Malay, and Bengali among others—is being ignored (26). At what cost can be gleaned, for example, from an article by David Murphy on the literatures of North and sub-Saharan Africa in which he is able to draw on literature in English, French, Portuguese, and Arabic (2007a: 62).

Lazarus cites a long list of writers who, he alleges, "are pretty much completely unknown to a majority of scholars in postcolonial literary stud-

11. The most discussed writers remained, I must admit, Achebe and Coetzee.

ies" and compiles a further list of authors—"to pluck some names almost at random from my own bookshelves"—who, while recognized elsewhere, are ignored by postcolonialists (26). In his own critical practice—and this is one of the most stimulating aspects of his book *The Postcolonial Unconscious*—Lazarus's reading incorporates the work of an exceptionally broad and quite eclectic range of writers from Manlio Argueta of Salvador, to Abdel Rahman al-Sharqawi of Egypt, Ousmane Sembène of Senegal, Shanon Ahmad of Malaysia, the Hindi poet Nirala, and the Palestinian Mahmoud Darwish. A refreshing and much-needed approach.

African literature provides an instructive example here. The dominance of Anglophone and Francophone African literature means that these literatures are more studied than literatures in African languages. As Huggan points out, "African literature … largely means literature in English, French, and other European languages" (2001: 34). Where scholars are usually expert in only one language spoken in Africa, "knowledge of African literature is often limited by language," the result being that much work in African languages is virtually ignored (Briault-Manus 48). Briault-Manus highlights the vital role that African-language literatures have to play in the future of African countries such as South Africa and calls for a recognition of the centrality of language in African literary studies (48). Although as she rightly argues "the best scholars to study texts in indigenous languages will be those in whose languages they are written," this does not absolve others from acquiring some knowledge of the relevant languages (62). It is perhaps not entirely realistic to suggest that postcolonial literary scholars should learn an African or Indian language, but it is nonetheless true that a great deal is lost without such knowledge and a great barrier is erected to our understanding of non-Western cultures.[12]

The case for a multilingual approach to postcolonial studies has been made by Nirmala Menon, who contends "that 'postcolonial' is, by definition, multilingual" (226). Arguing that postcolonial studies can be revitalized if scholars "look to the wide base of literatures available in multiple postcolonial languages" and taking India as her example, she thinks that "the diverse works in multiple regional languages should be included," both in the original and in translation (218–19). The postcolonial condition in India is experienced, she argues, not only in European

12. Loomba deplores the fact that the teaching of non-Western literatures is marginalised in the US (30), but of course this is not only happening there.

languages but also in "a host of other active languages" and by way of evidence she reminds us that on average the annual Sahitya Academy awards go to works in twenty-two Indian languages (224–25). Menon's modest advice on the language question is that "while it is impossible for a handful of scholars to cover all the different languages in different post-colonial places, I suggest we have to make a beginning" (227).

While recognizing "the difficulty of postcolonialism as an approach to move outside its origins in twentieth-century British and French processes of decolonization" (Mallon 272), there have nevertheless been a number of moves to do just that, as scholars have begun to explore the application of postcolonial theory to the literatures of hitherto uncharted territories. Three diverse examples will suffice to indicate the range of innovative topics now opening up. Layla Al Maleh has edited *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature,* the first volume to draw attention to such writing; Dorota Kołodziejczyk has explored the applicability of postcolonial theory to post-communist Eastern Europe, a region she describes as hitherto "bypassed" (152), and has developed a model of comparative analysis, which she has demonstrated from the work of Amitav Ghosh and Andrzej Stasiuk; while Graham Huggan has developed an interdisciplinary project investigating the impact of Arctic colonialism and the effects of tourism on the environment and the indigenous population of the region.

One of the most profitable lines of enquiry in postcolonial studies recently has been ecocriticism. Writing in 2005 from a US-based position, Rob Nixon had asked "what it would mean to bring environmentalism into dialogue with postcolonialism" (233). At the time it was a pertinent question, since until then scholars working in the respective fields had shown little or no interest in each other's research. Such writers and critics whose work had engaged with environmental concerns had come to attention, but were exclusively American (233). Nixon therefore proposed that the work of a more representative range of writers should be analysed in comparative perspective and that, for example, "eco-critical rereadings of classic African novels" (246) by such writers as Ken Saro-Wiwa, Bessie Head, Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and J.M. Coetzee should be generated. This, he thought, would enable a more compre-

hensive understanding of the environment and of "which literary works we entrust to voice its parameters" (247).

The kind of positive dialogue between environmentalism and postcolonialism Nixon was proposing is to be found in two books by the Australian critic Helen Tiffin, *Five Emus to the King of Siam,* which she edited, and *Postcolonial Ecocriticism,* which was co-authored with Graham Huggan. Introducing the second edition of the latter book, Tiffin and Huggan were able to state with some satisfaction that postcolonial ecocriticism had now entered "a boom phase" (vi) and that "the conjunction of postcolonialism and ecocriticism has begun to prove mutually illuminating" (17). Since the 1990s, they noted, some scholars in the humanities had begun to regard ecological issues "as not marginal but foundational to their disciplines," and such issues were becoming "centralized in literary studies" (16). The aim of their own book they described as "to strike a balance between the study of literature, the application of science, and the role of social activism" (vii). It is important to note the urgent political thrust that underlies their project. In her earlier publication, *Five Emus to the King of Siam,* Tiffin wrote that postcolonial studies "has come to understand environmental issues as not only focal in the European conquest and colonization of the globe, but as inherent in the very ideologies of imperialism and racism on which such invasion and colonialism depended" (xv). What is more, she warned, "the burgeoning area of environmental analysis and critique has in large part emerged out of genuine alarm at the future of the planetary environment and its inhabitants" (xi).

It is important to note the central role of creative writers here. "Recent studies in eco-criticism have," in Ferial J. Ghazoul's felicitous phrase, "excavated environmental issues lurking veiled or hidden in postcolonial literature" (117). Thus Huggan and Tiffin take up Nixon's criticism of the focus on American writers to the exclusion of others like Ken Saro-Wiwa, whose commitment to the environment and opposition to the devastation of his home region by economic interests cost him his life.[13] They also offer numerous examples of postcolonial writers who in their estimation "have made a valuable contribution to ongoing debates

13. Tiffin is sceptical of American ecocriticism, its association with the US academy, and what she terms "American neo-colonialist potential to dominate this burgeoning contemporary field" (Introduction to *Five Emus to the King of Siam*, xxvi).

about social and economic development in many regions of the formerly colonized world" (35). Among them are Arundhati Roy, Patricia Grace, Jamaica Kincaid, Albert Wendt, Amitav Ghosh, Timothy Findley, Nadine Gordimer, Judith Wright, and Oodgeroo, for all of whose work they offer fresh, ecologically oriented readings.[14] It is worth pointing out that such engagement with environmental issues in postcolonial literature is not confined to Anglophone writing. Possibly unexpected examples are also to be found in Arabic literature, as Ghazoul's discussion of greening discourse in Abdelrahman Munif's *Cities of Salt* (123) and Abd al-Hameed Ahmad's "The Palm Tree Said to the Sea" (127) reveals.

Postcolonial ecocriticism, which also explores the literature of non-Western societies, draws attention to urgent social and political issues. It reveals how imaginative literature can act as "a catalyst for social action" and how literary analysis can become "a full-fledged form of engaged cultural critique" (Huggan and Tiffin 12). Writing and reading may thus be regarded as "modes of engagement that may not necessarily lead to direct action but raise consciousness of its possibilities and draw attention to the urgency of the causes they seek, however obliquely or even ambivalently, to present" (ix).

A further trend in postcolonial studies which has aroused great interest is the exploration of indigenous cultures. This is a field which has led scholars in some unexpected directions and stimulates considerable curiosity from students, as anyone who has taught the oral traditions and literatures of the Canadian First Nations or the Aboriginal Australians will know.

One example of the kind of research that can be undertaken from my own experience will have to suffice here. An innovative project jointly run by the European branch of ACLALS and *Bhasha*, an Indian NGO working with indigenous tribal people (*adivasis*), provides an instructive example of how postcolonial studies can be "opened up" and may, at the same time, make a valuable contribution to social and cultural activism. The plan was to host a meeting in India which would be international, cross-cultural, and interdisciplinary. It would not be designed as a traditional academic conference but, as "an exercise in reducing our

14. Cf. here too Tiffin's chapter "Animals, Environment and Postcolonial Futures" in *The Future of Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Chantal Zabus, 144–53.

collective ignorance about the communities generally described as 'indigenous'" (Devy xii). It would be called *Chotro* and would aim to "bring together"—for that is what the word means in the Bhil language—indigenous people from many parts of the world, activists working with them, and scholars interested in their culture. From Bhasha's perspective it would place the tribal people of India firmly in the context of indigenous peoples across the world with whom they have so much in common but virtually no contact. From the perspective of EACLALS members such a meeting would enable them to familiarise themselves to some extent with the tribal people of India, their history and cultures, their languages and oral traditions. For those who were not specialists on indigenous cultures it would provide an opportunity to explore beyond the traditional pastures of literary studies and learn something of what indigenous peoples have to tell us of their lives. For many who came from outside India it was surely true, too, that the history, social reality, and cultural practices of the *adivasis* were little known, certainly by comparison with those of the Aboriginals of Australia, the Māori of Aotearoa/New Zealand or the First Nations of Canada, who occasionally figure on the curricula of schools and universities.

From the outset it was the intention that Chotro should be an interdisciplinary forum bringing together scholars working in anthropology and ethnography, sociology and political science, literature and orality, linguistics and history, music and film, theology, museum studies, and human rights. The success of the first meeting led to three further meetings being organised. The genuinely interdisciplinary diversity of Chotro constituted the unique interest both of the project and of the proceedings volumes subsequently published.[15]

The Chotros, which benefited greatly from the input of indigenous people themselves, offered evolving comparative perspectives on indigenous cultures and diverse modes of learning about indigeneity. They ad-

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15. The six Chotro volumes edited by G. N. Devy, Geoffrey V. Davis, and K. K. Chakravarty are *Indigeneity: Culture and Representation* (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2009); *Voice and Memory: Indigenous Imagination and Expression* (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2011); *Narrating Nomadism: Tales of Recovery and Resistance* (New Delhi & London: Routledge, 2013); *Knowing Differently: The Challenge of the Indigenous* (New Delhi & London: Routledge, 2013); *Performing Identities: The Celebration of Indigeneity in the Arts* (New Delhi & London: Routledge, 2015); and *The Language Loss of the Indigenous* (London, New York, and New Delhi: Routledge, 2016).

dressed a wide range of urgent issues including the marginalisation of indigenous peoples, their social deprivation in terms of lack of access to education and loss of traditional lands, their world-views and knowledge systems, cultural and human rights, oral traditions, endangered languages and language death, language development and scripts, publishing in and translation from aboriginal languages, the marginalization of aboriginal / tribal cultural expression, and the imagery of the indigenous in theatre, visual art and the media. They did much to sharpen the focus on the lives and culture of *adivasis* in India, to contextualise their situation within the broader perspective of indigeneity worldwide, and to reflect on some of the numerous economic, social and political issues besetting them, for which solutions must still be found. The Chotro project offered participants a unique opportunity to reconcile literary scholarship with social conscience and thus to contribute to bettering the plight of indigenous peoples.

Bearing in mind McLeod's concern referred to above that postcolonial studies should be opened up beyond the Anglophone focus, this essay would be incomplete if it failed to take account at least of the field of Francophone postcolonial studies, which has recently generated much debate and has also met with a growth of interest, not least from French departments outside France. This activity has resulted in two important publications (particularly for those who have no French), which make the case for Francophone Postcolonial studies. The first of these is *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (2003), a book whose stated aims were "to prise open postcolonialism and move beyond the Anglophone stranglehold" (13) and "to define and reassert the Francophone dimension of Postcolonial Studies, seeking to test the assumptions of Anglophone postcolonial theory against the 'realities' of the Francophone world" (9). Accordingly the volume includes contributions on such diverse topics as the Haitian revolution, the colonial question in Algeria, Creole culture, orality in French-language African novels, and postcolonial thought in the Caribbean. The second, more recent volume is *Transnational French Studies. Postcolonialism and* Littérature-monde, edited by Alec G. Hargreaves, Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (2010), which examines the debates generated by the 2007 manifesto in favour of a "littérature-

monde en français" and provides multiple perspectives on French studies as a field which is in process of becoming transnational.

Before looking more closely at these matters, it might be appropriate to emphasise what a wealth of postcolonial writing in French is there to be discovered, particularly from Québec, Haiti, West and North Africa, and now even Polynesia: writers like Antonine Maillet, Assia Djebar, Sembène Ousmane, Ahmadou Kourouma; thinkers like Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, Aimé Césaire, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Édouard Glissant, to name but a few. To which one may add indigenous writing such as "la littérature amérindienne du Québec" (Moura 2013: 150), and diasporic writing in French by writers such as Tahar Ben Jelloun and Maryse Condé, produced in the course of what Moura terms "cette expatriation culturelle" (2013: 153).

It is worth remembering, as does McLeod, who has paid more attention to the Francophone context than most English-speaking postcolonialists, that "Anglophone postcolonial scholarship has been fundamentally inspired by French thought and remains in critical dialogue with it" (2003: 201). He reminds us of the obvious truth that critics like Bhabha, Said, and Spivak are "indebted in fundamental ways to a variety of Francophone intellectuals" (2003: 192). Forsdick and Murphy pick up on the irony of the fact that, while French intellectuals have been reluctant to engage with postcolonial studies, the field was "in part, launched by anticolonial French-language writers, such as Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Jean-Paul Sartre, and there is an ongoing … reliance on poststructuralist thinkers such as Derrida, Foucault and Lacan" (8). Yves Clavaron has a typically witty comment on this ironic state of affairs: "On ne manquera pas de trouver piquante l'hypothèse de faire des Français des précurseurs du postcolonialisme," he writes, "quand on sait précisément quelle a été la réception des théories postcoloniales en France" (168).

And the French did indeed move relatively late into the field. Moura, one of the pioneers of the field in France, concedes that postcolonial studies made "une entrée tardive et difficile dans le domaine hexagonal" (2014: 81). That the major works of Spivak and Bhabha remained untranslated

for twenty years is attributed by Clavaron to the fact that postcolonialism was alien to the ideas of the traditionally-minded French academy (7). In his *Études postcoloniales* he concludes, however, that this late start did have its advantages: "être un 'late-comer' présente finalement un double avantage: ne pas céder à l'effet de mode et tirer profit des errements des prédécesseurs" (14). In recent years the early lack of interest has given way to a great deal of critical activity, the result of which has been what Moura recently characterized as "une sorte de surabondance critique" (2014: 82).

There were a number of reasons for initial French reservations regarding postcolonial studies. One, no doubt predictably, was the perceived Anglophone dominance of the field, geographically, linguistically, and intellectually. Many French literary critics were "deeply suspicious of 'radical, Anglo-Saxon' theories like postcolonialism" (Forsdick and Murphy 8) or, as Moura puts it, they had "un soupçon assez général envers la 'theory' américaine" (2013: 4) and a concomitant distrust of critical fashion, of "le dernier terme en vogue" (2014: 82).

There was also what Forsdick and Murphy designate as "the main problem with Postcolonial Studies," namely, "its (often unacknowledged) focus on the British colonial experience" (7). This was rendered more complicated due to the fact that France and Britain had practiced different modes of colonialism, the former opting for a policy of assimilation, the latter instituting indirect rule. "France's … adjustment to its own status as a postcolonial nation state" has been, observes Forsdick, "slow and reluctant," and the country has experienced some difficulty in integrating its colonial past into its literary history (32). Cultural gatekeepers in France tended to regard multiculturalism, for example, as "an Anglo-Saxon invention alien to France's assimilationist traditions," French critics took little notice of writing by immigrants from the former French colonies, and publishers were reluctant to publish such work (Hargreaves 145–7). Generally, according to Moura, "le transfert des critiques postcoloniales anglophones aux lettres francophones est malaisé" (2013: 5).

Language, too, constituted a problem, especially in France where the French language had become "un symbole culturel et politique en soi" (Moura 2013: 29). The language of postcolonial studies was, inconveniently, largely English, or as the Senegalese scholar Mamadou Diouf noted at the MLA roundtable, "In Africa, postcolonial studies speaks English, not French" (640), and that was true of other regions as well.

Understandably some French scholars have sought to counter this. Thus, Claire Joubert's edited volume *Le postcolonial comparé: anglophonie, francophonie* sets out to challenge "le monolingualisme des Postcolonial studies" (14) and to demonstrate its limits (41).

A major obstacle to postcolonial perspectives in France proved to be the institution of *la francophonie*. An organization like the Commonwealth, *la francophonie* numbers fifty-four member states whose common base is the shared use of the French language. "Cette institution politique, linguistique et littéraire qu'est la francophonie" (Moura 2013: 5) has, again like the Commonwealth, been the target of criticism that it is essentially neo-colonialist. In literary terms, since the term refers to all literature written in French except that originating in France itself, it has been regarded as perpetuating "le clivage … bien affirmé entre *la* littérature française et *les* littératures francophones" (Moura 2014: 85). When, for example, African writers living in France are referred to as francophones, they are "positioned outside the national cultural of France" (Hargreaves 146). Clearly postcolonial theories did not sit squarely with such monocultural, nationalist and, in the view of many, outdated notions.

The emergence of postcolonial studies and the belated debates that have ensued in France have given rise to an obvious question. As Marie-Claude Smouts puts it in introducing a volume devoted to both literature and the social sciences: "la question est de savoir qu'en faire dans le contexte qui est le nôtre" (56). Her answer is to envisage "un théorème postcolonial à la française" (25) based on three propositions, namely the ongoing relevance of the country's colonial past to the present; a recognition of the impact of colonialism on both the formerly colonized territories and the metropole; and the need to come to terms with the colonial past and its legacy in the interests of national unity. All questions long recognised in the Anglophone world, which must now be tackled in France. Moura, for his part, relates this question specifically to literature: "En quel sens peut-on parler d'un apport de la théorie postcoloniale à notre compréhension des littératures d'expression française?" (156). His own response is to draw attention to the history and sociology, language, culture, and aesthetics of French-language works in the light of postcolonial theory, a task in which he is of course no longer alone, if one considers the very considerable range of studies contained in the volumes edited by Forsdick and Mur-

phy, Hargreaves et al., Joubert and Smouts I have mentioned, which open up innovative approaches for research in French literature.

Two such approaches seem to be particularly promising. The first is that adopted by Joubert, who presents a collection of essays which goes some way towards realizing what McLeod sees as "one of the main aims of postcolonial theory [which] is to provide comparative analysis across former colonial boundaries" (quoted in Murphy 2007b: 188). In introducing the volume Baneth-Nouailhetas and Joubert express the conviction that "le 'postcolonial' comparé entre anglophonie et francophonie nous ouvre les perspectives de deux traditions intellectuelles au contact d'histoires de la décolonisation dont les tournants ont profondément différé" (7). Joubert regards the Caribbean with its complex multi-colonial history and linguistic creolisations as a prime candidate for a comparative approach, and accordingly half the contributions in the volume are devoted to the French, English, Spanish, and Dutch histories and literatures of that region.

The second approach focuses on what Françoise Lionnet has called "the 'becoming-transnational' of French studies" (quoted in Hargreaves et al. 2). This notion proceeds from the publication in 2007 of the manifesto "Pour une Littérature-monde" signed by forty-four writers which advocated the substitution of the term *francophonie* as a literary concept by the concept "une littérature-monde en français," which as Moura points out, would imply the end of *francophonie* and the birth of world literature written in French, where France would be "un pays francophone parmi les autres" (168). In their volume *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-monde,* Hargreaves and his colleagues provide a conspectus of opinion on the (cautious) reception of the manifesto in France, the often acrimonious debate that has ensued, the monocultural and monolingual traditions of French studies, the relationship between postcolonial studies and *littérature-monde*, the desire of some scholars "to de-centre a model of French studies that was focused exclusively on the hexagon," and the uncertain future of the vision the manifesto holds out (2). "In the light of these debates," the editors ask, "does *littérature-monde* offer an all-embracing transnational vista leading beyond the confines of postcolonialism, or reintroduce an incipient form of neo-colonialism even while proclaiming the end of the centre/periphery divide?"(3).

There is much to be learned from postcolonial developments in the French-speaking world and it is not, therefore, difficult to agree with Murphy when he writes that the francophone context is "too easily ig-

nored by many critics in their desire to forge 'general' postcolonial theories" (2007a: 183).

If, in conclusion, we consider Clavaron's question, "Alors doit-on enterrer le postcolonialisme ou le mort bouge-t-il encore?", the answer will undoubtedly be in the affirmative (195). Some of the directions in which postcolonialism is, or should be, moving will hopefully have become clear from the above, but they bear repeating. We must expand the field beyond the Anglophone and take heed of Francophone, Lusophone, and Hispanic writing and research. We must develop comparative approaches to the literatures and cultures of all the former European colonies. We must focus more on non-Western literatures and criticism, and take cognizance of literatures in African and Indian languages in translation or in the original. We must "make a beginning on languages." We must avoid Eurocentrism and pay much more attention to the view from the South. We must continue to situate postcolonial studies in its sociological and historical contexts. We must explore more innovative interdisciplinary approaches to research, particularly in areas like ecocriticism and Indigenous studies. We must pay renewed attention to the local. We must not be blinded by a focus on the literatures of the diaspora to the realities on the ground in developing countries. We must maintain the political commitment and the sense of urgency that informed the field from the start particularly in the contemporary globalized world.

I have never forgotten an occasion on which a well-known literary theorist, caught guiltily skipping a writers' session at a conference, explained to me that she never went to listen to the writers. What better example of the gap between literature and theory could one imagine? Perhaps, therefore, we should remind ourselves in concluding of the essential contribution of writers from all over the world to the field of postcolonial studies. It has been they who have pioneered new directions in literary practice, have taken the lead in exploring new literary territory, and have engaged with the political, social and cultural issues which have shaped our world. In view of their innovatory writing it is hardly surprising that the field continues to attract some of our brightest students.

The critics to whose work I have primarily been referring are very conscious of the social import of the field they are engaged in. McLeod reminds us of the "serious political and ethical goals of postcolonial studies" (2007: 5); Zabus characterizes postcolonial studies as "an anticipatory discourse of liberation and justice" (1). But I would like to give the last word to Paul Sharrad, who has reminded us that as postcolonial scholars "We cannot afford to be bogged down only in exercises in academic cleverness or yet more visits to colonial discourse and literary 'writing back.' Nor can we let ourselves as critics of culture and power be stymied by our theorizing so that difference and deconstruction disable the kind of agency implicit in universals such as human rights" (53).

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Theatres of the World: Local Performance and Global Diaspora

Amanda Rogers. *Performing Asian Transnationalisms: Theatre, Identity and the Geographies of Performance.* New York & London: Routledge, 2015. Pp. 251. ISBN: 9780415854382.

Ashis Sengupta, ed. *Mapping South Asia through Contemporary Theatre: Essays on the Theatres of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka.* Houndmills: Palgrave, 2014. Pp. 250. ISBN: 9781137375131.

Performance in its various incarnations has become a central focus for cultural analysis in recent years. Publishers have responded to this growing interest. Witness two innovative series "Studies in International Performance," edited by Janelle Reinelt and Brian Singleton at Palgrave Macmillan (first publication in 2006) and "Routledge Advances in Theatre and Performance Studies" (first publication in 2003). These series attempt to look at performance and theatre in a broad international context that takes into account local culture and international translations of and interactions with that culture. The two volumes under consideration here contribute to that effort. Both volumes take either cultural geography or the idea of mapping a cultural phenomenon as their central metaphors, and performance, particularly theatre, as their main focus.

In *Performing Asian Transnationalisms: Theatre, Identity and the Geographies of Performance*, Amanda Rogers, a lecturer in Human Geography at Swansea University in the United Kingdom, uses her background in cultural geography coupled with her research in performance studies to create a lens that allows us to see how the movement of performance within and across cultures can create issues of identity and politics across borders of all kinds. Space has long been seen as crucial in theatre and performance studies; as one critic points out, theatre is "the only art where the name given to the place where the artistic event occurs is the same as that of the art form itself" (Rogers 208). But while performance studies often focus on space as

the crucial medium through which intellectual and emotional content becomes literally embodied, Rogers takes a broader view of space. She investigates the creation and translocation of plays, their authors, and the performers who embody those texts as they move either within their national arenas or among different countries. This translocation—or movement of the entire process of play making and performance—allows Rogers to look both at the local political, economic, and cultural implications of theatre and at the transnational impact and changes that theatre engenders when it moves out of the context in which it was created.

In order to trace this fascinating movement, Rogers focuses on the interactions among Asian American, British East Asian, and South East Asian theatres and performers. Her analysis therefore moves among sites in Los Angeles and New York, London and (somewhat surprisingly) Scotland, and Singapore. These venues allow her to trace differing diasporas of performance material or performers with Asian (often Chinese) roots as they move across continents and cultures.

This travelling occurs in many directions and gives "geographies" many complex meanings. Rogers's personal participation in numerous arts festivals, conferences, performances, and demonstrations gives her study an immediacy often lacking in academic studies. Rogers herself becomes a "performer" as well as a scholar of transnational theatre performance. She begins her study by recounting the 2011 National Asian American Theater Conference and Festival held by the East West Players in Los Angeles in June 2011. This conference focused on "New Directions" and the "global reach of the arts" and was meant to introduce new voices and forms to "expand the Asian and Asian American voice in new directions" (Rogers 1). Surprisingly for the participants, these new directions gave transnationalism a prominent role as British Chinese directors, Singaporean British writers, and Malaysian actors joined the discussion that had been largely North American. The ensuing discussions introduced questions of global solidarity around Chinese heritage and culture, thus stressing unity within a diasporic experience of migrants moving transnationally, versus the Asian American project of multiculturalism which allows marginal and differentiated voices to become part of a broader American identity. Rogers's study teases out this basic dichotomy of relationship to an ancestral homeland within a migrant community that forms a new hybrid identity and a vision of a broader series of global cultural interconnections that maintain ethnic identity even while complicating gender and political issues.

One of the finest qualities of Rogers's work is that she does not shrink from seeing the complexities and ambiguities in a performance situation. When examining how changing geographies might affect identity, for example, she analyzes the play *An Occasional Orchid* (1996) by Ivan Heng. Heng is a Singaporean who wrote and directed the play while living in London. The role of Joseph/Zoe was played by Malaysian-born Chowee Leow when it premiered in Camden as part of London's One-Person Play Festival. It has since been staged in Hong Kong, Amsterdam, Malaysia, and Singapore. The plot follows a young Peranakan man from Malacca to London where he is going to study. Once there, freed from his cultural and familial expectations, he transforms himself into Zoe. This exploration of his trans identity is complicated when Zoe has a relationship with a white man who is attracted to trans men, and who happens to have a fetish for anything "Oriental." Identity issues become enmeshed in gender expectation as well as clichéd images of "the Oriental." London provides some gender freedom compared to his native Malaysia but then entraps Zoe in ethnic stereotyping. Thus, this transnational travel does not just contribute to breaking boundaries; it also enforces new cultural boundaries. The intersections of personal, cultural, ethnic, and gender expectations and violations create a complex of interactions that center around geography and performance. Rogers bravely explores these many intersections, refusing to accept easy answers about transnational movement being either exclusively liberating or exclusively confining.

She performs similarly rich and complex analyses of the writing and staging of various plays as well as of the authors and actors who present them in national and international venues. If, as a reader and scholar, you are seeking careful close readings of the texts of plays or discussions of their aesthetic value, Rogers's book will not fulfill your needs. But if you are interested in a carefully argued and richly documented investigation of the complex interactions between performance (in its many embodiments) and movement through cultural, national, and international space, from the point of view of someone intimately engaged in human geography and theatre, this volume is highly rewarding. Rogers brings out surprising interactions that make us rethink our views of multiculturalism, transnationalism, and shifting identities. She is also excellent at exploring the political and economic implications of unexpected cooperative ventures such as that between Singapore and Scotland, which had an extensive theatre and cultural exchange for several years. Rogers investigates the economic impetus for this exchange as well as the cultural gains on both sides.

Rogers's examination of the theatrical process and reception in terms of what it can do in different cultural, spatial, and political contexts is engaging and thought-provoking. Her chapter entitled "Relational Spaces of Protest: *The Orphan of Zhao* Controversy" is particularly enlightening in its study of political responses internationally. Rogers herself was engaged in the protest, which she is careful to state, as part of her attempt to be balanced and reflective about the event. The controversy centers on the Royal Shakespeare Company's cross-racial casting in their production of *The Orphan of Zhao,* a Chinese revenge tragedy from the thirteenth century, often called "the Chinese Hamlet." As part of the 2012–2013 "A World Elsewhere" season, the RSC staged this play with mainly Caucasian actors. The only three British East Asian actors who were cast played (as one indignant actress put it) "dogs and maids" (literally true in this production). They came off as voiceless "avatars" of ethnic minority performers (Rogers 170). The protest was over the RSC's lack of understanding of how casting practices can reinforce stereotypes of East Asians in Britain and contribute to their invisibility. This point was particularly vexing given that the RSC used Chinese cultural images to attract a British East Asian audience. This British protest followed upon the heels of a production of *The Nightingale* at the La Jolla Playhouse in California, which drew upon Chinese settings and characters but cast the main roles with Caucasian actors. Only two Asian Americans were cast and one of them was a child playing a bird. This production sparked protests among Asian Americans shortly before the RSC uproar.

These protests over casting took place largely on social media and galvanized a mutual support system that included Asian American, Asian Canadians, and British East Asian performers and writers. While Rogers traces this moment of transnational solidarity, she also points out the failure of the protests to gain support from British South Asian and Black British cultural leaders. The protests failed to generate a broader debate around diversity in British theatre and the possible failures of comfortable "multiculturalism" that runs the danger of obscuring underlying racial and ethnic problems. As Rogers puts it, "A lack of cross-racial support at home suggested that existing power relations in the arts were acceptable" (179). She also points out ways in which the cultural specificity of Asian performers in the United States and Canada resulted in differing responses to these protests and demonstrations.

The sheer range and depth of detail (gathered from attending performances as well as extensive interviews and correspondence) that Rogers provides make this volume fascinating for anyone interested in a comparative understanding of theatre. Rogers's background in human geography and performance studies adds a crucial dimension to our literary approaches and provides a new methodological tool with which to extend our insights into the complex issues that performance adds to the text on the page.

Ashis Sengupta's *Mapping South Asia through Contemporary Theatre: Essays on the Theatres of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka* is an exceptionally interesting and informative collection of essays. For an American or European reader, it offers an illuminating combination of history and theatre that shares a number of concerns with Rogers's study. In her foreword, Aparna Dharwadker refers to the wars and transformative events in the postwar and postcolonial remapping within South Asian nations. For Dharwadker, "South Asia has been a prominent site for the performance of *intranational* cultural differences" (x), and she points out that the essays approach theatre practice in political terms, "as a form of sociocultural and ideological intervention" (x). This lens shares much with Rodgers's work. Ashis Sengupta's introduction, "Setting the Stage," offers a probing overview of the region covered by the essays: "With a postcolonial-cultural-theatre/performance studies approach, [this volume] aims at a multidisciplinary study of contemporary South Asian theatres as being *reflective* as well as partly *constitutive* of the post-independence societies and 'national' cultures they grow out of, deal with and question, too" (2). The essays aim at a kind of mapping that "examines the course of events in specific geopolitical, geocultural contexts and yet connects them, wherever necessary, with the machinations of power and cultural phenomena outside" (3).

Having established the complex cultural mapping for each of the regions in the volume, Sengupta goes on to explain the unique and quite different nature of the postcolonial theatres and performances in each of these nations. Underlining theatre's importance as a "popular medium of address (and protest) in matters of national and social importance" (9) in South Asia, he further defines the range of theatre as both presentation and representation. This engaged theatre may well come from historical and religious or folkloric traditions, but it is the context from which the various theatrical performances arise that makes each of the countries—

and indeed the various subsections of those countries—unique. Sengupta gives his own narrative overview of the performance tradition in each of these countries. For instance, of India he says: "The decades-old debate about what constitutes 'Indian' theatre continues, thanks to an amazing if not bewildering plurality of India's theatre genres, forms, locations and languages" (18). He contributes to this debate by providing a brief socio-political history and an account of the theatrical development that goes with it. Sengupta includes in his discussion the autonomous women's movement and its shift "from the relatively narrow concerns of 'women's welfare' to the new ideology/program of 'women's empowerment' and the question of individual autonomy" (22). As regards the place of English-language plays, he mentions the encouraging fact that new Indian plays are being translated from one language into other Indian languages as well as English.

Sengupta's description of Pakistan's theatre ties closely into the India-Pakistan partition: "After the partition Pakistan was left only with some Lok (folk) theatre and bits of Parsi theatre in Urdu and Gujarati … [however] several types of theatre have still emerged in post-partition Pakistan" (25). He provides a brief history of Pakistan up to the present, which he connects to the various theatrical interventions tryng to reach out to the public and to influence it. When dealing with Bangladesh, he reviews the various verse forms and religious festivals existing before the partition. He further examines the language differences, especially focusing on why Bengali language and culture were perceived as non-Islamic or not Islamic enough. Several theatre groups developed out of the various wars and battles that led to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 and as such depictions of those conflicts have been a central aspect of theatrical performance. Sengupta notes that Rabindranath Tagore was an important author whose plays were performed by street theatres and local performance groups. Issues central to these groups range from class distinctions and women's empowerment to lack of social progress. In the histories of Nepal and Sri Lanka, the role of theatre is both fascinating and at times painful. Sengupta moves from ritual and dance forms that existed in ancient Nepal to modern comedies and political theatre, with the struggle against censorship taking shape in political street theatre. Sengupta notes that these groups were influenced by authors such as Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal. Even as the battles for control of the government persist in this war-torn country, the ancient rituals and festivals continue to be performed and to assist the contemporary theatre

movement. Sri Lanka is another divided country with ongoing conflicts between the Sinhalese-Buddhist-led government and the minority Tamil population. Because there are performance groups on both sides of the struggle, Sengupta argues that contemporary Sri Lankan theatre should be discussed from both perspectives, especially in terms of proscenium and street theatre performances. Sengupta concludes his introduction by returning to the theme of mapping the region and the "whole range of performance genres and practices—appropriation or reformulation of traditional and folk forms to address contemporary concerns in an urban, alternatively modern theatre; improvised and collectively devised performances on or off the proscenium stage" (52).

In "Dispatches from the Margins: Theatre in India since the 1990s," Shayoni Mitra offers a specific and original focus: "This essay weaves its way against the hegemonies of space, gender, language and caste that the original proponents of postcolonial culture wished to institute for Indian theatre" (66). She discusses the inadequacy of the central government's efforts to guide a national Indian Theatre based on Sanskrit and written in Hindi, and the resulting development of political street theatre. Indian street theatre grew out of the various cultural revolutions related to workers' rights and the women's movement. Today, it continues to function within the activist impulse, serving multiple purposes ranging from HIV/Aids activism to clean water claims. For Mitra, these theatre movements developed partially out of a lack of performance space. She provides examples from Mumbai to Delhi and Kolkata and includes Indian avant-garde theatre in her discussion. Although she also comments on English plays, which originated primarily in universities circles, she argues that such plays were essentially printed to be read rather than performed. Today, however, some English-language playwrights, such as Mahesh Dattani, deal with gender politics and marginal sexual identities. Finally, she turns to Dalit identity, i.e. the untouchables, a community in which folk performances and realist dramas abound. In Dalit theatre, Mitra finds an example of performance "which is community-oriented and at the same time speaks from the subjective position of personal experience" (95). She concludes her thoughtful study of the margins of Indian theatre in these terms: "So theatre in India progresses, in unlikely places, through unexpected collaborations, from unpredictable inspirations: its history a testament to the temporary" (98).

Asma Mundrawala's "Theatre Chronicles: Framing Theatre Narratives in Pakistan's Sociopolitical Context" may have been one of the more challenging chapters in the book to write, since the country's difficult and complex political history has made theatre life problematic. Mundrawala focuses on Pakistani theatre since the 1980s, and more specifically on two groups that emerged "in a climate of protest and in reaction against Zia-ul-Haque's laws against women" (104). She details the backgrounds of these companies, while pointing out that activities such as theatre "with their potential to encourage critical thinking are considered suspect and subversive by the ruling authorities" (105). Part of her essay describes the political events of the 1950s and '60s which led to the banning of the Communist Party in 1954 along with its student and trade union wings. This resulted in the disappearance of political theatre. Nevertheless, a number of groups adopted a political stance in the 1980s, under the influence of Brecht: "This affiliation may be understood by the fact that the themes in Brecht's plays are relevant even today to the sociopolitical conditions of Pakistan" (119). Mundrawala concludes her essay by commenting on two of these theatre companies, Tehrik-e-Niswan and Ajoka, which continue to persevere and reach out to all strata of society.

"Designs of Living in the Contemporary Theatre of Bangladesh" by Syed Jamil Ahmed examines theatre in Bangladesh essentially from a subversive perspective. Covering the period from the 1971 Independence of Bangladesh to the present, he focuses on "contesting identities inscribed by language, religion, and ethnicity," the "mobilization of subaltern resistance against hegemony of the state," as well as "replications and transgressions in the performativity of gender" (135). After examining the country's history before independence, Ahmed closely analyzes various plays that respond to the crises challenging the new country. Some of these plays sparked violent protests because they offered controversial representations of Islamist assumptions and questioned the presumably absolute connection between Bangladeshi and Bengali people. Ahmed provides examples of theatres that performed subversive drama; some of these groups reached out to the people via street theatre. In the Liberation War of 1971 "400,000 women were raped or suffered sexual slavery" (158). In his own plays, Ahmed focuses on women rewriting their history as well as training for armed combat. Other playwrights take up some of these issues, which Ahmed discusses in the language of western theorists such as Judith Butler and Jacques Lacan. He concludes by referring to

the redirection of attention from the "majoritarian norm" of identity to a postnational pluralist "process of becoming" (167).

Carol C. Davis's "Towards an Engaged Stage: Nepali Theatre in Uncertain Times" first states that Nepali theatre derives from "religious and seasonal rituals and festivals, and singers, story tellers and masked dancers [that] still provide the majority of theatrical entertainment" (177). For Davis, early modern theatre began in 1953 when one of its most famous writers, Balkrishna Sama (1902–1981), wrote a play about heroic fighters in the Anglo-Nepali war of 1814–16. This play established a tradition of "being intimately engaged with its society" (178) for Nepali drama today. However, another playwright, Gopal Prasad Rimal (1918–1973), was influenced by Henrik Ibsen, when in 1945 he wrote a play echoing *A Doll's House*. Davis discusses the country's ongoing monarchy and the growing political opposition to its repressive authoritarianism. By 1981, Ashesh Malla (b. 1955), a university student who became the father of Nepali street theatre, formed a company and began performing at universities throughout the country. This theatre of engagement inspired other playwrights and eventually contributed to a people's movement. By 1990, Nepal won its fight for a democratic government as a constitutional monarchy was established. Malla then turned his attention to social problems in his work. However, Nepal experienced little progress in improving basic needs such as health care or education, and the country fell into a bitter war between Maoists and the monarch after the king and his family were mysteriously murdered by a supposedly mentally-ill crown prince. The war between the Maoists and the government went on until a peace-treaty was signed in 2006. Reflecting this crisis, Malla's plays went from early optimism to disillusionment. Other playwrights also wrote about the despair of this period, and, after the war, dramas by authors ranging from Henrik Ibsen to Nikolai Gogol and Arthur Miller were translated by new writers and performed in new theatres. While the various traditional theatrical rites are still performed, modern playwrights continue to press for a democratic Nepal.

"From Narratives of National Origin to Bloodied Streets: Contemporary Sinhala and Tamil Theatre in Sri Lanka" by Kanchuka Dharmasiri concludes this volume. Like some of the other essays, this piece is both highly informative and profoundly saddening. In so many of these South Asian countries, theatre plays an important—if frustrated—role in often tragic or bitter political and cultural contexts. Sri Lankan theatre has

three linguistic components, Sinhala, Tamil, and English. Scholarship is apparently "polarized along linguistic lines" (208). By contrast, this essay covers the period from the 1960s to the present and examines both Sinhalese and Tamil theatres, an innovative approach indeed. In 1956, a "Sinhala-only" policy was implemented, supporting Sinhalese as the dominant language (211). At the same time, a Tamil dramatist wrote a play about a group fighting a clandestine war against the state. Dharmasiri refers to two origin myths dominating both sides—the Tamil *Ramayana* and the Sinhala *Sinhabahu* myths. This resulted in a highly productive period in which plays by authors from both groups could be performed on the same stage. In the 1980s, however, wars disrupted the Tamil side, though productions continued in alternative spaces. The war affected the Tamil north far more than the Sinhala south, and few Sinhalese playwrights attempted to grapple with it. One production of Euripides's *Trojan Woman* in 1999 and a production of Sophocles's *Antigone* in 2009 raised the issue of gender in Sri Lankan society. Several indigenous plays followed and dealt with issues related to the abuse of women, although there has been only a gradual increase in the representations of sexuality and gender matters. Dharmasiri concludes her essay with both a sad summary of "Sri Lankan theatre's present lack of engagement with the aftermath of the civil war or the traumas left behind it," and a glimmer of hope: "But in a context of state-supported racism, when one often forgets the relevance of dialogue, activism, and the critical role of the arts, it is in the efforts made by artists to forge connections in the face of all discrimination and hostility that the possibility for change is made visible after all" (233). These two fascinating studies on the interactions between performance and geography provide a highly informative and wonderfully enlightening context enabling us to understand contemporary uses of performance across cultures. They will be rewarding reading not only for scholars in literary and cultural studies, but also for those interested in racial/gender dynamics and politics more generally.

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Article d'opinion / Opinion Piece

Dictionary Notes For Comparatists

In the first decades of the revived Comparative Literature movement after World War II, there were two main habits in naming programs and journals that promoted comparative literary studies. Most departments or programs, associations, and journals simply used the term Comparative Literature, for example, British Comparative Literature Association, Japanese Comparative Literature Association, *Revue de Littérature Comparée,* etc. A good number of entities spelled out what was comprehended under "comparative" as including General Literature (GL), for example, Société Française de Littérature Générale et Comparée, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft, *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* (now simplified to *Yearbook of Comparative Literature*), etc. But some allied entities in the so-called West used the term World Literature (WL), understanding the old-style WL label as meaning CL + GL, as for example in the Netherlandic term Algemene Literatuurwetenschap.

GL (General Literature) was the term that covered the study of literary works received through translation from cultures that used one or more literary languages different from that of the recipient local culture. GL fostered the reception and teaching of literatures originally conceived in a great variety of native languages, and eventually received in others. GL also dealt with the presence in literary cultures of works from older phases of the local language or translated into it from ancient languages common to a number of modern cultures. General Literature was included under World Literature principally in countries of the old Soviet bloc, although the term WL was also sometimes used instead of GL in a few scattered instances in Western Europe and North America.

Under the old Soviet system, the cultural authorities in countries allied in that bloc encouraged the use of the term World Literature instead

of Comparative Literature to distinguish their rival efforts from "Western" efforts. Thus old-style WL functioned like CL, because it contained implicitly the two component clusters: CL and GL. Good examples are the Gorki Institute for World Literature in Moscow in its heyday and the Estonian world literature complex down to the present. The International Comparative Literature Association made it possible for both CL and old-style WL to flourish side by side and interactively under its aegis. When colleagues from widely divergent political and social systems met under the ecumenical umbrella of ICLA, the wisest understood why they were collaborating on the project of comparative studies and could work in common in programs and on research teams.

In the decades up to the millennial year 2000, both CL and old-style WL were implicitly paired in local efforts to teach "external" literatures deriving from diverse languages. That is, both CL and old-style WL were always allied locally with the practice of GL, which dealt with the reception and sharing of materials across geocultural and sometimes historical boundaries in translation. By the 1990s ICLA meanwhile had attained its current global reach and was implementing many of the research initiatives which had been posited for Comparative Literature in the heady days right after ICLA's postwar founding. That can be seen reflected in the pattern of its triennial congresses, at first fluctuating between North America and Western Europe, then including Eastern Europe, and next moving to Asia, Africa, and South America as of the new millennium.

However, one effect of the subsidence of the older rival term WL in Western countries was that parties eager to overleap all the achieved hard work and present themselves as "(re)inventing" studies on a global level were tempted to resurrect the less successful term and use it to pretend that they were doing something new. While some new-age proclaimers of WL came from CL ranks, most were simply pursuing the easier pathway of GL. Historically, this tendency originated in American departments of English; eventually it spread to Anglicist groups outside of North America and it has remained associated chiefly with English and Anglo-American groups.

Now, after the year 2000, we are witnessing a phenomenon that is very confusing for sincere advocates and practitioners of old-style WL (CL + GL): the attempt to erect a new-style WL movement in the present century via the hegemony of English as a world *lingua franca.* CL experts who were not born yesterday detect over and over again that new-style

WL is energized by aggressive English departments around the globe in tandem with English-language publishers eager to sell their wares. Via new-style WL they threaten to displace the teaching and reception of literatures of the world in the actual rich variety of native tongues.

In contrast, international CL embraces the latter challenge: the harder task of fostering openness to the literatures of the world in a multitude of local languages through translation from as many and into as many of them as possible, while CL simultaneously cultivates the difficult elitist level of considering literary traditions in their own modes of expression and in any wider contexts that are relevant. That mandate was already clear to ICLA approaching the year 2000.

While new-style WL in English may be welcome as a practical accompaniment to CL, it is no worthwhile substitute for GL in the multitude of global cultures in an array of local languages. Activities which are called GL or (new-style) WL have always coexisted alongside the more demanding practice of international CL, but CL, from its re-beginning after World War II and notably through the efforts of ICLA, has pursued a higher level of research into literary culture universally. Among many other things, CL encompasses the study of the spread and effects of *linguae francae* such as Sanskrit, Chinese, Latin, Arabic, French, English, etc., and the interactions of smaller and larger cultures in literary life regionally, transregionally, and globally.

New-style WL tends to introduce lopsided campaigns and criteria developed by Anglicists worldwide more recently. They are often tempted to monopolize everywhere and not just in English-speaking countries. In contrast, ICLA has promoted a more generous, older ethos of the investigation of cultural sharing, both in its early period of expansion after World War II, and continuing in the present century. The multinational and cross-cultural accomplishments of CL have been reflected in world congresses of ICLA held on every continent (except, to date, Australia) and—what is very important—also in hundreds of meetings of ICLA's many research committees and of its Executive Council (Bureau), often jointly with a national or regional association of CL. These events have been held in an amazingly diverse panoply of places around the globe (including Australia!) for many decades.

The economics of the cheapening of curricular programs (all too often attractive for college and university administrators) favors the possibility that new-style WL may divert many institutions around the globe away

from the more difficult challenge of CL and toward new-style WL (which originated as an American "light" export product). The ways in which CL (or old-style WL) has always accommodated GL is a story with which experienced comparatists are acquainted. But this story needs to be retold over and over again. New-style WL thrives on the dimming of awareness of the larger story of CL among newer entrants into the academy. The practice of mystification is all too evident in all too many proponents of new-style WL in situations where groups vie for budgetary resources.

A special dilemma can affect serious comparatists who have one or several English-language literatures among their main interests. Understandably, such colleagues are often housed in, or cross-listed from, a department of English. Everything else being equal, that is fine. But in all too many real-world situations today they may find it is very difficult or even career-threatening to assert the distinction between serious CL and new-style WL. In this regard, English departments often tend naturally toward suffocating CL and favoring new-style WL, both in countries where English is the predominant language and in countries where it is the most prominent foreign language. An analogous, relatively smaller problem can arise in cultures with sizable student populations of native speakers of the dominant local language (e.g., German, Japanese, Portuguese) if these "national" language departments attempt to monopolize GL courses and thwart the neighbor "foreign" language departments from contributing to GL teaching in their own areas of expertise. Educational administrators by sheer habit may embed qualified CL scholars or programs only inside their local "national" literature department, and this recipe, too, predisposes CL to devolve into a form of GL.

It is important that ICLA perform, from time to time, the task of clarifying the historical record. This remains a need because newer contingents of scholars are always entering our ranks. ICLA is obliged to combat pretentious, even preposterous unhistorical assertions on behalf of new-style WL or comparable claims and to restore awareness both of the actual and of the ideal range of CL research and teaching. The very success of ICLA in expanding truly onto the global plane by the turn of the new century has brought about not a lessening of difficulty, but an increased challenge.

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Comptes rendus / Book Reviews

I

Chantal Zabus, ed. *The Future of Postcolonial Studies*. New York: Routledge, 2015. Pp. 265. ISBN: 9780415714266.

In spite of its decidedly future-oriented title, *The Future of Postcolonial Studies* is also about looking back in order to better move forward. The outcome of "Future Postcolonialisms/ Le postcolonialisme-en-devenir," an international conference that was held at the Parisian sanctum of the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* in 2011, Chantal Zabus's edited volume celebrates the twentieth-fifth anniversary of the publication of the now classic *The Empire Writes Back* with a view to reassessing its pertinence and legacy in the present. A tribute to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin's extraordinary achievement, back in 1989, of highlighting the production of authors hailing from the former European colonies as well as evolving new modes of reading that challenged Eurocentric rationalities, *The Future of Postcolonial Studies* builds upon the troika's earlier interests in gender, indigeneity, ecocriticism, and linguistic creolization, among other topics, to structure its fifteen chapters around five trends: namely "comparing," "converting," "greening," "queering," and "utopia."

Since the late 1980s, the understanding of the category of the postcolonial has changed tremendously. At the same time as the term shifted from a hyphenated to a "graphically whole status," it stopped being understood as a "periodizing term" and gestured towards "a textual philosophy" (Zabus 1), indeed "a way of reading" (Ashcroft 235). As Zabus reminds us, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin already paved the way for such an extended usage of the term by broadening the time frame implied by the (then-hyphenated) category of the 'post-colonial' from a 'postindependence' to a 'postinvasion' period, in ways that made it clear that postcolonialism did not signal the end of colonisation, but was, as Hall

writes, "after a certain *kind* of colonialism, after a certain moment of high imperialism and colonial occupation—in the wake of it, in the shadow of it, inflected by it" (Drew 189). The suggestion that Zabus similarly views postcolonialism as an "anticipatory discourse" that reaches back to colonial times but is still pertinent in the present is evidenced by the historical range of the fifteen chapters of the volume, which span from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Geographically and linguistically speaking, *The Future of Postcolonial Studies* distinguishes itself by a determination to venture outside what Graham Huggan calls "the postcolonial mainstream" (131). For one, the volume resolutely draws postcolonial studies outside of its Anglophone "comfort zone" by shifting the terrain of analysis to lesser-examined postcolonial territories such as North Africa, the Middle East and the Arabic peninsula, the Horn of Africa, the Artic, Mauritius, and China. In line with Huggan, who argues elsewhere that "multi-sited, multi-lingual and multi-disciplinary" (20) approaches to the postcolonial currently invalidate turn-of-the-millennium gloomy predictions on the obsolescence of the field, Zabus remarks that postcolonial studies has now "entered a convalescing period of recovery" (5) during which a third generation of postcolonialists is building upon the intersectional legacy of second-generation scholars such as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin. It is not only that, by embracing new cross-disciplinary horizons, postcolonial studies is transforming itself into a "centrifugal force" able to "energize globalization, transnational, diaspora, and queer studies." Appropriating the neologism "intra-act," which was first coined by the feminist physicist Karen Barrad, Zabus contends instead that postcolonial studies interpenetrates other fields in ways that enable two-way processes of epistemological transformation. In that sense, the above-mentioned five "trends" around which this volume is structured operate less along thematic than along (cross-) disciplinary lines. Indeed, these trends all bear witness to current "intra-actions" between post-colonial studies and fields such as comparative literature, religion studies, ecocriticism, queer theory, transgender theory and the new technologies.

"Comparing," the first section of the volume, gathers contributions committed to complicating the assumption that postcolonial literature only boils down to a branch of English literature. Unpacking the ideological implications of the institution of "Francophonie" through, and beyond, Michel Le Bris and Jean Rouaud's famous Manifesto, "*Pour une littérature monde*" (2007), Moura, who was one of the very first French

scholars to take postcolonial theory seriously, analyses the reasons why the field is now gaining increasing relevance for literary studies in France after having been mostly consigned to the Social Sciences. Ironically, Albertazzi shows that the situation is almost reversed in Italy, where the study of English-language postcolonial literatures got a very early start, but where the media's uncritical celebration of stereotypical fiction by young "postcolonial" authors (including Italophone writers) has perversely become an "instrument of exclusion" (41), with the consequence that the best of these writers are now prevented from entering the Italian canon. Highlighting the polyglossic context of South Africa and the ways in which the hegemony of English is "directly linked to the neo-colonial/neoliberal economic policies of globalization" (62), Briault-Manus's chapter makes a vibrant plea towards postcolonialists, inviting them to lay claim to African-language literatures and fully take on board the ways in which African literatures in English and French "indigenize" European languages.

In Part 2, "Converting," Griffiths's chapter analyses the rhetoric and structure of the writings of the Rev. Tiyo Soga with a view to showing how this early Christian South African convert, who cannot be characterized by the "simplistic labels" (81) of "resistance" or "complicity" with colonialism in spite of his European-style education and conversion to Christianity, utilizes "shrouding personae" (79) and various narrative strategies to "articulat[e] the complex multiple voices that [he had] to contain and unify" (77). While Klaus Stierstorfer's essay makes a strong case for bringing postcolonialism and religious issues into a culture-specific "dialogue" within which fundamentalism should not always be tied to Islamic contexts in addition to being explained away as a result of modernity and the postcolonial situation, in her chapter on Mauritius Srilata Ravi similarly complicates "mainstream" postcolonial theory by exposing the "peripheral imperialism" (90) that now frames the relationships between India and Mauritius. As Ravi lucidly shows, the diaspora-oriented politics of post-liberalization India has promoted a "Hindu ethos" confusing religion, economic development, and ancestral ties to the homeland so that French-language literature is now (deceptively?) perceived by Mauritian intellectuals as one of the privileged spaces "to confront the hegemony of an imagined Indo-Hindu centre in the Indian Ocean" (90).

The three chapters of Part 3, "Greening," are concerned with opening new postcolonial lines of research related to environmental issues and

to the relationship between the human and non-human worlds. While Helen Tiffin's reading of selected texts by South African, Caribbean, Canadian, and Indian authors raise the subject of competing human, animal, and environmental claims in today's world, Ferial Ghazoul unearths numerous instances of "greening discourse" in contemporary Arabic literature. Huggan's chapter, "Notes on the Postcolonial Artic" is especially compelling in its exploration of the ways in which issues about "the mixed ethnic contexts" of the European Artic, the complexity of decolonization processes there, and the local subsistence-based nature practices of its populations operate in conjunction with each other with the consequence that the "technocratic governance of nature" (138) can be seen to simultaneously figure *de*colonizing trends (from an ethnicity-based point of view) and *re*colonizing ones (from an environmental perspective).

Part 4, "Queering," bears witness to the increasing prominence of queer theory in new understandings of the postcolonial mantra of "writing back to the centre." Joan Hambidge offers a psychoanalytic reading of the poetry of Johann de Lange, a major self-identified gay Afrikaans poet "writing back" to "the state of heteronormativity" during the Apartheid years in South Africa through intertextual links with the poetry of gay figures such as W.H. Auden and Thom Gunn. Looking at new forms of queer writing in the Maghreb and in post-apartheid South Africa, William Spurlin redirects our attention to the ways in which sexuality in postcolonial contexts still operates as "a shifting site of signification" that both challenges "the discursive heteronormative legacies imposed by a history of colonialism in Africa" (162) and African nationalist discourses condemning homosexuality as a sign of Western decadence. Turning to an Australian context, David Coad engages with recent literary works about gender transition that have played a significant role in "bringing [the queer] out in the [Australian] public domain" (185), thus paving the way for the passing of antidiscrimination legislation in today's Australia.

Zabus's chapter "The Transgendered Nation" builds a bridge between Part 4 and Part 5, "Utopia," in that it analyses how transgendered characters signify on nascent nation-building in Algerian, Jamaican, and South African contexts, as reflected respectively in the two memoirs by the *pied-noir* writer Marie-Pierre Pruvot, in Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven,* and in Nkunzi Zandile Nkabinde's *Black Bull: Ancestors and Me*. The utopian script of transformation at play in Zabus's contribution

is given a dystopian twist in Mike Hill's chapter, which offers a fascinating account of the ways in which the computational and aerial practices of the US war machine might compel us to move beyond anthropocentric accounts of conflict. In "Future Thinking," Bill Ashcroft returns to issues of nation-building and draws on Ernst Bloch's important distinction between utopia as "a parody of hope" (241) and utopianism as "a constant reminder of a future horizon" (245) to show how postcolonial utopianism reveals itself in "anticipatory illuminations" (242) and in "a developing attitude of separation from the nation-state" (239) that finds expression, today, in texts by African, Caribbean, Indian, and Chinese writers.

In a contemporary context within which the perceived obsolescence of postcolonial studies is generally pitted against the increased visibility of other related fields—namely globalization studies during the 2000s and more recently, world literature—it has become vital to show how postcolonial studies has resolutely moved from an earlier text-based model to a cross-disciplinary approach that can integrate and enrich the insights from many other disciplines. Although it fails to include important "intra-actions" such as the current ones between translation and postcolonial studies and between postcolonial and media studies, *The Future of Postcolonial Studies* makes a timely and important contribution to the field by pointing towards new cross-disciplinary avenues of investigation that extend beyond the linguistic, geographical, and conceptual purview of "mainstream" postcolonial theory.

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Françoise Aubès, Silvia Contarini, Jean-Marc Moura, Idelette Muzart-Fonseca dos Santos, Lucia Quaquarelli, Katja Schubert, dir. ***Interprétations postcoloniales et mondialisation: Littératures de langues allemande, anglaise, espagnole, française, italienne et portugaise.*** **Bern: Peter Lang, 2014. Pp. 258. ISBN: 9783034315975.**

L'on pourrait d'abord féliciter les contributeurs de ce collectif dirigé par six rédacteurs d'avoir étendu le domainedu postcolonial comparé : situé au carrefour de deux grandes approches de corpus géographiquement et culturellement divers, le comparatisme, d'une part, et la théorie postcoloniale, de l'autre, les différents chapitres déploient ainsi une triple ouverture. D'abord, plusieurs chercheurs ont travaillé sur l'aire lusophone et latino-américaine, tandis que d'autres se sont penchés sur le postcolonial au cœur de l'Europe par le phénomène des flux migratoires vers les pays européens : les interrogations du rapport entre le migrant (récent) et l'Européen se posent en effet tout aussi bien en Allemagne qu'en Italie. Une deuxième ouverture vers d'autres domaines de l'art traverse les frontières de la « critique littéraire » comparée, ce dont témoigne l'intérêt porté par les auteurs de ce volume au *folk* et à l'opéra, aux vignettes comme aux poèmes de rue.

Les deux premiers chapitres sont signés par Yves Clavaron et Jean-Marc Moura, un duo de chercheurs qui se sont déjà alliés à d'autres occasions[1] pour mener à bien ce genre de lecture croisée (voir notamment leurs ouvrages co-dirigés sur les « études Atlantiques »). Comme Charles Forsdick et David Murphy dans *Postcolonial (Francophone) Studies*, Clavaron et Moura nous incitent à explorer sans cesse de nouveaux terrains et à décentrer toujours plus la discipline de la littérature comparée. Depuis la notion de *Weltliteratur* de Goethe, focalisée sur l'Europe, le canon est désormais devenu postcolonial. Ceci oblige les chercheurs à couvrir des périphéries toujours plus vastes et d'examiner des auteurs toujours plus éloignés des centres. C'est ce que fait Mónica Quijano (dont l'essai est traduit de l'espagnol) en illustrant l'apport des théories postcoloniales dans le champ de l'Amérique latine. Elle rappelle d'abord com-

1. Yves Clavaron, « Etudes francophones et *postcolonial studies : entre mésentente cordiale et stratégies partagées », Neohelicon* 35.2 (décembre 2008) : 39–53.

ment ce glissement vers les *postcolonial studies* s'est concrétisé par la rencontre entre des sociologues (tel qu'Anibal Quijano) et des philosophes (tel Wallerstein, le penseur de l'antisystème et du système-monde), entre des sémiologues (comme Walter Mignolo), et des critiques littéraires spécialisés en littérature comparée (tel Fernando Coronil). Une nuance de taille doit être mise en évidence: comme la logique le veut, le phénomène postcolonial dans cette vaste région du monde coïncide non pas avec l'essor de l'empire anglais ou français, mais avec la découverte de l'Amérique par Colomb (1492). Cette temporalité différente fait que la « dépendance » planétaire s'est installée dès le 15e siècle dans cette partie du monde, époque où la relation entre Conquérants et Conquis a codifié les populations (40). Par ailleurs, une deuxième spécificité du domaine latino-américain doit être soulignée, celle de la *colonialité*, qui contrairement au colonialisme suggère une continuité s'établit tant ces pays dépendent aujourd'hui encore de logiques d'oppression planétaires (41).

Avec l'article de Ramona Onnis, on passe ensuite à l'Italie qui, comme on le sait, a eu quelques colonies dans « la corne de l'Afrique », soit l'Est de l'Afrique. L'Italie compte deux critiques célèbres dans le domaine des études postcoloniales : Iain Chambers et Lidia Curti qui ont rapidement traduit les concepts de Loomba, Spivak, et Hall, pour ne nommer que ceux-là. En même temps, l'importation de ces savoirs anglo-saxons repose sur un réseau éditorial (50) et de publications périodiques. Néanmoins, l'intérêt pour « la littérature italienne postcoloniale de la migration » est un phénomène récent (53). Ceci peut étonner lorsqu'on songe à un penseur comme Gramsci (l'intellectuel organique). Toutefois, il fut redécouvert par les Italiens dans la première décennie du 21ème siècle (54). Il faut également mentionner l'examen du colonialisme intérieur, soit du clivage Nord/Sud et du passé fasciste, tel que l'a entrepris l'historien Angelo Del Boca. Le cinéma permet de revisiter les parts de pénombre du passé colonial, et ce de manière plus efficace et rapide que la littérature (notamment en ce qui concerne le fascisme en Lybie, à travers un film comme *Omar Mukhtar*, 57). A ce propos, signalons l'important centre de recherche de Sandra Ponzanesi à l'Université d'Utrecht (Pays-Bas). Un développement tardif semblable s'observe Outre-Rhin, comme le note Myriam Geiser où un long silence a persisté jusqu'en 2004 lorsque l'Allemagne a commémoré le centenaire du génocide des Hereros : les regards se sont portés d'abord sur les Ottomans et les Turcs (travaux d'Ottmar Ette) avant que les chercheurs appliquent ou transposent les

Cultural Studies à l'écriture de la migration (68–69). C'est ce que Dirk Göttsche illustre de manière convaincante dans sa contribution : les œuvres des Allemands noirs, les rejetons des « bâtards de la Rhénanie » (85–86) ont été longtemps négligées, de même que les témoignages des rescapés de la Shoah. Dans la bibliographie de la fin de volume, on aurait pu ajouter les travaux de János Riesz sur les tirailleurs sénégalais. On pourrait également souligner le rôle des premières chaires d'études africaines (celle dont Ulli Beier est titulaire à Bayreuth en fornit un exemple).

Dans son essai, Roberto Vecchi se concentre sur le Portugal post-colonial. Il souligne l'importance du penseur brésilien Gilberto Freyre qui, lançant le concept de « lusotropicalisme », a apporté une notion-clé pour la période de Salazar, président colonialiste dans les années 1950. La lente transformation du Portugal en société postcoloniale se remarque aussi dans le cas des *retornados* — ces Portugais rentrés d'Angola et du Mozambique, qui ont préféré faire profil bas. Calafate Ribeiro, dans sa contribution, montre qu'ils sont pourtant nombreux à souligner les inégalités dans un lusotropicalisme imprégné de *saudade* (114), deuil de l'Empire mais aussi bilan du régime sinistre de Salazar. Cet état d'âme me rappelle la « *postcolonial melancholy* » que Gilroy[2] a mis en évidence chez les Britanniques d'origine caribéenne. Le postcolonialisme portugais, conclut Vecchi, fait penser à un « singulier pluriel » (132) du fait que l'idéologie lusotropicaliste est encore de mise pour le Brésil, la toute dernière colonie à obtenir l'indépendance (en 1888). Il ne saurait être question d'une « 'communauté [holistique] de langue portugaise' » (132). Toutefois, on peut regretter l'absence dans cet article assez concis, traduit du portugais, de tout commentaire sur l'apport du « modernismo » d'Oswald Andrade.

La contribution de Gonzalo Portacarrero porte sur les vignettes de César Guttierez au Pérou, qui font manifestement partie de la culture populaire et critiquent le tourisme dont seuls sont bénéficiaires l'Etat et les agences de voyage étrangères. Les indigènes, par contre, restent plongés dans la misère (145). La résistance du peuple au pillage et à la pollution causée par les entreprises minières, ainsi qu'à la répression de l'Etat, est crayonnée dans des images caricaturales. Tantôt elles représentent l'Etat-chien qui dévaste tout (146) ; tantôt l'Eglise (147), fustigée à travers des banderoles montrant avec cynisme que la spiritualité n'est qu'une façade et que le chemin du Christ est un leurre, même pour les touristes qui

2. Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (New York : Columbia University Press, 2004).

effectuent des circuits religieux. Enfin, l'étude de Portacarrero apporte aussi une réflexion sur un terme-clé des études caribéennes qui me sont familières : la terminologie du métissage, illustré par l'analyse du roman du Péruvien Arguedas *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (1971). Contrairement aux belles théories de synthèse de « races » et de cultures, il y aurait bien une « lutte permanente » (150) entre Criollos (les descendants des Espagnols) et Andins. Alors qu'il est connoté positivement et porté aux nues aux Antilles, le concept de *mestizaje* est ici teinté d'ambivalence. L'auteur critique aussi l'écrivain péruvien, Vargas Llosa, lauréat du Prix Nobel en 2008, qui dans sa biographie représente le monde andin comme « plongé dans les ténèbres »; son échec politique (il fut battu par Fujimori) s'expliquerait par un mythe andin.

Le volume aborde ensuite les réécritures shakespeariennes. Ferial J. Ghazoul se penche sur *Othello. The Moor of Venice*, recréé et transposé au Soudan par Tayeb Salih. Dans son roman *Season of Migration to the North* 1969, l'auteur soudanais ajoute un titre à la longue liste de réécritures shakespeariennes. A l'instar de Césaire, Lamming, Caryl Phillips et Marina Warner, Tayeb Salih nous livre son adaptation d'un grand classique shakespearien.

Dans la même optique, Christine Meyer fait remarquer que le dramaturge d'origine turque Feridun Zaimoglu, établi en Allemagne, n'adopte pas une attitude uniformément postcoloniale dans *Kanak Sprak* (1995). Ce recueil illustre comment la « post-migration » en marge de la société allemande transgresse la langue allemande et l'idéal d'une nation basé sur « le postulat toujours profondément ancré en Allemagne de l'unité entre nation, langue et ethnie » (174). Déconstructionniste, Zaimoglu s'attaque aussi aux traditions littéraires (Goethe, Lessing, Molière ainsi que Shakespeare). Dans son adaptation d'*Othello*, montée en 2003, puis de *Hamlet*, montée en 2009, par le Belge Luk Perceval, il tourne résolument le dos à l'éloquence shakespearienne (178). Toutefois selon Meyer, il n'aurait pas fondamentalement changé l'esprit des textes basés sur l'attitude du « *writing back* » (190). Malgré leur succès certain, les « tradaptations » de Shakespeare telles que les conçoit Zaimoglu seraient moins postcoloniales que celles de Morrison (dans *Desdemona*) ou encore de Rushdie, conclut Meyer.

Enfin, la dernière section du volume traite de la francophonie postcoloniale. Elle débute avec le chapitre de Véronique Porra, critique aguerrie de l'Afrique subsaharienne et du Maghreb. Elle revisite ici l'œuvre de

l'Algérienne Assia Djebar dans *Nulle part dans la maison de mon père* (2007), roman qu'elle compare à *L'Amour, la fantasia* (1985) : les études postcoloniales et les *subaltern studies* ne constituent plus seulement une grille d'interprétation mais une grille d'écriture, dans le parcours de plus en plus autobiographique de la grande dame des lettres algériennes. Dans ce roman, Djebar met aussi au premier plan sa posture d'héritière féministe, dans le sillage de Cixous et d'Irigaray. Elle déconstruit plusieurs mythes orientalistes et plus précisément féminins. Malgré le caractère autoréférentiel du roman, dont le titre me semble faire écho à l'essai de K. A. Appiah, *In my Father's House. Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*[3], Djebar démontre comment la sensualité est doublement refoulée à la fois par le système colonial et le tabou du corps féminin dans la société musulmane (201). La tentation suicidaire semble alors l'expression de cet écart et de l'éparpillement culturel (la « dégénérescence » de la sensualité grand-maternelle, 201). Porra montre ici une fois de plus avec acuité combien l'alliage du *close reading*, des *postcolonial* et *subaltern studies* permet de cerner l'évolution d'une auteure internationalement acclamée. Par ailleurs, elle a co-dirigé avec J.M. Moura[4] des collectifs sur ces thèmes.

Pour Alessandro Portelli, l'Italie compte quelques voix migrantes qui dénoncent l'hospitalité plus que douteuse du pays de Gramsci : l'italien n'a qu'un seul mot pour désigner l'étranger et l'hôte, « *ospite* », mais les deux rôles sont rigoureusement séparés dans l'œuvre d'auteurs migrants Somaliens et Indiens.

Ce collectif frappe par l'envergure des champs couverts : à côté d'une introduction fort utile d'Yves Clavaron sur le rapport entre la littérature comparée et les études postcoloniales, figurent des articles plus conceptuels sur les « *ethnic literatures* », concept intraduisible en français, à moins que l'on accepte le terme d'*endofiction*, suggéré par Crystel Pinçonnat. Dans la sphère de la francophonie, l'on parle de littératures issues de la migration, de littérature multiculturelle, ou encore, comme les disciples de Glissant, de « Tout-monde ». Il est par ailleurs frappant qu' hormis Porra (encore que de manière indirecte,à travers un roman de son émule, Patrick Chamoiseau, 195) et Onnis (51), aucun des auteurs ne fasse usage et ne renvoie à la théorie du Martiniquais (brièvement mentionné dans l'Introduction, 13). Cette absence relativise quelque peu l'importance et

3. K. A. Appiah, *In my Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1992).

4. Jean-Marc Moura, Véronique Porra, *L'Atlantique littéraire : Perspectives théoriques sur la constitution d'un espace translinguistique* (Hildesheim : Olms Verlag, 2015).

la validité des concepts-phares de l'ouvrage. Par contre, d'autres grandes pointures sont mentionnées régulièrement, ce dont l'Index permet aisément de faire le constat. Ainsi, derrière Bhabha, Spivak, Said (« *the holy trinity* »), on trouve Walter Mignolo, intellectuel appelant à la *désobédience*. Ce concept n'est cependant pas mentionné dans l'article de Mónica Quijano. A travers l'article de Gonzalo Portocarrero sur les représentations imaginaire du métissage, le collectif se focalise sur des cas concrets d'aires moins étudiées.

Le volume est de ce fait un des rares à regrouper la lusophonie postcoloniale et des régions européennes moins « proéminentes » lorsqu'on s'intéresse aux *postcolonial studies*. Ceci reflète toute l'ambition des deux coéditeurs, J.M. Moura et Yves Clavaron, qui ont d'ailleurs organisé des colloques notamment sur *Les Empires de l'Atlantique*[5].

Bien que les chapitres consacrés à l'Italie et à l'Allemagne, qui nous rappellent utilement que ces pays avaient eux aussi des colonies en Afrique, il est dommage que l'aire néerlandophone reste une fois de plus dans l'ombre. D'autre part, les deux chapitres sur Shakespeare attestent du regain d'une perspective postcoloniale sur l'œuvre du plus grand dramaturge et poète de langue anglaise. Toutefois, ces réécritures shakespeariennes (surtout l'*Othello* de Feridun Zaimoglu) ne s'avèrent pas toujours aussi radicalement postcoloniales qu'on pourrait le penser.

A l'initiative louable des rédacteurs de l'ouvrage, on pourrait objecter que forcément, pareille envergure risque de rester partielle. Les auteurs néerlandophones manquent à l'appel. De plus,, on pourrait objecter que l'illustration choisie pour la couverture frise le cliché. Des mappemondes et des cartes sont trop souvent utilisées pour ce genre de travail. De surcroît, l'on pourrait s'étonner que le nom de Todorov ne soit pas plus souvent cité. Dans *Nous et les autres*, *La Conquête de l'Amérique* et d'autres publications encore, le fondateur de la revue *Poétique* s'est montré un humaniste postcolonial. Il a beaucoup réfléchi sur le rapport malaisé entre colonisateur et colonisé qu'il connaissait d'autant mieux qu'il était originaire d'un pays communiste ayant connu la dictature.

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5. Yves Clavaron, J. M. Moura, *Les Empires de l'Atlantique, 19–21 siècles : figures de l'autorité impériale dans les lettres d'expression européenne de l'espace Atlantique* (Paris : Ed Perséides, 2012).

Delphine Munos. *After Melancholia: A Reappraisal of Second-Generation Diasporic Subjectivity in the Work of Jhumpa Lahiri*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013. Pp. 237. ISBN: 9789042037403.

Undoubtedly, the main strengths of *After Melancholia* is, on the one hand, Delphine Munos's scrupulous psychoanalytical close reading of Jhumpa Lahiri's work and, on the other hand, a new examination of the predicament of haunted diasporic identities. As the title of her book indicates, Munos explores how Lahiri uses melancholy to represent second-generation subjectivities haunted by impossible mourning and unclaimed legacies. According to Munos, the idea of a "return" is therefore understood as a process of accommodating diaspora's spectral presences.

The Pulitzer Prize winning author Jhumpa Lahiri privileges characters who hail from second-generation American-Bengalis from the late 1960s and early 1970s. Described as "high-achieving, urban, generally upper-middle-class, second-generation characters" (Munos xxxxii), they belong to a privileged group, in contrast to a previous generation of indentured labour migrants.

Indeed, from 1830 to 1916, the important Indian plantation diaspora provided cheap indentured labour following the British Empire's abolition of slavery in 1833 (Munos xxv). However, due to tightened emigration policies, the Indian-American community ceased to exist following WWII, when after 1965, an act allowed the recruitment of trained Indian professionals (Göttschlich in Munos xxxii).

However, Lahiri's characters are *Americans*, US citizens by birth, albeit from Bengali ancestry. They do not think of India as a motherland, as the first generation of immigrants did. Rather, they regard India as Americans do (Munos 186). For example, Hema, one of Lahiri's main characters, adopts the Indian custom of arranged marriage. This, Munos explains, does not arise from Hema's acceptance of or preference for a "purity" of Indianness over her US identity. Rather, adherence to such a custom allows Hema to "negotiate her own form of generational arrival in the U.S.A" (Munos 122). By focusing on a second-generation character whose plight suggests an articulation of non-arrival rather than negotiations of hybridity as a central issue, Munos's monograph offers a major contribution to the field of postcolonial literary studies. Second generation subjects still seeking a "place in the world"' because

of their "arrival-without-arrival" predicament, has remained a neglected issue in contemporary literary scholarship (Munos xxxvii). Indeed, in current diaspora fiction, the first-generation migrant experience continues to dominate, in doing so side-lining "migrants by affiliation" (Dutt-Ballerstadt in Munos xxxvii).

More specifically, Lahiri concentrates on descendants of Bengali migrants transitioning into adulthood. Beset with a crisis once their parents die, these characters find themselves at a point when they are "soon to become the last living connection with their parents' experience of migration" (Munos 1). In other words, these second generation people lose sense of their roots and routes as symbolized by their parents (Dutt-Ballerstadt in Munos 3). Consequently, the possibility of a "return" to the "homeland" lacks the sense of yearning triggered by nostalgia. In spite of this, descendants still feel the pressure of, on the one hand, loyalty to the old world and, on the other hand, adapting to the new (Lahiri in Munos 2). Thus guilt-ridden, they are burdened with an attachment to a lost yet not completely dead world, to a homeland where they were never born in the first place. Likewise, Munos subtly not only considers the migrants who have to bear the brunt of adjustment, she also problematizes the melting-pot ideology of the US. She articulates a mild critique towards a South Asian community that seeks to achieve a "model-minority" status. In doing so, this community leaves the white "supremacy undisturbed," favouring a "colour-blind American society" (Munos 190).

While Lahiri's work has usually been reduced to a thematic approach involving well-trodden paths of ethnicity, cultural assimilation, and a hybridity still privileging "arrival" into the host country, Munos, taking her cue from Mala Pandurang, asserts that such a discourse of arrival "constructs Western locales as quintessential sites of transformation and interaction, even though it is obvious that hybridity does not start upon arrival in the West" (Munos 123).

Another of Munos' original contributions is her reliance on psychoanalysis not only through Freud but also through the theories of such writers as Kristeva, Abraham, Törok, Green, and Laplanche. Instead of foregrounding Freud's father-centred Oedipus master narrative, Munos chooses to adopt a mother-centred approach. This can be perceived through the overwhelming presence/absence of mothers and motherlands in her study of Lahiri's works. To illustrate this point, Munos concentrates on Lahiri's main protagonists, Hema and Kaushik, who "employ

the maternal ego as lifeline" in order to understand themselves, even if this at times proves unsuccessful (Munos 187). The refusal of Kaushik's mother to be laid to rest in the US or in India, but in the sea, contributes to Kaushik's inability to objectify her loss. In an effort to preserve his own self-definition, he futilely strives to preserve the shadow of his mother through photographs. Kaushik's relationship with photography becomes a process by which he seeks to exorcise the memory of his mother. Moreover, this denial echoes the character's experience of seeing his own father dispose of his dead mother's pictures in boxes. Munos reads this episode as a sign of Kaushik's father's "implicit refusal to mourn" (29). At the same time, photographs could also provide, as Barthes opines, a foreshadowing of one's future death (Munos 47)[6]—which, in Lahiri trilogy's, is indeed Kaushik's eventual fate.

Equally innovative in Munos' reading of Lahiri's work is her interpretation of the city of Rome, the site of Hema and Kaushik's final meeting. Representing the unconscious in spatial terms, via Freud, Munos decodes the Eternal City as the place of confrontation between Hema's primal repressed and Kaushik's past, always already linked with the "message" of the mother (Munos 104). Munos, taking her cue from Derrida's notion of "postality," suggests that a message sent from the place of origins continues to travel towards meaning. "Postality" begs the question: what does language come to mean *in absentia*? In other words, how does a second-generation descendant process the gaps, secrets, silences[7]—the message—sent out by the ancestor? Here, Munos interrogates what she calls the transgenerational phantom: how are diasporic transmissions organised around the unsaid? Because of a generation's inability to access

6. Trauma Studies has abundantly explored the relationships between trauma writing and photography: like trauma, photographs reveal as much as they conceal. As a trace, a photo "hovers" between life and death, just like trauma survivors.

7. It is interesting to note that second-generation Holocaust survivors also suffer from both the silences of their parents and a certain sense of unexplainable attachment and guilt towards their parents' stories. In the introduction of his book, *Holocaust Novelists* (2004), Efraim Sicher explains: "The second generation feels an urgent need to transmit the testimony of the ageing survivors to the next generation, both as carriers of memory and as fighters against Holocaust denial. The generational transfer of posttraumatic memory has given children of survivors the feeling of being maimed by history before their births, and they have had to come to terms with a past of which they have no personal memory by imagining it creatively in novels, poetry and plays" (xvii).

primary narratives (Munos 81), mourning becomes "unreadable" (Derrida in Munos 81). So, is there anything after melancholia? For Munos, "home is where the haunt is" (29).

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Dorothy M. Figueira. *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Cross-Cultural Encounters with India.* London: Bloomsbury, 2015. Pp. 200. ISBN: 9781472592354.

Based both on a clearly articulated philosophical framework as well as on detailed studies of a broad corpus of texts, *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion* tackles a complex and multifaceted subject. Focussing on texts about "India," it presents and discusses encounters and interpretations of the "other" as a process of much more than just a theoretical interest. Concentrating on significant examples of works describing India, its inhabitants, and cultures, this monograph skilfully examines both the political implications and consequences of the interpretations implied—and thus of "interpretation" itself. Accordingly, Figueira's corpus is analyzed with the aim of determining the hermeneutics applied by the authors in order to discuss the "other." The book's title readily indicates the specific perspective from which interpretative processes and their respective hermeneutical premises are considered. Figueira's perspective is deeply indebted to the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, particularly his distinction between two basic tendencies

of hermeneutics—the "willingness to listen" and the "vow of obedience" on the one hand, and the "willingness to suspect" and the "vow of rigor" on the other (27). Thus modelled by Ricoeur's tenets, Figueira's approach offers a hermeneutics of unmasking and demystification, referring critically to misleading interpretations of texts, to a false consciousness, or to either of them. Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud are regarded as the "masters" of this hermeneutical "school of suspicion," as Ricoeur suggests. Further, Figueira stresses the fact that there is no absolute antagonism but rather a spectrum between the two poles of Ricoeur's double-barrelled model of hermeneutics (5). Figueira chooses to rely on Ricoeur, because his theories offer "a middle path between hermeneutics and the critique of ideology" (Figueira 10). One might articulate the idea of a precarious but fertile balance between conflicting and interfering hermeneutical premises in a way reminiscent of Ariadne's thread in the labyrinth of interpretations:

> Ricoeur ... acknowledged the need for a hermeneutics of suspicion. It allows us to transform the absolute other into a relative other that we might be able to see as another self. However, Ricoeur also saw ... that the mastery of the self in relation to the other is disrupted before discourse can even imagine itself in control. Following Gadamer, Ricoeur recommended an understanding of hermeneutics that posits the possibility of recovering a text's lost message while maintaining the necessary suspicions aimed at demystifying it. (11)

As the book's introduction makes abundantly clear, there is more at stake in this context than just the history of European reception and interpretation of the "Indian" other. The larger concerns of the study involve basic perspectives on human thinking and writing dealing with historical and cultural "otherness." The book's seven chapters are devoted to representative examples of writing about India from a Western (European) perspective, starting with antiquity (classical representations as well as biblical texts) and medieval representations (Biblical and patristic documents), and ending with Pietro della Valle (1586–1652).

Evidently, the specific subject of India indirectly sheds light on the participation of both individual and collective imagination in processes of constructing the other. The catchword "India" does not only refer to a region, its peoples, and cultures—which often appeared as outstandingly exotic from a European/Western perspective. In the history of European explorations, this term has been used to name two different worlds often difficult to differentiate for early European travellers: a subcontinent situ-

ated to the East of Europe and the New World located in the West, discovered by Spanish and other European imperial powers. This dual notion of India is more than the consequence of a simple geographical misinterpretation: it programmatically illustrates the involvement of imagination and anticipation in the process of exploring, conceptualizing, and interpreting the "other" part of the world. As colonized regions, both "Indias" are of eminent importance for the history of Western thought and self-interpretation, because in the course of their exploration and colonization, "Indias" induced controversies. They caused military struggles between different colonising nations as well as different conceptualizations of specific colonization ideologies, desires for self-representation, expectations, hegemony, and power. As the case of the two "Indias" clearly shows, interpreting and modelling the "other" always implies self-interpretation and self-modelling. Such a process strongly affects the practical (political, economical, and cultural) aspects of "identifying" oneself.

In her monograph, Figueira analyzes travel narratives, reports about voyagers and their aims, itineraries about India containing geographical, political, theological, and cultural information. Travelers' stories, according to Figueira's leading and fruitful premise, "create a vision of the other to better understand the self" (vii). Mirroring India implies the project of identifying oneself by contrast with the "other." Accordingly, as several examples demonstrate, travel narratives are written and read in order to distinguish between Christians and non-Christians, as well as between humans and monsters. They represent more than just empirical experience, as they reveal dreams and fears, and positive and negative obsessions. In her introduction, Figueira clearly outlines the philosophical-hermeneutical premises on which her studies are based. All "configurations of the other" (ix), even if they appear in the guise of monsters, gods, and strangers serve as mirrors to the self. (ix). Seen from the perspective suggested by Gadamer and Ricoeur, depictions of images of the other constitute a hermeneutical enterprise of outstanding and exemplary importance. Moreover, Figueira uses De Certeau and Levinas to highlight the fundamentally ethical dimension in discourses about and in constructions of the other. But "(h)ow can we read the other?" (v). As Figueira reminds us, according to Levinas, encounters with the other can never be adequately represented (11). Viewed from this perspective, travel narratives can be characterized as translations of "difference," as constructions of a "transparent alterity" (12), as "transcriptions" of unwrought

"alterity" into a something opposed to the familiar, i.e. "anti-same." Regarding the unfamiliar as antagonistic is a first step toward interpretation (12)—a process that is reflected in multiple ways in the history of writing about "India." In the course of this history, texts are always influenced by earlier models. As Figueira documents through different examples, one can detect a strong inter-textual bond linking texts about imagined and conventionalized monsters and detailed descriptions. Significantly, early accounts of India focus mainly on "marvels and curiosities"—*thaumata* (13). They are linked with and included into accounts of the travels and warfares of Alexander the Great, as well as the legends of Prester John and apostle Thomas's mission to the East and his martyrdom. In post-medieval times, as the borders of "Latin Europe" were extended, the age of discoveries and Christian missions induced re-configurations of India under the influence of new interests and questions. Indeed, since the mid-sixteenth century, Jesuit observers have been present in India.

Chapter 1, "Representations of the Indian Other," focusing on the Greek epic tradition such as Homer and Herodotus, emphasizes the distinction between the civilized and the barbarians typical of that era. Figueira also examines texts about the otherness of the "Indians" by such authors as Herodotus and Strabo. Early descriptions of Indian monsters such as Ktesias's *Indica*, typify the first instances of teratological discourse. Pliny, Strabo, Isodore, and others' portraits of sciopods, cynocephali, and blemmyes offer striking examples of this phenomenon. Comparing these descriptions with Sanskrit texts, Figueira notes "a marked similarity in the descriptions of Indian monsters found in both western classical literature and in Sanskrit texts" (25). Aryans described non-Aryans in terms of monstrosity; the Greeks translated the terms applied to the intra-Indian "others" and took them literally. Thus, as Figueira points out, the classical image of the Indian monster in early descriptions of India is partially a home-made product, "not purely a western racist construct," but one inspired by Aryan ideology (27). In the age of Christianity, a complex and subtle dialogue about monsters developed. It influenced the collective way of imagining India, literature (legends and historical accounts), and mapmaking. As she deals with this aspect of Western knowledge, Figueira provides a rich collection of examples and references that shed light on leading interests and tendencies. In this era, imagination stimulated by "fear, desire and anxiety," centered on "Indian Christians," pseudo-Christians, and monsters (38).

As chapter 2, "The Lure of Christian Allies and the Fear of Muslim Enemies" suggests, the complex history of the Prester John legend is closely linked with Western fantasies about India. In this section of her book, Figueira interprets this legend as a reaction to the medieval fear of a certain "otherness," i.e. Muslim religion and culture. The wealth and power of priest and king John, whose kingdom was hypothetically located in Africa as well as in Asia, fascinated the popular imagination. Prester John thus encodes the Western Christian desire to secure an ally beyond the Muslim world. As the subsequent chapter examines, the age of European discoveries ushers in a new episode in the history of "Indian" imagology.

Chapter 3, "The Quest for Christians and the Rediscovery of Monsters," examines prominent historical examples of interpretations of the Indian other through textual description. Nicolò de' Conti and Poggio Bracciolino's travel narratives impressively document the broad spectrum of conceptualizations of India in that age. Conti depicts both the idealized Indian Christians and the Indian "monsters" found in tales and legends. He underlines Indian "perversities," while exhibiting a general mistrust of Indians. This eventually leads to the notion that "Indians need oversight" (62). Columbus's perception of the India he discovered is dominated by the ethical concerns about enslaving "Indians." This dilemma is deeply related to the possibility of civilizing natives. Would it be conceivable to Christianize them and integrate them into society—or are they irreversibly monstrous barbarians (65)? Reports about cannibalism and about deviant sexuality are also closely linked with this alternative. Therefore, the imagology of "Indians" refers to theological and anthropological as well as economical and political concepts and oppositions. In a summarizing overview, Figueira identifies two controversial tendencies or myths: "One identifies Christians/proto-Christians and the other presents a theology of the monstrous" (75).

In Chapter 4, "Vasco da Gama, the Meaning of Discovery, and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion," Figueira focuses on Vasco da Gama's account of his Indian experiences—an example of Western construction of India appearing as odd as it is instructive. As Figueira unveils, da Gama's vision was strongly flawed by severe misunderstandings (cf.). Portuguese explorers, in their wish to identify "Indian Christians", evidently 'found' what they were looking for and misinterpreted phenomena inherent in Hindu culture and religion as a branch of Christianity.

In Chapter 5: "Re-visioning the Christian and the Monster," Figueira points out that merchants and travellers such as Pires, Barbosa, and others became quite meticulous observers of India, as they were more inclined to experience concrete cultural realities. Their travel narratives offer remarkable insights into the structures of Indian caste society. Thus, they identified a kind of "monster" differing from that depicted in classic and medieval sources. Indeed, Indian caste epistemology posited the outcast as monstrous in opposition to the Brahmin.

Chapter 6, "The Return of the Monster: Camoens and the Epic Venture," examines the role performed by European literature in the process of constructing India simultaneously in terms of otherness and as a mirror of the self. In its construction of a Portuguese cultural identity through the image of India, Luis de Camoens' epic poem "The Lusiad" (published in 1592) can be regarded as a counterpoint to Missionaries' texts. Combining historiographic, mythical, and legendary elements, it articulates a critique of the brutal behaviour of the Portuguese in India. According to Figueira's subtle and convincing interpretation, an old Man from Restelo critizices the Portuguese military and government by underlining their inhumanity. Thus, he implicitly raises the question of who the real monsters are. Evidently, these supposed monsters cannot be simply identified as "others." While the Portuguese exhibit some monstrous features, the other can now be construed as virtuous (125).

Chapter 7, "There is No There Anymore: The Subaltern Speaks to Pietro della Valle," concentrates on the life and voyages of Pietro della Valle, which also help conceptualize the other as related to the self. Pietro della Valle's descriptions of India strongly counterpoint previous modes of decoding the monstrous. His literary depiction of an Indian woman who freely commits "sati" transforms her into a genuine subject. According to Figueira, "the Indian other is transformed into the 'Christian' self" (14). This echoes the rhetorical question "can the subaltern speak?" which in this case is answered positively.

As Figueira's broad survey shows, European travellers tend to imagine Indians through the two dominating images of "Christians" and "monsters" (15). The possibility of Christianizing Indians certainly feels appealing to missionaries, at the same time at it sometimes distorts perceptions of visitors to India. This subjective vision is often rooted in concrete political causes. In many cases, "the fantasy of Indian Christians

appears ... as a utopian dream in response to the Muslim threat of encroachment" (15). On the one hand, the notion of "monstrous" Indians finds its source in a homogenizing way of shaping "the marginal and the outcast" (15). On the other hand, descriptions of monstrous phenomena in the Indian population reveal specific historical obsessions with subversion, danger, and pollution (15). All in all, *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion* offers an extremely intelligent and illuminating examination of the ways of modelling "otherness" and the complex motivations underlying these often conflicting images.

The distinction between a "hermeneutics of suspicion" and a "hermeneutics of belief" offers a valuable reading grid for analysing Figueira's corpus. These two hermeneutic principles work productively on at least two levels. First, they undoubtedly provide an adequate tool to interpret travel narratives and to explain the modes in which they interpret the "other." Second, Figueira's distinction prompts the following question: according to which type of hermeneutics should these historical texts be interpreted? As contemporary readers, should we submit them to a "hermeneutics of suspicion" or to a "hermeneutics of belief"? Figueira's analyses generally favour critical demystification and unmasking. In this respect, they are evidently committed to a "hermeneutics of suspicion." However, they also reduce the distance between this corpus in its historical and cultural "otherness" and the contemporary reader. Figueira's insights reveal analogies and similarities between old travel narratives and contemporary challenges; they help the reader detect mirror-images in unfamiliar ways of interpreting the world. Therefore, "the hermeneutics of suspicion" could also be described by the ethics of a "hermeneutics of belief."

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Christoph Senft. *Contemporary Indian Writing in English between Global Fiction and Transmodern Historiography.* Leiden and Boston: Brill Rodopi, 2016. Pp. 239. ISBN: 9789004309067.

In the wake of postmodern and post-structuralist theories, history as a grand narrative has become untenable as a privileged source of knowledge about the past. History's claims to objectivity, rationality, and ability to give meaning to the past are disputed. As history becomes a site of struggle between competing structures of power and epistemology, historiography comes into focus for its ideological baggage in representing and making sense of the past. The writings of Hayden White, Frank R. Ankersmit, Keith Jenkins, Alan Munslow, and Douglas Kellner among post-modernists and Dipesh Chakrabarty, Enrique Dussel, Walter D. Mignolo, and Ziauddin Sardar among postcolonial scholars have contributed towards a revisionist approach to historiography, in disciplines varying from philosophy to political science and history. Chistoph Senft, in this book, uses the insights of postmodern and postcolonial theories to interpret some of the recent works of historical fiction from India written in English with a view to show how they "represent the past in ways that counteract and enrich global and hegemonic discourses and give a voice to local and suppressed expressions of modernity" (4). He uses the term "transmodern" to suggest "confluence and overlapping in different value systems, cultural specificities and epistemologies" that give "voice to local and minor expressions of history and modernity" (4). Senft outlines the various strands of postmodernist theory on historiography in the second chapter, "Stories, Histories, Theories" to determine how they "justify the interpretation of literature as literary historiography" (8). The narrative mode of representing the past is common to literature and history. This is the reason why he refers to literature about the past not as historical fiction or historiographic metafiction but as "literary historiographies." In literature, "what is said" is determined by "how it is said." The past is not a "forensic reconstruction" but a metaphorical picturisation. Senft is right in saying that academic history is one of the many forms of "writing history." Its homogenising effect renders the past opaque and univocal. Literary historiography, on the other hand, allows "pluriversal dialogue with the past." Novels can deepen possibilities by reinventing the past in forms and ways inaccessible to the linear ways of seeing, exemplified

in academic writing. Obviously, such an "aestheticisation of historical representation" has ethical implications. The author comments: "Fictionalised histories ... can help us to reflect on moral systems in the past and present" (18). He feels it would lead to "democratising the analysis and production of historical knowledge" (ibid). All this is in keeping with the recent critique of Euro-centric discourses on rationality and modernity which have resulted in a change of perspective from the centre to the periphery and the ruling class to the ruled as evidenced by the writings of the subaltern school pioneered by Ranjit Guha.

In the course of thirteen chapters, Senft offers us a theoretical overview of postmodern and postcolonial theories as well as critical interpretations of ten novels written by Indian authors in English in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

While Senft's larger objective of pluralising the historical discourse is indeed relevant, one could wonder whether such a project can be realised through fictional works produced in English, the language of privilege in a county like India. The "global elitism" of these authors puts constraints on their ability to embody local and marginal voices even when they address issues that are politically and socially volatile and urgent. Senft defends his project on the ground that none of the texts chosen showcase "Indianness" or similar issues of identity, class, or language. It is true that these texts are diverse in their choice of spatial and temporal settings and use of varieties of EnglishFurther, they reject the "exoticism" so pervasive in contemporary taste and market preferences. They are able to raise important questions regarding historiographic agency, by asking questions such as "who writes history for whom, how those in power influence the selection of sources, topics and modes of writing, or how certain perspectives are repressed in (post)colonial subjects and societies" (216).

After adopting the policies of economic liberalisation in 1991, India has increasingly moved away from its Gandhian or Nehruvian legacies. This has caused ruptures as well as resistance in the political and social spheres. A new generation has grown up without the memories of the nationalist resistance against colonialism. Many of them find the values of Hindu nationalism acceptable in their search for a viable identity in the globalised world. The co-existence of revivalist and right-wing ideology with information revolution is a contradiction that characterises the Indian society of the twenty-first century. Some of the novels chosen for close reading in the volume such as *In Times of Siege* by Gita Hariharan,

Shalimar the Clown by Salman Rushdie, and *Fireproof* by Rajkamal Jha address these contradictions in plotting their complex narratives sensitively. As Senft points out, Shiv in *In Times of Siege* "personifies the conflict surrounding the use and abuse of certain epistemological positions" (47). As a native writer he has the freedom to interpret the past, although this infuriates revivalist ideologues. Those who defend Indian "values" are often unaware that instrumental reason has also infiltrated their constructs of the past. Gita Hariharan raises several ethical questions for which there are no clear answers. The same is also true of Salman Rushdie's novel, which moves across continents and intersects between global and personal narratives in the author's attempt to make sense of the truth of contemporary global history. The latter appears more surreal than literary fiction. Senft brings out the various narrative shifts in the plotting of Rushdie's novel to reveal the subterranean elements of angst, alienation, and anguish in contemporary manifestations of collective rage and terror.

Gita Hariharan uses elements of the regional past of Kannada *Vachana* poetry and the life story of its major exponent, the poet Basava, in order to interpret the present. Amitav Ghosh in his *Sea of Poppies* recovers the forgotten history of opium trade and projects an Indian ocean modernity rooted in the mobility of people across various frontiers that forces us to revise our sense of Western categories. As the author comments, the main task of the use of Indian ocean modernity is "to uncover, question and dissolve the borders between the West and East, modern and traditional, coloniser and colonised, higher and lower caste or status, and perpetrator and victim" (64). He also brings out the parallels between Gilory's "Black Atlantic" and Ghosh's "Indian Ocean" narratives. Ghosh remains convincingly local in his ability to use varieties of English and recover memories and trajectories which were erased by nationalist narratives. Though Sidharth Deb cannot claim the versatility of Ghosh's vision or craftsmanship, he invokes the conflict between region and nation in his story of Bengalies who have lived in the Northeast of India for generations, in his novel, *The Point of Return*. Senft reads it as a narrative of suppressed memories and neglected histories.

Both Ruchir Joshi's *The Last Jet-Engine Laugh* and Rana Dasgupta's *Solo* are novels that do not directly address issues of contemporary history. Joshi's novel "retells history, but imagines what the past would look like from a future perspective" (95) while *Solo* "reveals how the negative

teleology of Western modernity undercuts all social spheres and thus defines how historiography is written" (123). Both these novels consciously distance themselves from the local and regional. Rajkamal Jha's novel, *Fireproof*, is a masterly narrative that uses metafiction to critique the traumatic events of contemporary history defying narration and comprehension. Senft brings out the play between the factual and the fictional in the novel against the background of the suppression of the facts by state agencies. As he comments: "Magical realism helps point to the gaps and silences that violence and death have caused and that historiography often tends to neglect" (158).

A novel like *The Thing about Thugs* suits the author's requirements well, as the novelist seems to have kept in mind some of the post-modernist theories while crafting the narrative. *Maximum City* and *The Music Room* are novels that do not lend themselves to postmodernist readings easily. But Christoph Senft subjects them to his rigorous theoretical scrutiny, though one could have gained equally valuable insights through intelligent readings unaided by theory of any kind. The author could have confined himself to some of the best fictional works from his corpus, in order to produce a more detailed and coherent critical treatise.

The merits of the book can be found in its close readings, whch are articulated from well-defined theoretical perspectives. Chistoph Senft is conscious of the pitfalls in studying a complex pluralistic society such as India. Though English has become nativised into an Indian language and enjoys wide currency, it has inbuilt limitations in dealing with the diversity and multiplicity of Indian society. Some of the most profound recent works of Indian fiction dealing with historiography can be found in Indian languages rather than in Indian English. Since many of them such as K. R. Meera's *Hangwoman* (Hamish Hamilton), Shamsur Rahman Faruqui's *The Mirror of Beauty* (Penguin; described as "an amazing novel" by Orhan Pamuk) and Cho. Dharman's *Koogai: The Owl* (Oxford University Press) are available in English translation, any book dealing with revisionist historiography in Indian fiction needs to look beyond Indian fiction in English which only represents a tiny fraction of the total output of literary fiction in India.

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Elina Valovirta. *Sexual Feelings: Reading Anglophone Women's Writing Through Affect*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014. Pp. 217. ISBN: 9789042038608.

Elina Valovirta's monograph provides the lay reader a broad referential locus both in terms of a literature review and theoretical and conceptual apparatuses through which to read Anglophone Caribbean women's writings. In most practical terms it presents a pedagogically sound starting point in familiarizing oneself with this vast and diverse body of literary works stemming out of an equally heterogeneous set of socio-cultural and historico-political contexts. In her analysis, Valovirta brings together a varied set of voices representative of experiences ranging from women writers living and working in the Caribbean, to those of the second generation Caribbean diaspora in the United Kingdom and the United States. In doing so, Valovirta offers the reader a fair sense of the rich polyphony that exists in contemporary Anglophone Caribbean Women's writing. Exploring the works of Erna Brodber, Oonya Kempadoo, Edwidge Danticat, Opal Adisa, and Shani Mootoo, *Sexual Feelings*, as the title suggests, seeks to examine the underpinnings of sexuality, sexual orientation, and gender within these located feminine perspectives. In doing so, Valovirta also presents a cross-section of relevant Caribbean feminist scholars and engages with their works in arguing their relevance to her own analyses in this book. Contemporary voices in Caribbean feminist thought like Helen Scott, Evelyn O'Callaghan, Myriam Chancy, Cynthia James, Linden Lewis, Anita Haya Patterson, Janet Momsen, Denise deCaires Narain, Rhoda Reddock, Marietta Morrissey, Carole Boyce Davies, and Elaine Savory Fido—to name a few—form not only a conceptual universe within which Caribbean women's literatures may be understood, but also serve to locate and clearly define the scope of Valovirta's own scholarship within the field.

The questions of location, locatedness and the politics of locationality become key issues in defining the parameters and theoretical paradigms of this book. To this end, the introductory and concluding chapters form somewhat of a frame to understanding the author's scholarly endeavor. In the introductory chapter, Valovirta articulates what in my opinion constitutes the central argument and theoretical core of this book—the need to define the location of one's scholarship and the locatedness of one's reading. Such an acknowledgement of locatedness and

the politics of locationality is relevant not only to the author's own positionality in relation to her field of inquiry—European woman academic vis-à-vis Caribbean women's writings—but in a larger sense also to the practice of Comparative Literature and literary studies in general, thus making *Sexual Feelings* a work of interest to established and fledgling comparatists alike, for what one does in/with the event of a confrontation with alterity is a question comparatists continue to grapple with in more ways than one. Moreover, one could argue that Valovirta's exploration of location and locationality relates to issues of moral philosophy and moral psychology, particularly in the context of conversations surrounding identity and alterity, which increasingly inform scholarship in the Humanities and the Social Sciences today.

If we function on the premise that any act of reading could be configured in terms of an encounter with otherness, reading literary works from otherwise located cultures and cultural contexts would necessitate an even greater ethical responsibility towards the Other. Valovirta, in defining this need for ethical considerations, turns to the larger discursive context of feminist theory. She points to the importance accorded to the complex of feelings, affectivity, and experience within feminist discourses. The primacy Valovirta accords to "feeling" in her experiential locus as a reader, i.e. the locus of feelings she as a reader experiences in encountering the historical and experiential worlds of Caribbean women though their writings, in my estimation, is also an acknowledgement of the limitation experienced by an otherwise located reader in attempting to access an otherwise located text (Valovirta 5). The conceptual categories of affect and emotion that she gleans from the intersections of feminism and post-coloniality then become a means to address difference and perhaps even a possible means for transcending difference. Based on a praxis thus configured, Valovirta argues for an incontrovertible connection between affectivity and ethics (9). In other words, an ethics of engagement cannot be envisioned or defined outside the context of an encounter with otherness. However, while stating that "white feminists" have been "unnecessarily cautious" regarding their own "subject positions" in reading the Other, Valovirta also states that traditional reader-response theories have been "somewhat conservative" in defining the reader's role and the parameters for a readerly text (28). In negotiating both these limitations, and in inscribing the "readerly 'I'" into discursive hermeneutic acts that stem from textual encounters, she turns to Eve Korofsky Sedgwick's idea

of "reparative reading." Drawing on Sedgwick's work, Valovirta defines "reparative reading" in terms of a "new kind of intellectual desire" that facilitates an openness to alternative readings and seeks to transcend "literary borders" without resorting to an essentializing theoretical gaze (36). The question that our author seeks to articulate through such a practice is fundamental to her scholarship and her positionality as a reader: "how can a white feminist reader read and understand Caribbean fiction written by women from a white cross-cultural feminist perspective?" (36). It is in the context of this more complex and multifarious problem that Valovirta locates the subject of her inquiry in this book: the representations of sexuality and sexual feelings in a selection of literary works expressing feminine subject positions within Caribbean and Caribbean diasporic contexts.

The "will to know" and "access to knowledge" that frame our author's definitions of "reparative reading" seem problematic in current identitarian contexts of scholarship in the humanities (35). Does not locatedness also necessarily simultaneously imply locations vis-à-vis differential positionalities of power and agency? However, while acknowledging locational dynamics in her introductory chapter, the title of Valovirta's concluding chapter—"Sisters Together and Apart"—seems to suggest a possible transcendence of location through a certain affective kindredness. Needless to say, given the current political climate of the worlds we inhabit, any move towards transcendence is far from unproblematic. I am reminded of Feminist Theologian and Postcolonial theorist Kwok Pui-Lan's critique of Paul Gilroy's reconfiguration of the narrative history of African diasporas in his acclaimed book *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993). Pui-Lan observes that Gilroy's "images of travel and movement from place to place may reflect a more masculine script" of the African diasporic experience (46). The idea of "generational memory" that Pui-Lan instead chooses to focus on is, according to her, more representative of the experiences of women in African diasporas (46). This generational memory cannot be defined in terms of the grand vistas of sea-voyages that Gilroy paints. The memory that Pui-Lan embodies in the "image of the storyteller who selects pieces, fragments, and legends from her cultural and historical memory to weave together tales that are passed from generation to generation," is one that is configured in an experience of rootedness. Such a narrative consciousness, though "multiply located," i.e."constantly negotiating, shifting, and changing

contexts," cannot be thought of outside a physical, historical, and cultural locatedness (47). Therefore, and particularly in relation to specific historico-political contexts, movement and the agency of movement itself indicates a position of privilege. Such conditions of rootedness do not necessarily indicate a limitedness of experiential wealth. For example, while reading Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, one is not necessarily struck by how restricted the immediate kinetic contexts of characters like Sethe, Denver, and Baby Suggs are. Their characters in all their complexities are defined by their spatiotemporal kinetic fixity. In fact, we are given their exact coordinates at the very start of their stories: "124 was spiteful … but by 1873 Sethe and her daughter Denver were its only victims" (Morrison 3). Sethe and Denver are literally held hostage by 124 and figuratively by their pasts. Moving beyond the reaches of the house, as Denver does when she reaches out to the women in the neighborhood for help, is in and of itself no mean feat. The claustrophobic environment of 124 that frames the stories of Sethe and Denver could therefore be read as the restrictedness of movement experienced particularly by black women in the era of Reconstruction in American History. The difficulty of coping with past traumas in such claustrophobic environments, as exemplified in in Sethe's reluctance to recall memories of her mother, whose own movement as a woman in slavery from buyer to seller had been branded into her skin, makes movement and, more importantly, any transcendence of location wholly impossible. Therefore, from the example of the women in 124, we could infer that movement, whether physical or ideational (especially so), is more an indicator of privilege than precarity. Entering another's experiential world, whether as investigator or spectator, is most definitely an exercise of both privilege and power.

I am not suggesting that Valovirta argues for an uncritical transcendence of location or positionality in asserting a sense of kindredness with an otherwise located feminine subject. The title of her concluding chapter indicates both a kindredness and a separation—"Together and Apart." However, the note on which she chooses to end her present study interests me, in that it opens up diverse possibilities for future questions and engagements. She concludes her analysis with a moment in Queenie's life, a character in Erna Brodber's novel *The Rainmaker's Mistake*. At a crucial juncture of uncertainty in her life, Queenie remarks that she needed to move in the direction of where answers were to be found (Valovirta 193). Valovirta concludes by stating that this moment in Queenie's life and her

articulation of a need for sense of direction are in a certain sense indicative of the author's own endeavors in this book. One is of course tempted to ask: whose are these questions to ask and these answers to seek? Also, can Queenie's retroactive realization in *The Rainmaker's Mistake* be transformed through an act of "reparative reading" into an assertion towards possible future certitude? I refer here to the questions Judith Butler attempts to negotiate in *Precarious Life*. Most pertinent in the context of Valovirta's discussion are issues related to the process through which importance is attached to a life and to how this translates into the loss of another's life being deemed grievable (Butler xiv-xv). Is this process of according value to a life (and experience) existing outside of one's own Self also not an attempt to extend what Levinas defines in *Time and the Other* as the power of signification in the "I"—the immutably defined notion of a stable unified selfhood (53)?

It is at the interstices of such moral and ethical debates that one increasingly finds oneself located in the practice of Comparative Literature. I believe Valovirta's scholarship seems to express this very complex of uncertainties that a comparatist must operate within. *Sexual Feelings* voices and forces us to consider an ethics of encounter in the face of alterity. This question of an ethics towards the Other is foundational to the practice of Comparative Literature, by the simple fact that any act of comparison necessitates the presence of an Other. The purpose of scholarship sometimes is not to offer answers; it is just as worthwhile to articulate the absence of grand utopian answers to even the simplest of questions. This purpose is amply served by Valovirta's endeavors in this monograph, and in this sense she makes for a potential ally and a fellow traveler in the comparatist's ongoing quest for an ethics of alterity.

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Kathleen Gyssels. *Black-Label: Ou les déboires de Léon-Gontran Damas.* Caen: Editions Passage(s). Pp. 308. ISBN: 979109898017.

Partant en exil volontaire à Paris au début des années 1960, le Mauricien Edouard J. Maunick avait emmené dans ses bagages un cadeau qu'il destinait à la négritude, à savoir son nécessaire élargissement au *métissage.* Parmi ceux avec qui il put le partager figurent, outre les habitués de Présence Africaine, les trois pionniers de la négritude, Senghor, Césaire et Damas, devenus ses amis. Et Damas se fera un devoir d'inclure l'océan Indien et notamment Maurice, dans sa seconde Anthologie par le biais d'un poème de Maunick dédié à Césaire.[8]

La publication par Kathleen Gyssels de *Black-Label ou les déboires de L.-G. Damas*[9] a le grand mérite de ramener au premier plan l'œuvre de ce Guyanais qui fut le troisième homme du mouvement de la négritude. Léon-Gontran Damas (1912–1978) fut bien le signataire avec Aimé Césaire le Martiniquais et Léopold Sédar Senghor le Sénégalais, de la revue littéraire qui donna le coup d'envoi à la négritude : *L'Etudiant noir*. A la lecture de cet ouvrage, du portrait de Damas réalisé par Gyssels pour le site « *ile.en.ile* » (ainsi que celui de son héritière spirituelle, Christiane Taubira[10]) et des nombreux colloques organisés en Guyane et en Belgique, l'on se rend compte que bien des questions sont restées encore sans réponses et que l'œuvre de Damas–autant que sa personnalité–reste énigmatique. Par le biais de son analyse systématique et rigoureuse du troisième recueil *Black-Label* (Gallimard, 1956), Gyssels prolonge son analyse de l'écriture poétique qu'elle avait déjà amplement étudiée sur différents supports : une vingtaine d'articles (en anglais, français, néerlandais) sur le poète et parlementaire cayennais, les actes du colloque de Cayenne lors du centenaire de la naissance du poète, les traductions malheureusement empêchées par l'ayant-droit. Elle trace ainsi de nouveaux axes à la problématique Damas.

Cinquante ans après sa parution et presque quarante ans après le décès de son auteur, il était grand temps d'explorer le chant touffu de

8. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1966, 166–70.

9. Paris: Ed. Passage(s), 2016. Edition originale épuisée.

10. Voir sa présentation de Damas sur http://ile-en-ile.org/damas/. Consulté le 22 février 2015. D'autres Guyanais sont à signaler : Christiane Taubira, Bertène Juminer.

Damas, de le pénétrer comme s'il s'agissait d'une forêt amazonienne et d'en éplucher les portées en appliquant les plus récentes pratiques de l'analyse littéraire et en évitant les travers que dénonçait Damas: « la morale occidentale et son cortège de préceptes / de préconceptions / de présomptions, / de prénotions / de prétentions / de préjugés » (*Black-Label* 31) … Dès lors, une lecture au plus près du texte se justifie car il s'agit de sortir de l'ombre le recueil « le moins étudié » par rapport à *Pigments,* le premier recueil de Damas qui précéda de deux ans les *Cahiers d'un retour au pays natal* de son ami Aimé Césaire et à *Névralgies,* le dernier recueil publié de son vivant, en 1966. Car, selon Gyssels, *Black-Label* « est de loin le plus surréaliste des recueils damassiens » avec un « secret (…) au cœur même de l'écriture » (59).

Black-Label est d'abord un titre emblématique du talent de l'anglophile qu'il était, et dont la sortie en janvier 1956 ponctue l'événement capital de l'année : le premier Congrès international des artistes et écrivains noirs *à* la Sorbonne, à l'initiative d'Alioune Diop et de la revue *Présence Africaine.* Si Damas ne figure pas sur la photo commémorative, c'est qu'il était sans doute trop préoccupé par la sortie de *Black-Label*, qui semble n'avoir pas reçu beaucoup d'attention cette année-là. Le recueil apporte en quatre mouvements une tonalité singulière, damassienne, sans laquelle il manquerait un pilier à la négritude. Tout le premier « mouvement, » consiste en un voyage dans la « TERRE DES PARIAS », ce monde à géométrie variable dont les caractéristiques physiques et psychiques sont autant guyanaises qu'antillaises, afro-américaines et africaines. Lieu dominé par le racisme et l'assimilation, par la colonie pénitentiaire et le sentiment d'impuissance face au cours de l'Histoire, ce pays natal lui inspire une inquiétude ontologique intensifiée par l'exil parisien. Construites *à la façon des* litanies et comme issues d'un rituel, des plaintes jaillissent soulignant les nuits faites « de moins de solitude / de moins d'inquiétude / de moins de lassitude / de moins d'effroi / de moins de détresse / de moins de tristesse / de moins de vide » (*Black-Label* 13)… Autour sont des espaces de mort et de difficile survie dans lesquels le mot 'île' ne peut s'écrire qu'à l'ancienne :

aux Isles de l'Aventure

aux Isles à la Dérive

aux Isles de la Flibuste

aux Isles de la Boucane

aux Isles de la Tortue

aux Isles à Nègreries

aux Isles à Sucreries

aux Isles de la Mort-Vive… (*Black-Label* 10)

Litanies également que ces nomenclatures décrivant le spectre des citoyens de la terre des parias et commençant par un « ceux qui… » Oscillant entre l'humour d'un Prévert écrivant en 1931 la *Tentative de description d'un diner de têtes à Paris* et l'amertume du *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* écrite par l'ami Césaire en 1939, se rapprochant tantôt de l'un et tantôt de l'autre, Damas atteint une forme de poésie du mépris tant pour ceux « enchainés/ rivés/ cadenassés / calés » (7) malgré eux que pour les trop nombreux « qui naissent / (…) qui grandissent dans l'Erreur / (…) (*Black-Label* 15) qui poussent sur l'Erreur » ou encore « qui se renient / se surveillent / se désespèrent / et se lamentent »…(8). *Black-Label,* nous dit Gyssels, porte le sceau de traumatismes… qu'ils soient vécus ou imaginés dans ce premier « mouvement » (133).

Le second « mouvement » est celui du « nœud d'amour et de désamour, ce dernier conduisant au désir de mort » selon Kathleen Gyssels (137), mais un amour « mariné dans l'alcool » (*Black-Label* 73), comme surenchérit Damas par le leitmotiv qui ouvre ce deuxième volet de *Black-Label* et est répété plusieurs fois, six en fait à l'instar du refrain du premier volet qui, lui, était répété onze fois. La galerie de femmes qu'on y rencontre se confond en une image : celle de la « FEMME entrevue en l'Ile aux mille et une fleurs » (*Black-Label* 37 38 39) et qui est mère, amante, fille, vierge, fantasme, fantôme… et devant qui l'« odieux désir » peut se transformer en « impuissance » (*Black-Label* 46–47). Peut-être est-ce la raison de la colère qui clôt ce mouvement fustigeant « le Blanc à l'Ecole du Nègre » mais qui *« jamais **(…)*** ne sera Nègre **»** (*Black-Label* 52): car Damas revendique comme étant essentiellement nègre : la beauté, la sagesse, l'endurance, le courage, la patience, l'ironie, le charme, la magie, l'amour, le déhanchement, la danse, le rythme, l'art, le mouvement, le rire, la joie, la paix, la vie…

Le troisième « mouvement », sur fond « de stomps / de slows / de songs / de sons / de blues » (*Black-Label* 57) est aussi évocateur d'une rencontre de type amoureuse, coup de foudre entre danseur et admiratrice.

Le jazz, omniprésent dans les sonorités et les litanies mélodiques des premier et deuxième mouvements, prend ici forme plus concrète, plus lancinante, voire lascive… Le couple, rescapé du « désir insatisfait, » (73) entre dans « le vertige » (*Black-Label* 48) de la danse et aussi dans une forme de fusion des corps, puis des âmes. Le poète né « tout au bout du monde / LA-BAS » (*Black-Label* 61) souffrant de l'« infirmité à pleinement jouir / intensément jouir / de tous ces riens qui font une âme euphémiquement créole » (*Black-Label* 61) est à dessein ambigu, et nous confronte avec la source d'une colère profondément ancrée. Mais par rapport à quel drame, quel crime ? La poésie damassienne gardera des secrets devant lesquels la critique ne peut que faire des suppositions : « là où était le crime (…) l'enfance était gratuitement gardée à vue » (*Black-Label* 66), aux « pensums du jeudi » (Black-Label 67), qui poussent Damas à réclamer la mise à mort du Maî*t*re de l'Ecole, à acclamer « la racaille / la canaille / la valetaille / la négraille » (*Black-Label* 6) et le ramène au « BLACK-LABEL A BOIRE » (*Black-Label* 9) du premier mouvement, repris ici une douzième fois.

Le quatrième « mouvement » exalte la danse, celle du carnaval, et figure comme une rupture irrévocable, dédramatisée par à la fois la danse et le défilé carnavalesque avec, au passage, des clins d'œil à la pendaison d'oripeaux républicains et chrétiens. Il démarre dans la reprise du « cœur mariné dans l'alcool » (*Black-Label* 73) du deuxième mouvement qui n'arrête pas de rythmer une « ferveur démoniaque » (*Black-Label* 81) et glisse irrémédiablement vers « la palabre », « le poème à danser » au gré de grands coups de Tambour-Ka. Or, la reprise du « BLACK-LABEL A BOIRE » dans le mouvement final se lit comme une 'veillée' *:* l'homme dépouillé s'offre une « dernière bombance imaginée sous un tambour-Ka qui fait coïncider le rêve (…) et la réalité » (238).

« La poésie de Damas n'est pas passée, » conclut Gyssels, « au contraire, elle est plus actuelle que jamais » (262). En effet, Damas avait prévu les crises des banlieues et les « raidissements identitaires » en ce début du XXIème siècle. Pour en avoir fait l'expérience personnelle, son chant de mal-être est aussi un chant de malaise et, comme Lautréamont vécut son chant de mal d'aurore, la vérité damassienne réside dans cet emmêlement d'afflictions et d'« amours morts-nées ». L'écorché vif qu'est Damas avait selon Gyssels des longueurs d'avance sur des questions sociétales aujourd'hui posées, voire répondues, par Christiane Taubira qui explique

l'esclavage à sa fille[11] et l'importance du « Mariage pour tous » (265) dans la cinquième République aujourd'hui.

Ce que nous devons retenir de *Black-Label* est que Damas labélisé noir, pour le meilleur et pour le pire, était « miles ahead » avec ses recueils tonitruants où l'individu de couleur, d'origine coloniale et porte-parole des pauvres, faisait aussi bouger les dichotomies du sexe et du genre, prenant le rôle de la critique au sérieux, sortant de l'ombre ceux que le canon antillo-guyanais a un peu rapidement déconsidérés. Gyssels eut l'intuition que l'oblitération du « troisième homme » (23) résidait précisément dans son anti-académisme et anti-intellectualisme. Il méritait donc une forme de réhabilitation qui rejaillirait sur l'ensemble de l'œuvre, d'autant plus que Gyssels prépare un essai sur l'inédit, *Mine de riens*, paru en 2012 sous le titre *Dernière escale*, à paraître dans le cours de l'année chez les Editions Passage(s), ainsi qu'une troisième monographie '*A ti pas*' *: l'antillectuel Damas*, chez Brill.

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Tiziana Morosetti, ed. *Staging the Other in Nineteenth-Century British Drama*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2015. Pp. viii + 272. ISBN: 9783034319287.

Tiziana Morosetti's collection of essays is the fifth volume in Peter Lang's series *Writing and Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century* edited by J.B. Bullen and Isobel Armstrong. Containing ten individual essays of around twenty pages each, *Staging the Other,* as the editor explains in the Introduction, "is the outcome of the international conference" hosted by the Oxford University in September 2014.

The book explores different ways of representing (or creating) Otherness in Georgian and Victorian theatre. We should remember that, as Zara Barlas claims, "[t]he nexus between politics and art is crucial in the cultivation of our understanding of societies and their interactions with each other. And while it is a historical theme, the legacies of colonialism

11. Christiane Taubira-Delannon, *L'esclavage raconté à ma fille*, Paris: Bibliophane, 2002.

and so many other historic practices resonate and have significant repercussions on societies and their interactions today" (180–81). History can be very enlightening and help us decoding current trends, explaining the movements and processes that have led us to the present day, since some of them still exert some influence or even persist in today's society.

In the opening article, "'By a Nose' or 'By a Hair': Bearding the Jew on the Georgian Stage,'" Toni Wein explores how marking the Jew with a distinctive feature quickly becomes a "symbol of Jewish essence" (21). Accentuating the physical difference of the Jew, Georgian theatre constructed a stereotype "that colludes to rewrite the very history [the cultural memory] had recorded" (35), transforming an assimilated normal body into an exotic and easily recognizable one. Michael Bradshaw, on his part, does not focus on any visible characteristic of the Jew. The latter "occup[ies] a unique position," and—according to him—"is difficult to categorize and to place within certain boundaries, unlike distant, colonized Others" (42). In his contribution entitled "The Jew on Stage and on the Page: Intertextual Exotic," Bradshaw examines two dramatic works: Henry Hart Milman's *Fazio* (1815) and Thomas Wade's *The Jew of Aragon* (1830), drawing our attention to the way the Jew is categorized through literary intertextuality. Bradshaw argues that "Jewish characters do not necessarily look different or sound different, or act differently or speak differently; but texts tell us emphatically, dogmatically, that they are and must be different" (59). The first two essays analyze the nineteenth-century convention of introducing figures of the Jew that contributed to their stereotyping.

Another "exotic body on the English stage was male, white, muscular and was American" (61), as Arthur W. Bloom points out. In "Edwin Forrest: The Exotic American Body on the Nineteenth-Century English Stage," Bloom describes several appearances of this American actor performing the parts of Spartacus and Metamora, two noble and tragic heroes, warriors who fought against their oppressors. "In these roles [Forrest] brought to the English stage the exotic body of the perceived American," Bloom asserts, "raw, natural, savage, untutored, strong, democratic, naturally moral, family-oriented, manly and, above all, free." He concludes, "In many respects it is still the way Americans perceive themselves and the way they are perceived in the world around them" (76).

Tiziana Morosetti's contribution to this volume is not limited to the editorial sphere. In addition to providing the book's introduction, she

also contributes an essay entitled "Constructing the Zulus: The 'African' Body and Its Narratives," in which she explores the visual features of "exotic" bodies. She aptly points out that there are "at least three types of body [to] be taken into account" (89): the political, the scientific, and the theatrical. The latter was created as a response to the others. In conjunction with the "corrupted" language purposefully used by the actors, this body type favored a caricatured representation of Africans.

The political implications of staging the Other in the Victorian era are also echoed in Marianne Schultz's article "'An Interest Must Be Strong Now-a days to Raise Much Enthusiasm in an Audience, but It May Be, at the Same Time, of an Unpleasant Nature': Māori, New Zealand and Empire on Stage 1862–1864." The author argues that popular entertainments were the only way of establishing any contact with people from the vast British Empire. Thus, they served to support the imperialist discourse. Significantly, plays "[w]ritten and produced by Australians and Englishmen," she contends, "disseminated views of successful colonization and settlement of New Zealand" (123). However, "popular entertainments not only reflected imperial themes but consciously sought to inform and enthuse audiences about the empire" (128), as Peter Yeandle asserts in "Performing the Other on the Popular London Stage: Exotic People and Places in Victorian Pantomime." In this essay, he offers a wide panorama of the practice of pantomime in the British capital, describing the changing trends and topics treated on the stage. While pantomime was then acclaimed by the public as a spectacular satirical "form for broadcasting and interpreting the news" (127), it was also used to mold public opinion. The importance of official discourse also characterizes the novel Sara Malton analyzes in her essay, "Impressment, Exoticism and Enslavement: Revisiting the Theatre of War through Thomas Hardy's *The Trumpet-Major* (1880)," where the main character "denies his individual identity, telling instead the national, triumphalist tale of Britannia's prowess" (156). While the discussion of a prose work in this context may seem surprising, Hardy's work lends a theatrical dimension to its subject and, as Malton puts it, "the resonance of the pantomime extends throughout [it]" (168).

In contrast, Zara Barlas' essay, "Transcultural Operatics: India on the British Stage in *The Nautch Girl, or, The Rajah of Chutneypore*," offers a semiotic analysis of a comic operetta. Barlas examines how aesthetic elements such as image, sound, and narrative contribute to the representation of the figure of a nautch girl on the stage. As noted in the other chapters of

Staging the Other, the "exotic" body again serves as a construct supporting the interests of the British in this particular Indian context. In this case, sexual and gender denotations are foregrounded. Both concepts were controversial at that time, as, in the eyes of contemporary critics, they could potentially destabilize or "destroy British family values" (198).

The last two essays establish a link between nineteenth-century British theatre and the contemporary period. In "Singing the Exotic Body across the Atlantic: From *The Mikado* to the *Swing Mikado* and Beyond," Serena Guarracino takes Gilbert and Sullivan's opera as a starting point in order to study continuous redefinitions of the Other. Her essay focuses on the performance premiered in 1939 in Chicago, which she compares with the original Victorian staging and the very recent production filmed in Australia in 2011. Emphasizing the "exotic body *per se*" (208), she concludes that the "shift in [its] location … exposes its impermanence and subjection to the specific temporal conditions of performance, but also in its permanence in the English-speaking imaginary as a place of negotiation for cultural identities" (223). The legacy of nineteenth-century British drama legacy is also discussed in the tenth contribution to this critical anthology: "A Progressive *Othello*: Modern Blackness in Chakrabarti's *Red Velvet* (2012)." In this article, Sophie Duncan describes "an imaginative project of restaging Ira Aldridge, [an African American actor], for a twenty-first century audience" (231). She examines the audience reception of Aldridge's acting as well Chakrabarti's (re)construction of these facts. In doing so, Duncan underlines the difficulty of updating historical works touching on such sensitive subjects as racism. However, the "[a]version to Aldridge wasn't based solely on his blackness, but on wider xenophobia about international performers in British theatre" (234).

Staging the Other highlights the decisive role of theatre representations in creating the social perception of the Other and in strengthening the imperialist discourse. Tiziana Morosetti's collection of essays is not only a theatrical and literary study, it also provides anthropological and sociological insights into the Georgian and Victorian periods, at a time when productions—focused mainly on the physicality of the characters—aimed at naturalism and credibility. Despite notable differences between the various forms of spectacles of this era (drama/theatre, pantomime, exhibitions etc.), all of them sought to capture the authenticity and the essence of the "exotic" body, using representation strategies such

as exaggeration or caricature. They ultimately attempted to reinforce the current political rhetoric. As Yeandle sums up, "[b]y the end of the century, it is no surprise that reporting about the empire and foreign affairs was dominated by visual and theatrical culture" (136).

All of the essays collected in this anthology are very well documented, each offering extensive and up-to-date bibliographies. Thus, readers first discovering this field of research as well as those wishing to engage in further explorations will find this collection very useful. While each chapter could be read separately, taken together, all contributions generate a very interesting and vivid dialogue. In view of these assets, the volume as a whole provides an outstanding overview of the image of the Other in the nineteenth-century British culture.

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Wei H. Kao. *Contemporary Irish Theatre: Transnational Practices.* Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2015. Pp. 244. ISBN: 9782875743008.

Wei H. Kao's *Contemporary Irish Theatre: Transnational Practices* provides a series of original insights about Irish theatre, viewed from a transnational perspective. While not unique in the field of Irish studies—in particular for Irish theatre—the transnational perspective proves especially welcome as it investigates the ways in which foreign cultures are integrated in plays focusing on modern or contemporary Ireland. Considering that Irishness has become a multi-ethnic, multicultural, and global concept, Wei H. Kao investigates how this impacts plays and performances. The importance of adaptations of classical and foreign works—not to mention choices of overseas locations for an Irish play—questions the impact of globalization on Irish culture and Irish theatre, which partly explains why this monograph analyzes the ways in which Irish plays "counteract or absorb exotic / foreign influences" (12).

The book starts with an analysis of incest in Eugene O'Neill's *Desire under the Elms* and Marina Carr's *On Raftery's Hill*. The critical knowledge

of O'Neill seems less extensive than that of other playwrights (see for instance the confusion between O'Neill and his son as editor of an anthology). Moreover, equating an incestuous rape in *On Raftery's Hill* to the sexual relationship of Eben and Abbie seems questionable. Furthermore, stating that "Eben's incestuous affair with his stepmother is ignited partially … in expectation of securing the farm … by means of the heirship of their *own* son" (37) goes against the very meaning of the play, since Abbie kills the baby precisely to show that such was not her intent. Chapter two revisits the figure of the Stage Irishman through Boucicault's *The Shaughraun*, Edward Harrigan's *The Mulligan Guard Ball* and Sebastian Barry's *White Woman Street*. Wei H. Kao focuses on the Irish diaspora and lays stress on how the Irish "wished to be seen and how they saw other ethnic communities" (46). He shows the evolution of the stage Irishman, laying stress on interracial conflicts. Choosing a different angle, Wei H. Kao then analyzes the outlook of Irish migrants on their "home" country in Tom Murphy's *Conversations on a Homecoming* and Jimmy Murphy's *The Kings of the Kilburn High Road*. The critic subsequently concentrates on *The Kings of the Kilburn High Road,* which was performed in Ireland with "all-African casts." The author shows how this led to a new approach of identity, including a redefinition of "home" in contemporary Ireland. The investigation is continued in the next chapter about the search for home in Tom Murphy's *The House.* Wei H. Kao shows how, through the adaptation of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, Murphy questions the impact of migration in a context of globalization. The next chapter investigates the tendency of Irish playwrights to focus their attention on international affairs. Dolores Walshe's *In the Talking Dark* and Damien Smyth's *Soldiers of the Queen* deal with the Irish diaspora. As in the preceding chapters, the author connects racial divides in contemporary Ireland with those of South Africa. The context is well-documented; detailed information is provided, and new avenues for research are opened. However, the prevalence of sociological perspectives "how the South African experience can inspire the audience of both Ireland and South Africa with an alternative perspective, or a possible paradigm for the resolution of racial segregation and tensions in the era of globalization" (103) proves less interesting than analyses of specific issues related to Irish theatre. Moreover, although the author states that he "does not intend to point towards an

ultimate solution to the peace process in Northern Ireland" (118), he occasionally forgets that the real value of his work results from his analyses of transnational practices in Irish theatre.

Frank McGuinness's *Someone to Watch over Me*, Sebastian Barry's *White Woman Street* as well as Colin Teevan's *How many Miles to Basra?* testify to a change of location in Irish drama. They help show how a transnational perspective reshapes traditional political, religious and social outlooks, leading to a globalized perspective that redefines a theatre formerly confined to Irish borders. Moreover, the meeting-points of cultures, through a comparison of the political agendas of Irish and Taiwanese plays, enable the author to analyze their reception, laying stress on the lethal consequences for Taiwanese playwrights who, in the 1940s, challenged official ideology. More contemporary works are also examined to compare what it meant to stage labor issues in each country. The study of Beckett's works in Taiwan, both through performances and as a vital influence for the revitalization of Taiwanese theatre, proves fascinating from the point of view of their public reception and of their cultural reshaping. The last chapter deals with the Irish at Home and Abroad. It attempts to look back on the Irish stage as reflecting cultural phenomena that have been given pride of place in the twentieth century, including adaptations of classical works. As is the case with the chapters that provide an overview of Irish drama, this chapter proves less interesting than the analyses of intercultural and inter-ethnic phenomena. The author explains that his research has exposed "with critical distance the alarming gaps between the privileged and the unprivileged." A clearer political agenda would have helped foreground the more important aspects of this study. Its real interest does not really lie in showing how Irish drama can contribute to the coming to life of "a more peaceful world," but in providing an interesting, decentered view of Irish drama, which proves stimulating in many chapters.

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Rei Magosaki. *Tricksters and Cosmopolitans: Cross-Cultural Collaborations in Asian American Literary Production*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016. Pp. 168. ISBN: 9780823271313.

Rei Makosaki's *Tricksters and Cosmopolitans* is a meticulously documented, well-written work that offers a fascinating approach to the ways in which today's cosmopolitan environment is shaped. Drawing from a vast amount of data, the author carefully introduces us to the historical and contemporary contexts of Asian American literary productions. This monograph is a pioneering study of cross-cultural collaborations between Asian American writers and non-Asian editors or publishers.

Tricksters and Cosmopolitans is divided into three major parts, each of which addresses a specific issue in the process of cross-cultural collaboration. Some chapters focus on literary works while concomitantly emphasizing the importance of professional author-editor-publisher relationships. In the first part, the author examines the trickster-like behavior some writers have to adopt in order to be published. The second part discusses the development of the "cosmopolitan subject" while the last part concentrates on contemporary, twenty-first-century literary production. Magosaki focuses on works by Charles Chesnutt and Sui Sin Far in the first part; Jessica Hagedorn in the second part; and Karen Tei Yamashita, Monique Truong, and Min Jin Lee in the concluding part. Moreover, Magosaki foregrounds author-editor-publisher relationships throughout her study. This enables us to discover the wide-ranging results of the interactions between Chesnutt and Walter Hines Page, Sui Sin Far, and William Hayes Ward, and the avant-garde literary scene in San Francisco. It also highlights the tensions between pure capitalist interests and the works of Asian American authors in an intensely globalized world.

The Asian American authors studied here, the author argues, write at a time when "the displaced working-class subject join the rank of other unprotected lives around the globe, whose lives are crushed by the legacies of classic imperialism in the earlier decades of the twentieth century and vulnerable to the exploitative forces of late capitalism" (1). While Magosaki places the Asian American writer at the center of her discussion, she notes that in the process of creating "the Asian cosmopolitan subject" the focus is displaced from "the writers who are interested in celebrating this socially privileged figure" to "those who create a new critical

standpoint from a transnational perspective *through* this figure" (1, emphasis in the original). Therefore, Rei Magosaki regards the Asian American writer as a historical figure who helps create the cosmopolitan subject within a socio-political context as well as through literary production.

I would suggest that Rei Magosaki envisions a double function for the Asian American writer. What I will call the *performance-trickster function* reveals the writer as a historical figure whose actions within a detailed socio-political context help create the Asian cosmopolitan subject, whereas what I shall refer to as the *literary-trickster function* focuses on the writer's own literary productions. Magosaki uses the initial development of African American literature which was "shaped by the specific historical-material condition in Jim Crow America at the turn of the last century" as a "useful template for understanding the cultural dynamic that brought Asian American literary production into being at an also turbulent time of overwhelming anti-Chinese sentiment throughout the nation" (6). In this respect, the trickster should be understood within the performance-based function of the Asian American writer, i.e. of "the writer as trickster." Based on the theoretical framework established by Louis Gates Jr. in *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism* (1989), Magosaki furthers the idea that the actions of Asian American writers *signify* a trickster-like social performance. She then goes on to explain that Gates conceives of a trickster as a person who incorporates language games, "figurative substitutions and free associations" which finally reveal themselves as the "rhetorical strategy of tricksters as a unifying trip in African American literature" (17).

The first part of the book, entitled "Trickster Poetics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century" discusses the works of Charles Chesnutt and Sun Sin Far in order to identify and describe the features of the trickster theoretical framework. In the first chapter, Magosaki focuses on Chesnutt's collection of short stories "The Conjure Woman" in which she recognizes the literary conventions of nineteenth-century plantation tales. Therefore, Chesnutt's stories are said to provide "a stage for the meeting of the (black) slave trickster and the (white blackface) stage trickster" (24). The trickster character in its performance-based function is revealed by the fact that "Chesnutt himself is the first black writer to get away with publishing a potentially explosive piece of satire with a publishing house he knew to be conservative, under the guise of genteel plantation fiction, which was not known to be a vehicle for refuting racist ideology" (24).

This is the first case in which Magosaki explores the writer's potential for incorporating multiple functions. The professional relationship between Chesnutt and Walter Hines Page was partially based on Page's ability to "thriv[e] in that realm defined by cosmopolitanism in the North" (28) and on his personal efforts to publish Chestnutt's works. In a similar vein, the second chapter presents the work of Sui Sin Far who herself "may have been engaged in border-crossing tricksterism in real life, with her numerous trips between the United States and Canada, using her English name and Anglo appearance" (30). While discussing "In the Land of the Free," Magosaki identifies the trickster moment by means of the fact that Sui Sin Far's story "is from the outset based on translation as an inclusive gesture into a world that had excluded the reader because of language, making new identification possible" (33). Consequently, the trickster is revealed through the possibility of new identification. In "Leaves," another work by Sui Sin Far, Magosaki notes that the "working-class Chinese immigrant at the margins of its narrative" (34) reveals a similar trickster moment. The end of the chapter focuses on the involvement of William Hayes Ward who found ways to overcome political constraints and publish Chinese literary productions such as Sui Sin Far's.

Magosaki's research also offers a fascinating insight into how authors and editors found ways to collaborate by overcoming socio-political obstacles to pursue the cosmopolitan ideal. Magosaki coherently presents an abundance of historical information highlighting the characteristics of the trickster-concept. For the reader, however, this can be confusing at times since the direct connection between the information presented and the "trickster poetics" is not always self-evident, especially for readers who might not be familiar with Gates's work.

In the second part of the book, entitled "The Making of the Cosmopolitan Subject," Magosaki focuses on the work of Jessica Hagedorn as a prime example of the "extraordinary cross-cultural collaboration … between writers and their innovative publishers, who envisioned and established new literary platforms that reached across boundaries of race and gender to include Asian American writing for the first time in U.S. cultural history" (40).

Indeed, the late 1960s and the 1970s were marked by a context of political and social change in which "a new generation of artists could thrive at a time when the mainstream publishing industry mostly continued to uphold purported standards that effectively sealed off ethnic/racial mi-

norities and women from publishing their works" (40). In this part of her study, Magosaki further develops the "signifying" approach as a means of analyzing trickster poetics, although the emphasis is now placed on the importance of the interaction between authors and publishers rather than on the literary production itself. Asian American writers in San Francisco, for instance, are exemplified as "negotiating and creating interweaving cultural alliances as each worked out imagined solutions to ongoing social and political tension" (42). Magosaki does an excellent job of detailing the origins and consequences of the professional connections developed by writers like Jessica Hagedorn.

To pursue the cosmopolitan project, Asian American writers and editors established their own publishing houses, such as Yardbird Publishing, Shameless Hussy Press, or the Third World Communications Collective, which created new literary forums geared towards a multicultural dialogue. These relationships can be identified as an extension of the trickster framework presented by Magosaki in the first part of her book. As an example, the author points towards that "brilliant moment of tricksterism in Hagedorn's literary career, when she used the dazzling success of her National Book Award-winning novel *Dogeaters* as leverage to publish an anthology of contemporary Asian American writing from Penguin" (52). Magosaki presents the issues and particular developments that eventually created the "cosmopolitan subject" in as much cultural and historical detail as possible, without losing track of the coherence or structure of her argument. Striking an important balance between the content of the novels selected and the socio-political impact of the new literary forums, this may very well be the strongest section of the book.

The final part, entitled "L.A.-Paris-New York: The Parameters of Literary Production at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century," deals with a number of established cosmopolitan settings. The trickster framework and the cosmopolitan subject are explored once again in the context of the early twenty-first century. From the 1970s, small publishing houses were required to adjust to the new economic reality caused by financial deregulation, resulting in mergers which would largely lead to the domination of US cultural production by corporate giants like Time Warner, Disney, Viacom, News Corp, and Bertelsmann. As a result, the role of small publishing houses was reduced to virtually nothing, while capitalist interests greatly influenced the literary scene. Magosaki's purpose here is to "shed light on the urgent realities of the

new global divide, the enduring legacy of former imperialism at the heart of globalization, and the predatory nature of financialized capitalism that continues to expand the source of exploitation" (81). The tension between the value of art and the market value of art is viewed in reference to Andre Schiffrin's *The Business of Books* and Robert McChesney's *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*, leading to the apparent suggestion that the publishing industry should receive government subsidies. As a result of "the cold disinterest with which new corporate management regarded anything other than shareholder profit" (83–84), the author-editor-publisher relationships created as an extension of the trickster framework need to be reconfigured if Asian American literary production is to adapt and keep on pursuing its cosmopolitan ideal. *Tropic of Orange* by Karen Tei Yamashita, for example, "offer[s] a new image of the city changed by the impact of globalization, adding a much-needed corrective to the existing representations of L.A" (87–88). Yamashita's work, the author further observes, "is interested in articulating the experiences of people actually living in the global city, mapping out the trajectories of criss-crossing lives that are impacted by the forces of late capitalism on a daily basis" (88). While the main character in *Tropic of Orange* is an actual orange, Magosaki interprets it as a symbol for the entire global South and the "major structural violence implicit in the Western novel," thus creating the centrality of the main character "through the marginalization and silencing of the many" (99). This theme of silence also appears in Magosaki's discussion of *The Book of Salt* by Monique Truong. By writing a novel in which the main character, a Vietnamese cook in Interbellum Paris, does not speak English, Truong is said to signal "the manifestation of a new kind of US imperialism that runs on an emerging culture industry and its global capital, now working together with the earlier form of French imperialism established in the nineteenth century" (113). This part tends to focus on the concept of the foreigner and includes a strong critique on the effects of "late capitalism." A similar tone is adopted in the analysis of Min Jin Lee's *Free Food for Millionaires*, in which "deception, betrayal, and moral corruption are associated with Wall Street from the beginning of the novel" (120). As always, Rei Magosaki does a splendid job in vividly portraying the literary works that she addresses and the socio-political and economic critiques that they offer.

The events and issues discussed by Magosaki in relation to the process of literary production attest to the importance of *Tricksters and*

Cosmopolitans as a work of academic research. However, a future edition should perhaps offer a more detailed description of the method used in elucidating "trickster poetics," in addition to which the connections between a clearly defined trickster-concept and the historical information supplied throughout the study might be presented more explicitly. Nevertheless, *Tricksters and Cosmopolitans* is a wonderful work, a pleasure to read, and adds substantially to the field of Asian American literature and US cultural studies.

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Myriam Geiser. *Der Ort der transkulturellen Literatur in Deutschland und Frankreich: Deutsch-türkische und frankomaghrebinische Literatur der Postmigration.* Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2015. Pp. 643. ISBN: 9783826047831.

Over the last decades, the intensified movement of people on a global scale has generated new transcultural literary phenomena. The latter have challenged literary studies, which have traditionally operated within national contexts, and prompted them to develop new theoretical frameworks. Myriam Geiser's monograph, based on her 2010 dissertation, ventures into this new territory. Indeed, it focuses on literary works by descendants of Turkish-German and Franco-Maghrebi migrants, who represent the largest ethnic minority group in Germany and France respectively. This comparative undertaking, a pioneering endeavor through its very scope, seems particularly promising given the differences between German and French contexts. While in France a self-contained formation of theory and analytical praxis has emerged, German scholarship has turned towards Anglo-American Cultural Studies.

The book, which comprises a long preface (11–24) also serving as an introduction, and a relatively short and concise conclusion (591–97), is divided into two major parts. The opening section, "Zum Kontext der Literaturen der Postmigration in Deutschland und in Frankreich seit den 80er Jahren" (25–87), first considers the extra-literary, political, social,

and cultural context of the study. Adopting a discourse-analytical perspective, Geiser examines in detail how immigration has been constructed as a social reality over the last thirty years. In doing so, the author also takes into account the recent discussions about statistical surveys of ethnic groups in France (cf. 32/33). In Germany, since 2005 the "Umfang der Migration und ihrer Folgen" has been documented by taking a census of "Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund" (41). An exploration of the political and social discourse about immigration and an analysis of concepts such as integration, assimilation, multiculturalism, and collective identities make it clear that today's descendants of migrants are facing new issues and struggles. A "zunehmende 'Ethnisierung' und Ideologisierung der Argumente" (57) can even be observed, which underlines the necessity of considering the current generations distinctly.

The second section of the first part (88–293) is entitled "Literatur von Migrantennachkommen in Deutschland und Frankreich." Nevertheless, it reviews the labels, patterns of reception and institutions which developed in the last decades in order to grasp, describe, and accommodate the literary texts produced both by migrants and their descendants. In the German context, the author considers the debates about the Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Preis and the use of hyphen-terminology for writers from mixed cultural backgrounds. Further, she examines the capacity of influential concepts of "interkulturelle Literatur," "Literaturen ohne festen Wohnsitz" (Ottmar Ette), "axial writing" (Tom Cheesman) and others to contribute to our understanding of these literary innovations. Because of its colonial past, France has been characterized by a deeper exposure to intensive cultural contact and to transcultural literatures. Nevertheless, the "Francophonie" system played an ambivalent role in the reception of transcultural literary phenomena, as it was used to rigidly separate "French literature" on the one hand from "Francophone literatures" on the other. Accordingly, Geiser argues, the notion of "Francophonie" stands too close to the dichotomy between center and margin in order to adequately facilitate scientific metadiscourse (207f.). Thus, within this traditional cultural perspective, the scholarly categorization and description of the mixed forms of French migration literature remains unclear. However, the ongoing efforts of the literary scholar Charles Bonn, who advocates an innovative, comparative, and transnational approach, constitute an important exception (cf. 217). In addition, the reticence of French academe towards American postcolonial theory, which could

contribute to reconfigure fruitful reconfiguration literary studies, has only recently started to become less marked.

The book devotes one chapter to a significant example of this situation: the specific case of "littérature beur," which reflects the particular cultural context of North African immigrants and their descendants in France (240–93). The debate about this "littérature beur" also mirrors the different requirements governing literary reception, on the one hand, and literary production, on the other. Indeed, the scholarly need for categorization, the writers' struggle for recognition and the readers' interest in "authentic" life stories sometimes overlap, but at other times collide (cf. 244). Spectacular controversies such as those around the works of Paul Smaïl, who simulated a "beur" identity through the use of a pseudonym, underline the particular significance ascribed to the authenticity of the depicted experience and to the author's biography for this type of literature. Finally, Geiser identifies a "post-Beur generation" or "third phase" in the "littératures des banlieues" or "littérature urbaines." While these literary forms share the social realism and critical stance of "littérature beur," they are rather marked by place than by a certain cultural origin. In this sense, they are more sociologically than ethnically and genealogically defined (289).

Possibly influenced by these two major literary genres recording the migrant and postmigrant experience in France, Geiser rejects the views of a majority of scholars who in recent years have argued for a strictly intratextual, thematic, and aesthetic definition of migration literature (the preference for this term over "migrant literature" is symptomatic in this respect). Geiser, by contrast, argues quite convincingly through a number of concrete examples that neither purely thematic nor extratextual, biographical, or sociocultural definitions can do justice to the specific and innovative features of these transcultural literatures. While the ethnicity of the author alone does not determine the shape and content of his/her writing, recent emphasis on textual and thematic features has extended the notion of migration literature to a point where general literary devices are mistakenly construed as characteristics of migratory aesthetics (cf. for instance 154/155). Moreover, opposing the scholarly tendency towards textual purism, Geiser alludes to several literary anthologies of migration literature, in which the writers themselves regard biographical material as the vital core of their texts. Thus, after decades of definitional hesitations, Geiser concludes that the combination of the author's

biography and the thematic features of his/her texts is a crucial factor for these works to be considered as examples of migration or postmigration literature (cf. 160).

In the last chapter of the first part, Geiser formally introduces the notion of "the literature of postmigration" as a term superseding "migration literature." In prior publications from 2002 and 2008, Geiser apparently introduced this concept in French academic circles. As a category, "postmigration literature" comprises transcultural literary works penned by descendants of migrants. This "post" prefix points to the importance of conceptually transcending the moment of migration, while still asserting the historical significance of this event. The term underlines the contemporary sociopolitical situation and the developments that occurred after migration. Moreover, this prefix differentiates more precisely between the predicaments of migrants and their descendants, as the new cultural constellation experienced by postmigrants often manifests itself in an "Übersensibilisierung des eigenen Identitätsbegriffs" (308–09). The subject- and generation-based premises of Geiser's notion as well as the necessity for literary texts, according to this definition, to have been written by descendants of migrants, might lead to some questioning. How could a text authored by a recent migrant working in a context dominated by the literature of postmigration be accommodated into this new framework? Would this writer's works be considered as "migration literature" or "postmigration literature"? Moreover, where could we place German writers such as Zafer Şenocak and Feridun Zaimoglu, both born in Turkey, not Germany? Would their works belong to migration or postmigration literature or perhaps even to a genre situated in-between? These questions invite a more thorough discussion of the notion of "postmigration," which only recently emerged in the field of social science, cultural studies, and literary theory.[12] Geiser was probably unaware of these new scholarly developments, as she only mentions the scattered use of the term since the 1990s. However, more recently, the notion of "postmigration" was re-introduced more successfully in the German cultural scene by Shermin Langhoff. In 2008, Langhoff took over the directorship of the Berlin "Ballhaus Naunynstrasse" theatre, where she launched a production programme called "Postmigrantisches Theater." Subsequently, this

12. For a current interdisciplinary collaborative project on postmigration and culture, see "Art, Culture and Politics in the 'Postmigrant Condition,'" http://www.sdu.dk/en/postmigration.

concept was further developed in German social sciences and cultural studies, a process in which the "Netzwerk kritische Wissensproduktion in der postmigrantischen Gesellschaft," founded in 2010, played an important role.[13] The social scientist Naika Foroutan, deputy director of the "Berliner Institut für empirische Integrations- und Migrationsforschung" (BIM), is also a staunch advocate of postmigration.[14] Essential for the new understanding of the notion in the mentioned contexts is the extension of the subject-based perspective into the social realm. This implies a shift from a focus on the (post)migrant individual as an exception to a consideration of postmigrant society as irrevocably modified by migration. From Geiser's perspective, this could mean that first-generation migrant writers living in the environment of today's postmigrant societies could produce works showing more affinities with postmigrant literature than with the production of the so-called "Gastarbeiter"-writers of the 1980s, for instance.

In the second part of the book, Geiser's theoretical stance moves to a consideration of national literature systems in the age of globalization. If these structures are to integrate culturally diverse textual phenomena, Geiser argues, they must be conceptualized transnationally. To that end, she suggests a reinterpretation of the notion of "Welt-Literatur" (591) enabling scholars to take into account both the "wordly," transcultural features of literary texts as well as the techniques used to achieve localisation (cf. for instance 421–41). While many scholars dealing with transcultural texts have in recent years highlighted these works' tendency towards deterritorialisation as well as their transgression of geographical and cultural boundaries, Geiser thus advocates a more nuanced way of regarding these phenomena.

The second chapter of this part of the monograph (442–590) probably qualifies as its climax. In this section, Geiser articulates an overarching theoretical frame, on the one hand, and a "poetics of literature of postmigration," including concrete analytical categories, on the other. In Geiser's theory, concepts such as "identity," "nation," "boundary," "origin,"

13. Researchers using this term include Erol Yildiz (in the field of sociology and urbanity), Kijan Espahangizi (in history), Regina Römhild (in European ethnology), and Riem Spielhaus (in Islamic studies).

14. See for instance Foroutan's chapter "Postmigrantische Gesellschaften," in Heinz Ulrich Brinkmann und Martina Sauer, eds., *Einwanderungsgesellschaft Deutschland—Entwicklung und Stand der Integration* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2016), 227–54.

and "ethnos" are redefined from a different angle. Geiser stresses that the works of her corpus are often conceived in opposition to these traditional concepts, although the latter are not completely erased. Rather, the innovative aesthetic of these texts finds its roots in unconventional combinations and transformations of time-honored categories (442). Geiser suggests a "supranationales dynamisches Ordnungssystem von Literaturen" (446) which could include the "literatures of postmigration," often characterized both by an assertively local aspect as well as a deterritorialized dimension in their thematic and aesthetic configurations (447). Thus, Geiser's theories can be regarded as an attempt to enable a more balanced perception of these transcultural phenomena, in contrast to the recent tendencies of a certain radical scholarship, which dissolves traditional categories and boundaries.

Drawing on Itamar Eve-Zohar's "polysystem" model as well as on Deleuze and Guattari's theories, Geiser regards the literary system as non-hierarchical, versatile, and open (464). It consists of sub-systems (such as the "literature of postmigration") influencing and modifying each other. Continual movement inside and between these various sub-systems ensures the development and survival of the polysystem as a whole, even though such fluidity could be the source of a potential crisis at the sub-system level. Through this model, Geiser attempts to overcome the view of literary systems as fixed and rigid structures. Instead, she understands them as evolutionary entities.

Finally, Geiser introduces a "Typologie der Postmigrationsästhetik," which she defines as "narrative Strategien der Métissage" including four aspects: "hybridity as narrative attitude," "multilingualism as creative métissage," "metaphors as dynamic play of meaning," and "humor as distancing and resistance." Only brief examples from literary texts are cited to illustrate these techniques (544), as Geiser privileges theoretical conceptualization over textual analysis (571). Geiser's discussion of the features of multilingualism is especially noteworthy: she compellingly locates innovation in "konkrete oder latente Mehrsprachigkeit" (592), which she considers as more distinctive than the "'Wohnsitz-Frage'" (593). Linguistic hybridity and multilingualism trigger creative disruptions revealing the fluid characteristics of linguistic systems. Perhaps it could be argued that these features mirror the structure and mechanisms of the polysystem at another level.

To conclude, this voluminous study constitutes an impressive theoretical undertaking. It offers a substantial collection of empirical material, as it surveys the most significant critical and academic debates about the literature of migration and postmigration in Germany and France over the last decades. Its extensive bibliography will prove invaluable. Given the proliferation of theoretical and methodological concepts meant to describe the emergence of various transcultural literatures in Europe and elsewhere, it is an achievement in itself to provide such a comprehensive, detailed, and yet critical overview of the state of the art over the last thirty years or so. I consider that an important merit of the author lies in her attempt to reflect on the specific contribution of these respective notions to the general academic debate. Geiser skillfully places them in conversation, a remarkable undertaking which clarifies a number of overlapping concepts. In addition, Geiser often alludes to the writers' own comments about their professional conditions, the academic and public reception of their work and other relevant information to deepen, support, or contrast her scholarly reflections and analyses. However, her presentation occasionally lacks a sense of synthesis, as concepts and discussions are sometimes connected in a merely cumulative way. To some extent, this affects the readability of the book, especially in its middle section. The author runs the risk of disappearing behind the abundance of research material and quotations. Tightening the text and avoiding unnecessary repetitions would have been helpful. An index of names and concepts would also have facilitated the reader's navigation of this volume.

As mentioned earlier, this volume does not include detailed textual analyses. Apart from developing a theoretical and methodological framework for the analysis of transcultural literatures, it could probably best be described as a sociology of "postmigration literature," as the conditions for the production and the reception of this aesthetic form are thoroughly investigated. However, close-reading analyses would have been welcome, if only to test or illustrate the methodological categories presented in the second part of the book. After all, the author herself concedes that the development of classification systems should be rooted in concrete textual analysis (cf. 412).

All in all, one of the major merits of this study certainly resides in the possibility of extending its conclusions to other transnational and contexts. Its comparative approach shows vividly how, in two different societies, (post)migration literature unsettles traditional literary norms

and instigates innovation in strikingly similar ways. This volume's most valuable theoretical contribution is undoutedly Geiser's subtle combination of the postcolonial concept of cultural hybridity and the model of the dynamic polysystem as a key to understanding the structure and functioning of literary systems. Accordingly, Geiser's monograph will become required reading for all comparatists dealing with the literature of postmigration in German and in French. Furthermore, it will provide invaluable resources for all scholars looking for theoretical-conceptual inspiration in their study of transcultural literatures.

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Sandra Vlasta. *Contemporary Migration Literature in German and English: A Comparative Study*. Leiden: Brill, 2016. Pp. 296. ISBN: 9789004305991.

In an age characterized by such political projects as "brexit" and wall-building between countries, nationalistic political movements seeking

to keep ethnic identities separate have become increasingly dominant in the Western world, particularly in Europe. At the same time, the intense experience of hybrid identities and transnational cultures remains a staple feature of contemporary society, as reflected in specific literary genres: "migration literature is always a political project," Sandra Vlasta writes in the conclusion of her monograph *Contemporary Migration Literature in German and English: A Comparative Study*. She continues: "It is part of a process of newly defining culture and literature, and works towards their transculturalisation and nationalization" (265). In her work, comparatist Sandra Vlasta has dealt mainly with issues of transculturality and multilingualism, especially in Austrian, English, German and Italian literature. She is one of the founders and editors of the web platform *Polyphonie: Mehrsprachigkeit_Kreativität_Schreibe*n (www.polyphonie.at). Together with colleagues from Aix-Marseille, Brussels, Grenoble, Luxembourg, and Rome, she is currently working on "Trans-Culture: Migration and Literature in Contemporary Europe," another important research project focusing on transculturality rather than on processes of re-nationalization.

Vlasta's monograph obviously owes much to her doctoral dissertation, for which she was awarded the *Dissertationspreis für Migrationsforschung der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* in 2007. Her central research interest, a comparative analysis of different forms of migrant literature, addresses fundamental issues related to categories, methodologies, and tensions in comparative literature analysis. Does "migrant literature" exist at all, and if so, how could it be defined? Could we make a distinction between a "migrant literature in German" and a "migrant literature in English" and productively compare them? How could such a comparative analysis methodologically be carried out? Although Vlasta seeks to answer all of these questions, she leaves some issues untouched.

Vlasta regards "migration literature" as an open umbrella term for literary texts dealing with migration, "i.e. a long-term transfer to another place" (265). While she stresses she is less interested in the authors' migrant background than in the texts themselves, she nevertheless adds an appendix entitled "Bio-Bibliographical Notes on the Authors" (267–272). In it, she presents sixteen authors who were born and/or lived in—amongst other countries—Austria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Nigeria, Romania, South Korea, Switzerland, Trinidad, Turkey, the Netherlands, and the United States.

This diversity of cultural and linguistic traditions should help her to bear out her main thesis: "texts of migration literature can be considered a genre as they share … similar themes and motifs" (4). To that end, Vlasta differentiates between "theme," "motif," and "topic." Whilst "migration" constitutes the main topic of her study, she is equally interested in other significant (sub-)themes: "The themes to be looked at, then, are language, translation, identity and the search for identity, the new homeland, periphery, and centre. Within these themes, several motifs will be identified and analysed, for instance the motif of the tongue, cooking, eating, arrival, and the climate. The experience of migration as the main (but not exclusive) topic will serve as a reference level for the analysis of all the other themes and motifs in this book." (44) Consequently, Vlasta refers to Werner Sollors, as she defines thematology as her central method. She concentrates on themes and motifs on the one hand and their intertextual references to literary, historical, cultural and social contexts on the other hand. As such, she uses a variety of theories and methods, encompassing traditional textual analysis as well as postcolonial studies.

Vlasta establishes her "idea of a universal genre of migration literature" by comparatively analyzing "The Motif of Language" (ch. 2), "The Search for Identity … Expressed by Cooking, Eating, and Food" (ch. 3), "Depictions of the New Homeland" (ch. 4) and "Global Ethnoscapes" (ch. 5) in migrant literature. More specifically, she examines nearly twenty novels and three volumes of narratives written mainly by Austrian and by British authors. In her chapter on the motif of language, Vlasta focuses on prose foregrounding "second generation migrants" as linguistic and cultural translators: "children become translators for their parents, conversations are held in different languages, code-switching is documented or the characters comment on their feelings towards different languages" (63). In her analysis of Anna Kim's *Die Bilderspur* (2004), whose author was born in South Korea and currently lives in Austria, Vlasta underlines that Austrian literature is "based on an experimental approach to language" to a greater extent than "migration literature in English, which shows mainly conventional linguistic approaches" (263).

In her next chapter, Vlasta demonstrates that notions of and the search for identity in migrant literature are often expressed by cooking, eating, and food, which becomes a motif of the genre in itself. This is made abundantly clear through the contrasting analyses of Preethi Nair's

One Hundred Shades of White (2003), Timothy Mo's *Sour Sweet* (1982), and Vladimir Vertlib's *Letzter Wunsch* (2003). Although these novels explore the distinct predicaments of Chinese immigrants in Great Britain, Indian immigrants in Great Britain, and Jewish immigrants in Germany, Vlasta reveals their similar usage of the motifs of food, cooking, and eating "to construct the characters' identity and to negotiate a changing (hybrid) identity in the process of migration" (263).

Evidently, texts categorized as dealing with "long-term transfers to another place" share "depictions of the new homeland" as their common theme. To her merit, Vlasta convincingly argues that texts about coloured immigrants in Great Britain focus primarily on the colonial experience and the history of immigration in the host country (Caryl Philipps' *The Final Passage*, 1985, and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, 2003), whilst Austrian migrant literature tends to highlight the views of individual migrants about the recent past (Hamid Sadr's *Der Gedächtnissekretär*, 2005).

The fifth chapter, "Global Ethnoscapes in Migration Literature," elaborating on essays the author previously published, introduces a new methodological and comparatist approach. First, Vlasta sets out Arjun Appadurai's concept of global ethnoscapes, which are "places that are characterized by migration and mass media and that … have become locations for the social, spatial, and cultural formation of group identities" (223). Second, she provides short reflections on Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory and Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the Third Space. These theoretical approaches merge in Alexandra Lübcke's notion of topographical networks of memory providing "links between the *local* and the *national/global* … and transnational/transcultural spaces of memory and experience" (229). Thus, Vlasta identifies the location of protagonists and the shifting boundaries between centre and periphery as major themes of the genre of migrant literature. Accordingly, her methodology in this chapter evolves into a comparison between British and German (migrant) writers. Her examination of prose works by sixteen authors, ranging from Monica Ali to Feridun Zaimoğlu, leads her, not surprisingly, to this compelling conclusion: "As a genre, migration literature transgresses the borders of national literature" (264).

The importance of Sandra Vlasta's comparative study on contemporary migration literature in German and English is three-fold. First, this book offers convincing and meticulous overviews of existing research on

migrant literature and its central themes, such as language, the quest for identity, or depictions of the new homeland. Second, this volume contains comparative analyses of a broad variety of prose works by (migrant) authors from Austria and Great Britain, thus shedding light on vital themes and motifs of migrant literature in English and German. Vlasta's study will pave the way for further comparatist research in this field, especially in the cultural contexts of Austria and Great Britain.

Third, Vlasta's study articulates the tensions between the different methodological approaches and categories that can be used to analyze migrant literatures. These tensions arise from the conflict between Vlasta's central research question and her selected corpus. If one's ultimate goal is to pinpoint the general themes and motifs epitomized by migrant literature, does a comparison between only two national literary traditions yield compelling results? One could answer in the affirmative since "the possibilities for the development of multicultural literatures still depend very much on the frame of the nation-state," as Wolfgang Behschnitt and Magnus Nilsson stated in *Literature, Language, and Multiculturalism in Scandinavia and the Low Countries* (5).

Vlasta's work privileges literary analysis at the expense of institutional contexts, as her short historical and sociological chapter entitled "Immigration to Great Britain and Austria" indicates. Consequently, she has to deal with the tension between the notion of a "national migrant literature" (a category questioned by Vlasta herself, 50), the concept of a "transnational literature" (as described by Azade Seyhan, 37), and the idea of a "Neue Weltliteratur" (as used by Elke Sturm-Trigonakis, see 40). This tension is methodically transcended in her final chapter, "Global Ethnoscapes in Migration Literature." Accordingly, Vlasta invites future research on "a wider corpus of texts" (264), "extended to films and music" and to "further themes and motifs" (265). Her comparatist approach, focusing on transnational literatures and global ethnoscapes, has markedly political implications. Indeed, it concentrates on cultural issues far removed from the ideologies underlying "brexit," ethnic segregation, and plans to build walls between nation states. Vlasta's "cosmopolitan" stance provides useful suggestions to overcome such narrow-minded visions of the world.

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Crystel Pinçonnat. *Endofiction et fable de soi: Ecrire en héritier de l'immigration*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2016. Pp. 398. ISBN: 9782812451225.

Toute personne ayant un jour tenté d'étudier ou d'enseigner les littératures minoritaires a sans doute pu en faire l'expérience : il n'est rien de plus difficile que de trouver le point d'équilibre entre l'analyse des textes en tant que tels et l'exploration des périlleuses et abyssales questions identitaires, politiques, sexuelles et raciales qu'ils mettent en jeu. Ces questions en effet, qu'il serait dans un tel cadre particulièrement acrobatique d'éviter tout à fait, sont comme des sables mouvants conceptuels qui risquent à tout instant d'engloutir le discours critique. Qu'est-ce qu'une personne « issue de l'immigration » ? Qu'une personne « minoritaire », qu'une « minorité » ? Qu'une personne « de couleur » ? Où commence la nation, la vraie, le « nous » de la communauté littéraire nationale, et où commencent ses marges ou son « dehors » ? Ces interrogations qui occupent depuis des décennies historiennes, anthropologues, philosophes, sociologues et théoriciennes ne sauraient être résolues de façon simple, si bien que chaque terme potentiellement utilisable pour opérer des regroupements de textes « minoritaires » exigerait à lui seul des centaines de pages d'interrogations conceptuelles et politiques, éclipsant les œuvres littéraires. Ce dilemme critique a l'intérêt de nous rappeler une évidence : que les études littéraires mononationales tirent leur capacité à la précision dans l'étude des textes d'un oubli volontaire des questions conceptuelles et idéologiques potentiellement épineuses que pose le choix de

la nation comme horizon ultime du fait littéraire. À l'inverse, les grands noms des études postcoloniales comme Homi K. Bhabha et Gayatri Spivak, qui proposent des réflexions passionnantes sur ces sujets, se voient souvent reprocher de réduire la lecture des œuvres littéraires à la portion congrue. La grande qualité de l'ouvrage de Crystel Pinçonnat est de parvenir à mettre en place un *modus vivendi* critique viable, bâtissant sa réflexion sur des termes temporairement acceptables qu'elle soumet à ses lecteurs sans prétendre en épuiser les ambiguïtés, mais qui lui permettent de parcourir allègrement les romans de son corpus en maintenant une sorte de ligne claire dans l'analyse.

Le néologisme qui donne son titre à l'étude de Crystel Pinçonnat ne doit pas faire craindre au lecteur un ouvrage qui chercherait à imposer au forceps un concept nouveau et définitif sur le marché de la théorie littéraire. Le terme d'« endofiction » apparaît plutôt comme un outil heuristique sans autre prétention que d'être efficace, une étiquette qui permet d'opérer des rapprochements et des recoupements. L'auteure ne consacre pas de longs développements à le définir de façon abstraite ni à le situer par rapport à des concepts voisins ou concurrents des études littéraires postcoloniales, préférant laisser sa lecture des œuvres parler d'elle-même. Et si *Endofiction et fable de soi* se « contente », si l'on ose dire, de comparer des œuvres françaises liées à l'immigration algérienne et états-uniennes liées à l'immigration mexicaine, on sent bien que sa démarche aurait pu s'étendre bien au-delà de ces domaines, vers des champs qu'elle évoque au passage — communauté d'origine turque en Allemagne, indo-pakistanaise en Grande-Bretagne, etc. En cela, l'ouvrage est à la fois modeste et ambitieux, dans le sens où la ligne de crête critique sur laquelle il parvient à établir son discours peut se révéler précieuse pour étudier et enseigner un corpus, celui de la littérature liée aux questions migratoires, qui suscite de plus en plus d'intérêt. Crystel Pinçonnat place son projet sous le signe d'identités mouvantes, qui ne sont jamais ni tout à fait « nationales » ni tout à fait « minoritaires ». Hostile à une « histoire nationale appréhendée de façon monolithique » (9), elle souhaite faire entendre des récits dont l'enjeu même est l'articulation d'un sujet dans une langue, de façon contrastive : une « fable de soi produite depuis l'intérieur de la nation » (345). Dans ces récits, l'invention de soi est inséparable de l'invention du pays d'accueil lui-même, ce qui ouvre des ponts entre les citoyens « venus d'ici » et les citoyens « venus d'ailleurs ». Derrière cette idée centrale, se fait jour un désir, sinon de réconciliation, au moins de

conciliation des récits et des expériences des uns et des autres. Le texte de quatrième de couverture est particulièrement explicite sur ce point, arguant d'une « nécessité de rapatrier au sein des littératures nationales des textes souvent placés à leurs marges ».

On le voit, le parti-pris de Crystel Pinçonnat est celui d'une double échelle narrative — la nation, l'individu — qui rend son discours et son choix de textes particulièrement accessible et convaincant. Le phénomène de l'immigration est appréhendé à la hauteur du sujet individuel, dont elle montre qu'il constitue en tant que tel une inépuisable machine narrative. Dans la lignée des récits d'enfance, romans d'apprentissage et autres récits de vocation avec lesquels elle partage un air de famille, l'endofiction dramatise la confrontation du sujet avec le monde. Ses héros et héroïnes ont à cœur de se libérer de la communauté, ou comme l'écrit l'auteure, de « s'extraire de la gangue du nous » (243). Ce qui ne signifie pas que l'approche de Crystel Pinçonnat soit aveugle à tout ce qu'il y a de collectif dans le processus d'invention de soi qu'elle décrit, que l'on se place au niveau des personnages où même à celui des auteurs eux-mêmes. Pour chaque protagoniste, des entités sociales comme la famille, la langue, la nation et la littérature font l'objet de stratégies de positionnement complexes, tout comme pour l'écrivain. L'auteure analyse au même titre que les textes eux-mêmes les stratégies éditoriales mises en place (60–63) ainsi que les postures sociologiques des écrivains, dont elle dresse une passionnante typologie (64–85). Elle se montre attentive aux stratégies d'affiliation et d'implantation perceptibles dans les romans, notamment à travers la pratique de l'intertextualité, dans laquelle elle lit une forme de « branchement symbolique » (323) à l'univers national du pays d'accueil. La transmission nationale et la transmission familiale se trouvent placées dans un rapport dialectique, au sein duquel intervient un personnage-type que Crystel Pinçonnat nomme le « tuteur identitaire » (290–97), relais de la famille qui offre au protagoniste des discours et des modèles à même de l'aider à s'inventer dans un environnement social qui s'offre comme problématique. La langue elle-même, matériau de la création littéraire, est un espace de travail d'invention hybride et de mise en scène d'une conscience métalinguistique aiguë (299–301), faisant le lien entre les stratégies sociales évoquées et la matérialité des textes. Sur ce point précis, l'ouvrage est redevable aux travaux de Myriam Suchet, dont les *Outils pour une traduction postcoloniale* (2009) sont mis à bon usage.

Endofiction et fable de soi a l'honnêteté de ne jamais prétendre pouvoir généraliser son propos de façon absolue, et même de signaler les aspérités des textes qui pourraient sembler aller dans des directions quelque peu différentes de celles qu'implique son projet de lecture. Par exemple, il ne nie pas que les stratégies d'affiliation littéraires déployées par les auteurs ne vont pas toujours dans le sens d'une articulation de soi au sein de la communauté nationale du pays d'accueil : il arrive que les textes mobilisés appartiennent à d'autres littératures et possèdent une dimension plus militante, comme dans *France, Récit d'une enfance* de Zahia Rahmani où Richard Wright vient supplanter les classiques français. Malgré son parti-pris explicite, qui vise à « affilier » les littératures d'immigration aux littératures nationales de pays d'arrivée, l'ouvrage ne nie pas la dimension conflictuelle, voire la violence identitaire qui peut surgir dans leurs pages, ni l'inscription de discours d'activisme au sein des oeuvres (293–94). Crystel Pinçonnat ne traite pas la « nation » comme une entité essentialisée qui éliminerait tous les conflits et toutes les différences, mais comme un signifiant « élargi » (54) et évolutif désignant un espace et une expérience partagés par une communauté. Il n'en reste pas moins que le référent national fonctionne par définition comme l'opérateur d'une résorption des tensions et conflits d'intérêts présents dans le monde social. L'ouvrage tourne foncièrement le dos à une compréhension ethnoculturelle de l'idée de nation, dans une perspective indubitablement humaniste, mais la nation (indissociable d'*une* langue et d'*une* littérature) reste l'horizon idéal du discours, le point où la différence entre l'autre et le même se dissout. Préférant produire du consensus que du dissensus, ce dont on peut lui savoir gré dans le contexte politique qui est le nôtre, Crystel Pinçonnat passe peut-être un peu trop vite sur les problèmes que pose l'idéologie nationale, que les romans de son corpus permettent de déconstruire autant qu'ils la reconduisent. Le déploiement de théories comme celles de Homi K. Bhabha et Gayatri Spivak, fort éclairantes sur ce point, est volontairement succinct pour laisser la place à un discours plus neutre, nourri d'une riche bibliographie pluridisciplinaire (histoire, sociologie, théorie critique) mais aussi de références familières au public plus large des études littéraires (Mikhaïl Bakhtine, Philippe Lejeune, Dominique Viart), opérant par les actes le décloisonnement que l'auteure appelle de ses vœux.

On pourra regretter que le propos comparatif entre la France et les États-Unis, pour ces raisons peut-être, ne parvienne pas toujours à se

prémunir de certains préjugés et affirmations excessives, voire tout à fait discutables. On peut comprendre et respecter la préférence que manifeste l'auteure pour le système français vis à vis de celui des États-Unis, mais il est dommage que cette préférence mène parfois à caricaturer ce dernier. Par le jeu de la comparaison différentielle, les caractéristiques prêtées à l'un (mouvements ethniques et identitaires, tensions raciales, communautés disposant d'une forme d'autonomie par rapport à la communauté nationale) se mettent à définir l'autre par leur absence. L'opposition entre une littérature minoritaire qui aux États-Unis serait profondément l'héritière de mouvements politiques et qui en France ne le serait pas du tout, est quelque peu systématique. L'ouvrage aurait été plus riche encore s'il avait évoqué les mouvements des immigrés en France au même titre que la lutte pour les droits civiques aux États-Unis, et inversement s'il avait fait état des nombreux efforts effectués dans les littératures multiculturelles états-uniennes depuis les années 1970 pour dépasser leur ancrage militant. Il est contestable d'affirmer que la construction « d'un lieu de mémoire commun se dégage beaucoup moins dans la production nord-américaine » (361), surtout si l'on considère la production des années 1990 et 2000 où la dimension générationnelle et interethnique est tout aussi présente que dans les exemples français choisis ici. Plus gênant encore est le fait de désigner systématiquement les champs d'études pluridisciplinaires issus des mouvements pour les droits civiques (*African American Studies*, *Chicano Studies*, etc.) par l'expression polémique de « critique communautariste », qui résonne de façon particulièrement connotée dans le contexte actuel. L'auteure ne peut pas ignorer que ces champs de recherche et d'enseignement ont constitué d'extraordinaires viviers de talent et d'inventivité théorique qui ont transformé en profondeur l'enseignement universitaire états-unien dans son ensemble, avec la même exigence intellectuelle et la même portée universelle, en réalité, que les autres champs académiques.

Ce n'est toutefois pas là, nous l'avons dit, que se situe le projet de l'ouvrage. Si ces quelques moments de montée en généralité peuvent sembler moins convaincants que le reste du livre, c'est bien parce que son but n'est pas de résoudre les questionnements identitaires et idéologiques qu'il aborde, mais de proposer une forme de positionnement critique qui permette de donner une visibilité aux textes des « héritiers de l'immigration ». Sur ce point, *Endofiction et discours de soi* parvient à se saisir d'un éventail de questions qui ne sont pas nouvelles au sein

des études francophones et postcoloniales (rôle du nom, scène d'injure, famille, transmission, rapport conflictuel au langage) pour les articuler de façon nouvelle, formant un assemblage critique cohérent et fonctionnel qui permet de lire et de faire lire les oeuvres de son corpus, mais aussi bien d'autres encore qui pourraient s'y agréger. On peut gager que cet ouvrage d'une lecture agréable et fondamentalement tourné vers les textes littéraires constituera une ressource pédagogique précieuse dans les années à venir.

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Dobrota Pucherová and Róbert Gáfrik, eds. *Postcolonial Europe? Essays on Post-Communist Literatures and Cultures.* Leiden: Brill, 2015. Pp. 405. ISBN: 9789004303843.

An important and timely volume on post-communist cultures that seeks to offer an insightful contribution to the field of postcolonial studies has recently been published by Brill. *Postcolonial Europe*, edited by Dobrota Pucherová and Róbert Gáfrik, is the result of the collaboration of nineteen scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds. It covers the literary and filmic representations of post-communist societies such as Russia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and the Baltic States, among other countries. The diverse disciplinary background of the authors ensures that this very rich cultural material is explored from different angles, yet, regrettably, it also makes the volume somewhat incoherent. The quality of the collected essays varies considerably in terms of theoretical vigour as well as in terms of the significance of findings. Although the term "postcolonial" has been redefined a number of times, this volume shows that its implications could benefit from further fine-tuning. John McLeod's *Postcolonial London*, published in 2004, already suggested that the impact of colonialism needs to be investigated in the literary works produced in and about Western Europe. As McLeod argues, there is "a troubling lack of acknowledgement of the history which has happened within the imperial metropolis [London] as a consequence of colonialism and its aftermath" (5). In other words, while the examination of the impact of colonialism on Western Europe has been

on the agenda of recent critics, the "Second World" still remains an overlooked site, perhaps even a blind spot, in postcolonial theories.

The editors of *Postcolonial Europe* raise provocative questions: how are we to approach East Central Europe from a postcolonial angle? Can we regard Soviet expansion as part of European imperialism? Is not the whole of Europe postcolonial? I believe these are significant issues which need to be investigated, yet, as the editors themselves point out, this approach is not entirely new. Katherine Verdery, Ewa Thompson, and Violeta Kelertas, among others, have published book-length studies about post-socialist and post-communist cultures. This volume explores a number of thought-provoking case studies but I think it does not provide an entirely new paradigm for the analysis of the literary and visual culture of the region.

As the editors claim, "the book uses the term 'postcolonial Europe' in a new way; rather than designating the former West European colonial powers, as it has been used by the postcolonial discourse, it indicates here the Central and Eastern European countries formerly under Soviet domination, pointing to the fact that this region should play a major role in the current debates in postcolonial studies on European identity" (14). I fully agree that Central and Eastern Europe should be recognised as a postcolonial space. The history of the region, often considered as the "Other" of Western European modernity, certainly would gain much from such an analysis. Such a reassessment would constitute an important contribution to the understanding of Western modernity. As the editors note, even the most spectacular colonization in the region, namely, the imperial expansion of the Soviet Union into Europe and Central Asia, is routinely overlooked by Western postcolonial scholars, who are reluctant to view a communist country as an imperialist power. Since postcolonial theory implies a primarily Marxist approach, this resistance is logical: regarding a non-capitalist country as an imperial centre goes against the very basic assumptions of postcolonial criticism.

The volume consists of five sections. The first one, entitled "Post-Communist, Post-Socialist, Post-Soviet, Post-Dependence: Preliminary Considerations on East-Central European Un-Homing," deals with the representations of two types of displacements: "on the one hand, mass migrations from East-Central Europe to the Western metropolis, and, on the other, the internal exile of non-Russian populations in post-Soviet Russia and the Baltics" (15). While the literary and cultural material analysed in

this section is rich and truly engaging, I do not think these chapters offer new theoretical concepts and methodological tools to explore the literature and culture of the region. The term "post-communist un-homing" delineates the experience of post-communist migrants, which is assumed to be different from postcolonial displacement. However, the contributions to this section do not always convince the reader that this catchphrase significantly enriches the current discourse on diaspora studies.

Not all essays in this section focus primarily on literary and cultural texts. Benedikts Kalnacs offers "a brief insight" into the work of the Latvian theatre director, Alvis Hermanis, yet his main interest lies in exploring the historical experience of the Baltic region as the suppressed "Other" of Western modernity. If Emilia Kledzik discusses the current status of postcolonial studies in Poland in her informative article, she does not analyse any specific literary work. Primarily interested in post-communists "syndromes" such as nostalgia, displacement, etc., Cristina Sandru reads Baetica Morpurgo's *The Immigrants* (2011) as an instance of "postcolonial post-communist fiction" (65). Although she points to the specific features of the Romanian novel, which "rests squarely on the figure of the economic migrant" (75), her essay concludes with rather obvious claims about diasporic displacement and alienation. Madina Tlostanova's chapter explores a vast array of post-communist art forms: she concentrates on post-soviet verbal and visual arts ranging from Taus Makhacheva's *Gamsutl* (2012), a spectacular production set in an abandoned village in Dagestan, to films such as Ariel Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden* (1990), adopted for the famous movie by Roman Polansky in 1994. The rich material explored in this essay is mostly unknown in the Anglophone world, yet, regrettably, the author's short analyses sometimes lack deep insight. Tlostanova reads *Gamsutl*, for instance, as a "fascinating example of … an intersection of space, memory, alternative histories and topographies" (35), which offers a new vision of post-soviet masculinity, the subversive potential of which she fails to detail. This is a real pity: thanks to her extensive knowledge of post-soviet art and postcolonial criticism, Tlostanova could have offered a truly important contribution not only to post-communist studies, but also to post-colonial *theories*.

The second part of the book, entitled "The Ghosts of the Past: Post-Communist Rewritings of National Histories," explores post-communist trauma narratives. The contributions to this section focus on the healing process in such post-communist countries as Romania, Albania, Slovakia,

the Ukraine, and Hungary. Most essays deal with issues related to collective memory, the need to reconstruct a sense of national identity after the trauma of 1989, and the emptiness that haunts post-communist societies. All contributions map the social and cultural context of literary texts, including different events and issues such as the Prague Spring of 1968, the Kádár era in Hungary (Zsadányi), or the contempt for Romanians as the only European people without any history of their own until the end of the Middle Ages (Stefanescu). The essays in this section treat literary works from multiple perspectives: while Bogdan Stefanescu, for instance, investigates the notion of the void in literary theory, Romanian history, and post-1989 cultural discourse, Edit Zsadányi and Natalie Paoli focus on how literary texts deal with the trauma of communism.

The third section, which includes two essays on cities and two primarily theoretical contributions to spatial studies, foregrounds the theme of place. Tamás Scheibner's article on the postwar Sovietization of Budapest offers a meticulously contextualised analysis of the ideological (re)construction of the Hungarian capital after the Second World War in literature. Xénia Gaál's article on Kaliningrad examines the creation of the city by the Soviet regime. As these contributions indicate, urban studies could provide a productive approach to reconsider post-communist literature, which is primarily concerned with movement, transition and geopolitics. The other two contributions, focusing on the geopoetics of the female body in Ukrainian and Polish fiction (Sywenky) and the ecology of place in Central and Eastern European writings (Kolodziejczyk), are only loosely connected to those exploring the poetics of cities in this section. The volume also investigates orientalism in the Central European context, which is, in my opinion, a truly significant project. However, I do not think that this section "opens a hitherto unexplored topic in postcolonial studies" (18), as the editors claim. Robert Lemon's book-length study of the Habsburg Empire, which they briefly mention, has already tackled this subject matter. In addition, I have published a Saidian reading of a Hungarian national narrative, *The Eclipse of the Crescent Moon* (*Egri csillagok*). The novelty of the chapter consists in its focus on travel writings: the perception of the Orient in Slovak literature during the communist regime (Gráfik), the image of China in Slovak and Czech travelogues (Slobodnik), and the depiction of India in Polish texts of the 1960s (Sadecka).

Finally, *Postcolonial Europe* raises yet another Saidian question: what forms of colonialism continue to exist in Central and Eastern Europe?

Is it Western imperialism or the influence of Russia which defines neo-imperialist tendencies in the region? This concluding section deals with Ukraine's ambiguous post-communist development (Riabchuk), offers a case study of Frank Gaudlitz's photographs and the photographer's intrusion into the native space of East and South-East Europeans (Skróczewski), and an essay exploring the literary representation of East-Central Europe in Polish and Ukrainian fiction (Wierzejska). Jagoda Wierzejska relies on the trope of the palimpsest to comment on the relationships of dependency and power. In doing so, she claims to introduce a "fresh metaphor," though it has been used in urban studies for a few decades, most famously by Andreas Huyssen. I think that the issues this section seeks to raise have broader ramifications than those the limited scope of these three essays can do justice to. Although these articles offer thought-provoking case studies, a number of questions concerning the new forms of global coloniality in the region remain unanswered. Both these neo-imperialist tendencies and the literary history of the East Central Europe will need to be further explored, I believe, in the decades to come.

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Pierre Martial Abossolo. *Fantastique et littérature africaine contemporaine: Entre rupture et soumission aux schémas occidentaux.* Paris: Champion, 2015. Pp. 312. ISBN: 9782745326768.

Pierre Martial Abossolo, qui enseigne les littératures française, africaine et comparée à l'Université de Buea, au Cameroun, a obtenu récemment le prix *La Renaissance française* de l'Académie des Sciences d'Outre-mer

(France) grâce à cet ouvrage tiré de la thèse de doctorat qu'il a soutenue en 2009 à l'Université Stendhal Grenoble III, en France, et intitulé *Fantastique et littérature africaine contemporaine : Entre rupture et soumission aux schémas occidentaux*.

Dans ledit ouvrage, l'auteur se penche sur la difficile question de la classification et de l'analyse des œuvres littéraires africaines en suivant les critères établis par les chercheurs européens et pour la littérature européenne, à travers l'exemple particulier et concret du genre fantastique. Après avoir retracé la genèse de ce courant, né en Europe en réaction au courant rationaliste qui a dominé le 18e et le 19e siècle et qui a exacerbé la dualité entre le rationnel et l'irrationnel, devenus inconciliables dans la pensée moderne, et après avoir exposé de manière très claire les critères généralement adoptés par la critique et les chercheurs pour définir ce qu'est le fantastique en littérature, l'auteur adopte une approche comparatiste qu'il applique à un double corpus : d'une part, des œuvres françaises représentatives du fantastique, en l'occurrence des nouvelles de Guy de Maupassant et de Prosper Mérimée et un roman de Balzac, *La Peau de chagrin*. D'autre part, une série de romans africains qui semblent répondre aux mêmes critères, dus essentiellement à des auteurs camerounais — Charly Gabriel Mbock, Pabe Mongo, Camille Nkoa Atenga, Joachim Tabi Owono et Etienne Yanou — mais aussi béninois, centrafricain et ivoirien. Ce corpus permet de mettre à l'honneur des ouvrages essentiellement publiés en Afrique, des auteurs moins connus et certainement moins étudiés en Europe, ce qui constitue déjà un premier intérêt de cette monographie.

De manière générale, l'auteur démontre bien que si les œuvres africaines qu'il analyse entrent effectivement dans la catégorie du fantastique, notamment par l'utilisation particulière du cadre spatio-temporel — l'espace rural et sauvage, la nuit — certains de ces éléments ne sont pas forcément appréhendés de la même manière par les auteurs africains et leurs lecteurs. En effet, selon l'auteur, en Afrique « la vision du monde ne fait pas une distinction stricte entre ce qui relève du naturel et ce qui relève du surnaturel » (37), alors que c'est précisément cette distinction qui est à l'origine du fantastique en France et, plus largement, en Europe. Cette vision du monde différente a forcément des implications sur la manière d'écrire — et de lire — un texte. À titre d'exemple, Pierre Martial Abossolo montre que dans la littérature fantastique française, l'espace rural et sauvage — le maquis ou la forêt dans certaines nouvelles deMéri-

mée ou de Maupassant par exemple — aide à établir un effet fantastique grâce à l'atmosphère d'insécurité, de danger et d'étrangeté qui s'en dégage, loin de l'espace urbain maîtrisé, rationnalisé (71). Il souligne ensuite que si la plupart des textes fantastiques africains se déroulent eux aussi dans la campagne, le rôle de cette dernière n'est pas forcément le même qu'en Europe : elle peut en effet être vue comme « une zone d'harmonie entre le surnaturel et le naturel », et non comme un espace surnaturel qui s'opposerait à un espace rationnel, tandis que la forêt en particulier, qui suscite forcément la peur en Occident, peut produire le même effet en Afrique, mais peut tout aussi bien être bienfaitrice, voire même sacrée (80).

De la même manière, dans les textes français un nombre considérable d'événements fantastiques surviennent la nuit, « le moment par excellence du trouble et de la terreur, le temps favorable au maintien du doute et de l'ambiguïté » (107), comme l'illustrent maintes nouvelles de Mérimée et de Maupassant, alors que dans les textes africains analysés par l'auteur, le temps du surnaturel semble être autant la nuit que le jour — dans *La Parole de Mouankoum* de Nzouankeu, c'est la nuit que le dieu des Mbo se manifeste, mais dans *Le Sorcier signe et persiste* de Nkoa Atenga, la sorcellerie se produit en pleine journée. Ainsi, contrairement à ce qui se passe dans le fantastique français, l'alternance jour/nuit ne joue pas un rôle fondamental dans l'intrusion du surnaturel.

Pierre Martial Abossolo montre avec la même efficacité que les personnages et les objets utilisés pour créer le fantastique ne sont encore une fois pas forcément appréhendés de la même manière dans ses deux corpus, européen et africain. Alors que l'objet est souvent surnaturel et terrifiant d'un côté — un objet indéterminé, indéterminable dans *La Chambre bleue* de Mérimée, une main provenant d'une statue dans *La Vénus d'Ille* de Maupassant — il est souvent naturel, voire banal du côté africain : une marmite, un sachet, un balai, une pierre, une lance, un napperon, etc. Mais surtout, l'efficacité de leur action sème le doute, l'ambiguïté du côté français — une main de statue pourrait-elle avoir un pouvoir surnaturel ? — alors que du côté africain les personnages accordent d'emblée du crédit à l'efficacité des objets précités, dès lors qu'ils sont utilisés par des sorciers ou par des guérisseurs (158).

Autre originalité des textes fantastiques africains : l'usage des langues africaines, ou plus exactement l'insertion de mots ou de phrases en langues africaines dans des textes composés en français, un procédé qui permet notamment d'encore mieux souligner l'irruption du surnaturel

par une formule particulière, alors que les textes du corpus français n'ont recours qu'à une seule langue de manière homogène.

Par ailleurs, Pierre Martial Abossolo souligne avec justesse que la difficulté de classer des œuvres ou de les analyser selon des critères établis par des Européens, pour des œuvres majoritairement européennes ou occidentales, ne concerne pas que la littérature africaine : les chercheurs comme Roger Bozetto travaillant sur les textes fantastiques latino-américains, ou chinois, ont rencontré des difficultés similaires, le rapport à la modernité, introduit de l'extérieur, n'ayant pas non plus forcément été vécu de la même manière qu'en Occident dans ces espaces géographiques.

On pourrait ajouter que les mêmes problèmes se posent pour l'analyse en dehors du monde occidental d'autres genres littéraires, en particulier le Réalisme magique, très représenté en Afrique mais encore largement sous-étudié : le Réalisme magique produit en Afrique répond-il aux mêmes critères que ceux développés pour les œuvres européennes et sud-américaines ? Dans l'affirmative, s'agit-il d'une simple filiation, ou bien de traditions culturelles différentes qui se rejoignent dans le partage de caractéristiques communes ? Plusieurs auteurs africains, qu'ils soient d'expression anglophone, francophone ou arabophone, se sont en tout cas défendus de produire du réalisme magique forcément inspiré de la tradition latino-américaine, insistant au contraire sur l'ancrage de leur production littéraire dans les cultures africaines. De la même manière, plusieurs critiques et écrivains arabes disent que le Réalisme magique maghrébin ou proche-oriental puise avant tout son inspiration dans des récits tels que *Les Mille et une nuits* plutôt que dans la production littéraire européenne ou même sud-américaine.

Les arguments de Pierre Martial Abossolo en faveur d'un fantastique africain, étayés par une bibliographie solide, sont séduisants, et convaincants, malgré cette réserve: l'auteur semble considérer que toute la littérature fantastique africaine pourrait être soumise à la même lecture que celle qu'il fait des textes de son corpus. Or, ce dernier est exclusivement francophone, et limité géographiquement, alors que les auteurs anglophones par exemple, nigérians en particulier, mériteraient certainement plus d'attention dès lors que le titre de l'ouvrage laisse à penser que l'on traite de la littérature africaine contemporaine dans son ensemble. Plus encore, l'auteur utilise de manière récurrente le terme « africain » de manière générique, comme le font d'ailleurs de nombreux autres chercheurs, qu'ils soient occidentaux ou africains, à propos de littérature mais

aussi d'autres domaines culturels : il y aurait une philosophie ou une pensée africaine, un droit africain, etc. Ainsi, l'auteur parle régulièrement du « rapport de l'Africain au surnaturel » (24), de « l'attitude particulière de l'Africain à voir de la sorcellerie partout » (29), de la « vision du monde magico-religieuse des Africains » (245), etc. Or, s'il existe bien sûr une littérature africaine, cela signifie-t-il pour autant qu'elle soit si homogène ? Doit-on s'attendre aux mêmes caractéristiques culturelles face au fantastique au Cameroun et au Bénin, mais aussi au Nigéria, en Afrique du Sud, au Soudan, en Algérie et en Ethiopie ? Le rapport au fantastique serait-il le même, peu importe la zone géographique, le groupe linguistique, la culture religieuse en question ? Ces questions mériteraient d'être posées, même si elles n'entachent en rien la valeur de cette intéressante monographie de Pierre Martial Abossolo.

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Kim Anderson Sasser. *Magical Realism and Cosmopolitanism: Strategizing Belonging.* Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014. Pp. 260. ISBN: 9781137301895.

Of all experimental forms of writing, magic(al) realism is perhaps that which has most stimulated and frustrated critics from almost all fields of literary inquiry. Although fraught, this concept opens up exciting possibilities of aesthetic and/or thematic investigation. Nonetheless, it also involves issues related to defining the terms "magic(al)" and "realism," distinguishing magic(al) realism from other writing modes and genres, isolating its aesthetic mechanisms, as well as interpreting and deploying the concept in cultural terms. Kim Anderson Sasser's study takes up the threefold challenge of first surveying the myriad aesthetic and thematic answers to these questions that scholars have favoured over the years, second renewing the formalist approach to the magic(al) realist mode (Chapter 1), and finally offering an interdisciplinary, cross-pollinating dialogue between this mode and studies in cosmopolitanism (Chapter 2ff). With these last two steps, Sasser aims to reinterpret the traditional

notions of magic(al) realism as a subversive formal technique and an "intrinsically postcolonial" mode only (20). This allows her to argue that, although this mode intervenes in "strategies of belonging"—a staple feature of postcolonial literatures—it does so in a "constructive" way that can be better appreciated in today's global age in light of cosmopolitan theories.

In the first chapter, Sasser works her way remarkably well through the tortuous genealogy of the magic(al) realist concept, offering us a clear, yet nuanced, panoramic view of its evolution from the Latin American stage to its more recent deployments in "postmemorial Holocaust literature" (Jenni Adams's *Magical Realism in Holocaust Literature*) and in trauma studies (Eugene Arva's *The Traumatic Imagination: Histories of Violence in Magical Realist Fiction*). Reminding us of the tension between cultural and formal crises that magic(al) realism evokes, Sasser contends that, from the Latin American phase onwards, critics have tended to favour cultural approaches to the mode (what she calls its "secondary features," as opposed to its aesthetic characteristics), to the point of defining it according to a specific political or cultural paradigm (2). The assimilation of magic(al) realist techniques with the issues of postcoloniality is one of the most significant examples of this phenomenon. Despite affinities between the two fields of study, Sasser warns that "to presuppose [this postcolonial usage] as a necessary function is to continue unnecessarily to limit the mode" (20). What is essential, she claims, is to proceed to a "formalist delimitation" of magic(al) realism beforehand, instead of directly ascribing it to specific ideological thematics. By bridging magic(al) realism and cosmopolitanism, Sasser's innovative book illustrates how such aesthetic focus allows one to consider alternative "incarnations" of the writing mode (20).

This formalist delimitation is carried out in the sub-section entitled "Three Magical Realist Modi Operandi" (25–41), which undeniably constitutes the major contribution of Sasser's book. Having usefully reviewed the relevant secondary literature, she identifies three ways in which the codes of magic and realism interact: e.g. through subversion, suspension, and summation. In the first mode of operation, narrative magic subverts realist conventions and by extension their related worldviews, which are most often informed by the supremacy of Western rational epistemology. This type of interaction accommodates the deconstructive political

thrust of numerous postcolonial and postmodern writers. In the suspension modus operandi, magic and realism are forever "'suspended' in a dialectical relationship" or in a state of disjunction (28). Stephen Slemon articulates this theory in his famous essay "Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse." For Slemon, this technique of suspension "responds to the significant temporality during which colonized people experience(d) disjunction as a result of living between divergent languages and cognitive systems" (Sasser 31). Finally, in the summation model, magic "adds to or builds on the realistic world. It is compatible with, or works alongside, reality in some way, while at the same time suggesting that a naturalist worldview is lacking" (31). This model thus presupposes an amplification of reality, as the magic "'grows' out of the real" (32). Whereas the subversive modus operandi is essentially deconstructive in effect and the suspension model creates, according to Slemon, "textual voids," a summational interaction between magic and realism is characterised by a "constructive capacity." The latter crucially forms the overall working premise of Sasser's project. In this configuration, "magic can build within the real" various elements such as "spiritual dimensions, cultural aspects, elements of nationhood, and strategies of belonging" (34). Sasser goes on to explore such strategies deployed by magic(al) realist aesthetics: the latter can devise varying "representations of belonging, conveying how it is (not) or ought (not) to be forged on both personal and group levels" (38). The novels by four "cosmopolitan" writers, respectively Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*, Salman Rushdie's *The Enchantress of Florence*, Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban*, and Helen Oyeyemi's *The Icarus Girl*, provide fertile ground, says Sasser, for investigating the link between magic(al) realist formal features and the characters' struggle to "develop senses of belonging in the world" (40).

Although Sasser retains Timothy Brennan's coinage "Third-World Cosmopolitans" to describe the "most salient group of postcolonial magical realist authors" (9), she examines the issue of belonging through cosmopolitan lenses. Chapter 2 investigates in depth the relation between the interdisciplinary discourse of cosmopolitanism and one's local and global senses of belonging. Sasser argues that the four writers and works under scrutiny are better understood in today's historical context of "cosmodernity" (Christian Moraru)—or late globalisation—an era whose extreme sense of mobility has reconfigured

(inter)national belonging, complicated imperial/national identity binaries, as well as shifted "social imaginaries ... to transnational, global" ones (Sasser 45). Having experienced migratory movement themselves, Okri, Rushdie, García, and Oyeyemi witness the transition from the postcolonial to the late globalisation eras. Their transnational and transcultural position, says Sasser, informs the multiple and complex forms of belonging displayed by their characters at personal and collective levels. Thus, Sasser demonstrates how the magic(al) realist mode sheds light on manifold issues related to these postnational strategies of belonging, ranging from the protagonists' sense of self and familial ties to larger social group dynamics. In these novels, concerns with xenophobia, nationalism, ethnocentrism, and political hegemonies punctuate depictions of more fulfilling relationships.

Sasser's concluding chapter sums up the valuable contributions of magic(al) realism to cosmopolitan debates thanks to at least three of its key-features: its bidimensionality (i.e. dual structure), "spectacality," and antinomy. All three relate to her discussion of the summational configuration of the mode. By incorporating "attachments ... to invisible, immaterial [entities] (the spiritual, supernatural, ineffable, psychic, and traumatic)," its bidimensional structure expands the phenomenological representation of belonging and thus acts "as a supplement to realism" and its mimetic mode (212). Sasser's intriguing concept of "spectacality" refers to the strong visuality—the inevitable spectacle—of the magic(al) realist elements. She correlates this spectacality with "the imagistic ubiquity that characterizes late globalization," i.e. its "panopticity," in Moraru's terms (Sasser 214). Sasser's examination of the third key-characteristic—formal antinomy—evokes further points of ramification between the mode and cosmopolitanism. To Amaryll Chanady's description of the interaction between magical and real codes as "conflicting," Sasser prefers the term "incommensurable": the two codes "never finally blend into one" (216). This impossibility of a total fusion, she argues, aesthetically reflects the enduring socioeconomic inequalities of late globalisation's hyper-mobility. Such parallel not only undermines "over-celebratory views of late globalization" and thus paves the way for a critical trend of cosmopolitanism (216), but it also nuances claims that magic(al) realism is solely a utopian mode (220).

These interdisciplinary projects suggested in Sasser's last chapter bespeak her encompassing argument for the renewal of magic(al) realism as a field of study. *Magical Realism and Cosmopolitanism* successfully shows how this mode can be fruitfully reconfigured in multiple ways and still prove a meaningful aesthetic tool today, even if approached from outside the beaten tracks of postcolonial and subversive agendas. Sasser's study will certainly be of great interest to anyone researching magic(al) realism and/or postcolonial and world literature. Her section on magic(al) realist modi operandi effectively nuances aesthetic and thematic interpretations of the mode. Sasser's minute clarification of magic(al) realism as well as her overall formalist approach is an original and most welcome addition to the scholarship devoted to this mode. Her argument for the constructive quality of magic(al) realism in the framework of current critical forays is especially refreshing in light of the enduring reluctance (or frank castigation) shown by some towards magic(al) realism for its alleged neo-colonial representation of non-Western cultures. Far from dodging this delicate question, Sasser explains that such logic is coherent inasmuch as one's view of magic(al) realism is predicated on the binary framework of Chanady's seminal study (*Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved versus Unresolved Antinomy*). If transposed to (post)colonial contexts, Chanady's conception of magic(al) realism as comprising two conflicting codes seems to imply that the (formerly) colonised is associated with "the magical" and the (former) coloniser with "the real." Thus, Chanady's definition has established a binary that potentially "perpetuates a colonialist reductionism wherein the colonized person's worldview is forever treated as 'primitive' and 'pre-modern'" (Sasser 23). However, Sasser's book highlights that Chanady's understanding of magic(al) realism is by far not the only possible one. Sasser warns us: the predominance of thematic approaches together with unclear generic/modal distinctions dangerously risks implying that everyone shares the same definition of magic(al) realism and its formal devices.

The final inspirational touch of *Magical Realism and Cosmopolitanism* lies in its interdisciplinary perspective. Its cosmopolitan, transnational scope testifies to the current endeavour to rethink postcolonial studies, particularly in view of their potential homogenising and binary perspectives. New light is shed on the aesthetic devices and

cosmopolitan flavour of critically-acclaimed works by Okri, Rushdie, García, and Oyeyemi. However, one might regret that Sasser chose a fictional corpus so traditionally associated with studies in magic(al) realism and postcolonialism. Indeed, transcultural boundaries could be pushed even further in this regard, so as to include Canadian, East Asian, Australasian and Polynesian material. Sasser's concluding chapter hints at other transdisciplinary projects, thereby evidencing the endless flexibility of magic(al) realism. Time and again, Sasser touches upon very original lines of inquiry, which, if pursued with the same rigour and attention to nuances displayed in this book, promise to offer us other fascinating comparative studies of magic(al) realism.

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II

Sascha Bru, Ben De Bruyn, and Michel Delville, eds. *Literature Now: Key Terms and Methods for Literary History*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016. Pp. 309. ISBN: 9780748699254.

The editors of *Literature Now* consider that literary history has assumed fresh topicality after interest in theory has waned. They speak of a "historical turn" in literary studies, a change which is theoretically informed in as much as literary history has replaced theory as the main site of theoretical reflection within the discipline.

Bru, De Bruyn, and Delville seek to meet that revived interest in history by offering "an overview of some of the most important terms used in the past and the present to understand forms of literature both old and new." However, they did not wish to produce anything like a terminological dictionary but to explore "the complex meanings and histories of these terms," thus creating "an open-ended toolbox … a verbal laboratory" (3).

Literature Now consists of an introduction by the three editors and nineteen essays of ten to fifteen pages each on selected literary topics presumed relevant for literary history. The nineteen articles are organized into four groups under the headings "Channels," "Subjects/Objects," "Temporalities," and "Aesthetics." The contributors were asked to briefly rehearse previous research "before going on to highlight the term's present and future relevance, paying special attention to problems of applicability and possibilities for productive interdisciplinarity" (ibid). All the articles end with a short, useful list of recommended further reading.

For the sake of information, let us list the book's topics and contributors. The part on channels consists of articles on "Archive" (Ed Folsom), "Book" (Sydney J. Shep), "Medium" (Julian Murphet), and "Translation" (Thomas O. Beebee). Under "Subject/Object," one finds discussions of

"Subjects" (Orwin de Graef), "Senses" (Michel Delville), "Animals" (Carrie Rohman), "Objects" (Timothy Morton), and "Politics" (David Ayers). The theme of temporalities is covered by essays on "Time" (Tyrus Miller), "Invention" (Jed Rasula), "Event" (Scott McCracken), "Generation" (Julian Hanna), and "Period" (Ben De Bruyn). "Aesthetics," finally, offers contributions on "Beauty" (Sascha Bru), "Mimesis" (Thomas G. Pavel), "Style" (Sarah Posman), "Popular" (David Glover), and "Genre" (Jonathan Monroe).

The contributors do not, on the whole, reflect much on the general content of the concepts they are writing about. The latter are mainly taken for granted: the essays typically concentrate on how the corresponding topics have been addressed or commented on over the years. This makes some articles, like Rohman's on animals, read a little like reviews of research. Many of the essays trace literary-historical connections on various planes, and some articles offer surveys of very comprehensive developments, like Pavel's account of the changing views of mimesis from Greek Antiquity to the present day.

The richness of reviewed perspectives, combined with the relative paucity of strong standpoints on the part of the writers, made the collection seem a bit overly polyphonous to me. The book worked best when writers articulated definite ideas. Thus, I found Folsom's point thought-provoking, as he observed that the disembodiment of material affected by online archives has at the same time given rise to a new longing for the concrete, for touching the original documents, in which fine-grained scans have unveiled fresh enigmas. I was intrigued by Ayers's idea that the Russian revolution actually put an end to political utopianism, and that various later thinkers like Adorno, Nancy, Badiou, and Rancière have since struggled not quite successfully with what Ayers calls "the evident impasse of the theory of history" (133). I also liked the precise criticism of Bourdieu's "astonishingly oversimplified" (247) view of popular reading in Glover's substantive essay on popular literature. But such examples of what stayed in my mind after reading *Literature Now* are of course idiosyncratic and unfair to the contributors. Every reader of the collection will find his or her own things to remember and to continue thinking about. The participating writers are all good or excellent scholars with a special competence regarding their chosen topic, and the overall quality of the contributions is quite satisfying. I had difficulties with Timothy Morton's piece on objects,

which promises to reflect on an alternative, object-centred and posthuman, literary history. That history never acquires any clear contours for me. Moreover, Morton has slightly bizarre things to say about objects (for example: "A thing is deeply mysterious, even to itself," [116]). With that single exception, all the essays seemed interesting and rewarding to me, each in its own way and degree. Naturally, readers may sometimes not agree with the authors, but they are likely to learn a good deal and encounter many fresh ideas; at least, I did.

The overall quality of the various essays and the careful editing of the volume are much to the credit of Bru, De Bruyn, and Delville. However, I cannot really understand why these nineteen articles are thought to belong together. According to the subtitle, the essays present key terms in literary history. As my earlier listing of the topics treated should make it clear, this must be a dubious claim. Nonetheless, the editors maintain that they offer a principled selection of key terms for literary history. They write:

> Obviously, no book can claim to comprehend such a vast and protean field as literary history—which is why we have made a selection that, though limited, is based on a number of principles. While our agenda is transhistorical in the sense that we accentuate those issues that are vital to grasping the mechanics of literary change in any period, first of all, special attention is given to issues that are indispensable for analysing modern (roughly, post-1800) literatures. Additionally, we have chosen terms that are particularly relevant for contemporary literary studies and that reveal most clearly how literary history now functions in analogous ways to theory. "Medium" might be more relevant in this sense than "discourse," "book" more urgent than "text," "popular" a better choice than "classic." The terms in this book are also situated at a certain level of abstraction: "genre" rather than "lyric" or "novel," "subject" rather than "class," "race" or "gender," "period" rather than "medieval," "modern" or "contemporary." Even so, we could have included many more terms, obviously, and everyone will find his or her most unfortunate omission. (3)

I do not find this explanation convincing at all. My own list of omissions would begin with absolutely fundamental concepts like "literature" and "literary history." And why ignore the literary-historical importance of gender studies, postcolonial studies, and the study of world literature? Still, what surprises me most is the editors' seeming lack of interest in the very idea of literary history and in the whole tradition of literary-historical

thought and writing, including the discussions of epistemology, ideology, and form of literary historiography from the last few decades. I would understand it if Bru, De Bruyn, and Delville had wished to distance themselves from traditional literary history, but I cannot see why both that tradition and its critics of various kinds (like David Perkins, Gayatri Spivak, and Marcel Cornis-Pope) should be treated as if they did not exist. "Literary history," as the term is usually understood, refers to the development of literatures through the ages and the study of these developments. Here, it is as if the traditional conception of literary history had been emptied of its content while nothing very specific had been put in its stead. The concept of literary history which is supposed to underlie the collection remains unexplained, and the study of literary history tends to become indistinguishable from literary studies in general.

Nor am I really convinced by the editors' description of the historical turn which undoubtedly took place in literary studies. I am not convinced that literary history, as traditionally understood, has become a main site of theoretical reflection within literary studies. The latter has certainly turned away from high theory and deconstructive readings of individual texts, so that commentary placing literary phenomena in a historical or literary-historical context has again become dominant. Yet "literary history" generally carries more specific associations. The changes within literary studies which Bru, De Bruyn, and Delville have in mind could be described in other ways than as literary history assuming a new and at the same time more theoretical significance. Rather, one could say that the so-called critical theory has now permeated much of literary studies. It can be detected in many aspects of the discipline, including in cases where research is strongly predicated on the historical context.

"*Literature Now*" is a paradoxical title for a book ostensibly focusing on literary history. The text on the back cover does not in fact foreground literary history; its principal claim is that *Literature Now* introduces "the most important terms for understanding literature, past and present, in the twenty-first century"—an even wider ambition, and another characterization to which I am unwilling to subscribe. The main title and the blurb make the objectives of the volume even less distinct.

A final reflection: *Literature Now* adopts a thoroughly Western perspective. Throughout the collection, Western scholars are discussing Western literature, something which is treated as a matter of course and

nowhere commented on. The consistently Western character of the book is naturally in no way objectionable per se, but it makes the title "*Literature Now*" even more inadequate: literature is not an exclusively Western affair. While there are many good essays in this volume, I am not happy with the overall presentation of the book.

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Christiane Sollte-Gresser & Manfred Schmeling, eds. *Theorie erzählen; Raconter la théorie; Narrating Theory: Fiktionalisierte Literaturtheorie im Roman.* Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2016. Pp. 285. ISBN: 9783826058868.

Theorie erzählen is seventy-ninth in the impressive series *Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Vergleichenden Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft*, which owes an enormous debt to Schmeling as its founding editor and a frequent contributor. In a manner of speaking this excellent volume has been waiting in the wings ever since Cervantes directed the grand symposium that ends Part One of *Don Quixote* and ten years later, after having digested his own seminal artistic creation, let his readers, through characters who obsessively discourse on literature in his novel, wander ever deeper into a mysterious labyrinth of fiction in Part Two. One can almost hear Sterne, Diderot, Tieck, and the young theorist of the novel Schlegel—the direct heirs of Cervantes—applauding in literary heaven because Sollte-Gresser and Schmeling have brought up to date our focus on interpolations of literary theory in fictional texts beyond the Romantics down to Postmodernism. Some raw statistics are helpful to convey an idea of the range and depth of this vibrant collaboration. The co-editors, who also count as prime contributors, have directed a total team of nineteen international comparatists, nominally from eight countries. The resultant ensemble of nineteen overviews and essays (in English, French, and German), besides citing a wide brace of theorists, considers some fifty novels originally published in Bulgarian, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, and Spanish.

The team offers not a static model of evolutionary stages in the history of the novel, but explores a constellation of the different ways in which important authors from Modernism to Postmodernism have staged the interplay between specific narrative fictions and theories about fiction thematized in these fictions. Taken together, the separate contributions demonstrate how writers have approached the fundamental elements of the novel over and over again from multiple angles and have thereby created a newer stage of literary tradition. This outcome, collectively (in the reviewer's mind), bears analogy to an enormous "cubist" simultaneity. We are conducted into the complexities of this particular latter-day development of the novel in the two layers of introduction. Besides aptly summarizing each specific contribution, Schmeling's editorial prelude lucidly explains the rationale of the book's five larger divisions: "Roman- (und Dramen-) Theorien," "Transkulturelle Ansätze," "Theorien der Rezeption," "Intertextualität und Intermedialität," and "Theorien im postmodernen Erzählen" (Novel and Drama Theories, Transcultural Initiatives, Reception Theories, Intertextuality and Intermediality, and Theories in Postmodern Narration). Sollte-Gresset then expands on methods for approaching the modern and postmodern novel, concentrating on the examples of André Gide and Gilbert Adair. That pairing of major examples already catapults us across the larger modern-postmodern spectrum and invokes a sense of arrival in the present-day realm, when so many novels evidence some kinship to the already long-established puzzles of the Borgesian "metaphysical" strain.

The opening division on theories of the novel and drama elaborates formal/intellectual features of the grander trajectory. Jean Bessière points out how, by carrying an implicit theory of the novel, Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet* is a precursor, usually with no direct filiation, of postmodern experiments that expose and play with the structural categories and limits of the novel as a literary genre. Bessière weaves among authors and theorists from the late Renaissance to the present with an almost preternatural density and clarity to illustrate how a "deconstructive" impulse gradually emerges within fiction, as in Flaubert's work, and this then flowers in the twentieth century. Perrine Häfner next examines the famous case of meta-reflection about fiction at the start of the twentieth century in *Niebla*, Unamuno's so-called *nivola* (a pun on Spanish *novela*), in which a fictional character rebels, seems to challenge the author (we might add: as in the already extant theater of the absurd), but is reassured by the thought of

now being immortal via literature, whereas real people die. Roumiana L. Stantchéva takes us on a tour that demonstrates a related general attack on firm categories of reality in French, Bulgarian, and Romanian writing of the 1920s and 1930s. This internalizes criticism of staple traits of Realist narration and other genres, erases boundaries between fictional and historical persons, especially invented narrators and actual authors as well as main text and critical footnotes, and can become polyphonic. Stantchéva appreciates hypertropic cross-references as when, in their "collage" narrative *The Heart in the Cardboard Box*, the authorial duo Svetoslav Minkov and Konstatin Konstantinov cite *Le roman des quatre,* an actual novel written in common with provocatively different styles by Paul Bourget, Gérard d'Houville, Henri Duvernois, and Pierre Benoit! Henrik Birus usefully reminds us of the quite direct filiation linking the drama theories promoted by Goethe's fictional protagonist Wilhelm Meister and those of Joyce's equally Shakespeare-worshipping Stephen Dedalus. A useful extension here would be a separate chapter outlining the rise of a yet another rival concept of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* instead of the novel or drama, such as emerged in the line beyond Schopenhauer over Wagner and Nietzsche in advocacy of opera, nor would it be amiss to point to the epochal example of a universalizing genre-busting *Faust I* and *II* as a challenge for Joyce after *Ulysses*.

In the second division on transcultural initiatives we spiral by way of two exemplary cases into the virtual spaces of postmodern self-referentiality. In those hypothetical realms, the obsessions of the academic mind are bodied forth as species of madness in the form of unreliable textuality. Dorothy Figueira (herself a Sanscritist among her multiple areas of expertise) entrances us with an exploration of Lee Siegel's polyreferential satire *Love in a Dead Language* that reaches back all the way to ancient India, a cultural tour de force that we can stand next to John Barth's *Giles Goat-Boy*. Out of craving for status through commanding obscure ancient texts, characters who are both qualified and opportunistic rivals in a proliferating chain of "masquerades, doublings, and parodies" coincidentally exhibit not only the all-too-human passions and peculiar aspects of American culture but the zaniness of political correctness in today's academy, as we fluctuate between the powers of forgery and genuine critique. Another instance of "transcultural narratology" is offered in Myriam Geiser's study of the Germano-Turkish author Zafer Şenocak who invents serially involuted narrations that knit together "Erottoman" relationships of cultural, generational, and psychological identities, as characters probe and invent networks of elusive traces.

The third division on reception theories starts with Patricia Oster's examination of the way Italo Calvino in three novels references the cultural story of crucial theories—anthropological structuralism, biological evolution, and literary reception—and ingeniously rearranges, "corrects," or reconciles the tenets of cited major historical figures and ideas right down to current cosmogonic debates. Oster stresses Calvino's insight into the complex phenomenology of reading and into the myth-making penchant in our very most "modern" thinking (once again—though comparisons are not given—a trait we can readily find, for example, in works by John Barth). Herle Christin Jessen expatiates on the Québec author Normand Chaurette's novel *Scènes d'enfance* in which characters literally are involved in a staging of reception hermeneutics, as a fictional husband, who is an author and dramatist, struggles to understand why his wife committed suicide and, like a reader, grasps for clues, hitting on empty spots, and mises-en-abyme gape because others' as well as his own reconstructions involve virtual endless tangles. Citing the role of many key comparatists such as the late Douwe Fokkema, Carolina Ferrer's helpful retrospective on Jorge Luis Borges as our "ancestral" modern-postmodern theoretician of literature assembles—and displays in charts—bibliographical data of the past half century on treatments of his work, the relative number of commentaries in some sixteen European languages, and his significance for literary theory, reception studies, postmodernism, possible worlds, metafiction, intertextuality, and deconstruction. Two further chapters treat novelists who play with intertextuality. Marika Natsvlishvili's analysis of John Banville's novel *Doctor Copernicus* compels today's readers to probe what may be fictional or historical material, in the interwoven textualities of a past era and a later receiving era, and to navigate among shifting narrative voices, modes, and perspectives. Christine Thull probes the problematic substance of Max Frisch's novel *Stiller* when the protagonist himself, hyper-conscious of the Western canon of literary masterworks, acts as a theoretician of intertextuality in an "age of reproduction" that is rife with plagiarism, instances of which hardly can be distinguished from accepted "reality." Closing this division is Monica Schmitz-Emans' magisterial survey of the virtual duet played by texts and images in the novels of Umberto Eco, the great theoretician of systems of representation and communication. Intermediality proudly asserts itself arm in arm with intertextuality. An appendix of categories helps us to organize the profusion of insights about the interlaced modes of transmission of human knowledge and experience which, imitatively, Eco also profiles as a novelist.

The fifth division turns the spotlight onto theories *in* postmodern narration. We should deliberately emphasize "in" (versus merely "about"), even though by this point it will have become more than abundantly clear to readers that there are countless rewarding overlaps which could have allowed the volume editors to assign many chapters in more than one of the clusters. Collectively, their materials constitute a kind of multi-dimensional kaleidoscope.

Readers will instantly think of predecessor works such as Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* on perusing Isabel Capeloa Gil's analysis of the poststructuralist characters in Paul Auster's novels. Auster critiques the identity of subjects as decentered and the possibility of literature on any traditional basis. We are treated instead to urban spaces littered with the debris of past lives, in texts which are containers storing shards and wounded existences. Far from evoking Romantic or Symbolist fragments, the "author" has become a bricoleur of a visual archive of things made visible in a fallen Eden, the shattered American dream. Though Auster's works reveal false narratives, and deconstruction and subversion turn even on the instrumentality of literature as well as on the cultural system of objects, he is seeking strategies for the restitution of trashed out lives. Casting a much wider net, Sharon Lubkemann Allen presents a brilliantly compacted mini-monograph on questioned authorship and critical authority in works by Clarice Lispector, Osman Lins, Ljudmila Petruševskaja, Viktor Pelevin, and Oswald de Andrade. The panoply of decentered, hybrid, multiplex, self-interrogating features of narration and identity and of historical, social, and critical allusiveness in these exemplars of the postmodern novel simply beggars any hope of being enumerated under the space constraints of the present review. The intercalation of theoretical approaches in fiction, a topic which Allen includes, becomes the central matter under examination in Franziska Sick's chapter on the deliberate narration of theories, using mainly examples from Georges Perec. Interesting are inversions of celebrated earlier cases such as the existentialist epiphany of Jean-Paul Sartre's protagonist Roquentin in *La Nausée*. Theories and stories depicted as mutual interactive mirrorings prompt ironic questions about our capacity to grasp reality or narrative theory. This reaches an extreme in Perec's *La Disparition* which employs point-of-view techniques of the *nouveau roman* and presents people living virtually under a mythic curse in the guise of (post-)structuralist sign theory, as the novel undoes any binding validity of numerous

doctrines such as Freud's psychoanalysis or Lévi-Strauss' anthropology. The closing chapter by Hanna Matthies expatiates on Patricia Drucker's novel *Hallucinating Foucault.* We readers follow Foucault's theories through the novel's central thematics of subjectivity, but this pursuit leads us finally into a fictionalized exposition of madness as a postmodern outcome. The unnamed narrator, the fictional author Paul Michel as the endangered devotee of Foucault, Michel's psychiatrist, and other voices interact, problematizing the nature of critical discourse and relationships of power and resistance.

Theorie erzählen appears well after the main bulge of postmodern writing and critical reflections on it that occurred roughly between the mid-1960s and mid-1990s. This volume possesses several virtues: The critical language is very forceful and effective throughout. Collectively the chapters rest on and refer to important traits of that period without needing to "relitigate" the critical record. The key elements in creative fiction and critical discourse from those ebullient years in European and Western Hemisphere cultures are succinctly profiled and many newer related initiatives from the mid-1990s down to the present are given careful attention; the number of very recently published novels which are treated here is quite impressive. Broadly speaking, it is clear that the so-called academic novel of yesteryear has been thriving and continues to proliferate, because Theory itself has burgeoned as a core subject-matter and shaping force in fiction, as this complex collaboration admirably demonstrates.

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Daniel F. Chamberlain and J. Edward Chamberlin, eds. *Or Words to That Effect: Orality and the Writing of Literary History*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2016. Pp. 317. ISBN 9789027234643.

This collection of twenty essays addresses the lack of attention to oral performance—or what its editors call "celebrations of spoken language" (1)—in comparative literary historiography. It does not purport to summarize the matter, but presents a range of case studies concerning issues

the authors have encountered in their own research and fieldwork. These issues stem in many (almost all) cases from what Chamberlin identifies as the residue, exemplified by thinkers as relatively "modern" as Michel Foucault and Marshall McLuhan, of a nineteenth-century belief in an operative homology between the cognitive development of a child from speech to writing and the development from "primitive" to "civilized" societies. In short, it is the damaging, offhand term "oral cultures," whose fundamental ignorance Jacques Derrida explored in his early readings of Claude Lévi-Strauss, which is addressed and problematized in the work which is represented here.

For the critics in this volume, it is not a question of reorganizing the developmental relation of speech to writing, but of indicating its falsehood: the collection is above all arguing for an elaborated working definition of "literature" which is freed from various historical demands for a hierarchy between "spoken" and "written" literary forms. Accordingly, Paloma Díaz-Mas's contribution uses a children's whispering game called "los secretitos" ("the little secrets") to examine the mechanisms of oral transmission. She argues that "orality" is less a quality of a particular literature than a form of transmission which likewise can sustain learned literature (which might be written or spoken originally) and folk literature. What is more, folk literature may transpire to have a basis in written texts, just as much as the more familiar folk influence on written literature. For Díaz-Mas, the relationship between orality and written literature is best conceived, without hierarchy or teleology, as a continuing "interaction." Stuart McHardy's essay on transmission over longer time periods similarly insists that to be preoccupied with the (often indeterminable) historical "origins" of stories is to neglect the repetition which enlivens them in the first place, and their "psycho-sociological relevance" to their communities: "the stories continue to be told because they continue to be told," as he puts it (133).

One merit of the collection at large is that such methodological recommendations are concretely backed up elsewhere; too often in literary studies one reads hand-wringing but ultimately vapid pronouncements about how "we" ought to go about our critical business conscientiously. Here, however, the ethics have a point. One reads with interest Levi Namaseb's reportage of his work devising an orthography of the ǂKhomani language, believed to be the only surviving language of the click-based Southern Khoesan Language group in Southern Africa, with only a

handful of surviving fluent speakers as of this volume's publication—an impressive and timely example of the "interaction" Díaz-Mas advocates. Namaseb considers correspondences between storytelling traditions in ‡Khomani, and in his own first language, Khoekhoe. Following this essay, Neil ten Kortenaar discusses some of the folk tales and animal fables told to Namaseb during his ‡Khomani fieldwork, and explains Namaseb's criteria for analysing these. Interestingly, Kortenaar is also able to show that the ‡Khomani oral tradition is principally a consequence of a quite indiscriminate bricolage of other stories picked up by that community: a practical refutation of the racist myth of the chthonic "oral culture."

The collection demonstrates an impressive geographical and historical reach where Africa, America, and Europe are concerned. Andy Orchard's impressive contribution closely reads a range of Anglo-Saxon riddles or *aenigma*, mostly from the Old English Exeter Book, which are concerned with the relations between immediate spoken/sung "voice" and their silent memorialization in writing which nonetheless will have been the only means for their survival. No less arrestingly, Jon Kortazar Uriarte traces the influence of Johann Gottfried Herder on the privileged role of folk and oral poetry in the literary history of the Basque Country, and the study thereof. In a more localized account of influence, Beate Eder-Jordan's essay (translated by Maria Witting) gives an account of the Indologist Milena Hübschmannová's formal analysis of Romani literature, and her framework for understanding its transition from oral performance to conventional historiographical inscription. Eder-Jordan argues, furthermore, that Hübschmannová might also be said to have "co-founded" Romani literature in the Czech Republic and Slovakia by encouraging Tera Fabiánová, the first Romani author in those regions, to write down her poetry. But this itself, Elder-Jordan is right to emphasize, only came about due to those authors' hospitality toward the non-Romani scholar. Again, dynamic and even contingent interaction is shown to characterize the relation between orality and written literary history.

Daniel Heath Justice eloquently discusses the silences or quietness imposed by North American settlement—a theme hitherto neglected even as texts concerning the "Native voice" proliferate in Indigenous Studies—and concurrently thinks about the importance of moments or periods of quietude and silence to his experiences of Indigenous culture. This is a very suggestive dual thematic which Justice marshals with no little elegance into an essay about the ambivalence generative both

of silence and silencing. Michael Asch's text also takes up the topic of settlement in the US and Canada, through the question of the differing attitudes (but same broad ideology of Manifest Destiny) underpinning North American and Canadian treaty policy in the nineteenth century. The former proceeded with confidence that the Indigenous people would soon die out due to their "inferiority;" the latter with the argument that they were capable of more or less autonomous "advancement" into "civilized" status. However, Asch shows that Canadian policy in practice mirrored that of North America and thus was something of an historical wrong-turn. He cites his father's Folkways record company as an allegorical model for the forgotten promise of Canadian treaty policy.

Throughout, the collection considers the university as the privileged site for the implementation of changes to the literary paradigm which might incorporate a more thorough understanding of orality. In the volume's first essay, Daniel F. Chamberlain provides an historical account of what he considers the spatialization of literary history in the 1990s, where traditional presuppositions concerning literary periodization came to be viewed less and less as the only available vantage point; regional literary cultures were paid increasing attention, as well as non-European language communities, many of which maintained their literary traditions in what Chamberlain calls "an audio-oral context supported by forms of non-phonetic script" (35). One would be right to suppose that this elaborated view of "literature" would expand the field enormously, and yet, he argues, oral literatures still have not been incorporated proportionately into conventional or taught histories of literature. Clearly, though, there are dangers going forward both of tokenism (taking as exemplary a limited number of oral performances, or studies of performances, in a specific community or region), and of replacing a written/oral binary which excludes orality with one which includes it: the latter binary would misrecognize just as much as the former what is actually at issue (indeed, some literary critics are fatuous enough to repackage orality as simply the "performative" dimension of written literature). Later in the book, Keavy Martin's essay relates her own efforts to incorporate oral traditions and Indigenous intellectual frameworks into her teaching of literature and literary history in Canada, and Michael Chapman reflects on the challenges of writing the Longman volume, *South African Literatures* in the early 1990s, in a manner which integrated many different language communities, media, and understandings of "literature."

In his subtle and challenging essay, David R. Olson outlines two distinctive modes of discourse, the narrative ("storytelling") and the paradigmatic ("philosophical" or "scientific"), which he argues evince different, but equally epistemologically valid, ways of thinking, and ought not to be considered less and more rational versions of the same thing. This is to challenge a widespread received wisdom whereby narrative discourse is for "fun" whereas paradigmatic discourse is for the truth. For Olson, narrative is constituted above all by the unexpected, exceptionality, or, in Kenneth Burke's term, "Trouble." This can refer to an event in a story, but can also be expanded into a more general principle about literature—that the words used to create it are themselves open to unexpected deployment and significance. Paradigmatic discourse, by contrast, seeks as far as possible to establish stable conditions in which its content can be conveyed—usually a strictly denotative use of language. The expanded range of possibilities a narrative discourse might include does not indicate its relative "irrationality," but is better understood as "narrative rationality."

Edgard Sienaert's essay spiritedly argues for Marcel Jousse's broadly Heideggerian and rather tie-dyed "Anthropology of Geste" to provide the foundation for "a new common paradigm for future histories of literature and anthologies, one inclusive of oral performance texts" (48). I think, however, that the extant paradigms won't be affected by that particular suggestion. María Teresa Vilariño Picos provides the inevitable "digital culture" viewpoint which frequently seems to arrive these days at the end of this kind of collection—and equally often strikes one as perfunctory and terminology-heavy. To venture another quibble, the volume, for all its astute and welcome scepticism concerning the false inclusivity of standard literary histories, does sporadically fall back on quaintly consensual edicts about literature ("literature ushers us into a congregation that willingly suspends disbelief to celebrate belief") and, at times, unhelpful fag packet flim-flam ("There is only one humanity with one common heritage") (43, 55).

As a whole, though, this is a formidable book which manages a broad range, sustains a high scholarly standard, and maintains a lucid ethical focus: a rare trifecta. The penultimate essay, by Frederico Augusto Garcia Fernandes, might have gone first, so well does it encapsulate the volume at large. His contribution considers the development of critical approaches to oral poetry from those which confine it within hastily-conceived "social functions" to much more sophisticated theories of

voice and performance, such as the work of Paul Zumthor, which entail an argument, endorsed by Fernandes, for a recalibration of the concept of "poetry" more broadly. According to Fernandes, in a neat and summative formulation, "the challenge is not a matter of claiming a place for oral poems in literary criticism and in comparative literary history, but of … claiming an appropriate representation of oral poetry from a synchronic perspective, amidst its contexts of production and, to no lesser degree, its contexts of reception as performed texts" (268).

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Alexandra Berlina. *Brodsky Translating Brodsky: Poetry in Self-Translation.* New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2014. Pp. 217. ISBN: 9781623561734.

The winner of ICLA's Anna Balakian prize in 2016, this book deals with the self-translations into English of Brodsky's poems originally written in Russian. Not only is it an excellent introduction to Brodsky's work, it offers a fascinating study of the relevance of translation in literary studies. Through her innovative approach, Alexandra Berlina perfectly demonstrates that Brodksy's self-translations enable readers to apprehend almost any aspect of his poetry. Berlina's analyses provide an excellent commentary of the originals, especially with regard to Brodsky's attitudes to and preferences in Anglo-American literature and culture in general. Brodsky attempts to integrate English and American literary traditions. In this detailed work, Berlina aptly summarizes previous scholarship on the topic, however, she also provides invaluable insights of her own, as she privileges comparisons between different versions of the same poem in various languages. From that point of view, she regards translation as a method of close reading, since, as she says, "every translation is a metatext that can enrich the understanding *of both source and target texts*, of their languages and cultures" (5, emphasis mine). Rather than considering translation studies as a discipline, Berlina uses it as a tool for comparative literature and a way of exploring Brodsky's work in detail.

After a brief overview of Brodsky's biography, the author defines her aims in this book. First, she seeks to secure a place for Brodsky in the field of American Studies. Second, she examines in depth particular poems and translations by the author. And last (but not least), she reconfigures translation studies as a method of close-reading.

Berlina first analyzes "December in Florence," the first self-translation Brodsky accomplished on his own in 1980. The original poem, written in 1976, was a particularly difficult text in Russian. She then continues with "Three Nativity Poems," belonging to the period 1985–1995, when Brodsky's interest turned from the celebration of Christmas to the topic of Nativity *per se*. In her analysis, Berlina proves, for instance, that Brodsky's translations alter the original relationship between idyll and tragedy. She subsequently comments two "poèmes à clef" dedicated to Marina Basmanova, his life-long passion, whom he met in 1962, at the age of 21. The translations of these pieces into English obscured their meaning even more than the original Russian versions. In her discussion of the translations of some elegies dating from 1983–1984, Berlina identifies a manner of rewriting the originals that makes them closer in tone to Auden and Eliot. Berlina also detects in the translations a form of estrangement that makes them much more effective in English. By contrast, Berlina contends that part of the cycle "Centaurs" (1988) constitutes a self-portrait of Brodsky as a centaur (due to his bilingualism), a theme often treated with humour in his poems. It alludes to a hybridism pervading his work, sometimes connected with the theme of exile and loneliness. As Berlina makes clear, Brodsky reorders the constituent elements of the cycle in his self-translations, introducing additional shifts. He even modifies the tone of the entire cycle, rewriting it freely. Berlina concludes with the study of "Sextet," the English translation of the Russian-language "Kuintet" ("Quintet"). She points out that the English version completes the original poem with a critical comment.

Throughout the book, Berlina praises the Translation-Creation continuum in Brodsky's work. In general, his texts become more sexually explicit, once translated into English. This can primarily be attributed to the target culture's permissiveness as well as the connection between sexuality and philosophy characterizing the work of some of the Western writers he loved, such as J. Donne. Moreover, his self-translations intensify the atmosphere of the original, to the point that it can even verge on unreality. This process can be considered as

a form of rewriting the original poems. Broadly speaking, intratextual connections become more pronounced in Brodsky's self-translations, as they develop their own stylistic dynamics. For instance, they reveal an increasing reliance on word and sound play and other poetic devices. As a whole, such free rewriting of the Russian-language poems prompts readers to assume they are dealing with an original text, rather than a mere translation. Brodsky tends to make his self-translations accessible, as he explains their Western—rather than Russianconnections. However, for Berlina, the most important feature is rhyme and meter, which Brodsky recreated in a way both suited to the poem and faithful to the oral tradition of Russian poetry. Moreover, Brodsky ignored his stock of free verse poems, which would undoubtedly have been easier to translate into English. Rather he chose texts with the most difficult rhymes, metrical schemes and intricate word plays. This focus on punning manifests his love for the English metaphysical school.

Certainly, one can conclude that Joseph Brodsky was not a "faithful" translator of Iosif Brodskii poems. He never pretended to be so. On the contrary, as Berlina makes abundantly clear, he considered his self-translations as an opportunity to rework his poems, producing new hybrid texts moving beyond the original ones. All in all, Berlina's monograph is a truly fascinating book. It confirms what Marily Gaddis Rose stated some years ago: "literature can only gain in translation."

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Jean-Michel Rabaté. *The Pathos of Distance: Affects of the Moderns.* New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Pp. ix + 224. ISBN: 9781501307997.

The nine interrelated essays that constitute this study offer an often fascinating mix of theoretical reflection, intellectual history and literary criticism. Taking as his point of departure the distance (*Ferne*) that Walter Benjamin saw as central to his famous "aura" and Nietzsche's "pathos of distance," with which Benjamin's *Ferne* "exhibits a troubling proximity" (9), Rabaté ranges far and wide through the landscape of international

modernism, with occasional sorties into more recent times, as in his discussion of Deleuzian affect versus Lacanian pathos, of trauma in Siri Hustvedt's 2008 novel *The Sorrows of an American*, and of "nihilism and hospitality" (163) in J.M. Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus* of 2013.

Although the book's introduction leads off with Benjamin, it is the pathos of distance–according to Nietzsche the source of all true values—that gets the limelight. Rabaté's quest on the track of Nietzsche's elitist concept of distance leads him first of all to the long forgotten James Huneker's *The Pathos of Distance* of 1913 and then to an analysis of how Roland Barthes in his *How to Live Together* (first published in French in 2002) uses Nietzsche's pathos of distance and Gilles Deleuze's readings of Nietzsche (in Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy*) to arrive at an "ethics of distance." Rabaté's conclusion that the pathos of distance now "offers all at once a fundamental maxim of non-moral philosophy, a principle of feeling and a method of philosophy allowing one to rethink philosophy subjectively" (26) will, however, not convince all of his readers.

The core of Rabaté's book is constituted by those chapters that trace how Nietzsche's insistence on distance, and on the necessity of severity (if not occasional brutality) in creating that distance, influenced a good many modernist writers and, in fact, modernism itself. Following Ezra Pound in distinguishing between a "soft" modernism (for Pound exemplified by for instance Mallarmé) and a "hard" variety (the "masculine" modernism of for instance Pound himself), Rabaté offers first of all an analysis of Alfred Jarry's *The Supermale* and, practically *en passant*, of French modernism as such. Redefining soft modernism as tending towards an un-Nietzschean egalitarianism and the "hard" variety as fully prepared to embrace Nietzsche's elitism, he clarifies the acute discomfort experienced by those modernists who felt pulled both ways and, equally important, some of modernism's baffling contradictions. Seeing things in this light also allows him to explore how the "hard" variety of French modernism "displays a specific pathos of distance" (41). From this perspective, Charles-Louis Philippe and Jules Romains then stand for a pathos of pity—social fraternity—rather than a pathos of distance, while Guillaume Appollinaire's modernism, characterized by a "pathos of the new," stands apart from both. But Nietzschean distance did not manifest itself only in France. The German philosopher was also read in Ireland, where the modernism of Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett was born of the "spirit of Nietzscheanism" and where "Yeats learned from Nietzsche

a new 'hardness' and a new masculinity" (54), while Beckett arrived via the unlikely route of Schopenhauer, Fritz Mauthner and the seventeenth-century Flemish-Dutch philosopher Arnold Geulincx at a "Nietzschean occasionalism" (63) and a "different Irish modernism" (67). In England Rabaté then revisits the years of World War One "to assess the progress from one pathos to another, from a soft and ironical pathos to a hard and tragic pathos" (108). That progress is measured with the help of T.S. Eliot's early poetry and a psycho-biography of the young and newly married Eliot (Rabaté sees "[a] first 'pathos of distance'" in the 1915 poem "In the department store").

From Nietzsche's value-creating pathos of distance Rabaté moves on to a Lukács-inflected "brief history of value in modernism" (69), to a discussion of Deleuzian affect and Lacanian pathos that with some caution tries to save affect theory from its detractors, and to an attempt to decode the enigmas of Jean Cocteau's 1930 film *The Blood of the Poet* with the help of Benjamin's theory of allegory. It is after this excursion into the world of avant-garde film that we definitely leave the modernist period and jump to the twenty-first century with the "pathos of history" of *The Sorrows of an American* and the "pathos of the future" of *The Childhood of Jesus*.

The Pathos of Distance is invariably interesting and its amazing erudition is simply dazzling. Passages like the following abound: "The idea of a form purified until it becomes ethical will be developed by Jacques Lacan in a reading of *Antigone* to which we will return, and it was shared by Osip Mandelstam, who applied it to François Villon in a pre-Acmeist essay from 1910. Mandelstam points out that like Charles-Louis Philippe, Villon experienced directly the sordid lives of pimps and prostitutes in the Paris of the fifteenth century" (77). But in the end one can't help feeling that perhaps all that glitters is not gold and that Rabaté is too easily persuaded by what he reads (and what he writes—Philippe [1874–1909] did of course never experience fifteenth-century Paris). We are told that "time and light travel in waves together" (4), but is time really a wave? We once again hear Joseph Beuys's tale of being saved by Tatar tribesmen who wrapped him in fat and felt, but wasn't Beuys rescued by a German *Suchkommando*? Did in his last decade Ezra Pound really remain silent because he "felt such a strong remorse" (70)? Should we believe that "the name of Joyce deriv[ed] from a French name, Joyeux" (167) when my *Dictionary of English Surnames* tells me a different story, or that "a French Huguenot family [gave] to Beckett the liquid echoes of Bequet"

(167) when that same dictionary gives a completely different etymology of Beckett? Or that Aramaic, a Northwest Semitic language, "gave birth to Arabic" (166), a Central Semitic language? Is "the postmodernism thesis" really that "there are only virtual copies" (160) or is postmodernism here narrowed to a Baudrillardian perspective? Yes, these are very minor issues and surely this is rather pedantic nit-picking. But it expresses the uneasiness that gradually came over this reviewer of Rabaté's otherwise admirable book: what is missing is critical distance, a good dose of Nietzschean skepticism. Whenever Benjamin, Freud, Barthes, Deleuze, Lacan, or Derrida are appealed to or discussed, we seem to enter a hermetically sealed echo chamber where a more empirically minded outside world is never heard. For readers who don't see that as problematic *The Pathos of Distance* will be a fascinating trip through modernism and its aftermath. For others *The Pathos of Difference* still has much to offer, but will, at times, quite probably raise their hackles.

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Haun Saussy. *The Ethnography of Rhythm: Orality and Its Technologies.* Foreword by Olga V. Solovieva. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016. Pp. xv + 251. ISBN: 9780823270477.

Saussy's *The Ethnography of Rhythm* is, at heart, intentionally disruptive. Saussy uses the term "perturbation" repeatedly to describe both the affective and effective interactions between oral and written literatures, and the term accurately reflects the continual disturbances that emerge through these interactions. The sharp demarcation between the oral and the written is not only blurred, but essentially eradicated as oral literature emerges as a form of *arche-writing* that textualizes the body and turns rhythm into the technological method of such textual production. The resulting volume is a fascinating look into the ways past presumptions of opposition and distinction between the oral and the written are disrupted to the point of dissolution, and the ways such an investigation reinscribes this larger conception of literature within the broader contours of media theory.

In fact, while reading I was repeatedly struck by the connections between the way that Saussy continually constructs his comparative work through acts of reframing (the aforementioned perturbation) and the way that John Durham Peters enacts a similar approach in the field of media theory in *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (2015). Both works value diversity and the delight of an unanticipated comparison; both works understand their topic and task through an expansive rather than reductive lens; and both works ultimately participate in the larger philosophical conversation regarding the interactions between technologies, bodies, and the emergence of the human. While Saussy's volume can be read as a smart and engaging work examining the theoretical structures of the literary, I found its ability to engage in the larger critical conversations of contemporary media theory significant and useful.

The volume itself contains a foreword by Olga V. Solovieva (who ably highlights the various themes of the volume) in addition to Saussy's preface, in which establishes his own position: "I have tried to carry out an investigation of oral tradition, not by starting from a description of oral tradition, but from the observation of the difference it made for people to be talking about oral tradition.... As the investigation went on, I came to the conclusion that oral tradition was more clearly detectable in the wobble it caused than in anything else: that is ... that a medium manifests itself always and only in relation to other media" (xiii). For Saussy, the central question surrounding oral literature is not *what*, but *how*. To define oral literature in opposition to written literature creates a fundamental problem by thus assuming that orality and writing are themselves in opposition. Rather, Saussy argues, by tracing the various historical threads involved in the discussions of oral literature, the picture of oral literature itself as a type of writing that uses the body as its site *of* inscription and rhythm as the technology *for* inscription emerges again and again.

Saussy builds this argument throughout his Introduction and subsequent five chapters: "Poetry Without Poems or Poets," "Writing as (One Form of) Notation," "Autography," "The Human Gramophone," and "Embodiment and Inscription." The project centers around a redemptive reframing: "Rather than always doing badly what writing does well, oral tradition can be seen as doing something other than what writing does, or even, exceptionally, as performing the mission of writing better than writing itself can do" (8). In order to accomplish this task, Saussy

explores a wide range of historical and cultural forms of and reactions to oral literature. In chapter one, Jean Paulhan's work on the *hain-teny* dispute poems of Madagascar calls into question notions of originality and authorship while Marcel Granet's work on the Chinese *Shijing* extends these questions to a formulation of poetry as social reduction—both are explored by Saussy in order to strip from poetry expectations of the power of individual authorship and instead to foreground the community-forming properties of rhythm itself. This move then allows Saussy to take up Homer, a central figure in any history of oral literature in the West, and reexamine prior assumptions regarding oral traditions (that they exist to maintain the text until it can be finally fixed in written language) and then reformulate them in terms of community creation (for example, that oral traditions are instead inherently fluid and as such, adopt compositional methods and formulae in order to preserve not the text as such, but rather its context—its cultural information).

Saussy then moves in chapter two into the theoretical space thus cleared in order to think through "epic poets as animate machines and the transmission of oral poetry as a kind of intersubjective inscription that takes human beings as its writing tablets" (59). This shift to the body as the site of inscription will become a thematic touchstone to which Saussy returns repeatedly. The technological means and methods of inscription as developed within the epic itself provide a sort of self-reflexive framework in which the oral tradition is decentered from the voice and instead focused on the mechanics of communication. Saussy continues to develop these themes in the third chapter, which provides a more precise examination of the mechanical alongside embodied communication as he traces the evolution of efforts to transcribe aural experiences. Modes of transcription eventually lead to corporeal modes of memory, and the bodies of nineteenth-century hysterics are read as sites of phonographic recording devoid of subjective consciousness, much in the same way the *hain-teny* and *Shijing* avoid the pitfalls of individual compositional whim.

In the fourth chapter, Saussy continues to develop this image of the body as human gramophone by following the work of Marcel Jousse and his efforts to reestablish or even prove the authenticity of an historical Christ through an examination of the orality of the Gospels and the Epistles. In this model, the oral tradition "is not privative (that is, mainly characterized by the lack of writing), but positive: an attempt to model the specificity of the medium, to say what orality is and does rather than

what it is not. Oral tradition ... will not transmit just any message, but shapes the message it conveys in particular ways that are accounted for by the material conditions of the transmission" (133). The connections between Saussy's project of reclamation and Jousse thus center on the body itself, and Jousse's (literally) gestural reading of the Gospels provides a fascinating link to the modes of corporeal memory discussed in the previous chapters. Jousse's reading—in which the gospel becomes a message of salvation in which the body is taught or awoken to its own capacity as a site for memory and thus inscription—becomes even more striking within the historical context and conflicts of 1940s France; Saussy's description of Jousse's call to "an apocalyptic reversal of the media world" (155) may sound politically drastic, but, in a world of increasing media proliferation past traditional textualities, it also sounds on point.

For Saussy, however, it is clear that this "apocalyptic reversal" occurs within a project of reclamation and redemption: "Oral tradition is not the antithesis of writing, but a particular kind of writing, an inscription on other human minds" (156). The fifth and final chapter reiterates this point repeatedly: the material means of communication so commonly conceived as mechanized exteriorities to the human body are, in that very materiality, reoriented and re-grounded within the sinewy traces of flesh and bone itself. A poetics of rhythm can only truly be appreciated via the sensate body: without the sensing flesh (now the machinery of sensation itself), without embodied inscription, the project of aesthetic creation, reception, and, significantly, transmission cannot occur. "But when poems are inscribed on their hearers, poet and poem can be described as a nested pair of autopoietic machines—the poet a living organism in constant exchange with an environment, the poem a shared imagination in constant interchange with its own features and with its own hearers" (170). And it is in this constant exchange that Saussy centers his claim that oral literature and its historical development and theorization perturbs notions of literature as writing. "Collective poetry, self-organizing texts, techniques of the reciting body, translations of gesture, this media theory that is not one: the topic of 'oral literature' ... served as an experimental base for both artistic and theoretical avant-gardes, proposing the disappearance of the author, modular composition, automatic writing, self-reference, the iterative, interactive, and ergodic modes of performance" (170–71).

As a whole, Saussy's volume provides a convincing argument for rethinking the connections between orality, textuality, literature, and embodiment. As such, it addresses broad questions concerning what it means to be human and what it means to participate within an ongoing project of poeisis. Saussy's comparative methodology—here, that of bringing historically and culturally disparate works into conversation—is erudite and effective. I was particularly struck by the way the volume cut away at previous conceptions while simultaneously building up, layer by layer, its argument for the inscribed body. The theoretical move here is similar to that performed by Pierre Alféri in his 2016 address, "Life Lines."[15] There, Alféri makes the point that conceptually, a line can be understood in terms of inscription (that is, the cut that opens the line upon the surface) or in terms of accretion (that is, the laying down of one substance, however thinly, on top of the surface). This duality is then traced throughout a history of the line as that which participates in both chaos and order (e.g., the chaos of the line organized into the labyrinth, etc.) Significantly, Saussy seeks neither just cutting nor accretion; he is not interested in pitting orality and writing against each other. Rather, through acts of incision and accumulative readings, Saussy detects an emergent reordering in the chaotic history of the relationship between the oral and the written.

In terms of practical matters, the volume is well-conceived and produced; the addition of the notes, complete bibliography, and subject index increase its usefulness, and inclusion of 13 black and white figures increases the readers' enjoyment. While the following is not necessarily a criticism, I did find myself wishing for audible aids along with the visual. In a volume concerned with re-reading and reorienting prior expectations and conceptions, it does not seem like it would have been too far a stretch to include access to a few additional recordings (audio and/or visual) illustrating some of the more experiential items under discussion on a website, blog, or even YouTube channel. Not necessarily the norm for an academic volume of course, and something easily remedied by the curious reader's own efforts, but it would have been an unexpectedly welcome gesture. That is, of course, the upshot of reading a volume whose breadth and depth spark both curiosity and a desire for continuing conversation—

15. Pierre Alféri, "Life Lines," lecture given at the European Graduate School, August 8, 2016, YouTube, published March 16, 2017, https://youtu.be/5ylFrDCyoYU.

it leaves the reader both satisfied and wanting more. Saussy's work here is productively provocative, and the volume is warmly recommended to those interested in questions of orality, textuality, the body, poetics, performativity, and theory.

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Catherine Toal. *The Entrapment of Form: Cruelty and Modern Literature*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016. Pp. 172. ISBN: 9780823269358.

Catherine Toal's book addresses issues related to the use of allusions to and representations of cruelty in French and American literatures from the end of the eighteenth century to the 1960s. It provides concluding observations on comments and reports about cruelty, which can be found in American accounts of contemporary forms of torture and in interpretations of the Fifth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

Although in its introduction the author reviews a wide sample of philosophical approaches to cruelty, which range from Plato and Aristotle to Thomas Hobbes, Adam Smith and Tocqueville, she does not seek to offer a historical, trans-historical, and ultimately abstract perspective on cruelty. Catherine Toal contrasts French and American uses of these allusions and representations, points to their connections, and eventually invites us to read her various and often comparative arguments as a means to specifically define American views of cruelty. This definition is illustrated by contemporary American philosophers, who characterize cruelty as "a failure of love, or a failure to 'notice' the suffering of others" (16). Consequently, the decision to build explicit or implicit, continuous or discontinuous comparisons between French and American literatures does not lead to any systematic description of cruelty. Rather, it relies upon distinct definitions of the latter on the one

hand, and textual connections between French and American writers on the other. Toal's comparisons fall within the purview of the history of ideas. In this sense, they interpret the contrast between French and American representations of cruelty as the result of the opposition between French writers' aesthetic accomplishments, enabling readers to "view" and question cruelty's reality and meaning, as well as American philosophers' "tendency to treat the confrontation with terrorism or cultural struggle for hegemony and their cruelty, in 'aesthetic' terms, as problems of sensibility or visual representation" (17). Thus, American references to and representations of cruelty are paradoxical because they tend to veil their own object.

However, Catherine Toal's distinct approaches to French and American expressions and assessments of cruelty share a common ground. Representations of, allusions to, as well as comments about cruelty in both cultures provide a challenge to society. In other words, cruelty is a question in itself, a status evidenced in readers' reactions to cruelty. The latter never fails to affect readers and to stimulate their thought. This triggers a critique of the societies referred to in literary works. French and American representations/expressions of cruelty can be differentiated along the following lines: the former define cruelty as a way of engaging critically with society—representations of cruelty both designate the oppression of society and respond to it—while the latter do not disassociate cruelty from the contradiction, as Tocqueville noted, between "the mutual 'sympathy' Americans generally show in social intercourse and the 'cruelty' with which they treat their slaves" (15). According to Catherine Toal, this American characteristic resurfaces today, *mutatis mutandis*, in comments about torture. Whatever differences can be detected in French and American approaches to cruelty, Catherine Toal identifies a paradigmatic response to them in Lacan's essay, "Kant avec Sade." Although Catherine Toal regards Lacan's text as a critique of French commentaries about cruelty, it provides a link with her broader observations. Indeed, it situates the limit of cruelty in intersubjectivity, which constitutes the basis of any ethical system, as Kant suggested.

We have just described the explicit and implicit argumentation of Catherine Toal. We mention both explicit and implicit because the author did not intend to write a monograph about cruelty. Although representations of cruelty are manifest in the corpus examined, they are encoded within the complexities of "literary works," within "the entrapment

of form." While being manifest, articulations and recognitions of cruelty entail direct and indirect expressions without which no questioning effect would be achieved. In other words, this book should not be read as a study in French and American enunciations and ideologies of cruelty, or the unveiling of moral lessons in literary works, but as the effort to "elucidate the hidden structures that decide the modern outline of cruelty" (17). Our previous remarks outline the main characteristics and implications of this structure.

Short summaries of the book's self-contained and yet interrelated five chapters confirm the search for the "structure" that commands modern expressions of cruelty. Chapter One, "The Form of the Perverse," interprets Poe's stories as exemplifications of a kind of perversity linked to cruelty, more specifically to its Sadean version. References to Lautréamont and Baudelaire and his translations of Poe foreground a kind of cruelty explicitly revealing an opposition to society. Significantly, Catherine Toal argues that Benjamin's comments about both writers confirm her argument. Chapter Two, "Some Things Which Could Have Never Happened," offers a literal reading of Melville's *Benito Cereno* as a vindication of Tocqueville's claim about American cruelty, already quoted above. This reading stands in contrast to interpretations of Melville's story, which miss the essential contradiction inherent in cruel acts. Chapter One and Chapter Two both offer explicit comparisons of the French and American articulations of cruelty. In addition, they stress the important ideological implications of the theme of cruelty in nineteenth-century literatures. Chapter Three, "Murder and 'Point of View,'" deals with Henry James's novels, his critique of French realist writers, and the ramifications of his use of the "point of view" technique. As Catherine Toal shows, the moral cruelty which James perceived in the Goncourts' *Sœur Philomène* characterizes his novels as well. This argument relies upon analyzes of the images of sexual development in James's works. It is predicated on the "point of view" device, which actually enables the writer to be explicitly implied in his stories. Chapter Four, "The Marquis de Sade in the Twentieth Century," surveys the numerous debates about cruelty in twentieth-century France. Reviewing and discussing most of the major interpretations of cruelty, Toal identifies the vision of cruelty as the "negation of the self" as a shared characteristic. Toal's analysis of Lacan's essay "Kant avec Sade" enables her to reverse this view. Following in the wake of Lacan, she does not dissociate cruelty from an ethical point of view. References

to Sade and Kant point to a broader argument about the "disfigurement of the image of the Jew as such" (96), complemented by allusions to the historical understanding of cruelty and anti-Semitism by members of the Frankfurt school. Chapter Five, "American Cruelty," should be read as a counterpart to Chapter Four: it points to the most frequent American definition of cruelty—as the failure to notice the suffering of others. It considers this approach to cruelty as the source of "a crisis of cultural and political response in the face of legal attempts to justify the use of torture" (3). Paradoxically, American philosophers refer to literature in order to define the meaning of cruelty and confirm the existence of routine references to suffering.

The Entrapment of Form does not offer an extensive description of allusions to and reflections about cruelty in France and in the United States; it neither avoids paratactic arguments, nor systematizes its conclusions enough. However, it is a very useful book, as it highlights the importance of representations of cruelty, disassociates them from aestheticism and moral approaches, links them to social history, and views them as epitomizing the tension between the individual and society typical of our modernity. In addition, many specific issues are implicitly suggested, such as the connections between cruelty and Christianity, cruelty and suffering, cruelty and violence, cruelty and representation, as well as cruelty and social critique in modernity.

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John Lurz. *The Death of the Book: Modernist Novels and the Time of Reading*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016. Pp. iv+199. ISBN: 97808223270989.

John Lurz believes not only that favorite modernist texts by Proust, Joyce, and Woolf exhibit a powerful awareness of mortality and temporality at a watershed juncture in the development of diverse media technologies in the early twentieth century, but that their novels exude a powerful sense of their own structures and finitude. Because these authors correlate their characters' mental and bodily attributes to the status of the book, Lurz

detects a pervasive epochal obsession with death and with the material basis of the narrating and reading of books as objects—no matter how complex—in time. They realize that, as interstices in the time-space flow, works of art can never achieve pure presence, and thus key modernist novels "place the readerly subject rather literally in touch with the very situation of ephemerality that they embody" (13). Lurz entirely limits the discussion to modernism and cites more recent fashionable theoreticians; he does not remind us that, for example, as far back as the late eighteenth century, Laurence Sterne's first-person narrator of *Tristram Shandy* already was wrestling with the problematic status of the book in relation to the body, mind, culture, and technology and with writing as challenged by death.

There is nothing wrong in Lurz's concentrating in the Justine segments of Proust's *roman fleuve* on the way the first-person narrator Marcel is bewildered by her opacity, like a book the satisfactory reading of which ultimately eludes him. However, Lurz otherwise simply ignores the astounding multidimensionality of the various entities which Marcel engages starting already as of page one of *Swann's Way* (e.g., himself, the experiencer, as a book; a church as a long enduring complex artifact-container; a musical composition; a drama of contesting actors and systems in a key moment of the Renaissance). In this grand overture, Marcel meditates on the processing of life experiences and desires in dream, mentally traverses centuries of civilization, attempts to fathom primitive depths preceding Adam and Eve, and reconstructs pieces of his ego. Eager to demonstrate the "physical materiality of the book" (54) as a central theme and to show how Proust perceives a realm of darkness, Lurz does not adequately credit the extensive way that, through his educational protagonist, Proust illuminates temporality in all the arts across different ranges of time and space. The traumatic crisis of World War I helped impel Proust to find the conclusion to his colossal project, but Lurz chooses not to comment on the finally aged Marcel's experience of the rupture in world order as a dreamlike interlude in cultural history reminiscent of others in history while deep social shifts occur, nor to credit Marcel's sense of participation in a longer stream of life under the phenomenal surface. Basically Lurz devalues the sacramental awareness which Proust shares with Mann and Joyce by spiritual affinity.

Turning to Joyce's third-person saga of a festival day in Dublin, the novel *Ulysses* to which (as critics have long known) the author himself

assigned organ equivalences chapter by chapter among other symbolic frameworks, Lurz concentrates on the Sirens chapter where the aural and visual and also olfactory are fused. At first Lurz exaggerates Stephen's disembodied mind in contrast to Bloom's openness to the world and organic processes, but more importantly he arrives at a well-stated understanding that their combined modes of "reading" constitute an "action of *both* mind *and* body" (71, his italics). Ultimately, the union of Stephen and Bloom, plus the strands of language, mind, and world, cannot be unwoven. Lurz develops the theme of "holes" via the figure of Molly, but adds little to the (here ignored) association of the feminine role and polarity with the gateway, the means of passage for both birth and death, by which existence self-processes. He moves to a post-Bishop sense of *Finnegans Wake* as a book of the dark, revolving around death as its fulcrum and exhibiting the stark materiality of letters, both in the alphabet as writing code and figuratively. The *Wake* is both "radically polysemic" (84) and analogous to film for Lurz because its "positive value is negativity itself," and Joyce renders "darkness visible" (86), while—Lurz's boldest claim—printed words also "function as a non-referential medium" (88).

Lurz finally gets to the *Wake's* cyclic structure, but his downgrading of the "letter" buried in a dump, the "literal dustbin of history" (92), egregiously overrides the evolutionary story of the "letter's" rebirth, when the cosmic egg is reissued courtesy of the Isis-like Hen, and its delivery occurs in multiple envelopes over time. In the reviewer's judgment, Lurz also over-interprets in his analysis of the famous diagram (FW 293) that he views as an "index of nothingness" (99), the feminine zero, in contrast to Boldrini's elaborate positive explication of its association with the mother and its fuller referentiality (35–46). Lurz indeed recognizes that the "letters themselves … are a magic dreamlike vision" (102), that the Wake "both thematizes and performs" (104), and in the final analysis that "Shaun and Shem meet in accord" as sons of their mother (105). Nonetheless he deems that, via the "darkprint" of the Wake, it is not the imagination or intellect—let alone the dark night of the soul—but the body we readers share with the dead.

Likely because Lurz has more room to expatiate on details in the less voluminous *Jacob's Room* and *The Waves*, his final two chapters excel as appreciations of Woolf. Lurz succinctly revisits the crucial impressionist-to-postimpressionist context and relates Woolf's own biographical notes regarding hands-on involvement in the Hogarth Press

to her experimentation as a novelist. Her emphasis on thingly aspects and essentially stream of consciousness intermingled with impressions of the outer world in specific moments which Lurz cites could well be compared (though Lurz does not venture to do so) with analogous features in Rilke, Galdós, Schnitzler and others. Lurz gives good examples of Woolf's blurring the "distinction between the human and nonhuman" (125) and establishing a higher level of complexity when details of cultural history are sounded as worldly material that replaces or supplements linguistic abstraction. Woolf tends to portray characters who "print" something onto others and reciprocally are printed on. The theme of death in *Jacob's Room* becomes dramatically focused in the episode where "the book itself is drowning" (130), which is suggested when a copy of Shakespeare goes over board as a storm rises. The storm in which Jacob perishes is, of course, the Great War, the colossal trauma that haunts so much of modernism. In Jacob himself Lurz posits a tension between a "status either as an omnipotent subject or a nonhuman object," while in some passages books appear to "mediate the ephemerality of human emotions and the durability of the object world" (133).

Lurz nicely exposits Woolf's drive to depict the important activity of the solitary mind turned toward things and events, yet participating in a community of voices, in the chapter on *The Waves*. Through three males and three females, we follow the variety of ways characters experience the flow of existence and try to give it some order. Regrettably, Lurz does not mention experiments by the Romantics a hundred years earlier (whether or not there may be any direct filiation) when he describes Woolf as envisioning a new kind of hybrid novel that mixes articulated stories and fragmentary pieces. The lead figure Bernard criticizes standard narrative form in his closing monologue as not commensurate with how we experience, in contrast to music, and senses a "deeper, nonlinguistic level of life" (144). The traumatic intrusion of death with the loss of Percival brings "deepened awareness of time's passing" (152). Just as the friends each previously occupied a distinct temperamental or philosophical position vis-à-vis life, so their awakening to their own materiality and to the world varies. It can eventuate in finding oneself "alone in emptiness" (152), but in the case of Bernard it brings intensified attention to things, with a non-subject-centered account of experience, including influence of other minds and their works, realization of the suffering of others. A dissolution of subjectivity is sensed in changing aspects of the seascape

and as a dispersal of self into the human community, while cosmological dimensions, too, impose "radical finitude" (157). A kind of victory occurs insofar as Bernard can split off his narrative consciousness and see himself or a friend as an object and challenge death by his altered attitude, which Lurz correctly sees as analogous to the endings of *Recherche* and *Finnegans Wake*.

The reviewer cannot fend off the regret that Lurz could have treated most of the same materials quite effectively without being wed to his own thesis to the extent that he is tempted to invent metaphoric frameworks to impose on the authors he studies–for example, to picture the generic book, in the case of *The Waves*, symbolically as a set of separable pages which are nevertheless connected by its spine; or to proclaim the supposed paradox that he the critic is giving life to a work by attending its "death"; etc. He intermittently describes moments of his own personal engagement with the novels under examination, and occasionally he indulges in a kind of singsong interaction with terminology which he borrows eclectically from the repertories of his favored postmodern critics and theoreticians. These biographical and ludic features lend his views a strong "performative" character that often seems akin to that of deconstructors like Derrida (whom the reviewer construes as a late-late epigonal resurrector of Romantic irony). The general reader who is not already inducted into the cultish aspects of deconstructive jargons may find this annoying, but in compensation will enjoy considerable stretches where Lurz grapples in a more straightforward manner in the exegesis of passages and re-illuminates them with enthusiasm.

Straddling three major writers (French, Irish, and English) is a big enough challenge in itself, but the fact that two of them participate on an enormous scale in the long and bounteous European tradition of the interlaced educational and encyclopedic novel makes it hard to do any justice to their colossal range of referentiality by applying a single narrow formula. Aside from creating large reference works (a mammoth aspect of Joyce and Proust studies), probably the best a competent comparatist can do is to highlight moments where a super-narrator or an internal narrator doubling at times as an authorial spokesman appears to exhibit an approach to the world which resembles that of certain of the novelist's contemporaries or his most obvious inspirers and to correlate clues in literary and intellectual history, as Lurz does with considerable flare in pursuit of his thesis when less shackled by it.

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Mihai Spariosu. *Modernism and Exile: Play, Liminality and the Exilic-Utopian Imagination.* London: Palgrave, 2015. Pp. 209. ISBN: 9780230231412.

The present book authored by Mihai Spariosu is part of the *Modernism and …* series edited for Palgrave by Roger Griffin. It devotes its comparatist approach to thematics by taking "exile" and "utopian imagination" as cornerstones of modernism.

It is a challenging approach, since the bringing together of the three afore-mentioned concepts (modernism, exile, and utopian imagination) is not necessarily self-evident. This is where being a true comparatist helps: to crossbreed these concepts, one has to be crystal clear about one's epistemological foundation, and then present and develop one's argument in a structurally balanced movement between theoretical thinking on the one hand, and textual analysis and consideration on the other. This is the challenge Spariosu takes, and at which he definitely succeeds. The present book makes the reader revise a number of supposed "truths" about the conceptual framework it addresses, and the reader comes out of it with a more complex, and therefore interesting, view of the problems raised and addressed.

This approach is developed and argued by Spariosu through three main gestures: i) a conceptual questioning of exilic-utopian imagination from a theoretical-cultural perspective; ii) a historical methodology, through which we are taken as far back as *Gilgamesh*, the Pentateuc,

Sophocles, and Plato; iii) and five main case studies of such instances in modernism itself, that is, Conrad, Koestler, Huxley, Mann, and Bulgakov. By combining these three different ways of approaching his subject, Spariosu is able to take from theoretical, historical, and literary analysis the best each can offer and assimilate them in a mutually illuminating way. The conceptual framework underscores the possibility of going back to classical texts to understand how modernity—and more specifically modernism—inherits and transforms a millennial-long tradition of thinking and writing what we now take and read as literature. So what might be considered at first glimpse to be rather anachronistic, that is, linking modernism to pre-classical and classical texts, becomes instead a challenging tool that also, in the process of thinking, carefully avoids going back to only the most obvious forefathers of utopia, the main one being, of course, Thomas Moore.

Also interesting in this seemingly counter-intuitive approach is the fact that modernism is taken not through the notion of the avant-gardes' rupture with tradition, but instead by highlighting its serious playfulness with time, tradition, and history. Modernism is not only a way of discarding the past but, and perhaps mainly, a way of weighing that past, and of trying to be worthy of it through its transformation. Like Walter Benjamin's angel of history, the piles of the past are what we see, as the wind of history blows us into the future. So, the way Spariosu views modernism itself is also a serious process of revision of our own recent literary history. We all have much to gain from such complex approach.

In his preface, the series editor Richard Griffin rightly points to Max Weber's theory on the gradual *entzauberung* ("disenchantment") of the world, and recalls some of the major modernists in order to show that, one way or the other, they all tried somehow to rescue modernity from total scepticism by trying to create some kind of "magical production." This is in fact the core of Spariosu's argument, which is developed through the structured approaches briefly sketched above, especially as the present volume reaches its conclusion, as we shall see. In fact taken from this point of view, the modernists' paths and trends—even the seemingly pure aesthetic ones such as Wilde's—point to the integration of anti-rational, even archaic, elements as one way of re-sacralizing a world in which human beings feel to be in existential exile. Therefore, the conceptual kernel of Spariosu's argument rests on this assumption: the exilic-utopian imagination offers to many modernist writers a powerful

device to bring back into the world an imagination that does not depend solely on that we could term without paradox a "real realism" (a "practical" one, as Wilde, here quoted by Spariosu, considered to be absolutely unnecessary). On the contrary, such imagination depends on the ability to recognize "one's place" as an ontological exile, and of imagining utopias as positive or negative responses to that never-to-be solved exile. Utopianism and anti-utopianism become, in Spariosu's thought, more complementary than opposing principles. They offer different responses to a problem that cannot be solved and, therefore, will never go away.

Part I of this volume deals with theoretical concepts approached through their historical (and hence different) configurations. The processes revisited and attentively characterized by Spariosu include: the distinction, but also the links, between modernity and modernism; the complex perspective on how the concept of "modern" already appears in classical antiquity and permeates the cultural history of the West; the crucial difference between a negative use of "modern" until roughly the nineteenth century, and the sudden rupture in cultural and artistic manifestations caused by a positive appreciation of the same concept. The reader is presented with a deeper understanding of the roots of the different modernities which have, after all, been long-time companions of artistic and historical thought—and this, in itself, is a useful understanding for expounding a concept that equates "the modern" with our own present "modernity." Two further steps intersect in this framework in Part I: the interrelation between play and liminality in modernist cultural theory, on the one hand, and on the other, the consideration of both exile and utopia as playful liminality. The main thinkers that Spariosu uses to develop his argument on "radical liminality and its negative perception in modernism and modernity in general—perception that is characteristic of a mentality of power" (27) are three classical scholars who devoted a great deal of their attention to these questions: Huizinga for the notion of play, and Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner for their contributions to the concept of liminality that the latter formulates, but is already implied in van Gennep's reflections. Although pointing out some of the implied contradictions, mainly in Huizinga's pioneering work on *Homo Ludens*, Spariosu finishes Part I by establishing the grounds he will later use in the case studies presented. One of the main questions is the relation between seriousness and playfulness (I think that Bakhtin's thought on Carnival and the Menippean Satire

would have been an important contribution to Spariosu's argument here). Still another is the importance of liminality ("the interval," as for instance explicitly recognized in many of Fernando Pessoa's works—one of the great names of modernism itself) for the works of the modernists who will be the central *corpus* of this study.

Chapter two is focused on playful liminality as a key concept both for exile and utopia. Spariosu does not shy away from what might appear as counterintuitive statements, as, for instance, when he claims that even if it seems to be against the common-sense notion, exile may well be approached through the notion of ludic liminality by its connection with the agonistic basis of playfulness itself. This amounts to say that this book does not follow, on many occasions, the well-beaten trends of cultural theory. On the contrary, it challenges some of our apparently "safe" dichotomies about some of the questions implied—and it does so in an open manner. This may help Spariosu's descriptive but also programmatic theory on the exilic-utopian imagination, which according to him "allows us to value it [exile] as a potentially positive cultural experience" (30). Utopia as exilic liminality is also addressed and characterized in this second Part of the volume, underlining the exilic character of all utopias (be they thus named or not) as lands of *ou-topos*—lands or places of nowhere. This liminality or "interval"—again at the heart of the utopic imagination—stresses its affinities with exile since by definition no utopia coincides with one's "proper" place. Exile becomes, in this sense, a necessity for the characterization of utopia (or, for that matter, dystopia as well). One must "get out" of one's place and/or time. From this point of view, it makes perfect sense to speak of an "exilic-utopic imagination," pointing out their interdependent dynamics, instead of considering them as opposed attitudes of cultural and artistic thought on displacement. A brief outline of a history of exilic-utopian imagination, mainly post Thomas More, is offered in chapter three of Part 2, and the framework described above is adequately developed for a full analysis of the five case studies chosen. The reader is now in possession of a complex set of information on post-sixteenth-century history of the exilic-utopian imagination. However, this reader in particular would have found it useful if at least one or two of the ground-breaking examples that are given had received fuller attention, so that non-specialists might be given a greater insight into such imagination previous to modernism itself.

For Spariosu, it is clear that this history goes way back before Moore and the sixteenth century. That is precisely the reason why a large section of Part II is devoted to the "birth of modernity" in ancient near-Eastern narratives such as Gilgamesh and the Pentateuch, and the "modern consciousness" of this type of imagination in the Hellenic world such as Sophocles and Plato. While these are impressive instances of close-reading analyses from the point of view of the chosen topics, this section highlights a temporal gap (that ought perhaps to be addressed) between these ancient and thoroughly studied texts and those constituting the fulcrum of the book in Part III (Modernism). Perhaps this temporal and historical gap is in fact part of the programmatic stance of Spariosu: if his overall purpose is to distinguish and to oppose two kinds of exilic-utopic imagination, the irenic and the "ethopathology of power" (85), and show how they are approached differently in classical and modernist texts, then his stance becomes in fact quite self-evident. One wonders, however, if closer attention to the historical gap mentioned above might eventually have contributed to a somehow different description of the exilic-utopian imagination. In my view, this would only have sharpened the perceptive description of high modernity (from the nineteenth century onward and therefore including modernism) as being characterized by an "acute sense of ontological loss," to which exilic-utopian imagination has offered different responses. However, before plunging into the literary works he has chosen, Spariosu ponders on two existential exilic experiences closer to us by considering Said's and Brodsky's personal situations and reflections on exile. It is an interesting move, for it offers not only an insight into the problem, but also the experience of self-reflexivity, typical of modernity itself. This becomes a noteworthy point of departure for the chapters that follow.

As stated above, these sections focus on five major modernist works in which exilic-utopian (and dystopian) imagination is at the heart of the fictional plots. The first example is Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, which represents, from Spariosu's perspective, "exile, utopia, and the will to empire." This, in turn, is a direct expression of empire as the "will to power" in the combat between different "places" and their interpretations as possible utopias, which could in fact be read as real dystopias in British imperialism and African archaic society. The contrast between Conrad and the epic of *Gilgamesh* is a powerful one, and definitely sets the tone for Spariosu's further analysis. Then comes Arthur Koestler's *Darkness*

at Noon. This novel is described as "utopia, totalitarianism, and the will to reason," going a step further from the impasse described by Conrad by taking as the centre of its plot the transitional moment between the "modernist" Russian revolution and the postmodernist "totalitarian type, rejuvenated by the archaic will to power, masquerading as Reason, Utopia, and the logical, irreversible 'march of History'" (129). This is followed by Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, which is viewed as exile, dystopia, and the will to order. Order, still another form of totalitarianism and dystopia at the heart of Huxley's novel, is now placed in a postcolonial and postcommunist phase. Thus, it is distanced from the novels that are previously studied in the book as "dystopia based on pleasure" (143). Finally, the last chapter addresses two other major novels by two major authors: Thomas Mann's *Joseph and His Brothers* and Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*. They are interpreted through the prism of exile, theotopia, and atopia. They differ from the previous novels because in them, by contrast, the religious and the artistic-creative elements come to play a fundamental role in the construction of atopian societies.

To conclude, I would like to point out another interesting insight of this volume: the political consequences, and possible dangers, of utopianism, dystopianism, and anti-utopianism are not evaded (consequences which are at the core of the readings offered by Huxley and Koestler, for instance). The pervasive Western "will to power" is not the only possible way of viewing history and cultural and artistic production, Spariosu claims. There is more to say throughout the history of the East and of the West (and the crossings between East and West) about "the irenic principles of love, compassion, mindfulness, and peaceful cooperation, rather than on cutthroat competition, selfishness, greed, and excessive materialism" (184–85). This book is concerned with the principle of wisdom. But it does not ignore the political dangers involved in the utopian-exilic imagination. On the contrary, they are at the very centre of this inquiry, therefore also contributing to necessary revisions of the concept of modernism as a historically literary period from different points of view. The long Afterword (actually, a central piece of thinking) with which this volume closes is, in my opinion, not only a traditional afterword, but also a point of arrival of the thematic, conceptual, and historical approaches that structure this book. There is the reason why this afterword is entitled "The End of Exile: Toward a Global Eutopia": it is, as Spariosu himself points out, a personal belief

that there is a way out of the agonistic dynamics of the will to power and the struggles between centre-periphery. This book closes with the self-ironical remark by Oscar Wilde, about the necessity of taking up "unpractical schemes" precisely because they are unpractical—for what is practical already exists, and does not need to be invented. In this sense, the programmatic view that Spariosu offers is, in itself, a reflection infused with the subject matter that it takes from: an exilic-utopian project for whoever may consider, even for a moment, the possibility of a "global eutopia."

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Aurore Touya. *La Polyphonie romanesque au XXe siècle.* Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2015. Pp. 574. ISBN: 9782812431258.

La présente étude trouve son point de départ dans les bouleversements de la modernité littéraire de la fin du dix-neuvième et du début du vingtième siècle, plus particulièrement dans le désir des romanciers de se libérer des conventions réalistes et de l'autorité d'un narrateur unique et omniscient, lesquelles étaient propres au roman du dix-neuvième siècle. Le phénomène de la polyphonie romanesque est une des meilleures expressions de ce désir de renouvellement. Mikhaël Bakhtine a été un des premiers à y avoir été attentif. Cependant, comme le rappelle Aurore Touya, l'auteur de la *Poétique de Dostoïevski* limitait la polyphonie au contenu de l'histoire et ses significations, omettant de l'envisager comme structuration narrative, c'est-à-dire « entrelacement des voix de personnages » et « alternance des voix de narrateurs » (37). Or, selon Touya, malgré les études isolées qui lui ont été consacrées, la polyphonie entendue en ce sens n'a pas encore été reconnue comme « un paradigme à part entière » (118). Telle est bien l'ambition du présent livre. Il offre une étude exhaustive du roman polyphonique, non qu'il prenne en considération tous les romans relevant de ce modèle, mais parce qu'il en propose une compréhension globale, faisant le tour des problèmes narratologiques, linguistiques, philosophiques, idéologiques et historiques qu'il ne manque pas de poser.

Les interrogations guidant l'étude se situent en effet à plusieurs niveaux. Il s'agit d'abord pour Touya de comprendre les mécanismes narratifs et formels de la polyphonie, c'est-à-dire d'identifier ses traits permanents comme ses variantes, et d'examiner en quoi la polyphonie transforme le roman dans son ensemble. Ensuite, l'auteur entend saisir les bénéfices que les écrivains tirent de l'usage de la polyphonie: que permet-elle de dire sur l'homme, sur la société, sur leur époque, là où ne suffisaient plus les structures narratives traditionnelles? Enfin, la question majeure sous-jacente à l'enquête consiste à comprendre les raisons historiques profondes expliquant l'apparition et la diffusion exceptionnelle de la polyphonie romanesque tout au long du vingtième siècle. Or, de telles ambitions de recherche justifiaient amplement, voire rendaient indispensable, une large perspective comparatiste. De fait, le corpus de Touya implique neuf romans en trois langues, couvrant deux continents, et dont la publication s'échelonne de 1929 à 1968: quatre romans américains, deux de William Faulkner (*The Sound and the Fury, As I Lay Dying*) et deux de Toni Morrison (*Beloved, A Mercy*); trois romans en langue espagnole, mais impliquant à la fois la culture de l'Amérique latine et celle d'Espagne (Juan Rulfo, *Pedro Páramo*; Mario Vargas Llosa, *Conversación en La Catedral*, Roberto Bolaño, *Los detectives salvajes*); enfin, deux romans de langue française, issus de France et de Suisse (*Les Mendiants* de Louis-René des Forêts, et *Belle du Seigneur* d'Albert Cohen).

La première partie de l'étude commence par circonscrire le sujet en définissant le plus précisément possible le roman polyphonique, remontant à l'étymologie du terme. L'auteur fait le point sur les différences entre le roman polyphonique et le roman choral, d'une part, et entre le monologue intérieur et le *stream of consciousness,* d'autre part. Le corpus est décrit en détail et justifié. Touya inscrit le roman polyphonique dans l'histoire intellectuelle du début du vingtième siècle, marqué par une nouvelle manière de penser la subjectivité, qui se traduit chez le philosophe Henri Bergson par l'insistance sur une part confuse, infiniment mobile et inexprimable de la vie consciente, et chez Sigmund Freud par l'attention accordée à l'inconscient. L'intérêt que des romanciers plus ou moins contemporains comme Marcel Proust et James Joyce manifestent pour la conscience et pour l'intériorité est concomitant de cette nouvelle pensée de la subjectivité. Le roman polyphonique radicalise leurs innovations par l'introduction de plusieurs personnages narrateurs qui donnent à voir directement leur intériorité. Le monologue intérieur et

le *stream of consciousness* font figure de techniques appropriées pour ce genre d'entreprise. Dans cette première partie de l'ouvrage, l'histoire de l'arrière-plan intellectuel et culturel du roman polyphonique fait cependant assez rapidement place à une analyse différente, relevant plutôt de la sociologie du livre et de l'édition, ce qui permet à l'auteur de mettre en évidence (du moins pour la France) la diffusion toujours grandissante du roman polyphique jusqu'à l'époque contemporaine.

Après le long préambule des définitions et « contextualisations » diverses, Touya entame véritablement l'analyse des romans polyphoniques retenus. A l'échelle de l'étude dans son ensemble, celle-ci progresse en partant d'une mise en évidence des propriétés structurelles et formelles des romans en question pour aboutir à une prise en compte de leurs significations. Dans cette optique, Touya s'attelle d'abord à une typologie narratologique des romans polyphoniques, distinguant trois catégories : les romans polyphoniques homogènes, où toutes les voix sont placées sur un pied d'égalité et typographiquement isolées les unes des autres, sans qu'il y ait un narrateur extérieur; ceux qui reprennent certaines données de la première catégorie, en y ajoutant un niveau de narration, de facture traditionnelle et régie par la troisième personne du singulier; enfin ceux qui enchâssent successivement les uns dans les autres plusieurs récits et/ou plusieurs dialogues. L'examen de ces divers choix narratologiques montre que la polyphonie ne saurait se réduire à un simple outil technique mais s'avère à chaque fois intimement liée au sens même du roman en question: pour ne donner qu'un exemple, le chevauchement rapide des voix narratives chez Juan Rulfo et Mario Vargas Llosa, déconcertant pour le lecteur, est à l'image d'un roman conçu comme une investigation laborieuse concernant le passé.

La seconde partie de l'étude envisage les répercussions de la polyphonie sur la facture des romans, imposant à ceux-ci des « modifications » portant aussi bien sur la forme que sur le genre. Autrement dit, ces romans cessent d'être traditionnels pour d'autres raisons encore que l'usage de la polyphonie. Pour ce qui est de la forme, Touya étudie en détail les jeux typographiques, notamment l'usage des italiques, qui peuvent se doter de significations diverses: marqueurs de changement de voix, de la sensibilité du personnage, équivalent de guillemets, etc. Elle examine les libertés que les romans prennent éventuellement mais pas nécessairement avec la linéarité du récit. On le constate à nouveau, les choix formels, en l'occurrence temporels, ne sont pas gratuits, mais liés au sens

profond du récit. Enfin, toujours sur le plan formel, la polyphonie des voix conduit à l'éclatement du roman qui se présente désormais comme un « puzzle » à assembler, ce qui valorise l'adresse interprétative du lecteur tout en la mettant à rude épreuve. Cette démarche annonce aussi une conception relativiste de la vérité, sur laquelle Touya reviendra plus loin dans son ouvrage. Les modifications imposées au roman sont aussi d'ordre générique, en ce sens que les textes examinés se rapprochent de l'investigation policière, de l'instruction judiciaire, du théâtre ou de la poésie. Le roman s'apparente à une enquête familiale chez William Faulkner, il peut se doubler d'une enquête sur la situation politique à une certaine époque, comme chez Mario Vargas Llosa, se muer en une interrogation sur le destin du sentiment amoureux comme chez Albert Cohen. On comprend qu'une quête qui passe par une multipicité de voix rende la vérité elle-même plurielle. Le roman polyphonique se rapproche du théâtre par l'introduction de répliques, par le tragique ou par la thématique de l'illusion tout comme il devient poétique par le développement d'associations verbales inattendues. Bref, le roman polyphonique confirme la vocation du roman tout court à assimiler les discours les plus disparates.

L'ample et minutieuse approche narratologique et formelle des deux premières parties pointait déjà vers les questions du sens. Celles-ci sont traitées en profondeur dans la dernière partie de l'ouvrage. Touya commence par montrer que le roman polyphonique manifeste une forte vocation à la critique sociale et politique. Même un roman d'amour comme *Belle du Seigneur* d'Albert Cohen est porteur d'un tel genre de critique, en s'en prenant au microcosme de la diplomatie européenne de l'entre-deux-guerres. Mais parfois le roman polyphonique véhicule le portrait critique de toute une société, comme le Pérou des années cinquante chez Mario Vargas Llosa ou le Mexique chez Roberto Bolaño ou Juan Rulfo. A chaque fois, l'alternance des voix permet de renforcer cette charge critique, en permettant notamment l'expression de représentants de différentes classes sociales. Le roman polyphonique se plaît aussi à donner la parole à toutes sortes de laissés pour compte de la société, se dotant par là nettement d'une fonction éthique et politique: idiots et enfants chez William Faulkner, femmes et enfants afro-américaines confrontées à la violence sociale et historique chez Toni Morrison. Ainsi se dégage une des grandes significations du roman polyphonique : tout en étant à l'image d'un monde moderne fragmentaire et

hautement conflictuel, il en compense en même temps les manquements par l'élan démocratique inhérent à la multiplicité des voix qu'il orchestre.

En fin de parcours, Touya revient à ce qui fait l'originalité langagière et psychologique profonde du roman polyphonique, le fait qu'il mette directement en mots l'intériorité des personnages–de plusieurs personnages pour être plus précis -, sans plus passer par un narrateur qui les dirige, et reproduisant ainsi leur « pensée silencieuse » (412). C'est l'occasion pour l'auteur d'approfondir les fonctions du *stream of consciousness* et le monologue intérieur dans les romans retenus. Elle situe l'innovation du « psycho-récit » dans l'histoire de la narration littéraire et s'interroge sur les raisons de l'abandon du narrateur en surplomb et de la multiplication des voix au sein même d'un seul roman, croyant trouver une réponse dans la violence historique et le délitement des idéologies propres au vingtième siècle, qui rendent caducs les anciens modèles de récits. La conclusion générale fait écho à cette interprétation historique en établissant le lien entre le « nouveau type de vérité, prudente et relative » (547) qu'incarne la polyphonie romanesque et « la complexité du monde contemporain » (544). L'auteur semble en dernière instance reconduire le roman polyphonique à une vision assez désenchantée et démythifiée (moderne? postmoderne?) de la vérité, qui a fait le deuil de l'absolu (significativement, elle cite un des narrateurs d'un roman polyphonique d'Alberto Manguel déclarant: « Il nous manque une théorie unique qui explique le monde dans sa totalité », cité 544). Il n'en demeure pas moins que, se penchant aussi sur les rapports entre le roman polyphonique et la mort, elle relève dans certains romans de son corpus des voix parlant d'outre-tombe, ce qui témoigne clairement d'une pensée magique et autorise la conclusion que « le roman polyphonique va jusqu'à abolir le temps et la mort » (534), ce qui, en somme, réconcilie le genre en question avec le mythe. Quoi qu'il en soit, Touya le souligne en passant, le roman polyphonique ne manque pas d'ambiguïtés, notamment dans son rapport au langage: d'une part, ses multiples voix traduisent la foi en la possiblité de manifester l'intériorité profonde des personnages, d'autre part, des remarques métalinguistiques de la part de certains de ses narrateurs semblent mettre ce pouvoir en question.

L'étude d'Aurore Touya, impeccablement rédigée, élégamment construite au point que la fin de chaque développement annonce le suivant, impressionne par la rigueur de ses analyses textuelles et par l'ampleur de ses perspectives, à la fois littéraires, philosophiques et sociologiques : elle

embrasse plusieurs littératures, met brillamment en lumière l'unité et la diversité de l'architecture du roman polyphonique et en éclaire les grands thèmes. Cependant, les angles d'approche sont à ce point divers que leur application devait fatalement rester lacunaire. Les explications finales demeurent aussi quelque peu générales et demanderaient sans doute à être affinées à la lumière de l'étude d'autres romans et de contextes socio-culturels davantage circonscrits. Il n'en demeure pas moins que son livre est appelé à devenir incontournable pour l'étude du roman polyphonique.

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Henri Garric. *Parole muette, récit burlesque.* Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2015. Pp. 469. ISBN: 9782812437083.

L'essai d'Henri Garric sur les expressions silencieuses aux XIXe–XXe siècles, *Parole muette, récit burlesque,* s'est assigné pour tâche la volonté de faire renaître les traditions oubliées de l'expression silencieuse, à travers un parcours évoquant les différents arts, des origines à nos jours, le véritable point de départ de l'analyse quasi exhaustive du sujet étant toutefois le premier romantisme allemand, à l'heure des fragments de *l'Athenaeum*.

Henri Garric traque dans les moindres recoins de toutes les formes d'art, qu'il s'agisse du cinéma, du roman, de la poésie, du théâtre, de la bande dessinée, de la musique, de la peinture, toutes les œuvres, jusqu'aux plus inattendues, qui, d'une manière ou d'une autre, se réclament du silence. Le « patrimoine muet » que l'auteur attribue au cinéma du début du XXe siècle, sur l'évocation et l'analyse duquel s'ouvre et se clôt le livre, circule en vérité parmi les différents arts. Henri Garric part du postulat qu'à l'hypertrophie bruyante des sociétés contemporaines s'oppose un « grand déferlement du silence », ce dernier étant « signe de la plus grave incommunication et de la communion la plus intime » (22).

La valeur du silence a subi une lente évolution, des retraites monastiques des XVIe-XVIIe siècles, en passant par l'idée de la retraite rousseauiste, jusqu'à la paranoïa contemporaine du bruit et son corollaire, la valorisation du silence. Les fragments des premiers romantiques allemands, publiés dans la revue *l'Athenaeum*, confirment le statut

d'exception que se donne la littérature en s'identifiant au silence. C'est alors qu'apparaît la notion du « Witz », qui brise la langue ordinaire pour inventer un nouveau langage poétique. À partir de cette notion si particulière et presque indéfinissable de l'ironie, l'auteur entraîne sa démonstration vers le rapprochement « parole muette » et « récit burlesque », qui constitue certainement un apport original, insoupçonné, et tout à fait convaincant de l'essai, véritable colonne vertébrale qui soustend l'ensemble des chapitres, menant à l'analyse du dernier chapitre sur « Pantomimes et mimiques », avant la coda conclusive et le retour au « Silent movies », les plus grands cinéastes de ce temps étant parvenus à révéler directement la psyché à l'aide d'images, sans jamais avoir à passer par le langage.

Dans la partie intitulée « Identification de la littérature et du silence », l'auteur convoque le silence de Mallarmé, et celui de Rimbaud, en particulier à partir des réflexions sur le sujet établies par Maurice Blanchot dans ses ouvrages critiques, dont le recueil de 1945, *Faux pas*, est l'une des références majeures. Le paradoxe consiste à reprendre l'aphorisme beckettien de la parole qui, « quand elle ne parle pas, parle encore ». C'est alors qu'Henri Garric fait intervenir la notion du rire, d'après la définition qu'en donne Bergson, augmentant son argumentation du « rire absolu » de Bataille, l'ensemble prouvant de manière irréfutable que l'expression silencieuse fait partie du comique. L'essayiste précise : « S'il faut conserver à l'opposition entre l'expression silencieuse absolutiste et la séparation comique toute sa différence, elle ne doit pas faire hiérarchie » (146). Henri Garric parvient, comme il se l'est assigné, « à sortir la littérature de son état d'exception parmi le système des arts », et il voit comment « l'expression silencieuse est d'abord pensée dans le cercle complet d'une esthétique comparée des arts » (157).

Une longue étude intervient ensuite sur la question de la musique, qui « offre un langage qui n'a pas à se poser la question de la parole » (185). Il est rappelé les théories de Jankélévitch sur la question de l'ineffable et de l'indicible, tandis que de nombreux exemples mêlant écrivains et compositeurs sont convoqués : est rappelée la célèbre partition de John Cage *4'33*, ce « silence dépassant la musique », tandis qu'au XIXe siècle Garric parle d'une « musique silencieuse », avec de belles pages d'analyse sur Hoffmann, sa nouvelle *Le Chevalier Gluck* et son *Kreisleriana*. C'est ainsi qu'une continuité entre les XIXe et XXe siècles traverse les pages de l'essai, à la faveur de ces allers-retours constants entre la naissance d'une

esthétique du silence à l'heure des premiers romantiques allemands, et la dissémination de cette permanence d'une identité silencieuse dans les arts et dans la musique moderne et contemporaine. C'est aussi dans la musique, à propos en particulier d'Aperghis, que ressurgit la notion du grotesque, celui-ci étant advenu en particulier à l'heure du cinéma muet. La partie suivante sur la peinture rappelle que dans celle-ci, comme l'écrit Michel Serres, « la parole naît dans le tableau par une géométrie qui construirait un espace » (230) Dès lors, pour Garric, le silence est ce qui exhausse le réel à une dimension spirituelle, transcendant le cauchemar réaliste. L'auteur parle avec une grande justesse, citant Élie Faure, de la « symphonie silencieuse de Vélasquez », décrit par le critique d'art comme « le peintre des soirs, de l'étendue et du silence » (235).

La partie essentielle de l'essai d'Henri Garric est sans doute celle où il est montré que l'esthétique du sublime et du grotesque se situe au cœur du système d'une esthétique silencieuse, reposant sur trois piliers : d'une part la tradition de l'expression silencieuse, d'autre part l'ironie romantique, enfin l'esthétique du sublime et du grotesque proprement dite. L'auteur fait appel à l'historique du dessin comique sans paroles apparu à la fin du XIXe siècle, allant jusqu'à prouver que l'écriture de Kafka, dans son premier roman inachevé *Amerika*, est une imitation de ces dessins comiques. C'est ensuite que le « théâtre silencieux » est relié à une histoire de l'acteur et de la gestuelle corporelle, du célèbre acteur anglais du XVIIIe siècle Garrick, aux pantomimes et mimiques plus contemporaines, en passant par de remarquables pages concernant le théâtre de marionnettes de Maeterlinck, auteur qui « fait du silence son matériau primordial » (310). Dès lors, la pantomime est vue comme une dramaturgie silencieuse, rappelant le poème *Mimique* de Mallarmé. Une ultime analyse littéraire évoque le *Portrait de l'artiste* et l'*Ulysse* de Joyce, traquant le silence au cœur du personnage de Dedalus, artiste en miroir de l'écrivain lui-même, le « retour lyrique sur soi » (361) comportant son lot d'expressions silencieuses.

Dans une dernière partie, l'auteur se livre à une analyse quasi exhaustive des films les plus importants du cinéma muet des années 1910–1930, celui-ci accomplissant les « rêves de l'expression silencieuse », à travers l'autorité silencieuse toute-puissante de l'image, et s'imposant comme la recollection finale d'un siècle d'arts silencieux. Le burlesque même contenu dans de nombreuses scènes du cinéma muet, tel celui de « l'arroseur arrosé », laisse apparaître « un fragile espoir au cœur de la

solitude silencieuse la plus déchirante » (425). À la puissance du silence qui nous rapproche de nos angoisses indicibles, Henri Garric a su ajouter avec une pertinence inégalée, les expressions silencieuses mineures de l'inflexion burlesque, donnant à son lecteur une image inattendue, originale et convaincante du silence.

Plus qu'un essai, le livre propose de nombreuses digressions, superposant les strates d'analyse les plus diverses, à la manière du *Paris, capitale du XIX*e siècle de Walter Benjamin, constituant un exemple du meilleur de la littérature comparée, aboutissant même parfois à un sentiment de vertige à la lecture de tant d'œuvres convoquées, mais n'est-ce pas le sens d'une étude dans laquelle chacun pourra puiser, selon ses goûts, matière à réflexion ? Loin d'enfermer le sujet dans un huis-clos exhaustif, l'auteur nous offre un voyage initiatique au cœur d'une question à la croisée de tous les arts : celle de « l'expression silencieuse ». L'édifice esthétique fait sens : à chacun de s'y promener à sa guise, et d'y admirer les œuvres exposées, sans se prendre au sérieux d'un silence qui n'est jamais pesant, mais toujours instructif.

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Timothée Picard. *Sur les traces d'un fantôme: La civilisation de l'opéra*. Paris: Fayard, 2016. Pp. 728. ISBN: 9782213681825.

Timothée Picard est bien connu de la communauté des comparatistes pour avoir publié plusieurs ouvrages de référence au sein des études musico-littéraires, cinématographiques et, plus largement, intermédiales.[16] Ce nouvel essai marquant creuse le sillon des larges synthèses, articulant imaginaire transartistique et histoire des représentations, dont Timothée Picard s'est fait une spécialité : il brille à nouveau par une érudition, un souffle et une puissance de réflexion peu commune, que l'on

16. Entre autres : *Wagner, une question européenne : Contribution à une étude du wagnérisme (1860–2004)*, 2006 ; *L'Art total, grandeur et misère d'une utopie (autour de Wagner)*, 2006 ; *Âge d'or — décadence — régénération, Un modèle fondateur pour l'imaginaire musical européen*, 2013.

peut aisément qualifier de magistrale. Mais il est aussi traversé par une interrogation plus personnelle, sourdement inquiète : n'est-il pas urgent de revi-siter un pan entier de notre civilisation, à l'heure où les conceptions et les représentations de la culture connaissent une mutation sans précédent — pour ne pas dire qu'elles se mettent à vaciller ? L'inquiétude, authentique, est explicitée dans le post-scriptum de l'ouvrage, où Timothée Picard finit par s'identifier au fantôme dont il traque les traces, les effacements ou les réapparitions dans la culture européenne.

Quel est donc ce fantôme ? Il s'agit, au premier niveau, du *Fantôme de l'opéra*, ce roman de Gaston Leroux paru en feuilleton dans *Le Gaulois* avant sa publication chez Pierre Laffite en 1910, dont on n'aurait pas cru a priori qu'il pût constituer la pierre angulaire d'un savant édifice de 728 pages ! Timothée Picard lui consacre une étude exhaustive : il montre comment cet ouvrage, qui n'appartient pas au canon littéraire, synthétise paradoxalement à lui seul un imaginaire construit par plusieurs décennies de littérature mélomane ; comment il incarne la « civilisation de l'opéra » que le Palais Garnier a représentée par excellence ; comment il a ensemencé enfin toute la culture populaire du XXe siècle. Mais puisque chez Leroux le personnage d'Erik est une allégorie du genre lyrique, monstrueux et séduisant, le fantôme auquel s'attache Timothée Picard est aussi, à un second niveau, l'opéra lui-même. Le roman de Leroux est donc autant le fil d'Ariane que le prétexte de cet essai cherchant à embrasser toutes les diffractions de ce puissant imaginaire que le genre lyrique n'a cessé de susciter dans la conscience occidentale : « mis bout à bout, ces reflets fidèles ou déformés, fragments grimaçants ou embellis, construisent à côté de l'opéra un double fantasmatique, dessinent autour de lui un *halo de fiction* susceptible de livrer sur son compte des vérités de prix auxquelles eux seuls donnent accès » (28). Or Timothée Picard cherche à montrer que ces représentations de l'art lyrique « engagent certaines des interrogations les plus décisives sur ce qui fait le sens et la substance de la civilisation occidentale » (28) : il reprend ainsi la pensée de Nietzsche qui, dans *La Naissance de la tragédie*, résumait tout l'Occident moderne par cette formule de « civilisation de l'opéra ». Une telle articulation entre le roman de Leroux et l'aventure de l'imaginaire occidental ne relève pas du brillant tour de passe-passe : elle est le fruit d'une puissante réflexion explorant les fantômes de notre culture.

Intitulée « Un abrégé des conceptions et représentations de l'opéra. Entre cultures savantes et populaires », la première partie démêle

l'écheveau des multiples références tissées par *Le Fantôme de l'opéra*, roman-palimpseste héritier de plusieurs générations de représentations littéraires de la musique, du théâtre lyrique et du chant. Outre les référents mythiques, d'Orphée à Faust, cette partie reconstitue les généalogies artistiques dont se nourrit Leroux, et qui rejailliront après lui, entre monstres et masques, littérature fantastique et fictions policières, romans de la chanteuse et imaginaire du castrat, fantasmagories lyriques et kitsch bourgeois. Timothée Picard ne s'intéresse pas seulement à des corpus consacrés (de Hugo à Villiers de L'Isle Adam en passant par Hoffmann, Verne ou Poe), il explore également des pans entiers de littérature populaire comme celui des « petits mystères de l'opéra », ce quasi-genre surgi au carrefour entre journalisme, histoire et fiction, et n'ayant cessé de mettre en scène l'univers de l'Opéra de Paris, de la salle aux coulisses et des cintres aux enfers. L'exploration des réseaux symboliques associés à cet écheveau de textes montre finalement que « l'Opéra entretiendrait un rapport privilégié avec ce qui est de l'ordre du refoulé collectif, du mensonge, du secret » (241) ; mais ce refoulé n'est pas seulement d'ordre psychique ou sexuel, ainsi que cette première partie s'attache à le montrer : il est plus largement historique et culturel, comme si l'opéra était « le placard où la société a enfoui ses fantômes » (242).

La deuxième partie prend alors la forme d'un « voyage au centre du XIXe siècle ». Elle montre comment le roman de Leroux a contribué à mythifier l'Opéra de Paris, c'est-à-dire à le constituer en lieu de mémoire, lui-même métonymie d'un « Paris, capitale du XIXe siècle », selon la fameuse formule de Walter Benjamin ; plus que les grands magasins, les grandes gares ou les hauts lieux parisiens du XIXe siècle, le Palais Garnier a en effet réussi à incarner l'imaginaire historique, social et culturel d'une époque. Leroux resserre tous les fils de cet imaginaire lié à l'essor de la culture bourgeoise au moment même où celle-ci semble sur le point de sombrer, condamnant l'opéra à prendre le visage spectral d'Erik, ou les reflets fantomatiques d'un âge d'or largement fantasmé. Timothée Picard explore alors les ambivalences de cette culture articulant, entre valeurs officielles et obsessions refoulées, la célébration de l'idéal romantique dans un monde que la modernité désenchante, la sublimation ambiguë d'une figure féminine le plus souvent asservie, l'autoreprésentation satisfaite et la violence sociale dont l'espace de la salle d'Opéra est le reflet, le rêve de l'harmonie communautaire et la répression sanglante des velléités révolutionnaires, la place ambivalente de l'artiste entre culture officielle

et champ de reconnaissance autonome, l'aspiration à la fantaisie créatrice et l'omniprésence de l'argent, l'ascétisme des aspirations spirituelles et la hantise de la sexualité ou la crainte de la mort, la séparation tranchée des sexes et la fascination pour les monstres, l'essor du réalisme et le renouveau de l'esthétique fantastique, l'entrée dans l'ère de la reproductibilité technique suscitant la confiance dans le progrès et la nostalgie d'une époque où le lien avec la nature semblait plus étroit (24).

Nourries des analyses stimulantes de Walter Benjamin mais aussi de celles de Céleste Olalquiaga[17], les réflexions de Timothée Picard sur le kitsch, à l'intersection entre beauté et laideur, entre ravissement et horreur, sont des plus stimulantes : le grand opéra romantique, fastueux et spectaculaire mais hanté par l'inquiétant fantôme du matérialisme, incarnerait par excellence un paradoxe qui affleure dans toute la culture de cette époque, « de la galerie marchande faisant resplendir l'article derrière une vitrine » à « l'appartement bourgeois envahi de bibelots trônant sur les consoles comme autant de reliquats morts-vivants » (p. 246).

Au-delà du seul XIXe siècle, Timothée Picard invite finalement son lecteur à suivre l'histoire de l'ambivalence de l'opéra en tant que *valeur* ; aussi oscille-t-on entre l'évocation des reproches esthétiques, éthiques ou politiques adressés à son encontre, et celle des œuvres artistiques ayant hissé le genre lyrique en véritable modèle de formes à la fois libres, profuses et impures. C'est justement cet *esprit* de l'opéra, venant hanter des univers a priori très éloignés, que Timothée Picard entend traquer dans sa troisième partie intitulée « Citoyen universel d'une industrie mondialisée et contestée. Transmigrations culturelles et médiatiques d'un *Phantom* aux millions de *Phans* ». Il s'agit, à un premier niveau, de suivre les multiples commentaires et adaptations suscités par *Le Fantôme de l'opéra*, dans l'ordre romanesque, chorégraphique ou cinématographique. L'essai de Timothée Picard emprunte une voie entièrement nouvelle, en défrichant un corpus extraordinairement foisonnant au sein duquel les moments attendus (Rupert Julian, Dario Argento, Brian De Palma, Andrew Lloyd Webber, etc.) voisinent avec une foule de productions moins connues parmi lesquelles le continent de la *fan fiction*, qui ne cesse d'enrichir le *Fantôme de l'opéra* de différentes réécritures constituées en *presquels*, *paraquels* ou *sequels*. Suivant une logique chronologique et une

17. Walter Benjamin, *Paris, capitale du XIXe siècle : le livre des passages* ; Walter Benjamin, *L'œuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproductibilité technique* ; Céleste Olalquiaga, *The Artificial Kingdom — A Treasury of The Kitsch Experience.*

méthodologie notamment issue de Linda Hutcheon[18], Timothée Picard tisse une toile de références à la fois transculturelles (de l'Amérique à la Chine) et transmédiatiques (théâtre, radio, télévision, jeu vidéo, etc.) qui esquissent, par-delà leur prolifération, un ensemble de constantes liées à l'appariement de la musique et du fantastique, à l'hybridité des genres et des registres, à l'hyperbolisme de l'expression ou encore à l'ambivalence culturelle, entre canon et marges. De là surgit, et c'est le second niveau d'investigation, une réflexion sur l'*opératique*, que Timothée Picard définit en conclusion comme « un *esprit de l'opéra moins l'opéra* » (691). L'opératique, c'est finalement ce fantôme de l'opéra qui continue à hanter les arts, et notre culture en général, et qui se caractériserait par un goût pour la violence paroxystique, une culture du pathos, une faculté à articuler art et commerce, artifice et vérité, hybridation des valeurs et des modes d'expression, etc. A la lumière des analyses de Mehdi Belhaj Kacem et de Youssef Ishaghpour[19], la conclusion articule l'*opératique* et le *spectaculaire* pour reconnaître que « tout en s'effaçant peu à peu de notre culture la plus vivante et la plus contemporaine (si l'on en croit l'opinion commune), l'opéra demeurerait malgré tout pérenne, fantôme mutant sous la surface et réapparaissant bien vivace en des lieux et sous des formes que l'on n'attendrait pas » (692).

Ce faisant, Timothée Picard ne contribue pas seulement à conjurer, en partie, la nostalgie fondatrice de l'édifice entier (et inhérente, au demeurant, à l'imaginaire opératique en général). En réussissant à montrer que notre civilisation peut se comprendre à l'aune de l'opéra, ou du moins des valeurs qu'il véhicule, il démontre aussi le caractère central, au sein des études comparatistes, des recherches liées à l'imaginaire musical. De ce point de vue, cet essai conjugue avec une étonnante virtuosité l'ensemble des approches traditionnelles des études musico-littéraires (la thématique musicale au cœur de la fiction, la musique comme modèle des autres arts, l'opéra comme genre mixte visant à la totalité, le devenir-musical d'une œuvre littéraire, etc.) tout en projetant ce champ scientifique vers de nouveaux horizons (articulant non seulement musique et histoire des idées, mais également savant et populaire, transmédialité et transculturalité, etc.) qui l'élargissent considérablement. En racontant les histoires entrelacées « de l'opéra — pratique élitiste en quête du

18. Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*.

19. Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, *Opera mundi, La seconde vie de l'opéra 1* ; Youssef Ishaghpour, *Opéra et théâtre dans le cinéma d'aujourd'hui*.

populaire — et d'un certain roman populaire adapté dans des formes cinématographiques et musicales grand public mais désireuses à l'inverse d'une reconnaissance et d'une respectabilité canoniques » (402), Timothée Picard apporte des réponses essentielles aux questions concernant le devenir de notre culture et aussi, implicitement, à celles concernant le devenir de notre discipline : son essai est d'autant plus incontournable qu'il fait de l'opéra tout à la fois le visage spectral de notre civilisation, et le fantôme disciplinaire de la littérature comparée.

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Ileana Rodríguez and Mónica Szurmuk, eds. *The Cambridge History of Latin American Women's Literature.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. 666. ISBN: 9781107085329.

From its beginnings, women's writing in Latin America has been marked by a strong sense of collaboration and the creation of intellectual networks. Ileana Rodríguez's and Mónica Szurmuk's edited volume is a compelling case in point within this polyphonic tradition. Its 666 pages are the result of extended scholarly conversations carried out over the past decades by literary scholars. The volume includes contributions by thirty-seven leading scholars in the field of Latin American women's writing, researching and teaching in the Americas, both North and South. For those less familiar with the context, it might come as a surprise to learn that the first comprehensive volume on the history of Latin American women writers written in English dates from 2016; but *The Cambridge History of Latin American Women's Literature* is indeed the first of its kind. While recent years have seen a variety of publications related to women's writings in specific genres, topics, and political contexts, in addition to *Latin American Women Writers: An Encyclopedia,* edited by María Claudia André and Eva Paulina Bueno (2008), the present volume by *The Cambridge History* series is the first comprehensive history of women's literary production in Latin America and thus an achievement in itself.

The book is ambitious in geographical, temporal, and linguistic terms. It analyzes literary productions by women from the Southern Cone to the Caribbean and pays special attention to scholarship on Central America and the Andean regions, which has often been relegated in criticism on Latin American literature. While it focuses on literature written inside the subcontinent, it also reaches out to productions outside of it, such as writing in exile, works by expatriates and those living at geographical borders, and Latina writing in the US. It takes as its starting point the textual productions from before the Spanish colonization. This choice is founded on a broadened concept of the literary that, in addition to literature written with words, includes other visual and performative strategies. The topic of non-written literature reappears at the end of the volume in essays on present-day works that expand the concept of literature towards new media. Albeit most essays are dedicated to textual productions in Spanish, the present volume also includes a few studies on literatures in a variety of other languages spoken in what we today call Latin America: Brazilian Portuguese, English, French, Creole, and indigenous languages, or a mixture thereof. In their introduction, the editors highlight their focus on a "diversity of gazes that attest to the ingenuity of women across continents, the inventiveness of genres, the reach and dare of transatlantic connections, the spread of women's qualities of writing, the force and might of their steady entrance into the flesh of the earth in order to make public their plight and to publicize their nerve" (1). Among the accomplishments of the volume are first a broadening of the archive of Latin American women's writing: the many new names of authors and works discussed, in addition to nuanced reassessments and vindications of the works of authors who had been previously excluded from the canon illustrates this painstaking critical work on the ongoing formation of a Latin American literary canon. The compendium provides new insights related to central ideas in Latin American studies from a feminist venture point: topics discussed include modernity, cosmopolitanism, the role of the intellectual, dualities between the global and the local, the center and the periphery, and the role of sensory perception. Several articles fathom relations among literacy, the literary, and literature, while others reconsider the historical articulation between oral and written words, and others account for the key role of women in inventing new genres, most prominently the *testimonio* of the 1960s and contemporary adaptations of *crónicas*. Finally, the volume includes lucid

examinations of marketing structures that discuss the shaping of literary tastes in relation to socio-cultural-political contexts.

The book is divided chronologically into four parts, each of which is preceded by a concise introduction by Rodríguez and Szurmuk. While an assessment of each of the essays is not possible in the context of this review, I propose to give an overview of the range of topics, genres, and research questions discussed in the collection. "Part I: Women in Ancient America: The Indigenous World" is dedicated to women's writings from prior to the conquest until the eighteenth century, "Part II: Women Writers in Creole Societies: Nation Building Projects" covers the nineteenth century and the arduous creation of independent nations, "Part III: Women Writers In-Between: Socialist, Modern, Developmentalists, and Liberal Democratic Ideals" is dedicated to women's writing during the twentieth century, and "Part IV: Women Writers in a One-World Global System: Neoliberalism, Sexuality, Subjectivity" analyzes writings from the beginning of the twenty-first century. The first part consists of five essays discussing the legal writings by noble indigenous, *mestiza* and *criolla* women, such as petitions, and personal texts by nuns written for their confessors or patrons. Santa Arias's chapter provides an overview of the range of archival documentary sources and, by doing so, challenges the notion of a merely written archive, in order to excavate indigenous women's experiences. Rocío Quisepe Agnoli examines textual productions of *coyas* and *ñustas* (Quechua noblewoman in early colonial Peru) and describes the interaction of the indigenous elite with the lettered culture of their time. She highlights the need of an "autoethnographic" expression that is able to speak to both audiences. Mónica Díaz analyzes the various facets and changing interpretations of the paradigm of the Malinche as translator, traitor and ultimately mediator. Valeria Añón studies diverse rhetorics of silencing, claim and deviation in legal-inquisitorial discourses by women. Her textual corpus includes letters, testaments, and inquisitorial transcripts. Beatriz Colombí's essay describes the trajectory from *mulier docta* to female author of the most paradigmatic Latin American woman writer, the sixteenth century nun Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

The second part of the volume, consisting of six essays, discusses textual strategies for women writers' entrance into the modern world, particularly in the context of the emerging genre of the novel. Mónica Szurmuk and Claudia Torre focus on travel writings, journalism, and educational (textbook) writings. Rita Terezinah Schmidt's piece, the only

essay dedicated to the Brazilian literary context, describes female novelists' strategies to appropriate the genre in order to shape a tradition of resistance. Her example is the 1859 novel *Úrsula* by Maria Firmina dos Reis, an emancipated Afro-American woman. This text still does not figure in any literary canon of the time. Francine Masiello studies the feminine presence as a challenge to the regime of the senses in the works of the two mid-century Romantics, Argentina's Juana Manuela Gorriti and Cuba's Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda. This is among the most inventive of the pieces included in this section; Masiello argues that a focus on what she terms "sense work" is a way to question the limits of writing and thus a prerequisite for reading the politics and history of a social milieu in transition. Gwen Kirkpatrick examines the emerging presence of women in the public sphere, in works by Alfonsina Storni and Gabriela Mistral, while Ana Perluffo studies the transatlantic expansion of sonorous networks in a variety of *modernista* poetry. Catherine Davis's essay is, according to its title, a comparative study of ways in which women writers of the Spanish Antilles engaged with their countries' distinctive island identities. Her focus, however, lies mostly on the writings of Cuban authors Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, María Mercedes Santa Cruz y Montalvo (Condesa de Merlín), and Dulce María Loynaz.

The third and most substantial part of the volume, dedicated to the twentieth century, is aptly titled "Women Writers In-Between." The central theme revolves around social change—revolution, militancy, and ensuing movements of migration and exile. In their writings, women engender new forms of realism: magical, social, socialist, and regional. Maricruz Castro Ricalde compares the presence of the Revolution in narratives by María Luisa Ocampo and Nellie Campobello. She analyzes why Ocampo's work, a keystone of 1950s Mexican literature landscape, has virtually disappeared from our canons and scholarly interests today, while Campobello's oeuvre, "hidden" during the twentieth century, has now reached almost paradigmatic status. Parvathi Kumaraswani's essay compares the testimonial strategies used by Mexican and Nicaraguan authors in articulating experiences of revolutions. Vicky Unruh studies the literary activities of Avant-Garde women artists from diverse class and ideological backgrounds. Gabriela Giorgi and Germán Garrido discuss the conceptual limits of cosmopolitanism—which, according to both authors, remains tied to a desexualized and normative masculinity—and explore strategies of a dissident, female Latin American cosmopolitanism.

María Rosa Olivera-Williams juxtaposes the all-male Latin American *Boom* movement from the 1960s and its female counterpart, the partially parodic *Boomito* from the 1970s-80s that developed in the midst of political violence. María Inés Lagos compares experiences of exile during the violent 1960s-80s by Southern Cone Writers with those of migration by their peers from the Caribbean and highlights the importance of generational differences. Debra A. Castillo zooms in on women authors' responses to the question of how to live in several national and cultural landscapes simultaneously. Marta Josefina Saldaña-Portillo's research centers on Latina women writing, which she describes using the rhetorical figure of catachresis. She highlights that while Latina authors are mostly celebrated for their erotic and feminist themes, they are rarely recognized for their connections to Latin American literary traditions. Kanika Batra studies Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean women writers' strategies of rewriting European canonical texts from the point of view of a conscious mimicry. Nuria Vilanova analyzes the theme of human alienation in women's novels from Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, and describes narrative innovations that are closely linked to language transgression and the use of the body as a poetic territory. Nicole Caso discusses the invention of truth-telling genres in Central America, particularly the new historical novel, with a focus on the works by Gioconda Belli, Daisy Zamora, and Rigoberta Menchú. The essays by Jean Franco, Arturo Arias and Nora Domínguez illustrate how violence against women has been at the center of politics of inequality in Latin America since the conquest and examine literary reflections of violence inflicted on the subaltern (Franco), responses to the experience of violence in indigenous languages by Maya authors (Arias), and the trope of dead and missing children in post-dictatorial cultures (Domínguez).

The last section of the book accounts for the impact of neoliberalism on literary production by women in Latin America. Beatriz González-Stephan and Carolyn Fornoff contrast the market model of "girlpower" narratives that deploy a watered-down feminism with what they term "nonconsumer narratives." Many of those writings refocus on the body as a damaged and perturbing political artifact. Marcy Schwartz's chapter explores ways in which by transforming the book into an object, women have expanded the very concept of literature. Schwartz studies alternative modes of publishing, including blogging and verbal/visual dialogues. The last essay, by Héctor Domínguez Ruvalcaba and Patricia Ravelo Blancas,

offers a critical review of literary works of different genres written by women and published in the last two decades about the *Feminicides*. This type of literature centers on the topic of the abject, and bears witness to a state of impunity.

This volume insightfully recombines, revisits and recreates historical corpuses of women's writing. It draws on a variety of critical approaches and presents its analyses in the light of contemporary debates. The polyphonic voices that at times discuss the same works from different angles and engage in sustained conversations with each other invite the readers to draw connections between essays and engage with them in an active fashion. With its wealth of thematic approaches, sustained rigor and critical passion, *The Cambridge History of Latin American Women's Literature* is a tour de force and cornerstone for future scholarship in the field.

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Ellen E. Berry. *Women's Experimental Writing: Negative Aesthetics and Feminist Critique*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2016. Pp. 176. ISBN: 9781474226400.

Building on her previous work on experimental and postmodern writing by women, Ellen E. Berry contends with a diverse range of contemporary experimental women writers whose work prioritizes feelings of discomfort, anger, absence, and other negative affects in her latest monograph, *Women's Experimental Writing: Negative Aesthetics and Feminist Critique*. In her earlier work on Gertrude Stein, Berry argues that not all postmodern writing should be conglomerated under a single category or interpretive strategy and uses a specifically feminist lens to position Stein as postmodern *avant la lettre*. *Women's Experimental Writing* applies a similar analytic structure to a range of authors whose aesthetic techniques are postmodern, often resistant to semantic meaning, and uncomfortable

for their readers. These authors write texts whose affective valence is negative, an affective weighting that resides both in readers' prospective discomfort with the texts' indeterminacies and representations of often explicit violence and in the writers' expressive projects, which respond to the conditions faced by women and girls within patriarchy. As such, Berry's monograph is continuous with the current interest in affect studies in general, and negative affect more specifically, which has been a significant focus of contemporary queer and feminist theory, including key work by Sarah Ahmed, Lauren Berlant, Ann Cvetkovich, Heather Love, and Sianne Ngai, among others. Berry rejects the conventional perception that avant-garde writing is necessarily apolitical and political writing must be realist. Rather, she argues that the negative aesthetics of her exemplary texts are at the very heart of their feminism. Berry defines these aesthetics both at the level of style, as a range of alienating and uncomfortable strategies, and at the level of content, including the representation of extreme, violent, and/or bizarre situations. Not only can negative aesthetics more effectively mirror the difficult experiences contemporary women authors represent, claims Berry, but in forcing us to read, and therefore to perceive differently, they lay the groundwork for feminist change.

Scope is always a concern with projects of this nature, and Berry restricts herself to an approximately three decades-long period between the late 1960s and the late 90s. This temporal restriction has the effect of excluding non-contemporary (and more contemporary) experimental women writers, including many whose writing merits feminist readings; however, it makes sense given Berry's focus on postmodernism, which was at its peak literary prominence during this period, and her particular interest in the participation of a number of her authors in broader literary, artistic, and social scenes specific to the era. Specifically, Berry's care to situate authors such as Valerie Solanas and Kathy Acker within the broader artistic, social, and political communities of the New York of their day is one of the volume's strengths.

Another strength is *Women's Experimental Writing*'s range of coverage within its restricted timeframe, although Berry's authors are predominantly US American (Jeanette Winterson and Chantal Chawaf are the only exceptions, though Theresa Hak Kyung Cha immigrated from South Korea as an adolescent). Nevertheless, Berry brings into conversation works that are well-known, but understudied (Solanas' *SCUM Manifesto*), canonically experimental works (Acker, Winterson), lesser-read works by well-known

writers (Lynda Barry's *Cruddy*), and works by authors who are themselves lesser known, or lesser known within North America (Cha, Chawaf). In particular, the serious attention that Berry gives to Cha's understudied, underpublished, and undeservedly obscure *Dictee* is long overdue. Berry notes that "put off by its inaccessibility and its refusal to represent a clear model of ethnic identity, for the most part readers and critics ignored *Dictee* at the time of its publication and it quickly went out of print," and her observation that its experimental style, and thus its resistance to realist identity narratives, may well be the reason that it has been so long overlooked is well warranted—an observation Berry extends to aesthetically negative feminist experimental writing more generally (64).

Indeed, Berry's argument that the emphasis on realist forms and identity narratives within political movements "has acted to render inaudible and invisible formally innovative works that also challenge dominant paradigms of power and privilege but do not embody their political content in conventional forms" is a convincing and welcome antidote to the critical propensity—at least within North American traditions—to read meaning-resistant texts apolitically (5). Berry argues that the emphasis on realist identity narratives comes along with an assumption that to be political, a text must positively propose or represent political outcomes and/or proffer readers straightforward sites of political identification. Rather than restricting our understanding of the political and/or the feminist only to these valences, Berry suggests, we should open our understanding to include "these texts [that] not only encode extreme affects thematically, but … also mobilize a range of often-discomforting affects on the reader's part and insistently remind us that pleasure and a sense of redemption are not the only outcomes of feminist readings" (5–6). In so doing, Berry calls for feminist interpretation that embraces some of the negative theoretical and interpretive strategies popular in recent queer theory.

In making such a call, Berry situates her project in the context of queer theory's focus on negativity and failure, particularly in work by Lee Edelman and J. Jack Halberstam, along with a range of works of feminist and literary criticism that foreground experimental and/or negative forms. In contrast to the theoretical plenitude of her introduction, Berry selects a single critic to ground her theoretical framework in each chapter. This strategy does not quite seem to fit with Berry's own categorization of her exemplary texts as, among other qualities, being

"highly self-conscious and theoretically aware texts that emphasize varieties of feminist postmodernism," and, indeed, the strategy works better in some chapters than others (2). Berry's use of Judith Butler's work on loss as an interpretive lens for Cha's *Dictee* provides an effective grounding for reading its fragmentation of history and memory, although it would have been interesting to see it brought into conversation with more of the recent feminist work on negative affect and the archive. Similarly, while Berry begins her chapter on Chawaf by providing her reader with an effective summary of the author's French feminist milieu and its emphasis on feminist writing *as* formal experimentation, the chapter largely begs the question of the difference this emphasis makes to Chawaf's project and its reception in its native literary environment. If, as Berry argues, many of the texts she considers have received insufficient, or insufficiently nuanced, feminist consideration in the context of an Anglophone feminist politic that prioritizes realism and identification, what difference does it make that Chawaf's novel was produced and originally received in a feminist context that prioritized formal experimentation, if with a conventionally (but not exclusively) more positive affective valence than Chawaf offers in *Redemption*?

Similarly, Berry's strategy of focusing on only one work by each author, instead of on oeuvres, is more effective for some than for others. All of the works that Berry covers are prose, if sometimes only arguably so. Centering prose means that it makes sense to focus on *Dictee*, Solanas' *SCUM Manifesto*, and Barry's *Cruddy* alone, outside of the authors' oeuvres, which otherwise consist of other genres and/or media. However, Berry's choice of single novels from among Acker and Winterson's bodies of work makes less intuitive sense and sometimes raises questions that her readings never quite answer. For example, Berry occasionally recognizes that desire, not just dominance and exploitation, is a feature of Acker's work; however, her exclusive focus on *Blood and Guts in High School*, one of Acker's most relentlessly affectively negative texts, if not her most stylistically abstruse, means that Berry never quite reconciles the significance of Acker's deployment of female desire within texts that also inevitably highlight the violence and exploitation experienced by women and girls. Likewise, Berry's reading of the effectiveness of the gender ambiguity of Winterson's protagonist in *Written on the Body* seems optimistic in the context of Winterson's oeuvre, if not the novel taken on its own. Many readers familiar with Winterson's

body of work have legitimate difficultly reading *Written*'s protagonist as separate from an oeuvre rife with androgynous female protagonists in love with more feminine redheads—thus the propensity to read the protagonist as female may well stem more from readerly familiarity with Winterson's work as a whole than from the desire for straightforward identification with the protagonist to which Berry attributes it. Nevertheless, Berry's elucidation of the ambiguity of the novel's final moment, in which the beloved Louise does or does not appear, and her linking together of the atomization of parts in *Written* and the literal dismemberment in *Redemption* are insightful and well-wrought.

Ultimately, if Berry's chosen restrictions and theoretical strategies raise some questions that she leaves unanswered, it does not negate the volume's contributions to developing an explicitly feminist approach to discomfiting experimental work. Writing against a North American tradition that tends to categorize works as *either* experimental *or* political, Berry's monograph highlights both the aesthetic and feminist value of writing styles that make us uncomfortable—that make us experience the negative affect that they also represent. In so doing, she not only gives serious attention to a number of understudied works, but opens up a conversation between feminist political literary criticism and other criticism movements that have more explicitly embraced the negative.

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Mario Zanucchi. *Transfer und Modifikation: Die französischen Symbolisten in der deutschsprachigen Lyrik der Moderne (1890–1923).* Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016. Pp. 822. ISBN: 9783110425192.

Symbolism was one of the most pivotal movements in *fin de siècle* literature, attaining European dimensions and producing long lasting influences on the poetry of the twentieth century. Zanucchi's extensive reconstruction of the reception of "French" Symbolism in German speaking countries between 1890 and 1923 impresses by its very size: 685 pages of text, accompanied by an appendix, illustrations, and a bibliography. The book

is as weighty as it is heavy: It provides an overview of the developments of Symbolist production in France, Belgium, Germany, and Austria. It gives precise insight into the different groups and generations of poets, and into the close interrelations among them. It revives the form of literary portraits that Walter Pater called "Dichterporträts," particularly in chapter three and four. This ingenious conceit implicitly emphasises the vastness of the field and its contradictions, which should not be glossed over. Finally, the book highlights not only the heydays of Symbolism, but also its remnants in the pre-avant-garde and thus draws our attention to less recognised writers, such as Walter Wenghöfer and Ernst Stadler.

The monograph, based on the author's Habilitation project at Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg, consists of five parts. Chapter one is convincing with its very clear and lucid introduction and periodization of French Symbolism. Zanucchi discusses the development of the movement from Jean-Moréas' manifesto on, as well as Symbolism's distinction from other movements, such as Naturalism and the *Parnasse*. He also explains specific features, such as depersonalisation, metapoiesis, elitism, and mysticism. He defines the notion of symbol, of synaesthesia, and the importance of music for this literary form. This chapter in particular could serve in university courses as a useful introduction to Symbolism.

Chapter two focuses on criticism and translations, surveying the widespread network of interrelations in European literature around 1900. It concentrates on Stefan George's translations of works by Baudelaire and by other European Symbolist writers. George's *Blätter für die Kunst* (1892–1919) constitutes the main source of this chapter, which leads to a certain imbalance, positioning George—who undoubtedly was a very important poet of the *fin de siècle*—as the one and only leader in the German-speaking Symbolist movement, while underrating tendencies from outside George's circle as well as influences of other individuals. This chapter has several weak points as it is based only on existing literature in the field. It fails to provide an adequate and balanced overview of the criticism published in the journals of this period. For example, from the many journals and magazines connected to the Vienna Symbolist movement, Zanucchi only mentions briefly *Moderne Dichtung* (1890–1891) and *Wiener Rundschau* (1896–1901), but not *Die Zeit* (1894–1904) or *Die Wage* (1898–1925).

The emphasis on George's circle is even stronger in chapter three, which presents an impressive number of "Dichterporträts" including Rainer Maria Rilke, Richard von Schaukal, Emil Rudolf Weiß, Max

Dauthendey, Paul Gérardy, Leopold von Andrian, Felix Dörmann, and Ernst Stadler. The interpretations of poems included in this chapter provide valuable insights into the diverse forms of intertextuality in the context of George's own production. Chapter four accentuates the importance of the concept of "Lebensphilosophy" for Symbolist poetry. A profound introduction is followed by more "Dichterporträts" and detailed analyses of poems, with emphasis on Rilke's *Sonette an Orpheus* (1923). Chapter five focuses on the pre-avant-garde and writers like Hanns Meinke, Walter Wenghöfer, and Georg Trakl. Zanucchi identifies a fundamental aesthetic disillusionment (581) as the main feature of these poets' works and supports this claim with deep and detailed interpretations. The volume offers a prospectus of Symbolism in the avant-garde. It therefore foreshadows Zanucchi's next research project on intercultural transfers in the poetry of German Expressionism.

All chapters demonstrate a clear structure, beginning with an introduction initiating the reader to the specific topic followed by comprehensive and insightful interpretations of poems and the relations (called "dialogues") to other writers or other forms of arts. The book certainly is a very important study on the reception of French Symbolism and therefore an indispensable reference tool for all further studies in the field of Symbolist movements in German-speaking countries and their international context.

Nevertheless, the title promises more than the book can finally deliver. While claiming to be a study on *the* German poetry of the modernist movement, the monograph focuses too much on Stefan George and his circle. Without a doubt, George was one of the leading German poets of the turn of the century, but Zanucchi overlooks and omits many facets by centering his vantage point (only) on George. This becomes very clear, for example, when he limits Nietzsche's influence on French Symbolism to the concept of "Lebensphilosophie," which he connects to Alfred Schuler (a member of George's circle). Taking Jacques Le Rider's seminal monograph *Nietzsche en France* (1999) into consideration would have disclosed the importance of Nietzsche for French Symbolism around the *Mercure de France* and beyond, and would have shown that the reception of Nietzsche around 1900 was much broader than only "Lebensphilsophie." Further, Zanucchi does not differentiate national from linguistic attributions such as French and German in his monograph. He uses the expression "französischer Symbolismus," although he mentions several

Belgian writers, and even emphasises that, after 1900, poetry written by Belgians became pivotal (110–11). The same problem occurs with regard to the Symbolist movement in German-speaking countries, which was located mostly in Munich and in Vienna. Zanucchi only writes about "deutsche Symbolisten." After the dissolution of the German Confederation in 1866, and the foundation of Belgium in 1830, this lack of differentiation displays insufficient sensitivity towards the historical context. In this regard, Zanucchi does not dissociate himself from the nationalist ideas of the nineteenth century, although critic Henri Albert had already published "Lettres allemandes" as well as "Lettres viennoises" in the *Mercure de France*.

The book is mostly based on textual analysis and detailed interpretation of poetry, as well as on Peter Stocker's reading of intertextuality (*Theorie der intertextuellen Lektüre*, 1998). This enables Zannuchi to categorize several forms of intertextual relations and serves as a stable foundation for the study. However, the author mentions notions such as "Transfer" and "Modifikation"—even in the title of the book—claiming his would be the first study scrutinizing extensively the reception of French Symbolism in Germany from a "funktionsgeschichtliche" (based on the history of function) perspective. Regrettably, neither does he define any of these concepts nor does he engage with the abundant critical literature existing in this vast field. For example, neither the many volumes and articles on cultural transfer published since Michel Espagne's and Michael Werner's seminal article "Deutsch-französischer Kulturtransfer im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert," nor Silvio Vietta's book on "Funktionsgeschichte" *Literatur und Rationalität: Funktionen der Literatur in der europäischen Kulturgeschichte* (2013), are considered at all. The same applies to "Transgression," which is also a frequently discussed term in the field of philosophy and literary studies. In short, Zanucchi's theoretical approach remains quite narrow. Referring to current critical notions without fully engaging with them will leave readers interested in transfer studies unsatisfied, especially as integrating these concepts might also have helped the author avoid some of the imbalance in his judgements (e.g. the predominance of George).

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Victoroff Tatiana, ed. *Anna Akhmatova et la poésie européenne*. Bruxelles: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2016. Pp. 443. ISBN: 9782875743046.

Trente-sixième volume de la collection « Nouvelle poétique comparatiste », *Anna Akhmatova et la poésie européenne* est le fruit de l'atelier consacré à « Une poésie européenne ? Akhmatova et les poètes européens » qui s'est tenu en juillet 2013 à l'Université Paris IV Sorbonne dans le cadre du XXe congrès de l'AILC « Comparative Literature as a Critical Approach ». L'ouvrage édité par Tatiana Victoroff est toutefois bien plus que de simples actes de colloque. Faisant suite à son livre Anna Akhmatova. Requiem pour l'Europe (2010), il marque visiblement une nouvelle étape dans sa réflexion sur la place d'Akhmatova en Europe et plus largement sur l'européanité de la poésie russe. Outre l'audace manifeste dont Tatiana Victoroff fait preuve en ce début mouvementé de XXIe siècle, il faut saluer l'originalité et l'ambition avec lesquelles elle se propose d'aborder cette problématique. Il suffit d'énumérer quelques-uns de ses contributeurs pour constater son aspiration à l'excellence : Yves Bonnefoy, Michel Aucouturier, Jean-Louis Backès, Michèle Finck, Jean-Yves Masson, etc. Ainsi, la chercheuse de l'Université de Strasbourg ne réunit pas seulement une imposante variété de textes — allant de l'article scientifique à la poésie en passant par l'essai et le témoignage —, mais elle réussit surtout à faire dialoguer des figures du monde littéraire et universitaire venues de Russie, de France et d'ailleurs sous le patronage d'Anna Akhmatova et de sa poésie européenne.

Le noyau central du recueil est composé d'articles scientifiques de chercheurs comparatistes et slavisants issus d'universités russes et françaises. Invitant à un « Dialogue avec les poètes européens », les huit auteurs du premier chapitre confrontent la poésie d'Akhmatova avec celle de Baudelaire, Eliot, Jaccottet, Yeats, Noailles, Rilke, Dickinson, Celan et Char. Loin de s'arrêter à ces comparaisons jumelées ou triangulaires, ils ouvrent le dialogue à une polyphonie d'inspirations européennes qui comprend des figures telles que Dante, Hoffman, Maeterlinck, *Verhaeren,* Lamartine, Balzac, Apollinaire ou encore Dickens. Ce réseau d'apparence infinie accorde une place importante aux écrivains russes, tels que Pouchkine, Gogol, Dostoïevski, Belyï et Brodskiï, qui sont véritablement mis à l'honneur dans le deuxième chapitre intitulé « Poésie russe — poésie

européenne ? ». Les trois contributions qu'il contient se concentrent en particulier sur Tsvetaeva, Mandelstam et Annenski.

Partant de ces deux chapitres au format classique d'un point de vue scientifique, Tatiana Victoroff invite ensuite ses lecteurs à se distancier progressivement de la tonalité universitaire pour explorer la traduction, l'édition et la réception de l'œuvre d'Akhmatova de manière moins conventionnelle au fil des cinq chapitres qui suivent. Sans totalement rompre avec le canevas scientifique, auquel se conforment Laura Toppain dans « "La plus belle fleur du vers russe" : Renato Poggioli traducteur d'Anna Akhmatova en Italie » et Alexandra Smith dans « The Muse of Lament or the Muse of Compassion ? The Reception of Anna Akhmatova in Great Britain », les articles scientifiques cèdent le pas aux essais, témoignages, réflexions, souvenirs et enfin à la poésie. Cette évolution du scientifique vers le littéraire, qui suit subtilement la chronologie du destin de la poète et de son œuvre, est particulièrement notable des troisième et quatrième chapitres (« Traduire et éditer Akhmatova », « La réception d'Akhmatova ») aux deux derniers (« Akhmatova incognita : poèmes inédits », « Rayonnement contemporain de la poésie akhmatovienne »). Les souvenirs réunis dans le cinquième chapitre qui s'intercale entre ces deux blocs (« Akhmatova en Europe dans les années 1960 : souvenirs ») semblent servir de pivot entre, d'une part, une prose qui se relâche et, d'autre part, une poésie qui se construit par la traduction et la réception.

Tatiana Victoroff a ainsi habilement relevé le défi que pose le matériau hybride et varié qu'elle a sélectionné en l'organisant de manière cohérente et pertinente. Cette cohésion est renforcée par l'ajout d'une table des matières, d'un tableau de translittération, d'une bibliographie sélective autour d'Akhmatova en Europe, de notes sur les auteurs et traducteurs ainsi que d'un index des noms cités, le tout étant unifié par un avant-propos de la directrice du volume. Dans « Des "voix qui s'appellent l'une l'autre" : une poésie du dialogue », Tatiana Victoroff ne s'attarde pourtant pas sur la structure du livre. Il est vrai que sa logique générale s'impose d'elle-même, mais il n'en demeure pas moins que l'ordre des textes à l'intérieur des chapitres n'est pas toujours évident, d'autant que la chronologie et l'alphabet ne semblent pas avoir été nécessairement déterminants. Le choix de l'article de Christophe Imbert en ouverture du premier chapitre aurait, par exemple, mérité une justification. L'entrée en matière peut paraître un peu ardue, étant donné que son texte (« "Ici où se promènent nos ombres / Sur la Néva, sur la Néva, sur la Néva …" Ombres

du fleuve, mélancolie de la ville, Enfer moderne, de Baudelaire et Eliot à Akhmatova ») ne contient que peu d'éléments de contexte par comparaison à d'autres articles, comme celui d'Olga Ushakova (« "A word which is not mine": T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Anna Akhmatova's *Poem without a Hero* »). On se demande également pourquoi le texte sur Jaccottet (« Poétique comparée du *Requiem d'Akhmatova* et du *Requiem de Jaccottet* » de Michèle Finck) se trouve entre l'article d'Olga Ushakova sur Eliot et celui de Grigory Krouzhkov sur Yeats (« "Je serai la plus malheureuse" : Yeats et Akhmatova »). De façon plus substantielle, il est encore plus difficile de comprendre l'isolement des articles de Véronique Lossky (« Les figures d'Akhmatova et de Tsvetaeva dans le contexte poétique européen »), Michel Aucouturier (« La "Cassandre" de Mandelstam : Anna Akhmatova ») et d'Hélène Henry-Safier (« "Mythe d'octobre" : remarques sur la mythopoétique dans la poésie lyrique d'Innokenti Annenski ») dans un petit chapitre russo-russe coupé dudit « Dialogue avec les poètes européens », provoquant un déséquilibre de forme et de contenu.

Les questions d'ordre et de structure ne sont bien entendu pas à prendre au sens littéral. C'est la stratégie argumentative qu'elles préfigurent qui mérite d'être soulevée ici. Pour reprendre les termes de l'éditrice, un formidable réseau de « consonances » et d'« interrelations » (19) se déroule tout au long des 442 pages du volume. Par-delà les différentes approches et la diversité des formes d'expression, un *leitmotiv* métaphysique se dégage de cette confrontation entre les écrits d'Akhmatova et la poésie européenne, permettant non seulement de confirmer l'appartenance de la poète russe à la pléiade européenne, mais aussi de repositionner la poésie européenne par rapport à la Russie. Mais alors pourquoi séparer les études consacrées à la littérature russe de celles qui se focalisent sur la poésie européenne ? La distinction est d'autant plus surprenante que l'intitulé du deuxième chapitre pose explicitement la question de l'européanité de la poésie russe : « Poésie russe — poésie européenne ? ». La répartition des articles entre les premier et deuxième chapitres suggère que la Russie est d'emblée catégorisée en dehors de l'Europe, closant ainsi le débat qui est au cœur même du livre. Il légitime de regretter cette décision car elle rend une partie de la réflexion caduque, notamment sur le concept même de poésie européenne. Au final, qu'est-ce que la poésie européenne ? Et de quelle Europe parle-t-on ? Dans l'ouvrage, les aires culturelles qui dominent sont anglophone, germanophone, francophone

et italophone, excluant les pays scandinaves, la péninsule ibérique, les Balkans et une grande partie de l'Europe centrale (bien que représentée par Rilke, Celan, Bachmann et Iwaszkiewicz). Tandis que plusieurs pays européens manquent à l'appel (l'explication est peut-être à chercher dans l'histoire de la réception d'Akhmatova), les écarts outre-Atlantique (Dickinson et Eliot dans une moindre mesure) ne semblent, quant à eux, pas contredire l'idée d'Europe, au contraire des ponts qui s'esquissent en direction de la Russie. Mal défini, le qualificatif « européen » semble ainsi se réduire à un simple label, dont l'usage réservé aux titres et sous-titres manque quelque peu de substance.

C'est toutefois au niveau de la forme que le livre présente ses plus importantes faiblesses, notamment dans la gestion du multilinguisme qui constitue certainement une des principales difficultés du projet. Bien que la langue dominante soit le français, le recueil contient deux articles en anglais, des traductions multiples et des citations en russe, allemand, italien, anglais et polonais. Le soin apporté aux traductions est remarquable et l'effort est d'autant plus louable qu'il donne accès à des poèmes, témoignages et articles inédits en français. Dans l'ensemble, c'est donc une réussite incontestable, mais elle aurait été totale si une attention plus grande avait été accordée à l'harmonisation et l'uniformisation. La question du cyrillique est éloquente à cet égard. Alors que l'ouvrage est muni d'un tableau de translittération française — dont le choix aurait pu être argumenté —, son application s'avère relativement imparfaite. En effet, certains auteurs ne suivent pas les règles à la lettre (le signe mou de « *zabyt'* » n'est pas translittéré aux pages 88 et 89), et d'autres ne prennent même pas la peine de transcrire les caractères cyrilliques en caractères latin (51, 105, 110, 147, 188, 204, 233, etc.). À ce défaut de conséquence, il faut ajouter l'omission du tableau de translittération anglaise, pourtant nécessaire pour les deux articles en anglais.

Bien qu'aucun avertissement ne le justifie, plusieurs systèmes de référence cohabitent dans le livre. La majorité des références se trouvent en note en bas de page, mais certaines d'entre elles sont intégrées au corps du texte, notamment pour éviter les répétitions et l'excès de notes. Cette pratique est courante et ne pose en soi aucun problème. Le souci est que les deux systèmes ne sont pas utilisés de manière systématique, comme le montre le référencement de *Requiem : Poème sans Héros* dans la traduction de Jean-Louis Backès (Gallimard, 2007). En effet, le livre figure tantôt dans le corps du texte (129), tantôt en note en bas de page (143).

De plus, il est abrégé de différentes façons : « JLB » par Tatiana Victoroff (47), « *JLB* » par Nicolas Schwaller (123) et « *AR* » par Michèle Finck (79). Le lecteur doit donc se rendre compte que « (JLB 209) » (54), « (*JLB,* 14–15) » (123) et « (*AR,* 193) » (85) se rapportent au même livre, ce qui n'est guère évident. Le format des références varie aussi dans les notes en bas de page : il suffit de prendre deux pages au hasard, comme 94 et 106, pour le constater. De plus, les références sont parfois incomplètes (67, 93, 99, 106, 229, 230, etc.) et plusieurs d'entre elles sont carrément manquantes, notamment dans l'article d'Olga Ushakova.

Ces imprécisions formelles peuvent parfois gêner la lecture, mais elles donnent surtout une impression de négligence qui pourrait dépasser les seuls aspects formels et affecter le contenu. Il est vrai que Tatiana Victoroff aurait pu définir les concepts de spleen, nostalgie, angoisse funèbre et mortelle (47–49). Alexandre Medvedev aurait pu développer certaines idées pour éviter la succession de colonnes de poèmes (111–15). Hélène Henry-Safier aurait pu ne pas se focaliser exclusivement sur Annenski et mentionner au moins une fois Akhmatova (177–89). Cependant, il est toujours possible de faire mieux et ces imperfections ne doivent surtout pas occulter les qualités — bien plus nombreuses — du livre. Au-delà de la diversité et du caractère inédit de certains textes, il faut souligner l'originalité et la capacité de certains chercheurs à offrir un regard innovant par le biais de l'approche comparatiste. C'est le cas de Michèle Finck qui parvient à mettre en évidence de nouveaux traits du *Requiem* d'Akhmatova grâce à une subtile comparaison avec le *Requiem* de Jaccottet. De même, l'idée d'Élisabeth Kaess de se pencher sur la représentation du bourreau chez Akhmatova, Celan et Char est particulièrement inspirante. Nicolas Schwaller, pour sa part, réussit à retracer l'évolution de la nature dans la poésie akhmatovienne à l'aide de rapprochements avec Noailles, Rilke et Dickinson. L'apport de chaque article est ainsi indéniable et l'ensemble marque une avancée notoire dans les recherches sur la poésie d'Akhmatova. *Anna Akhmatova et la poésie européenne* est un ouvrage important et fera date dans la slavistique francophone.

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Tania Ørum and Jesper Olsson, eds. *A Cultural History of the Avant-Garde in the Nordic Countries 1950–1975*. Leiden and Boston: Brill/Rodopi, 2016. Pp. 857. ISBN: 9789004310490.

A Cultural History of the Avant-Garde in the Nordic Countries 1950–1975 is Volume 32 in the Avant-Garde Critical Studies book series, which has generated a new installment every year or two since 1987. It is also designed to be the third in a four-volume sub-series, edited by Tania Ørum and Marianne Ping Huang, devoted specifically to the Nordic avant-garde (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) "in a wide transnational perspective that includes all the arts." It seeks "to discuss the role of the avant-gardes not only within the aesthetic field but also within a broader cultural context," according to the preface (xv). The sub-series' emphasis on cultural history, rather than a narrower focus on art history, is important for any critical study of avant-garde movement given the "social amplifier" that such transgressive, rule-breaking, art of an imagined future demands (12). Yet such a framework is particularly apt in a Nordic context, where a distinct set of model welfare states emerged in the twentieth century that helped generate funding, space, resources, and networks for, and public debates on, experimental arts, as these were deemed vital to the health and welfare of a modern democratic society.

While third in the planned sub-series, this book is only the second to appear in print. The first, *A Cultural History of the Avant-Garde in the Nordic Countries 1900–1925* (AGCS Vol. 28), was published in 2012 and constituted the first scholarly work in English to situate the development of a myriad of influential twentieth-century Nordic avant-garde movements, artists and networks within European, and in relation to American, contexts. In this earlier period, given the traditional and nationalist tendencies that dominated the visual and literary arts, Nordic artists with more radical visions and practice, such as the Norwegian painter Edvard Munch, the Danish silent film diva Asta Nielsen, and the Swedish writer and artist August Strindberg, traveled to cultural centers elsewhere in Europe, most notably Paris and Berlin, in search of a cohort and to connect to avant-garde networks. The second volume in the Nordic sub-series, spanning the years 1925–1950 when a push for democracy in architecture and design aligned with the rise of the Nordic welfare states, was due out in 2015, according to the Nordic Network for Avant-Garde Studies

website, and both the preface and the editor's introduction of the current volume reference it when mentioning events or movements during those years. However, it is not yet out, and the Brill/Rodopi online catalog does not indicate when it might be. According to the third volume's preface, the fourth and final volume in the Nordic sub-series will cover the remaining years of the twentieth century, from 1975–2000.

In one respect, at least, this gap in volumes seems fitting. In her introduction to the third volume, editor Tania Ørum questions a common tendency to label the post-war period of radical artistic experimentation in Europe and the United States the "neo-avant-garde" in order to dismiss the work of post-war avant-gardists as imitative of "the genuine, so-called 'historical avant-garde' of the pre-war period" (3). While such a reading can also be contested in a broadly international context, the essays that comprise this volume demonstrate that in a Nordic context, such a reading is completely off the mark. In fact, as this volume shows, it was during the post-war period that avant-garde groups began forming in the Nordic region itself, rather than individual Nordic avant-gardists taking up residence elsewhere. The coverage in this volume is strikingly heterogeneous and broad, exploring the complex geographies, cultural politics, networks, institutions, social upheavals, technologies and new media, and consumer culture that shaped the avant-gardes in the Nordic region from 1950–1975. In her editor's introduction, Ørum also unpacks the flawed paradigm of a Nordic periphery whose artistic experimentation necessarily lags behind developments in European and American centers and is often derivative of them. «Nordic artists in the post-war period did not simply copy art trends in France or America,» Ørum writes; «it was rather the other way around—they looked abroad for international artists who seemed to be working along similar lines to those which they themselves were exploring,» regardless of those artists' renown or impact or influence in their own societies (16). In fact, as the essays in this volume collectively attest, the Nordic avant-gardes flourished during the post-war period due in large part to Nordic welfare policies that cast the arts as a cornerstone of democracy; to the revolutionary—almost apocalyptic—spirit of change that swept through the Nordic region in the activist 1960s; and (paradoxically, given the anti-establishment stance of historical avant-gardes) to the founding of major cultural institutions, most notably Moderna Museet in Stockholm in 1958, which created both cultural forums and financing for experimental

art and served as important sites of transnational artistic exchange. The Nordic region also gave rise to internationally known avant-garde movements, such as the Second Situationist International, aka the Bauhaus Situationiste, established in Stockholm in 1962, and to countercultural environments such as the bohemian town of Christiania in the heart of Copenhagen, where squatters carved out a proto-utopian performance domain in what were once military quarters.

Compared to the first volume in the sub-series, which included thirty-five essays by scholars from throughout the Nordic region, this latest installment is even more ambitious, boasting eighty-five essays, or "case studies," penned by 54 contributors based in all five Nordic countries (Co-editors Tania Ørum and Jesper Olsson each contributed nine essays). Some of the contributors are, like the editors, scholars of the avant-garde, while others are museum curators or artists, offering a diversity of professional perspectives that is not always present in such scholarly anthologies (this diversity is not apparent to the uninitiated reader, since no contributor biographies are provided). The inclusion of museum curators and artists among the authors is particularly fitting given the pivotal role museums and artist collectives played in the post-war avant-garde, as well as the editors' stated ambition to include "all the arts"—which over the course of 857 pages comprises, among other things, multimedia installations, concrete poetry, electronic music, little magazines, performance art, staged "situations," film, radio, comics, computing, experimental television, telephone art, festivals, theater, sculpture, architecture and urban planning, counterculture, and even an alternative Eurovision song contest. These case studies reveal the deep ambivalence that characterized relationships between experimental artists in the Nordic region and the established systems that both supported their work and sometimes rejected it as vulgar or provocative, for example, the refusal of the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk, just north of Copenhagen, to host the Danish artist Bjørn Nørgaard's «ritual slaughter of a horse to protest against the human slaughter in South-East Asia» (37). They also bring to light often forgotten histories of celebrated landmarks, such as Moderna Museet's pivotal role in bringing to Stockholm, then sharing with other Nordic museums, the work of American neo-avant-gardists; as well as Norwegian artist Viggo Andersen's failed proposal to remake Gustav Vigeland's iconic sculptural installation in Oslo's Frogner Park into a utopian construction of octagonal modules.

While the scope and heterogeneity of the volume is imposing, its thoughtful organization into seven coherent sections makes it an accessible, dynamic, and useful scholarly reference work for anyone with an interest in avant-garde movements in, from, and including the Nordic region. Each of the sections has its own introduction, and each of the essays (save one that is only two pages long, half of it an image) begins with a concise abstract that introduces the subject of the essay and provides a rationale for its inclusion (the placement of abstracts on the first page of each entry is a welcome change from the first volume in the sub-series, which grouped all of the abstracts together in the volume's closing pages.) This narrowing sequence of introductory texts, from broad overview to precise case study, mitigates what could be seen as the volume's main flaw, namely the assumption that readers are already familiar with named European and American avant-garde and neo-avant-garde movements and their platforms (e.g. expressionism, tachism, constructivism, the Situationists, Fluxus, Cobra, etc.) and all that is needed is to situate original Nordic contributions within this known landscape. While this surely is true of students and scholars of the avant-garde, additional orientation will surely be needed if one were to assign any part of this volume, including Ørum's comprehensive overview of Nordic post-war avant-gardes, to students taking, for example, a Scandinavian Studies or Nordic cultural studies course. On the other hand, Ørum's introduction does provide a helpful theoretical discussion of the scholars whose work has helped define the epistemological perimeters of European avant-gardism to date, among them Peter Bürger, Benjamin Buchloh, and David Cottington. Ørum cites Cottington's "concept of the 'avant-garde as a cultural formation' [. . .] defined as a network of distinct social groupings based on certain common cultural attitudes and practices such as a critique of the conventional institutions of art, the establishment of alternative channels of advancement (such as magazines) and informal networks, rejection of commercial values and experimental, often cross-aesthetic, work" and asserts that his formulation lies closest to the "sociological definition of the avant-garde" embraced by the editors of this Nordic sub-series (10).

The volume's seven sections are arranged in a way that reveals the new complexities of post-war avant-gardism in the Nordic region and beyond. The opening section, "Paradigmatic Images of Scandinavia," showcases the work of Nordic avant-garde artists whose work is internationally known, such as the Swedish multimedia artist Öyvind Fahl-

ström (1928–1976), the experimental Danish poet Inger Christiansen (1935–2009), and the New York-based theater of electronic art known as The Kitchen, founded by Icelandic artists Steina and Woody Vasulka. The second section, "Cultural Politics and Institutions," profiles organizations that played an influential role in the development of the post-war avant-garde—in particular, the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, whose role in "backing modernist and avant-garde art can hardly be overstated" (23). This section also contains its own sub-section of seven essays devoted to "little magazines" of the Nordic avant-garde. The third section, "New Cultural Geographies," provides case studies to exemplify the volume's claim that the post-war avant-gardes in the Nordic region operated contemporaneously with, and in dynamic relation to (and often in opposition to), one another and those in Europe and the United States, including, for example, essays on the "Situationist Offensive" in Scandinavia; on SÚM, the Fluxus movement in Iceland; and on Fluxus General Secretary George Maciunas' collaborations with Danish composer and intermedia artist Eric Andersen to bring the movement to the Communist East. The fourth section, "New Technologies and New Media," highlights a myriad of dynamic new forms and transmissions of avant-garde art to which the age of television, experimental cinema, and other communications technologies gave rise. The fifth, "Performative Strategies," documents a "performative turn" in Nordic avant-garde art, which gave rise not only to aggressive innovations in established art forms such as theater and music, but also to the invention of entirely new arts and performance spaces. In the Nordic region, as elsewhere, "symbolic actions in public spaces became the hallmark of new political movements and youth cultures as well as of new art genres such as happenings and new venues such as festivals, political demonstrations and the many fusional forms of art, politics, and media performance" (36). The sixth section, "Interventions into Everyday Life," explores the attempts of Nordic avant-garde artists to renegotiate the role of radical aesthetics in finding or producing meaning in the banality of daily life during a time when "the borderlines between art, politics and social life became increasingly indistinct" (37). The seventh and final section, "The Avant-Garde Between Market and Counterculture," examines the productive tensions between the Nordic avant-gardes' immersion into commodity culture on the one hand and countercultural and anti-capitalist critique on the other.

Like the avant-garde networks they have studied extensively, the collaborators of this sub-series have made productive use of the Nordic Network for Avant-Garde Studies to engage experts from a wide variety of fields. However, a disproportionate number of the contributors are Denmark-based schoars, many from the University of Copenhagen (and of these, nearly all are in Ørum's home department), which is not entirely unexpected since this institution hosted the scholarly conferences where these topics initially were introduced. A welcome addition to the fourth (and final?) volume in the sub-series would be the inclusion of the Arctic territories of Greenland, Sápmi, and the Faroe Islands within the cultural geography of the Nordic avant-garde, a hope expressed by the organizers of the final conference in the series in December 2015.

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Hubert van den Berg, Irmeli Hautamäki, Benedikt Hjartarson, Torben Jelsbak, Rikard Schönström, Per Stounbjerg, Tania Ørum, and Dorthe Aagesen, eds. *A Cultural History of the Avant-Garde in the Nordic Countries 1900–1925.* Leiden & Boston: Brill/Rodopi, 2012.

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Kathleen L. Komar, ed. *Father Figures and Gender Identities in Scandinavian and Comparative Literature: Studies in Honor of Ross Shideler*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: North Pinehurst Press, The Wildcat Canyon Advanced Seminars, 2016. Pp. 234. ISBN: 9780692642344.

As its title suggests, this festschrift for Ross Shideler contains a series of essays engaging with representations of patriarchy and gender in a variety of literatures. The subject matter ranges from the lesser-known works of Hans Christian Andersen (his novels), to nineteenth-century travel literature on Brazil; from the "anagogical" affinities between Fredric Jameson's "Marxist approach to literary exegesis" and Erich Auerbach's description of Christian exegesis (Kristal 103), to Agamemnon and Electra on the worldwide web; from August Strindberg's campaign for "literary paternity" (in comparison with Mark Twain's) (Rugg 6), to his take on

homosexuality. In her introduction to the volume, editor and contributor Kathleen L. Komar writes, "These essays are meant both to question father figures of all kinds and to honor the father figure that Ross Shideler has come to represent to generations of his students and colleagues" (xi).

Although Shideler's books on Swedish writers Ekelöf and Enquist are mentioned, the clear touchstone for the festschrift as a whole is *Questioning the Father: From Darwin to Zola, Ibsen, Strindberg, and Hardy* (1999). This book considers the influence of Darwinian ideas on literary works that critique patriarchy, the dominant strain of authority in Western culture. Its final lines express hope for further challenges to authority: "We can hope as this century comes to a close that men and women will continue to work together toward the 'grandeur' that Darwin saw in his view of life and to do it with that 'joy of life' which inspired and eluded many of Ibsen's characters" (Shideler 169). *Father Figures and Gender Identities in Scandinavian and Comparative Literature* is a fulfillment of Shideler's hope for continued work.

The festschrift genre is often somewhat incoherent. In this case, the thematic "red threads" of the book—father figures and gender—are so broadly construed as to feel arbitrary, holding the essays together only loosely. In the concluding essay, Komar again describes the volume's theme as fathers "both honored and challenged in western literature and culture" (175). This theme, however, is implicit, even peripheral, in a few of the essays. Moreover, some of the authors refer to and engage directly with Shideler's scholarship, while others do not—almost making it seem as if they received different guidance about the publication's aims. Of course, festschrifts are generally organized around events (retirement, in this case) and their goal is to honor a person rather than to pursue a theme, form, or idea by rigorous arrangement. Taken together, the essays in *Father Figures and Gender Identities* gesture to the vast interpersonal encounters that underlie a scholarly life. In most cases, the individual author's own goals are well defined. The essays are also largely devoid of jargon, and I can imagine assigning some of them to undergraduate students.

Komar's introduction contains a brief summary of each essay in the collection. In an effort to demonstrate the range of the book, I mention here some central questions or undertakings from selected essays. In "Murdering the Father: Hjalmar Söderberg's *Doktor Glas*," Susan C. Brantly wonders whether Söderberg's novel allows us to regard science as the new Grand Narrative, replacing Christian patriarchy, or whether it isn't simply the newest placeholder for human longing for certainty.

In "Erasing the Father," James Massengale wonders "why the poet [Carl Michael Bellman (1740–95)] might, in retrospect, wish to erase certain matters from his biography," and uses this (personal) question as a means of considering the class structure of Swedish society in the latter half of the 1700s (33). In "Ach Grete! A German Tutor in 19th Century Brazil," Ricard da Silveira Lobo Sternberg uses the travelogue of a governess to consider the impacts of classed family structure and slavery on education in Brazil. In "Gender is the Real Queer: Gender Wars in Contemporary Poland," Joanna Nizynska discusses the "glocalization" of the terms gender and queer in Poland, finding that while queerness remains an academic import term, gender has the power to "surreptitiously subvert" (147). In "The Ultimate Father and Daughter: Agamemnon, Electra and Their Legacy," Komar uses the full story of Agamemnon and Klytemnestra and their legacies on the web to ask "the most crucial question: Does mother right hold up against father right?" (178).

In the volume's epilog, "The Longing of the Seasoned Man (A Shaggy Dog Story aka A Tribute to Ross)," Mary Kay Norseng offers readers a suggestive revelation of the personal, of the person who motivates the festschrift. Norseng informs readers that Shideler's career "bookended her own at UCLA," and then proceeds by associative fragments to tell the story of a life and career—her own? Shideler's? They are intertwined—guided by longing, love, and poetry. She cites, among others, Albert Camus, Sigbjørn Obstfelder, C. S. Lewis, and two of Shideler's own poems. I quote one stanza from Shideler's "The Audience" (published in *Poetry Magazine* in 1975):

> Language almost says itself.
>
> I can hear it sometimes
>
> speaking clearly and succinctly
>
> to an audience that I
>
> do not quite understand.
>
> It speaks to more than my ears
>
> yet if I try to understand precisely
>
> to whom it addresses itself,
>
> as if I stood up in the audience
>
> and said, "That is interesting but…"

> I never get beyond standing up.
>
> It stops speaking and I am left
>
> alone in an empty auditorium […] (197)

The epilogue and its poems make up in part for the incoherence of the volume by reminding us that academic work is an interpersonal undertaking, despite its loneliness and uncertainty—even if we tend to hide this fact in the formal structures of academic writing. Although the individual essays don't always speak to one another, taken together they do gesture to the fact that scholarship involves mentorship and other labors of love. Norseng concludes her epilog with an invitation to Shideler to go skinny-dipping. After citing Ricardo da Silveira Lobo Stenberg's poem, "A Prince's Soliloquy" (*Some Dance*, 2014), which gives voice to a prince who would like to be unkissed so that he might return to his "dark pond," Norseng addresses Shideler directly:

> Ross: You have worn your suits and ties with style, and you have played your parts well: teacher, scholar, translator, colleague, dean and chair. You have earned your silver pond. The water is nice and warm. Slip back in and dare the moon. You've got some poems to write. (206)

All that is left to say is congratulations on your retirement, Ross Shideler.

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Ying Xiong. *Representing Empire: Japanese Colonial Literature in Taiwan and Manchuria*. Leiden: Brill, 2014. Pp. 375. ISBN: 9789004310728.

What happens when, under colonization, young men of literary bent and ambition who are born in the motherland move to and spend their lives in the colonies, seeing themselves as full-fledged members of the imagined community they call empire? That is the underlying, if tacit, question

that drives Ying's study. Choosing two of these young men—Nishikawa Mitsuru (1908–1999) and Ôuchi Takao (1907–1980)—in two very difference colonial appendages of the interwar Japanese empire—Taiwan and Manchuria—Ying examines (sometimes in very great detail!) the complex and often fraught relationships these two ex-patriot native sons develop vis-à-vis empire. The title of the volume—*Representing Empire*—may suggest to readers that the authors under consideration produced willful, writerly propaganda, but a closer reading of this work, the third volume in Brill's *East Asian Comparative Literature and Culture* series, reveals an ambivalence, or even resentment, that builds in these writers as they work to define themselves at some remove from the homeland and against/alongside the colonized. One of the writers is "driven by his abiding quest for recognition from Japanese national literature" while the other is "filled with suspicion of and contempt for slogans" that underscored Japanese imperial oppression of the subaltern (319).

Ying's aim is "to reveal the numerous ways the Japanese empire was imagined, and to unveil the conditions and constraints that those Japanese writers living in colonial or imperial areas face in rendering colonialism and forging their own identities" (xv). The choice of the verbs *rendering* and *forging,* with their violent overtones of boiling, melting, and hammering, is illuminating, since the writers find themselves as both observers of the process as well as renderers and forgers. Both take the raw cultural materials of empire and tinker with them in very different literary ways, producing "knowledge that rationalised the colonial order" (xix). And both demonstrate varying degrees of self-awareness, or even shame, regarding their own complicity in that rationalization.

The book is divided into three main parts, the first two of which examine Nishikawa in Taiwan and Ôuchi in Manchuria, respectively, and how their varying environments combined with different personalities to give Nishikawa colonial resources to expand the definition of Japanese literature while providing Ôuchi with a vision for transnational utopianism fueled by interactions with Chinese writers via translation. Nishikawa, in a kind of literary imperialism, combined his own interest in decadence and modernism with the exotic "southern" attributes of Taiwan's land and people to send back to Japan literary products that he saw as enlarging the domain of traditional Japanese literature. Ôuchi, on the other hand, used his skills as a translator to effect Sino-Japanese literary communication as part of the cultural development of Manchuria as

a Japanese colony. Both found themselves at odds with official colonial policy from time to time.

The third part of the book examines how, as the war years rolled on, the empire's view of these two very disparate colonies narrowed to a common "blueprint" dominated by the notion of "Japan's people." From individualized, nuanced, and reciprocal influences represented by the two writers, a Japanese political and cultural shift to assimilative and nationalist discourse impoverished the previously rich literary and cultural milieu of the disparate colonies. Nishikawa and Ôuchi were subsumed by generalized rhetoric in a manner echoing the negative impact fixation on canon can often have on histories of literary tradition. In the concluding chapter, Ying underscores the value comparative literature brings to the study of East Asian literature by using accounts from the periphery to tease out distinctions otherwise masked and obscured by broader uniform narratives.

Given that the series itself exists, in part, as a clarion call to create a "positive transnational identity" (x) among East Asians, the author's choice to expand the traditional focus of literary histories to include Japanese writers living in colonies brings a welcome sense of empathy and nuance from writers living among the colonized, who were themselves struggling with what might be seen as a "negative national" identity. Ying's volume opens up broad perspectives on the complex ambivalences that can emerge in different corners of the same empire, and invites us to give further consideration to the dynamics and effects of political, and literary, imperialism in fresh new ways.

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Mingjun Lu. *The Chinese Impact upon English Renaissance Literature: A Globalization and Liberal Cosmopolitan Approach to Donne and Milton.* Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2015. Pp. 237. ISBN: 9781472461254.

The eighteenth-century European fascination with China is a familiar piece of cultural history, and most people conversant with British culture are aware of Sir William Temple, Oliver Goldsmith, and Alexander Pope

as witnesses to that age of chinoiserie—an episode seemingly exhaustively studied by Chen Shouyi, Fan Cunzhong, and Qian Zhongshu in the 1930s. Recent scholarship has pushed the beginnings of substantive English engagement with China back by half a century or more (see Robert Batchelor [2013] and Timothy Brook, *Mr Selden's Map of China: The Spice Trade, A Lost Chart and the South China Sea [2014])*. Now Mingjun Lu recovers the effects of China awareness on John Donne, John Milton, and their contemporaries. One strategy is to comb the works of Donne and Milton for explicit references to China, Southeast Asia, and the ways thither; another is to reconstruct the climate of ideas in the authors' time so as to show the indirect presence of China in discussions of the universal language, world chronology, the Northwest Passage, the relative advantages of trade and empire, and similar concerns.

As her subtitle indicates, Lu's is "a globalization and liberal cosmopolitan approach," chosen "rather than the conventional racialist, colonialist, and Orientalist models" (16) to illuminate the English understanding of China in this period. Lu's choice of filter is appropriate for historical reasons: the idea of "race" was then in its infancy, English colonies in Ireland and Virginia did not weigh heavily on the international scale, and the empires of the Far East were imagined with envy and admiration, not disparagement. The writers she discusses demonstrate at certain junctures a "liberal cosmopolitan" sensibility, willing to learn from and make room for cultural Others, and ready to question their own inherited frames of thought. The book's six chapters explore the growth and the limits of this inquiring universalism. They deal with the worldwide silver economy, the controversy about rival chronologies of ancient times, the characteristics of the primordial language, and the formation of world empires: all topics that, to seventeenth-century people, would have implied a reference to China.

China cast a long shadow in the world of 1600, especially where money and prices were concerned. The Spanish extracted vast quantities of silver from their colonies in the New World. Most of that silver transited through Manila to China, where the silver-to-gold exchange rate was favorable, compared to what silver would bring in Europe. Unprecedented flows of Chinese gold and American silver into Europe brought, not prosperity, but inflation and a fall in the value of land. This was an early form of globalization: a network of exchanges spanning East and

West, in Northern and Southern hemispheres, affecting the daily lives of hundreds of millions of people. Although John Donne was certainly not able to specify all the causal links, the mention of "unfiled pistolets" in his poem "The Bracelet" offers the starting-point for Lu's exploration of the connotative network of gold and silver imagery in Donne's poetry and sermons—a network that insistently leads back to Spanish mines and Chinese buyers. Donne's restless verbal associations build up a network of terms: the phrase "unlick'd bear-whelps" can describe the raw appearance of crudely stamped American silver coins, or it can console the Virginia Company for a year of bad results (in contrast with Spanish riches and dominance); the "pale and lean" French coins (clipped and washed by their former owners) indicate the "rot" of the French economy; the "righteous Angels" that Donne is reluctant to have melted down as a replacement for his beloved's lost bracelet are English gold coins, "righteous" because their value has held constant while silver rose and fell. Conceits drawn from cartography, a Donne specialty, work to build his "global consciousness" (63), to make his world "round." Donne's language often invisibly cites that of explorers, promoters, polemicists, diplomats, and others engaged with the processes of that early globalization. His tropes are not contained by the internal logic of poem or sermon, as Lu shows, but participate in a public conversation. The three chapters on Donne are not merely source research, but make a strong case for reading his work in new ways not constrained by biography, genre, or creed.

The encounter with China, as is well known, introduced Europeans to a documented history that far exceeded the Biblical chronology. Reconciling the various systems of world history and adjudicating their divergences occupied some of the best minds of the time, because it involved not only truth, but authority. With the survey of human history in Book X of *Paradise Lost,* Milton slyly dodged the details but showed awareness of the problem. His "Cambaluc" and "Paquin," topographical kennings for "the seat / Of mightiest empire," relate to recent Chinese history: the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century, which furnish Milton a model for a unified world government distinct from the conquests of Alexander or Julius Caesar. Lu shows again that China was not absent from the imagination of the seventeenth century, but rather had a formative role.

Silver, chronology, world empire: the fourth domain of Chinese salience in the English seventeenth century is speculation on language, from Bacon to Wilkins, with an understandable emphasis on John Webb's *Historical Essay Endeavoring a Probability that the Language of the Empire of China is the Primitive Language* (1669). Milton must narrate (in postlapsarian language) an origin of language in Eden, and Lu shows that the characteristics of Adam's speech correspond to those ascribed by enthusiastic language scholars to the "China character." The subject of this chapter must now be reconsidered in light of Dinu Luca's exhaustive survey *The Chinese Language in European Texts: The Early Period* (2016).

Lu does not answer all questions raised by the overlay of her scheme of globalization and liberal cosmopolitanism on seventeenth-century imaginings of world order. The rebuttal of Milton's "alleged nationalism" (181) is somewhat contorted. Lu emphasizes the last phase of Milton's career: "after being yoked again to monarchy, the English nationalism Milton vehemently championed in earlier years ceased to be a reference point to conceptualize 'human, civil, and religious' liberty" (182). There is a simpler way of accounting for this. Like many defeated politicians, Milton abandoned direct confrontation and took up the philosophical critique of all existing empires. *Paradise Lost* depicts Satan as an empire-builder, and *Paradise Regained* envisions "a global institution beyond the national state" (183), to be overseen by the Son. But this schematic fulfillment is not on the same practical plane as Milton's earlier "Defenses of the English People." It also hinges on the ambivalence of the term "nations" in the Bible, from the Prophets to Paul: originally the label for the enemies of Israel, by the time of the institutionalization of Christianity "the nations" are to be brought into a single fold. Later Christian thought played on the difference between separate states and a purportedly unifying religious community. By advocating a universal government under the Son, Milton is simply moving from the register of human politics to that of religious eschatology.

Lu's research is thorough, but unfortunately limited to English-language sources where the topics considered would seem to require exploration in Latin, Spanish, French, German, and Italian—for the European world of the intellect in the 1600s was not so penned in by national languages as it is today. The book's attitude to Chinese sources is cavalier: some common views on the early chronology are recycled

with a footnote to a "reliable source" (96)—a children's book on the "five thousand years" of China! The missionaries who presented Chinese history to European audiences were infinitely better-equipped for polemics (see Nicolas Standaert [2012]). An encyclopedic, rather than argument-driven, style causes certain *longueurs* and repetitions. And in the later sections, Lu's descriptions of the inherent qualities of "empire" rely on repeated quotations of Negri and Hardt's *Empire,* a work seeking to descry the forces behind contemporary trends and hardly applicable to a wider set of examples without major re-engineering.

Mingjun Lu has demonstrated the relevance of supranational awareness—as an accompaniment of supranational conditions—in the thought of the major authors of England in this period of social transformation. "The Chinese Impact" is only one of the factors impelling early globalization; it works well enough as a heuristic, however. Lu's book stands honorably on the same shelf as Donald Lach's *Asia in the Making of Europe (1965–1933)* and Virgile Pinot's *La Chine et la formation de l'esprit philosophique en France, 1640–1740* (1932).

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Silviu Lupascu. *Arabesques littéraires: L'Empire arabe et l'Empire chinois en 750.* Champion, 2016. Pp. 216. ISBN: 9782745329530.

Dans cet ouvrage, l'auteur rassemble huit essais, en comptant les longues introduction et conclusion, dont cinq touchent le monde musulman médiéval et deux la Chine. Soulignons cependant que le titre est trompeur car l'amplitude chronologique des problématiques dépasse bien 750 pour arriver en plein XIVe siècle avec Ibn Ḫaldūn. Il aborde ainsi d'abord les espaces politiques, spirituels et angéliques chez Ibn Ḫaldūn. Puis, il consacre quatre chapitres à l'époque abbasside en traitant successivement des liens entre l'histoire politique, l'enseignement soufi et l'apocalyptique, puis des relations entre gnosticisme et soufisme, et enfin des connexions entre le christianisme et l'islam avec l'évocation de l'origine judéo-nazaréenne de l'islam, telle qu'elle apparaît chez les polémistes chrétiens médiévaux. Il sort de l'islam ancien pour aborder l'ascension de l'âme dans le soufisme, l'hindouisme et le manichéisme, puis les relations entre la Sogdiane et la Chine à l'époque abbasside. Cette transition chinoise lui permet de terminer avec les doctrines sotériologiques taoïstes et bouddhistes, et il conclut avec un développement sur Confucius. C'est donc hétéroclite, d'autant que si l'essentiel des études porte sur l'histoire des idées, le chapitre sur la Sogdiane traite d'une question socio-économique avec le rôle joué par les marchands sogdiens dans les changements politiques qui touchent la région au milieu du VIIIe siècle. Autre malentendu à évacuer : l'historien et à fortiori l'orientaliste n'apprendrait pas grand chose de ce livre car l'auteur y rassemble, compare et met en ordre des notions spirituelles ou philosophiques en dehors de toute explicitation de leur contexte historique, exception faite du dernier chapitre où les adaptations au milieu taoïste des textes bouddhistes sont abordées. Le lecteur a aussi l'impression que l'auteur veut tout, voire trop justifier dans ces notes infrapaginales. Pourquoi donner la biographie de Nestorius à la note 289 et celle de Mani à la note 404 ? Quiconque s'intéresse à ces matières les connaît ou maîtrise les instruments pour se les rappeler. Etait-il nécessaire de consacrer vingt-quatre ligne à la note 271 sur la nature du texte coranique en se référant à Nöldeke et Schwally alors que l'histoire de la rédaction du texte coranique est fortement révisée depuis deux décennies ? En revanche, l'historien des idées ou le comparatiste pourrait retirer du livre des idées fécondes, mais en faisant preuve de sens critique car des erreurs factuelles se sont glissées dans les développements de l'auteur. Ainsi, quand S. Lupascu écrit, p. 62 : « L'astronomie et la trigonométrie des sphères sont des parties composantes de l'épistémologie

grecque. » que veut-il dire quand on sait que, justement, les Grecs ne possédaient pas la trigonométrie sphérique ? Dans le même contexte, p. 63, il cite à raison les Sphaerica de Ménéalos d'Alexandrie mais en omettant que si Ménéalos y définit bien le triangle sphérique, il n'a pas les moyens trigonométriques pour en élaborer les applications, la trigonométrie étant une invention indienne qui se développe dans le monde musulman au IXe siècle. Le lecteur se rend compte malheureusement que l'auteur n'a parfois qu'une connaissance rudimentaire des ouvrages tardo-antiques ou médiévaux qu'il cite. Ainsi, les développements qu'il consacre à l'Almageste de Ptolémée sont superficiels. De plus, certaines références bibliographiques sont ambigües, ainsi à la page 111, il cite al-Bīrūnī à propos de la présence de Manichéens à Samarqand connus sous le nom de Sabéens, avec renvoi à la page 191 du Kitāb al-āṯār al-bāqiya ; en réalité, il cite sa traduction. Ce qui ne pose pas de problème quand cela est clairement exprimé. Autre exemple d'incohérence, dans les citations d'Ibn al-Nadīm : dans la traduction de Bayard Dodge (note 283), parfois dans l'édition (vieillie) de Gustave Flügel, note 423. Ces scories soulignées, on notera les mérites du livre dans le comparatisme qu'il établit entre divers courants spirituels ou religieux qui se sont formés et propagés au Proche-Orient. Le chapitre sur le développement de l'idée du « sceau de la prophétie » et celui sur « l'ingestion » et « la digestion » des particules lumineuses dans le soufisme, l'hindouisme et le manichéisme sont séduisants par les analogies présentées. On gardera cependant à l'esprit que concomitance et similitude ne signifient pas automatiquement ni causalité, ni transfert.

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Claudine Le Blanc. *Les Livres de l'Inde: Une littérature étrangère en France au XIXe siècle.* Paris: Presse Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2014. Pp. 236. ISBN: 9782878546361.

This book is very much a product of French Comparative Literature scholarship and, as such, it is to be appreciated. It combines all the virtues of this configuration of the discipline: a broad comparative scope, a formidable review of the scholarly literature, and a new way of looking at old problems. I must admit here at the outset that the author picks up

on work that I and others pursued in the past. She gives due credit to her precursors and claims to be moving beyond the scope of their inquiries. I am not convinced that she completely achieves this end, nor do I think that she exploits as much as she might due to the topical ramifications of what her research uncovers. I say this not to point out a weakness in the text, but rather as encouragement to the author to be bolder in the course of future investigations.

The author claims to look at the fundamentals and the irremediable foreignness of Indian literature in nineteenth-century France. She challenges us to think about what it means to read a foreign text. This is a very pertinent question, and one that is touched upon in a cursory manner by the current debates surrounding World Literature, but rarely treated with the subtlety that Le Blanc attempts to bring to the discussion. Correctly she notes that much of the French work on Indian exoticism by the likes of Raymond Schwab (to whom E.W. Said was so indebted) and Jean Bies was based on influence studies—the bread and butter of French Comparative Literature, as in the vision of "X en Y" or its variant "X et Y." This brand of French Comparative Literature gives us numerous studies broadly dealing with "Indian Literature in France" or "Indian Literature and France." The author is wedded to this model, but seeks to move beyond it.

While the author claims to be expanding her inquiry in more theoretical directions, so much of what she delivers is still her national model of Comparative Literature: lists of works, history of reception and influence study. What is truly innovative in this volume and a genuine contribution to the field is the way in which the author brings the discussion into the present age within the context of recent debates in the field of Translation Studies, particularly the work of Antoine Berman. This focus is a welcome and fruitful path to further investigation. Even so, the author could have extended her discussion further: she might have explored the reasons why the current theorizing regarding World Literature, and much else in literary studies today tied to discussions dealing with the emplotment of the Other, does not also question the philosophy behind the act of translating. Would that it too ventured forth into delving into the hermeneutical ramifications of reading the foreign and the issues raised by translation studies, as does Le Blanc's investigation. The type of analysis that the author valorizes and in large part delivers is the very type of analysis that I would like to see in such current literary debates.

There are, however, other concerns. If this is a book examining Indian literature in France, why does the author devote so much time and space to non-French authors? The first chapter focuses on the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* and T.S. Eliot, material that many others, including Eliot scholars, have amply investigated in the past. Why is Eliot here? Why does Chapter 2 discuss Albrecht Weber? Where do the discussion of Dickens and E.M. Forster fit into the purported topic of the book? The author either should have focused more closely on the French context or broadened her title. She is at her strongest when dealing with the French authors she investigates. The first chapter, for example, offers an interesting and truly novel analysis of Jacques Lacan's relation to upanishadic thought. Whether it is significant, however, is another question perhaps better left to readers who take Lacan more seriously than this present reviewer does.

The stated rationale for the focus on Eliot is that the author sees him as the key for reading a foreign text. But is Eliot really needed to draw the conclusion that all interpretation is subjective? While Le Blanc's reading of Lacan and the *Brhadaranyaka i*s creative, it is not crucial to make the case that psychoanalysis can be employed as the hermeneutic model for reading a foreign text, nor do we need Eliots' repetition of the thunder ("Da, Da, Da") to make the case that reading literature in its Indian conceptualization becomes a method for comprehending literature as bound to an echo, as we supposedly find in Eliot. As I mentioned, this is a very French book: an erudite command of the literature, theoretically sophisticated, and at the same time rather more poetic in its argumentation than that of Anglo-Saxon comparatist research.

Another important premise of the book is that Sanskrit literature is more foreign than Latin and Greek. The author's understanding of the notion of *littérature* é*trang*è*re* is heavily influenced by the work of Yves Chevrel. In addition to the French Comparative Literature practice of listing all the French texts that deal with India, the author also offers a comprehensive discussion on how French literary criticism conceptualizes foreignness. She then follows this by an extensive history of Sanskrit studies in France (as well as England and Germany). These chapters retread material of her precursors, the present reviewer included. I was gratified to see a more extensive analysis of all the French authors such as Cousin, Lahor, and Lamartine that I discussed in my own book

on the exotic.[20] The author did not cite this volume in her bibliography and is perhaps unfamiliar with it.

There is also a chapter on French translations of Sanskrit texts. This summary is extensive and the author quite intelligently brings new insights from Translations Studies to material that has already been repeatedly studied. While we get French Comparative Literature's love of histories and lists of translations, the author also questions the effect of their fragmentary or anthologized presence in the reception of things Indian. Here too, she could have pushed her inquiry forward to the present-day situation, where we find World Literature anthologizing the world.

At this point, there follows an substantial analysis of Kalidasa's *Sakuntala* and I was gratified to see my work on the French reception of this work duly cited, as well as the more recent work of Romila Thapar. However, here I really felt: been there, done that.

In short, this is an erudite book that raises very important questions I wish the author could have related to the recent discussion regarding the fate of Comparative Literature in the world of World Literature. This book helps us see what French Comparative Literature is, what makes it unique in all the world's comparing of literatures. It is theoretically sophisticated and quite poetic in its reasoning. Le Blanc amply shows the ways in which treatment of many of the same Sanskrit texts in French literature and French Indology has developed (or not developed) in the past thirty years since I was working more intensively in this field.

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D. Venkat Rao. *Culture of Memory in South Asia: Orality, Literacy and the Problem of Inheritance.* Berlin: Springer, 2016. Pp. 336. ISBN: 9788132235071.

Two reasons for thanking the author of *South Asian Cultures of Orality* are his uncompromising rejection of a "phantasmatic homogenous ("Hindu") culturalist India" (ix) and his laudable aim of rescuing the

20. Dorothy Figueira, *The Exotic: A Decadent Quest* (New York: SUNY Press, 1994).

Humanities from "the abyss of the postcolonial destitution" by "gathering and reaffirming our heterogeneous pasts for the promise of a future" (7). Using the theoretical frame of deconstruction, the author sets out to show how colonialism is "a translational, comparativist epistemo-critical pedagogical project (aiming) at permanently altering the heterogeneous modes of being in the world through a normative discursive order" (91), subjecting the "host tissues and fluids of Indian cultural formations" to the "epistemic violence of the colonial project" (92). Accordingly, one would expect a deconstruction of the idea of Hinduism as a unified religion and of Hindu India as a myth foregrounded by this "normative discursive order." This is especially relevant since religious fundamentalists are currently as actively complicit in homogenization of "Hindu"/ India as the native informant colonial intellectuals, who were contaminated by the colonial institution, i.e. the university. Rao castigates them for their blindness to the traditional culture of Sanskrit (3–4). However, though the author's agenda to de-phantasmatise the homogenous Hindu culturalist notion of India is welcome, what he calls his "comparatological" method seems trapped in binaries. He proceeds to demonstrate that "Indian heritage inclines more towards speech and gestural modes, while European heritage prefers inscriptional modes" (20) by constructing "a certain thematic based on Sanskrit and the *bhasha vangmayas* and *kalas*, the world of vocal-acoustic rhythms and gestural-graphical performatives" (8). As this constitutes the thesis, the anti-thesis is "the Abrahamic-Christian culture of the referent" (7). Derrida's challenge to logocentrism is taken as a point of departure to understand the "verbal compositions of Indic, i.e. Sanskrit tradition" (96), the "textlooms" (Chapter 9.2) of the "responsive receptions" (12) of Vedic Sanskrit literature across millennia. Within this thematic frame, chapters provide detailed discussions of Sanskrit-Telugu "responsive receptions," drawing conclusions about the "Indian resources of memory" (12). Findings are sometimes reduced to Indic culture and sometimes extended to South Asia, as promised in the book's title. Despite these extensions and reductions in scope, the author attempts to "configure cultural difference on the basis of alithically (non-inscriptionally) woven cultural memories" (7)—mnemocultures, as opposed to the archival logocentrism of colonizing Europe. Though his desire is to rescue theoretical enquiry into difference from culturalism or essentialism (viii), the notions of translatability, referentiality, the archival text, and the ipsocratic identitarian use of narrative emerge as the

essentials of the so-called Abrahamic-Christian cultural discourse. In his critique, the author shifts our attention from the essentialist construction of "Hindu India" by the culture of colonising Europe to Sanskrit and Sanskrit-reflective cultural traditions. Indian tradition is forged in the history of contact and exchange between diverse language-cultures from within and beyond the geopolitical space now called India. However, in this account, tradition remains circumscribed by structural oppositions such as oral-written, definite-indeterminate, archived-remembered, prosthetic-natural. This constitutes as much a homogenizing enterprise as the colonial/institutional homogenization of the innumerable "performative response(s) to the received" (10), which form the core of the author's critique.

While there is little to quarrel with in the criticism of the influence of colonization upon the "Indian" consciousness, the claim that the institution of caste is a foreign implant remains unexplained by the "reasoning imagination" (viii) with which, according to the author, "culture is configured in this work" (ix). The author contends that the "deeply natural but obviously cultural … rhythms of caste" have been misunderstood and stigmatized (310) by the colonial Indological discourse and by the Cartesian postcolonial university (ix). Under these circumstances, a justifiable call to take responsibility for "rethinking this enigmatic phenomena outside the colonial consciousness" (310) is made ambiguous by its failure to problematise the discourse of caste representation and formation, concentrating on anti-colonial fictions instead. Rao gives as an instance Vemana, the seventeenth-century Telugu poet whose verses were anthologised by C.P. Brown, the colonial lexicographer. This collection, argues the author, presents the poet as a caste iconoclast, which he was clearly not. Rao constructs this argument from Derrida's rebuttal of the institution of the Platonic logos, as represented through writing. This account of the violent colonial transformation of an oral corpus underlines the coloniser's forced establishment of the power of writing / ipsocretic narrativity over orality, of document over memory, of the culture of the archive over the silenced host facing colonization. After separating muthos from logos, song from narrative, memory from writing, emphasis is simply reversed in Rao's discussion. As a consequence, heterogeneity as an operative concept in Rao's theoretical frame appears cosmetic: even while claiming to interrogate the colonial consciousness which

spawns the homogenous culturalist idea of Hindu India, the terms of the author's critique exclude all those communities which are not jati, i.e., all those cultures which are unrelated to Sanskrit and the Sanskrit-reflective culture identified here with India, its arms spreading across South Asia. The author describes jati as the "generative impulse of biocultural formations" that "constitute the Indian cultural difference" (7–8), a definition he extrapolates to cover South Asia. He argues that "Jatis are internally self-differentiating and forever open-ended" (315), as "what is particular to a group is addressed not so much in terms of its inherent essence but its relation (not always harmonious) to its counterpart" (315). This construction of "India" as a Sanskrit and Sanskrit-reflecting heterogeneity claims for itself anti-colonial memory-embodying praxis. However, it remains limited if "jati" is proposed as the quintessential source of differentiation within the Sanskrit-reflective discourse.

Separating jati from community, the author invokes epistemic violence to explain the stigmatization of jati (310), trying to show that what operates as an institutionalized hierarchy is actually characterised by fluidity and dynamism. The latter enable this form of institution to eschew essentialism and to remain forever fluid. In chapter 9, Rao argues that the ritual liminality of "parasitic jati folds that circulate as the guardians of memory within the communities" is not oppressive until "slotted into a hierarchy of opposites, significatory practices of speech and writing systems entail(ing) violent epistemological and social consequences" (ibid). What is the source of the resistance to transgression or infringement of caste practices, even before and after the colonial period, if the ritual liminality of specific jatis protects them from the violent effects of what has here been described as the "open-ended" process of "self-differentiation"? The author suggests that particularity is not essential but relational. This may problematize the essentialist discourse that the author is interrogating—but it does not automatically ensure that the relation presented as an alternative to essentialism is one of equality.

The author explicitly focuses on "methodological issues and epistemic frames" rather than aiming "at retrieving informational knowledge" (12). However, it could be noted that scholarship on the dharma shastras has documented, through well-accounted source texts, the gradual formation and institutionalization of caste hierarchies and practices across centuries. This research shows the lack of complete

consensus among the writers of the dharma shastra texts about the origin and nature of hierarchies, the basis for differentiation ranging from profession, to conduct and ability, and to birth. Applications and justifications, even divisions themselves are not uniform or homogenous. Still, the existence, sources and operations of caste hierarchies in society evidently predate the period of colonization. Accordingly, the statement in the Preface that "Indic" culture does not "systematize (the ends and discourses of man) over millennia" (viii) is difficult to accept. If the author's caste-as-natural-and-cultural-rhythm-of-life theory is to stand, the evidence of the dharma shastras and centuries of oppressive practice, whether exactly or loosely sanctioned by them, must be addressed with more than a positing of structured binaries to provide a convincing interpretive frame. It would be difficult to describe this binary interpretive structure as the result of the "mono-logo-theo-normative order of the West" (310). It could be suggested that the "patterned unified response across the intellectual terrain of West and the sub-continent in the modern period" (311) is not due only to the imported Indological verities ruling enquiry in the Cartesian colonized university. What the author calls the "din of caste" (314) is heard louder today, because of the visible survival of these oppressive practices, regardless of the hermeneutic frames we academics deploy to contain them with our understanding.

The attempt to replace "logocentric thinking that privileges rational speech" with "non-linguistic melopoeiac reflection and imagination" (10) culminates in the conclusion that Sanskrit-reflective traditions (13) and responsive receptions (12) are "plurivocal" (310), i.e. characterised by multiple rhythms, vowel arrangements, and sonorities, to the exclusion of language. Thus, Rao's discussion focuses on the plurality of aural compositions without reference to the multiplicity of Indian language-cultures. The history of the formation of Indian languages time and again shows the impact of mutual contact between neighbouring language-cultures as well as contact with the various languages and cultures of the different religious leaders, foreign rulers and traders who visited specific regions of what is today called South Asia. Therefore, a vocalic Sanskrit-reflective plurality limits the scope of "Indian" and "South Asian" cultures. Those who are "outside" the folds of jati can appear in Rao's narrative only by virtue of their inability to transform Sanskrit reflective traditions. The "intrusions" (viii) of Christianity and Islam are conflated with those who embraced them.

Those who moved from within the folds of jati and beyond the reflective shadow of Sanskrit to other religious and/or language-cultures find no place in the thematic frame Rao proposes as a counter to colonial homogenization. Despite their irreducible participation in the linguistic and vocalic cultures of India and South Asia, these imagined intruders are characterised only by the "epistemic ambiguity" (viii) of their status *vis a vis* Sanskrit. In attempting to posit a challenge to the homogenization imposed by Indologists and the Cartesian university establishment, Rao has homogenized the plurality of Indian culture, leading us to conclude, with undue haste and thoughtlessly, that South Asian or "Indic" cultures are without exception Sanskrit-reflective.

The vocabulary of the Humanities in India is considerably colonised by the language and media of academic globalization scholars have complacently accepted. While this book sets out to critique that complacence, in its commitment to the "Indic" as opposed to the "Indological" verities, it bases its arguments on some startling assertions. For example, to equate speaking and thinking in English or French, the languages of the colonizer, with the practice of untouchability, concluding that attention to the latter is fuelled by the machinations of the former (311–12), is to inflate out of proportion the arguments voiced elsewhere in the book for retrieving caste and jati as part of the disowned "Indian cognitive universe" (313). This book proposes "epistemological alternatives for reflective practice" (ix) in order to place this universe, transformed by the epistemic violence of both colonizer and (post)colonial institutions, at the centre of our academic concerns. In doing so, Rao hopes to turn the practice and pedagogy of the Humanities away from the colonial/Cartesian/Christian legacy (ix). It is a pity, therefore, that the project of rescuing the Humanities from "postcolonial destitution" (6) by proposing an alternative framework for reading Indian cultural texts should be limited by the very assumptions underlying the interpretive approach.

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III

Theo D'haen and César Domínguez. *Cosmopolitanism and the Postnational: Literature and the New Europe.* Leiden and Boston: Brill/Rodopi, 2015. Pp. 250. ISBN: 978900433195.

Those wondering about the future of Europe, given the recent political and social difficulties the continent has faced, might be well-advised to turn to César Domínguez and Theo D'haen's timely collection of essays for possible answers. Indeed, in 2015 the idea of Europe as the crucible of cosmopolitanism was radically challenged. As Domínguez claims, "what is [now] in question … is the very concept of 'European citizenship'" (1). Cosmopolitanism—"the world as my city" (2), one of the concepts at the very heart of the creation of Europe—has now morphed into a fear of countries associated with the Other. Yet, "not the exotic Other," as Domínguez explains, "but a 'new' hideous Other of government largesse, which is deemed responsible for all the current wrongs" (2). Theories of cosmopolitanism have recently focused on two dismal considerations. On the one hand, *Institutionalized cosmopolitanism* valorizes integrating and transferring national sovereignty to the trans-European level. On the other hand, *deformed cosmopolitanism* holds that the empowerment of supranational bodies disempowers the democratic process (3). Domínguez, however, tries to nuance this grim picture by referring to the ideal Ulrich Beck and Edward Grande have termed "cosmopolitan realism." Other scholars have compared this form of cosmopolitanism to postnationalism. Domínguez refers to Jürgen Harbermas's understanding of European integration as being an instance of a "postnational society" in which "identification with one's own form of life and tradition was overlaid with an abstract patriotism that no longer referred to the concrete whole of a nation but to abstract procedures and principles" (quoted in Domínguez & D'haen, 3). This postnationalism could be described as a

form of integrated cosmopolitan patriotism differing from a simplistic annihilation of nation states.

The fact that such postnationalism is often superseded by supranationalism undoubtedly constitutes the main challenge for today's Europe. The book's three sections precisely seek to investigate these issues. The first section, "Challenging Postnationalism/Cosmopolitanism" further elaborates on the issue of cosmopolitanism versus postnationalism. Section two, "What's New in European Literature," examines large-scale European challenges, namely, security, migration, and transnationalism, through the lens of novelty. Section three, "Test Cases on Postnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and the New Europe" seeks to verify the conclusions drawn by the contributors of the first two parts through specific case studies—applying, as Domínguez argues, Beck's notion of "Europeanization from below" (9). Although I do not agree with the binary logic of this metaphor, I am willing to try and accept Domínguez's major argument, according to which "culture is once again there to provide a different logic … in which cosmopolitan sovereignty might be based upon an enlarged and deepened multilateralism and direct democracy" (9).

Helena Carvalhao Buescu's article "Europe between Old and New: Cosmopolitanism Reconsidered" tackles the question of "what Europe has come to mean at a time when moves towards further European integration clash with fear of uniformity" (11). In her attempt at finding an answer, she articulates two critiques: that of Eurocentrism on the one hand, and that of presentism on the other. Buescu contends that the contemporary European tendency for "cultural recycling" (14) is actually one of the features of Europe's cyclic history. According to Buescu, the literature of catastrophe and the related testimony literature (epitomized by Holocaust narratives) offer primary examples of transnational objects of culture and memory. Similarly, émigré and migrant literatures allow authors to "speak from a place between cultures" (21). As such, these literary genres foreground cosmopolitanism as one of the ways to react to movements of displacement. Finally, Buescu addresses postcolonial literature as another illustration of her theory, as it "calls for the integration of both the ex-colonized and the ex-colonizer's perspectives" (23).

As César Domínguez also contends in his article entitled "Local Rooms with a Cosmopolitan View? Novels in/on the Limits of European Convergence," we urgently need a redefinition of Europe and its culture taking into account both the notions of time and space, as encapsulated

in the concept of postnationalism. Like Buescu, Domínguez argues that cosmopolitanism should be examined not as a *new* issue, but rather as a controversy that has always been inherent in European history. Domínguez defines European culture in the light of Ulrick Beck's theory of cosmopolitan realism, according to which culture might be the fourth pillar of the EU, along with the European Community, the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and Police and Judicial Co-operation in Criminal Matters. Cosmopolitan realism, by abandoning "an either/or model of society, of exclusive dualisms," relies on "a logic of equivocalness, a both/and model of society, of inclusive dualisms" (34). Domínguez offers the novel as a cultural example of negotiating European integration (37). He therefore explains the necessity of adopting a form of "cosmopolitan reading" "that rejoices at difference" (40). The second part of Domínguez's essay offers examples of "Europeanization in action" (41) through representative novels: *Ciudadanos de la Tierra.com* by Joaquin Lorente, *La fi d'Europa* by Angel Burgas, and *Europa* by Tim Parks. Although Domingez's view of cosmopolitan reading at first seems appealing, his approach of these novels lacks the convincing depth that would have corroborated this optimistic and comprehensive theory. Although rooted in the notion of comparison, the agenda of cosmopolitan reading sounds almost utopian: "the importance of a cosmopolitan reading lies in its power to overcome the distance between a past-oriented memory and the anxiety at a shared European future" (50). In Domínguez's view, "one of the main causes of the cosmopolitan crisis is the weakness of agency, as evidenced by the lack of a 'real political arena,' a public sphere, a 'communicative space' in Europe" (51). Accordingly, culture might assume that role and open up avenues for re-imagining Europe.

Sibylle Baumbach, the third contributor to this first section, takes this proposal one step further by linking it with the founding myth of Europa. Sybille Baumbach locates European literature in the repetition of its very foundation. Indeed, "literary trends, themes, and genres that surface within and outside 'new Europe' can often be revealed as receptions, revivals and re-fashionings of concepts, ideas, and literary models that already exist(ed)" (59). Baumbach sees in the Greek myth of Europa, the Phoenician princess abducted by Zeus and brought to Crete where she gave birth to the Minoan civilization, the paradigmatic instance of "a tension between the same and otherness" (62). In addition, myths also display "an ethics of inclusiveness" embracing a variety of stories from

different cultures (64). Baumbach concurs with Domínguez, as she locates the possibility of embracing transnationalism in the act of reading. She explicitly refers to a form of "rooted transnationalism, which does not require the detachment of the national but maintains links to it while engaging into a complex interaction of, and negotiation and exchange, with other cultures" (69).

Maria DiBattista, the last contributor to this section, situates her approach to a new form of reading within identity politics; her essay, "Native Cosmopolitans," opens her discussion of the need for a renewed form of reading by arguing that "the era of identity politics is waning and the age of global character is struggling to be born" (75). The growth of this form of global character can be detected in novels by Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Karin Desai, or Edwige Danticat. As native cosmopolitans, characters in these novels embody "a new form and hope for character: formed in the enduring ethos of local traditions and habits but marked … by the consciousness that one is more connected to, yet less at home in the global cities in which [one's] destinies are often decided" (75). In this seemingly antithetical formulation, DiBattista sees a possible semantic answer to the negative connotations appended to the term "native." Indeed, Dibattista reminds her readers that if the term native is primarily used to refer to someone born in a particular place, it also referred to (in a now obsolete sense of the term) people born in bondage. With that paradoxical meaning in mind, Dibattista explains that being a native, i.e. being born in a specific place, is no longer enough for "the native [to feel] like a native, that is [to feel] at home" (82). Cosmopolitanism, on the other hand, "encompass[es] … both the culture and the personal orientation of a certain kind of human being who identifies with something beyond the local or indigenous population" (83). In the novels analysed by the critic, native cosmopolitans can be regarded as characters for whom self-deception and impersonation have become inherent aspects of self-construction. The search for "what it would mean for such characters to become undeceived" is to be found in "novels written about and for and by native cosmopolitans" (92).

The first section of the book offers a homogeneous approach to the way in which issues of cosmopolitanism and trans- or post-national identities could help us understand the logic of a new Europe. By contrast, the second section proves to be much less convincing due to its lack of coherence. Domínguez introduces the section as "deal[ing] with three

large-scale phenomena which pose specific *challenges* to Europe, namely, security, migration and transnationalism" (7, emphasis mine). Araujo's and Soren's contributions appear particularly convincing in this respect, as they do indeed question current issues related to security and migration. However, the editor's decision to have placed Karen-Margarethe Simonsen's article about the necessity to rethink literary history from the point of view of emergence and transculturation in this section about "urgent" challenges sounds somewhat stretched. While Simonsen's discussion of the notions of emergence and transculuration is quite cogent, endowing the very question of thinking and writing literary history with the same sense of urgency as terrorism and migration does not seem justified. Susana Araujo's "European Security, European Identity? Fictions of Terror and Transnationality" further questions identity politics against the backdrop of the current issues of security and terrorism. She presents 9/11 as the cause of the hijacking of Europe's identity by the United States, which resulted in security becoming a central concern. Along with Beck, she contends that threat could serve as a force uniting the world. If so, the possibility of a borderless vision would eradicate "us vs. them" dichotomies. The "collage vision" (102) characterizing *Windows on the World* by Frédéric Beigbeder, *Saturday* by Ian Mc Ewan, and *Blindness* by José Saramago expresses this borderless, cosmopolitan viewpoint. Soren Frank, in "Globalization, Migration Literature and the New Europe" regards the migrant writer as the articulation of a "double movement of elimination and recuperation of space" (107), a process in which the migrant him- or herself is "weightless and rooted in multiple places" (107). This concept, he argues, reflects a structural affinity running across globalization, *Weltliteratur*, and cosmopolitanism. Frank illustrates his discussion through a particularly well-developed analysis of Tahar Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier*.

The third and final section of the volume collects further literary case studies. This section reinforces the arguments of the previous one: it addresses language as a crucial aspect of cosmopolitanism and postnationalism. Three essays question the importance of language as a defining concept for a European literary geography, the relation of transcontinental experiences, and the place of performativity in the formation of identity. John Crosetti's "Europeanization, Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism: Cases in the Crime Fiction of Poe, Gadda and Simenon" refreshingly views

crime fiction and popular culture as possible modes of identity formation (162). Crosetti considers Poe's "The Murders of the Rue Morgue" as an instance of cosmopolitan literature in the sense that it reflects "an acknowledgement of, and value in, the diversity within the different regions that are deemed European" (158). Conversely, Gadda's and Simenon's works epitomize cultural nationalism through their description of Parisian and Roman "languages, landscapes and monuments" (158) as examples of a typically European geography. In "The Spaces of Transnational Literature: Or, Where on Earth Are We with Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Der Hof im Spiegel?*," Birgit Mara Kaiser examines Turco-German writer Emine Sevgi Özdamar's work through its poetic language. Indeed, Özdamar writes in German in spite of her late acquisition of this language, after she left Turkey in her early twenties. Kaiser argues that this type of writing from authors with a transnational background questions the limiting demand of identity as a form of "unequivocal belonging" (178). Kaiser also focuses on space, which is particularly important in Özdamar's short stories. In the latter, Özdamar develops "multilayered temporalities and imaginary, hybrid spaces" (177). Finally, Aysegul Turan, in her article "How to Become a 'Rudeboy': Identity Formation and Transformation in *Londonstani*," describes how hybrid forms of language influence the processes of "self-definition" (233) in multicultural environments. Turan concentrates on a novel relating the story of a young Pakistani wishing to join a gang of South-Asian Londoners. Her analysis is based on the performative impact of mixed languages through which these boys seek to be defined, in this case "a mash-up of London street slang; popular Americanisms ... Panjabi slang and hip-hop slang" (231). To this aspect she adds the issue of gender performativity, embodied in the term 'rudeboy.' The two remaining articles of this last section further dissect the issue of identity from the point of view of the publishing 'market.' In "Postnational or Postcolonial? Reading Immigrant Writing in Postnational Europe: The Case of Equatorial Guinea and Spain," Dorothy Odartey-Wellington, focusing on "immigrant literature," underlines the significant difficulty for "authors from elsewhere" (200) to have their works accepted by renowned publishers. The experience of Equatorial Guinean writers in Spain offers a case in point. Feeling concerned with potential marketing objections, most of the time publishers consider such works as inaccessible to the Spanish readership. According to Odartey-Wellington,

promoting this literature should be encouraged as a way of overcoming neocolonialism. This effort would help "dismantl[e] the hegemony of the nation-state or the promotion of national identities" (201). Such an attitude would facilitate the "recognition of transcontinental dialogue" and the abolition of "borderlines" (200). In a similar vein, in her essay "A Transnational and Transcultural Perspective: Transcending the 'Englishness' of English Literature," Margarida Esteves-Pereira regards A.S. Byatt's introduction to *The Oxford Book of English Short Stories* as an attempt at defining the notion of 'Englishness,' which impacts the anthologization of English literature. To the "traditional" and the possible "re-invention of a British national identity" (216), Esteves-Pereira adds the "kind of post-nationalism built on reappraised symbols and traditions that implicitly acknowledges the mongrelized nature of most British identities" (216). The latter concept is applied by Dominic Head in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern British Fiction* and by other editors of contemporary literary companions. Esteves-Pereira then supports her approach with an examination of novels by Hanif Kureishi, Zadie Smith, and Monica Ali.

All in all, the essays gathered in this collection bear out Domínguez's initial argument: "culture is once again there to provide a different logic" (9) questioning cosmopolitanism and postnationalism. Unfortunately, such a perspective can only remain a premise, as the insights offered by the contributors appear too heterogeneous, perhaps even too far-fetched, in order to reach any consensus. As this volume suggests, it would be futile to try to identify one single overarching European culture or literature. Rather, one is confronted with a multitude of emerging and local European-inspired cultural traditions. While the latter may well exhibit aspects of cosmopolitanism, their specificity prevents us from drawing any definitive conclusions at this stage. The possibility of replacing the out-dated "either/or" opposition with Beck and Grande's "and/or" logic certainly sounds enticing. Only time will tell whether this new vision can become a springboard for future traditions.

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Barry Sheils. *W. B. Yeats and World Literature: The Subject of Poetry*. Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015. Pp. x + 200. ISBN: 9781472425539.

With admirable clarity Barry Sheils overcomes the high challenge of adding usefully to the enormous body of commentary on Yeats, much of it excellent. By citing more recent theorists selectively, but expatiating on Yeats' contemporaries and immediate successors, he manages to describe key features of the great Irish poet's several ranges of practice and spheres of interest in a way that helps us to associate these with the tangle of trends unfolding on the threshold of modernism and to understand how this modernist pioneer reacted to his own passage through modernism. Sheils urges us to scrutinize Yeats' personal history and situation in retrospect from our own moment, long after English has entrenched itself as the primary global *lingua franca*.

A curious but advantageous aspect of Sheils' achievement is that by synthesizing the multiple jargons of a range of neo-Marxian and postmodern theoreticians he manages to "translate" their clichés into a more coherent package for his own purposes. His aim is to examine Yeats' creativity and personal saga when reflected in a larger epochal mirror which ultimately for us becomes a rear-view mirror. Being attached to a neo-Marxian master narrative, Sheils wants to see Yeats' career finally under the star of "late capitalist modernity," but he also senses poignant echoes from past poet-philosophers like Hölderlin agonizing over "the place of poetry in a destitute age" (162). While occasionally Sheils drifts into a litany-like play with the "gong"-words of his critical orientation, for the most part he engages in a very intense and rewarding exegesis of the poet's writings in their own right. Thus over and over again the passionate drama is evoked of Yeats as an experiencer of his tumultuous era. What is of great value is that Sheils weaves back and forth among the many components of Yeats' considerable repertory–his poetry, plays, prose utterances, biographical statements, opinions on contemporary life, correspondence with other writers, etc.–and follows thematic strands as they evolve and sometimes coil back upon themselves. Sheils' chapters guide us in revisiting a poetic life in a series of historical contexts as palimpsestial moments, while he also comments on these moments from a present vantage. The reasonable premise is that Yeats begins as a patriotic

Anglophone Irish writer who understands that world-girdling English has triumphed over Gaelic and who tries to carry key traits of the native heritage over into modernism through English. Gradually Yeats reaches out to discover important features and affinities in older and newer European, New World, and Asiatic heritages. But growing ever more disenchanted (especially after the Irish civil war) with the actual domestic and foreign outcomes of modernism, Yeats withdraws into a mode of heroic, albeit cantankerous, old-age to rescue the poetic principle. He senses that poetry is threatened globally in the aftermath of modernism because it has become anachronistic everywhere under the "state's totalitarian hold on life" (180). Having started out as a cultural romantic who shows the relatedness of Irish culture with ancient and foreign values across the world, Yeats struggles with the transition into world consciousness and eventually takes on vatic characteristics of fanatic subjectivity in opposing the modern state and its violence.

There is such a wealth of interpretations of particular works, across a diverse span of genres and decades, that only a niggardly summary and a small sampling is possible here. This book sets out from the already complex mixture in Yeats' early efforts leading up to and following World War I. Aware of the precarious position of Ireland's small, unevenly bilingual culture, he navigates past the Gaelic revival movement by perfecting a partially hybrid Hiberno-English literary idiom capable of serving as an alternative vehicle to British norms, energetically anthologizes originally Gaelic-Irish works in English, and embraces the Easter Uprising as a world-historical event. Moving in and out of the London and Dublin scenes, and ultimately preferring Ireland over Paris as a focal point, already before World War I Yeats is reaching out to the world, interested in the Bengali writer Tagore, Japanese Noh drama, and more. The title of ch. 1, "Yeatsian Transmissions," quite nicely pinpoints the dynamic whereby the "nationalist" poet so closely associated with creative institutions like the Abbey Theater reaches out to the larger world and avidly assimilates elements of other literary traditions and the longer cultural development of Europe. Likewise Yeats, who enjoys a successful lecture tour across America, is fascinated by the rise of the New World as an alternative new realm of human activity, and one of the new channels for the enormous Irish diaspora. But as a processing consciousness the poet increasingly recognizes disturbing aspects of twentieth-century reality, a new order of glaring ugliness in the actual environments and discordant traits emerg-

ing in the actual populaces. Whereas Yeats could be spellbound by the fusion of beauty and ruthless determination in revolution-minded Maud Gonne before Ireland's civil war, afterwards increasingly he senses that the passage into modernism is releasing terrible forces in the world.

Ch. 2, "Folklore and the New World of Text," details Yeats' assiduous involvement in the rescue and reformulation of the Irish heritage and, in counterpoint, his expansion into the world arena. Monoglot Yeats' editorial and anthropological efforts to reuse Irish tradition are situated as "stereographic" alongside those not only of major Gaelic revivalists like Hyde, but also of hyper-text-conscious modernists like Pound, Eliot, and Joyce. Yeats' own aim around the turn of the century like Synge's is to capture the "spirit" of the folk, and we are reminded in helpful detail that his quest is executed amidst the plethora of theorizing about Celtic culture in Great Britain, lingering *causes célèbres* like the Ossian craze, and the still potent reverberations stemming from German romantic sources, notably Goethe and Herder. Inevitably Yeats' own voice becomes interwoven in his materials, and Sheils perceives an "ironically picaresque" (96) quality in the poet's investigative wanderings as a folklorist. "Yeats *performs* traditional language" (97, italics original) but is actually moving into the modernist future. He absorbs the import of new media of communication and transport by his travels in Europe and as a lecturer in America, while the semi-peripheral cultures like Ireland are being relegated to a museum-like status and destined as items for "a world literature anthology" (55). In this reviewer's estimation, when Sheils cites Goethe's *Faust II* as a prime example to illustrate that "the modern epic is a kind of museum text" (56), he misses a big opportunity to establish a deeper cultural context. In contrast to Yeats, Joyce vied in tacit competition with Goethe (and more openly with many other predecessors) to produce a cosmic narrative of epic proportions that could encompass the whole human developmental story in relation to Ireland as that story's complex synecdoche. Besides, a host of great Renaissance writers had already produced many epics set imaginatively in the Middle Ages or in antiquity, including biblical epics, that pulsated with nostalgia for earlier human experience or the authentic roots of a particular homeland. It would add enormously to the picture if Sheils were explicitly to connect his own neo-Marxian outline to the basic romantic psychological, historical, and cosmological model of development that underpins both Marx and Freud (*vide*, e.g., Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and*

Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry), or to link it to the yet longer-lasting basic paradigm of a succession of ages in Christian lore and tradition (*vide*, e.g., Northrup Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*), as discerned by a multitude of both religious and secular cultural historians.

Ch. 3, "'Put into English': The Monoglot Translator and World Literature," treats the manifold involvement of Yeats in assimilating important works of non-English cultures in English, beside his Englishing of Gaelic tradition, and views these instances as traffic in commodified items in an international economy. In a neat formulation, Yeats is scrutinized as working "within one hegemonic language containing multiple and mutually interfering cultural registers" (102), while simultaneously in a dual movement he tends eastwards toward ancient cultures and westwards to the pristine New World and its modern instantiations of Europe. Allying Irish with non-English literatures through the universalizing "economy" of English helps create a global literary space. Though evincing Nietzschean traits as an "aesthetic cosmopolitan" (115), Yeats nevertheless gets grumpy at times about the subversive potential of world materials in circulation. In transposing other cultures into English, he resembles modernists like Pound who recognize that different languages do not really correspond and who incorporate representative pieces in studied acts of "bricolage," i.e., chunks of quotation.

There are many unpleasant reminders of the twentieth century in ch. 4, "'Woman' and the Poetics of Destitution," in which Yeats is shown confronting the violent rupture whereby the nation is born. Sheils accepts with equanimity that, like Shaw and so many artists into the 1930s, Yeats momentarily entertains the utility of eugenics and is attracted toward fascism as promising cultural strength. The emphasis in on the poet's major re-mythologizing statements–notably, the rebirth of the nation and of the folk as a goddess in *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* and as beautiful child in *Leda and the Swan*. It is surprising, though, that in treating Yeats' early work *William Blake* Sheils omits reminding us that the myth of a rejection of feminine nature and its recuperation reflects the fundamental Christian cosmogonic and ontological myth (which innumerable Renaissance poets and early modern mythographer-anthropologists like Athanasius Kircher as well as movements such as Boehmean theosophy expound and cultivate over and over again). We are compensated, however, by Sheils' elaboration of how, on the one hand, Yeats uses the Easter rebellion as a quasi-Nietzschean economy of sacrifice which infests the

recipients with guilt and the need to repay, so that the afterlife of the heroes is like dividends from their investment; but, on the other hand, how this particular "gift" proves destabilizing through its untimeliness and disjointed transmission. Counting among the best passages in Sheils is his exposition of the "Crazy Jane" figure as a post-Independence destitute Cathleen Ni Houlihan. She "embodies the predicament of the openness of global modernity" (155), freedom as a kind of banishment. Radically different from chaste mother Ireland, the tramp Jane brazenly affirms life beyond the borders of national sovereignty. This in Sheils' view reveals the "deterritorialising flow of twentieth-century capitalism" (158).

The title of ch. 5, "Fanatic Subjectivity in the Modern State," adds foreboding excitement to Sheils' picture of exile from meaning in so-styled "late capitalist modernity" (162) and of the non-synchronicity of modern poetry laden with subjective energies. Regrettably, when Sheils examines Yeats' expression of the predicament of poetry as caught between art and philosophy, his judgment (in the reviewer's estimation) is clouded by distorting influences such as Said's, so that he underestimates the challenge of the comparable poetic task and dilemma posed in past eras. Much clearer are Sheils' references to fanaticism within the so-called rational state, the Enlightenment project, and the utopian origins of modern politics covered over by liberal ideology, as well as to its latency in calls on the modern Left, such as Bloch's, to reintroduce a religious element in order to re-energize revolutionary potential. Impatient with nihilism, resentment, and philistinism in modern society, Yeats' sardonic confession, "I am a fanatic" (171) in the late pamphlet "On the Boiler" (1939), serves to make the violence in any organic community visible. The motifs of discouragement in his earlier poems resurface; he becomes, in Sheils' well-argued view, a herald of twentieth-century existentialism. But Sheils chides him for a lack of artistic values in certain alliances with nihilistic enemies. The reviewer notes that the year of Yeats' death saw the publication of Jean-Paul Sartre's *La nausée*, the final collapse of the Spanish republic, the violent start of World War II during which Ireland remained neutral, Thomas Mann's withdrawal into New World exile to combat the Nazis, perhaps the most stellar year ever of great Hollywood films, the Stalin-Hitler pact, and much, much more in a bewildering climax to the dark dirty decade.

The Introduction contains an insight which defenders of international Comparative Literature will find crucial: "A unified field of study

meant to describe a reduction in diversity of literary forms … can only be suspected of perpetuating the very conditions it describes ... especially … when many of the major anthologists and methodologists of world literature live and work in the United States" (20). Here the problem surfaces of the recent spread of what is an inherently imperialistic academic "field," new-style World Literature carried via English which today is the predominant global *lingua franca*. Originating principally in North America and intruding into every kind of cultural space worldwide, the marketing of Anglophone curricula and doctrines, with non-English materials taught in translation, threatens to displace *both* the simple, albeit indirect, encounter with the world's variety through translation into an array of local languages (General Literature), *and* the more demanding encounter with diverse literatures mainly in their original linguistic modes of expression (Comparative Literature). While Yeats saw valid reasons for the Irish to avail themselves of their own form of English as a national medium in the approach to the twentieth century, he certainly had no yearning for a triumphalist climax to its use instrumentally in the twenty-first century on the part of an as-yet-to-be-born horde of academics who are housed mainly in colluding English departments on every continent, in cultures of all sizes around the globe. We cannot know how he would have reacted beyond 1939, but a good guess is that the aged vatic dissenter might have shrieked in protest and disgust.

Though it is not Sheils' explicit purpose, his study of Yeats is capable of provoking the inference that the new-style twenty-first-century "discipline" of World Literature, originating in America and carried everywhere mainly in English, may indeed be displacing international Comparative Literature institutionally in many localities, but Anglophone WL does not and cannot replace Comparative Literature intellectually. The same holds for other global *linguae francae* (e.g., French, Chinese, Spanish, etc.) as potential rivals to English for that purpose. In whatever language a new-style WL may push its way, its constellation will be contained as a sub-field amidst the panoply of cultural subject-matters and approaches which CL includes and pursues programmatically under its elitist mandate. CL aspires to be a container of all meta-languages and of the natural languages about which meta-languages discourse in a variety of old and new natural languages. Sheils' book illuminates a magnificent attempt to break out from a corner of an empire onto the world plane via that now waned empire's multifaceted language, and we face the prospect

that that language may possibly end up enduring for a long while beyond our times, functioning in its many roles in analogy to a language like Latin in past historical episodes.

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Liina Lukas and Katre Talviste, eds. *Taming World Literature: In honorem Jüri Talvet.* Special issue of *Interlitteraria,* supplement 1, 2015. Tartu: University of Tartu Press, 2015. Pp. 260. ISBN: 9789949329380.

In its 2015 issue, *Interlitteraria*, the flagpole publication of Estonian literary studies, celebrates Jüri Talvet, one of the scholars who placed the University of Tartu on the global map of comparatism. The two editors of the issue, Liina Lukas and Katre Talviste, avoided the rhetoric of academic honors, and decided instead to situate the thinking of their mentor and inspirer against the background of the hottest philosophical debates currently underpinning our discipline.

The polemical stakes are aptly and knowledgeably concentrated in Liisa Steinby's essay "Against Cultural Imperialism: World Literature, Comparative Literature, and 'Generalism.'" The liberal camp supports the idea that cultural borders are far more porous than commonly expected, and that scholarship should concentrate on the works that "naturally" transcend these borders and circulate outside their original environment. The hermeneutical camp advocates an intensive approach of cultural Otherness, almost proceeding with the ceremonial precaution of a secular religion. In her contribution, Dorothy Figueira re-posits the essential incompatibility between the empathetic, minute, patient, ethically humble comparative approach of a distinctive Other, and the comprehensive, universal, to wit crypto-imperialist ambitions of World Literature.

Figueira poignantly states that abstract defense of cultural difference and critique of Western ideological self-centeredness, of the Gayatry Chackravorty Spivak type, tend to become self-righteous and self-centered themselves, since they put aside and implicitly devalue the strenuous effort of appropriating the language, values, worldview of an *actual*

Other. The neo-Goethean agenda is also regarded with equal circumspection in Gerald Gillespie's intervention. Gillespie treats David Damrosch, the main proponent of World Literature as a consistent research and curricular area, as a worthy opponent, whose explorations are rooted in generous and humane intentions, but who unintentionally supports a re-enforcement of Western hegemony.

Both Figueira and Gillespe illuminate through their amiable disagreement with the World Literature school of thought one of the main tenets of Jüri Talvet, reflected in the volume through citations selected by the editors. In Talvet's view World and Comparative Literature are not mutually exclusive, and liberal cosmopolitanism is not doomed to reproduce *malgré soi* the hybris of big cultures sanctimoniously ignoring or patronizing small ones. While painfully aware of the threat of violence congenial to the interaction between "big" and "small" nations, Talvet is nevertheless optimistic that cultural empathy can bring the asymmetry of power statuses under the authority of humanness. Hence his theory of the both inescapable and beneficial need of small cultures and literatures to be as open as possible to the "world." A vision that eludes their traditional profiling as consummated victims and empowers them into vibrant laboratories allowing for intersections and synthesis unlikely from the perspective of big cultures usually ignoring or defying each other.

Among the contributors to the debate, Monica Spiridon seems to come closest to Talvet's comprehensiveness. Spridon elegantly argues for a weak universalism, set apart from all walks of imperialism or Messianism, which might mediate between understanding global literary processes, on the one hand, and, on the other, respectfully approaching the intimacy of transcultural literary intercourse.

Other contributions resonate with Jüri Talvet's openness toward a world literature definable as such through its internalization of global dilemmas. This view is taken by Harvey L. Hix, in his "The Human Need for Ethopoesis: Toward an Apologetics for World Literature;" by Arturo Casas in "World Poetry in a Socio-Political View;" and by Alfredo Saldana's "Itinerarios de la poesía europea posmoderna."

Jüri Talvet is the world promoter of a creative understanding of "minority," which goes against the grain of the mechanical culpabilization of cultural imperialism, towards the inspiring vision of a virtual federation of small literatures congregating to turn global odds to their advantage. Accordingly, the propitiousness of "smallness" is differently thematized

by different contributors to the volume. Javier Gómez-Montero exults the uninhibited cosmopolitanism of contemporary poetry written in Galician. Jeanne E. Glesner argues for bilingual publications as a means of promoting small literatures, on the basis of the French-German literary review *Floréal* issued in Luxembourg between 1907 and 1908.

As is well known, in a "micro-cosmopolitan" spirit, Juri Talvet contends that contingent small cultures are caught in webs of congregated traditions, in cohesive interplays of similarities and dissimilarities, the mapping of which can be instrumental in the formation of self-confident glocal identities. Along these lines, Marko Juvan tells the fascinating story of the emergence of the identity discourses of Western Slavic "small" nations, as reflected in the nineteenth-century "alphabet war." Benedikts Kalnačs uses the genre of historical drama as a means of exposing the intertwined and sophisticated responses of Baltic literatures to political and cultural foreign domination.

In the Talvetian vein of relativizing the notions of "big" and "small," Kwo-Kan Tam traces the influence of Ibsen in China, while Katre Talviste reverses the small-big axis by analyzing the pioneering 1920s translation of Walt Whitman by Estonian poet Johannes Semper.

The ethical awareness and sensitivity to human suffering omnipresent in Talvet's poetry deeply resonates with John Neubauer's contribution to the volume, "Victims and Perpetrators: Two Novels on the 1942 Novi Sad Atrocities." The works considered as case studies (Aleksandar Tišma's *The Book of Blam,* 1971, and Tibor Cseres's *Hideg napok,*1964) deal with how Novi Sad Hungarian extremists, themselves representing a minority, unleashed havoc over both the Jewish and the Serbian populations of the city, their razzia triggering a violent retaliation from the Serbs at the end of WWII. The study is not meant to single out Hungarians, since it is well-known that similar crimes with different perpetrators occurred at the same time around the region, such as the horrifying atrocities against the Jewish community committed in Iași, Romania in 1941, or the Jedwabne massacre in 1941 Nazi-occupied Poland, carried out not by the Nazis themselves, but by domestic anti-Semites. The essay is a bitter but necessary warning against the illusion that heinous violence is only what "big" nations do to "small" ones.

On a brighter note, this dense and valuable volume comprises, besides the open references to the work of Jüri Talvet, some hidden hints at the uniqueness of his personality and work. This is the case, for instance,

of Jaan Undusk's essay on the connection between ethics and time. Undusk's discussion of the "right moment," the *kairos*, of (communicative) action, which is actually the first contribution to the volume, might be an inspired allusion to the manner in which Talvet conceives of the encounters between literatures and cultures. Dorothea Scholl's *Montaigne et l'amour de la sagesse* could also be seen as containing a filigree portrait of the Tartu sage.

But the most impressive intimation of his personality and creed is circumstantially offered in a quotation from a 1853 work of German-Estonian scholar Johann Heinrich Neukirch (1803–1870), made available in Liina Lukas' excellent overview of the history of "Weltliteratur in Tartu": "Der Wert der Summe der Kenntnisse, die man sich aus den Dichtern anzueignen vermag, lässt sich nicht hoch genug anschlagen, indem jene ein durch kein Andres zu ersetzendes Mittel sind, zu einer allseitigen Bildung und dadurch zu einer immer grösseren geistigen Freiheit zu gelangen."

In my humble opinion, there can be no more persuasive a way of capturing the reason behind Jüri Talvet's lifelong dedication to the global and universal cause of literature, and particularly of poetry, than the above-stated prospect of "eine immer grössere geistige Freiheit," an ever-greater spiritual freedom.

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Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature. Postcolonialism Across the Disciplines 17. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015. Pp. 196. ISBN: 9781781381915.

On the cover of this interesting book, no single author or editor is indicated, the name of Warwick Research Collective (WReC) fulfilling that function instead. The book starts with "A Note on Collaborative Method" explaining that every chapter, and indeed every sentence, is the result of collaborative writing. It is not a collection of essays, in which chapters would usually be contributed by individual scholars, but a monograph written collectively

by seven people (who all own the copyright): Sharae Deckard, Nicholas Lawrence, Neil Lazarus, Graeme Macdonald, Upamanyu Pablo Mukharjee, Benita Parry, and Stephen Shapiro. Only once is the special expertise of a member of the group referred to (footnote 9, 160).

While the book contains two theoretical chapters and four chapters that analyse literary works, the two theoretical ones are considerably longer, constituting almost half of the main text. The basic insight of these chapters, on which this theory of world literature is built, is of political, economic and social character, and goes back to Trotsky, although it was already suggested by Marx's late writing. This argument could be summarized as follows: the development of global modernity is uneven *because* it is combined. The simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous (Ernst Bolch's *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzetigen*) is not an anomaly that should or will disappear as modern development goes on. The underdevelopment of certain nations, regions, and neighbourhoods is not a lateral consequence or a malfunction of the system but an essential part of it. In other words, underdevelopment is the result of development. Preserved feudal structures in the countryside are connected with the modernisation of metropolitan areas. Likewise, capitalism does not only produce high technology, but also backwardness. Being combined does not mean that development is exactly the same everywhere on the globe. On the contrary, this results in unevenness. If combined development creates centres and peripheries, this does not mean that either of them will be homogeneous; rather they are also uneven. While one can find residential areas on the globally highest level in India, terrible living conditions still exist in some parts of the UK.

How can these insights about global capitalism be adapted to literary studies, and how can a new concept of world literature be based on them? For the WReC, world literature is what bears testimony to the shock of modernity. Therefore, world literature could not develop before the nineteenth century or the end of the eighteenth at the earliest. This definition ostentatiously recycles a good old Marxist theory of representation, namely that literature mirrors social reality. This may be the main reason why the WReC necessarily focus on narrative literature, almost exclusively on novels. Even if they explicitly state that the novel is an element of modernity as paradigmatic as cars, this hardly justifies a concept of world literature that excludes such huge domains of literature as poetry, among others. Theoretically, they emphasise that literature is a globally connected system, in which one can differentiate between core

cultures and peripheries. Unlike Moretti (whose concept is criticised on 55–57), they believe that the peripheries are more likely to develop poetic innovation. However, due to ubiquitous unevenness, peripheries can be localised in core countries too. In their analyses, they do not investigate the interconnectedness of peripheral poetics. Rather, they examine how social reality is represented in novels produced in the peripheries, because "[i]n (semi-)peripheral aesthetics, the 'shock' of combined unevenness is registered with particular intensity and resonance" (72). The literary works analysed in chapters three through six could not easily be described as representing social reality, as indicated by the works considered in each chapter: Chapter 3, Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* (Sudan, 1969); Chapter 4, Victor Pelevin, *The Sacred Book of the Werewolf* (Russia, 2005); Chapter 5, Peter Pišťanek, *Rivers of Babylon* (Slovakia, 1991), Pio Baroja, *The Quest* (Spain, 1922), Halidor Laxness, *The Atom Station* (Iceland 1948), James Kelman, *The Busconductor Hines* (Scotland 1984); Ch. 6: Ivan Vladislavić, *Portrait with Keys* (South Africa, 2006). Indeed, these books are not realist novels. The WReC base their interpretations of such a post-modernist, magic-realist corpus as mirroring social reality on several theoretical insights. They make good use of a term coined by Michael Löwy in 2007, namely "critical irrealism." Löwy resorts to this phrase to describe a kind of literature that criticises the real, existing society while basing its aesthetics on imagination, the miraculous, the mysterious, or the dream. It is important to realize that even the overwhelming abundance of unreal elements in the represented world does not exclude the articulation of a critical position towards social reality. However, not even critical irrealism is able to construct a world exclusively from unreal elements. Frequently, real—and seriously criticised—social practices can be clearly discerned in this kind of literature. Even if the representation is irrealist, i.e. an adequate expression of a discontinuous experience and worldview, the object of the writing remains the existing social order. It is important to realize that the flourishing of irrealist poetics in the peripheries has historical reasons. What made nineteenth-century critical realism possible was the data-collecting activity of the modern state. However, in a colonial context, institutions of knowledge production served the goals of the colonisers, and therefore their kind of knowledge was suspicious in the eyes of the colonised. The latter needed other types of knowledge, such as legends, myths, which should be regarded as simultaneously constructed, alternative types of modern knowledge, rather than something archaic or

authentic. Logically then, peripheral literature makes use of the alternative, local forms of knowledge.

The literary works analysed in this book, however, were not all written in colonial or former colonial countries, or to put it another way, in the Third World. Indeed, only two of the seven works examined were, while the remainder were produced in Europe, three of them even in countries that are now members of the European Union. The WReC severely criticises—among others—Susan Bassnett in her "Reflections on Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century" for using terms like Europe, the West, and the northern hemisphere as synonymous, as if they were a mystical unity. Against this kind of essentialism, they stress that Europe is divided and culturally multileveled, with plenty of wiped out, extirpated or marginalized languages and cultures. They welcome Lucia Boldrini's critique of a homogeneous view of Europe as the coloniser: most of European countries have no imperial history, or rather only a passive one as she writes in her "Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century: A View from Europe and the UK." With this complex view of Europe, it does not seem politically incorrect to find the peripheries or semi-peripheries of the world system in what is geographically called Europe. If irrealist poetics are able to represent not only the effect of uneven and combined development on the colonial peripheries, but also the shock of transition, it is reasonable to find examples of the latter anywhere. The transition from communism to neoliberal capitalism is painful not only in post-communist, post-colonial countries, but also in Eastern- and East-Central-Europe. Post-apartheid neoliberal South-Africa is another example of a difficult transition. Not only is Europe as a whole divided and uneven, so are its most developed countries themselves. Most innovative literature can be produced in the semi-peripheries or peripheries of core countries, a kind of literature that appropriates "marginalized class, ethnic or regional positions" (55). Therefore, according to the WReC, William Faulkner is a typical writer of the periphery, rather than a central writer whose revolutionary technique radiates to the peripheries, as Pasquale Casanova described in *The World Republic of Letters* (127).

If the irrealist poetics of fissures can be a symptom of a political unconscious, the WReC is more interested in cases where authors self-consciously use the fissures in the reality of global capitalism as sources of innovation to transform realist poetics. Theoretically, this kind of innovation can result in two types of literature. One of them would be the

"world-system novel," in which the narrative structure "encapsulates the structure of the world system" (97). The main example could be Bolaño's *2666*. The other type is deeply rooted in a local context, while reflecting its position within the world-system. The book dwells much more on the latter type of literature, and the refined analyses of such novels offer exemplary readings of critical irrealism.

The *Combined and Uneven Development* is perhaps based on too narrow a definition of world-literature, which depends on what is represented in a narrative text. However, for world-literature understood in this sense, the authors elaborate a valuable and undeniably useful toolkit of literary analysis.

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Fabien Pillet. *Vers une esthétique interculturelle de la réception.* Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016. Pp. 385. ISBN: 9783825366070.

Issu de la thèse de son auteur, qui aurait sans doute dû être davantage remaniée pour gagner en légèreté et en fluidité, cet ouvrage à l'ambition essentiellement théorique vise à esquisser les grands traits d'une esthétique interculturelle de la réception. Celle-ci est d'emblée

associée à une « approche de la réception littéraire interculturelle *différenciée selon les liens entre l'espace de production et le(s) espace(s) de réception(s)* [nous soulignons] » (xv), nuance qui constitue l'un des intérêts du modèle proposé par F. Pillet. L'auteur s'appuie sur quelques études de cas démontrant la validité de ses propositions, dans un appel à éprouver leur pertinence sur d'autres corpus. En ce sens, et malgré quelques généralités et approximations, cet essai constitue une nouvelle tentative fort intéressante de penser la mondialisation de la littérature à différentes échelles.

Posant un premier cadre théorique, la partie ouvrant l'essai est consacrée aux approches et aux places de la réception au sein de la recherche littéraire, des réflexions de Jauss aux « études littéraires comparatistes contemporaines » (66–75), en passant par les études culturelles. Partant du principe qu' « [i]l n'y a pas de littérature comparée sans étude de la manière dont un auteur, une œuvre, un corpus d'œuvres ou encore un mouvement littéraire voyagent hors de leur espace culturel d'origine, c'est-à-dire sans recherche sur la manière dont les textes sont à la fois reçus à l'étranger et sur la façon qu'ils ont d'influencer les autres littératures » (1), F. Pillet commence par présenter les grands concepts jaussiens utiles à sa démonstration : l'« horizon d'attente », l'« écart esthétique » et l'« herméneutique question-réponse ». Revenant sur l'histoire puis sur les limites du célébrissime « horizon d'attente » — limites qui émanent en particulier d'une prise en compte insuffisante des différences culturelles entre les espaces traités (20), il souligne ainsi la nécessité pour les études interculturelles de réception de s'intéresser au contexte socio-historique de production des œuvres abordées, sans pour autant « réduire l'esthétique [...] à un simple phénomène socio-historique » (13). De ce point de vue, « [l]e rôle de l'esthétique de la réception interculturelle prend [...] deux dimensions : 1) dégager [...] diverses attentes esthétiques selon les différents espaces culturels ; 2) étudier comment celles-ci sont appréhendées dans la variété des jugements sur une œuvre, sur un mouvement ou encore sur un mode littéraire » (17). Dans ce contexte, F. Pillet souligne que si les études culturelles ont permis de développer « l'intérêt porté à la différence de réception entre les publics », la « différence téléologique » entre les études culturelles et les études de réception « rend difficilement exploitables les apports et les transformations amenés par les *Cultural Studies* pour [son] modèle, du simple fait qu'elles refusent la discrimination esthétique » (66). Ce reproche fréquemment adressé aux études culturelles débouche

sur une critique adressée aux « études de réception comparatistes » (sont convoqué.e.s Y. Chevrel, A. Corbineau-Hoffmann, N. Bachleitner, Amy L. Blair *et alii*), au sein desquelles « [l]'absence d'analyse des différentes aires culturelles en termes relationnels, à savoir de différences relationnelles, apparaît comme le défaut majeur » : c'est face à cette « carence » que F. Pillet se propose de « ten[ir] compte du type de relation spécifique entre l'espace de production et l'espace de réception » (70–71). *In fine*, il ressort de l'analyse critique menée dans la première partie de l'ouvrage la nécessité de spatialiser les concepts abordés, dans le cadre d'une analyse de réception interculturelle visant à cartographier les diverses relations entre les espaces culturels en jeu.

Posant un autre cadre théorique devant servir de base à une cartographie du monde prenant en compte les relations culturelles (77), la deuxième partie de l'ouvrage s'intéresse à la notion d'espace. Se penchant d'abord sur les « apports conceptuels et limites des *transferts culturels* et de la *World Literature* » (77–126), F. Pillet aborde des éléments déjà bien connus, notamment lorsqu'il épingle la « dimension eurocentrique » des développements de M. Espagne (89), lorsqu'il critique l'opposition binaire, qui occulte bon nombre de dynamiques de réception, effectuée par D. Damrosch entre « culture occidentale » et « cultures extra-occidentales » (104) ou lorsqu'il reproche à P. Casanova et D. Moretti de délaisser la question de la réception dans leurs approches de la littérature mondiale, le second envisageant la relation entre centre et périphérie « à partir de la production et non de la réception » (122). Sans doute eût-il été judicieux de s'intéresser à des manières intermédiaires de penser la littérature mondiale : pour ne citer que deux comparatistes, Ottmar Ette (*ZwischenWeltenSchreiben : Literaturen ohne festen Wohnsitz*, Kadmos 2005) ou Jean-Marc Moura (*L'Atlantique littéraire : Perspectives théoriques sur la constitution d'un espace translinguistique*, Olms 2015) ne négligent absolument pas les questions de réception dans les cartographies dynamiques de l'espace littéraire en langues européennes qu'ils dessinent. Leurs réflexions auraient notamment permis d'affiner et de nuancer les différentes échelles que propose F. Pillet à la fin de sa deuxième partie, dans une séquence intitulée « Le casse-tête de l'espace culturel de réception ». Si l'effort de l'auteur pour proposer un « *découpage* spatial du monde sur une base *culturelle* permettant la meilleure analyse possible des différentes relations littéraires interculturelles » (148) est louable, les échelles envisagées auraient gagné à être complétées. L'espace atlantique,

que l'on peut considérer à la suite de J.-M. Moura comme la « mer intérieure de l'Occident », offrirait par exemple un complément à la division proposée par F. Pillet en quatre espaces de réception : (1) « espace local » (157–58), (2) « espace européen » (158–69), (3) « espace mondial », divisé en « espace mondial de langues européennes » et « espace mondial de langues non-européennes » que certains espaces culturels ont en partage (169–81), et (4) « espace postcolonial » (181–83). Cette division est d'autant plus discutable que les « littératures postcoloniales » sont associées dans la troisième partie de l'ouvrage, *via* quelques formulations malheureuses, au « Tiers-Monde » (329–30) : *quid* du Québec ou de l'Australie, par exemple ?

Dans l'ensemble, la dernière partie de l'essai intégrant trois études de cas systématiquement reliées à des synthèses théoriques reste globalement convaincante quant à l'applicabilité du modèle d'analyse proposé par F. Pillet. Celui-ci s'intéresse d'abord aux réceptions de « *Madame Bovary* dans l'espace européen de langue allemande » (191–246), dont il tire des conclusions qui seraient applicables à « toutes les lectures d'œuvres d'art littéraire produites dans un autre pays de l'espace européen effectuées par des lecteurs issus d'un autre espace linguistique et/ou national européen » (246). Selon lui, l'étude de la réception européenne exige que le public récepteur fasse preuve de plusieurs capacités : (1) identifier le rapport qui lie l'espace de réception de l'œuvre à son espace de production ; (2) étudier la traduction de l'œuvre, et en priorité sa première traduction ; (3) observer si l'horizon d'attente et l'écart esthétique sont maintenus dans la traduction ; (4) analyser les prises de position des premiers lecteurs et critiques ; (5) confronter l'œuvre étudiée à sa « réception créatrice », définie comme « œuvre d'art répondant à l'œuvre traduite » ; (6) analyser (éventuellement) la réception créatrice « en sens inverse », c'est-à-dire « dans l'espace culturel local de l'œuvre dont elle constitue la réponse » (246–47). Les deux études suivantes donnent lieu à des modélisations du même type, dont F. Pillet invite en conclusion de son ouvrage à vérifier la pertinence pour l'analyse d'autres corpus (365). Consacrée au « *réalisme magique* entre l'Europe et l'Amérique » au sein de « l'espace littéraire mondial en langues européennes » (247–308), la deuxième étude de cas montre que s'il omet de s'interroger sur leur intérêt dans sa deuxième partie, F. Pillet a néanmoins parfaitement perçu l'importance des relations littéraires transatlantiques aux XXe et XXIe siècles. Après avoir souligné, grâce aux exemples de F. Kafka, G. Grass et I. Calvino, que « [l']unité du

réalisme magique européen démontre la réalité d'un espace européen » (280), puis étudié « le transfert de la locution *réalisme magique* en Amérique latine » dans la production critique et/ou littéraire d'A. Carpentier, J. S. Alexis, G. García Márquez et T. D'Haen, F. Pillet avance l'idée intéressante que le réalisme magique serait devenu un mode narratif universel (302–07) : « Nous pourrions presque dire que le réalisme magique, partant de l'espace européen, est devenu *The First World Literature Literary Mode* » (302) — constatation qui n'occulte pas le fait qu'« il existe, herméneutiquement, une diversité de réalismes magiques » (305). La troisième étude de cas concerne les « réceptions critique et créatrice postcoloniales du roman colonial *Heart of Darkness* » (308–55), où sont convoqués E. Said et C. Achebe, dont le roman *Things Fall Apart* est envisagé (1958) comme une « réception créatrice » de celui de Conrad. Son analyse permet à F. Pillet de souligner qu'«[à] la différence des espaces européens et extra-européens, les auteurs postcoloniaux ne visent pas toujours prioritairement [...] des lecteurs culturellement proches d'eux. Ils s'adressent parfois même autant, et parfois davantage encore, au public de l'espace européen qu'à celui de leur espace culturel » (355). S'il précise en conclusion de son essai qu'il importe d'articuler ses trois études de cas à d'autres « relations littéraires spatiales interculturelles » (366), F. Pillet semble avoir atteint le but qu'il s'était fixé, à savoir « convaincre le lecteur de l'intérêt de multiplier les études de réception interculturelles et [...] faire apparaître que les diverses réceptions "étrangères" des œuvres d'art littéraire sont aussi intéressantes que les réceptions "nationales", "locales" de celles-ci, et tout aussi importantes pour l'histoire de la littérature » (*ibid.*). Pour cette raison, son essai devrait connaître des prolongements fructueux.

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Pheng Cheah. *What is a World?: On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016. Pp. 397. ISBN: 9780822360926.

The re-emergence of interest in world literature studies during the 2000s has been accompanied by discussions on whether "world literature" represents a new paradigm within comparative literature or a new discipline

in itself. Such alternatives seem typical of the humanities in at least two derogative senses. First, the humanities in general, and critical theory in particular, are obsessively bulimic: As Jonathan Culler wittily pointed in a textbook significantly addressed to undergraduates, "Spivak? Yes, but have you read Benita Parry's critique of Spivak and her response?"[21] This "unmasterability of theory," in Culler's terms, is not unrelated to the identification of successive contributions as new paradigms or new (sub)disciplines. One of the key factors for the eagerness to create such new disciplines may be the low social esteem of the humanities, to which scholars in the humanities respond: "But we're constantly discovering new things!" Second, this low social esteem is at the basis of the humanities' search for scientificity, which, ironically, may result in low intellectual rigour, as illustrated by the Sokal hoax.[22] And yet, the humanities are not exclusively responsible for this situation. One should not forget that, according to Margaret Masterman, Thomas S. Kuhn defined "paradigm" in twenty-one different ways, something Kuhn himself denied, though he acknowledged the fault was partly his for not having defined "paradigm" more accurately.[23] Something similar may be said regarding the different definitions of "academic discipline."

World literature is neither a new paradigm for comparative literature, nor a new (sub)discipline. It cannot be a new paradigm insofar as world literature is what comparative literature has aspired to study since its inception, be it either the seminal concept of *Weltliteratur*, in the discussion of which Goethe carries out a comparative analysis of the Chinese "novel" he was reading in December 1827, Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* and his own *Herman und Dorothea*, or Macaulay Hutcheson Possnett's 1886 seminal programme for comparative literature, according to which "the gradual expansion of social life, from clan to city, from city to nation, from both of these to cosmopolitan humanity" is "the proper order

21. Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 16.

22. In the case of comparative literature, an example of such lack of rigour is Henry H. H. Remak's 1961 definition of the discipline *qua* response to René Wellek's 1958 diagnosis of the disciplinary crisis, for the key issue around methodology remains unaddressed. And yet, Remak's is the standard definition for comparative literature for the international community of comparatists.

23. Margaret Masterman, "The Nature of a Paradigm," *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, eds. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (1970; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 59–89.

of our studies in comparative literature."[24] A completely different matter is, of course, that comparative literature has neglected the study of world literature during long periods in favour of more "attainable" objectives, such as *rapports de fait*.

This directly leads to the refusal of considering world literature as a distinct discipline in its own right, unless one accepts that a discipline *qua* a branch of knowledge results from contextual changes. J. Hillis Miller, for example, has claimed that "World Literature's time has come (again). The new World Literature is a concomitant of current globalization. I strongly support the project of World Literature. The present context for developing a *rigorous discipline* of World Literature is, however, quite different from, for example, the context in which Goethe two centuries ago proposed the reading of *Weltliteratur*."[25] "I have in general capitalized 'World Literature' when I mean the new discipline," Miller adds, "not the collection of various national literatures that might be included in 'World Literature'" (253n2). However, to establish the new discipline of "World Literature," he still frustratingly defines "world literature" as a "collection of various national literatures." Furthermore, Miller overlooks that his "three important challenges to the new World Literature" (254)—the challenge of translation, the challenge of representation, and the challenge of defining what is meant by literature—have been (and still are) main concerns for comparative literature. In short, neither a different methodology, nor a different object of study, nor specific research methods are provided to sustain the idea that "World Literature" is a different discipline from comparative literature.

And yet this does not mean that a paradigm shift is not taking place in relation to world literature as comparative literature's object of research. Such paradigm shift is observable particularly in Pheng Cheah's 2016 book *What Is a World?: On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*. Cheah, a leading theorist of cosmopolitanism, nationalism, and postcolonialism, starts his book by identifying a self-evident issue as unaddressed by world literature theorists: "A world only is and we are only worldly beings if there is already time" (2). The close connection

24. Macaulay Hutcheson Possnett, *Comparative Literature* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co., 1886) 86.

25. J. Hillis Miller, "Globalization and World Literature," *Neohelicon: Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* 38.2 (2011): 251–65 (253; emphasis added).

between the twenty-first century re-emergence of world literature studies and globalisation, which led Miller to contemplate world literature as a new discipline, has favoured an understanding of world literature in exclusively spatial terms, which is not unrelated to Michel Foucault's announcement of the twenty-first century as the century of space. Hence, current theories of world literature identify the "world" of "*world* literature" as the circulation of books across the global market. In contradistinction, for Cheah "world literature" is a formula that should lead us to ask "what literature can contribute to an understanding of the world and its possible role in remaking the world in contemporary globalization" (5). Cheah is, therefore, intervening in the recurrent discussions on the social value of literature, albeit without mentioning them and, more importantly, without adopting their inane rhetoric of victimization, by positing "world literature as a world-making activity" (2). Consequently, "Is there a normative worldly force immanent to literature?" (5) becomes the central question of Cheah's book.

By "normative force" Cheah understands world literature's "power or efficacy to change the world according to a normative ethicopolitical horizon" (6). *What Is a World?* develops a normative theory of world literature, i.e. an inquiry into "the normative force that literature can exert in the world" (5). Such normative theory is based on "an understanding of the world as a temporal category" (6). The book is divided into three parts. The first two parts discuss the normative force of world literature by means of two temporal concepts: teleological time and worlding. The third part introduces a third concept: postcoloniality. The central aim is to propose "a more rigorous way of understanding world literature's normativity as a modality of cosmopolitanism that responds to the need to remake the world as a place that is *open* to the emergence of peoples that globalization deprives of world" (19). It is here where the announcement of a "paradigm shift" is encapsulated, that is, a replacement of "explicit rules as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzles" of world literature studies.[26]

Cheah introduces a new theoretical framework. In contrast to current theories of world literature, Cheah's normative theory of world literature equates the worldliness of literature with neither "circulation as a

26. I am following here a more accurate definition of "paradigm" as provided by Thomas S. Kuhn in "Postscript—1969," *The Structures of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 174–210 (175).

process in the augmentation of a literary object's value" (29), nor an understanding of literature's autonomy as an "incessant struggle and competition over the very nature of literature itself" (32), nor the reduction of literature's impact to "a refraction of social forces" (34). In contrast to the theory of possible worlds, the normative theory of world literature does not equate the "literary world's ontological status" with "one of virtuality" (4). In opposition to the geographical turn in postcolonial criticism, for Cheah's normative theory of world literature, a literary work's worldliness does not lie in "its geographical infrastructure, its *spatial* situated-ness, the 'historical affiliation' that connects cultural works from the imperial center to the colonial peripheries and the interdependencies that follow from these connections" (219).

The normative theory of world literature that Cheah formulates presupposes a temporalization of the world. Proposals concerning such temporalization are examined in the first and second parts of the book. In Part 1, "The World of World Literature in Question," Cheah highlights the minimal normative content in the concept of the world in current theories of world literature (Chapter 1), in Hegel's philosophy of world history (Chapter 2), and in the centrality of the world market in Marx's analysis of capitalism (Chapter 3). In Part 2, "Worlding and Unworlding: Worldliness, Narrative, and 'Literature' in Phenomenology and Deconstruction," Cheah discusses phenomenological and deconstructionist negative accounts that, unlike spiritualist and materialist views, do not take the world for granted, and yet restrict the opening of the world. (Post) Phenomenology understands modernity and globalisation as "world-impoverishing and world-alienating" and fosters a "special connection between world-making and world-opening" and literature (96). Both their restrictions and connections between world and literature are discussed with detailed attention to the cases of Heidegger (Chapter 4), Arendt (Chapter 5), and Derrida (Chapter 6). These "philosophies of the world" allow Cheah to outline four criteria for rethinking world literature. First, "new" world literature studies should "track the processes of globalization that make the world and [...] contest this world by pointing to the temporality of another world" (210). Second, they should ask "what world a given piece of world literature lets us imagine." Third, they should address the world as "a limitless field of conflicting forces that are brought into relation." And, fourth, they should show how world litera-

ture exemplifies "the process of worlding, or in the current argot, performatively enact[ing] a world" (211).

These four criteria guide Part 3, "Of Other Worlds to Come," where Cheah's normative theory of world literature is empirically contrasted with novels from the postcolonial South in order to interrogate "what kind of world does world literature open and make" (193). The geocultural choice is due to two factors. On the one hand, "decolonization is precisely an attempt to open up a world that is different from the colonial world." On the other hand, "the reworlding of the world remains a continuing project in light of the inequalities created by capitalist globalization and their tragic consequences for peoples and social groups in postcolonial space" (194). After an introductory discussion (Chapter 7), novels by Michelle Cliff set in Jamaica (Chapter 8), by Amitav Gosh in India (Chapter 9) and by Nuruddin Farah in Somalia (Chapter 10) are analysed through the lens of three distinctive projects of postcolonial reworlding in contrast to the worldlessness of a Caribbean "sold as a global tourist destination for leisure seekers from the North" (217), the Indian "preservation of the natural environment for world heritage" (253) and Somali humanitarianization. Chapters 8, 9 and 10 within Part 3 have been arranged "in the order of when the places portrayed historically entered into the modern world-system" (215). Chapter 11 offers an exception to this order, for it focuses on Ninotchka Rosca's and Timothy Mo's depiction of the Philippines' integration into the European world economy in the sixteenth century. Thus, it functions as an epilogue.

Beautifully written and eloquently constructed, *What Is a World?* will transform the landscape of world literature studies in the coming years by posing new questions about how the world is and should be conceived. Cheah claims that his is "a work of *literary theory* where I study philosophical conceptions of world that are insufficiently theorized or simply missing in existing theories of world literature" (14, emphasis added). The disciplinary affiliation of literary theory is, however, an important caveat when it comes to thinking about these new questions.

Literary theory is usually a monolingual practice that, from the outset, affirms the canonical value of the literary works upon which theory is elaborated. The canonical *a priori* does not apply to *What Is a World?*, as tellingly indicated by the anecdote regarding a graduate seminar on postcolonial world literature taught for the English Department of the University of California, Berkeley. Although students found "the theoretical part of the

class stimulating, they complained about the literature," a complaint that leads Cheah to conclude that his students' comments are "patently Eurocentric" (15). This is consequential with Cheah's claim that the survival of postcolonial worlds is necessary "to the constitution of a larger world of humanity that is truly *plural*" (12, emphasis added).

However, the contradiction between this pluralism and monolingualism—all the novels analysed by Cheah are in English—, persists. Indeed, *What Is a World?*, in contradistinction with Cheah's graduate seminar does not exclusively address students of English. Nor does it understand world literature as a "new" discipline whose difference with comparative literature lies in that the former studies literature in translation into English while the latter requires "deep knowledge of various languages" (24). From this perspective, the paradigm shift represented by *What Is a World?* needs to be actualized from within comparative literature by transcending, on the one hand, translation as the only complexity of postcolonial literature in English so as to include the plurality of languages that resist "the cultural homogenization of globalization" (268), and, on the other hand, the identification of literary force of world-making and world-opening exclusively with narrative and, more specifically, the novel.

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Compte rendu de revues / Review of Journal Issues

Journal of World Literature, vols. I:1 and I:2. Leiden and Boston: Koninklijke Brill, 2016. Pp. 296. ISSN: 24056472.

Members of the AILC/ICLA may already have some acquaintance with the *Journal of World Literature*, the Brill quarterly published "in association" with the Institute for World Literature. The inaugural issue, which appeared in Spring 2016, was on exhibit at the Vienna Congress and for almost a year has been available at brill.com/jwl. Signaling a major overlap between this new venture and comparative literary studies, Theo D'haen and Zhang Longxi, two of *JWL*'s four editors-in-chief, have held or now occupy leadership positions with the AILC/ICLA. The same double duty also holds for several members of the journal's editorial board as well as for Sowon Park, who edited the journal's second issue, on "The Chinese Scriptworld and World Literature."

The inaugural issue's two introductions, one by David Damrosch and the other by the managing editors, Omid Azadibougar and Esmaeil Haddadian-Moghaddam, point up an intriguing interplay of motives behind the foundation of *JWL*. On the one hand, an older Harvard-based scholar who has done so much over the past two decades to renew and stimulate serious scholarly interest in world literature. On the other, two younger Iranian expatriates based in Western Europe, who started with plans for a periodical that, to counter what Damrosch calls an "exclusivist politics of culture" (3), would study the reciprocal relations between Persian and world literature. This initial vision expanded, after they received advice from many quarters and a broader editorial team was established, to become the current endeavor, whose statement of "Aims and Scope" envisions a forum "for contributions from all the world's literary traditions."

Comparatists curious about the overlap between their field and world literary scholarship in this journal's personnel will find that the

contributors often reference David Damrosch's well-known definition of world literature as writing that, in circulating beyond its culture of origin, has the capacity, even in translation, to attract readers. Accordingly, *JWL*'s statement of aims confirms that translation will definitely be "a focus," thus marking a clear departure from a comparatist's commitment to knowing texts in their original language. Yet Damrosch's introduction can stress that world literature seeks to expand "comparative studies to a world scale" (1). At stake is the tension between two forms of cross-cultural literary study, one that is intensive and relatively localized despite its multilingualism and another that, to enlarge its geocultural scope, chooses a more flexible attitude toward what counts as text. To judge from the articles in these first two volumes, however, this distinction is far from absolute, since at many points all of them show a detailed command of specific literary works, even of entire traditions, in their original language. The differences between *JWL* and a typical comparative literature journal lie in the number and variety of literatures that a given volume considers, in the expectation that readers want to learn something about languages and cultures about which they have little prior knowledge, and in the authors' commitments to framing their arguments in ways that promise to advance world literary study.

The ten articles in *JWL*'s inaugural issue, arranged in alphabetical order by the authors' names, seem to have been chosen to display the journal's willingness to welcome a wide range of contributions, both in subject and approach and in the scholars' seniority. Four of them could be called "position papers," in that they address perennial topics for cross-cultural literary study that are probably familiar to older colleagues but merit reformulation and updating. Thus, within a broader global perspective, Theo D'haen extends Georg Brandes's insights about the literary situation in Europe around 1900, where three "major" literatures diverted meaningful attention away from a host of more "minor" ones—a trend that would mark much comparative work throughout the twentieth century and poses a continuing problem for world literature. José Luis Jobin and João Cezar de Castro Rocha explore the implications of Oswald de Andrade's "cultural cannibalism" manifesto in an array of Latin American and Spanish contexts, from Sarmiento and Machado de Assis to Borges and Picasso, making the point that the belatedness of either area was able to promote synthesis and innovation, not just an endless sense of "underdevelopment." Zhang Longxi argues, contra much

postcolonial criticism (and perhaps with China's cultural revolution in mind as well), that world literature should not act too hastily in dismissing works that have achieved canonical status in their national settings. Karen Thornber, finally, in the spirit of her 2010 Balakian Prize book on an East Asian literary network, draws attention to other such groupings that remain invisible to Western scholars: especially the south Asian or African literatures in non-European languages, but also the role of transnational "vectors" like the ones formed among Tibetan or Jewish writers. She also speaks for a younger cohort of scholars in looking ahead to the challenges for cross-cultural literary study in the current century, such as the treatment of global problems like environmental degradation, health and disease, or human rights abuses.

Along with these programmatic statements on the nature and scope of world literary study, this issue features three ambitious discussions of issues that confront the field today. Alexander Beecroft addresses the challenge of devising a better system of periodization for literary history worldwide than the Eurocentric ones, emphasizing (for example) the contrast of the hiatus that separates the Greek and Latin classics from the early Renaissance in the West with the striking achievements during those "Dark Age" centuries in both East Asia and the Middle East. Still, a scheme covering Eurasia as a whole should be possible, though much more needs to be learned about genres other than fiction, drama, and poetry; about the long stretch of time between antiquity and modernity; and about that intervening sequence's terminal phase which Beecroft proposes to call "late premodernity." As for the future, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen provides a rousing account not just of four key changes that should have decisive impacts on literature around the world (migration, digitalization, climate change, and the "posthuman") but of how these changes reshape perceptions of twentieth-century figures like Nabokov and Borges in the first two instances and of earlier touchstones like the flood in *Gilgamesh* or Frankenstein in the other two. Despite the many pressures from other media, Thomsen contends that, given language's deep roots in human nature, literature will easily survive. Engaging with translation, but shifting from language issues to social realities, Gisèle Sapiro weighs current obstacles to the free circulation of world literature, mainly in the West. With the decline in interference from the state, profit motives among publishers that devalue translations ironically collaborate with the restrictions of copyright, but "educational and cultural hierarchies" (92) still command a market niche that "constantly resurfaces

and extends its ramifications" in the manner of Moretti's trees (94). This is where world literature now finds its place.

Rounding out the inaugural issue are two fascinating analyses of specific textual situations and the prospectus for a different kind of world literature journal. Satoru Hashimoto juxtaposes Lu Xun's, Brecht's, and Benjamin's responses, all of them from the 1930s, in narrative, poetic, and reflective modes respectively, to the legendary origins over two millennia before of the Daoist classic, the *Daodejing*. Implicit in these responses at unsettled times, whether Western or Chinese, is a shared sense of an "irreducible, boundless openness" at the core of world literary works, one that exists "prior to any cultural identification" (50). Focusing on Malaysian editions of the Qu'ran which added word-for-word interlinear translations of the Arabic text, Ronit Ricci discusses their cultural implications, which along with religious teachings brought innovations in vocabulary and grammar to the Malay language plus a peculiarly granular approach to "world literature" involving direct exposure to writing in a different language with only a rudimentary mastery of its vocabulary. For its readers, the article should spark reflection on their first contacts with foreign texts, with their oddly constructed sentences and no interlinear guidance. Modeling an alternative to *JWL*, South Korea's *Global World Literature*, launched in 2013 and appearing at two-year intervals, publishes actual literary works along with criticism and is aimed at a more general audience. The editor Kim Jae-yong (in a translation by John Kim) ascribes the rise of a broader, more urgent sense of world literature to the changed world order after World War II, but notes that the competing visions of the field sponsored by China and the Soviet Union gave rise to problems and in any case "could not contain the voice of the non-west" (65). Building on their prior attention to Asia and Africa, he outlines a literary geography with three more regions: the Middle East straddling both continents, Euro-America, and Latin America—the last of which is "both participating in yet distinct from Western culture" (66).

JWL's second issue places readers squarely in an East Asian subset of Kim's Asia, a region that includes China, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan, which over various long periods and in somewhat different ways used Chinese characters as a writing system. From a Western perspective, the result is an interesting reconfiguration of the four-culture problem, whether it appeared in an Italian, Spanish, French, and English format during the Renaissance or in a French, English, German, and Russian one for fiction

from Goethe to Chekhov. But whereas those examples shared at most an alphabet and some etymological affinities among specific words, the Chinese scriptworld had in common a writing system that, despite major differences in the languages, was mutually comprehensible. For the benefit of neophytes, Sowon Park makes it clear in her thoughtful, enlightening introduction that Chinese characters are not "purely ideographic" (134-35), nor were they fully transparent as they moved among the four languages.

Befittingly, given his pioneering work on writing systems and world literature, Damrosch leads off this issue's nine articles. He joins reflections on cuneiform and hieroglyphics in the antique world with discussions of Vietnamese and Korean writings that, while using either the classic Chinese system or homegrown national ones geared to the vernacular, touched in various ways on issues of inscription. Three other articles provide further global framing, with Charles Lock reviewing the fortunes of the Roman alphabet with an eye to embedded cultural assumptions, most notably, in the early centuries, when newly Christianized societies resisted an alphabet that was associated with persecution. Around 800 CE the English, with their non-Latinate language spoken at some distance from Rome, were the first to accept the new dispensation, while the cedillas, tildes, umlauts, and other "diacritical rebellions" (168) adopted elsewhere brought out the absence of a full fit between the original Roman letters and the sounds of the languages. Linguist Edward McDonald pursues the tangled story of Western attempts to understand the Chinese script, often leading to mistaken emphases on its pictorial or its directly ideational nature. Still, there are "more similarities than differences," he affirms at the end of this searching discussion, among "writing systems across the whole Eurasian continent" (209). Within East Asia itself, in a thought-provoking cultural critique translated by the editor, Lim Hyung-Taek looks back to the early twentieth century at the seeming irony of Japan's reliance on Chinese script to translate imported Western terms and concepts. This practice he interprets as one aspect of a policy to promote a regional order centered on Japan, first with its Korean colony, then with China itself; the situation led to Korea's rapid abolition of Chinese in favor of a writing system of its own that dated back to the 1400s. Now, however, with the passing of that imperialist era, Lim regrets the loss of a heritage shared with his nation's neighbors.

The remaining articles consider a satisfying variety of topics from the fringes of the Chinese scriptworld, generally with a degree of attention to

textual detail that recalls Hashimoto's and Ricci's pieces in the inaugural issue. Judy Wakabayashi addresses the subtleties of tone relayed by Japan's three scripts, one of which draws on Chinese characters, and investigates the many difficulties that they pose for literary translators. With Chinese script seemingly irrelevant to his topic, Matthew Chozick examines the role of English-language translations in establishing *The Tale of Genji*'s reputation as a "first" novel; they even succeeded in reviving domestic interest in Murasaki, which culminated in 1939-41 with Tanizaki's translation of her book into modern Japanese. Alert to massive cultural imbalances on Taiwan, Andrea Bachner studies the complex mixtures of Chinese and native languages involving both words and writing systems in the work of two Taiwanese Indigenous writers. More broadly, in an overview of six watershed periods, Karen Thornber stresses the diversity of languages and scripts and the role of ethnic minorities throughout Chinese history. She then turns to Tibet and its lengthy but long neglected twelfth-century *Epic of King Gesar*, which over the centuries was translated into Mongolian, Kalmyk, and German, but only recently into Chinese, where it has now become "a thriving cultural industry" (220). This special issue of *JWL* draws to a close at the sinosphere's southern edge, where John Duong Phon traces the secularization of script in Vietnam after World War I. Turning away from Chinese characters and their aura of cosmic wisdom, this country, like Turkey in the same years, came to adopt a more "practical" national writing system based on a customized Roman alphabet.

Besides the two issues reviewed here, the editors have already assembled ten further ones, two of which on "Translation Studies Meets World Literature" and "Scandinavian Literature and World Literature" have appeared just recently. Readers can look forward to topics that range from the national ("Romanian World Literature") and the regional (Arabic world literature) to broader worldwide issues like translingualism or "ultra-minor literatures." One annual issue will be devoted to papers from the yearly meetings of the Institute of World Literature, which will continue to rotate among sites in Asia, the United States, and the Middle East or Europe. Once *JWL* enters its fourth year, it will be in a position to start publishing work from a wider array of interested scholars, who are invited to submit their articles online following the instructions on the journal's Brill website.

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Rapports de colloques / Conference Reports

The Many Languages of Comparative Literature / La littérature comparée—multiples langues, multiples langages / Die vielen Sprachen der Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft

XXIst Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association (AILC/ICLA), University of Vienna, July 2016

On the occasion of its Paris meeting in 2013, the general assembly of the ICLA decided that the next congress was to take place at the University of Vienna, Austria. Among the local researchers and teachers in the field of comparatism, an organising team was created with Achim Hermann Hölter as chair and Norbert Bachleitner and Christine Ivanovic as vice-chairs. Paul Ferstl, who also coordinated the programme, and Constanze Prasek acted as senior assistants. Naturally, the organising committee has to thank many other colleagues and helpers for their passionate support.

The XXIst Congress of the ICLA took place from July 21st to 27th 2016 at Vienna University. More than 1,500 international participants engaged with the main topic, "The many languages of comparative literature / La littérature comparée—multiples langues, multiples langages/ Die vielen Sprachen der Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft," in numerous workshops and lectures. Due to current political developments,

some Turkish colleagues were unable to attend. The ICLA presidency delivered a note of protest to the Turkish ambassador in Vienna.

For the first time, the theme of a congress organised by the International Comparative Literature Association involved "language" in all its meanings, embedded in various contexts: as a "national" idiom forming the basis of a literary text, as source and target language in literary translation, as the set of languages forming "world literature" in its literary manifestation, as the canon of languages "world literature" is actually concentrating on, and finally as terminology—a transnational kit of tools more vital than ever to a multilingual scientific community. Paradoxically enough, the ever-growing dominance of English made itself felt even in the AILC-ICLA biotope. Among the 383 single papers presented at the congress, fourty-nine were delivered in German, sixty-four in French, and 271 in English. The congress also focused on language in its broadest sense: the language usage of social and ethnic groups as vectors of literature, the language of themes and discourses, language as a literary subject, language as the expression of central problems and ideas negotiated in various literatures of the world, and even language in its metaphorical sense, as "languages" of styles and forms.

The opening ceremony was held on July 21st, with words of greetings offered by Heinz W. Engl (Rector of the University of Vienna), Achim Hermann Hölter (Chair of the Organising Committee of ICLA 2016), Hans Bertens (President of the ICLA), Matthias Meyer (Dean of the Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies, University of Vienna), Antje Wischmann (Deputy Head of the Department of European and Comparative Literature and Language Studies, University of Vienna), and Frank La Rue (UNESCO Assistant Director General, Head of sector Communication and Information). The latter presented the Memory of the World Programme (MoW) and suggested a possible collaboration between ICLA and UNESCO MoW.

These aspects were discussed further during the special panel entitled "How Can Comparative Literature and the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme Cooperate?" (July 26th). During this session, statements were made by Hans W. Bertens (President, ICLA), Lothar Jordan (Vice-President, Memory of the World International Advisory Committee; Chair of the MoW Sub-Committee on Education and Research), Dietrich Schuller (Austrian National Commission for UNESCO, Chair of the Austrian MoW Committee, Member of the MoW

International Advisory Committee), David Sutton (Reading, UK), Galina Alexeeva (Leo Tolstoy Museum Estate Yasnaya Polyana, Russian Federation; Chair of the ICLM [International Committee for Literary Museums] in ICOM), Achim Hermann Hölter (University of Vienna/ Austria), and Jan Bos (National Library, The Hague, Netherlands; Chair of the MoW Register Sub-Committee). An address was subsequently delivered by Abdulla El Reyes (Abu Dhabi/ UAE, President of the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme). It was followed by a concluding panel discussion with Hans W. Bertens, Achim Hermann Hölter, Abdulla El Reyes, Jan Bos, and Lothar Jordan.

As the general theme allowed for a broad variety of approaches, participants could take part in one (or several) of altogether 125 group sections in the form of seminars and round tables, or choose to present their paper in one of the five major streams of the overall "language" topic. As had to be expected with this relatively novel approach, the praxeological section "Comparatists at Work / Professional Communication" was, with eighteen papers, the least frequented. The "Language of Thematics" section, which doubtlessly foregrounded one of the traditional strongholds of comparatism, comprised fourty-nine papers. The "Arts as Universal Code" section, quite astonishingly, gathered no less than eighty-seven scholars, who explored questions related to Comparative Arts / Interart Studies, intermediality, and adjacent subjects. The two groups dealing with language itself ("Language—The Essence of World Literature") and the interconnection between multilingulism and multiculturalism ("Many Cultures, Many Idioms") attracted each more than a hundred contributors (112 and 117 papers, respectively).

Five round table discussions further elaborated on particular topics from the five main panels. The underlying aim of the organisers was to make these five axes clearly visible and productive throughout the congress. Haun Saussy, Christine A. Knoop, Achim Hermann Hölter, and Marc-Mathieu Münch contributed to the discussion on "The Current Interest in Comparative Arts / Interart Studies" (Panel A: The Arts as Universal Code), which was hosted by Gerald Gillespie on July 26th. Hans W. Bertens, Ipshita Chanda, Adams Bodomo, Sandra Bermann, and Achim Hermann Hölter (discussion leader) exchanged their views in the panel entitled "On Terminology, Dictionaries, and the Languages of Comparatism" (Panel B: Language—the Essence of World Literature) on July 23rd. Dorothy Figueira on July 22nd moderated a debate on the question "Has

Comparatism Turned into World Wide Cultural Studies?" (Panel C: Many Cultures, Many Idioms), in which Isabel Capeloa Gil and Zhang Longxi participated. Takayuki Yokota-Murakami, Achim Hermann Hölter, and Gianna Zocco exchanged views on "Current Trends in Thematic Studies" (Panel D: The Language of Thematics) in a session led by Hendrik Birus on July 25th. Finally, Steven Sondrup and Cho Sung-Won shared their thoughts on "Comparative Literature and the 'Practice Turn'" (Panel E: Comparatists at Work) with Achim Hermann Hölter on July 26th.

All in all, the 125 group sections focused on a wide range of topics examined through some 1,063 papers. Each of the five largest seminars deserving particular mention hosted between nineteen and twenty-five lectures and contributions, namely "Productivity of Plagiarism" presented by Larissa Polubojarinova, Charlotte Krauss, and Christine Baron; "Comparison and Intermediality" organised by Massimo Fusillo and Marina Grishakova; "Sprache der Migration. Migration der Sprache" devised by Sandro M. Moraldo and William Franke; "Interferenzen" prepared by Sebastian Donat, Martin Sexl, Monika Raic, and Martin Fritz; and lastly "South Asian Pathways" organised by Chandra Mohan for the Comparative Literature Association of India (CLAI).

The first keynote lecture was delivered by Dame Marina Warner (Birkbeck, University of London, UK) on July 21st, as part of the opening ceremony with the introduction and chair by Sowon Park (University of California Santa Barbara, CA/ US). It focused on "Magical Writing: Oracles, Curses, & Further Preventive Measures." Marina Warner also offered a workshop on "Orienting Wonder" on July 22nd.

On July 22nd, Joep Leerssen (Academy Professor of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences) was invited by the Austrian Academy of Sciences (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften) to present a keynote lecture entitled "Behind Gutenberg's Back: World Literature beyond Print Culture." This event took place in the ceremonial hall of the Academy. Leerssen was welcomed and introduced on behalf of the Academy by Waldemar Zacharasiewicz (University of Vienna, Austria).

A panel discussion on July 23rd, "Theory, World Literature and the Politics of Translation," placed in conversation Emily Apter (New York University, NY, US) and David Damrosch (Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, US). This session, introduced by Christian Moser (University of Bonn, Germany), was organised and hosted by the German Comparative Literature Association in collaboration with the Swiss Comparative

Literature Association. Christian Moser chaired this keynote presentation together with Markus Winkler (Université de Genève, Switzerland).

Further, two distinguished literary guests presented their work during plenary sessions. On July 25th, the famous Austrian author Christoph Ransmayr, who was decorated with both the "Prix Jean Monnet de littérature européenne" and the "Prix du meilleur livre étranger" in 2015, read from the English translation of his "Atlas of an Anxious Man" (Simon Pare). On July 26th, in a session entitled "In jeder Sprache sitzen andere Augen," Nobel prize laureate Herta Müller, who had already been invited to the Seoul ICLA congress in 2010, talked about language with journalist Angelika Klammer. This conversation included readings from her novel "Atemschaukel" and a presentation of hitherto unpublished poetic collages. Herta Müller's talk was translated live by Caterina Grasl from the Department of English.

Further distinguished lectures were given by the following: Waldemar Zacharasiewicz (University of Vienna, Austria), "The Confluence of Ethnic Voices in Urban America: John Dos Passos, Manhattan Transfer and Henry Roth, Call It Sleep"; E.V. Ramakrishnan (Comparative Literature Association of India, Kolkata/ India), "From Reception to Resistance: The Many Languages of Indian Modernism"; Vladimir Biti (University of Vienna/Austria), Past Empire(s), Post-Empire(s), and the Narratives of Disaster: Joseph Roth's *The Radetzky March* and Ivo Andrić's *The Bridge over the Drina"*; Isabel Capeloa Gil (Universidade Catolica Portuguesa, Lisbon/ Portugal), "From peripheral to alternative and back: Contemporary meanings of modernity"; Hendrik Birus (Jacobs University Bremen/ Germany), "Zur Übersetzbarkeit literarischer Namen"; and finally, Peter V. Zima (Alpen-Adria Universitat Klagenfurt/ Austria), "Krise und Kritik der Sprache in vielen Sprachen." An exhibition by publishers and service providers who specialised in literary studies was also held in conjunction with the congress. Organised in the courtyard of the main university building, this event sought to promote the exchange of information on recent publications in the field of comparative literature.

Another exhibition in Vienna University Library displayed dictionaries of critical terminology in dozens of languages, translations of Thomas Mann's novel "Der Zauberberg" in numerous world languages, publications by the members of the Viennese Department of Comparative Literature, selected copies and a complete list of PhD and MA theses

by local students, and, last but not least, almost all of the published proceedings of previous ICLA congresses.

Throughout the whole week of the conference, the "ICLA on stage" initiative—organised by members of the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Vienna—enabled participants to read and listen to texts written in the many languages of literature in the courtyard of the main building of the university.

The numerous events and lectures of this congress could not have been put together without the financial support of a number of generous sponsors, nor without the devoted and indefatigable help of eighty student volunteers from the Comparative Literature BA and MA Course of Studies.

At this stage, the organisers are planning to publish in print and open-access format a selection of peer-reviewed individual papers presented at the congress along with papers from workshops etc., unless these are being published in distinct volumes by seminar leaders. The proceedings will, of course, include the keynotes and distinguished lectures.

The closing ceremony, which took place on July 27th, included a farewell speech by the outgoing president Hans Bertens and words of welcome by the new president Zhang Long-xi. Looking ahead to future developments, a Chinese delegation took this opportunity to introduce the city of Shenzhen, which will host the XXIInd Congress of the ICLA in 2019.

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Comparative Literature: At the Crossroads of Culture and Society

XIII Biennial International Conference of the Comparative Literature Association of India (CLAI). March 6–8, 2017. Centre for Comparative Literature, Visva-Bharati (India)

The XIII biennial conference of the Comparative Literature Association of India (CLAI) was held in the sylvan surroundings of Visva Bharati,

Shantiniketan, a few days ahead of the famed Basanta Utsab, March 6–8, 2017. The programme was hosted by the Center for Comparative Literature, Bhasa Bhavan, Visva-Bharati, in collaboration with the Comparative Literature Association of India, the University Grants Commission, Delhi; Sahitya Academy, Delhi; Oxford University Press, New Delhi and Rabindra Bhavan, Visva-Bharati.

The inaugural session included a traditional welcome by the students of the University, followed by an address by Prof. Tapati Mukherjee, Chairperson, Center for Comparative Literature. The theme of this conference "Comparative Literature: At the crossroads of Culture and Society" was introduced by the three Assistant Professors of the Centre for Comparative Literature, Drs. Nilanjana Bhattacharyya, Soma Mukhopadhyay and Dheeman Bhattacharya. As the Vice Chancellor of Visva Bharati University, Dr. Swapan Kumar Dutta, reminded the audience, the emergence of the field of Comparative Literature in India dates back to Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore's 1907 lecture series. The cultural context of Visva Bharati is the ideal location to study comparative literature, given the fact that a myriad Indian and non-Indian languages are represented. He expressed his hope that this conference would be a huge success.

A report on the activities of CLAI and the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) was delivered by Professor Chandra Mohan, the General Secretary of the Indian Association. After welcoming all guests, he particularly rejoiced at the presence of the President of the Comparative Literature of India, Dr. Indra Nath Choudhury; eminent writer-poet and distinguished Professor Nabaneeta Dev Sen; Jnanpith awardee Shri Bhalchandra Nemade, as well as other members of the CLAI Executive Council. He also welcomed and congratulated the distinguished guests from Shenzhen University, China and from Montaigne University, France. He complimented Professors Ipshita Chanda and E.V. Ramakrishnan for their recent election to the board of ICLA.

In his lecture, Professor Zhang Longxi, President of the ICLA, talked about non-Western concepts of spirituality as well as the imperative need to overcome the trauma of the colonial legacy. Jnanpith awardee Bhalchand Nemade delivered a speech about his vision of comparative literature and the role of the comparatist, who should learn to embrace the vastness of diversity. He chose examples drawn from Mesopotamian tales, the Panchatantra and also the Kalidasa, exploring their thematic resonances in order to illustrate his point. He particularly focused on

the use and the notions of secularism, the concepts of elitism and non-elitism, as well as standard and non-standard uses of language. He noted that in India, writers often have recourse to such European languages as English, which is easier to learn than standard native languages. He also dealt with linguistic consciousness and the control of the reading public. He pointed to the role of comparative literature as a discipline seeking to reduce the distance between center and margin.

The CLAI presidential address was delivered by Professor Indra Nath Chaudhury. He focused on how Tagore's concept of world literature was used to refer to universal humanism. In her speech, Professor Nabaneeta Dev Sen voiced her life-long love affair with comparative literature. She felt delighted that this conference was taking place in Visva Bharati, a venue particularly suited to the study of the field. She emphasized that comparative literature remained a comparatively young discipline on the Indian sub-continent. She argued that comparative literature could only benefit such a pluralistic, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual nation as India. Professor Tapati Mukherjee, after thanking Professor Nabaneeta Dev Sen for her lecture, invited all participants to share their views about comparative literature in a lively debate.

Professor Emeritus E.V. Ramakrishnan, Central University of Gujarat, chaired the first plenary session on "Literary and Cultural Narratives in South Asia," in which Professors Chandra Mohan, Anisur Rehman (Director, Rekhta Foundation), Ameena Ansari, and Jamia Millia Islamia participated. Professor Chandra Mohan launched the session with a paper discussing the music-based narratives of Guru Nanak and his companion Mardana. Professor Ameena Ansari's presentation focused on "Narrativising Pakistan: Khalid Akhtar's Literary Discourse." Professor Anisur Rahman concentrated on "Verse Narratives in Urdu" while Professor Ramakrishnan delivered a speech entitled "The Return of the Story Teller: A Perspective on Recent Trends in Contemporary Asian Fiction." The second plenary session, "Doing Comparative Literature in India: Languages, Literatures and Cultures," was devoted to the work of Mahasweta Devi, a distinguished writer and activist. Chaired by Professor Ipshita Chanda, this session featured presentations by Bhalchandra Nemade, Daxin Chara Bajrangi and Nabaneeta Deb Sen.

One of the highlights of the second day of the conference was a third plenary session entitled "Comparative Literature: East-East Dialogue," chaired by Avijit Bhattacharya, Head of the Department, China Bhavan,

Visva Bharati. The main speakers were Zhang Xiaohong and Yang Xiaoxia from Shenzhen University, China. The fourth plenary session, chaired by Professor Ipshita Chanda, explored issues related to cosmopolitanism and comparative literature. It comprised talks by Indra Nath Choudhuri, Jancy James, Harish Trivedi, Ipshita Chanda and Swati Ganguly. This eclectic session touched upon various issues, including the possibilities inherent in a universal methodological apparatus informing the practice of comparative literature; the link between the supremacy of the English Language, urbanization and marketing policies; and, the Tagorean notion of universal humanism. In addition, twelve parallel sessions, gathering academics from different parts of the world, contributed to the scholarly quality of the debates.

The third and final day of the conference gave participants the opportunity to attend stimulating lectures by Professor Indra Nath Choudhury and Emeritus Professor Didier Coste (Université Montaigne, Bordeaux, France). The music performed during the closing ceremony offered a welcome addition to the multiplicity of literary avenues explored during the conference.

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Ethical Literary Criticism, Comparative Literature, and World Literature

Sixth Conference of the International Association for Ethical Literary Criticism, hosted by the Estonian Association of Comparative Literature, October 1–7, 2016. University of Tartu, Estonia.

In the first days of October 2016, the University of Tartu, Estonia, hosted an international conference that should have discussed ethics in literature and criticism, but instead took the concept of intercultural cooperation to an entirely different level. A conference titled "Ethical Literary Criticism,

Comparative Literature and World Literature" was a cooperation project proposed by the International Association for Ethical Literary Criticism (IAELC) and the Estonian Association of Comparative Literature (EACL).

The first four annually held symposia of the International Association of Ethical Literary Criticism, an organisation established in China in 2012, have taken place in Shanghai, China and the fifth in Seoul/Busan, South Korea last year, making the event in Tartu the first one to be organized outside Asia. The notion of "ethical literary criticism" was new and intriguing to the board of the Estonian Association of Comparative Literature and the decision to combine our annual EACL conference with the symposium of a budding Chinese scholarly association that sought cooperation partners in Europe was genuinely welcomed. However, the conference and the Association provided an enormous surprise and I must say, the expectations of the conference were to a large extent not met, at least in the way the organizers and European partners expected. The event was described by many Estonian and experienced international colleagues as well as one of the guest speakers invited by the EACL, Dorothy Figueira, as one of the most memorable, yet puzzling conferences in their careers.

According to the founder of the organization, Professor Nie Zhenzhao from Central China Normal University and his followers, ethical literary criticism—to clarify the concept very briefly—holds as a premise that literature should establish through texts the ethical norms of an existing society and set a behavioural role model for the readers to follow. The theory is based on an opposition of ethics and aesthetics, the latter being solely a tool for a more convincing packaging and presentation of "ethics" in literature. But the black and white binary oppositions do not end stop there in Nie's theory. A human is opposed to an animal (an animal being uncontrolled, irrational, and therefore bad) as our mind is opposed to emotions. Humans, according to Nie's theory, are complete and mature only when they follow their rational minds enabling them to make ethical choices and decisions. Literature serves as a tool for reflecting and shaping an ethical society, a signpost for people seeking moral guidance in our social reality. In brief, we could call it a theory of right and wrong as determined by the school of ethical literary criticism.

Starting with Professor Nie's take on *Hamlet,* "Ethical Dilemma, Ethical Taboo, and Ethical Choice in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: a New Interpretation of the Character's Delay," and continuing with Professor Su

Hui's explanation of the ethical values of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and other comedies, the audience heard a thorough but baffling coverage of Western literary history interpreted from the point of view of right and wrong, the ethical and the unethical. The presentations that involved Nie's theory, all delivered by Chinese colleagues, often consisted of a graphic account of the characters in a who-is-who style in a well-known literary work and left the impression of an agenda meant to re-interpret, in a presumably correct way, (Western) literary canon. All the presentations by Chinese colleagues relied on Professor Nie's theory of ethical literary criticism without providing any critical angles or points of comparison and contrast.

Having experienced Soviet society and ideology very closely in the near past, the Estonian academic environment still tries to keep an open mind regarding different ideas and approaches. However, we tend to have a severe allergic reaction to anything that limits choice and restricts the ways the world around us can or must be interpreted. Thus, throughout the first day of the conference, the presentations were met with quiet dismay by the Estonian organizers and the international audience who had never had an encounter with ELC before. Yet, as we proceeded, the seeds from Professor Nie's theory started to fall on hostile ground. Nevertheless, it was not only the dogmatic theory of "what is ethical" that caused confusion among the audience, but rather the fact that all attempts to question, counter or further examine the theory of ethical literary criticism in discussion and questions sessions were rebuffed by Chinese presenters, Chinese moderators or their colleagues, leaving the impression that instead of a hoped for dialogue we were dealing with a cleverly planned ideological invasion. The keynote speaker invited by the Estonian organizers, Dorothy Figueira, Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Georgia and Honorary President of the International Comparative Literature Association, commented on the conference in an interview with an Estonian weekly cultural newspaper *The Sirp*:

> I did not get the impression that the network of IAELC was really open to dialogue. Rather it presented its vision and there was virtually no discussion of other possible ethical perspectives. This was unfortunate because, in theory, I could not agree more with the ELC general thesis that there is a deficit in ethical engagement in Western theory. But, in practice, I was not at all convinced that ELC offered any viable remedy for this deficit.

And indeed, in her presentation Figueira stressed the lack of interest in ethical issues in literary studies and ways in which we might ethically conceptualize "the other." I am sure the conference gave her much food for thought in this department.

In order to give a balanced account of the conference, I should also say a few words about the presentations by the small minority of non-Niean scholars. For example, the papers delivered by young Estonian scholars offered a refreshing contrast to the more dogmatic presentations. Inga Sapunjan (University of Tartu) spoke of the ethical mindset of literary characters in the Stalinist era. Johanna Ross (University of Tartu) presented a paper on two reading models of Soviet Estonian women writing with conflicting ethical priorities, opposing the gendered to the national reading model. Kim Bo Hyun and Kim Bokyoung from Korea University both made very interesting presentations, the former speaking on the unique ethics of the Tanaka genre and the latter about film censorship and the motion picture code of ethics in post-war Japan. Yolanda Caballero Aceituno (University of Jaén, Spain) delivered a talk entitled "Literary Education and the Ethics of Expansion: Principles, Processes and Examples" based on her own teaching experience. It concentrated on the ability of literature to bring about meaningful societal changes by empowering readers to broaden their visions of the world. Katiliina Gielen and Klaarika Kaldjärv (University of Tartu) extended the discussion on the relationship between ethics and literature to the translations of literary works. Their joint paper exploring translation and ethics introduced a model that considers ethics in translation as a volatile concept dependent on different factors such as cultural and political norms, target audience, and genre.

Finally, Jüri Talvet, the main organizer of the Tartu conference and the founder of the Estonian Association of Comparative Literature, managed to reconcile the audience with a thoughtful consideration on the ways in which a self-centered practice of literary research and teaching could be gradually replaced by a symbiotic/dialogical treatment of literature, capable of providing us with a firm and solid ethical dimension. This would definitely strengthen the position of humanities in world academe. Jüri Talvet is a firm proponent of any kind of cultural plurality and dialogue, and his ability to value and accept approaches differing markedly from our own is commendable. In his presentation, he stressed the right to the difference of opinions, no matter how conflicting these might

be: "We certainly cannot deny anybody the right to understand, interpret, and also to question the terms that at least to some extent have been consecrated in our containers of knowledge [such as] universal dictionaries [and] encyclopedias." Talvet therefore emphasized that it should not be our goal to contest the meaning of "ethical" in the sense of "morally righteous" since it spreads across the conscience of a wide variety of communities. He concluded: "as the question goes about literary scholarship and criticism: in all cases concerning CL [Comparative Literature], WL [World Literature], and ELC [Ethical Literary Criticism]—we should not neglect one more [than the] 'other.'"

The next symposium of IAELC will take place in the summer of 2017, in a truly European center of scholarship: UCL, London. Let us try to keep an open mind.

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Centers and Peripheries: Literatures and Literary Issues

Université catholique de Louvain (Belgique), décembre 2016

Organisé par Amaury Dehoux (Université catholique de Louvain) en collaboration avec Jean Bessière (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle — Paris 3), le colloque « Centers and Peripheries: Literatures and Literary Issues » s'est tenu à l'Université catholique de Louvain aux dates des 2 et 3 décembre 2016.

Comme son titre l'indique, ce colloque se proposait de réinterroger la dualité centre/périphérie en tant que principe structurant d'une approche systémique de la littérature — cette dualité est notamment supposée dans les travaux de Pascale Casanova et de Franco Moretti sur le système littéraire mondial. Une telle interrogation entendait être menée selon une perspective insistant sur la flexibilité et la relativité des notions de centre et de périphérie — dans la pratique, une même littérature peut

être à la fois centrale par rapport à un premier réseau littéraire et périphérique par rapport à un second.

Afin de mettre en évidence cette relativité, le colloque était volontairement axé sur une typologie de situations tenues pour paradigmatiques de la pluralité systémique qu'autorise une approche fondée sur le binôme centre/périphérie. Ces situations, qui constituaient autant d'orientations critiques, étaient au nombre de quatre : 1) le positionnement des littératures de langue mineure au regard d'ensembles culturels ou linguistiques plus larges ; 2) la définition des littératures écrites dans une langue largement utilisée, mais périphériques d'un point de vue culturel ou géographique ; 3) la caractérisation des littératures périphériques appartenant à des réseaux linguistiques, culturels ou géographiques, tels que le monde arabe ou les îles du Pacifique ; 4) la relocalisation des littératures entrées dans un processus de globalisation.

Cette typologie a alors ouvert la voie à une série de communications qui peuvent être réparties en trois catégories. Un premier ensemble d'interventions a ainsi proposé une réflexion théorique et épistémologique sur la dualité centre/périphérie même et sur sa pertinence pour les études littéraires à l'ère de la globalisation. Un deuxième groupe de contributions s'est attaché à actualiser cette dualité et ses questionnements dans l'espace littéraire européen. Enfin, un troisième cycle de conférences a transposé la relation du centre et de la périphérie aux littératures extra-européennes.

Le volet théorique du colloque comportait la communication de Jean Bessière, intitulée « Les variables du centre et de la périphérie, considérées à partir de la théorie des systèmes de Luhmann ». Repartant de quelques notations du sociologue allemand, Jean Bessière a commencé par insister sur la relativité des notions de centre et de périphérie. Pour ce faire, après avoir rappelé la multiplicité des centres et des périphéries littéraires en Europe et dans le monde, il a souligné en quoi une telle multiplicité autorisait une diversité de perspectives suivant les ensembles culturels envisagés et les recouvrements qu'ils supposent ; dans le même ordre d'idées, il a noté qu'en un procès de renforcement, ces recouvrements pouvaient à leur tour se lire selon bien des manières — linguistiques, culturelles, géopolitiques, institutionnelles, historiques. Une telle relativité appelle dès lors une recaractérisation de l'universalisme moderne, apte à penser une étendue de la littérature et une cohésion du monde — ce qui n'est pas sans incidence sur les définitions usuelles de la World Literature.

Parallèlement à cette recaractérisation, il convient également de redéfinir le jeu des médiations littéraires, en vue de penser une co-interprétation et une co-réflexivité des littératures lorsqu'elles sont rapportées aux notions de centre et de périphérie.

Zhao Baisheng (Peking University) a poursuivi cette réflexion théorique avec son intervention « On the Binary Opposition Approach to World Literature ». Dans celle-ci, il a identifié la dichotomie centre/périphérie comme le lieu d'un dépassement critique, susceptible de renouveler les définitions usuelles de la World Literature. Ainsi, après avoir notamment évoqué le cas de Chinua Achebe et de la lecture tricontinentale qu'il autorise, Zhao Baisheng a proposé d'approcher la littérature en termes de macro-poétique. Adoptant *mutatis mutandis* les principes de la macro-économie, cette perspective envisage la littérature uniquement à travers des processus globaux et permet dès lors une théorisation *at large* de la littérature mondiale, théorisation qui dépasse les visées plus restrictives de la micro-poétique. A ce titre, il paraît nécessaire que les études littéraires accordent une plus grande attention aux questions de macro-poétique, lesquelles sont d'autant plus pertinentes aujourd'hui qu'elles entrent dans un jeu de congruence avec le phénomène actuel de la globalisation.

La dualité centre/périphérie a été reportée à l'espace littéraire européen par la communication de Marko Juvan (Académie des sciences, Llubjana), « Peripheries and the reproduction of the world literature system: a Slovenian perspective ». Prenant appui sur une série de critiques du modèle diffusionniste qui sous-tend les théories de Casanova et Moretti, cette intervention s'inscrivait dans une perspective de révision historique et sémiotique des relations centre/périphérie et visait, par là, à donner une représentation plus complexe de celles-ci. De cette manière, à la suite de Ďurišin, Lotman, Kliger et Susan S. Friedman, Marko Juvan a affirmé qu'en plus de reproduire les centres de la littérature mondiale, les périphéries pouvaient également contourner ceux-ci et établir leurs propres réseaux et leurs propres sous-centres — certes temporaires. La poésie moderniste de l'écrivain slovène Srečko Kosovel (1904–1926) a alors permis d'illustrer concrètement les modes de la productivité périphérique et l'irrégularité de ses réponses à l'égard des procès évolutionnaires du centre. Ce cas explicitait en outre les obstacles qui empêchent la globalisation de l'information périphérique.

Dans sa communication « Pour une histoire transnationale et transdisciplinaire de la littérature bulgare », Marie Vrinat-Nikolov (Inalco, Paris) a évoqué un projet qu'elle a entamé depuis deux ans et qui consiste en l'établissement d'une histoire littéraire transnationale et transdisciplinaire de la Bulgarie. Par ce projet, elle espère non seulement renouveler l'historiographie littéraire bulgare, mais aussi contribuer à une réflexion générale sur l'historiographie littéraire en tant que telle. En se concentrant sur la « géographie » temporelle d'une littérature périphérique, elle a en effet été amenée à mettre au jour et à questionner des faits qui sont bien présents dans les espaces centraux, mais qui tendent à ne pas s'y laisser voir tant ils paraissent évidents — la problématique des influences, celle de la nationalisation de la littérature ou encore celle de l'émergence de la littérature dite moderne. En d'autres termes, en travaillant sur une littérature tenue pour périphérique, Marie Vrinat-Nikolov a opéré un décentrement critique qui ouvre également de nouvelles interrogations pour les littératures centrales — la perspective centre/périphérie autorise un jeu de relecture particulièrement fécond pour l'histoire littéraire.

Cette approche de l'espace européen en termes de centre et de périphérie a été complétée par la conférence de Jeanne E. Glesener (Université du Luxembourg), « A cheval entre les centres. Typologie des positions périphériques de la littérature luxembourgeoise plurilingue ». Cette intervention a abordé la situation particulière de la littérature luxembourgeoise, qui actualise différents types de relations centre/périphérie — l'isolement linguistique et institutionnel des œuvres écrites en langue luxembourgeoise ; le positionnement complexe de la littérature luxembourgeoise germanophone au regard des centres allemands ; l'inclusion de la littérature luxembourgeoise de langue française au sein de la Francophonie. Après une description historique, culturelle et institutionnelle de ces différents types de caractérisations périphériques, Jeanne E. Glesener a montré comment, à partir des années 1970, la littérature luxembourgeoise a profondément modifié son positionnement en survalorisant son statut mineur et en se définissant comme son propre centre.

Avec la communication de Daniel-Henri Pageaux (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle — Paris 3), « Antilles, Réunion, Maurice. Perspectives sur des périphéries littéraires francophones », la problématique centre/périphérie s'est déplacée au-delà de l'espace européen. Cette contribution visait à pointer l'intérêt épistémologique que présente la mise en

parallèle de deux ensembles francophones loin d'être homogènes — d'une part, les Antilles (Martinique et Guadeloupe) et, d'autre part, les îles de la Réunion et de Maurice. Il apparaît en effet que la situation politique et culturelle de ces deux ensembles appelle une approche contrastée, qui révèle deux façons de se positionner au regard du centre et de se constituer comme réseau linguistico-culturel. Ce contraste s'est d'ailleurs vu illustré par deux manifestes littéraires — *Eloge de la créolité* (1989) et *Amarres* (2003–2005) — qui envisagent de façon assez distincte l'évolution culturelle des deux ensembles.

Cette perspective extra-européenne a été prolongée par la conférence de Bénédicte Letellier (Université de la Réunion), « Centres et périphéries : le cas des littératures arabes contemporaines dans l'océan Indien ». A travers l'exemple de la poésie arabe d'inspiration soufie, cette conférence s'est attachée à démontrer que, telle qu'elle est pensée en Occident, la dualité centre/périphérie particularise difficilement un espace flou comme l'océan Indien, qui joue d'autres mécanismes de rayonnement. Après avoir caractérisé les réseaux originaux qui assurent la diffusion de cette littérature — les réseaux occidentaux, indianocéaniques et mystiques —, Bénédicte Letellier en est ainsi venue à souligner que la dimension soufie, qui est plus ou moins présente dans la poésie arabe contemporaine de l'océan Indien, dote celle-ci d'une vision du monde au sein de laquelle les notions de centre et de périphérie n'ont de pertinence qu'à partir d'une expérience subjective et spirituelle du monde — une configuration qui échappe totalement aux perspectives occidentales.

Ce questionnement autour de la littérature arabe a trouvé un écho particulièrement fort dans la contribution de Mounira Chatti (Université Bordeaux Montaigne), « Littératures de l'aire franco-arabe : un jeu de la périphérie et du centre. Marginalisation des écritures francophones face aux écritures arabophones ». Cette communication s'est en effet intéressée aux enjeux politiques et poétiques qui entourent la constitution du monde arabe en termes de centre et de périphérie. A l'aide de trois prismes qui s'interpénètrent dans le contexte arabe — la pluralité et l'étanchéité des champs littéraires au niveau national ; le multilinguisme et la diglossie ; la question de la traduction —, Mounira Chatti a pointé que la littérature arabe tend à s'instituer comme un centre qui relègue à un statut périphérique les écritures plurilingues qui partagent son espace. Cette attitude de rejet se voit encore renforcée par

la conscience douloureuse que la littérature arabophone possède de sa propre marginalité en contexte occidental et mondial — dire une centralité exclusive vise à pallier une périphérie subie. Il existe néanmoins plusieurs éléments qui rendent possible, dans le futur, une réconciliation linguistique au sein du monde arabe et, *de facto,* une redistribution du centre et de la périphérie.

Se transportant dans un contexte totalement différent, la communication de Shi Zhongyi (Académie des sciences, Université de Xiamen), « *La sculpture du dragon* — Comparaison des poétiques », a offert une manifestation exemplaire des effets que la globalisation de la littérature chinoise peut avoir sur les cadres critiques de l'interprétation littéraire. Etudiant *Le Cœur des lettres et la sculpture du dragon* dans l'optique d'une poétique mondiale, Shi Zhongyi a mis en évidence que ce texte portant sur l'esthétique littéraire chinoise actualise en même temps des principes qui se veulent universels et qui autorisent, par là, un rapprochement des perspectives orientale et occidentale. Il en résulte qu'un texte *a priori* périphérique pour l'Occident se fait ultimement l'interprétant des principales orientations poétiques attachées à cet espace. Autrement dit, la globalisation de la littérature chinoise entraîne un déplacement du centre et de la périphérie, lequel engage à son tour le dessin d'une poétique effectivement universelle par l'alliance qu'elle suppose entre données orientales et occidentales.

Par la diversité des littératures et des perspectives envisagées, le colloque a ainsi contribué à une réflexion sur les notions de centre et de périphérie, sur leurs fondements — culturels, linguistiques, poétiques, politiques —, sur leur pertinence et sur leur devenir dans le cadre du processus de globalisation. Il a appelé à une relecture et à un dépassement des théories usuellement reliées à ces notions — Casanova, Moretti — en vue de repenser autrement la construction systémique de la littérature et les conditions de sa possible mondialisation.

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"Wildness without Wilderness": The *Poiesis* of Energy and Instability

7th Biennial Meeting of the EASLCE (European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture and Environment), in Association with BASCE (Benelux Association for the Study of Art, Culture, and the Environment). Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium (ULB), October 27–30, 2016

If wilderness or the expanse of the physical natural world untamed by humans is shrinking fast, *wildness,* or the instability of the material world and of its agencies that elude human control, paradoxically, very much continues to endure.[1]

Exploring this wildness and its manifold manifestations entails, implicitly, a comparative approach in itself, one that maybe invites a broadening of the very concept of "comparative studies." Indeed, whereas the latter discipline is often seen as exclusively meant to bring different human cultures into dialogue and contrast, in our age of ecological crisis and repositioning, it is perhaps also time to bring the non-human and the NatureCulture intersections into the equation. Can one truly decipher Culture without investigating how its forms of discourse and creativity remain influenced by and enmeshed with the systems of Nature and the productivity inherent in the broader web of life? Can one genuinely compare cultures and the narratives generated by their imaginaries without, at some point, also addressing the way in which they construct the very biosphere in which they are embedded and evolve? Irrespective of the nuances that separate the different orientations within the ecocritical community—from Deep to Social Ecology, from more theoretical to more activist approaches—the environmental humanities would answer in the negative. By definition, being an ecocritic entails some kind of comparative investigation between the systems of Culture and those of Nature and of their ongoing interactions.

1. See Gary Snyder, "The Etiquette of Freedom," in *The Practice of the Wild* (ShoemakerHoard, 1990): 3–26.

Besides this implicit comparative approach between the patterns of Nature and those of Culture, exploring wildness equally entails curiosity about a number of other constants such as energy, creativity, and *poiesis*. For as stated in the "Call for Papers" of the 7th Biennial Meeting of the EASLCE, the alternation between temporary structure and instability that characterize all life could not exist "without the phenomena of *energy* and *creativity* that inform both the non-human and human worlds of impermanence and indeterminacy."[2] In turn, energy and creativity both suppose "*poiesis,* understood as a *potential for making that combines randomness and design,"* with the attendant phenomena of assemblage, proliferation, dissipation, collapse, and re-arrangement.

It is precisely into different forms of the "*poetic travail*" which actually "links the wild artistry and skilful means of nature to those of human production"[3] that last Autumn, the 7th Biennial Meeting of the European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture and Environment brought together scholars from and outside Europe at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB). In an effort to strengthen local partnership, the EASLCE worked on this occasion in close cooperation with one of the newer bioregionally anchored networks, namely BASCE, the Benelux Association for the Study of Art, Culture, and the Environment, founded in 2012.

Historically, it is in the United States that in the early 1990s ecocriticism started to federate the academic and environmental communities. As an emerging revisionist paradigm, ecocriticism wished to challenge the anthropocentric bias of the humanities and its often corollary exclusion of the category of "Nature" from conceptual and interpretative grids. In the beginning, thus, the ecological awareness that had developed in the US tradition strongly coloured the "greening" of the humanities. In part to correct this reductive US-centric slant, the EASLCE was established in 2005 to showcase more prominently ecocritical research by European scholars and/or about cultures shaped by languages other than English. Yet, European not being the same as Eurocentric, since its inception, the EASLCE has always insisted on retaining an openness towards cultures and ecological/ecocritical discourse worldwide, from North and Latin America to Asia and Australasia. This double orientation combining a

2. This quote and all subsequent ones in the paragraph are taken from the official "Call for Papers" of the Conference. See its official website at http://ulb.easlce.eu/.

3. *Ibid*.

European focus with an inter- and transnationalist one was certainly reflected in the diversity of countries and panels represented at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) from 27 to 30 October 2016, even if English remained the dominant language of debate and exchange.

Indeed, over four days, Brussels was home to just below one hundred scholars, poets, artists and environmental activists based not only in a broad range of European countries, from the Mediterranean to Scandinavia, but also participating from as far afield as Turkey, Corea, Nigeria, the United States, and Canada.

This human diversity was also matched by the variety of topics covered in the thirty-two panels seeking to explore different aspects of the advances in ecocritical theory, eco-narratology and eco-composition, as well as ecosophy and eco-ethics. The *poiesis* of instability, manifesting and shifting back and forth along a wide spectrum that blends natural and textual energies, was discussed from a multiplicity of vantage points, ranging from animal studies to urban ecologies, from (new) materialist to ecospiritual and ecopsychological readings. The NatureCulture dynamics discussed included—but were not limited to—those of petromodernity, ecophobia and biophilia, or still, forms of atmospheric wildness and elemental agencies.

These debates were fuelled by the three very contrasted—if complementary—perspectives from which the keynote speakers, who each came from rather different geographical/cultural/scholarly horizons, mapped out the porous zone between the dynamics of Nature and those of Culture.

With an array of nuances and modulations which have, over the years, characterized his elaborate theoretical thinking, literature specialist Hubert Zapf (University of Augsburg, Germany) explored this porosity from the angle of "Sustainable Wildness and Energy: Literature as Cultural Ecology." For Zapf, energy exchange and release as well as creative transformation are characteristics that do not just apply to the webs of nature, but also to those of culture: "'Life" as a precarious process of constant semiosis, interpretation, and adaptation between self and other […] is […] a crucial dimension of the ways in which imaginative texts, as texts, are acting as an ecological force within culture."[4]

In the second keynote, "The Search for Wilderness Needs Wildness in the Mind: The Discovery of Missing Pages in the Book of Culture,"

4. Hubert Zapf, *Literature as Cultural Ecology: Sustainable Texts* (Bloomsbury, 2016), 266.

Frans Vera (Natural Processes Foundation) explored how the representations of culture both derive from and collide with this original wilderness. To buttress his famous theory that, contrary to received opinion, primeval Europe was actually not covered by a closed canopy forest, he enlisted not only environmental science, but also paintings and word etymology. In the process, he actually gave a live demonstration of how trying to understand and read the wilderness historically proves inextricable from the effort to do the same for the productions of language and art.

Finally, it is through the lens of ecopoetics that Adam Dickinson, author of the celebrated poetry volume *The Polymers* (2013), engaged with how environmental and cultural energies intermingle and interpenetrate. In "*Poiesis* of the Body: Chemicals and Microbes as Metabolic Poetics in the Anthropocene?," Dickinson focused on the body as a porous zone both reflecting and triggering chains of re-inscription. Indeed, the Canadian poet is currently monitoring how chemicals and microbes are rewriting him as a "body-in-environment." In a move from endured to willed contamination, he seeks to transform this ambient toxicity recombining his physical chemistry into a conscious form of energy that catalyzes anew his methods of verbal fashioning.

To return to the panels themselves, the papers of particular relevance to comparative studies understood in the narrower and more conventional sense included, for instance, "The Pull of the North vs a Literature of City Dwellers: A Comparative Approach to 21st-Century British, Dutch and German Fiction on Landscape and Climate Change" (Astrid Bracke, The Netherlands); "Wildness Within, Wildness Without: Zoopoetic Overtures in the Work of Don McKay and John Burnside" (Jonathan Matthew Butler, United Arab Emirates); "Spiralectics in Polynesian Literatures" (Anne-Sophie Close, Belgium); "Poetischer Energietransfer zwischen Mensch und Natur: Alfred Döblins Die Ermordung einer Butterblume und W. G. Sebalds Nach der Natur" (Sieglinde Grimm, Germany); "Collapse or Continuity? Norwegian Climate Change Fiction from the 1970s to Present-Day" (Reinhard Hennig, Sweden); "The Enduring Wildness of Trees: Ecospiritual Readings of Three Australasian Novels" (Jessica Maufort, Belgium); and "'Ecomythopoiesis': Framing Neopastoralism in Canada" (Juan Ignacio Oliva, Spain).

Next to a "Roundtable on Regional Ecocriticism and Regional Ecocritical Organizations and Networks," the pre-formed panels with a more inherent comparative slant comprised one on postcolonial ecocriticism.

Organized by BASCE, this session brought together writers J.-M. G. Le Clézio, N. Scott Momaday, and Jeanette Winterson (presenters: Sara Buekens from Belgium, and Eline Tabak, Kristine Steenbergh, and Suzanne Ferwerda, all three from the Netherlands). Featuring Beat Generation research from the UK, the Netherlands, and Belgium respectively, there was also a panel on "Beat Ecologies" comparing and contrasting the environmental writing of Philip Whalen, ruth weiss, Anselm Hollo, and Allen Ginsberg (presenters: David Arnold, Chad Weidner, Laura Martin, and Franca Bellarsi). Another comparative panel, showcasing research from Turkey, Austria and the United States respectively, was devoted to "Forces of Attraction and Repulsion in Poetries Old and New." As such, this session established an unusual dialogue between Lord Byron, the Italian poetry of the Renaissance, and Arthur Rimbaud (presenters: Zümre Gizem Yilmaz, Raffaele Russo, and Alexandre Dubois). From the perspective of intermediality, several papers also bridged poetry and painting in innovative ways, such as "Wild Earth, Uneartly Creatures: a Portrait of a Region in Miguel Torga and Graça Morais' *Um Reino Maravilhoso*" (Isabel Maria Fernandes Alves, Portugal); "Threadings, Bendings, Tanglings: Poetry, Painting and Place" (Harriet Tarlo and Judith Tucker, UK); and "The Radical of Space: Thinking Space through New American Poetry and Indigenous Painting" (Miriam Nichols, Canada).

The porous borders between natural and cultural energies were also explored in more alternative ways. On the one hand, thematic walks were taken in the urban environment of Brussels to illustrate the complexity of urban ecologies, from nature reserves in cities to sewer systems and waste management. On the other hand, there were screenings of the Dutch eco-documentary "The New Wilderness: Big Nature in a Small Country" (directed by Ignas van Schaik) and of the US documentary "Milagro Man: The Irrepressible Multicultural Life and Literary Times of John Nichols" (produced by Kurt Jacobsen), followed by a late-night skyping session with John Nichols himself. In covering the seasonal life cycle in the Oostvaardersplassen reserve, van Schaik unveils some of the complexities behind the term "Nature" in one of the most densely populated countries on earth. In a completely different vein, Jacobsen's film focuses on the author of the "New Mexico Trilogy" and documents the links between ecological awareness and the American Counterculture.

Last but not least, an international Poetry and Performance evening brought together local and global voices as well as a range of literary

styles. Whatever the degree of experimentation involved in their respective works, novelist and nature writer Richard Kerridge, poets Adam Dickinson (Canada), Arpine Konyalian Grenier (US), James Venit (US & Belgium), Sarah Strange (UK & Belgium), and poet Harriet Tarlo in collaboration with visual artist Judith Tucker (UK) were so many presences who reminded the Conference participants of the fact that the energies of the human voice are indeed part and parcel of the instability and wildness of NatureCulture.

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Nouvelles des comités de recherche / News from the Research Committees

Co-ordinating Committee for Histories of Literature in European Languages (CHLEL)

For additional information about CHLEL please consult: https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/chlel/about-chlel/websites/
For information about publications, see consult John Benjamins' website: https://www.benjamins.com/#catalog/books/chlel/volumes

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Status of Projects

Published Volumes

Of the projects under way at the time of the Vienna ICLA General Assembly, 2016, the following have been completed and published:

Iberia: A Comparative History of Literatures in the Iberian Peninsula, Vol II

Directors: César Domínguez Prieto (project director, cesar.dominguez@usc.es), Anxo Abuín González (anxo.abuin@usc.es), and Ellen Sapega (ewsapega@wisc.edu). This volume, which is being copy-edited, completes this literary history.

The following books are being peer-reviewed or are at press

Renaissance II: La nouvelle culture: 1480–1520

Directors: Eva Kushner (eva.kushner@utoronto.ca). This volume, which has been sent to internal and external peer reviewers, completes this literary history.

Nordic Literatures: A Comparative History of Nordic Literary Cultures

Directors: Steven P. Sondrup (steven.sondrup@gmail.com, sondrup@comcast.net, or sondrup@byu.edu) and Mark Sandberg (sandberg@berkeley.edu).

Vol I: Spatial Nodes has now been completed and has been sent to peer reviewers. Moderate progress has been made on *Vol. II: Temporal Nodes:*. while all articles have been received, some have to undergo revisions. Almost all articles from *Vol. III: Figural Nodes* have been through the preliminary editorial process.

In Progress

The other projects listed on the University of Antwerp CHLEL website are progressing smoothly, although definitive dates of publication cannot be determined at this point.

Upcoming Events

The CHLEL Business meeting will take place at St. Andrews University, June 2–3, 2017. It is kindly hosted by St. Andrews and co-organized by Professor Margaret-Anne Hutton.

The 50th Anniversary of CHLEL will be celebrated with a conference entitled *Global Perspectives on the Past and Future in Comparative Histories on Literatures in European Languages,* taking place at St Andrews University on June 2, 2017. Invited guest speakers comprise Zhang Longxi (President of ICLA), Rebecca Walkowitz (Professor of English, Rutgers University), Margaret Higonnet (former President of CHLEL) and James

English (Professor of English, Pennsylvania University). In addition, members of CHLEL will join the ranks of these eminent scholars.

Publication of six articles about challenges and new possibilities for histories about literatures in European languages in the journal *Arcadia*, 2018.

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ICLA Research Committee on Literarary Theory

1. Annual Workshop 2017

The theme of this year's workshop is "Critique/Criticism." It will take place on June 23–24 at the Center for Literary and Cultural Research (Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung) in Berlin. Stefan Willer will host 16 participants, who will offer their analytic reflections on the techniques and theories of drawing distinctions. Our guest lecturer is Terry Eagleton.

Call for Papers

The English language has a way of differentiating 'criticism' and 'critique' that is absent from other European languages. As is often explained, 'critique' rather refers to the philosophical tradition of critical thought—as in Critique of Pure Reason—whereas 'criticism' denotes its more down-to-earth applications, such as literary criticism. Even though this distinction obviously underrates the complexities of literary evaluation, it has been and is being used to introduce value judgments with respect to literary criticism itself. To cite a blunt example: "criticism finds fault/critique looks at structure," "criticism is spoken with a cruel and sarcastic tone/critique's voice is kind, honest, and objective," "criticism is negative/critique is positive" (Judy Reeves, *Guide for Writers and Writing Groups*, 2002). As simplistic as these dichotomies may be, they address long-standing epistemological and ethical problems. On the one hand, according to Rodolphe Gasché, critique in the history of modern philosophy, starting with Descartes, "entails a new and radical negativity of thought." On the other, it can be labelled essentially positive, as in Heidegger, who

states that the Greek verb 'krinein' means "to lift out that of special sort" and thus designates "the most positive of the positive" (cf. Gasché's introduction, *Honor of Thinking,* 2007). Between these extremes, a vast field of distinctions opens up, especially for literary and/or textual criticism. According to Friedrich Schleiermacher's reflections on Hermeneutik und Kritik (1810s–30s), critcism is both a judgment ("Gericht") and a comparison ("Vergleichung"); it can be doctrinal and historical, lower and higher, documentary and divinatory, referring both to letter and spirit. Ultimately, for Schleiermacher, every slip of the tongue is a critical case, given that thought and speech diverge. Criticism hence becomes relevant for finding 'faults' in the broadest sense, but in a highly differentiated manner. Thus, the English distinction of 'critique' and 'criticism' can induce some more specific research into the techniques and theories of drawing distinctions. Topics may include: the semantics of 'krinein' and 'krisis,' its consequences and alternatives; concepts of aesthetic judgment; methods of comparative criticism; criticism and (or: versus) scholarship ('Literaturkritik und Literaturwissenschaft'); the interconnections of textual criticism and psychoanalysis (cf. S. Timpanaro's 1974 study on the Freudian slip); the role of literature in critical theory (and vice versa); poets as critics (e.g. Pope, Poe, Pound); and, of course, poetical aversions to criticism (cf. the English version of Beckett's Godot, in which the word "Crritic!" is pronounced by Estragon "with finality" to decide his and Vladimir's exchange of insults).

2. Publications

-Papers from the 2015 Pécs workshop were edited by Yvonne Howell and Francoise Lavocat and published in a special issue of *Neohelicon* [43 no 2 (Dec 2016)], under the title, *Fact vs Fiction.*

-Papers from the 2014 workshop, *Literature and Policing,* held at the University of Osaka were edited by Takayuki Yokota-Murakami and Calin Mihailescu, and will be published by Brill in 2017.

-Papers from the 2016 Vienna workshop on *Prismatic Translation* will be edited by Matthew Reynolds, Sowon Park and Adriana Jacobs, and published by Legenda Transcript (http://www.mhra.org.uk/series/T). We are aiming to submit the completed volume to the publisher at the start of 2018.

3. Membership of the Committee

Our members are, as of 20 April 2017, Sowon S. Park (President),Walid Hamarneh (Secretary), Jernej Habjan (Website Editor), Eva Horn, Yvonne H. Howell, Françoise Lavocat, Kyohei Norimatsu, Matthew Reynolds, Stefan Willer and Robert Young. We failed to elect new members in Vienna last year. We have, however, four new approved nominations this year. The committee members present in Berlin will discuss and vote on the candidacy of the nominated colleagues, who will have presented papers at the workshop. We seek to continue to elect new members until we reach a maximum size of 20, keeping our focus on the balance of the Committee, with particular reference to specialisation and regional representation.

4. Acknowledgement

Our members appreciate and celebrate the passing of the motion at the 2016 General Assembly to make the Research Committee on Literary Theory a voting member of the EC of the ICLA. We thank the support of the Executive Council for all our endeavors, not least of the maintenance of our website, http://iclatheory.org/.

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ICLA Research Committee on Comparative Gender Studies

Statement of Purpose

The Comparative Gender Studies Committee works to further the comparative study of gender and sexuality through organizing innovative seminar programmes at the ICLA and at other conferences, such as the ACLA, and through supporting research and publication in the relatively new fields of comparative gender and comparative queer studies. We define 'comparative' in its broadest sense as an approach to the study of literature and culture that includes: a) traditional comparisons across na-

tional and linguistic borders as these relate specifically to gender and/or sexuality; b) comparative work across historical, postcolonial, and transnational contexts focusing on gender and/or sexuality; and c) scholarship using gender and/or sexuality as sites of comparison themselves, or as they intersect with race, class, ethnicity, national and religious affiliation, and other sites of difference.

We also support research on the gender and queer politics of textual and/or cultural translation in all historical periods. The work from our seminars is published in international peer-review journals and in edited collections with major academic presses. Anyone with a scholarly interest in comparative gender/queer studies is invited to join the Committee, and we especially welcome graduate students.

Annual Business Meeting of the Committee

The ICLA Comparative Gender Studies Committee held its annual business meeting on July 26, 2016 at the ICLA World Congress in Vienna. The business meeting was open to its members and to anyone with a scholarly interest in comparative gender and comparative queer studies. Following introductions, elections were held to fill posts vacated by those whose offices expired in 2016, including the Chair and one Executive Committee Member. The Committee also discussed plans for future seminars, publications and collaboration with other research committees. The Committee will hold its next Annual Business Meeting on July 8, 1–2:30pm at ACLA 2017 in Utrecht.

Elected Officers of the ICLA Gender Studies Committee

Officers serve a three-year term with the option of serving only one additional term of three years if they so choose. At the Annual Business meeting in Vienna en 2016, the Committee's executive board was constituted as follows:

President/Chair

Liedeke Plate, Radboud University (NL)

Vice President

Jordana Greenblatt, University of Toronto and York University (Canada)

Secretary

Chris Coffman, University of Alaska, Fairbanks (US)

Elected Executive Board Members

Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, University of Texas at Austin (US)

Rita Terezinha Schmidt, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil)

Tegan Zimmerman, Stephens College (US)

Past President

William J Spurlin, Brunel University London (UK)

Activities

In 2016–17, the Committee sponsored a well-attended five-day seminar at the ICLA World Congress in Vienna in July 2016 on the topic of '(Queer) Relationality: Gender and Queer Comparatists at Work,' which was chaired by William J Spurlin. It is also sponsoring a three-day seminar at the ACLA Annual Meeting in July 2017 in Utrecht, entitled 'Queering the Posthuman,' chaired by Liedeke Plate (Radboud University), Alessandro Grilli (University of Pisa) and Matthew Mild (University of London), as well as a programme at CCLA 2017, entitled 'Posthumanism: Genders, Sexualities, and Literatures,' chaired by Jordana Greenblatt (University of Toronto and York University) and Tegan Zimmerman (Stephens College), Ryerson University, 28–30 May 2017. The Committee was also involved in the organization of 'Cirque 2017: What's New in Queer Studies?,' L'Aquila (Italy), March 31–April 2, 2017, where its past president William J Spurlin delivered a keynote address.

Publications

The Committee has published a number of special issues in such journals as *Comparative Critical Studies* (2009), *Comparative Literature Studies* (2014), *and Intertexts* (2014). Additionally, the Committee has published edited volumes, such as *Translating Women* (ed. Luise von Flotow, 2010) and *Comparatively Queer* (eds. Jarrod Hayes, Margaret Higonnet and William J Spurlin, 2010). All of these works have made important interventions in the field. The committee has several other projects, including

an edited collection based on the papers presented at recent committee-sponsored meetings.

Website and contact

The Committee has its own website: https://sites.google.com/a/alaska.edu/icla-comparative-gender-studies-committee/executive-board; as well as a distribution list: icla-gender-studies-committee@lists.alaska.edu. To contact us, send an email to Liedeke Plate (l.plate@let.ru.nl; president) or Chris Coffman (cecoffman@alaska.edu; secretary).

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ICLA Standing Committee for Research on South Asian Culture and Literature

Members of the Research Committee

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Prof. E.V. Ramakrishnan, Co-Chair, *ICLA Standing Committee for Research on South Asian Literature and Culture*. Vice President—CLAI and Member Executive Council, ICLA.

Prof. I.N. Choudhuri, President, Comparative Literature Association of India.

Prof. Ipshita Chanda, Department of Comparative Literature and India Studies, English and Foreign Languages University, (EFLU), Hyderabad and Member, Executive Council, ICLA.

Prof. Anisur Rahman, Senior Advisor, REKHTA, former Prof. of English, Jamia Milia Islamia Central University, New Delhi and Secretary, CLAI.

Prof. Jancy James, former Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Kerala, Kasaragod and former President, CLAI and Member, Executive Committee, CLAI.

Prof Kavita Sharma, President, South Asian University, New Delhi and Member, Executive Committee, CLAI.

Prof. Sunaina Singh, Vice President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (Govt. of India), New Delhi and Member, Advisory Council, CLAI.

Prof. Harish Trivedi, former Professor of English, University of Delhi and Member, Executive Committee, CLAI.

Prof. Ameena Ansari, Chair, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia Central University, New Delhi and Member, Executive Council., CLAI.

Prof. Balaji Ranganathan, Head, Centre for Comparative Literature and Translation, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, New Delhi

Prof. Amith Kumar P.V., Head, Department of Comparative Literature and India Studies, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad.

Prof Rachel Bari, Department of P. G. Studies and Research in English, Kuvempu University, Jnanasahyadri, Shankaraghatta—577451, B.R. Project, Shimoga, Karnatak.

Dr. Rizio Yohanan Raj, Founder and Executive Director, LILA Foundation for Trans-local Initiatives, New Delhi.

Prof. Dorothy Figueira, Distinguished Professor, Department of Comparative Literature, University of Georgia, Athens, US.

Prof. S. Walter Perera, Depatrment of English, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

Prof. Munazza Yaqoob, Chair, Department of English, Female University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Prof Mashrur Hossain, Department of English, Jahangir University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Brief Description of Ongoing Research Projects

Project on Literary Narratives in South Asia. The ICLA standing committee for research on "South Asian Culture and Literature" has identified this area as one of its priorities. Research on South Asian narratives will allow comparatists from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Singapore, and Pakistan to examine the rich legacy of narrative literature belonging to

various traditions such as classical and folk, religious and secular, mythical and mystical and realistic, modernist and post-modern, from contemporary perspectives.

A project on a "South-South Research Dialogue: A Comparative Enquiry" of the epistemologies of South Asia, has been undertaken by the department of Comparative Literature, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. The aim of this research is to investigate the "genos" of South Asia by way of comparing similar types of "genos" that have emerged in the contexts of other countries of the global south. A certain degree of similarity in the literary genetics of South Asian "Haplogroups" could be ascertained in the contexts of ethnic groups from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal (Prof. Amith Kumar, coordinator).

The Centre of Language and Literature, Jain University, Bangalore, has introduced a research-based post graduate diploma in Comparative Studies with a special focus on sub-continental literary interrelationship in Indian Languages with a comparative context in South Asia (Prof. Mythili Rao, coordinator).

Literatures of South Asia and Literatures of Bangladesh were introduced as components in a Comparative Literature MA programme, taught under the auspices of the Centre for Comparative Literature, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, West Bengal. The Centre also offers courses in cross-cultural literary relations, and literatures of Asia.

2016–17 Events

A special plenary session on Literary / Cultural Narratives in South Asia was held at the International conference on Comparative Literature at Visva Bharti University, Santiniketan, March 6–8, 2017. The following papers focusing on South Asian Narratives were presented:

Prof. Chandra Mohan: " 'Gurbani Shabad' A Unique Devotional and Philosophical Narrative"; Prof. Anisur Rahman: "Verse Narratives in Urdu: The Case of Masnawi"; Prof. Mashrur Shahid Hossain: "Have I Ever Seen My Neighbor? A Comparative Study of Bangladeshi 'Marginalized' Poetic Narratives." Prof. Ameena Ansari: Narrativising Pakistan: Khalid Akhtar's Literary Discourse; Prof. E.V. Ramakrishnan: "The Return of the Story-teller: A Perspective on Recent Trends in Contemporary South Asian Fiction."

Publications

A volume containing 25 seminal research-based papers in the special Group Section on the theme "South Asian Pathways: Language, Culture, Gender and Politics" presented at the ICLA International Congress, University of Vienna, July 19–27, 2016, is being edited by Prof. Jasbir Jain and Prof. E.V. Ramakrishnan.

Individual Members' Contributions:

Jasbir Jain, *Forgiveness: Between Memory and History,* Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 2016.

Jasbir Jain, "Lost Homes: Shifting Borders and the Search for Belonging," forthcoming.

Kavita A. Sharma*, The Sages and Teachers in Mahabharata: Subcontinental Perceptions*, forthcoming.

Rachel Bari and Ishmit Kaur (ed), *Remembering to Forget: South Asian Women Writing,* forthcoming.

EV Ramakrishnan, "Habitations of Resistance: Role of Translation in the Creation of Literary Public Sphere in South Asia." In *Translation and Global Asia: Relocating Networks of Cultural Products*. Ed. Lawrence Wong and Uganda Szepul, Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, forthcoming.

Soma Mukherjee, "Ramifications of the Ramayana in India, Indonesia and Thailand: A Comparative Study*."* In *Comparative Literature as a Critical Approach.* Ed. Anne Tomiche, Paris, Classiques Garnier, forthcoming.

Sayantan Dasgupta and Kavita Lama, eds., *Call of the Hills: Indian Nepali Short Stories in English Translation: Revised and enlarged second edition* (Jadavpur University Press in collaboration with the Centre for Translation of Indian Literatures and CAS in Comparative Literature Phase 2, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, 2016—in press).

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E.V. Ramakrishnan
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Central University of Gujarat (India)

ICLA Research Committee on "Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature"

Ever since its establishment, the Research Committee on "Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature" has sought to promote and foster the spirit of Scriptural Reasoning by inviting international scholars to lecture at Renmin University of China, by hosting international workshops and conferences, and by supporting academic journals and publications.

To that end, since May 2016, the Committee has sponsored the following activities:

1. On May 30, 2016, Professor Roland Boer (Newcastle University, Australia), gave a lecture entitled "Between Romance and Momo: Love in the Modern World," in which he discussed the Marxist view of love in a global age.

2. On June 6, 2016, the Committee helped organize a special forum for doctoral students under the auspices of the Confucius China Study Plan. This enabled international students to share their views with their counterparts. Renmin University lecturers contributed to the debates.

3. From July 4–6, 2016, Professor Idit Alphandary (Tel Aviv University, Israel) led a seminar on the theme of "forgiveness" for Renmin University students and other Beijing Institutions of Higher Education. The participating students, who had read novels and watched films both in English and Chinese, were able to explore the meaning of "forgiveness" in different cultural contexts.

4. On July 8, 2016, Professor Kevin Hart (University of Virginia, US) gave a lecture on "The Absolute Event of History: The Shoah and the outside."

5. From July 10–14, 2016, the Committee organized the 12th "Theology and Humanities" Summer Institute, which focused on the ways of "Rethinking Universalism." Eight keynote speakers and 30 young scholars from mainland China, Taiwan, the UK, and US, the Netherlands, and Israel were invited on this occasion.

6. On September 22, 2016, Professor Peter Lampe (Heidelberg University, Germany) delivered a lecture on the topic of "Jewish Apocalyptical Literature: Does the Image of a Violent God Necessarily Entail an Ethos Oriented toward Violence."

7. On September 24, 2016, Professor Martin Kern (Princeton University, US) gave a speech entitled "Old Books, New Questions: Methodological Perspectives for Studying Ancient Chinese Texts Today." This event inaugurated a cooperation programme between Chinese and Western scholars on the study of ancient texts and cultures. Indeed, Renmin University intends to set up a research center devoted to this field of research.

8. On September 26, 2016, Professor Werner G. Jeanrond (University of Oxford, UK) gave a talk on "Hermeneutics and Revelation."

9. From October 28–November 9, 2016, Professor Paolo Santangelo (Oriental Institute, Sapienza University, Rome, Italy) delivered four lectures on the theme of "The Cross-Culture Comparison of Emotion," in which he examined the specific terms used to express "emotion" in different cultures.

10. From October 31–November 8, 2016, Professor David Jasper (University of Glasgow, UK) gave a series of lectures on the topic of "Comparative Literature and Comparative Religion." As he recounted the history of the field and mapped the current state of the art in comparative studies on literature and religion, he engaged in a dialogue with participating students and lecturers.

11. On November 2, 2016, Professor Péter Hajdu (Institute of Literature, Hungarian Academy of Sciences) delivered a speech entitled "Magic in Ancient Rome and in Roman Literature."

12. From November 12–13, 2016, the Committee helped organize the Fifth World Conference on Sinology, whose theme was "Sinologies in a Comparative Context: Tradition and Transformation." This event hosted about 89 international scholars from 16 different countries, who interacted with Chinese scholars through various panels and forums: "Sinology and China," "Sinology and Western Learning," "A Centurial Review of Sinology Journals," "The Quarrel between Ancient and Modern Sinology Paradigms," "Trilateral Common Vocabulary Dictionary Consultation Forum," "Confucius China Study Plan Ph.D. Student Forum."

13. On November 16, 2016, Professor Zhang Longxi (City University of Hong Kong) lectured on the topic of "East-West Comparative Studies: Challenges and Opportunities." He outlined the potential of comparative studies as well as the issues the field was confronted with. His talk was followed by a lively discussion with students.

14. On April 22–23, 2016, the Committee helped organize the "International Symposium: Methodological Perspectives for the Study of Ancient Texts." The event gathered five Chinese scholars from Peking University, Renmin University, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, as well as nine international scholars from Oxford University, Princeton University, New York University, University of Pennsylvania, University of California Los Angeles, University of California Santa Barbara, University of Colorado Boulder, Yale University, and Princeton Theological Seminary. The participating scholars shared their views on the methodologies applied in the study of Chinese, Egyptian and Hebrew ancient texts. This high-profile philological symposium, the first of its kind, enabled a dialogue between Chinese and Western scholars of the study of ancient texts. The event attracted a large audience.

With regard to academic publications, the Committee continued to oversee the publication of *The Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* (http://jscc.ruc.edu.cn). Issue 36 (published in November 2016) concentrated on a theme inspired by the Chinese ancient text *Analects*: "Does *Tian* (Heaven) Speak?" The contributors to this issue seek to explore the different mindset and approach from which Chinese and Western cultures try to understand the will of God/Heaven. As the journal issue makes clear, the tension and paradox between the "sayable" and "unsayable" can be found in all civilizations. In this respect, the editor selected Christian thinker St. Augustine in order to shed light on current scholarship related to this issue. Three featured articles include: Daniel Williams' "Augustine's Negotiation of the Liberal Arts," Han-luen Kantzer Komline's "Grace, Free Will, and the Lord's Prayer: Augustine's Appeal to Cyprian," LEE Kam-Lun Edwin's "Augustine's Anti-Julian Debate and Original Sin." Other scholars focus on the dialogue between Confucianism and Christianity as well as the cultural exchanges revealed in the translations of the Bible. The global challenges of the 21st century regarding ethics, human goods, the practice of faith are further explored in Issue 37 of the journal (published in May 2017). Under the umbrella themes of "Ethics of Ultimate Ends" and "Ethics of Responsibility," Max Weber, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Catholic theology are placed in conversation. Key articles include: "A Trinitarian Reading of the Catholic Social Teaching after Vatican II," "Universalism and Human Goods: the Possibilities and Limits of Ethics," "Beyond Geopolitics: The Catholic Church among Refugees as Reflected in Pope Fancis' Words and Deeds in 2016," "The Catholic Church Hier-

archy from the Perspective of the Laity," "'The World Should Not Fear China's Rise': An Interview with Pope Francis." This issue also contains three conference reports.

In the coming academic year, the Committee will continue to promote inter-disciplinary, inter-religious and inter-cultural studies. The Committee will host the following major conferences: in June, 2017, a symposium about the study of ancient texts and cultures will be convened in Beijing. Four or five keynote speakers and fifteen doctoral students from all parts of the world will present their research. From August 19–23, 2017, the Committee will hold the 13th "Theology and Humanities" Summer Institute, which will be devoted to the following topic: "Literature, Arts and Religion in the Post-secular World." One of the roundtable sessions of the 12th Triennial Congress of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association will also focus on this theme. In September 2017, an international workshop on the concept of "State" in Chinese socialist contexts will be held at Renmin University. In October or November 2017, the Committee will help organize the 3rd World Conference on Sinology Executive Council meeting.

As regards publications, issues 38 and 39 of the *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* will focus on the following two topics: "Difference and Écart" and "Post-Secular World." The Committee has embarked on the project of publishing translations of the selected articles from *T'oung Pao*, so that additional primary research material can be made available to Chinese scholars. As these articles reflect the genuine spirit of Scriptural Reasoning, they will contribute to the development of this field of research among Chinese and Western scholars.

List of Research Committee Members:

YANG Huilin, Renmin University of China, Chair

ZHANG Jing (Cathy), Renmin University of China, Secretary

David Ford, Cambridge University, member

GENG Youzhuang, Renmin University of China, member

Andrew Hass, Stirling University, member

John LAI, Chinese University of Hong Kong, member

LI Bingquan, Renmin University of China, member

LIUniversity Yunhua, Shanghai Normal University, member
David Jasper, Glasgow University, member
David Jeffrey, Baylor University, member
Peter Ochs, Virginia University, member
Chlöe Starr, Yale University, member
WANG HAI, Renmin University of China, member
ZHANG Hui, Peking University, member
ZHANG Hua, Beijing Language and Culture University, member
ZHANG Longxi, Hong Kong City University, member
Eric Ziolkowski, Lafayette College, member

YANG Huilin, Chair
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ZHANG Jing (Cathy), Secretary
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ICLA Research Committee on Literature and Neuroscience

Committee Members (additional members are invited annually according to changing topics):

From Comparative Literature: Suzanne Nalbantian, Long Island University; New York; Donald Wehrs Auburn University, Alabama; John Burt Foster, George Mason University, Washington, D.C.; Peter Schneck, Osnabrück University, Germany

From Neuroscience: Jean-Pierre Changeux, Kavli Institute (USCD) and Pasteur Institute (Paris); Paul Matthews, Imperial College, London; Robert Stickgold, Harvard University, MA

The ICLA Research Committee on Literature and Neuroscience has been heavily involved in work on two major book-length publications. The first is the interdisciplinary volume on creativity with 19 original essays from both humanists and neuroscientists. This volume, which I am

coediting with the committee member neuroscientist Paul Matthews, is approaching completion. It is contracted with Oxford University Press and will present cutting-edge theories on the creative process across the disciplinary divide. It is the product of a previous symposium that I organized in 2014 under the auspices of the ICLA Research Committee and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory on Long Island, New York. Permanent members of the research committee are offering chapters for this volume, including Donald Wehrs and John Burt Foster on the literary side, and Jean-Pierre Changeux, Paul Matthews and Robert Stickgold for neuroscience. Other comparatist critics are also contributors. For this volume, along with my own chapter, I am at work on a synthetic Introduction which will draw together the findings. Secondly, I have been assembling a Table of Contents and proposal for another volume on Cultural Memory. This book will stem from the sessions on cultural memory that I directed at the 2016 Vienna ICLA Congress. From that seed group which explored this vast topic in new interdisciplinary ways, I expanded the number of contributors to 20, which now includes more neuroscientists and scholars in literary and cultural studies. Comparatists like Sirkka Knuuttilla, Peter Hanenberg, Donald Wehrs and Peter Schneck will contribute chapters. I am currently seeking an appropriate publisher for this volume. Both volumes continue the goal of this research committee which is to provide unique new research on seminal brain/mind topics based on true interdisciplinary exchange—what the discipline of comparative literature intrinsically fosters. In addition, I am working toward the creation of an interdisciplinary brain/mind institute under my direction, which could use some of this committee's resources and participants.

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Long Island University (US)

ICLA Research Committee, Dreamcultures: Literary and Cultural History of the Dream

The dream as a basic anthropological phenomenon has fascinated and puzzled people in all cultures and ages. This has led to a multitude of theoretical writings trying to explain the origin and functions of dreams

and to decipher their meaning ("dream-discourse") and to factual and fictional representations of dreams in literature and many other media.

Our Research Committee is trying to study this phenomenon in as many cultures and periods as possible. As part of the 2016 ICLA Congress in Vienna, we convened a workshop on "Historizing the Dream / Le rêve du point de vue historique," and we are preparing an international symposium for 2018 on "Mediating the Dream / Genres et médias du rêve." Early in 2017, the first volume of our series "Cultural Dream Studies / Études culturelles sur le rêve" was published: Bernard Dieterle/Manfred Engel (ed.), *Writing the Dream / Écrire le rêve*. Würzburg: Könighausen & Neumann 2017; ISBN 9783826061202.

For details, see our homepage: www.dreamcultures.org, which also includes a rapidly growing, fully searchable database of researchers and publications on the dream motif. If you have been active in this field please enter your personal data and publications (-> Research / -> Submit).

We are still looking for committee members with a special competence for dream-discourse and literary dreams in Eastern Europe, South America, Africa and Australia.

Prof. Dr. Bernard Dieterle
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Mulhouse (France)

Prof. Dr. Manfred Engel
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Saarbrücken (Germany)

ICLA Research Committee on Religion, Ethics, and Literature

The research committee investigates the philosophical and theoretical roles of religion and ethics in relation to literature, as well as explores the fraught relationship between secularism and post-secularism. It examines global literary phenomena as instances of subject formation in order to think new relationships between these three disciplines. We are particularly concerned with the modern displacement of religion, and

modernity's epistemological underpinnings as these aspects reflect judgments about the world, culture, and its relationship to a religious past. While the examination of religious imagery, symbolism and the role of myth will not be the purview of this committee, the signifiers of religion in as much as they motivate "an ethical turn" in the text is a key element of the committee's purview.

As a result, the committee has a wide-ranging concern with the interstitial space that literature makes visible, a space that is not reducible to the literary, religious, or ethical, and yet intersects with all of these nodes of expression. In other words, we question the epistemologies and categories that underwrite the ways that religion, literature, and ethics coalesce around an aesthetic object.

This year marks the third year of our operation and it has been a busy one. In addition to the ICLA Congress in Vienna in which we sponsored three streams, the committee also sponsors two seminars at the ACLA national conference in Utrecht, and two panels at the German Comparative Literature Association's national conference in Bochum (DGAVL). The committee thanks Linda Simonis and Monika Schmitz-Evans in particular for their invitation for the committee to participate in the DGAVL.

The committee's book with Bloomsbury is due to the publisher in December for copyediting. A collection of fifteen essays, the contributors represent early career researchers, graduate students and senior scholars in comparative literature as a discipline. The collection will be listed as part of the Religion, Philosophy, and Literature division for that press, and marketed not only to comparatists, but also scholars within religion and philosophy.

Recently, Professor Millet agreed in principle to edit a new journal on the research committee's themes for Brill. The journal will be peer-reviewed and Millet is currently assembling an editorial board as well as a staff with the projected first issue for 2019. Brill aims for two issues a year. The hope is that the journal will offer another mechanism for members to refine their research through peer-review as well as provide opportunities for publication.

The committee website contains a copy of our quarterly reports, lists our sponsored panels at different conferences, provides a list of our members, updates our publications progress, and offers instructions for membership (http://online.sfsu.edu/kmillet1/faultlinesgrp.html). Although Professor

Kitty Millet (kmillet1@sfsu.edu) chairs the committee, committee members remain actively engaged in growing the committee, determining its next events, and targeting potential audiences.

Kitty J. Millet
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San Francisco State University (US)

ICLA Research Committee on Translation

The Committee on Translation had a successful meeting last year at the Vienna ICLA congress where we organized a series of panels on the topic "Engaging Publics in and through Translation." This year, we issued a call for papers for the ACLA conference (in Utrecht) on the theme "Translation Networks." With this title, we mean to include papers about those regularly perceived relationships between languages, cultures and texts (across geographic and temporal divides as well as across disciplines and media). We also intend to gather scholarly reflections on less frequently discussed networks—those engaging publishers, editors, educators, scholars, reviewers, activists and other agents as they relate to the work of translation. We encouraged projects examining such relationships and movements as these exist in an increasingly globalized world. Given the large number of very promising responses, we organized a double session for the July conference.

As in the past, we are also scheduling a committee meeting at the ACLA conference outside of the panel discussions where we can debate ideas about our work further and make plans for the future.

Email contacts for the group are Sandra Bermann (chair): sandralb@princeton.edu; Assumpta Camps (vice chair): a.camps@ub.edu; and Spencer Hawkins (secretary): spenseur@umich.edu.

I include below the paper titles and participants for our panel discussions at ACLA 2017.

Translation Networks: I

Friday, July 7, 2017 Stream B (11:00am–12:45pm)

Translation, Comparative Religion, and Comparative Concepts of Truth and Power,

Sinkwan Cheng, University College London

Gift Exchange and Translation: José Emilio Pacheco and Reciprocity Between Literary Cultures,

Isabel Gómez, University of Massachusetts Boston

In and Out, Memberships of the Literary Translation Field: The Case of the Literary Translation Prize at the Leipzig Book Fair

Angela Kölling, Göteborgs universitet (University of Gothenburg)

Arabic Literature Prizes and the Global Market for Translation

Chip Rossetti, University of Pennsylvania

Saturday, July 8, 2017 Stream B (11:00am–12:45pm)

Transdisciplinarity as Translation Network

Spencer Hawkins, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

Scale, Cultural Translation, and the Networks of World Literature

Youngmin Kim, Dongguk University

The Consecration of Clarice Lispector

Chloé Brault MacKinnon, University of Toronto

A Rose by Many Other Names: Translation, Adaptation, and the 'New' Localization Industry

J Scott Miller, Brigham Young University

Sunday, July 9, 2017 Stream B (11:00am–12:45pm)

Out of the Dominant Political Agenda: Translation and Interpretation Networks for Social Activism

Assumpta Camps, Universitat de Barcelona (University of Barcelona)

Culture and Ideology in Translating the Algerian Novel: The Case of Ahlem Mosteghanemi's Dhakirat Al-Jasad

Lynda Chouiten, University of Boumerdes

Translating Utopia: Hu Feng and his Translation of a Soviet Proletarian Novel

Zhen Zhang, University of California Davis (UC Davis)

Depictions of Native Americans in Twentieth-Century English Translations of Cabeza de Vaca's Relación

Marlene Hansen Esplin, Brigham Young University

Translation Networks: II

Friday, July 8, Stream C

Persia by Way of Paris: On Matthew Arnold's in 'Sohrab and Rustum'

Reza Taher-Kermani, Nanyang Technological University

Modern Poetry Translation Networks: England and Italy

Jacob Blakesley, University of Leeds

Modalités de l'importation littéraire chez Gomez Carrillo

Juan Zapata, Université de Lille 3, SHS (University of Lille 3)

There in Amsterdam: Adrienne Rich's Translations from the Dutch

Diederik Oostdijk, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU–Free University of Amsterdam)

Saturday, July 8, 2017 Stream C (2:30pm–4:15pm)

How Does the Dominant Literary Discourse of the 21st Century Iran Translate the American Poet's Image?

Behnam Mirzababazadeh Fomeshi, Independent Scholar

From poet to poet: Lucebert translated by Louis Lehmann

Jaap van der Bent, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Co- and Contemporary Translation

Anja de Feijter, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Sandra Bermann
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Princeton University (US)

ICLA Research Committee in Comics Studies and Graphic Narrative

The research committee in Comics Studies and Graphic Narrative was formed and approved during the 2014–2015 academic year. The research committee seeks to advance the study of the medium of comics in the field of comparative literature. The committee also aims to facilitate opportunities for discussion, to present research in joint sessions at the AILC/ICLA congresses and other major meetings, facilitate the publication of the results in journals and anthologies, and to support young and emerging scholars in the field. The 2016 meeting hosted by the University of Vienna marked the first formal meeting of the group as a research committee. The committee is headed by Kai Mikkonen (University of Helsinki) and Stefan Buchenberger (Kanagawa University); Lisa DeTora (Hofstra University) is serving as secretary and prepared this report.

A vibrant series of sessions was held at a Group Session, "Comic Studies and Graphic Narrative" which occurred at the 2016 AILC/ICLA meeting in Vienna. The session was a continuation of the symposia held at the previous ICLA congresses in Hong Kong, Rio, Seoul, and Paris, and invited papers that considered, including historical and comparative approaches (questions about genre, medium, production, and reception), narrative studies (forms of storytelling, sequence, temporality, spatiality, voice), culture, social, and media studies (globalization, comics and other media, gender, ethnicity, politics, pedagogy), as well as analytical and theoretical approaches in linguistics, literature, philosophy, and arts. Seventeen scholars from institutions in Europe, the United States, Japan, and Canada had presentations accepted; these scholars were: Umberto Rossi, Nicola Paladin, Francesco Ursini, David Coughlan, Adnan Mahmutovic, Stefan Buchenberger, Tracy Lassiter, Noriko Hiraishi, Angelo Piepoli, Kai Mikkonen, Lea Pao, Lisa DeTora, Barbara Grüning, Chris Ceyns-Chikuma and Désiréé Lorenz, Alison Halsall, and Christian Bachmann. Sixteen papers were presented.

A committee meeting was held on 22 July at the University of Vienna, during which publications, plans for the 2019 ICLA meeting and the possibility for hosting a session at the ACLA 2017 meeting in Utrecht were discussed. The committee comprised scholars from Ireland, Italy, Sweden, the UK, the United States, Japan, Germany, and Finland. These

scholars represent various academic disciplines including linguistics, semiotics, social sciences, composition, publishing, and literature.

The research committee has been very active in presentations and publications. The group will sponsor a seminar, "Who's Bad? Representing Heroes, Villains and Anti-Heroes in Comics and Graphic Narratives," which will meet at the American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA) Congress to be held in Utrecht in July 2017. Another ACLA seminar, "Embodiment at the Margins: Theorizing Embodiment and/as Subjectivity in Literature and the Arts I," part of an ongoing endeavor in medical humanities, will include a panel also sponsored by the research group. Key prior activities include the "Future in Comics," hosted by Francesco Ursini, in September 2015, which will result in a collection to appear in 2017 under the McFarland imprint. Kanagawa University's Sixth International Symposium on Comparative Culture "From Entertainment to Art: The Evolution of Cultural Practices" was hosted by Stefan Buchenberger in June 2016 and included a presentation by Kai Mikkonen. Since 2014, members of the research committee have published over a dozen papers, with additional publication activities expected to result from the 2016 AILC/ICLA meeting as well as the 2017 ACLA meeting. Several works are in progress and in press.

LISA DETORA
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ICLA Research Committee: A Comparative History of East Asian Literatures

In 2015 the ICLA commissioned a cross-border, long-term, multilingual history of the literature of the East Asian region. Such a project is unprecedented. Good histories of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and other East Asian literatures already exist, some of them written in European languages. They have in common to be organized so as to show the development of the national tradition, envisioned as self-sustaining. A history in the comparative mode should not reduplicate those histories but give its attention to the interacting elements in East Asian literary history, which, because of the national focus of existing histories,

has hitherto been underemphasized. Many works on East-West cultural interactions exist, but the cross-pollination of texts and ideas within the region has a much longer history and deserves separate treatment. And of course "world literature" is a going concern, but it too has a bias foregrounding contemporary fiction translated into two or three major languages. This project reaches farther back in time and affirms the cosmopolitan character of a single world region, East Asia (indissociable as it happens from South, Central, and Southeast Asia).

The AILC/ICLA plan is for a collective of scholars from many countries to compile a history of cultural transfer, of influences, of migrating genres, forms, plots and ideas. The regional cultures of East Asia are porous; none is an island (indeed the "island culture" of Japan is perhaps the most porous of all). The largest national literature in the region, that of China, has integrated forms and materials from India (Buddhism, and before that, perhaps, certain yogic practices), from the nomadic peoples on the northern frontier (musical and verse forms, flowing southward in successive waves from the pre-imperial period on), from the Northwest corridor (Manicheanism, pre-Islamic Persian political and philosophical constructs, Turkic and Muslim ideas), from Tibet, from the southern highlands, and from the cultures Chinese merchants and emissaries encountered in Vietnam, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia. Though the Chinese language, with its peculiarities of script, has the reputation of being resistant to external influences, this is easily shown to be an exaggeration. Other languages sure to play significant roles are Pali, Tibetan, Mongolian, Manchu, Turkish, Sogdian.

Similar interchanges can be mapped for each of the other countries of East Asia. The literatures and cultures of Vietnam, Korea, Mongolia, and so forth are drawn from various sources and combine them idiosyncratically. It will be no easy task bringing clarity and order to these often neglected histories. An editorial committee, drawn chiefly from AILC/ICLA members, will have the task of drawing up the geographical and historical bounds of each volume, recruiting editors, and suggesting contributors. We anticipate seven or eight volumes to be published over a period of ten or so years, on the model of previous AILC/ICLA literary histories.

In the first year of the project's effective life, an editorial Steering Committee will meet once or twice to lay out in greater detail the volumes, as

well as secure commitments from authors. Though quite a few colleagues have volunteered their efforts (for which they are to be applauded), others interested in the project are warmly encouraged to convey their interest to Haun Saussy, hsaussy@uchicago.edu.

Haun Saussy
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In Memoriam: Mihály Szegedy-Maszák
(1943–2016)

With deep regret, we received the sad news of the death of Mihály Szegedy-Maszák in Budapest at the age of seventy-four.

Mihály Szegedy-Maszák was a towering figure of comparative literature studies and a committed member of the ICLA, who contributed immensely to the project "A Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages" (CHLEL). He joined the association in 1972, and became a member of the Coordinating Committee responsible for CHLEL in 1983. From 1992–2001 he was the vice-president and from 2001–2006 the president of the Coordinating Committee. As a result, he was involved in the activities of the book series for twenty-three years, during which period sixteen volumes were published. He also contributed to a volume entitled *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe,* Vol. III, that was published after his presidency. From 1991–1997, he was member of the Executive Council, and from 1997–2004 vice-president of the ICLA. In 1998, he became the editor-in-chief of *Neohelicon* as well as the editor-in-chief of *Hungarian Studies.* Since 2009, he had been the president of the Hungarian Comparative Literature Association.

Due to his astonishing erudition, unparalleled but by a very few, and his expertise in literary theory, comparative literature studies, translation studies, musicology, and the modern literary history of several nations, he could promote the field of comparative literature immensely. His tremendous scholarly output includes seventeen books.

Mihály Szegedy-Maszák was a full member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and of Academia Europaea, professor emeritus at Indiana University, Bloomington and Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. He will be greatly missed.

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Notes biographiques / Notes on Contributors

Daniel Acke enseigne la littérature et la philosophie françaises à la Vrije Universiteit de Bruxelles (VUB). En tant que dix-huitièmiste, il s'est intéressé à la tradition des moralistes. Il a collaboré à l'édition des œuvres de Charles-Joseph de Ligne (direction du volume *Caractères et portraits,* 2003 ; collaboration à *Mes écarts,* avec J. Vercruysse) et est associé à celle, en préparation, de Vauvenargues. Dans la littérature et la pensée du vingtième siècle, il étudie surtout le mysticisme non religieux, dans le prolongement de ses travaux sur Yves Bonnefoy (*Yves Bonnefoy essayiste. Modernité et présence*, 1999).

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gali Periodicals 1865–1947 (Stree Kolkata 2013) ; *Selfing the City: Single Women Migrants and their Lives in Calcutta* (Sage Delhi 2017), as well as the entry on Third world Feminisms in the *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies* (2016).

Chloé Chaudet a fait ses études entre l'Allemagne et la France, où elle enseigne actuellement la littérature française et comparée dans le secondaire et le supérieur. Docteure en littérature comparée depuis 2014, elle travaille sur les liens entre littérature et politique en Occident et dans certains contextes occidentaux, en s'intéressant notamment aux reconfigurations de l'engagement littéraire au tournant du XXIe siècle. Elle est l'auteure d'une monographie intitulée, *Écritures de l'engagement par temps de mondialisation* (2016).

Geoffrey V. Davis read Modern Languages at Oxford and has taught at universities in Austria, France, Germany and Italy. He has held research fellowships at Cambridge University, Curtin University (Australia) and the University of Texas at Austin. He is co-editor of *Cross/Cultures: Readings in Post/Colonial Literatures and Cultures in English* and of the African studies journal *Matatu.* He is a past chair of The Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS).

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Dorothy Figueira, the immediate past editor of *Recherche littéraire/ Literary Research*, is Distinguished Research Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Georgia (US). Her most recent book is *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion. Cross-Cultural Encounters with India* (2015). She has published extensively on East-West literary relations, literary

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John Burt Foster holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Yale University and is University Professor in English and Cultural Studies at George Mason University. His most recent book is *Transnational Tolstoy: Between the West and the World*, which was named a *Choice* Outstanding Academic Title in 2014. He is also a past editor of *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research.*

Robert Furlong a servi la cause de la francophonie multilatérale au sein de *l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* pendant 25 ans. Il se consacre aujourd'hui à l'écriture et la recherche sur la littérature mauricienne. Parmi ses publications récentes, il faut citer *Panorama de la littérature mauricienne. La production créolophone* (volume 1 : origines à 1968, 2007) ; présentation de *Moïse* et *Autobiographie spirituelle* de Malcolm de Chazal (2008); *Quand les poètes mauriciens parlent d'amour* (2010*)* ; *En revues et en français. Une anthologie de nouvelles, chroniques et contes mauriciens* (2015). Il fut Président de la Fondation Malcolm de Chazal de 2011 à 2014 et est Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres.

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fictives de Simone et André Schwarz-Bart (1996). Sa thèse d'habilitation s'intitule *Passes et impasses dans le comparatisme postcolonial caribéen: Cinq traverses* (2010), Elle s'intéresse aux postures et aux mécanismes de canonisation et à la réécriture comme stratégie postcoloniale. Elle publie dans de nombreuses revues sur les littératures caribéennes et africaine-américaine et dirige un groupe de recherche en littératures postcoloniales à l'Université d'Anvers. Elle vient de publier *Marrane et marronne : la coécriture réversible d'André et Simone Schwarz-Bart* (2014). Elle prépare une monographie sur Léon-Gontran Damas.

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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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