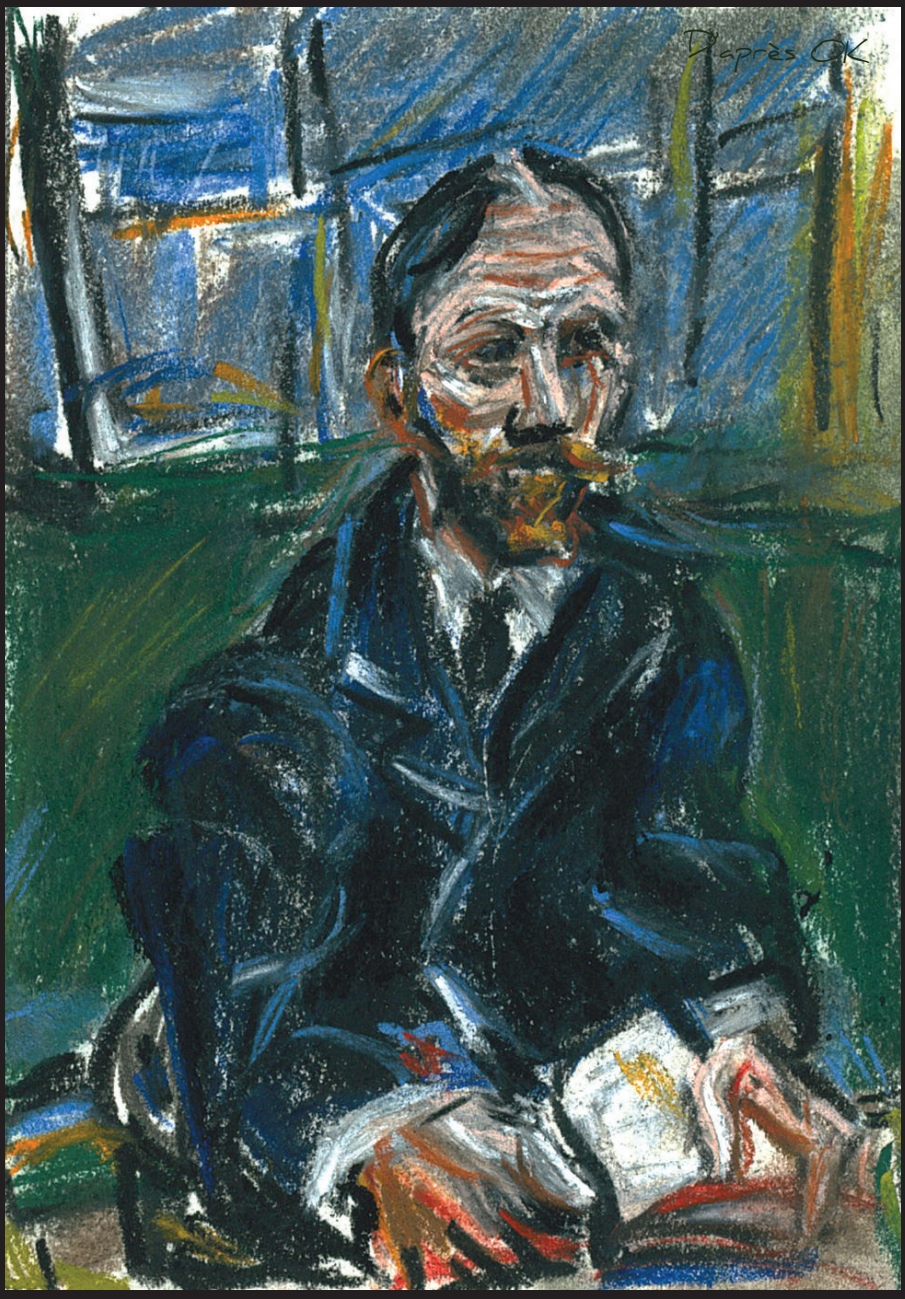
Recherche littéraire
Literary Research



31.61–62 (Summer 2015)

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

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

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

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

Couverture: / Cover art: "Studies after Kokoschka" courtesy of John Schweppe.

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Présentation du rédacteur / Editor's Introduction

The cover of this issue—a study after a painting by Oskar Kokoschka—announces the upcoming ICLA Congress in Vienna in the summer of 2016. Kokoschka so wonderfully expressed the early twentieth-century anxiety regarding the impending demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the course of our careers, many of us have studied the literatures of "Old Europe." But, one of the benefits of Comparative Literature is that it allows us also to engage new Europe and with this thought in mind, I devote some space in this issue to Poland, a central linguistic zone of "old Europe" and a country with a vibrant tradition of comparative literary studies. This issue highlights some of the work taking place in Comparative Literature there today with an extensive review essay on the *Polish Comparative Literature Yearbook,* produced at the University of Szczecin, and a report on a Comparative Literature conference held this year at this same university. Like last year's cluster devoted to Indian publications, I have tried to highlight the work in our discipline beyond the "dorsal lip" of the profession as it is often conceived in Amero-European metropolitan centers. The perennial questions regarding Comparative Literature's focus and mission are, I believe, best addressed not by dogmatic mission statements but by bringing to the attention of our readers the wide range of publications found in our discipline and a global perspective on conceptualizations of our field. Comparative Literature is best "defined" through the wonderful variety with which it is conceived and practiced throughout the world. With this focus on international reviews and publicizing international conferences, I have tried to show the diverse ways Comparative Literature is config-

ured as a international discipline – in an age of unfortunately ever more doxological pressures.

This is the last issue I will produce as editor. Since my home institution's partial funding of this journal has ended, I came to the conclusion last autumn that, perhaps, the time had come to pass the reins on to a new editor. I feel that with its regular publication these last eight years, first under the stewardship of John Burt Foster, Jr. and then under my direction, it is on secure footing for its next incarnation. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Deans Dorsey and Fallows of the University of Georgia for their funding of an editorial assistant these past four years. I would also like to thank the ICLA for subventing my release from teaching one class at my home institution in order to prepare the manuscript. I am grateful to Sharon Brooks and Jill Talmadge of the Comparative Literature Department at the University of Georgia for all the help they have given me with technical matters. I am greatly indebted to Jenny Webb of Webb Associates for the preparation of the manuscript and distribution of proofs. The printing office of Brigham Young University has consistently produced excellent copy and Prof. Steven Sondrup of BYU has been responsible for the electronic distribution and labels for the print mailings. In this age of outsourcing, ICLA is to be commended for having kept control of its journal's production and circulation. Of course, my task as editor was greatly facilitated by the willingness of ICLA colleagues and an array of comparatists throughout the world who graciously reviewed the books for this publication. I also wish to thank the membership at large for their willingness to shift to a partial electronic format. Their flexibility has greatly aided the journal financially. I have tried to make *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* reflect the variety and multiplicity that makes up our discipline. As a field of inquiry, Comparative Literature is a "many splendored thing" and this journal has tried to reinforce its varied, yet inclusive nature.

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Essais / Review Articles

Brian Massumi. *What Animals Teach Us About Politics.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. Pp. 137. ISBN: 978-0822357728.

Brian Massumi was one of the early proponents of the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, providing a masterful translation of Deleuze and Guattari's massive *A Thousand Plateaus* in 1987, and in 1992 authoring a seminal introduction to their work, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari.* In his subsequent books, Massumi has continued to elaborate on various concepts in Deleuze and Guattari, but unlike many of their commentators, he has combined their thought with that of many other theorists to formulate his own philosophy, one that has assumed increasing reach and power in the last few years. Massumi's *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (2002) greatly expanded the implications of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of affect, and in the process produced a foundational text for the growing field of Affect Theory. In *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts* (2011), Massumi subsumed his exploration of affect within a meditation on experience, perception, semblance and the event, making heavy use of William James and Alfred North Whitehead to formulate a relational and event-oriented approach to interactive artistic media and to the arts in general. In his most recent books, *Power at the End of the Economy* and *What Animals Teach Us About Politics,* both published in 2014, Massumi has expounded on the political implications of his thought, in the former by articulating a critique of neo-liberalism, and in the latter by exploring the relationship between animals and human beings.

What Animals Teach Us About Politics opens with a dense, tightly argued essay on animal play, instinct and intuition; the continuum that relates humans to these domains of animal existence; and their bearing on a general theory of politics. This lengthy essay is followed by three "

supplements," the first devoted to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "becoming animal" as it is manifested in literature; the second to zoos and the problem of spectatorship; and the third to "Six Theses on the Animal to Be Avoided." Deleuze, Guattari, James and Whitehead remain important inspirations in this book, but they are joined here by Henri Bergson, Raymond Ruyer, Gilbert Simondon and Gregory Bateson (among others), all of whom allow Massumi to construct a biological model that establishes commonalities among animals and humans. Massumi attributes mentality, intuition, spontaneity, creativity and sympathy to animals, and in so doing anticipates charges from critics of anthropomorphism. His object, however, is not to humanize animals, but instead "to move beyond our anthropomorphism *as regards ourselves*: our image of ourselves as humanly standing apart from other animals; our inveterate vanity regarding our assumed species identity, based on the specious ground of our sole proprietorship of language, thought, and creativity" (3). Critics of anthropomorphism insist on the radical difference between humans and animals, regarding the attribution of human faculties to animals as a form of arrogant appropriation of the Other for the purposes of domination. But Massumi counters, "Is it not the height of human arrogance to suppose that animals do not have thought, emotion, desire, creativity or subjectivity? Is that not to consign animals yet again to the status of automatons? ... The barbed accusation of anthropomorphism misses its target, and sees its arrow turn back against itself" (51).

Massumi's entry into the animal domain is via Gregory Bateson's influential 1955 essay "A Theory of Play and Fantasy" (reprinted in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*). Often play between two animals resembles combat, but there is a clear difference between the animals' play combat and real combat. (Bateson chooses two chimpanzees as his example, whereas Massumi focuses on two wolf cubs.) The wolf cub's playful nip is not a bite. The nip is a metacommunication that marks a difference; the nip says, "This is not a bite." As metacommunication, the nip is an abstraction from the communicative level of actual combat, and it entails the mental coexistence of nip and bite in order to function (since a metacommunication without the simultaneous presence of its referent communication would be meaningless). For this reason, the nip incorporates the bite in a paradoxical relationship of simultaneous inclusion and differentiation. In Massumi's terms, the play relationship is one of "mutual inclusion" (4), which suspends the principle of the excluded middle by allowing elements to be both the same and different at the same time.

Massumi adds to Bateson's analysis first by noting that the nip of one cub draws the cub's play partner into a social relation and thereby releases "a force of *transindividual* transformation" (5). Massumi then observes that the ludic gesture takes place in the conditional mode. "These actions do not denote what those actions for which they stand *would denote*" (5). The ludic combat includes within it traces of actual combat, but held in suspension as a potential that may be activated later. In this sense, play is oriented toward the future. Massumi argues further that the playfulness of the nip is communicated through its style, through the manner of its execution, the "how" of the gesture. The nip "is not so much 'like' a combat move as it is *combatesque*" (9). The nip is delivered with a flourish, "an excess of energy or spirit," carrying with it "what Daniel Stern would call a *vitality affect*" (9). The nip is a metacommunication, and as such abstract, but it is embodied as a lived abstraction. It is a metacommunication inseparable from its corporeal enactment and the vitality aspect that suffuses it.

As vital excess, the ludic gesture carries with it "*a surplus-value of life,*" which Massumi identifies with what Raymond Ruyer calls the gesture's "*aesthetic yield*" (10). This excess is one of self-enjoyment, aesthetic in the sense that it transcends its usefulness and is enjoyed for its own sake. "The standing-for of the play gesture makes play an *expressive* activity, essentially in excess over its function" (11). The instrumental theory of play views ludic combat as parasitic on actual combat, an animal's play being an instinctually induced, and evolutionarily advantageous, preparation for actual combat. Massumi counters that the relationship between ludic and actual combat is more complex. Actual combat itself entails play, in that each combat is a new situation with multiple variables, to which the combatants must respond through improvisation and adaptation to the changing circumstances of the fight. It is in ludic combat that the animal practices improvisation, and through the implementation of improvisatory strategies during actual combat the real fight is "modulated" by play, in the sense that the actual combat undergoes a process of continuous variation as it unfolds. Ludic and actual combat are inextricably connected, and what ensures an animal's success in a fight is its ability to exploit the improvisatory excess of play's vital affectivity. For this reason, Massumi argues, "It is in fact instrumental action that is parasitic upon play" (12).

Massumi's treatment of the instrumental theory of play leads him to a broader consideration of animal instinct in general. Massumi concurs with Ruyer that "the autonomous powers of variation are present in every instinctive activity of any kind" (13). Every instinct, "no matter how

stereotyped it normally seems to be, carries a margin of maneuver" (13). If this were not the case, an animal's instinctive behavior would be incapable of adjusting to variations in its environment. (Mussami here cites Darwin's remarks on earthworms, which all have an instinctive impulse to plug their holes with dirt, but which do so in a wide variety of ways.) Instinct's margin of maneuver is one with the "style" of play, the excess vitality affect of improvisation, which is also spontaneous in its unpredictability. Although corporeally enacted, instinct's margin of maneuver signals the existence of a mental power, which Massumi defines as "the *capacity to surpass the given.*" Hence, instinct is "*a first degree of mentality* in the continuum of nature" (17).

Although Massumi argues for a pervasive mentality in animal life, he does not thereby downplay the importance of affect. In a reprise of Bateson's analysis of play, Massumi observes that Bateson sees one element common to ludic and actual combat—what Bateson labels "emotions," or "mood-signs," and what Massumi calls "affects." The play-fight and the real-fight differ, but both arouse the same affects (fear, aggression, anger, and so on). This affective commonality between the ludic and the real leads Massumi to posit a further distinction within the domain of play. Within the same affect, he argues, one may distinguish "vitality affect" from "categorical affect." Vitality affect is the improvisatory excess that grants an action its style, the adverbial "how" of its performance. Categorical affect, by contrast, determines the "what" of the action—that is, what the action is about. The "what" of an action is a determination of its importance for the organism in question. Such a determination requires a retention of past experiences, a classification or categorization of those experiences according to their importance, and a recognition of their sameness in the present. Such "lived importance is a noncognitive understanding," but "it still qualifies as an *act of thought.* It is thought at its lowest degree of creativity, anchored to a recognition of the given, which is to say, keyed into the sameness of the present to the past" (30–31). The lived abstraction of vitality affect, by contrast, "is turned to the future, in an enactive thinking of the new. It is also a noncognitive understanding, but in future-oriented action" (31). Both vitality affect and categorical affect occur in the act of play, the one determining the "how" of the play, the other the "what." "The play nip says 'this is not a bite' (this act does not denote what it would denote). At the same time, it says categorically: 'this is nevertheless a situation of fear'" (26). Vitality affect brings enthusiasm to the play, whereas categorical af-

fect lends it importance. Vitality affect establishes a "*transindividual* link" between play partners, and in so doing allows them to separate themselves from their ordinary situation and enter a separate play space. Categorical affect, by contrast, ensures that the play space remains anchored in the real. "Categorical affect is the immediately felt determination of what life is actively about in the eventful complexity of the moment" (27).

In Massumi's view, vitality affect and categorical affect, easily discerned in play, are also present in every instinct, since instinct always entails an improvisatory margin of maneuver. Massumi labels as "intuition" the cooperative functioning of vitality affect and categorical affect within instinct. His effort here is to expand on the notion of instinct as "*a first degree of mentality*" (17), a "noncognitive understanding" that is nonetheless "thought ... at its lowest degree of creativity" (30–31). Such thought is embodied thought, thought-action, and intuition is that thought's "creative embodying" (31). The categorical affect of instinct ensures that instinct is oriented toward the present, but instinct requires something more for its enactment as embodied thought. "What intuition adds to instinct is the corporeality of the present situation" (33). Intuition provides an assessment of a given situation within which instinct may operate. "Intuition's double polarity capacitates instinct to factor into its operation what is presently important, while at the same time maintaining instinct's appetitive tending to surpass.... Each lived instinctive act bears a degree of intuitive enabling" (33). The noncognitive understanding of instinct's thought-action, enabled through intuition, also involves "sympathy," which Massumi characterizes as that element of the thought-action that allows the actor to interpenetrate the elements of each situation as a new and ongoing event. His summary formulation of the roles of instinct, intuition and sympathy in this noncognitive understanding is that instinct, "in its aspect of lived intuition," is "the sympathy that transports us, with a gesture effecting a transformation-in-place, into the heart of a unique event that is just beginning, with which our life will now coincide, but whose outcome is as yet unknowable, and consequently incomprehensible" (32).

Instinct, then, is a first degree of mentality, in that it is an ability to surpass the given. Intuition is the creative embodying of instinct-thought. And sympathy is the "feeling with" that engages instinct and intuition in the event. The two affects of instinct, vitality affect and categorical affect, pervade the complex of instinct, intuition and sympathy, and they point toward the dual nature of animal thought-

action as aesthetic and ethical—aesthetic in that the style, the "how," of a thought-action involves a creative, improvisatory surpassing of the present, and ethical in that the "what" of the situation is a determination of lived importance, "the anchoring of incorporated experience in the imperative expressed in the already given" (38).

On the basis of this analysis of animal mentality, Massumi proposes several ways in which we humans, as beings on the animal continuum, can learn political lessons from animals. "Animal politics," as he calls it, involves not simply including the non-human within the political, as Bruno Latour proposes, but also recognizing our own "becoming-non-human," that is, our participation with other life-forms in our "instinctive animality" (38). Animal politics defies any fixed ethics, its ethical dimension being that of a situation-specific assessment of lived importance. Its criteria of evaluation reside not in universal rules but in assessments of "the intensity of the mental potentials for variation put into play" (41). Given the aesthetic dimension of instinctive-intuitive-sympathetic thought as an improvisatory surpassing of the present, there can be no rigid separation of the frivolous and the serious. As thought-action, animal mentality encourages "a politics of the performative gesture, alloying itself with practices of improvisational and participative art in the wild (beyond the territory of the gallery)" (40). Animal politics distances itself from traditional concepts of agency, since such theories separate agent from action, whereas animal politics stresses the embodied nature of thought-action. In that animal play, and animal instinctual activity in general, draw individuals into a transindividual event, animal politics' "ethico-aesthetic paradigm calls for a *politics of relation*" (42). Animal politics also affirms both a logic and a pragmatics of mutual inclusion. In sum, animal politics "envelops the human in an *integrated animo-centrism* in which it loses its a priori dominance without, however, either its difference or those of its animal peers being blurred or erased. It calls on the human to become animal, not on animals to renounce vital powers wrongly assumed to be the sole province of the human" (52).

Massumi's book should be of interest to anyone who has speculated on the relationship of humans to other animals, but comparatists should find especially stimulating Massumi's scattered remarks on language and his discussion of "becoming-animal" in literature (Supplement One). Massumi reiterates Bateson's insight that the metacommunication of animal play creates the conditions for the emergence of language. Animal play is a proto-language, which suggests not simply that animals are possessed of

mental abilities often reserved exclusively for humans, but also that human language is essentially animal. Hence, Massumi asks, "Why not consider human language a reprise of animal play, raised to a higher power? Or say that it is actually in language that the human reaches its highest degree of animality?" (8). Following Bateson again, Massumi observes that the difference between communication and metacommunication is one between territory and map, and in both animal play and human language there is a differentiation of the two. But human language is distinguished from play "by its reflective capacity to double over on itself—to fold its operations back on themselves, to comment on what it is doing as it is doing it" (21–22). In this way, language is able "to map its own operations, immanent to their exercise" (22). Nonetheless, language remains an action and every statement a performance of its embodiment. In this sense, language's metacommunicative map always carries with it a territorial communication of its occurrence in a concrete situation. "The same verbal acts that produce the distinction between the communicational and the metacommunicational level collapse the levels together: you can't talk about language without using it" (22). Just as animal play creates a zone of indiscernibility in which map and territory shade into each other, so language blurs map and territory, but in language the zone of indiscernibility is within language itself, such that language may be both metacommunication about itself and communicative performance of that metacommunication.

Massumi draws out some of the literary implications of the relationship between animal play and language in "To Write Like a Rat Flicks Its Tail," the first of the book's three Supplements. His focus is on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "becoming-animal," which they introduce in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1975) and develop further in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980). In *Kafka,* Deleuze and Guattari argue that in such stories as "The Metamorphosis," "A Report to an Academy," "Investigations of a Dog" and "Josephine the Singer," Kafka is not simply writing about animals but engaging in a process of "becoming-animal." And in *A Thousand Plateaus,* Deleuze and Guattari find the same process at work in Melville's narrative of Ahab's obsession with Moby-Dick and in Hofmannsthal's account of Lord Chandos's impassioned evocation of the death throes of the rat colony he has poisoned. For Deleuze and Guattari, becoming-animal is only one of several becomings—becoming-woman, becoming-child, becoming-molecular, becoming-imperceptible, and so on—all of which are means by which people may become-other, that is, undo the categorical norms

that regulate Western society (especially those that valorize and privilege white male adult humans). To become-animal, for Deleuze and Guattari, is to induce a becoming-other that undoes the normative categories of the human and the animal and opens toward something uncharted by those categories. It is such an animal becoming-other that Kafka, Melville and Hofmannsthal activate in their writings. Massumi adheres closely to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-animal and to their approach to writing, but he adds significantly to their analyses by relating the concept and its literary practice to animal play. Human becoming-animal is a form of play, but it differs from animal play in that its abstraction from the real is absolute, not limited to the specific sphere of ludic activity. Animal play combat is an abstraction from real combat, but human becoming-animal is a suspension of all human categories, an unframing of the normal and an activation of a "supernormal," improvisatory margin of maneuver. Becoming-animal's "unframing opens an escape hatch leading away from *all* known arenas of activity given in nature.... The becoming passes *between* the human and the animal, in the margin of maneuver produced by placing their generic identities in suspense in such a way as to mutually include them in a state of heightened intensity—suspended animation" (57). When writers engage in becoming-animal, they do not imitate the animal but extract the style of the animal's improvisation, the "-esqueness" of the animal's vitality affect, and invent a linguistic correlate of that style.

The embodied play of animal instinct suspends the real but remains tied to it, instinct's margin of maneuver manifesting itself in the unfolding domain of the animal's action. Writing, by contrast, suspends such unfolding. "In a written animal-becoming, unlike in nonhuman animal play such as that of wolf cubs, what is played is not a particular function of the animal, like predation. The 'plot line' of the story is an envelope for the integral animal to express itself in all its immanent intensity" (59). What is dramatized in written animal-becoming is the margin of maneuver itself, the "supernormal" something-extra detached from any specific context. The style or "-esqueness" of a specific animal provides a means of access to a continuum of creative improvisation that includes all animals. "Writing extends the –esqueness to integral animality, taking pure expression to the limit" (59). In all play, animals, including humans, "are extracted from their normal contexts, abstracted from their customary frames." But what sets writing apart from other actions "is that it gives free range to the instinc-

tive movement of supernormality running the full length of the animal continuum immanent to the life of humans and nonhumans alike" (61).

Play in literature has been widely and variously discussed, but Massumi brings something new to the topic in linking linguistic play to the play of animal instinct. Avoiding reductive evolutionary or biological models, Massumi relates humans to animals, not by subsuming humans within a mechanistic schema of stimulus-response or inexorable natural selection, but by finding within all animals traits commonly attributed to humans alone—mind, intuition, sympathy, aesthetic affects, ethical judgments, improvisation and creativity. The result is not to lower humans to the level of mere beasts (as so much Neo-Darwinian criticism does), but to elevate animals to the level of co-participants with humans in the domain of embodied affective ludic invention.

Massumi writes with careful precision, building his argument in condensed yet cogent stages, occasionally moving obliquely from one line of thought to another, but eventually bringing them together in a synthetic rearticulation of the principal thesis. His language is often abstract, but he provides sufficient concrete examples to clarify his points. His style ranges from the lapidary to the ecstatic, lengthy theoretical disquisitions interspersed with aphoristic formulations and colloquial summaries. He leavens the whole with a dash of controlled playfulness that is never self-indulgent and often illuminating. He makes use of a specialized vocabulary, which, if taken out of context, might seem deliberately obscure. But he introduces his terminology in measured steps, clearly defining each concept and gradually combining them as he formulates his argument. The resultant discourse, though difficult, is intelligible, rigorous, and necessary for the articulation of his thought.

This is an important book that deserves a wide readership. Although literature is not Massumi's primary topic, comparatists should find much of value in this broad account of human animality and our common participation in the world of animal creativity.

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Elena Gretchanaia, Alexandre Stroev, Catherine Viollet, dir. *La francophonie européenne aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles: Perspectives littéraires, historiques et culturelles.* Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2012. Pp. 276. ISBN: 9782875740052.

Fruit d'un colloque international qui s'est tenu à Paris en avril 2011, le présent volume rassemble dix-neuf communications dont l'ambition vise à définir l'image qu'une littérature européenne d'expression française offre de l'Europe moderne, perçue comme « fondatrice d'une société » établie au-delà des « barrières nationales ».

Interroger, dans la longue durée, les représentations d'une société européenne et le développement de sociabilités croisées, construites à partir d'usages linguistiques diffus, corrélés au développement de l'institution littéraire—voire au fonctionnement des *institutions de la vie littéraire*—peut sembler relever de la gageure. En étendant, le concept anachronique de « francophonie » à des aires géopolitiques pour le moins disparates—allant de l'Europe du nord (Suède, Lituanie, Hollande) à la Russie, en transitant par l'Europe centrale et l'Europe de l'Est (Prusse, Bohême, Biélorussie, Pologne, Tchéquie, ...), à l'exception des pays où le français est l'une des langues d'usage de la population (Belgique, Suisse), Elena Gretchanaia, Alexandre Stroev et Catherine Viollet sont toutefois parvenus à renouveler les recherches scientifiques qui, depuis plus d'un demi-siècle, ont envisagé les manifestations de la francophilie europé-enne durant l'époque des Lumières. L'originalité de l'ouvrage repose en grande partie sur sa capacité à fédérer les résultats obtenus à la suite de récents recensements d'une considérable envergure qui, individuellement, avaient pour objectif de cerner au plus près les dimensions sociales des pratiques littéraires du français sur des aires géographiques plus étroitement circonscrites.

Les questionnements qui hantent l'harmonisation des articles réunis ici sont donc résolument multiples. Sous un angle conceptuel novateur, les auteurs tissent ou détissent pour partie et en fonction de préoccupations contemporaines, clairement assumées (13), l'écheveau des recherches menées sur le cosmopolitisme des Lumières ou sur la République des Lettres. Le volume s'inscrit dans le sillage tracé, dès 1938, par l'ouvrage de Louis Réau (*L'Europe française au siècle des Lumières*), emprunté ensuite différemment par les travaux de René Pommeau (*L'Europe des Lumières: Cosmopolitisme et unité européenne au XVIIIe siècle,* 1966) et, plus récemment, par les contributions de Marc

Fumaroli (*Quand l'Europe parlait français,* 2001) ou de Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire (*Le mythe de l'Europe fran*çaise au *XVIIIe siècle: diplomatie, culture et sociabilités au temps des Lumières,* 2007). Il emboîte également le pas à des approches pluridisciplinaires, à l'instar de l'ouvrage codirigé par Olivier Chaline, Jaroslaw Dumanowski et Michel Figeac, intitulé *Le rayonnement français en Europe centrale du XVIIe siècle à nos jours* (2009) et doit se positionner face à des recherches plus larges, telles celles réunies sous le titre *Multilinguisme et multiculturalité dans l'Europe des Lumières* (U. Haskins-Gonthier, A. Sandrier dirs., 2007), qui ont débouché, en 2014, sur la parution du volume *European Francophonie: The Social, Political and Cultural History of an International Prestige Language* (D. Offord, V. Rjéoutski dirs., 2014). Forts des acquis de cette tradition historiographique, les auteurs tirent parti des conclusions de plusieurs enquêtes pragmatiques (bibliographiques, archivistiques ou prosopographiques) menées au sein de différentes bibliothèques nationales ou de dépôts d'archives du continent. Ces études éclatées trouvent ici, plus qu'un écho, une synthèse et une cohabitation heureuse qui invitent au comparatisme et à l'esquisse d'un large panorama. L'on pointera notamment parmi ces études-sources, les volumes signés par Margareta et Hans Östman (*Au champ d'Apollon: Écrits d'expression française produits en Suède, 1550–2006*, 2008), par Irena Buckley et Marie-France de Palacio (*L'Éden lituanien et la Babylone française: les contacts culturels franco-lituaniens au xixe siècle*, 2012), par Iouri Lotman et Viktor Rosenzweig (*La littérature russe d'expression française: Textes français d'écrivains russes XVIIIe-XIXe siècles,* 1994), par Elena Gretchanaia seule (*Quand la Russie parlait français: la littérature russe francophone XVIIIe-première moitié du XIXe siècle,* 2010) ou en collaboration avec Catherine Viollet (« Si tu lis jamais ce journal… »*: Diaristes russes francophones 1780–1854,* 2008). Le lecteur soucieux d'en prendre la mesure trouvera en tête de l'ouvrage une bibliographie générale de cinq pages qui dresse un état des lieux raisonné de ce champ de recherche et qui atteste ses filiations, son extrême vivacité et ses récents bénéfices.

Les éditeurs ne pouvaient décemment ignorer, en adoptant le concept opératoire de « francophonie européenne », les réflexions menées sur l'instrumentalisation de cette notion qui, traditionnellement, frappe au coin les études postcoloniales et les littératures contemporaines d'expression française du Maghreb, de l'Afrique noire, du Canada ou des Antilles ... Derrière l'usage du terme, se profilent inévitablement les débats scientifiques qui ont usé des concepts de *littérature-monde,* de *world fiction*

ou de *Weltliteratur,* selon des acceptions qui, depuis Goethe jusqu'à Edward Said, en passant par Étiemble et Erich Auerbach, n'ont pas toujours coincidé, déformées encore par des ambitions intellectuelles et un intérêt divergents au sein des mondes francophones et anglophones.[1] La première partie du livre consacrée aux « Approches théoriques et historiques » et le point qu'offre Jean Bessière sur les études francophones, en ouverture de celle-ci, sont donc particulièrement bienvenus. Ils permettent de faire la part entre une vision transnationale et une vision nationale des littératures francophones (29). Ils relativisent aussi le « volontarisme militant » qu'a épinglé Jérôme David et qui, en visant « la survalorisation d'une sphère supranationale d'institution de la littérature, dans le seul but d'en découdre avec la nation et avec l'État », conduit généralement, pour l'époque moderne, à des conclusions « historiquement fausses ».[2]

Bessière s'attarde sur l'usage du français langue seconde au sein des états européens et au cœur d'une littérature de la diaspora qui ont offert à la francophonie une multiplicité de lieux et d'histoires qui correspondent à autant de situations de diglossie ou de multilinguisme. Cette diaspora, précise-t-il, n'a pas été nécessairement une « diaspora de domination » mais parfois, au contraire, la « diaspora d'une indépendance » ou d'une « manière d'autonomie » (Belgique, Suisse, Québec, Louisiane, ...). En invitant le lecteur à un détour par les littératures francophones contemporaines, Bessière préfère les évoquer en termes d'espaces de médiations du français. Il rappelle, à l'évidence, qu'une reconnaissance de la tradition littéraire française n'implique pas, par l'usage de la langue, une adhésion systématique et idéologique aux données politiques, culturelles et sociales proprement françaises. Le français et l'expression en français apparaissent dès lors comme les « moyens de la relation à l'autre », dans laquelle « quelque calcul national français » ou « un progressisme hérité des Lumières » peuvent se mêler, mais sans pouvoir être tenus pour « les seuls déterminants de l'étendue et de la fonction de cette diaspora » (31–32). En marge des débats usuels sur la littérature-monde et à rebours d'une certaine tradition critique française, Bessière n'invite donc pas à saisir la référence et l'usage du français selon l'angle de l'« utilisation d'un capital culturel et symbolique proprement français ». Il encourage plutôt à jauger l'internationalisme de ces littératures à l'aune de leur relativité. Se dessine alors, sous le concept de francophonie, un « jeu spécifique de discours », confrontés à d'autres discours, parmi lesquels figure la littérature française, mais aussi bien d'autres. Les littératures contemporaines en français, hors de France, jouent histo-

riquement face à la littérature française aujourd'hui, poursuit l'auteur, le rôle de « littératures de rupture historique et d'exposition d'une multiplicité des historicités ». Et Bessière d'étendre cette leçon du contemporain qui, *mutatis mutandis*, « vaut probablement dans des perspectives historiques ». Une telle approche lui permet de situer l'importance de l'usage du français dans la perspective d'une « ouverture historique » et « d'une pluralisation de l'histoire » (33–34). Cette pluralisation recouvre plusieurs niveaux (public ou privé), dans bien des domaines (politique, scientifique, etc.), et laisse apparaître des agents fort divers (anonymes, puissants, écrivains consacrés ...). L'auteur dévoile ainsi une possibilité d'écrire l'histoire de l'usage du français de manière « toute foucaldienne ». Ces pratiques ne possèdent-elles pas, en effet, leurs propres archives?

L'argument résume magistralement la thèse et la méthode d'un volume qui affiche un souci constant de répondre à l'appel lancé naguère par l'école des Annales dans le but d'étendre le champ de l'historien de la littérature au « quotidien ». En empruntant cette voie pour mesurer la nature et l'ampleur des contacts interculturels noués autour des écrits francophones, les contributeurs au volume font en effet émerger des textes qui, pour certains, n'avaient même jamais été recensés: ils relèvent de genres différents, désormais considérés indépendamment du « canon » littéraire, de leur « rayonnement » et de leur « reconnaissance institutionnelle ». Aussi l'historien de la littérature est-il convié ici à se pencher sur le « non-monumental »—l'« invisible même »—afin de reconstituer « les tendances et pratiques culturelles de l'époque dans leur signification précise et leur intégralité » (Gretchanaia 14). Si le lecteur a connaissance de la multitude des poèmes, mémoires, journaux ou traités rédigés en français par les Grimm, les Catherine II, les Antoine Hamilton, Janos Fekete de Galantha, Jean Potocki, Andrei Chouvalov ou Louis-Antoine Caraccioli ..., il ignore généralement le continent des manuscrits inédits qui procèdent de *minores* ou d'anonymes et qui entourent ces œuvres publiées ou relativement confidentielles, mais depuis longtemps redécouvertes. Ces pièces relèvent tantôt du registre de la fiction, tantôt des codifications de la communication scientifique ou militaire, ou encore du registre de l'intime, décliné au gré d'une pléthore d'égo-documents. Leur conservation chaotique, parcellaire, invite le lecteur à mesurer l'étendue des témoignages du même ordre irrévocablement disparus et enjoint les éditeurs à souligner l'urgence du dépouillement systématique des documents préservés et de leur nécessaire inventoriage. Procéder à la dé-hiérarchisation—sur le plan linguistique et

littéraire—de ces discours et s'attacher à leur examen qualitatif et quantitatif, faire surgir les pratiques qu'ils font entendre, les partages de discours qu'ils donnent à lire et les représentations qu'ils convoquent dans un contexte socio-culturel déterminé engage, en définitive, les auteurs à rompre avec une « certaine idéologie des 'belles lettres' françaises qui fonderait ou justifierait une généralisation de la notion de 'république des lettres' ». La voie de la comparaison s'en trouve ainsi ouverte: elle promet de dessiner, « époque par époque », nation par nation, une « logique comparée de la diaspora et des usages du français écrit » (Bessière 34).

Les communications rassemblées dans l'ouvrage, outre la tripartition géographique (Europe du Nord, Europe Centrale et de l'Est, Russie) qu'elles épousent, peuvent se comprendre selon trois axes que le volume mêle constamment et qui concernent l'exploration des *genres*, les études de *cas* et l'examen des *précautions* méthodologiques.

Conformément aux perspectives historiographiques privilégiées, le corpus des égo-documents est celui qui s'impose majoritairement à la lecture de l'ouvrage. Catherine Viollet (37–50) invite à envisager journaux, récits de vie ou de voyages et correspondances comme autant de révélateurs d'une micro-histoire européenne. Ils apportent par le détail des conditions de vie matérielle, par le truchement des sentiments ressentis lors du voyage ou par la confrontation à l'altérité religieuse, d'infimes renseignements permettant de brosser une fresque de la vie quotidienne, culturelle et sociale. Dans ces écrits personnels, le chercheur peut déceler un rapport à la langue et aux spécificités nationales. Il peut y lire des modèles d'écriture, y pister des réseaux sociaux et peut y pénétrer le fonctionnement de sociabilités complexes. L'approche polyphonique ou kaléidoscopique qu'offrent ces textes sur les rapports à la langue et à la culture française, sur divers processus d'acculturation aussi, enjoint incontestablement à internationaliser leur traitement, selon une démarche simultanément interdisciplinaire. Deux ans avant sa disparition, Catherine Viollet, animatrice, depuis sa fondation, de l'équipe « Genèse et autobiographie » (ITEM) continuait ainsi d'appeler de ses vœux l'avènement d'une communauté internationale de chercheurs, groupés autour d'objets toujours largement inédits et dont l'intérêt pour les disciplines historiques est au moins triple. Ils témoignent d'abord de frontières génériques mouvantes, à l'image de celles, idéologiques ou naturelles, qui séparent les nations où ils courent. Outre les questionnements qu'elles induisent sur l'institution littéraire, en corrélation avec les contextes socio-politiques, ces introspections rédigées en

français par des auteurs allophones constituent une pâture de prédilection pour les *cross-cultural studies*. Enfin, elles interrogent la répartition des rôles sociaux en fonction des sexes et offrent aux *gender studies* un matériau de choix. Plusieurs contributeurs ont dès lors choisi de les étudier selon l'une ou plusieurs de ces orientations.

Sous l'angle du *gender*, Émilie Murphy (221–35) envisage les nombreux récits de voyages rédigés en français par les femmes de l'élite sociale russe, entre 1777 et 1850. Son étude mesure le hiatus observé entre la pratique d'une langue qui assume, pour les diaristes, un statut de *lingua franca*, leur permettant, où qu'elles aillent, de s'intégrer à la haute société, et l'héritage des Lumières françaises, obéré par la pesanteur de la société patriarcale russe. L'échantillon des journaux et relations de voyage hollandais, dressé par Madeleine van Strien-Chardonneau (79–94), offre quant à lui un éclairage sur la diversification sociale des usages du français. Si, dans la société des Provinces-Unies, la langue française conserve un rôle de marqueur social et culturel qui correspond au départ à une pratique largement aristocratique, l'usage du français va évoluer dans le sens d'une relative « démocratisation ». Celle-ci est tributaire de l'environnement singulier qu'offrent les Pays-Bas (rôle des refuges protestants, internationalisation par le français de la science hollandaise, impact des relations commerciales). Mais elle est aussi la résultante d'une période d'occupation qui, à la fin du XVIIIe siècle et durant l'Empire, impose le français comme vecteur administratif et juridique et qui facilite l'accession de la bourgeoisie aux fonctions publiques. L'efflorescence des compositions françaises se marque alors parmi le patriciat urbain, plus important quantitativement que la noblesse. Une mise en perspective de ces écrits avec les monuments littéraires francophones de l'époque, dus à Frans Hemsterhuys, à Isabelle de Charrière ou à Etta Palm d'Aelders, permet à van Strien-Chardonneau de dresser une large typologie des textes francophones qui, progressivement, devront aussi composer avec une idéologie nationaliste de plus en plus prégnante. C'est en français que s'exprimera ironiquement, à la fin du XVIIIe siècle, une partie de la société qui appelle de ses vœux un bilinguisme tempéré et c'est dans la langue de Voltaire que plusieurs groupes manifesteront leur sentiment résolument anti-français. La contribution de Margareta Östman, qui concerne la situation propre de la Suède, offre un pendant à cette étude. Elle présente les résultats obtenus à partir d'une vaste enquête menée sur un échantillon de 451 auteurs identifiés, hommes et femmes confondus, et dresse une statistique qui permet de se représenter de façon

synthétique l'importance de l'influence étrangère sur ce territoire, durant près de trois siècles, en fonction de l'âge, des origines sociales, de la formation, de la carrière des auteurs ou des genres qu'ils ont pratiqués. À la foule des anonymes, Östman ajoute quelques figures célèbres—celle de Beata Rosenhane, de Mary Louise Karadja ou de Carl Gustaaf Tessin—qui, selon une démarche similaire à celle adoptée par van Strien-Chardonneau, permettent de mettre en évidence plusieurs pratiques singulières, conférant ainsi un surcroît de couleur et de profondeur à ce vaste tableau (67–78).

De ces analyses sourdent plusieurs difficultés méthodologiques. Au-delà des problèmes d'attribution inhérents à la constitution de corpus qui reposent majoritairement sur des anonymes, ces approches notent, mais sans pouvoir s'y attarder outre mesure, l'inégale et difficilement quantifiable correction linguistique des textes étudiés. Le recensement de la nature ou de la fréquence des « écarts » linguistiques permettrait toutefois de mieux appréhender l'aspect qualitatif des corpus, d'éclairer l'emprise de régionalismes ou de néologismes et, indirectement, de faire la part entre des traits qui relèvent proprement de spécificités nationales et ceux qui correspondent à des spécificités linguistiques attachées à des zones géographiques plus ponctuelles, et ce d'une manière plus conforme sans doute à la polysémie du terme « nation », compris dans ses acceptions modernes. Il convient de même d'interroger avec précision le multilinguisme qui caractérise souvent ces textes majoritairement rédigés en français. Michel Braud mène ce type d'enquête à partir de la correspondance et du journal intime de Waleria Tarnowska, dont l'écriture est bercée du souvenir de ses lectures françaises—Chateaubriand, Delisle, Genlis. Née au carrefour de différentes cultures, en Volhynie (actuelle Ukraine), au cœur de territoires placés sous autorité polonaise et occupés par l'Empire russe dès 1793, Tarnowska incarne une figure singulière, emblématique d'un certain européanisme. Fille d'un député à la « Diète de quatre ans », plus tard sénateur de l'Empire russe puis conseiller d'Alexandre Ier, elle est également la nièce d'un recteur de l'Université de Vilnius, célèbre pour avoir introduit la physiocratie en Pologne. Au sein des écrits personnels que nous avons conservés, l'écriture de Tarnowska manifeste nombre de glissements linguistiques vers le polonais qui ne sont pas anodins et qui n'ont rien d'aléatoires. La déconstruction patiente des usages linguistiques en fonction des registres affectifs et des faits évoqués permet à Michel Braud d'exposer le statut de chaque régime linguistique: le polonais constitue la langue des échanges officiels et intimes, avec des hommes souvent;

l'urgence d'un événement et l'estompement de l'intimité invite l'auteure à retranscrire les faits dans la langue de l'échange originel. Les communications ancrées dans l'espace privé, et qui concernent généralement d'autres femmes, s'opèrent en français, à l'instar de l'évocation du quotidien ou du partage de réflexions religieuses, esthétiques, morales, économiques ou sociales. Le français confirme ainsi sa préséance aristocratique, sa supériorité dans les débats artistiques et son emprise sur la conversation féminine. Le polonais incarne, de son côté, la langue de la familiarité et du lien affectif avec d'autres groupes sociaux. Il caractérise aussi les textes les plus chargés de valeurs patriotiques et devient la langue « de la nation partagée et de l'identité collective perdue » (181). L'épistolière confère à la langue un rôle primordial dans la constitution de son identité, mais une identité hybride qui réside tout entière dans l'intraduisible expression du mal du pays—*tęsknota*—et dans l'incessant passage d'une langue à une autre grâce auquel Tarnowska se sent véritablement chez elle (182).

Ces contributions invitent également à s'interroger sur l'existence d'une dichotomie entre une « francophonie de la terre natale » et une « francophonie de la terre d'exil » ou de l'espace d'immersion. Buckley et de Palacio nourrissent cette réflexion (95–110) au terme d'un parcours qui fait contraster ces notions en étudiant la francophonie des Lituaniens, alternativement en Lituanie et en France. Les auteures s'attardent sur les enjeux linguistiques liés à l'identité culturelle des Lituaniens immergés parmi la colonie polonaise, exilée à Paris, au lendemain de l'émigration de 1831. Elles éclairent, dans ce contexte, la portée des messages révolutionnaires véhiculés, en français, par la « Société Lithuanienne et des Terres Russiennes ». Perçues comme éminemment subversives dans la France de Louis-Philippe, ces interventions furent vraisemblablement à l'origine de l'effacement des particularismes lithuaniens au sein des commémorations françaises de la révolution polonaise. Parallèlement à ce désaveu et après avoir isolé plusieurs voix d'exilés emblématiques d'une francophonie mondaine (César Plater) ou militante et intellectuelle (Joachim Lelewel), Buckley et de Palacio constatent le désaveu progressif, sur la terre natale, de la culture francophone. Le français, pourtant attaché à l'essor de la culture salonnière « du manoir », se heurte, sur fond de patriotisme, aux théories romantiques de l'origine des langues et à la revalorisation des idiomes maternels et des aspirations ethnoculturelles lituaniennes. Cet aller-retour entre les lieux d'enracinement de l'apprentissage du français et les espaces de prise de parole politique enjoint également à poser un autre regard

sur la production française, plus encore lorsque celle-ci est délibérément présentée comme une émanation francophone, d'origine étrangère. La presse clandestine était coutumière du fait et Voltaire usa, sous de multiples pseudonymes, d'artifices semblables permettant de le camper tour à tour sous un masque suisse, slave, balte, allemand ou russe. Alexandre Stroev se penche avec rigueur sur les problèmes d'attributions soulevés par l'*Ode. Aux confédérés de Pologne* et déconstruit les motivations qui conduisirent Voltaire à prendre le nom du courlandais M. Darta. Ce stratagème permit au philosophe d'exprimer non seulement des « opinions politiques paradoxales » mais aussi, dans le même temps, de « prendre ses distances avec elles » (64) tout en établissant plus sûrement un dialogue entre confédérés polonais et philosophes français, dans lequel la Pologne, la Russie ou la Porte servent d'exemples ou de contre-exemples à l'Europe.

L'examen d'une francophonie européenne des Lumières exige donc bien une mise en perspective constante de ses expressions littéraires et culturelles au sein d'un contexte discursif profondément multiculturel et multilingue. Si l'influence française (littéraire, linguistique, scientifique ou culturelle) dans la presse périodique russe est une évidence, en évaluer l'importance et l'instrumentalisation implique de situer cette influence relativement aux autres références culturelles qui peuplent les mêmes journaux et à prendre en compte les relations de concurrence ou de complémentarité qui transforment cette co-existence en un complexe dialogue *inter*culturel. Vladislav Rjéoutski analyse en ce sens l'essor de la presse francophone russe sous le règne d'Élisabeth Petrovna (1750–1760) (185–96). Il y montre que le modèle français, loin d'être hégémonique, dispute chèrement sa place dans les périodiques, à la culture antique, aux référents culturels anglais ou allemands. La culture allemande opère même comme un filtre préalable à la présence française dans les journaux russes dans la mesure où leurs rédacteurs incorporent bien souvent les références étrangères, françaises ou anglaises, à partir de traductions germaniques, parues précédemment dans la presse allemande. À l'image de l'un des titres de cette presse francophone, les périodiques russes font varier, tels des « caméléons littéraires », les tonalités d'une culture européenne présentée à un lectorat qui comprend le français, certes, mais qui reste peu averti et peu spécialisé. La contribution de Carole Chapin répond presqu'en miroir à l'étude précédente, en privilégiant la présence matérielle du français dans les périodiques russes russophones. Chapin en énumère les adaptations—typographiques notamment—et les différents lieux d'ancrages (titres

d'œuvres, de journaux, noms d'auteurs ou de personnages). Elle s'empare de la citation en départageant discours rapportés traduits et non traduits, et leur corollaire: l'inclusion ou l'exclusion d'un public non francophone, apte ou non à décrypter le message publié. Chapin cherche derrière le mariage des langues et le recours aux comparaisons à comprendre l'explicite et l'implicite de discours qui, par le respect de la langue originelle, recherchent tantôt l'authenticité, tantôt l'autorité ou l'élégance, sans pour autant faire preuve d'une foncière francophilie. À plus d'un endroit, le choix linguistique du français assume à lui seul, par connotation, une portée argumentative et stratégique. Paradoxalement en effet, l'usage de la langue française permettra à plusieurs journalistes de plaider, auprès d'un public d'élite, la cause des lettres russes, injustement soutenues. Aucune imitation servile n'est à l'origine de ce geste. Il découle, *a contrario*, de la ferme volonté d'instaurer une relation entre « égaux » censés partager « un savoir européen qui prétend à l'universalité »: « ainsi l'incursion francophone, même incomprise de certains, milite en quelque sorte pour un cosmopolitisme littéraire qui est autant un choix poétique que politique » (211). Ce qui paraît relativement aisé à énoncer pour un organe de presse, diffusé dans un espace confiné à l'étranger, l'est moins pour des auteurs (professionnels, dilettantes ou occasionnels) qui voyagent à l'étranger et qui cherchent, à des degrés divers, la reconnaissance des cénacles parisiens ou le suffrage du lectorat français. L'échec relatif d'*Une saison à Paris* de Varvara Rimskaia-Korsakova à s'affranchir des stéréotypes culturels nourris par la France vis-à-vis de la Russie illustre cette difficulté et les tentatives, bien souvent, d'harmoniser des intentions contraires. La multiplication des accents patriotiques dans l'œuvre, le recours au mythe russe et l'analyse d'une société qu'elle décrit pourtant de l'intérieur n'ont pas suffi à l'auteure, souligne Elena Gretchanaia (237–46), pour lui permettre de s'affranchir totalement des idées reçues. Le roman resta indéniablement victime d'une construction pensée pour rencontrer les attentes de la critique et du lectorat français. Ne faut-il finalement pas voir en Rimskaia-Korsakova, comme le suggère Gretchanaia, la préfiguration d'une longue lignée d'écrivains russes francophones, d'Irène Némirovsky à Andreï Makine, incapables de se départir du désir d'appartenir à la littérature française?

L'ouvrage, enfin, livre un éventail éclectique de « cas », discursifs ou sociaux, individuels ou collectifs, qui permettent de jeter un regard neuf sur des œuvres largement méconnues du public français et sur des pratiques, publiques ou privées, ancrées au sein d'espaces de circulation

spécifiques. Ivo Cerman (151–58) étudie l'œuvre de Lolo Clary-Aldringen (mémoires, théâtre de société, poésie), Nina Dimitrieva se penche sur le théâtre français du comte Grigori Tchernychev (213–20) qu'ils situent dans l'espace de diffusion restreinte des œuvres francophones au cœur de la Bohême, pour le premier, au sein de l'influence des modèles français parmi la haute société russe, pour le second. Martina Musilovà dissèque la *gallomanie* d'Alexandrine von Dietrichstein (159–72), dont l'œuvre diversifiée (journaux, mémoires, réflexions sur la religion, contes sentimentaux ...) est longtemps restée confinée aux rayonnages des archives tchèques. Pour Leonhard Horowski (113–26), il s'agit d'évaluer la relativité de l'usage du français à la cour et dans l'administration de Brandebourg-Prusse aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, en fonction des exigences communicationnelles (ordres militaires, mondanités ...) et des public-cibles (aristocratiques, bourgeois, populaires, mixtes), dans un contexte forgé par les influences cumulées des huguenots, de Sophie de Hannovre ou de Frédéric II. Olivier Chaline, quant à lui, démystifie une manière d'imposture (127–36). Derrière le lexique français attaché à l'art des fortifications ou aux traités de poliorcétique aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles, se profile en effet, non pas une influence typiquement française mais bien un héritage européen qui découle du rôle notoire joué par plusieurs ingénieurs et officiers francophones dont la science militaire s'est élaborée notamment à partir des modèles italiens du XVe siècle. Ce paradoxe résulte de plusieurs facteurs: un engouement pour la traduction et les nombreuses traductions de l'art militaire en français et depuis le français, qui reste une langue largement utilisée, en Europe, dans la formation des ingénieurs. La circulation, à travers l'espace européen, d'ingénieurs francophones, porteurs d'un savoir enviable—celui de Belges notamment, attachés à la monarchie autrichienne—a accentué ce trait. Il fut encore renforcé par les succès militaires de Versailles, sous Louis XIV: la taille et la proximité de l'adversaire intimait l'obligation, sinon d'en parler la langue, du moins de la comprendre. Ce détour par un domaine habité par le français, mais qui recouvre une discipline où excellent plus largement les voisins étrangers de la France, permet de rompre avec les représentations stéréotypées. Il rend bien l'hybridité et la réciprocité des échanges au sein d'espaces de médiation où se jouent des transferts de capital culturel ou symbolique qui masquent ou qui faussent les véritables rapports de domination.

La nuance introduite contre l'apparentement superficiel entre des pratiques linguistiques et l'origine, ou l'originalité, des réalités sociales qu'elles

expriment invitent encore à deux réflexions. Cette parenté n'est-elle pas, d'une part, plus largement tributaire, et ce jusqu'au début du XIXe siècle, de l'hégémonie culturelle que la France a longtemps tenté de conserver comme arbitre du goût et des civilités? En analysant les productions littéraires de la Compagnie de Jésus sur les territoires de la Biélorussie aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles (137–50), Denis Kondakov éclaire le rôle-clé joué par une communauté en faveur d'une imprégnation culturelle qui repose fragilement sur le goût pour le Grand Siècle. Elle entretient le lustre suranné d'un rayonnement culturel, né à Versailles, mais dont les oripeaux continuent d'habiller les entreprises internationales d'apologétique ou de manipulation politique orchestrées par les jésuites. D'autre part, l'histoire de la francophonie réside aussi dans l'histoire des réflexions sur la traduction, en termes traductologiques de choix linguistiques et sémantiques, d'emprunts et de transferts, mais aussi en termes de diffusion et d'aventure éditoriale. Les textes littéraires français ont eux-mêmes joué à plusieurs reprises le rôle d'une vulgate dans l'apprentissage des langues européennes.[3] Cette histoire est encore largement à construire et Sergueï Vlassov nous y invite à travers les aléas qu'ont connus les éditions des traductions françaises des poèmes d'Evgueni Baratynski, contemporain et ami de Pouchkine, vraisemblablement aidé dans ces œuvres de commande par plusieurs mains anonymes, françaises ou francophiles.

Malgré le vaste panorama qu'il s'est imposé, *La francophonie européenne aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles* parvient à éviter la plupart des écueils qui guettent ce type d'entreprises. La complexité des phénomènes culturels et linguistiques épouse ici idéalement, et dans la longue durée, la complexité de réalités historiques et géopolitiques sans cesse mouvantes. Grâce à des assises théoriques solides et au recul des contributeurs sur les sujets traités, le volume réussit à rendre compte d'une réalité extrêmement morcelée sans tomber dans les travers d'un simple catalogage. L'ordonnancement des contributions en fonction de préoccupations géographiques exige toutefois de la part du lecteur une part de réappropriation s'il souhaite garder conjointement à l'esprit les multiples aspects et la transversalité de la problématique abordée. Plusieurs choix peuvent également paraître critiquables. Si l'ouverture à des sources de nature diverses est louable, l'on aurait attendu, symétriquement, plus de diversité et d'interdisciplinarité dans le choix des contributeurs qui, très largement, restent des historiens de la littérature, là où l'apport d'historiens du droit ou des « mentalités », de sociolinguistes, de politologues ou de philosophes auraient pu être

particulièrement fécond. L'étude du profil sociologique des auteurs modernes fait également défaut. Cette francophonie européenne ne pourrait-elle pas être envisagée à l'aune des champs littéraires qui la façonnent et des luttes symboliques internes ou externes à ces champs? L'étude systématique des cursus, des statuts ou des postures des auteurs francophones auraient permis sans doute de comprendre mieux les modalités culturelles et sociales qui ont présidé à certains choix linguistiques, et aux rapports tumultueux entre capitales culturelles et manifestations littéraires périphériques. L'on peut regretter, enfin, le silence concerté qui frappe les territoires belges et suisses, érigés en enclaves artificielles, injustement écartées de la « zone Europe ». Ces deux espaces, non uniformément francophones, ont en effet nourri, sur les questions présentées ici, de riches débats qui ont encore cours aujourd'hui. Leur évocation revient de plus en filigranes de plusieurs communications soit en tant qu'aires linguistiques spécifiques, soit au tra-vers de figures intellectuelles et littéraires connues précisément, durant les Lumières, pour leur cosmopolitisme (le prince de Ligne *e.a.*). Reprocher âprement les manques de cette étude reviendrait toutefois à nier que ses ambitions se situent bien au-delà de cet opuscule de 276 pages. L'examen des usages et des représentations des *francographes*, *francophiles* ou autres *gallophobes* qui peuplent ce volume constitue le deuxième stade d'une réflexion globale et synthétique sur la francophonie des Lumières qui a pour but principal de fédérer des études dispersées et d'ouvrir la voie à des concrétisations de plus grande envergure. Ses objectifs, en mêlant les supports, les genres, les communautés discursives et sociales ou les individus, sont avant tout programmatiques. Ils dessinent les contours d'études à venir, annoncées par les organisateurs du colloque tenu en 2011: la rédaction d'une histoire littéraire de l'« Europe française », la confection d'un dictionnaire des auteurs francophones. Une fois la lecture stimulante de ce volume achevée, le lecteur ne peut qu'appeler de ses vœux la réalisation de tels projets. Il ne reste donc plus à *La francophonie européenne* qu'à tenir ses très belles promesses!

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1. Voir à ce sujet Pascale Casanova, *La République mondiale des Lettres,* Paris: Seuil, 1999; Jérôme David, *Spectres de Goethe: Les métamorphoses de la « littérature*

mondiale », Paris: Les prairies ordinaires, 2011; François Provenzano, *Vie et mort de la francophonie: Une politique française de la langue et de la littérature,* Bruxelles-Paris: Les Impressions nouvelles, 2011; et, du même, « La 'francophonie': définitions et usages », *Quaderni* 62 (2006–2007): 93–102. On se reportera également au motivant programme du séminaire de recherche coordonné, en 2015, à l'ENS par G. Bridet, X. Garnier, S. Moussa, L. Zecchini sur le sujet Littérature et cosmopolitisme: Discours, poétiques, pratiques, circulations.

2. Voir Jérôme David et Lionel Ruffel, « Prendre soin de la littérature mondiale », entretien recueilli sur le site Fabula, sous la rubrique « Atelier littéraire » (http://www.fabula.org/atelier.php?Prendre_soin_de_la_litterature_mondiale, consulté le 21 févr. 2015) et le dossier critique n°25 d'*Acta Fabula* (janvier 2013): *Anywhere Out of the Nation* (http://www.fabula.org/acta/sommaire7410.php).

3. Voir à ce propos, par exemple, le succès des éditions juxtalinéaires tirées de l'œuvre de Fénelon: *Télémaque polyglotte contenant les six langues européennes les plus usitées: le français, l'anglais, l'allemand, l'italien, l'espagnol et le portugais,* Paris, Baudry, 1837 et la bibliographie scientifique relative à l'utilisation des *Aventures de Télémaqu*e dans l'enseignement du français langue étrangère aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles.

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Jeff Fort. *The Imperative to Write: Destitutions of the Sublime in Kafka, Blanchot and Beckett.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2014. Pp. 424. ISBN: 9780823254699.

To evaluate Jeff Fort's fascinating book *The Imperative to Write: Destitutions of the Sublime in Kafka, Blanchot and Beckett* is a formidable and challenging task for three significant reasons: (i) it is an ambitious piece of work which includes three difficult twentieth-century writers (ii) it is a complex projection of genuine curiosity which in other such inquiries has centered on, "how do the writers write?" but here is combined with another embedded question of "why" they write the way they do (iii). The massive corpus of works by these three writers is analyzed so meticulously that the book invites a multilingual and technical response of an expert literary theorist fluent in in German, French and English. This volume is a "tour de force" of close textual reading. Jeff Fort moves back and forth in these languages with rare insight into the texts as well as their critical reception. He shifts paradigms from biographical events weaving from philosophical thematic strands to critical explorations focusing on the interconnectedness

that dictates these writers' "imperative to write." What makes the book enigmatic is the author's attempt to trace out a distinctive thematic pattern in the vocational designs of the writers, toward what he terms the destitution of the sublime; it is their "inner compulsions" which compel them to write and Fort sees them as "imperatives." These compulsions are irreducible. The writers and their "imperative to write" are often at odds with the demands of life and even the will of God, as in the case of Kafka. The book explores the intricacies of how "the sublime" is challenged by "downward" trends in fiction. In other words, the narrative voices of the writers prompted by the irresistible "obsession to express," intermingle linguistically to convey intentionality and experiences. These linguistic demands at times cause confusion, as in those instances where Fort adds his own voice in an attempt to build a definite theoretical framework of narration.

Imperative to Write states in the opening sentence of its Preface that its purpose is to deal with the "a number of problematic aspects discernible in a certain extreme relation to writing" (ix). It is an attempt to depict the "real world" which can neither be denied nor accepted easily though it offers its "forms, figures, shapes and textures" (x) through the texts and "figural language" of the writers studied here. The central force of the book takes a form that is less personal and "more implicit" in the "very structure of language, a broken and ruptured structure that *opens* precisely in the form of an imperative ... that incalculable and irreducible dimension of literary speech" (xi). Precisely, Fort establishes the imperative that the "possibility of fiction" lies in the "possibilities of speech." The "Introduction," focuses on the "necessity of writing" for which a writer such as Kafka challenges even God on account of this "exclusive vocation." "God does not want me to write, but I, I must" (1). Writing has become a compulsive necessity. Similarly Blanchot admits that "I can not do otherwise" or "I can not help it" (4). Beckett is also convinced by "the irreducibility of writing's imperative," what was "a sublime vocation" is now "curved down into the poor space of letters and diaries." These writers write because they "are good for nothing but writing" (5); it is an exclusive vocation that depends on "a "categorical" movement of *sensibility* at work in the writer's task. But the term for such a movement is precisely *compulsion*—only a compulsion striped of its objects and ends" (7). Another characteristic of this vocation is its melancholic mood—something which all three writers share. They all explore the irresistible "autobiographical dimension" with a "radical depersonalization." The past and failure become the "essence of the necessity" to write.

The four chapters of Part 1 are devoted to Franz Kafka (1883–1924). In the three chapters of Part 2 the author critically evaluates Maurice Blanchot (1907–2003) and in the two chapters of Part 3, he focuses on Samuel Beckett (1906–1989). The book's conclusion connects the narrative as articulating a voice of conscience controlled by the demands of language. It is followed by elaborate notes, a comprehensive bibliography, and index.

The first chapter deals with Kafka, who possesses a singular literary ambition to write because he "must." Aptly titled, "Kafka's Teeth" examines his faith in linguistic experience and the wounds he experienced from spiritual failure. Fort discusses how Kafka's self-referential fiction as well as his letters and diaries reveal significant structural features of judgment, guilt and punishment. Kafka's desire to attain a kind of "absoluteness" makes him speak of his "dream-like inner life" as he admits in *The Trial* that nothing will ever satisfy him. With a change in thinking, the imperative to write also changes. Fort captures the spirit of Kafka's narratives from "an imperative to *present something… to present nothing*" (25–26). Necessity to write and art's relationship to failure, which lead to a "degradation of sublime," adds an erotic component. Fort views Kafka as a complex writer who mocks, yet maintains his religious and metaphysical notions. In "The Hunger Artist," Kafka's literary genius is self-evident as is his "self-debasement" and "vocalization of the conscience." However there is always present a clear "imperative to cultivate one's talents" (49).

In the second chapter, "The Ecstasy of Judgment" Fort presents another imperative in Kafka's writing, the need to experience the ecstasy of speaking and present something of one's inner reality amidst "the everlasting up and down" (66). Short stories such as "The Judgment" and "The Metamorphosis" and fiction like *The Castle* and *The Trial* reveal Kafka's social and political thinking. They expose the *irrationality* and *manipulability* (95) at the root of a supposedly rational world. Kafka's accurate and well-informed description of the legal debates regarding justice and discipline highlight the necessity of speaking in self-defense and breaking the shell of the "closed system of justice and discipline" (100). The next chapter, "Embodied Violence and the Leap from the Law" further examines the same theme in works such as "In the Penal Colony" and *The Trial,* which depict the social reality (i.e. the writer's "self-debasement"). Here, Fort sees Kafka questioning the role of "literature as a value and a cultural good" (143). The last chapter of this section, "Degradation of the Sublime," illustrates how Kafka examines the theme of the "destitution of the sublime vocation" (144). The change in Kafka's thinking about the "representative

task of art" is reconfigured in "A Hunger Artist" when the protagonist faces the "impossibility of finding the food I like" (146), transforming him into "a cultural laborer" with "an insatiable bad conscience" (147). Complex and perennial discontent, definitely a key theme for Kafka, persists as an "imperative to surpass oneself ... outstripping all measure on its way to the absolute" (150). In the figure of the hunger artist, Kafka evokes the sublime in a metaphysical and moral sense, which shows the "corrosive power" of the sensation of hunger (151). The hunger artist is also "cheated" by the world of his "reward." All he is left with is the compulsion to confess. "What is more: the compulsion to confess the compulsion" (155). His confession, "because I could not find the food I like" makes a banal affair or "a melancholy joke into a deceptively 'affirmative' allegory" (158). Fort pertinently comments on the experience of the hunger artist thus: "It seems the hunger artist's search is not for a food he 'never found,' but rather for *nothing* that he can not grasp or make graspable" (159). Through the metaphor of food, we are confronted with the refusal of the total stuff of life. In this sense, Kafka's "vocation," his artistic striving can also be seen as an imperative and a compulsion.

Part 2 is devoted to Maurice Blanchot. Fort begins with the problematic issue of Blanchot's denial about "writing a past." For him, to "enter "literary space" one must already be "writing." Despite the otherness and strangeness of the fictive world, one of Blanchot's primary aims is to acknowledge the link between life and writing with all its paradoxes and evasions and reduce that link "to an unpresentable silence" (164). Although there are figures, "haunting remnants" which are lodged within "literary space" Blanchot makes a conscious effort to avoid "personal" writing. In this respect, he is quite unlike Kafka. There is "no visible kinship with the existence from which they seem to be derived" (166). As the author is continually "coming into being, along the textual spectrum," some traces of the past also remain "visible" despite all the denials and efforts to establish "absolute separation" between life and literary space. This chapter is difficult to read and still more difficult to comprehend because of its multiple comparisons, and the exigencies which are part and parcel of Blanchot's style. Blanchot articulates "unlocatable experiences" (174), concepts, mythical figures, and beliefs in "Literary Space" through tonality, rhetoric, figurative and other narrative strategies, all the while insisting on "impersonality." Precisely, the imperative to write is impelled by past time and the familiar world that provides "an uncanny and anonymous space of writing.

Through sheer image and language, it "becomes its own image" yielding a tremendous force which transforms the writer into "a strange impersonal being" who turns away only to reemerge at a ultimate point to present "ungraspable irreality" "into the space and time of history with a real artifact, a written book" (175).

In his essays, Blanchot is seen to articulate his compulsion, resoluteness or "exigency" to exhibit the pressing and impersonal need, "an imperious force—an *imperative* in every sense" (176). In his "ethics of writing," Blanchot emphatically asserts that "exigency has no content" and demands nothing; "it is without content, it does not oblige, it is simply the air one must breath" (176). Blanchot's passionate pursuit of "exigency," as presented by Fort, remains "uncertain" but maintains its relation with law. Blanchot believes that "the work of art fears nothing from law" (177). Thinking and language are seen as "neither failure nor attainment" but a "fascination." They provide a temporal adventure, and prompt "the necessity of writing as an unaccountable demand to *relate* (in every sense) *without relation*, constantly brushing against the "linear" contours—figural, temporal and narrative which it thereby twists, convolutes, diffuses, blurs and fades" (179). Blanchot's engagement with the "question of literature" and what he sees as the strange experience of writing takes into account "the inevitable autobiographical effects" (200). The act of writing replaces tears with written words (201). It is his "treasure," the outcome of "those momentous events after which nothing is any longer what it was before" (207). As Blanchot explains, "when a man has lived through something unforgettable, he shuts himself up with it to grieve over it, or he sets off to find it again; he thus becomes a ghost of the event" (207).

The next chapter entitled "The Shell and the Mask" reshapes Blanchot's reflections and focuses o*n L'arrêt de mort* in order to trace "the subliming process of a 'volatilization'—though perhaps in a sense that is rather alchemical than chemical" (214). Blanchot's narrator speaks of "the ineliminable dross of the world" (214), "the shell of an enigma" which stands for residues having no proper substance. In this chapter, the kernel is the shell, an outward image and figure of narration, perhaps a man's relation with a dead or dying woman. Fort indulges in a long, intricate series of arguments about "a death-woman-thought" apotheosis or "volatilization" (218). It is meant to take "this other life into hand by writing" (219). Once this notion of the space of writing emerges, as in *The Gaze and the Hand* and *She*, it demands "loyalty;" it becomes imperative and necessary to follow to the

end (223). It is a writing passion that gives life to the "death-woman" who "is vivified, figured as alive in its deathliness" (231). Fort adopts the Rilkean notion of "other side of life," the vision of death that we ordinarily refuse to see, which offers "a dictatorial imperative" (240). It lodges itself in "the transcendental kernel of imagination" (246) and "locates the graphic schematism of the imperative to write" (247).

In the next chapters, the author explores additional symbolic patterns to highlight Blanchot's "transcendental and essential" (249) theoretical and philosophical ideas, with particular reference to Heidegger's "image" and Kant's "transcendental imagination." Precisely, the schematism of vision and speech or language is a central concern for Blanchot. The author's long discussion on the death mask; its transcendental origin ("as having been") makes it "a cultural artifact" (255). In one of the subsections of this chapter, entitled, "Blanchot's Two Versions of the Imaginary," Fort lyrically describes how Blanchot characterizes the "literary space of images opened in solitude and fascination, a space …, falling short of world, into which 'one' wanders, driven and drawn… by a passion of the image" (256). Beyond the world of reality, if some object becomes "the indeterminate medium of fascination," that "medium is so to speak *absolute*" (256). Fort quotes Blanchot's analysis of how "not seeing becomes seeing," in a vision that never comes to an end: *a dead look*, a look that becomes the ghost of an eternal vision (257). When a presence is felt against an absence, in "the formless presence of this absence," language becomes an image of itself, "an imaginary language," constituting "images of words and words in which things are made images" (257). "Whether the image is thought to follow from the object, or to precede it as the ground of its possibility" (258), "writing, memory and biography are tightly intertwined" (270) and create those rupturing movements that Blanchot calls "passion" which take "the form of pressure ... exerted on the work." It is there not in order "to write" but to include within "what the writing itself must hide" (273). Fort notes how Blanchot, one of the most impersonal writers, constantly refers to biographical material but maintains "a distance from the world" because he knows that "he can communicate with the world only if he becomes master of the emptiness" (280). Blanchot resolves this paradox by "the infinite movement of *outstripping* this absence and making it be *reborn*" (280). The sublime passion of "lived experience," of merging and diverging nature emerging from impatience, relates Blanchot with Kafka on whom the former draws heavily. He repeatedly realizes his "incapacity" by "attaining

nothing." "And what remains of writing, mere shell and residue, remains, still, no less of an enigma" (289).

Part 3 deals with Samuel Beckett. In "Beckett's Voices and the Paradox of Expression," Fort attempts to locate the imperative for Beckett to write and shows "what lies at the extreme limit of conflict ... between the world of the familiar and the worldless world of writing" that holds an "irreducible incompatibility," (294) and in the formal structures of language driven to "speech." The author analyzes "The Three Dialogues" and three novels—*Molloy*, *Malone Meurt*, and *The Unnamable* and points out three things specifically: (a) "a jarring synthesis of lyricism and abstraction is one of the most characteristic features of Beckett's texts" (294); (b) "the impossibility of expression and the failure of the artist" (295) and (c) Beckett's use of "biographemes in such a way as to articulate the drive to speak—and drive to fiction, a drive conditioned as much by the stuff of life as by imposing and overwhelming structures of language" (296). In other words, the dilemma of expression persists throughout Beckett's work as do language issues regarding "narrative voice" with all its characteristic features such as the rhythm, style, and vocal contours. Beckett's writing tends to be lyrical, sentimental and effusive. Fort dwells extensively on the idea of the "failure to fail" and "the obligation to expression," focusing primarily on "The Three Dialogues." Beckett's handling of characters is so peculiar that they dissolve in "a strange form of self-dismissal" (304), that is, a "dismissal of living" (306). In *Malone Meurt,* the protagonist waits expectantly for death. He is compelled by nothing other than his relation to his past life. The lyricism of this work "hinges around nothing so much as a final decision to exit life" (315). Malone's very existence is centered on his narrative voice, which carries the undertones of a metaphysics of failure and nostalgic evocations. He finally confesses, "Yes, there is no good pretending, it is hard to leave everything" (319). Malone is impatient for the final silence and peace because he believes that

> to be on the verge of death is identical to being on the verge of birth, for each would deliver one into a space of non-speech… and where the lack of language is projected as identical to peace that can be found nowhere within language. (319)

In *The Unnamable,* Fort sees the same theme of "the voice as absolute subject" (320). The only death possible for Moran is when he ceases to speak. The irony is that he must do this by speaking. Like Molloy, Moran

speaks in the first person and his voice is "almost entirely reflective" and the space that his story occupies is "an indeterminate space that is enclosed and limitless, all-encompassing and featureless" (322). The space is devoid of all those features associated with the world of fiction, such as the characters and events. "The universe is made entirely of words ... The only function that remains is that of the speaking voice" (322). The notion of obligation and compulsion vis-à-vis speaking recurs; the unnamable is only *a voice*. The image of the worm suggests the ultimate silence that is the proper end of the voice. Badiou is perhaps right when he refers to Beckett's fiction as "experimental laboratories." "The test is company," (333) for which every thing is devised. With the banishment of proper names, the use of "I" is also forbidden. The voice keeps speaking of and to itself.

Beckett's three characters weave stories that belong to no one in particular. "I," an empty space marker "structurally implicates "you" and "he." The gist of Fort's argument is that in "the timeless void of company, there is no locatable subject, only subject functions: devising, speaking, hearing" (336). The deviser says that "The voice is company but not enough" because the suspension of memory, and identification is resolved by the force of speech in an obsessional style. "Silence replaces God in Beckett's metaphysics," but is not "absolute nothingness" (344). The problem with language is that it carries unstillable pangs, stirring and need. Beckett's notion of language's transcendence, which takes the form of pure sensation, leads to "a liberation of hearing both from memory and from reason" (345). In the end of the volume, Fort refers to *Worstword Ho* where "nothing and yet" becomes a refrain.

In his conclusion, Fort again turns to a complex nature of the conscience that forms the writer and structures the laws of writing. Among other factors, the conscience creates "the space of a voice" (348). Fort concludes by examining some of the texts in order to focus on the imperative voice and Heidegger's attempt to trace the significance of "the grain of voice" (351). The book ends with a note on Kafka's hunger artist and other writings that reiterate the "compelling nothingness" (359) of the voice.

This book is worth reading if you have the patience to enter the world of the author and participate in his search for "compulsions to write," especially in the case of the writers he has chosen; it is worth buying if you care for a well-written, comparative study that challenges Bacon's popular axiom that "some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." *Imperative to Write* fits none of these

categories easily. Its material density, thematic design, and complex style make it a challenge to read. However, it is perhaps high time to go beyond Bacon and establish another category of books with new linguistic and cultural demands. Fort's book may be seen to fit such a category. It may find a few chosen readers who are serious academics interested in the vocation of the writer, and determined to discover the sublime beyond destitution.

Manorama Trikha
Meerut (India)

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That Comparative Literature journals should celebrate multilingualism, although a given today, is, in actuality, rarely practiced in most (Western) academic journals. It seems that the venerable tradition of comparative reading has receded to the peripheries of world academia. The multilingual tradition of comparatist research has fallen by the wayside despite the pragmatic desire to be heard outside one's immediate national academic space.

Rocznik komparatystczny/Komparatistisches Jahrbuch, an annual journal of Comparative Literature published by the University of Szczecin, Poland, with an international editorial board, publishes articles in several languages. Volume 5 (2014) contains articles in Polish and German. It focuses on the challenges of translation in cultural, ideological, intersemiotic or intermedial contexts and covers topics such as the modern transformations of mythic and sacred imageries, literature in the new media, and the intercultural aspects of the word-image relation in text, theater, film, photography and hypertext. This volume joins the ongoing debate on the role and value of Translation Studies in the discipline of Comparative Literature. It is divided into six sections: "Translating Cultures," "Word and Image," "New Media," "Literary Translation: Case Studies," "Discussions and Presentations," and "Book Reviews."

The first section of the volume, *Translating Cultures,* discusses the cultural transfer of texts, images, and ideologies via translation and interpretive reinstatement. The opening article "Theaterlandschaften als

Bedingungsrahmen für literarischen, intermedialen und kulturellen Transfer" (Theater Landscapes as Conditions of Literary, Intermedial and Cultural Transfer) by Brigitte Schultze, a distinguished German researcher of Polish, Russian, and Czech literature, and Beata Weinhagen, a representative of the younger generation of German Slavic Studies scholars, examine two plays by the Polish playwright Janusz Glowacki, *Cinders* and *Antigone in New York,* and shows how their various translations (English, German, French, and Russian) are determined by the theatrical traditions of each country in which the plays were staged. Glowacki's continual work on his plays, especially on their English translations have influenced new Polish versions. Consequently, there is no definitive text for translators who work from different Polish versions.

In "Übersetzung und Rűckűbersetzung—eine Neubestimmung im Kultur-Code" (Translation and Retranslation—A Redefinition of the Culture Code), Maria Krysztofiak, a renowned Polish expert on Translation Studies, proposes to apply Alexander Höllwerth's concept of translation and retranslation not only to literary studies, but also to literature. Höllwerth translated a history of Austrian literature written by a Polish Germanist into German and reflected how it was actually a retranslation—he retranslated the discourse of Austrian literature as seen through the Polish cultural code. Krysztofiak then applied this understanding of translation to *Præludier,* a novel about Frederick Chopin written by Peer Hultberg. The Danish writer attempted a double translation, from the Polish cultural and musical code into the Danish language—and then a retranslation into the Polish edition of the novel. Another example, Głowacki's *Antigone in New York*, presents, according to Krysztofiak, the translation of a universal myth where the various retranslations are, in her estimation, no longer coded on the level of language.

In "'Durch den Weltkrieg zur neuen Weltkultur': Periphere Literaturen im deutschen Sprachraum (1914–1918)" ("Through World War to New World Culture": Peripheral Literatures in German Speaking Countries) Paweł Zajas, a professor in Dutch and South-African Studies at Poznan University, assesses the impact of World War I on the reception of smaller European literatures in Germany. Using statistical data as well as specific examples, Zajas argues that the reception of peripheral literatures in German-speaking countries after World War I mirrors the interest during the war for literatures of those nations fighting on the German side or in territories annexed by Germany.

In "Dwa przypadki kulturowego przekładu Owidiusza: Juliusz Bocheński, *Nasz poeta* i Christoph Ransmayr, *Die letzte Welt*" (Two Instances of the Cultural Translation of Ovid: Juliusz Bocheński, *Nasz poeta* and Christoph Ransmayr, *Die letzte Welt*), Mieczysław Dąbrowski, a professor in Comparative Literature from Warsaw University, foregrounds the parodic and metatextual character of the texts in question. He shows how they function to a large extent as both translations of the classic and playful reflections on translation as appropriation. The author discusses the inherent postmodern aesthetics of both texts, written more than a decade before Lyotard's formulation of postmodern aesthetics. Defining these "translations"—which in fact are fictional renarrativizations—of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as cultural translations grounded in intertextuality, Dąbrowski maps the complex hermeneutical space created in both these reappropriations of Ovid's masterpiece for contemporary political and ideological commentary.

In "Zum West-Ost und Ost-West-Transfer des aufklarischen Kulturmodells" (From the West to East and East to West—The Transfer of the Enlightenment Cultural Models), Ute Marggraff, a scholar specializing in Polish, Russian and Czech literature, discusses the transfer of the Enlightenment model of culture from West to East, using as his example a tale modeled on *Robinson Crusoe*, written 1768 in German by P. L. Le Roy. In order to explore the possibilities of realizing Enlightenment ideas in Russia, Le Roy tells the tale of four Russian sailors stranded in the polar region. His text was subsequently translated into Russian, and subjected to significant revisions. Marggraff concentrates on the German version, adding insights from the Russian translation, thus offering a perspective of translation and retranslation and insights into the Russian culture code, as seen by Le Roy, and the alterations it had to undergo when retranslated into Russian.

Ulrike Jekutsch, a professor of Slavic studies at the University of Greifswald, in her brilliant essay "Heiligenkult—Roman—Theaterstűck. Zur Übertragung des Kults der hl. Kűmmernis in die neue polnische Literatur" (Veneration of Saints—Novel—Drama: Modes of Translating St. Wilgefortis into Literary Genres) presents the medieval cult of Saint Wilgefortis (Saint Kümmernis), as it is reintroduced into modern cultural memory by the Polish novelist Olga Tokarczuk. This essay addresses themes also found in the author's novel *House of Day, House of Night* (1999) where Tokarczuk employed the figure of the saint as a symbol of the borderland—not only the borderland between Polish, German, and Czech culture in Silesia, but

also the borderland of gender constructions: the female saint in her desire for union with Christ is transformed into His male body and consequently crucified by her father. The Polish dramatist Piotr Tomaszuk used Tokarczuk's narrative to create a modern miracle play; Jekutsch shows how both the novel and the drama transpose the medieval cult into a universal story asserting individual identity in modern society.

The contribution of Tadeusz Skwara, a PhD candidate in German Studies and Art History at Warsaw University, "Józef Flawiusz—pośrednik między kulturami? O roli postaci historyka w trylogii Wojna żydowska Liona Feuchtwangera" (Flavius Joseph—An Intermediary Between Cultures? On the Role of the Historian in Lion Feuchtwanger's *Jewish War* Trilogy) undertakes a related subject of refurbishing the classical text/figure with contemporary references and contexts in the historical novel. The author traces how this historical figure, an intermediary between cultures of the East and West, evolves from a cosmopolitan to an engaged insurrectionist for national freedom in the Jewish anti-Roman uprising. He shows how this transformation reflects Feuchtwanger's reaction to the increasing persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany in the Thirties. Borrowing from Luhmann's concept of culture as second-degree observations, Skwara analyzes the Jewish historian in Rome, but leaves out the meta-critical question posed at the beginning—how can a comparatist's work of reading between languages, historical epochs and translations illuminate contemporary conceptions of multiculturalism.

Finally, Dorota Sośnicka, a Germanist from Szczecin University, in "'Jedes Wort ist eine Übersetzung': Zsuzsana Gahses experimentelle Vermittlungen zwischen Sprachen, Medien, 'Gattungengen und Kulturen'" (Every Word is a Translation: Z. Gahse's Experimental Mediations Between Languages, Media, Genres, and Cultures) sketches an outline of the literary work of the modern German writer, translator, and immigrant from Hungary. Sośnicka concentrates on Gahse's literary portrait *Translated: A Disunity* (1993) and on her *Story Islands* (2009), where Gahse claims that every word of every language is a translation of thoughts into language. According to Sośnicka, Gahse's inquiry into the art of translation calls to mind the reflections of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Walter Benjamin.

The next section, *Word and Image*, is made up of articles analyzing the transmedial passages from word to image (or image to word) in various epochs, as cases of translational creative practice. "Wie 'űbersetzt' man Embleme? Am Beispiel der Emblem-und Emblematikrezeption im Kiever

Kulturmodell de Barockzeit" (How to Translate Emblems? An Example of the Reception of Emblems and Emblematics in Kievan Baroque Culture) by Walter Kroll, a specialist in Slavic literature at the University of Göttingen, discusses the reception of emblems in the Kievan Baroque. In a detailed analysis, Kroll shows how trilingual—Polish, Latin, and Churchslavonic—emblems of scholars and students of the Kievo-Mohylanska Akademia (particularly in the work of a Filip Orlyk [*Hippomenes sarmacki*, 1698] and Stefan Jaworski [*Vinograd Christov*, 1698]) project, transpose, and/or transfigure traditional heraldic and emblematic signs and thus provide innovative intermedial translations.

Urszula Makowska, an art historian from the Polish Academy of Science, analyzes in "Pożegnanie Hektora z Andromachą w tekstach i obrazach" (The Parting of Hector and Andromache in Texts and Images) the rich history of literary and visual adaptations of Homer, especially popular in eighteenth and nineteenth century Polish literature and iconography. The author grounds her reading in the interdisciplinary space of comparative art history and literary studies, as well as in the methodologies of intertextual and transmedial translation. Basing her reading on Polish eighteenth-century visual and literary representations of the leave-taking of Hector and Andromache, Makowska develops a very interesting and erudite study of the motif's hybrid cultural reappropriations in the works of Polish artists. She thus traces the borrowings, intertextual allusions, and parodies between word and image in the diverse, translational and dialogic routes of the Homeric motif in Polish culture.

Marta Koszowy, a scholar in Literary Studies and Fine Arts at the Polish Academy of Science observes, in "Słowo w kadrze: Literatura a fotografia, fotografia a literatura" (The Word Framed: Literature and Photography; Photography and Literature) the shift in the relationship between literature and photography—from an initial emphasis on textual approaches to photography to the current interest in visual approaches to literature, such as "transmedial phototextuality." The author points to the shift from the functional to the performative character of photography, from the logocentric to the iconocentric. This phenomenon poses challenges to methodologies of reading and demands a more comparative and interdisciplinary tool kit to better understand the representational value of the word in photography and the autonomous status of the image (photography) in the text, beyond the still prevalent narrative approaches to the semantics of phototextuality.

Next three articles consider film adaptations and examine the seminal importance of a literary text as the basis for a screenplay. Solodki, a media studies scholar from the School of Art and Design in Łódź, in "Między literaturą, filmem a rzeczywistością: o problemach z adaptacją Wojny polsko-ruskiej" (2002; Between Literature, Film, and Reality: On the Problems with the Adaptation of his Reading of Xawery Żulawski's Film Adaptation of Dorota Maslowska's *Wojna polsko-ruska pod flagą biało-czerwoną*) examines the work of the eighteen-year old author which sent shockwaves across Poland because of its mastery of various social languages from the urban youth underclass to the hyperactive media newspeak. Maslowska mixes and recycles these languages in the novel, achieving an inimitable camp effect that poses a challenge to the novel's translators (the cultural contexts of this novel were quite problematic, for example, for the English translator). To grasp the novel's two-dimensional diegetic presentation, the director employed a range of techniques, relying mostly on the avant-garde traditions, media (tabloids, TV series, talk-shows and formats especially), and political discourses (from the Left, Right, alterglobalism, and ecology). In his analysis, Solodki tries to link the director's resistance to what the critic deems a more convenient convention of surrealism with fidelity to the novel's apparent engagement in what was termed the "nothing generation" at the turn of the millennium. Whether this was, in fact, the novel's message was subject to a fervent debate. But Maslowska is primarily interested in recording the array of languages circulating, in a contemporary and rather heightened Bakhtinian, carnivalesque fashion. She appears unconcerned with generational perspectives and suggests that any pedagogical mission should be applied with care or, better still, abandoned.

Another film adaptation article considers Andrzej Wajda's *Panna Nikt*, a film from 1996 based on a bestselling novel by Tomek Tryzna from 1994 of the same title. Robert Birkholc, a PhD candidate in Comparative Literature at Warsaw University, in "Limin(oid)alnosc *alla polacca*—motywy inicjacyjne w *Pannie Nik*t" (Liminality *alla polacca*—Initiation Motives in *Panna Nikt*) proposes to see the film, quite marginal in the great director's *oeuvre,* as an attempt to decipher Polish society of the post-communist period through the lens of an especially vulnerable social group of teenage girls. The author discusses the film's translation of the novel's initiation rituals with the use of the interpretive key of liminality, understood on the level of theory and exemplified in a brief survey of Wajda's films. Birkholc

evaluates the film as articulating both Wajda's bleak vision of nascent capitalist consumerism and his search for a new, adequate filmic form.

In "*Zakochany Goethe*: Wokół filmowej interpretacji *Cierpień młodego Wertera*" (*Young Goethe in Love*: On the Film Adaptation of *The Sorrows of Young Werther*) Ewelina Kamińska, a professor in German Studies at Szczecin University, discusses the techniques and strategies used in Philipp Stolzl's *Goethe!* from 2010. Focusing on the extent to which a biographical film uses a literary text to achieve a deeper portrait of a hero, Kamińska shows how the film's creators managed to build an interesting metafictional, structure, where some events from Goethe's life are represented as a process of documenting sources for the future epistolary novel and how the history of the novel's publication and success provides an extradiagetic complement to the film's scene of Goethe's alleged suicidal attempt.

Two articles by Anna Tatar and Anna Mach then discuss film adaptations of novels whose central theme is the Holocaust. Anna Tatar, a PhD student in Comparative Literature at Warsaw University, analyses an ingenious adaptation of Hanna Krall's documentary fiction/reportage "Ta z Hamburga" (1993, That One, From Hamburg) by director Jan Jakub Kolski in *Daleko od okna* (2000; Away from the Window). The author grounds her comparative reading on the motif, prevalent in Holocaust testimonies, of hiding in the closet. In her in-depth analysis of this motif in Krall's text and in Kolski's film, Tatar shows how it becomes a device for the writer to turn *reportage* into an artistic literary text and, for the film director, to explore the archetypal power of this survival strategy. The author traces the rich cultural contexts as they are sensitively rendered in both the text and film, inscribing her reading within a broad framework of Holocaust Studies, trauma studies, and film theory.

Anna Mach, a Polish Studies scholar at Warsaw University, discusses Pawel Huelle's 1987 novel, *Weiser Dawidek,* and its 2000 film adaptation by Wojciech Marczewski entitled *Weiser*. The main difference between the novel and its film adaptation can be seen in the virtual disappearance of the implied or hypothetical Jewishness of Dawidek from the narrative layer of the film, in particular, "Jewishness" as an area of silence and as a haunting presence of the departed. The author views the absence of spectral Jewishness in the film adaptation as troubling in itself and contextualizes it in the overall tendency in the 1990s to erase the memory of the Holocaust as part of the social trauma and separate it from national (Polish) history. Framing her reading of the film's omissions in Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis,

she considers the Holocaust legacy in the narrative pattern of the return of the repressed in a broad textual, cinematic, and cultural context.

The section *New Media* includes articles on hypertextual translation. In "Przeklad hipertekstowy: teoria i praktyka" (Hypertextual Translation: Theory and Practice), Ewa Szczęsna, Urszula Pawlicka and Mariusz Pisarski define, classify and analyze examples and techniques of digital translation, digital adaptation, hypertextual translation and translation of structures, considering the challenges they pose to the translator who has to adapt the text across semiotic systems, structures, and programming codes. The authors fully recognize the multi-layered, creative transformation taking place in digital translation and combine practical reading techniques with actual translations. They provide a comprehensive theory of interactive semantics based on new media technologies.

Ewa Hendryk, a German Studies scholar at Szczecin University, in "Liberatura—o nowych aspektach dialogu między literaturą a sztuką" (Liberature—On Some New Aspects of the Dialogue Between Literature and Art), discusses the phenomenon of "liberature"—the art movement and critical approach literalizing the book as a physical object. The term also suggests another possible derivation, from the Latin—freedom—as evoked by the Spanish writer Julian Riosa. Unlike hypertextual translation, liberature involves, apart from the semantic texture of its literary content, the visual and structural layer as an inherent part of the hermeneutical process.

The last section of the volume, *Analizy przekładów* (Literary Translation: Case Studies) presents translation studies of literary texts from Russian to German, Polish to Norwegian, and Polish to English. It highlights one of the major strengths of the journal and its bilingualism favors such comparative analyses. The dialogic space between the Polish and German articles and their often intersecting research areas create an additional interpretive and comparative layer that fosters an interlingual and transnational perspective, refreshing in an era where Comparative Literature is too often "rendered" exclusively into English.

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Comptes rendus / Book Reviews

Jean Anderson, Carolina Miranda, and Barbara Pezzotti, eds. *The Foreign in International Crime Fiction: Transcultural Representations.* London and New York: Continuum, 2012. Pp. 256. ISBN: 9781441128171.

This book consists of three major parts, discussing three major features of crime fiction: the setting, the detective, and the villain. Part One" is entitled "Inside Out or Outside In? The Scene of the Crime as Exotic Décor." "The scene of the crime" does not mean crime scene here, rather the general setting, a city, a country or a whole region. These chapters make important distinctions, criticizing certain authors who perform the orientalising, colonizing, Eurocentric gaze on exotic places and peoples (e.g. Caryl Férey in chapter 1 by Ellen Carter and Deborah Walker-Morrison, or Irène Bertaud and Chantal Kardilès in chapter 5 by Jean Anderson), and praising others who undermine or expose such attitudes (e.g. John le Carré in chapter 2 by Sabine Vanacker, or Daniel Zié-Mé in Chapter 5 by Jean Anderson). The selection of texts examined in this cluster is, however, undeniably Eurocentric. Exotic places—to whom? Foreigners—where? The settings discussed in the five chapters of Part One are as follows: New Zealand, South-East Asia, Havana, Shanghai, and the Franco-Pacific area. Exotic places, for sure—to Western readers. Of course, the books scrutinized are mostly written for Western readers, therefore the central role of exoticism in the discourse can be accepted as legitimate. But it is legitimized only by the selection of the books the authors choose. Could there be other options using different selection strategies? Perhaps, yes. I refer to one single example to suggest another strategy, *Amalfi* (or *Amarufi*) by Juichi Shimpo, a Japanese crime story in an Italian setting.[1] Europe also can be an exotic place with strange local habits. There is no doubt that one can find other such examples. But, such books would undermine the author's politically correct premise: if a French writer gives a completely false representation of Maori habits due to a superficial knowledge of the local culture of New

Zealand, it can be criticised as European arrogance. But what can be said if Italian public safety in 2009 is represented in a Japanese book as if we were in the 1960s? What about the depiction of exotic inferiority in Italian police work? (Of course, such a portrayal follows the generic tradition of presenting professional policemen as stupid in comparison to ingenious outsiders. But it also supports another thematic dealing with interracial prejudice.)

Maybe a Japanese novel is not "international" enough (in the sense of circulation) for this volume even though a movie based on the novel may make it acceptable as such. Even if a writer originally writes for a domestic audience, once her book has gained international recognition, as in the case of Padura Fuentes's Havana stories, it may be included in this volume. The examination of "Havana *noir*" by Philip Swanson (chapter 3) is particularly telling: Fuentes may have elicited international interest in Havana as the setting for crime fiction, but the chapter focuses primarily on non-Cuban writers who use the setting to display nostalgia for the pre-Castro nightlife of the city, which no longer exists and is more of a myth than a remembered cultural experience. Leonardo Padura Fuentes and his novel *La cola de la Serpiente* are also examined in the very last chapter of the book (chapter 16) by Carlos Uxó. He is criticized for his inability to rid himself of stereotypical clichéd representations of Chinese-Cuban minorities.

The title of Part Two ("Private Eyes, Hybrid Eyes: The In-Between Detective") suggests its epistemological focus: how can a foreign (or at least partially foreign) detective understand a community enough to carry out a successful investigation? In chapter 6, Stewart King astutely analyses the novels of Rosa Ribas, who writes in Spanish but sets her story in Frankfurt. The really in-between (half Spanish half German) detective, Cornelia Weber-Tejedor not only finds the perpetrators, but during her investigation also comes to a better (albeit rather dark) understanding of both the life of the Spanish immigrant community, and German society's anxious reaction to multicultural reality. In chapter 7, France Grenaudier-Klijn is less interested in crime narrative than in why the genre of crime fiction is so important in postmodern French literature. According to Grenaudier-Klijn, the life of a pair of amateur investigators who appear in several novels by Dominique Sylvain proves that friendship, or rather the multicultural network of friendships, is the only really significant human value.

The next four chapters of Part Two compare different pairs of writers. In chapter 8, John and Marie Ramsland examine Australian authors who showcase aboriginal detectives, as in the case of Arthur Upfield in the 1920s and 1930s and Philip McLaren in the present. In chapter 9 and chapter 11,

Conan Doyle is compared to contemporary French rewriters of his fiction. Alistair Rolls first discusses a novel by Fred Vargas, and Keren Chiaroni then looks at Sherlock Holmes adaptations by Fabrice Bourland. In chapter 10, Andrew Nestingen and Paula Arvas compare a Danish book from 1992, Peter Høeg's *Smilla's Sense of Snow,* with a Swedish trilogy from the 2000s, Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy.* Their conclusion, that Larsson works with too radical and excessive otherness, while understandable, lacks a certain subtlety.

Part One discusses contemporary crime fiction. Le Carré's *Karla* trilogy, which dates from the 1970s, was the only (and not really old) exception to this chronology. Part Two examines earlier examples of crime fiction, comparing them to more recent texts. The contemporary focus, however, is not a rule in this book, and the first two chapters of Part Three discuss considerably older material. In chapter 12, Andrew Francis analyses British juvenile spy fiction between 1900–1914, and notes how this xenophobic writing, succeeded in soliciting anti-German sentiment not only in Britain, but also throughout the British Empire, and resulted in "the speed, with which imperial societies mobilized against Germany in August 1914" and showed how their hostile attitude "was maintained throughout four years of fighting" (164). In chapter 13, Carolina Miranda examines Roberto Arlt's criminal short stories, in which the petty crimes of miserable characters offer an opportunity for the realistic representation of the social and historical situation in Buenos Aires in the 1930s and the crucial role foreigners play in this context. It should be noted that these three chapters on non-contemporary crime fiction and the three chapters comparing old and new achievements, call into question the structure of the book as a whole. Accepting that the topic is "transcultural representation," why are we not given chapters on the classics like Christie and Chandler? Does Hercule Poirot's name not first come to mind when thinking of "the foreign in crime fiction"?

In the opening sentence of this review I wrote that Part Three is about the foreign villain; this is, however, not completely true. It is called "When Evil Walks Abroad—Towards a Politics of Otherness," and its chapters discuss the representation of immigrant communities in crime fiction: Germans in pre-WWI Britain, the wide variety of immigrants in inter-war Argentina, immigrants in Italy (chapter 14 by Barbara Pezzotti), Turks in Germany (chapter 15 by Margaret Sutherland), and the Chinese community in Cuba. The perpetrators in the stories discussed in this part are members of immigrant communities, but sometimes they are also its

victims. In chapter 14, a comparison between Massimo Carlotto and Andrea Camilleri demonstrates a basic difference between northern and southern Italian (crime fiction) attitudes towards immigrants. In the north, there is basic hostility against the not really differentiated immigrants who do harm to well-established and traditional Italian criminal groups. Because the south has for decades provided migrant workers and as a consequence, experienced exclusion, it is presented as it has developed a more welcoming attitude. Southern Italy is presented as part of an ever-changing Mediterranean scene, where populations travel where and when they can or where and when they are needed. Tunisians are not regarded as immigrating but returning to places they once had to abandon (181). Chapter 15 compares a 2007 *Tatort* episode (268, "Wem Ehre gebührt") with W. W. Domsky's novel *Ehre, wem Ehre ...*, published in 2009. The former is a careful study of immigrant life and xenophobia, in which the detective has to learn during the investigation that her first hypotheses, based on ethnic stereotypes, are all wrong. The latter is a rather unsophisticated collection of xenophobic stereotypes. However, Sutherland does not simply compare two crime stories but examines how they are presented in the different media and, therefore elicit different public reactions. In the television medium, the crime committed by a person was seen as an individual act and had nothing to do with the culprit's national or religious background. The local national community, the Alevis, reacted so fiercely to this episode that it has never been broadcast again. While the Alevis thought that the fictional representation of a member of the community committing a crime spread unfair stereotypes, the much more hostile novel by Domsky has not caused any negative reaction. Clearly television has a much greater impact on community life than print literature. This conclusion prompts the following question: can a collective approach to international crime fiction afford to focus exclusively on printed novels? All the other chapters, if they mention film adaptations at all, explicitly refuse to analyse them; Margaret Sutherland's chapter proves that there is great potential perhaps to be found in such inter-media comparisons.

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1. I have to express my gratitude to Takayuki Yokota-Murakami for providing me this study's example.

Elena Gretchanaia. *"Je vous parlerai la langue de l'Europe ...": La francophonie en Russie (XVIIIe-XIXe siècles).* Enjeux internationaux 26. Bruxelles: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2012. Pp. 416. ISBN: 9789052018850.

This study, which details the involvements with French language and literature by a varied array of Russian writers during the century before Pushkin, comes from an author with impressive qualifications. Professor Gretchanaia, who is now professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Orléans, is a former associate at the Institute of World Literature in Moscow. She has thus been in a position to draw widely on the many relevant manuscripts and out-of-print publications held in Russian archives, which are documented in a bibliography that devotes nineteen pages to these primary sources alone.

The result is a book that might be viewed as a companion to *Quand l'Europe parlait français* (2001), except that here discussion focuses on literary developments within the Russian culture of origin rather than surveying, as Marc Fumaroli did, the diverse careers of notable eighteenth-century French speakers and writers from throughout Europe and even North America. Gretchanaia's intriguing literary-historical narrative begins with the poet/translator Trediakovsky in the 1720s before turning to Catherine the Great and other Russian admirers of Voltaire. They are followed by travelers and diplomats from the higher, mainly legitimist aristocracy, leading on to Madame de Krüdener and the pietistic-mystical mindset after Waterloo. An "Annexe" of almost a hundred pages amounts to a mini-anthology of letters, poems, stories, and reminiscences written by ten of these figures, whose French at times surpassed their command of Russian.

Unlike Priscilla Meyer's *How the Russians Read the French: Lermontov, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy* (U of Wisconsin P, 2008), which emphasizes the underlying polemics with a "desacralization" of the written word that the last two novelists sensed in their French contemporaries, Gretchanaia usually brings out the convergences between the transnational writing culture of her francophone Russians and the main trends in eighteenth-century French literature. The leading exceptions are Trediakovsky, shown here as he begins to domesticate neoclassicism in a bilingual collection of poems that test the potential of a number of subgenres, and Catherine, who makes sure that the "icy North" clichés of her French correspondents do not overshadow the military victories and other successes of her reign. Madame de Krüdener stands out for her promotion of the new myth of "Holy Russia."

But the other Russians come across as well-mannered, properly respectful practitioners of trends popular in Paris, from the gallantries of salon-life and the philosophizing of Enlightenment sages to a sentimentalist interest in the feelings and the "je ne sais quoi," ending with one hesitant response to "frenzied romanticism." This group gives nary a hint of the scandalous young man who comes several generations later in Dostoevsky's *The Gambler* (1866) and who, on visiting Paris, threatens to spit in a prelate's coffee and screams "je suis hérétique et barbare."

In a broader historical perspective, the book can be understood to complement Alexander Etkind's *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (Polity, 2011). These Russian francophones were one outgrowth of policies dating back to Peter the Great that promoted foreign language instruction and that (along with other objectives) aimed at eventually creating a national literature to rival the achievements of the Western great powers. Full realization of this goal, of course, would only come later in the nineteenth century, though by then the literature that had come into being would not be uniformly welcomed by Russian authorities. From this angle, the book's most interesting chapter, "Écrire sa vie," is its longest one. In a variety of intimate writings ("life writings" as they are now sometimes called in English), such as diaries, journals, letters, travel narratives, and autobiographical fragments, the figures covered in this chapter were starting to cultivate a new, more individualized sense of self that supplanted, or at least coexisted uneasily with, a received Orthodox tradition of hagiography. Along with noting the influence of French practices of spiritual self-examination and concise formulations of worldly insight (*esprit*), Gretchanaia emphasizes the discoveries by several women of new opportunities for religious self-expression. If at times the aristocratic reticence or superficial mimicry of these writings fails to communicate intimacy, they can also bear witness to deeper "translations" of identity within the inner self, ones that even led in several cases to conversion.

This volume is the first one to address literary issues in a series that, to judge from the titles, has hitherto dealt with French diplomatic history or international politics and economics. The editors of "Enjeux internationaux" are to be congratulated for broadening their interests into this new area of inquiry, and comparatists will hope that the series will sponsor other studies with this one's depth of cross-cultural expertise, richness of illuminating detail, and suggestiveness of implication.

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Ignacio Infante. *After Translation: The Transfer and Circulation of Modern Poetics across the Atlantic.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2013. Pp. 217. ISBN: 978023251780.

A Spanish born comparatist working in the US, Ignacio Infante is known for developing a concept of modern poetry that engages in the analysis of unrelated, foreign texts and thus contributes to transcontinental comparativism. He investigates modern poetry in light of its historicity. In this highly informative study, Infante distinguishes between modern poetry and modernist poetry. Through this distinction, the author claims to update the classical theoretical paradigm undermined by transhistorical and transnational analysis. He observes that poetry on both sides of the Atlantic bears witness to a need to go beyond geographical and spatial limitations and dialogue across borders. Infante emphasizes the importance in translation by juxtaposing the works of such modern poets as Fernando Pessoa (Portugal), Vicente Huidobro (Chile), Federico García Lorca (Spain), Jack Spicer, Robert Duncan, Robin Blaser (San Francisco), Kamau Brathwaite (Barbados) and Haroldo and Augusto de Campos (Brazil).

An important part of the book is devoted to the concept of multilingualism. Citing Pound, Infante notes that: «It must be clear to anybody that will think about the matter for fifteen minutes that reading a good author in a foreign tongue will joggle one out of the clichés of one's own and will as it were scratch up the surface of one's vocabulary" (5). By analyzing poetic works specifically in translation, Infante calls for a sensitive global awareness. Emily Apter would define Comparative Literature as the "translation zone" and Infante's book tends to support this perspective through his analysis of various national types of translation. Using the, by now, popular term "circulation" to show how translation brings an awareness that connects different people and generates meaning, Infante invites us to take part in a transnational journey, where different frames of reference or modes of understanding the world are thought to have a productive potential in fostering intercultural dialogue. Production of meaning is essential to the translation process.

Infante outlines several translation theories to clarify new trends in translation studies. For example, he employs Walter Benjamin's theory of translation transmitting the ideas of the original work and increasing the linguistic potentiality by exposing vocabulary to new realities and frames of reference. Infante cites Walter Benjamin's claim that the translator needs to "release in his own language the pure language which is under the spell

of another ... for a reconciliation and fulfillment of languages" (111). Infante also focuses on particular aspects of translation that motivate the circulation of modern transatlantic poetics. Infante's book calls to mind what Humboldt terms the "love of the original" and what Antoine Berman meant when he identified translation as an art form and not a science.

Another essential dimension of this volume can be seen in its presentation of various twentieth-century critiques of modernity. Infante also applies George Steiner's theorizing on the poems he discusses. He identifies their common theme as the encounter with the Other that demands new forms of understanding and a change of paradigm. Indeed here is, of course, a critique of modernity that Infante wants to emphasize. He does not choose the poems under analysis randomly, nor are they directly connected. Their common ground is their critique of modernity. Divided into five parts, one for each poem, Infante's analysis seeks to provide the reader with a fresh perspective on the modes of transatlantic transfer.

Chapter 1, "Heteronymies of Lusophone Englishness: Colonial Empire, Fetishism, and Simulacrum in Fernando Pessoa's English Poems I-III," examines how Pessoa uses the English language to promote a new cultural identity that goes beyond his native Portuguese self. Appropriating Deleuze and Guattari's use of the term simulacrum, in *Difference and Repetition*, Infante portrays Pessoa's translation of *Epithalamium* as a text that takes its writer "continuously beyond himself." The same process is thought to occur in Keat's *Antinous* that Pessoa seeks to replace with heteronymous modernist versions. Infante catches Pessoa playing with alter egos of himself thus transforming poetry into "modernist simulacra of themselves"(44).

In the case of the *English Poems*, while Pessoa's use of English has postcolonial tendencies, it nevertheless finds itself situated within the English poetic tradition. Infante bears witness to the transformation of English into a malleable medium, by examining the notion of the fetish developed by Marx, Freud or Agamben. He acknowledges that Pessoa recreated his voice in several heteronyms, each belonging to a different empire.

Chapter 2, "The Translatability of Planetary Poiesis: Vicente Huidobro's Creacionismo in *Temblor de cielo/ Tremblement de ciel*" focuses attention on the poetics of this Chilean poet. Infante considers Huidobro's poetry romantic in its ability to recreate and reform. The author brings into discussion the works of critics such as Peter Burger and René de Costa, who analyze avant-garde poetics. Infante's view is that Huidobro's bilingual poem aims at a "literary absolute" and has planetary potential as a "linguistic

continuum." The word "creationismo" a term that Infante uses only at the end of this chapter brings together the role of the continuum and the absolute in the literary process. It implies the power of poetry to connect readers from different parts of the world. Spatio-temporal and linguistic limitations are surpassed through reading and translation when, as Wai Chee Dimock notes, "foreign languages turn a native tongue into a hybrid" (80). As Infante sees it, "Huidobro's nomadic cosmopolitanism" (52) together with the figure of the magnetic butterfly capture his narrator in a liminal experience where nomadism is the central trope and the planetary sensitivity omnipresent.

Chapter 3, "Queering the Poetic Body: Stefan George, Federico García Lorca, and the Translational Poetics of the Berkeley Renaissance,» examines the influence of Stefan George's and Federico García Lorca's style on three members of the Berkeley Renaissance: Robert Duncan, Jack Spicer and Robin Blaser. This chapter shows how modern poets extend their aesthetic field, by adapting foreign sources because "translation […] is closely connected to a mode of cultural circulation that generates a tradition" (86); Stefan George significantly influenced the three poets under discussion. Infante shows that Lorca, as a gay poet, was a significant figure in the development of experimental poetry. In his analysis of Spicer's *After Lorca*, he investigates the changes occurring in poetic imagery from one language to another, where meaning expands and evolves because translation discourages closure and can provoke new reading. The amalgamated alterations have the effect of combining several frames of reference.

Chapter 4, "Transferring the 'Luminous Detail': Sousândrade, Pound, and the Imagist Origins of Brazilian Concrete Poetry,» analyzes the Brazilian movement that revolutionized world poetry. Here, Infante examines in particular the work of Agosto and Haroldo de Campos and their role within the development of the Brazilian avant-garde. Infante also stresses Ezra Pound's influence on the work, particularly their use of his "luminous detail." By contrasting the de Campos brothers' use of *concretismo*, to analyze the poetry of Joachim de Sousa Andrade to Pound's *imagisme*, Infante concludes that both theoretical approaches see translation primarily as a critical tool. He argues that de Campos brothers "constitut[e] a brand-new genealogy based on a truly native Brazilian origin" and destabilize[e] "European and Anglo-American hegemony in the definition of the origins of the historical avant-garde" (133). Infante ends this chapter by highlighting the importance of Sousândrade's *ReVisão,* which is a "crucial document in the literary history of the global avant-garde" (145).

In the concluding chapter, Infante draws our attention to the vast development of postcolonial poetics. The poet under investigation here is the Carribean Kamau Brathwaite whose work involves interlingual transfer from the oral medium to the digital. Infante examines both the local and cosmopolitan on Caribbean culture and Brathwaite's work. He observes the combination of the old and the new in the Caribbean vernacular language that the poet employs. "Sycorax video style"is Brathwaite's experimental approach to the "digital vernacular." Infante challenges his readers to anticipate the great impact computational methods will play in the future study of literature and poetry: What would SycoraxVS look like "if published in various modes of digital media, such as the World Wide Web?" (175). Translation, poetry and new media seem to share a common future. Infante leaves open the question of what this future may entail. He allows the reader to postpone any judgment since this interdisciplinary medium is still in the process of development and evolution.

With an eye towards the future, but still completely aware of the historical past, Infante invites his audience to envision a new framework for approaching transatlantic poetry. "Poetic of transfer" has an unlimited range for growth in new and surprising directions, beyond the notion of the translator as a traitor: *traduttore-traditore*. This collection focuses is on todays' interdisciplinary framework and the manner in which it opens new ways of transferring messages from one language to another and from one side of the ocean to the other. Global awareness is seen to provide us with an open perspective that embraces the Other. Infante does a good job in convincing his readers that modern poetry leaves behind the modernist paradigm and offers itself to new and inventive digital, cultural and historical exchange.

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Dominick LaCapra. *History, Literature, Critical Theory.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013. Pp. 248. ISBN: 9780801478659.

In *History, Literature, Critical Theory*, Dominick LaCapra, a Cornell University historian, pursues his historical, philosophical and literary enquiries into history, historiography, and traumatic experiences—which, in this book, are to be uniquely identified with the extermination of the Jews

by the Nazis. LaCapra's constant concerns are here supplemented with specific literary analyses, precise discussions of historical studies, and references to a wide span of philosophical and ideological thought from the nineteenth century to the present. Consequently, *History, Literature, Critical Theory* offers essays on literary works, philosophical arguments, and definitions or assessments of the historian's task with regard to the victims of traumatic events. Moreover, it succeeds in showing how writers, historians and readers are always complicit with the representation of violence and traumatic events.

Because *History, Literature, Critical Theory* lacks a unifying narrative or continuous and progressive argument, although the introduction to the book and chapter 1 offer overall views upon the topics which are addressed, its series of five essays and one epilogue do not allow for easy summary. However, its main arguments and their implicit coherence can be (re)construed by the reader if she takes the liberty to reorder the chapters sequence.

Chapter 4, "Historical and Literary Approaches to the "Final Solution": Saul Friedlander and Jonathan Littell," should be the first step in this reconstruction. It defines and exemplifies the most important inquiry in the book: how to handle violence and traumatic experiences in a historical book and in fiction. LaCapra opposes Saul Friedländer's *Nazi Germany and the Jews* (2 volumes) to Jonathan Littell's novel, *The Kindly Ones*. Friedländer shows that the history of the "Final Solution" must be written with concern for the victims who as part of the historical process, make it possible to designate what LaCapra calls the transcendent orientation of the "Final Solution." Nazism implies a kind of civil religion; the "Final Solution" should be explained according its political, geopolitical, economic causes and its transcendent implications, as Saul Friendlander suggests. This suggestion becomes a quasi- assertion for LaCapra.

Jonathan Littell's novel offers a remarkable contrast. He does not address issues regarding the victims. His main character, Max Aue, an SS officer, allows him to make his novel an insider's evocation of Nazism. The transcendent orientation of the Nazi regime is designated in the novel by the myth, which is referred to by the original French title of the novel (*Les Bienveillantes*) and by the implicit or explicit references to Georges Bataille and negativity. LaCapra reads *The Kindly Ones* as a justification and aesthetization of the Nazi regime. He stresses that Littell describes this regime according to its implicit transcendent orientation and agrees with this orientation because he makes the aesthetic view of Nazism prevail. This

opposition between Friedlander's and Littell's books allows the reader to understand how LaCapra considers the relation between history and literature. This relation should not be reduced either to the fiction/reality duality, or to representational issues, or to determinism—the real determines the discourse of the fiction. It should be equated with the ability of the literary work to address the violence of the real—whatever characteristics, events, facts and signs define this violence. LaCapra's implicit conclusion is easy to articulate: any literary work should makes its autonomy obvious without ignoring violence.

Chapter 1, "The Quest! The Quest! Conrad and Flaubert," and chapter 2, "Coetzee, Sebald, and the Narrative of Trauma," provide the second step of our (re)construction. Both chapters are complementary. The first chapter shows that Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* cannot be read according to the usual conventions of realism (the description of Charles's cap at the opening of the novel is not realistic but a kind of collage) and that Emma Bovary should be described as a victim—she commits suicide. She lives in a world which is upside down according to LaCapra's insightful comment on the prosecutor Pinard's expression, "les souillures du mariage et les désillusions de l'adultère," prevent the realization of autonomy that the bourgeois individual might rightfully claim. In LaCapra's words, the violence of the real should be read in *Madame Bovary* according to the "pressure of the real." LaCapra recalls Flaubert's infamous expression: *le livre sur rien*, which applies to *Madame Bovary*, and suggests that this definition of the novel does not contradict its realism, but characterizes the fictional and the real according to a reciprocal negativity or banality. *Madame Bovary* does not identify any transcendence. It imposes a recognition of the real, by highlighting its daily violence. The author's detailed critique of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* addresses this novel's portrayal of colonialism. LaCapra reads Conrad's text according to the colonial/anti-colonial duality and questions the similarities between obscure Africa and misty London. Colonial power is seen, at its heart, to be as obscure as the land it has colonized. Any colonial empire exemplifies violence both in its colonies and at its center. An implicit conclusion one might draw is that the novel should read violence not only by moving from the perpetrator (the Empire) to the victim but also by disclosing the perpetrator's inner negativity—which should not be identified with absolute negativity. Both *Madame Bovary* and *Heart of Darkness* treat history in a specific way: they designate social violence; they do not identify the violence of the real with the Lacanian Real—which can be equated with absolute negativity.

Chapter 2 should be read as a complement to the first chapter and as an introduction (or a return, if one agrees with my reordering) to chapter 4, "Coetzee, Sebald, and the Narrative of Trauma." LaCapra stresses that Sebald recalls the Nazi "Final Solution," but that his works do not impose an identification with the perpetrators of violence. They describe the world according to the gaps which violence has created and the distortions it has imposed on the subject and the real. Sebald's creative perspectives do not imply any transcendence. Although his works are reflexive, the same argument applies to Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello* and *Disgrace*. On the one hand, *Elizabeth Costello* describes the violence of Africa and post-apartheid South Africa and questions their common expectations for the future. *Disgrace* points to the search for a counterpoint to violence and the impossibility of making animal alterity fruitful. In this manner, it stresses the reflexive stand of the writer. Given these dualities, the encounter with history becomes obvious: both novels reject any "whole other" and any final authority to be recognized to literature—LaCapra concludes this chapter with Lucy's words: "There is no higher life. This is the only life there is" (94).

The first part of our reconstruction of *History, Literature, Critical Theory*, is completed. Thus reconfigured, the three chapters of the book, which study literary works, offer an implicit argumentation that can be qualified as cogent and self-sufficient. It can be summarized by recalling LaCapra's conclusion regarding Flaubert: the literary is not its own transcendence and does not designate any "whole other"; it does not duplicate the real, but shows its influence and deals with violence without ignoring its victims. However, this clear argumentation does not prevent the reader from questioning these literary chapters and the role they play in the book. LaCapra moves from Flaubert to Jonathan Littell and concludes with Derrida and Žižek. He makes constant reference to traumatic experiences. Yet, it is obvious that no one can read about the violence in *Madame Bovary* and extermination of the Jews in *The Kindly Ones* as though they present a continuous and homogeneous reference. The violence in *Madame Bovary* is not symmetric to the violence evoked in *The Kindly Ones.* One cannot think that LaCapra is unaware of this asymmetry. The question becomes: why does he construe such asymnetric references to violence?

This question is answered by comparing the three literary chapters with the other chapters which do not refer to literature but focus on the history of ideas—from German Romanticism to Deconstruction and what LaCapra calls the postsecular: chapter 1, "The Mutual Interrogation of History and Literature," chapter 5: "The Literary, The Historical, and the

Sacred: The Question of Nazism," and the "Epilogue"—"Recent Figurations of Trauma and Violence: Tarrying with Žižek." Let us read them backwards, from "Epilogue to "The Mutual Interrogation ..." LaCapra identifies an ambiguity in Žižek's works where the reader is presented with both a critique of our world and an identification of this world with the Lacanian Real and some level of transcendence. In other words, LaCapra suggests that Žižek is not faithful to his critical perspective. Chapter 5 views several of today's thinkers (Derrida, Agamben, for example) and other literary scholars dating from Romanticism as approaching (although not agreeing with) the kind of ambiguity that Žižek's work exemplifies. In order to make the refusal of transcendence explicit, La Capra refers to René Girard and Émile Durkheim, and returns to theses he himself expounded in *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory.*[1] LaCapra then advocates our examination of the limits of trauma implied by the study of the literary sublime, with its misinterpretation of the social function of excess and the "sacred." Chapter 5 offers a critique of the prevailing ideas regarding society and the literature that underpins the ideological background of the literary chapters. Consequently, "The Mutual Interrogation of History and Literature," in chapter 1, does not focus upon the usual contrasts between history and fiction or the truth of facts and the truthfulness of the novel. It invites us to study the relation between history and literature at their intersection, i.e. "how a literary text comes to terms with the pressure of historical events" (29). In this formulation, we can finally decipher the rationale for the asymmetric references to violence found in LaCapra's book.

Whatever violence they impose, historical events should be seen uniquely as social events. They exclude any recognition of negativity or transcendence—both may have been or might become justifications of violence. Literature interrogates history because it expresses or should express the social limits of the experience and interpretation of violence in history. LaCapra refuses to equate this responsibility of literature with an ethical obligation. Literature should be written, read, commented upon within the limits of our secular societies and the anthropology that is attached to theses limits. The real and the pressures of history in *Madame Bovary* and in Jonathan Littell's novel should be interpreted within the same limits. Not forgetting the victims of historical trauma is then a means of acceding to those limits.

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1. Baltimore: Cornell University Press, 2004. See pages 153–54.

Leonardo F. Lisi. *Marginal Modernity: The Aesthetics of Dependency from Kierkegaard to Joyce.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2013. Pp. xi + 352. ISBN: 9780823245321.

Leonardo Lisi's *Marginal Modernity* makes an erudite, interesting and compelling case for a renewed and expanded perception of modernist aesthetics as influenced by a Scandinavian thread stemming from the Danish Christian thinker, Søren Kierkegaard. Shifting the focus from the well-established geographical, cultural, and linguistic centres of modernism (e.g., Paris, London, and Dublin), Lisi guides us to a Scandinavian margin sorely overlooked. A margin—he argues—which is nonetheless crucial to the understanding of the development of modernism. Lisi detects a widespread Scandinavian influence on major modernists (Henry James, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, James Joyce, and Rainer Maria Rilke), thanks to the example of Ibsen, who in the wake of Kierkegaard helped give rise to what Lisi labels "the aesthetics of dependency." Redirecting our attention from centers to peripheries, Lisi helps us appreciate how our initial understanding of modernist aesthetics, as informed by the aesthetics of autonomy and aesthetics of fragmentation, should be supplemented by a revisionary "aesthetics of dependency."

Thus, he challenges the position, exemplified by Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters* (2007), which argues in favour of a unilateral influence, exercised from the culturally powerful centers on peripheries. Inversely, Lisi is more in line with recent studies, such as Arnold Weinstein's *Northern Arts* (2008) and Toril Moi's *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism* (2006), which claim that the cultural influence of Scandinavia has been neglected.

The aesthetics of dependence, emerging from Kierkegaard and Ibsen, breaks with the aesthetic aspiration towards unity, self-sufficiency, and autonomy as well as with the conception of artwork as formal fragmentation (as practiced by the avant-gardes). However, these two aesthetic paradigms, dating from the late eighteenth century, are not put aside but combined in an aesthetics of dependency: "It generates neither pure fragmentation nor organic harmony but rather makes the process of trying to convert the former into the latter the focus of the work" (6). According to Lisi, modernist aesthetics must essentially be understood as reactions to the difficulties posed by Immanuel Kant's self-proclaimed "Copernican revolution" in his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Lisi points to three reactions. First, the aesthetics of autonomy was shaped by the response of idealist thinkers

who endeavored to complete Kant's project by arguing for an underlying unity behind the seeming contradiction of thought and sensitivity. Second, the aesthetics of fragmentation is inspired by sceptics who rejected Kant's project by insisting on the incommensurability of concept and phenomena. Third, the aesthetics of dependency evolved from the philosophical and Christian anthropology of Søren Kierkegaard. Arguing that God plays an epistemological role in Kierkegaard's thinking, Lisi claims that the identity of thought and experience "becomes possible only through the awareness of our radical dependence on a divinity that is wholly other" (15). For the radical Christian thinker, faith involves both an infinite transcendence of our subjectivity and the—for us—immeasurable standard for it; thus "converting faith into a relationship of continuously seeking a fulfilment that remains inherently beyond us" (15). Indeed, man is decisively marked by a fundamental split (in accordance with the avant-garde experience), yet he must strive to abrogate this contradiction (in accordance with the philosophical premises of the aesthetics of autonomy) even though this goal seems out of reach of man's limited existence. Overall, this situation leaves us with the fourfold structure of Kierkegaardian faith that also designates the fourfold structure of the aesthetics of dependency. In other words, Kierkegaard advances:

> a notion of faith as a structure of meaning that rests on four terms: the two realms of thought and being that oppose each other, our attempt to transform that opposition, and the unity for which we strive that simultaneously eludes our efforts and justifies them as an end in themselves. It is this fourfold structure that underlines the aesthetics of dependency. (15)

In literary terms, Lisi claims that a text displays the aesthetics of dependency when "the purposeful relation of its part depend[s] on an interpretative perspective not coextensive with the logic of those parts themselves" (8).

The structure of the book is threefold: Part 1, "Philosophical Foundations"—the most densely written and challenging section—competently unfolds the epistemological debate from Immanuel Kant, his follower Friedrich Schiller, and Friedrich Hölderlin, to Kierkegaard. In the theoretical chapters of the book, Lisi lays the philosophical groundwork for the two succeeding analytic parts, "Aesthetic Forms at the Scandinavian Periphery" and "Modernism and Dependency." The third analytic section traces the aesthetics of dependency that starts with Henry James's *The Wings of the Dove*, continuing with James Joyce's "The Dead" (from the collection of short stories, *Dubliners*) and Hugo von Hoffmanthal's *Brief des Lord Chandos an Francis Bacon*, concluding with Rilke's *Die Aufzeichnungen*

des Malte Laurids Brigge. These texts are analyzed and interpreted through "close readings" (18) that patiently, convincingly, and subtly tease out the fourfold structure characteristic of the aesthetics advocated here. In other words, the literary text is analyzed as an "artistic enactment or representation of fundamental forms of knowledge and experience" (8)—but Lisi wisely steers securely away from merely reducing the text to a general and illustrative appendix of theory. Though Lisi subscribes to close readings, which tend to remain within the bounds of the texts, he also evokes the political, economic, and historical context to illuminate and strengthen his case. This method is especially noticeable when he crosses from the theoretical to the analytical sections, namely Part 2, which deals with the Danish nineteenth-century Hegelian and dramatist Johan Ludwig Heiberg (who will probably be new to most readers outside Denmark or Scandinavia) and Henrik Ibsen (*Peer Gynt* and *A Doll's House*).

Heiberg and Ibsen embody different strategies towards the socio-political crisis of the modern world threatened by the growth of capitalism and the waning of feudal structures. Whereas the idealist Heiberg strives to reconcile this crisis in his art, Ibsen, Lisi argues, rejects idealist aesthetics in *Peer Gynt* that challenge the forces of modernity: "*Peer Gynt* stages a conflict between the system of morality as such and the new emergent capitalist world order, which no longer holds a place for it" (87–88). In contrast to the traditional readings of the play, Lisi shows how ambiguity reigns and how any step toward reconciliation can easily be discarded. His rich and penetrating analysis of *A Doll's House* is arguably the book's *pièce de résistance*. The issue in the analysis, emblematic for the subsequent examination of the modernist masters, is well known: Nora struggles for emancipation from the confining bonds of a marriage in which she is treated like a "doll," a plaything for a man who does not recognize her as an equal human being in her own right. Her bold break from her husband and her children in order to find herself leaves us with the hackneyed question: "Where is Nora going?" Now, Lisi's point is that we do not know. It is up to the reader to attempt to organize the moral conclusion, since the play only leads up to Nora's departure. As she sets out to explore new experiences, the reader is also forced to leap into unknown territory and leave any secure moral and metaphysical grounds of knowledge behind. For Kierkegaard this process involves a leap of faith—an option that is neither desirable nor possible for Ibsen. Whereas Kierkegaard makes us dependent on a divine Other, whom we cannot possible comprehend, Ibsen forces us to recognize our dependency on a human other, which escapes egalitarian and hegemonic perceptions:

> In Ibsen's text, this is not so much to say that through Nora we come to know a nonhuman form of life (as would be the case for Kierkegaard) but that the notion of humanity is radically revised. Instead of conceiving of the human in terms of conditions of my own existence that I can recognize in the other, the human now finds its source in the other rather than in me. (154)

Nora's attempt at becoming herself, at finding herself, does not adhere to any subjective preconceived standard for the ego but rather something much more slippery and, as yet, unachieved; it is never idealistically present at hand. That is to say, subjectivity is informed by "an intuition of meaning or purpose qualitatively different from my own and not accessible through analogy with my experience" (154). The aesthetics of dependency therefore projects an experience of scepticism, while maintaining "the desire to overcome scepticism" (162), a desire for an absent standard of knowledge situated in another who nevertheless remains unfathomable.

Such is the positive and progressive ethics inherent in the aesthetics of dependency. It offers a radical upheaval of a more traditional stance according to which the other deserves less respect than we do, since we cannot know him or her directly or transparently. Conversely, this aesthetics contains "the realization that our inability to know the other may make it *more* valuable than us and that we therefore might be forced to give up the ground from which we speak" (163). For this reason, "the difficulty lies in having to accept the possibility that the other might hide a wholly different point of view that is more valid than ours" (163). Meaning is located elsewhere; it requires us to surrender the idea of a secure ground and expose ourselves instead to the other:

> I would argue that the fact that literature holds a different ontology than human existence means that it is able to imagine conditions for meaning other than the ones operative in our world and that this is one of its great strengths: to give us modes of knowledge that we could not otherwise encounter but which we may well desperately need. (164)

This is a muscular and penetrating perspective, which—navigating between the aesthetic paradigms of autonomy and the avant-garde—offers a persuasive perspective in which to study a modernistic imagination haunted by doubt and despair that nonetheless relentlessly explores the unknown and unseen for new meanings and experiences. As mentioned above, Lisi's literary analysis beautifully exemplifies his theoretical claims. In all of the literary interpretations—executed with supreme subtlety and diligence—the author eruditely and skilfully shows how the text is marked

by a violent ambivalence on the level of theme or form. Therefore, the texts envision "the crisis that underlines Modernism at large: the confrontation with the irreversible chasm between concept and percept, sign and referent, facts and values, which makes any determination of meaning impossible" (239). Nevertheless, the conclusions of the texts, however, seem to embody a promise of a unifying transcendence of this conflict, even if transcendence is nowhere to be found within the text and remains to be discovered.

The proclaimed originator of the aesthetics of dependency is the unrelenting Christian thinker, Kierkegaard, who acknowledges that the practical, modern world can no longer make any claims on any metaphysical and theoretical justification whatsoever. The existence of God cannot be proved and the issue of belief is far beyond the jurisdiction of reason. However, halfway into modernity, Kierkegaard shies away from taking the next step and decides to remain in a retrograde world with a God whose existence he nevertheless cannot and will not justify. If we compare him with the modernist authors analyzed here, Kierkegaard seems strangely obsolete. With the exception of Rainer Maria Rilke, all of Lisi's representative authors of an aesthetics of dependency (Henrik Ibsen, Henry James, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and James Joyce) circumnavigate and depict a world bereft of God. The author's choice of subjects is thus striking. Even though modernist authors engage in structures of meaning analogical to the theological structures of the Danish theologian, and even though they share a common point of departure, i.e. a world in which metaphysics fails to gain a legitimate foothold, they do not look backwards for a solution. This point is quite significant. For these aestheticians of dependency, the goal is rather to probe and pave the way for the emergence of an unformulated meaning and perspective of existence in a godless world. They do not look for a glimpse of hope in an absolute and metaphysical Other, but rather in a human and contingent other.

Even though I agree with the author's thesis regarding the aesthetics of dependency, I remain a little sceptical with regard to his premise that Kierkegaard can be seen as the midwife for the modernistic authors' formulation of the aesthetics of dependency.

The book is nevertheless an outstanding study; it will inspire scholars of modernism.

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Micaela Maftei. *The Fiction of Autobiography: Reading and Writing Identity.* New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. Pp. 208. ISBN: 9781623569020.

Once Kafka wrote in his diaries: "There are people who float grabbed to a pencil trace. Float? A drowned dreaming of salvation." I ask myself if this idea can be applied to the writer of autobiographical texts. I suppose it can be. Maybe in an era when salvation seems like the plot of a utopian dream, lost and absurd, the inscription of our own life becomes one of the few ways we can achieve some form of secular redemption.

For more than two decades, there has been a resurgence in autobiography studies. Micaela Maftei's book *The Fiction of Autobiography: Reading and Writing Identity* responds to this momentum with an original contribution. Maftei's point of departure is not the theoretical discussion of this large and complex field. She does not want to reevaluate, dispute, or propose new ways of interpreting autobiography. Her project is more humble, yet no less worthy of merit. She begins with her own autobiographical texts. They are fragmented and, at the same time, solidly written. They resemble translucent drops of familiar memory, to this reader at least, and it is unfortunate that they appear in this book's appendix rather than as a central component.

Since these autobiographical fragments provide the core of Maftei's reflection on the genre of autobiography, they should ideally open the book and, perhaps, help us to avoid some misunderstandings. Reading the book in the order that it is presented, with the autobiographical fragments at the end, leads the reader to approach the volume as if it were a standard work on autobiography studies, without an examination of key autobiographical authors that such studies normally would evoke. For instance, there is no mention of Foucault and his theory of "écriture de soi," topics that have been so central to the field in recent years. Also, there no is essay on Derrida, his "The Ear of the Other," his thought-provoking essay on Blanchot's testimonial fiction, "Demeure: Fiction and Testimony," or anything else he wrote about autobiography. Maftei also does not mention Paul de Man's classical "Autobiography as Defacement" (1979). Perhaps, the author thinks that this poststructuralist discussion is something old and outdated. But I tend to think not, since Maftei deals with the very same issues that these authors discussed in a critically profound and valid way.

The book is, in fact, very effective as a tool for writers who wish to explore their own lives in a more direct and creative way. It should not be

judged for its limited bibliography or even its scant discussion of its main theme, since the work is presented as a self-reflection of an author seeking to achieve a better understanding of the autobiographical phenomenon. In her introduction, Maftei notes the "subjective turn" in academic studies.

> Understanding the personal and individual as supremely relevant to building a critical stance and performing textual analysis of the other work showed me how a rigorous piece of critical/academic writing need not pretend its author exists outside the text, and that openly incorporating one's own life into written work need not be regarded as "creative writing." (6)

That's very true, and Nietzsche, Freud, and Benjamin are only some theoretical authors who incorporated their lives in their theories, or rather they wrote from the core of their life experiences. This book would have, perhaps, benefitted from acknowledging them in support of this important lesson. The chapters and their respective arguments would then make much more sense.

The book has four chapters. In the first, Maftei discuses the problem of autobiography as "true"/truthful writing. Quoting Jill Kerr Conway, she affirms that there is "'no meta-narrative ... no fixed history, no history that is true,' the very nature of transforming experience into language requires the choosing of one transformative sequence, authoring one version, at the cost of all others" (41). By way of an example, she presents the idea of testimony as the (impossible) wording of a traumatic reality. Citing Shoshana Felman, Maftei presents testimony as a struggle between a speaker and a listener to achieve something the speaking survivor does not possess. Here truth emanates from the traumatic character of reality. Maftei criticizes one of the main theoreticians in the autobiographical field, Philippe Lejeune and his canonical definition of the genre. She claims that it relies on knowledge of the author's intention: in other words, it depends on something that is impossible to grasp.

In the second chapter, Maftei challenges the idea that identity is stable. "The writer must wear a multitude of masks in order to create the illusion of being both protagonist and recorder of the story, the character to whom we (hopefully) relate and have an interest in following, as well as the controller of the strings, the one who draws us along through the story even while knowing the outcome and writing from a time and space beyond it" (59). Basing her argument on Gertrude Stein's *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas,* Maftei questions Lejeune's idea of shared identity between the writer and narrator. In the autobiographical works of Natalia Ginzburg and Joan Didion, Maftei then seeks to show "the gap between the writer's

experience at the time of writing and at the time of experiencing the events they describe" (68).

The third chapter explores the construction of memory as a kind of performance. The author sees memory as something constructed by the brain. Here she connects studies coming from neurological science and other clinical approaches with insights derived from authors such as Proust and Virginia Woolf. With an analysis of the work of Paul John Eakin, Maftei interprets memory as one more source for fiction. Autobiographies are just memory-based fictions, "fictions about what is itself in turn a fiction, the self" (97). (Shoshana Felman with her focus on testimonial writing would hardly agree with this assertion but Maftei does not address Eakin's relativism in light of Felman's theory.)

Maftei applies perspectivism to deconstruct the possibility of having a true memory. She agrees with Nabokov's statement, that she cites: "reality is a very subjective affair ... you can never get near enough because reality is an infinite succession of steps ... and hence unquenchable, unattainable" (106) and notes that we also cannot delineate the borders between the past and the present in the construction of autobiographical texts. Indeed, rather then seeing such texts as inscriptions of time, we should also see them as constructing time in our lives. Writing is conceived then as a barrier that helps create borders. Remembering Didion's phrase "*These fragments I have shored against my ruins*," Maftei recalls that we are not able to control the fragments of our lives. In this regard, she could have quoted Friedrich Schlegel's letter to his brother August W. on 12.18.1797: "Ich kann von mir, von meinem ganzen Ich gar kein andres Echantillon geben, als so ein System von Fragmenten, weil ich selbst dergleichen bin" ("I can give from myself, of my whole self no other sample than as a system of fragments, because I myself am the same stuff").

The fourth and last chapter, "Inventing the Road with Every Step," examines autobiography as a product and construction, rather than a representation. In an inspired moment, the author compares the dilemmas of translation with those involved in autobiographical writing: in both cases we have to recognize constructions rather than copies or exact representations. When dealing with autobiography, the author considers the process of construction to be even more important than the process of conversion, a central theme in many important autobiographies, from Augustine's *Confessions* to the present.

In her conclusion, Maftei returns to her own autobiographical writings and discusses why she prefers not to think of them as non-fiction.

Here again, she confirms that this book has creative writing students as its ideal readers rather than autobiography scholars. In a kind of public statement, commenting on her own familial quarrels, she affirms: "There is no way to return to the past, and both our understandings of it are necessarily colored by the period between then and now. Even in the present, this present where I am writing, the experience influences the past and is influenced by the past, and how I view it keeps changing. To spend too much energy trying to determine which version is closer to 'what really happened' is like a dog chasing its tail: exhausting, pointless, comical" (153).

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Forest Pyle. *Art's Undoing: In the Wake of a Radical Aestheticism.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2013. Pp. 328. ISBN: 9780823251117.

As I took my first steps in the academic world of English language literature, I could not keep myself from thinking that reading, the scholar's ultimate experience, would reveal an inspiring (and uplifting) imaginative journey of understanding. My first encounter with Romantic poetry, however, forced me to reconsider my fervent ingenuousness. Far from endorsing Mark Twain's definition of classics—the praised ones that one never reads—I had to admit that, when faced with texts whose aesthetic nature had been acclaimed for centuries, the sought-after experience of reading somehow unravelled. In some compelling instances, the delicate art of writing became undone, leaving me to ponder the meaning of the aesthetic experience itself. It is just such "crucial moments" (xi) in a scholar's reading experience that Forest Pyle seeks to expose and resolve in *Art's Undoing: In the Wake of a Radical Aestheticism*.

Pyle's major conceptual construct consists in a juxtaposition that might at first seem redundant. Most often associated with nineteenth-century movements praising *l'art pour l'art*, aestheticism in its strictest definition implies a form of sweeping artistic endeavour "result[ing] in the *celebration* of the judgment or the sensation" (2). Aesthetic-ism, as in other instances when this suffix is used, involves a form of militant devotion. In that sense, aestheticism is radical by nature. Although the 'avant-garde' meaning of "radical" emerged at the same period as romanticism, it is not

this sense either that is emphasized by the concept. Instead, Pyle's clever use of the term forcefully serves his deconstructive and performative approach toward aesthetic textual weaving. Moments of radical aestheticism, he argues, prove themselves "extreme enough to *deliver us to the roots* of the aesthetic, its constitutive elements reduced to ashes or to sighs" (xii, emphasis added).

The term "radical"—the act of unearthing roots—might as well describe the organization of the corpus discussed in this monograph. As in a Foucauldian genealogy of what Oscar Wilde called "Our Romantic Movement" (11), Pyle approaches six figures who stand as essential precursors of aestheticism. He finds in Wilde's description of "The English Renaissance of Art" the "historical contours" (11) of the British strain of Romanticism that he considers: Percy Shelley, John Keats, Dante Rossetti, and Wilde himself. To them, he adds Gerard Manley Hopkins and, surprisingly, Emily Dickinson—whose poems, because of their concerns, workings and outcomes, may claim a significant place in the British Romantic Movement. The radical aestheticism of these canonical authors, whom critics praise but might not read (or read well), constitutes for Pyle extreme literary moments "from which one turns away" (19).

The repulsion that radical aestheticism produces affects both readers and critics. It refers "not only to the act of aversion that takes place in response to a textual event," to the "critical *disregard*" with which many critics welcome such events, but also to the "interpretive 'turning'" some other critics might mobilize to "rescue, or redeem the text" (20). Although I am not convinced by the "unique and heroic" nature of the "position of being the one who did not turn away," (19) Pyle's analysis of the functioning and features of radical aestheticism offers a convincing and well-developed theoretical model for a renewed and original understanding of the effects at work in these classical texts.

Although Pyle argues that there is no master rhetorical trope that might define radical aestheticism, he sees in *lyricization* the potentially most precise way of describing its formal and generic dimensions. To this formal characterization, he appends a series of quintessential conditions that have to be met for a text to display radical aestheticism in its content. First, and most importantly, the text must adopt a reflective stance in the form of ekphrastic or meta-artistic discourse. Reflection must bear upon art's interconnection with history or knowledge and upon the "relationship between art's sensuous aspects and its ethical, political or theological responsibilities" (3). Such a meta-discursive approach does not however

constitute radical aestheticism in itself, for in instances of radical aestheticism the "*performance* of [the] aesthetic reflection" *dissociates* art and knowledge by "subsuming the latter to the former" (4). Finally, the text may be said to "*succumb*[…]" to a radical aestheticism when it "*experiences* 'aestheticization' as the undoing of any claim to an aesthetic autonomy" (4). Radical aestheticism does not then constitute a positive stance or experience. Pyle's approach involves radical deconstruction: by uncovering the roots of aesthetics, and such aestheticism invalidates all claims—either common or authorial—usually made in the name of the aesthetic. In Pyle's colorful style, radical aestheticism corresponds to pseudo-moments in which the text turns into an artistic black hole destroying any possible hope for aesthetic illumination.

These black holes also have the power annihilate the authorial projects at work in these Romantic masterpieces. With the by now customary reference to Barthes, Pyle describes how, in a work of art, crucial moments involving radical aestheticism do undermine an author's "vocational" or "cultural agency" (17). Such projects do not correspond so much to the author's intentions as they do to a textual "*animating* principle" (17). While Pyle acknowledges his two main theoretical debts to Marxism and Deconstruction, he proposes a *performative* approach where it is the poem and not the poet who enacts radical aestheticism. Pyle thus outlines the author's diverse projects to better hasten their downfall through the analysis of a "fundamental crisis" (18) constituted by radical aestheticism. This fundamental crisis is in each chapter enacted through the pairing of the great romantic poets with at least equally classic post-modern and post-structural theoreticians.

In the first chapter, Pyle—borrowing Shelley's own words—describes Shelley's project as "wholly political" (29). Shelley's weaving of aestheticism presents a directed and partisan impulse in which the spirit of aesthetics generates the binding force of universal human love. In instances where such radical aestheticism appears, this universal love takes the form of Benjamin's aura. As an expression of the work of art's authenticity, the experience of the aura is always recorded as a "vanishing […] registered with the shock of something shattered" (43). Pyle describes Shelley's reliance on radical aestheticism as a double yet open-ended activity: "a rhetorical demystification or dispelling […] that is accompanied by the image of an incalculable opening" (45) that might well end-up being a total confinement, leaving readers gazing in an "ever-shifting mirror" (57) with no promise of redemption.

The second chapter focuses on the limitations of Keats's poetry as an ethical project. Keats faces conflict between irreconcilables expressed in a performative double bind. Pyle posits that the poet's "turn to the ethical is not represented as an overcoming of the seductions of the aesthetic, but as a succumbing to a radically aestheticized version of the ethical" (69). It is in this vital tendency to sacrifice to aesthetics that one discovers Keats's capital weakness and Pyle draws a parallel to the aesthetic disposition he sees in Barthes's *Paresse*. Keats's ethical impulses may also be mirrored in Barthes's understanding of the artist's morality, which he defines as the inability to access morale. Barthes resolves this inability by devising a "third way," a deconstructive moral stance where one once again is unable to find hope for ethical recovery. According to Pyle, Keats's ethical turn expresses through the reader's encounter with radical aestheticism, "the gift of an all-consuming poetry that bestows us nothing at all" (102).

Chapter 3 focuses on Dickinson's poetry and opens on a most unexpected yet incredibly sensible and well-appointed image. As in the case a computer's binary code, Dickinson's radical aestheticism presents the opposition (and interconnectedness) between zeros and ones, events and machines—"occurrence and structure" (107). The chapter's subtitle "Emily Dickinson, Event-Machine," can be read as the unexpected—almost antinomic—marriage of the New-England poet with French theoretician Jacques Derrida. Pyle's subtitle makes sense given that Pyle interprets Dickinson's project as poetics itself, which, he argues, is exemplified by the abundance of her poetic production and her inordinate number of strong opening lines. Pyle claims that these practices represent a poetics of "eruption and negation"(108) that relies on the event-status of her intriguing opening lines (that Pyle connect with Agamben's "events of language) and the machine-status of the subsequent deflation of mood that characterizes a majority of her poems. This engine powers her poetics—a poetics of absenting, of noughts and zeros. Dickinson's machinery is one that produces events, instances of aesthetic experiences, which "can only be *supposed by*, but not *realized in*, poetry" (142).

Chapter 4, on Hopkins's theological vocation, opens with a challenging rhetorical question regarding the poetics of the sigh. Hopkins's reliance on aesthetic experience is directed toward divine revelation. It is this theological necessity however, Pyle argues, that makes the aesthetic "always bear [...] for Hopkins a burden and a risk" (146). Revealed through stress and strain, the aesthetic—genuine inspiration—"gives rise to a non-fit between the said and the saying" (147). This strain between human intuition and

language is mirrored in the tension between theology and aesthetics. It results, as Pyle explains, in the "emission of a sigh and in the 'ringing' of [...] radical aestheticism" (148). Because a sigh is the dangling counterpart of a speech act, Hopkins's poetry enters the performative, enacting a revelation in which grammar and syntax are suspended. Hopkins, in Pyle's model, appears to be the poet most strongly opposed to radical aestheticism, since it stands at the exact antipode of what the poet seeks to achieve. If radical aestheticism means that in some textual moments truth is subsumed by art, then Hopkins's theological vocation of using art as a sensory manifestation of God's grace becomes void.

The book reaches its climax in Chapter 5. As Pyle himself explains "no artists appears more appropriate than Dante Gabriel Rossetti for inclusion in a study of the aestheticism that emerged in the wake of Romanticism" (171). However, as if enclosed in a deconstructing performativity himself, Pyle rapidly contradicts his claim and argues that Rossetti's aestheticism might appear too conspicuous to be considered radical. However, it is this conspicuousness, this superficiality—a fact that, according to Pyle, might explain the reason why Rossetti failed to elicit much criticism—which determines Rossetti's radical aestheticism. Rossetti's superficiality (his obsession with surfaces) supports his project of turning art, "an escape from temporality and a reminder of death," (173) into love's counterpart. Pyle finds in Michael Fried's concepts of absorption and theatricality a useful critical approach to illuminate Rossetti's aesthetic radicalism. By seeking to resist theatricality and trigger the reader's absorption in self-conscious art forms, Rossetti's depictions appear theatrical, inauthentic, superficial, opposed in essence to love, a notion Pyle further correlates with Žižek's appropriation of the Lacanian definition of courtly love as the "fundamentally narcissistic" (188) truth of desire.

The book concludes with Wilde, the figure who started it all with his description of the "British Renaissance of Art." Wilde's vital tendency, his project, spells out a meta-aestheticism. Pyle explains that his reading of the dandy's works examines aestheticism "from the point of view of *its point of view*" (210). Indeed, Wilde's complete dedication to the aesthetic can be described as a point of view that unfolds as an imperative, both a rhetorical position and a pedagogical mission, that Wilde sought to live as his own "extravagance" (210). The term "position" acquires a significant sense in Pyle's analysis as he considers that Wilde's extravagance may be described as a "game of over and under" (211). Forever seeking the superior position of art, the poet will always sit under the scope of aestheticism. It is in

Georges Bataille's theory of *dépense* or expenditure that Pyle finds the most felicitous pairing for Wilde's extravagance. Bataille's *dépense* in its aesthetic application glorifies art for art's sake because it has no end beyond itself. An artistic *dépense* rejects the classical principle of utility: it is essentially a "non-productive expenditure" (213), a performative speech act forever associated with extravagance.

More than anything, Forest Pyle's monograph provides an enriching addition to the already large critical literature on Romanticism. Although it is centred on issues that have been subject to significant debate, as shown in his well-informed review of the literature, Pyle's analysis offers a fresh and challenging reading of dense poetic works. His well-structured and accurate engagement with deconstruction and performativity provides sound arguments for a post-modern examination of texts that have too often been relegated to more classical critical frameworks. Pyle's colorful style offers agreeable reading and sustains his central aesthetic theme. As a scholar, Pyle has no cause to envy the poets' witty eloquence, his weaving of arguments sometimes borders on poetry. The volume's lavish illustrations frame the texts' discussion in a multi-media perspective and offer possibilities for further comparative research. And Pyle himself recognizes that radical aestheticism is not limited to poetry and that instances could be found in other genres (written or otherwise). *Art's Undoing* provides a strong piece of criticism backed up by solid theoretical scholarship. It offers a novel approach to poetic works that appeal to all readers' aesthetic sensitivities and hermeneutic judgments. By examining classical texts devoted to the art of beauty with the tools of deconstruction and post-modernism, Pyle shows how art and history, imagination and understanding, do indeed come full circle by the performative magic of hermeneutics.

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Caroline Rupprecht. *Womb Fantasies: Subjective Architectures in Postmodern Literature, Cinema, and Art.* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013. Pp. xiv + 132. ISBN: 9780810129139.

In *Womb Fantasies*, Caroline Rupprecht examines the use of pregnancy, motherhood, and womb-like spaces in postmodernist art, film, and

literature. Key to her argument is the plurality of her title; among the directors and writers she discusses, there is no shared fantasy. While the womb signifies an enclosed space, it may be a site of either comfort or trauma, one to be "experienced from within or externally, suffocating or liberating, closed or accessible, a point of new beginning or a space one wants to crawl back into" (3). In the works of Marguerite Duras, Alexander Kluge, Uwe Johnson, and Jean-Luc Godard, as well as the art pieces which serve as bookends, Rupprecht's discussion of the use of pregnancy, maternal connections, and space as signifiers demonstrates the versatility of the womb in the postmodern, post-war texts she explores. She contends not that there is one meaning behind the use of such a theme, but that what these works "have in common is a preoccupation with the womb, or womb-like spaces, as the site of mysterious forces, connected to both creativity and its destruction," with "maternal figures ... represented as sources of death and rebirth" (94).

Rupprecht starts with a short frontispiece on Eero Saarinen's *Womb Chair*, designed in 1947, and ends with a piece on Damien Hirst's *Virgin Mother*, a 35-foot bronze statue. The author presents Knoll's No. 70 Lounge Chair, still available today, in order to introduce the world of the 1950s, one in which atomic bombs, the Holocaust, and the Cold War made the idea of a utopian retreat to the womb attractive. As Rupprecht explains, the chair "is named after a female body part that continues to be invested with cultural fantasies of protection and shelter." The commodification that makes it available for purchase "is, perhaps, its greatest accomplishment" (7). Her examination of the works of Duras, Kluge, Johnson, and Godard develops from this background of war and violence, treating the womb as a place of retreat and new beginnings, or of imprisonment and impotence, while her last piece on Hirst's statue looks at science and new trends in filming pregnancy—YouTube videos of delivery, for example—as an end to the prevalence of the womb as a mythic figure. Designed to echo Edgar Degas's *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen* (1879) and, according to Rupprecht, the concerns voiced in the original reception of Degas's *Dancer*, *Virgin Mother* puts the female body and the enclosure of the womb on display, even as they are encased within the buildings of the courtyards in which the two copies stand. The work "is yet another in an ongoing series of culturally constructed fantasies around the womb—in this instance, the fantasy that the womb has become accessible" (104). Rupprecht suggests the post-war need for security, the lack of such an asylum from the world of violence, and guilt-by-association served as a source for the types of "womb fantasies" found in postmodern expression. The illusion of control over the body given by

diagrams, sonograms, in vitro fertilization, and other breakthroughs may explain a dwindling emphasis on the mystery of the womb.

Within the writings of Marguerite Duras, this mystery is a site of trauma and colonization. Rupprecht's analysis of *Hiroshima mon amour* investigates the use of physical space to recreate the past of the unnamed French actress whose story "takes center stage" (14). Her Japanese lover may have lost his family due to the atom bomb, but this atrocity and the destroyed city mainly serve to remind the actress of her own bereavement. Her time in the city becomes the repeating memory of her own tragedy, the death of her German lover and her castigation at the hands of her community and family. The darkness and unnavigable space of the city echoes the small basement of her parents' home in which she was imprisoned after the war. Her experiences depict the womb as uninhabitable; the events of Duras's *The Vice-Consul* further reflect this negativity by depicting "infertile" fertility. The beginning of the novel is actually the creation of one of Duras's European characters who imagines the life of a perpetually pregnant Indian woman. This structure itself is colonial; the actual gravid woman of Duras's story is silent, her experiences untold, yet the character Peter Morgan attempts to occupy her point-of-view. This view is one of control, a reimagining of "the female body as a territory to be conquered, a potential 'safe space' for himself" (24). By the end of Morgan's writing, his mad woman's womb becomes as infertile as his pen—he makes her sterile as his ability to create diminishes. As Rupprecht demonstrates, Duras's "womb fantasy" is like Morgan; there is no "release from historical trauma" of war or colonization in either of these works (35).

Alexander Kluge's cinematic depictions of motherhood are indeterminate, but contain the element of possibility because of their uncertainty. His strategic use of cuts and ambiguous endings keeps the audience from knowing all the facts about Anita G.'s story in *Yesterday Girl.* The viewer must "make subjective associations as to what may or may not have happened" (42). The film visually lacks the pregnancy of Anita G. since Kluge does not depict her changing body, the actual birth, or even the child. Rupprecht successfully argues that this fertility is a symbol of hope, the separated child representative of "a break with the past ... in terms of German-Jewish history" (41). Anita G. is haunted by the loss of her family in concentration camps, and seems to be continually persecuted by the law. The new life within her, however, gives Anita G. a "dual function as both a signifier of repressed guilt and a potential bearer of hope." Rupprecht claims that the film "certainly illustrates the German conflict about whether

and how to relate to that country's horrific past; and how to conceive of a future that seems inevitably marred by the ongoing presence of the dead" (45). The author also finds such hope in the story of "Die Übergabe des Kindes" within *The Blind Director*, as its depiction of a foster mother and child creates "a positive, maybe even utopian" womb which appears to provide both shelter and care. Kluge's camera does not depict overtly affectionate scenes between the two protagonists, but rather a careful visual framing creates a sense of mutual respect, as the foster mother watches the child at play through windows, and the child peers in at her within the study. Spatially separated, their visual gazes serve to create a connection. This situation ends when a court awards custody to an aunt in Munich, a relative so disconnected from the child that she does not take time out to meet the girl when she arrives. This home that is supposed to be permanent and loving—the villa of a rich relative—is depicted as a different womb, restrictive and alarming. Rupprecht, however, finds cause for hope in the final shots of the episode, where the foster mother disobeys the court and travels back to Frankfurt with the child. Their return to utopia is not depicted in the film, nor is the child's living situation resolved permanently, but neither is the prospect of a permanent return to the shelter of the Frankfurt house completely destroyed.

The maternal connections in Uwe Johnson's tetralogy *Anniversaries: From the Life of Gesine Cresspahl* may be viewed as a less hopeful scenario, since the titular character is incapable of escaping her childhood. Rupprecht connects the depiction of Gesine's powerlessness to overcome her mother Lisbeth's neglect and suicide to Johnson's own youth as the son of a Nazi and his resulting "notorious sense of guilt for being German" (74). While the facts of Johnson's life may indeed have influenced the creation of his work, Rupprecht's discussion of *Anniversaries* does not depend solely on biographical resonances. Her treatment of Gesine's connection to water—a womb-like "source of comfort for Gesine"—echoes the more generalized sense of repressed guilt earlier mentioned in the analysis of *Yesterday Girl*. Shorelines blur in Gesine's sight to become the landscapes of her childhood, but although "she continually fantasizes about the Germany of her childhood ... Gesine does not romanticize the place she has lost" (72). A child of World War II whose mother violently ended her own life after witnessing the events of *Kristallnacht,* Gesine tries to sever connections to her mother and, by extension, to Nazi Germany. Her attempts are ultimately ineffective. In her description of Lisbeth's suicide, Rupprecht suggests that such guilt cannot be explained by mental illness or misguided sacrifice. By

staging a violent suicide in which she sets fire to the house after restraining herself, Lisbeth links her pathology to the violence which killed her neighbor's child. Rupprecht makes this connection clear by referring to Stuart S. Asch's object relations theory regarding apparent homicides which are actually suicides. She claims that Lisbeth imagines herself "executed" by the Nazi Germans of the pogrom, and thus conflates herself as a mother with those who led to her suicide. By using Asch's theory, Rupprecht shows that Lisbeth is an ambivalent symbol of the German past—although she is not Jewish, she makes herself a "victim" of the Nazis, usurping and competing with Jewish suffering while obsessing over Nazi actions. Her mental illness absolves her of full guilt while also serving as a vehicle to express guilt by association and highlight the impotence of Gesine's (and Johnson's) generation through its connection to German non-Jewish parents and its inability to act during the events of their childhood.

In contrast, Jean-Luc Godard's recreations of the womb, are fantasies of fertile innovation. In his films, pregnancy becomes a metaphor for the mechanical reproduction of life created by the camera. In *Breathless* and *A Woman is a Woman*, Godard's camera seems to penetrate private moments of self-assessment by Patricia and Angéla. For Rupprecht, the moment of evaluating one's stomach, looking for or staging signs of pregnancy, "highlights the uncertainty of the cinematic medium, where potentially everything can be shown, yet nothing may be 'true'" (81). In both of these movies, interiors become an echo of the womb, one which can be shown. Patricia's hotel room is claustrophobically small, but a place of shelter contrasted with the more open apartment which later serves as a site of betrayal when Patricia calls the police to turn in Michel. Angéla's job as a stripper includes a domesticated back room where the women are free from the sexualization of their profession and are presented simply as women and mothers. Her own apartment is seen as another site of performance, where she and her husband Emile appear "as if they were playing at being a married couple rather than really being one" (87). Rupprecht describes Godard's use of interiors as "one way for him to negotiate the perceived otherness of the female body," and in the case of *Hail Mary,* this negotiation includes "the fantasy of inhabiting this body by way of cinematic exploration" (87). A rewriting of the conception of Christ, this film associates the position of the director with that of the Divine Creator through its depiction of the pregnancy of the teenage Marie, as "the 'womb' itself becomes the place where technologically created images are generated" (89). Round objects and spotlights echo the roundness of Marie's belly as well as that of the

camera lens. In short, the fertility depicted in Godard's film is that of his own cinematic creations.

Rupprecht's in-depth examination of these texts provides a new viewpoint from which to analyze the postmodern. The choice to focus on the works of two filmmakers and two writers highlights the versatility of the womb as a symbol, while also demonstrating that it is not a phenomenon restricted to a single national literature. Rupprecht's use of theory and references to World War II are sound and provide a solid template against which other post-war "womb fantasies" may be examined. The bookends of the *Womb Chair* and *Virgin Mother* are also helpful in the sense that they encapsulate the decline in the prevalence of such fantasies. This text is valuable for scholars interested in gender studies, histories of embodiment, or postmodern literature and film studies.

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Mihaela Ursa. *Identitate şi excentricitate: Comparatismul românesc între specific local şi globalizare.* Bucureşti: Editura Muzeului Naţional al Literaturii Române, 2013. Pp. 270. ISBN: 9789731671956. *[Identity and Ex-Centricity: Romanian Comparativism between Local and Global]*

In her most recent book, the Romanian comparatist and theorist Mihaela Ursa (*Optzecismul şi promisiunile postmodernismului,* 1999; *Scriitopia: Ficţionalizarea subiectului auctorial în imaginarul teoretic*, 2005, 2010; *Erotticon: Tratat despre ficţiunea amoroasă,* 2012) offers a deep analysis—based on a comprehensive perspective—of the history of Romanian comparativism. This recent volume may easily be seen as the best and most comprehensive Romanian contribution to the global endeavor in redefining Comparative Literature in last few decades. It reviews specific responses and proposals from Romania to the eternal question: "What does Comparative Literature do?"

Mihaela Ursa (University Babeş-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca) insists that Romanian comparatists are still witnessing a legitimating discourse of the discipline, as the Romanian intellectual landscape confronts allegations that comparatists are marginal or "usurpers of dominance" over territories within other disciplines. Ursa rhetorically asks if there was a moment

when Romanian culture articulated the disciplinary aspects of Comparative Literature. She seeks an answer in the long and complex process of synchronization with Western definitions of Comparative Literature. The author claims that the link between Romanian comparativism and the philological and linguistic tradition is evident, as it is based on Romania's preoccupation with its national identity in the nineteenth century. National identity played a significant role in Romanian comparativism, not just in comparison with other nations, but also within the history of Romanian literature itself for the very reason that until, the end of twentieth century, it provided a "disciplinary meditation" on national identity seen as a condition for universality (Ursa 2013: 174). Romanian comparativism is guided by a schema summed up by Adrian Marino in the 1980s: to participate in the virtual universal literary network means to be simultaneously *specific*, *national*, *general*, in a word: *universal*. The whole history of Romanian Comparative Literature can be characterized as a constant negotiation between the *local* and the *universal.* For Ursa, "the transnational challenge" is "one of the most constant creative impulses in the discipline of Comparative Literature (overcoming national boundaries), as well as one of the most sensitive factors for the Romanian space" (Ursa 2013: 267).

Highly interested in confronting the various positions and influences marking the history of Romanian literature, Ursa gives attention—in Part II of her remarkable volume—to *the national criterion* in defining a Romanian theory and practice of Comparative Literature. This criterion is present throughout Romanian culture, revealing (for comparatists) the concerns and reflexes of comparative literary studies, as they were practiced since the end of the nineteenth century. But as far as Ursa views Comparative Literature mainly as a metadiscourse, a discipline with a pronounced self-consciousness, she directs special focus on literary studies from the postwar period. In the decades between 1990 and 2010, Ursa identifies two secondary criteria: one used in postcolonial studies, concerning "the *revelation of those identities previously censored* by imperial cultures" (local cultures, small groups, professional communities) and another dealing with the adherence to a "republic of letters" (Pascale Casanova's term), present in traditional (and transnational) studies, but with little interest in national culture. These two criteria are "subspecies of a main one, active even before 1990 in exceptional circumstances, which we identify as *the need for intermediality*" (Ursa 2013: 265). Of utmost importance is *the excentric repositioning*, which provides the new paradigm of contemporary

comparativism, specific to postcolonial and Central and East-European spaces, where the Western crisis of Comparative Literature is not present.

In defining Romanian comparativism in terms of identity, one may find very useful the titles the author uses for sections in chapter 4 (*Distinctive Signs*: *Philological Roots*, *Spontaneous Comparativism* (borrowed from Al. Dima), *Synchronicity*, and *Methodological Crisis* (as a dispute between formalism and contextualism). Here we find discussions on theory and method, polemic universalism vs. owned nationalism, national values, critical and anti-imitative encyclopedism, localism, and imagologic interest. A major theme of Ursa's volume, intermediality, is examined in chapter 5 (*Romanian Comparativism Today*), with topics ranging from themes of exile, mutation, traditional prejudice, cognitive anarchy, nostalgia, and translation. Of course, there are various ways of defining *intermediality*, as seen in its different conceptual frameworks. Dick Higgins, Peter Frank, and Marshall McLuhan refer to *intermedial fusion*; Joachim Paech, Karl Prümm, Irina O. Rajewsky, Freda Chapple, and Chiel Kattenbelt to *interart studies*; or George Landow and Jay David Bolter to *digital media.* The term as used by Ursa suggests the act of belonging to at least two different cultural media, delineated by linguistic traces.

In the same chapter, Ursa makes "intermediate considerations" on the comparativism of ex-centric repositioning: *intermediality* became important and relevant after the 1990s, it was applied to writings from exile, and appeared as "a favoring factor or consequence of living and acting *in-between*, or of the discomfort experienced in a fixed paradigm of thought and the inability to find a self-matrix" (Ursa 2013: 265).

Ursa maintains that an adjustment is required for the field of Comparative Literature, as a consequence of its divorce from the questions of national culture and identity as announced by Susan Bassnett yet she notes that these questions are still important for Romanian comparatists. Romanian Comparative Literature needs to adopt the principle of *re-use*, not of *negation* (Ursa 2013: 239). Future explorations of comparative literary studies should integrate literature in a complex assembly of discourses on knowledge or as alternative *praxis*, focusing on literature's pragmatic, therapeutic virtues and powers (with some degree of loss of aesthetic dimension). Ursa proposes an ex-centric repositioning of integrative comparativism, in order to examine literary texts with a specific understanding of fictionality—towards ethical values. She sees similarities with Cultural Studies of the 1990s and with nineteenth-century Comparative Litera-

ture in such a schema and possibilities for an interdisciplinary approach to concepts of knowledge, culture, nation and identity. Comparative Literature can then be seen to have two main targets on different levels: first, restoring a local tradition, in the greater context of the European tradition; second, shaping a paradigmatic profile of Romanian identity in terms of Otherness.

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Iain Bailey. *Samuel Beckett and the Bible.* London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. Pp. x + 200. ISBN: 97817809368888.

Nathan A. Scott, Jr., one of the "fathers" of the discipline of Arts, Literature, and Religion, provocatively evaluates, in *Craters of the Spirit,* the work of Samuel Beckett. For Scott, Beckett's writing explores the "complex motions of quest and exploration that are performed by the human spirit in a time when 'the absence of God moves about ... with the intimacy of a presence'" (23). Beckett shows us "how we live now," though he does not show us the further dimension of Scott's project, "how we ought to live" (23). For Scott, Beckett takes us to zero: a point at which "the despair and the defeat of man are so absolute as to be almost beyond the possibility of dramatization: it is a world in which the individual lives in those 'perilous zones ... dangerous, precarious, painful ... [where] the boredom of living is replaced by the suffering of being'" (176).

One element of this power in Beckett's *oeuvre* is, as Iain Bailey demonstrates in *Samuel Beckett and the Bible*, the way that Beckett deploys the Biblical text and the artifact of the Bible itself. Bailey concludes that the Bible occupies a "perverse position" (181) in Beckett's work, "familiar to the point of indifference, so generically significant as to be trivial, and at the same time subject to a splintering and diversification of authority that is characteristic both of Beckett's writing ... and of the historical moment in which he concluded his career" (181). Bailey chooses a variety of texts in order to demonstrate the ease with which Beckett uses the Bible, but also the complicated way that use is situated. It is, to use Scott's language (as well as that of Claude Lévi-Strauss), a zero: a baseline or space holder that is charged by what we put there, a site for interrogating the situated-ness of modern life.

Bailey points out that, in Beckett's Protestant Irish background, the Bible was part of an ideology of education and family, and Beckett both heard and read it in those contexts. In addition, Beckett owned (and annotated) Bibles in multiple languages (38), including the Martin and Louis Segond translation of the Bible into French, which he used in his French plays. He also annotated his *Comprehensive Teacher's Bible*. This Bible, edited by Samuel Bagster (who also published the English Hexapla, a study Bible that places six translations of the English Bible, including the Catholic Douay-Rheims, side-by-side), contains basic introductions to Greek and Latin and a concordance and an atlas.

Beckett, therefore, has more than a simple facility with the text. Bailey contends that Beckett is not just using the Biblical text as authority, but also examining the Bible as "writing, documentation, and the product of complex procedures of redaction and translation" (7). Beckett is not just quoting the Bible, in an unexamined way, but, at zero, (re)writing the Bible, working with the notion of its unity in the face of textual and sociohistorical repetitions and discontinuities. Beckett is not just glossing the content of the Bible, but also is interrogating, mimicking, and rewriting its style. Along with thinking about the Bible as "writing," Beckett also thinks about the Bible as "writing down" (65–66) as documentation, and as site of negotiation between the text and the world.

To examine this claim, Bailey deftly reads across Beckett's works—poetry, novels, and plays and also letters—looking at, for example, the importance of the Biblical trope of "voice" in *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable* and the function of the "little child" in *All That Falls,* writing childhood as receptivity and impressionability to dominant culture (90). Bailey argues that these tropes are not just Biblical inter-text but also attempts to work through the manner in which feeling—the affective plays a strong role in Bailey's analysis—involves a complex set of relations between text and social production. He wishes to show how the Biblical text "circulates," so to speak, in history, culture, and human experience. The Bible, then, is sometimes aphoristic, sometimes generic, and sometimes profound, but always "at play" in Beckett's process.

There is much rich analysis in this book, using postmodern categories of memory, archive, and intertextuality, to re-evaluate Beckett's work. I was particularly taken with Bailey's chapter on Beckett and blasphemy. The chapter is a complex one. It invokes T.S. Eliot's contrasting orthodoxy and begins (again) with *All That Falls*'s critical reception, but in relation to Beckett's witness in the libel trial of *Sinclair v. Gogarty* and to Ireland's

regulations of blasphemy that led to *More Pricks than Kicks* being banned. In the latter, Beckett as outsider—"from Paris"—makes his offense the importation of a "foreign" element, one that has to be blasphemous, into culture. The deft orchestration of all these pieces demonstrates the critical acumen of the author.

Samuel Beckett and the Bible is beautifully researched, working back through the major analytical works on and biographies of Beckett, but it is original in its approach. It is one of a number of works on Beckett in the "Historicizing Modernism" series, that seeks to reread Modernism in light of Postmodernism and other theoretical fields. This work is very solid, helpful for the first-time reader of Beckett's work who needs to look at the existing critical apparatus, but also for the more advanced reader, as the work positions Beckett as the transitional and oddly representative figure of the emergent postmodern, in which, to Scott, the metanarrative, like the Bible, moves about in absence but also in presence.

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Jean Bessière. *Inactualité et originalité de la littérature française contemporaine: 1970–2013.* Paris: Honoré Champion, 2014. Pp. 231. ISBN: 9782745327468.

Il faut lire le nouvel essai de Jean Bessière, *Inactualité et originalité de la littérature française contemporaine: 1970–2013,* suivant un renvoi à deux de ses ouvrages les plus récents. Explicite, le premier renvoi caractérise la présente étude comme une reprise, une explicitation et une amplification des thèses posées dans *Qu'est-il arrivé aux écrivains français? D'Alain Robbe-Grillet à Jonathan Littell* (2006). Implicite, le second renvoi corrige, à partir de là, des conclusions qu'on aurait pu, qu'on a pu tirer à la lecture du *Roman contemporain ou la problématicité du monde* (2010).

Pour éclairer ce double renvoi, il suffit d'exposer la thèse centrale de l'ouvrage et les implications qu'elle dispose. Pour Jean Bessière, il convient en effet de lire la littérature française contemporaine—entendue ici dans un sens large, qui n'exclut certainement pas la littérature antillaise, voire les littératures francophones—selon un paradoxe: une telle littérature peut se dire à la fois inactuelle et actuelle. Le paradoxe se comprend si l'on reconnaît que cette actualité et cette inactualité ne relèvent pas des mêmes parts

de cette littérature, qui est donc le siège d'une dualité. La majorité de l'essai vise alors à particulariser les deux termes de cette dualité.

La part inactuelle de la littérature française contemporaine se définit par un attachement à la tradition du nouveau, héritée des avant-gardes de l'entre-deux-guerres. Un tel attachement la rend paradoxalement aveugle à l'actualité, en l'amenant à jouer d'une symbolique qui est sans pertinence pour l'approche de la société liquide. Il en résulte ainsi une réflexivité inachevée de cette littérature: celle-ci se confond avec un mimétisme social de son contexte liquide, qui, par son défaut critique, ne l'autorise pas à traiter du contemporain. Imitant la société sans référents, elle s'enferme dans un jeu sur la littérature puissance—la littérature a un pouvoir de nomination si grand qu'il devient indifférent—ou sur la dédéfinition—la littérature n'a pas de définition propre et, à ce titre, elle ne peut être son propre référent. Ces notations expliquent le paradoxe qui fonde la majorité de la littérature et de sa critique dans le domaine français: en elle-même, la littérature justifie bien des entreprises littéraires et bien des discours à leur sujet, même si personne—ni écrivains, ni critiques—ne peut précisément dire ce qu'elle est—l'exercice littéraire devient alors un jeu de nomination sans cesse repris, qui confine à la pure tautologie.

Contre cet aveuglement au présent, la part actuelle de la littérature française—ici caractérisée comme la littérature fantastique et policière, la littérature de science-fiction, de la shoah, de la colonisation, des identités sexuelles et du genre—essaie justement de répondre du contemporain, en dehors de cette symbolique sans pertinence que répète avec inintelligence son pendant inactuel. Elle réussit dans son entreprise critique suivant une triple réforme des représentations usuelles du temps, du réel et du sujet. Elle figure le temps précisément selon la désignation d'un nouveau départ dans le temps; elle dit le réel selon une identification de celui-ci à la réduction des possibles; elle dessine le sujet selon le *dissensus* social comme condition d'instauration de l'individu. Par cette triple réforme, la part actuelle de la littérature française permet ainsi un dépassement des jeux tautologiques de son *alter ego* inactuel et une pensée critique adaptée de l'exercice littéraire dans le monde contemporain.

Cette double caractérisation doit s'interpréter comme le renvoi explicite à *Qu'est-il arrivé aux écrivains française? D'Alain Robbe-Grillet à Jonathan Littell,* puisqu'elle précise la dualité déjà pointée par cet essai plus ancien. Une telle caractérisation ouvre cependant, dans *Inactualité et originalité de la littérature français contemporaine,* à une leçon originale, qui engage une relecture du *Roman contemporain ou la problématicité du monde.* De cet

ouvrage de 2010, on aurait en effet pu conclure que seule la part actuelle de la littérature française contemporaine—spécialement les littératures antillaise et francophone—faisait sens dans une appréhension at large de la littérature d'aujourd'hui." La nouvelle étude de Jean Bessière corrige une telle déduction, en donnant la littérature française dans sa dualité comme un outil d'analyse du contexte mondial de la littérature et de sa critique.

Une telle dualité, qui fait la spécificité de la littérature française aujourd'hui, la tient à l'écart des paradigmes dominants de la critique littéraire internationale que sont le postmoderne et le postcolonial. Ainsi, ces paradigmes impliquent un traitement de l'actualité, qui ne s'accorde pas avec ceux de la littérature française. De cette irréductibilité, il découle une possibilité de réifier ces deux notions depuis cette même littérature française: il y a réification du postmoderne car il se confond avec une vision arrêtée du temps; il y a réification du postcolonial car il relève d'un usage non discriminant de la référence au pouvoir. Plus fondamentalement, la dualité de la littérature française porte encore un enseignement au sujet de ces deux notions qui supposent la légitimité d'époques historiques établies. En effet, en montrant que les seuils de l'histoire sont construits par les hommes, qu'ils ne sont pas *a priori,* les deux parts de la littérature française signalent précisément l'impossibilité de considérer des époques historiques qui dessineraient impersonnellement leur propre ensemble. Il convient d'identifier là une relativisation ultime du postmoderne et du postcolonial. À ce stade, la littérature française d'aujourd'hui, telle qu'elle est étudiée par Jean Bessière, devient une leçon critique pour une réinterprétation de la littérature contemporaine et de son étude en contexte global.

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Maurizia Boscagli. *Stuff Theory: Everyday Objects, Radical Materialism.* New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. Pp. 280. ISBN: 9781623562687.

Contemporary culture has passed through several "turns" in recent decades: the linguistic turn, the visual, spatial, performative, bio-cultural and so on. One of the newest, and certainly one of the most effective and radical of these is the material turn, derived from complex philosophical thought and focused on diverse political and social issues. Boscagli's book offers a

valuable contribution to this field, especially from the perspective of literature, cinema and aesthetics (specifically "technoaesthetics"), and with regard to key concepts such as objects, fetishes, and garbage.

Boscagli's starting point is the following definition of "stuff": "matter whose plasticity, its transformative potential, comes into being, inextricably, with the human" (2). We are dealing here with the liminality between human and non-human that is at the core of queer theory and several other critical approaches. Stuff is a composite entity: an assemblage of form, flow and vision that characterizes objects in their cultural context, transforming them into "quasi-subjects and quasi-objects," as in Bruno Latour's pivotal concept, which here plays a central role. The philosophical genealogy behind this approach is an alternative materialism that goes back to Epicurus and Lucretius, passes through Spinoza, Bergson, and Deleuze (among others) and arrives at Donna Haraway's cyborg theory. By defining a new, hybrid vision of materiality, stuff's vitalism and deterritorialized nomadism challenge the mainstream culture of objects and commodities.

The structure of the book intentionally avoids a systematic and taxonomic approach, instead reflecting Haraway's "diffractive reading," a multidirectional and heterogeneous method of comparison aimed at disrupting linear temporality and fixed causality. The inevitable first step is a profound confrontation with Walter Benjamin's theory of fetishism, less teleological and determinist than those of Marx and Freud, and therefore more vital in contemporary visual culture. Boscagli stresses especially "the flip-flop reversibility of material and immaterial, agency and passivity," and the pre-Oedipal, libidinal porosity between subject and object. The gender perspective is brilliantly used to read Baudelaire's *À une passante* as a fetishistic male fantasy about the power of the gaze, leading to a second chapter focused on the intersection between fetishism and fashion, and especially on women's transgressive use of clothes. The main point here is a synesthetic, somatic, almost carnal quality of fetishism, which goes against the pervasive abstraction of materiality produced by spectacle and image (the obvious reference here is Guy Debord). An in- depth comparison between the Nausicaa episode in Joyce's *Ulysses* and Elfride Jelinek's novel *The Piano Teacher* (1983, *Die Klavierspielerin*) develops those issues, showing interesting connections between two "post-imperial" texts dealing with key concepts such as ornamentality and sadomasochism (the discussion of female masochism, however, should be updated and more extensive).

After this complex comparative analysis, the book returns to theory, choosing an extremely dense, almost mythical historical context, Paris

1968, and especially three theorists, Barthes, Baudrillard and Debord. Boscagli reads their different approaches to key films and novels: Jacques Tati's satire of the increasingly pervasive system of rationalized space in *Playtime*; Georges Perec's resistance against the standardization of life in *Les Choses*; and Bertolucci's reflection on utopia and transgressive sexuality in *The Dreamers*. Boscagli presents his most profound insights in this section of the book, as in the following parallelism she draws between symbolic elements and critical categories:

> The sheets of glass that are everywhere and often invisible in this film [*Playtime*] are the brilliant exemplars of the abstraction of the material real which Barthes had railed against as mythology, Baudrillard has described as the hyperreal, and Debord called the spectacle. Glass in the film is also the equivalent of the Barthesian "myth", the Baudrillardian simulation, and the Situationist spectacle. (158)

Finally, Boscagli takes up two contrasting yet complementary categories, individual and collective memory, discovering a new tactile relationship to remembered reality in two canonical writers of memory, Woolf and Proust. The author parallels their attack on a teleological vision of history to Peter Greenaway's action-text-opera *One Hundred Objects to Represent the World,* a response to NASA's decision to select a specific number of significant objects as representative of human life, a work that questions the principles of mimesis and monumental memorialization. The amnesiac presentism of our age, in fact, is nothing but the flipside of commercial memorializing. The other conclusive category in Boscagli's book is garbage: the wild, protean, viscous side of stuff, particularly apt for understanding liquid modernity. After the junkification of art produced by modernist avant-gardes, now our age presents an aesthetization of junk: Rem Kohlaas's concept of junkspace, Sam Mendes's film *American Beauty,* Italo Calvino's essay on garbage *La Poubelle agréée,* and Agnes Varda's documentary *The Gleaners and I* (*Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse*; 2000), each of which offer a different and equally stimulating perspective on waste and marginality to investigate materiality as a historical process, and to propose a new awareness of the sensuousness of matter and its utopian potential.

Since this book seeks to apply the material turn to literary and aesthetic realms, it could have offered richer textual analysis: as it is, the reader can feel overwhelmed by theory (all the most important theories on objects and fetishes are deeply exploited, from Billy Brown to Taussig; one might add only Hartmut Böhme's extraordinary research on fetishism). Nevertheless, Boscagli's book is a precious, fascinating and exhilarating reflection

on objects, fetishes, and commodities from modernism to our age; it offers a very valuable example of a new materialism.

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Birgit Däwes and Marc Maufort, eds. *Enacting Nature: Ecocritical Perspectives on Indigenous Performance.* Brussels: PIE Peter Lang, 2014. Pp. 254. ISBN: 9782875741462.

Birgit Däwes's and Marc Maufort's *Enacting Nature*: *Ecocritical Perspectives on Indigenous Performance,* the first scholarly text of its kind to explore comparatively "the interconnections between ecocritical methodologies and Indigenous theatre, drama and performance," arrives at an exciting time for Indigenous Theatre and Performance Studies (13). Within the past decade or so, there has been a surge of creative productivity by Indigenous artists in the United States, Canada, and Oceania. Indigenous practitioners have transformed traditionally Western theatrical constructs into culturally sensitive, culturally specific modes of sharing that challenge the Western theatrical playing field. Performances infused with significant worldviews have renewed these communities across the globe and serve as a reminder of their continued existence in a chaotic and ambiguous world.

The anthology is divided into two sections, with the first section addressing Indigenous works in North America. Birgit Däwes's "Stages of Resilience: Heteroholistic Environments in Plays by Marie Clements and Yvette Nolan" opens the anthology with an insightful reading of Clements's *The Edward Curtis Project* and Nolan's *The Unplugging*. Däwes examines these works through her notion of "heteroholistic cultural ecology," which she believes gives scholars the ability to engage with Indigenous ecocritical perspectives from a broader, less reductionistic perspective—one that counters fallaciously ascribed "eco-friendly" stereotypes and allows the complexity of Indigenous worldviews and the "interrelationship between culture and natural processes" to take central focus (15). Däwes nicely weaves key epistemological concepts throughout her discussion, establishing a lens through which she is able to consider Indigenous worldviews and to understand their bearing on Indigenous ecocritical perspectives. A similar lens is developed in Ric Knowles's essay "Mounds, Earthworks, Side Show Freaks and Circus Injuns," in which the themes of environmental-

ism and its interconnectivity are examined within Indigenous dramaturgical perspectives. Knowles posits that earth mounds perfectly exemplify the symbiotic relationship between Indigenous cultures and the environment and can be read as performative sites that epitomize how Indigenous peoples live in harmony with the natural world. The construction of earth mounds and their strategic placement upon the land are "writing systems" emblazoned with rich and vibrant cultural information that, Knowles argues, continue "to perform" and "embody" Indigenous peoples "across time" (25). Knowles also describes how the processes of mound building have dramaturgically informed the "deep structure" utilized by LeAnne Howe, Monique Mojica, Michael Greyeyes, and himself in the construction of *Side Show Freaks and Circus Injuns*. Knowles's essay is followed by Jaye T. Darby's "'Civilization' and its Transgressions of the Old Shawnee Trail: Lynn Riggs's *Out of Dust*," which explores Western and Indigenous cultural perceptions of ecology and environmentalism alongside the destruction of local landscapes by overzealous ranchers intent on taming the land. Darby differentiates between Western and Indigenous conceptions of the environment: Westerners view their environment as something to be exploited and conquered while Indigenous peoples do not (61). Darby supplements her careful reading of Riggs's text with rich dramaturgical and historical information.

Maryann Henck, like Darby, also compares Indigenous relationships to the land to Western practices in "'alterNature' in Drew Hayden Taylor's *The Berlin Blues*: Constructions and De(con)structions of Contested Spaces." Henck approaches Taylor's text from the vantage point of Dwight Conquergood's "Moral Mapping of Performative Stances Towards the Other" and ecotourism. This essay nicely follows the many ecocritical perspectives expressed in other essays collected here and extends them into the realm of cultural tourism. Like the land in *Out of Dust*, Indigenous cultural identity in *The Berlin Blues* is coopted by Westerners keen on "observing" and "honoring" "Ecological Indians" by exploiting their traditional and sacred practices for profit, which, Henck states, "overrides cultural and environmental issues" for the sake of business and industry.

Yvette Nolan develops the theme of identity loss in her essay "The Collapse of Worlds in Laura Shamas's *Chasing Honey*," by tackling such issues, as deracination and transculturation. Nolan explores how the lost relationship with lands and the forced assimilation into mainstream society has slowly made Indigenous people drift away from their communities, much like honeybees have disappeared from their colonies. Nolan's essay

perfectly expresses how Indigenous peoples are intertwined with the environment and is an excellent example of what ensues when such closely-knit relationships are knocked off balance. Similar ideas of fragile equilibrium are explored in Nicholle Dragone's investigation of Eric Gansworth's *Re-Creation Story* in "Eric Gansworth: Dramatizing the Ecology of Haudenosaunee Creation." Dragone examines here the metatheatrical aspects of Gansworth's drama and the ecology of Haudenosaunee creation myth and storytelling, particularly its notion of balance as being a constant process of re-creation. The final essay in this section, Ginny Ratsoy's "Voicing Nature in the British Columbia Interior: A Place 'Back in the Midst of Time' in Kevin Loring's *Where the Blood Mixes*," investigates the natural and the spiritual through notions of ecojustice and ecospirituality in a play that blends natural and supranatural worlds together with the lived realities of Indigenous communities torn apart by historical injustices.

Ecospirituality and the notion of healing is further explored in the second section of the book, which focuses on Indigenous works from Oceania. Maryrose Casey's essay "Serving the Living Land: Place and Belonging in Australian Aboriginal Dramas," analyzes the spiritual role of the land in Wesley Enoch's *The Story of the Miracles at Cookie's Table* and *Black Medea* and David Milroy's *Windmill Boy*. As we saw in Jaye Darby's essay, Casey also explains how non-indigenous notions of land and environment clash with Australian aboriginals, who regard the land as a living entity and who are obliged to respect and protect it, as it was a gift entrusted to them by the "creator spirits" (163). While the majority of essays thus far have focused on Indigenous dramas, Rachael Swain's contribution, "Dance, History and Country: An Uneasy Ecology in Australia," focuses on dance performances in Neminuwarlin's *Fire, Fire, Burning Bright* and Marrugeku's *Crying Baby*. Swain applies a "socio-topographic" context to her case studies, which she explores through the notion of historic and mythic time and its relationship to "country"—an Aboriginal English term that denotes "an area of land formations and at times stories which a group or individual may have custodianship over" (166). As in Ric Knowles's essay, Swain's dramaturgical discussion of *Crying Baby* shows how the methodology of "deep mapping" is used to construct the performance.

In "'Je te parle d'harmonie entre les plantes:' Ecologies of New Caledonian Nationhood in Pierre Gope's *La Parenthèse*," Diana Looser examines Gope's use of botanical metaphors and plants as an ecocritical framework through which the playwright addresses historical Kanak and French civil conflicts. Gope's botanic allegories stress how "the natural environment

forms a reflexive basis for the play," which reminds "audiences of the deep, reciprocal, and fragile associations between land, culture, and identity" (181). Lisa Warrington and David O'Donnell examine notions of authenticity and theatricality in "Unfolding the Cloth: Patterns of Landscape and Identity in The Conch's *Masi.*" They also examine how theatrical language is utilized in this intercultural project. Masi, a piece of cloth made from the bark of a mulberry tree, "symbolizes the land and the natural world" and becomes a central character in the production (204). Warrington and O'Donnell explore the fusion of European illusion and magic with Fijian storytelling and dance, unpacking the New Zealand-based theater company's attempt to carve-out a "third space" wherein an intercultural encounter with the environment can take place. Hilary Halba's contribution, "Cleansing the Tapu: Nature, Landscape and Transformation in Three Works by Māori Playwrights," examines the notion of *mauri* and *tapu*, two cultural concepts explaining the life-force of the non-human world and Māori religious superstitions restrictions. Halba chooses Witi Ihimaera's *Woman Far Walking* as well as Briar Grace-Smith's film, *The Strength of Water*, and her theatrical production of *When Sun and Moon Collide* as her case studies. She investigates how the supranatural and natural intertwine in the Māori world. Marc Maufort concludes the volume with a cross-comparative analysis of works from North America and Oceania in "Performing the Spirit of Earth: Multi-faceted Aesthetics of Ecology in Contemporary Indigenous Drama." He examines transcultural aesthetic characteristics of ecojustice and ecospirituality in the works of Tomson Highway, Andrea James, and Hone Kouka, wherein water plays a crucial role in establishing an Indigenous conception of place and belonging.

Each of the essays collected here engages Indigenous ecocritical perspectives with respect. Yet those written by Indigenous scholars are written from a place of knowing that non-indigenous scholars struggle at times to comprehend. This struggle is evident in the application of theoretical paradigms through which non-indigenous scholars attempt to make sense of Indigenous ecocritical perspectives. Some readers might find this theoretical focus troubling. For instance, the notion of hybridity seems to undermine Indigenous peoples' capabilities to create performances of cultural significance, derived from their own culturally specific place / space of knowing. Similarly, continuing to confine Indigenous dramas to strict "postcolonial" discussions seems to diminish Indigenous cultural production. Considering that the majority of Indigenous peoples continue to experience the effects of colonization on a daily basis, applying "post" to colo-

nialism should be exercised with extreme caution, since hegemonic powers have yet to reasonably reconcile Indigenous concerns ensuing from deracination and transculturation, nor have they made the process of (forced) habituation particularly rewarding for Indigenous peoples.

Objections aside, readers unfamiliar with Ecocriticism or Indigenous Studies will find much value in this survey of the field. However, readers might also find a flaw in the brevity of some of the articles included in this volume and wish to engage with specific case studies more fully. The sheer number of voices included here hinders many discussions from being fully developed. While students and scholars of both sub-disciplines will find this anthology a valuable sourcebook, specialists in one field or the other will find some of the essays more groundbreaking than others, especially those that explore and support indigenous ways of knowing more fully as compared to those that rehash tropes from Western theory or apply terms from unrelated literary scholarship that are less useful than they might, at first glance, appear. Still, Däwes's and Maufort's compilation provides rich readings on Indigenous dramas and illuminates their significance to the field of Ecocriticism.

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Wiebke Denecke. *Classical World Literatures. Sino-Japanese and Greco-Roman Comparisons.* Oxford: Oxford University Press 2014. Pp. 368. ISBN: 9780199971848.

What is a classical literary age and what is (a) classic? The questions have been discussed among scholars, mainly in Europe, for many decades, and have engendered debate in every country claiming a literary classical age (regardless of its moniker): from Italy to Spain, France, and Germany. That the entire national literature of a certain epoch can in itself be classical is yet another problem. Also, the question "What is World Literature?" has been asked since Goethe created (or, more precisely: shaped) the term, but the debate was kindled recently during the rise of and in response to postcolonial theory. World Literature may be an explosive term in this context. World Literatures, however, suggest two concurrent foci: the very relevance and exemplary character for a large cultural sphere and a limitation to this cultural region. The concept of "classicism" is, in this sense, to be seen both

as completely independent from any aesthetic models based on the practice of ancient Mediterranean European cultures, and illustrative of a literary continuum developing over centuries for a continent or a world region.

In light of such concerns, the author presents (in eight chapters and an epilogue) a study which can with full justification be called an example of real and serious comparatism, undertaking a confrontation beyond the borders of large cultural spheres (as Earl Miner did in his comparison of Eastern and Western poetologies), i.e. "Sino-Japanese and Greco-Roman comparisons." The basis of such a venture is a priori the absence of synchrony, or vice versa, the thesis of the non-simultaneity of the simultaneous. However one wishes to divide the eras of world history up to the present age, it does not make sense to impose the turning point of the Christian era on Asian kingdoms, dynasties or literary periods. In short, this book supports its rich documentation of diverse literary events and episodes by quoting dates, but the hypotheses of the volume make exact chronology somehow irrelevant.

Despite all linguistic, ethnic, historical, and political divisions, Sino-Japanese and Greco-Roman cultures are each understood as large units, but are also combined as dyads of an"older reference culture plus a younger receiving/ transforming culture." The first chapter questions the comparability of the two regions. The common denominators are in both cases the social, political and economic conditions accounting for the rise of cultures in which literature plays a decisive role. This chapter, therefore, deals with the formation of centers of advanced civilisation, the emergence of literacy, the development of instances of power, etc. In the second chapter, the author does not simply tell the early history of literature and rhetoric in these two linguistic regions, but also inquires how a historiography can, in fact, be written, especially in the case of very early oral literatures in East and West. In the third chapter, the author outlines two parallel longitudinal sections of European and Asian literary history, focusing on the emergence of an average aesthetic ideal position (i.e. a "classicism"). In Greco-Roman and Sino-Japanese literatures, historical lines are traced showing how texts gradually received their aesthetic value (or surplus), how they were able to maintain a balance over time, and how they moved into decline. The fourth chapter deals with foundational myths in literature, comparing e.g. the narrative reconstruction of how the Roman Empire (in Virgil's *Aeneid*) and the Japanese political system (attributed to Prince Shōtoku) were established. The author then draws parallels between the Roman Empire and Japan as respective latecomers. In the extensive fifth chapter, Denecke

shows how the role of both Rome and Kyoto as capital cities led to the development of literary practices, poetical forms, and negotiability of gender roles. The shorter sixth chapter compares classic authors in exile in these two cultural spheres: the paradigmatic Japanese writer Sugawara no Michizane and the most famous exiled poet of European antiquity, Ovid. But the possible comparisons between Europe and Asia go further: the scholarly cultures also produced similar forms of discourse and similar practices. Here the author discovers that the (dis)advantages of learning and rhetoric have similar parallels in European late antiquity and "medieval" Japan.

All these points of comparison between the histories of communication technology, style, speech, writing, the concentration of power, myths, and authorial roles examined in this volume are motivated by a fundamental interest for parallels. If one accepts the hypotheses of earlier historians such as Vico regarding the underlying foundations of comparatism, namely that empires and cultures develop in respective cycles, the construction or reconstruction of historical analogies and correlations remains one of the most appealing challenges for a form of Comparative Literature that goes beyond preaching the obvious and exposing materially plausible, although hidden, intertextual references. In other words, the juxtaposition of the data of world history and significant performative events in the arts, has always exerted as a form of a synchronopsis a subtle appeal to readers and is often evoked today in terms of the popular "material turn." It works equally well as a dynamic between East and West.

This volume also offers surprises in its exposing of the somewhat shifted parallels between similar phenomena, and the reciprocal "ignorance" of each other's "classicisms" and "Asianisms." The historical and methodological roots of Comparative Literature as a discipline can be found in positivism, where demonstrable relationships prevail, or, as the author might put it, where positive data emanate from a certain easy or even idle way of thinking. This book advocates the opposite course, but not within the counter-paradigm known from the history of literary influences as the so-called "typological similarity." It rather seeks to uncover analogies based on "deep comparison." In particular, this volume draws comparisons at a level far below explicit cultural contacts and therefore much closer to categories such as "humanity" or "the world." But the author's project requires a permanent awareness of gaps, incommensurabilities, and seeming equivalents, which is why the book claims the catachresis as "the master trope of deep comparison" (300). With its numerous original Greek, Latin, Chinese and Japanese quotes, translated into English, with its vast

bibliography, its most useful index, this volume is a paragon of learning and a masterpiece of transcultural literary history.

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Massimo Fusillo. *L'object-fétiche: littérature, cinéma, visualité.* Trans. Veronic Algeri and Angelo Pavia. Paris: Champion, 2014. Pp. 239. ISBN: 9782745326218.

L'object-fétiche: littérature, cinéma, visualité, Massimo Fusillo's most recent book, appeared in the original Italian in 2012 under the title *Feticci: Letteratura, cinema, arti visive*. This book offers a compilation of essays dealing with fetishes, or "fetish-objects" as the French translation calls them, in literature, film, and art. It presents a series of mini-case studies across multiple genres and literary, cinematic, and artistic periods, from the ekphrasis of Achilles's shield, Dorian Grey's picture, Pamuk's museum, to pop art and "commodity sculpture." Fusillo provides many insights about the given period and artistic movements connecting them with various types of fetishes. The study also shows the complexity of fetishism in the modern context, the significance of which should not be reduced to mere obsession. The book itself is like Pamuk's museum: it exhibits objects that have a mystical significance or are endowed with magical qualities.

The author introduces his subject by expressing the need for an exploration of the fetish. Indeed, he states in the preface that he is concerned with everyday objects that "ont toujours été relégués à l'arrière-plan, et qui aujourd'hui, à l'époque où leur diffusion dans le quotidien augmente de manière vertigineuse, sont devenus des thèmes de philosophie et d'anthropologie" (7). Fusillo defines a fetish, or at least the fetish-objects with which he will be concerned, as items carrying a symbolic, affective, or emotional quality. The author then discusses the different functions of the object as fetish in the modernist tradition, in the wake of colonial interactions with Africa and across various media, singling out at least seven distinct but closely related functions. The centrality and the role of objects in film are easily delineated, since cinema is an art "où la valorisation fétichiste du detail a une valeur fondamentale; on pourrait dire structurelle" (123). However, the book's strength can be found in Fusillo's examination

of the role objects play in literary works, and the connections he draws between the various media.

Though the primary object of this review is not a critique of the translation, it is worth noting that the translator's rendition of the title points to a key premise of the volume. While the original Italian title simply has "feticci," Algeri and Pavia choose to translate it as "l'object-fétich," or the "fetish-object," instead of perhaps "Fetish" or "Fetishes." This choice is justified, if not explained, by the author in the introduction, where Fusillo comments on the vast and varied role objects play. To limit his study, Fusillo proposes to explore the intersection between object and fetish. The French translation of the title and the subsequent uses of this keyword throughout the translated text thus reaffirms the status of the fetish as an object and its commodification in modern society as reflected by art and literature.

The first chapter is titled "L'objet de séduction." It is concerned with objects that seduce by their beauty and splendor. Like Achilles's shield in the *Iliad*, these objects are not commonplace or ordinary; they often have a contextual, mystical, or historical significance, at least in the classical tradition. The narrator often interrupts the flow of the narrative to talk about these objects. Sometimes they can trigger action or have a direct bearing on the narrative, as in the case of the Golden Fleece. The poetic potential of the object is often evoked in classical sources.

Another kind of fetish-object is related to memory. The category examined in the second chapter includes objects that reactivate memory by standing in for something else or bringing something back to conscious memory. These fetishes become the objects of obsessions and perhaps fulfill an erotic need. Examples of such fetish-objects are abundant in Romantic literature, specifically in the novel. At least two models present themselves: the Dickensian model, which is more social and realistic, and the individualistic and lyrical Goethian model. Chapter 2 also discusses one of the most obvious examples of such fetish-objects outside of literature (and sometimes in it, as seen in the work of W. G. Sebald): photography. The author enters into a lengthy discussion of Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence* which combines various different types of memorial objects, often tied to loss. Indeed, Fusillo states that "*Le musée de l'innocence* est peut-être le roman qui donne avec le plus de netteté une place centrale au thème de l'objet-fétiche mémoriel, — de son début à sa fin, avec une systématicité impressionante. L'objet pour Pamuk est toujours investi de valeurs affec-

tives, émotionnelles, symboliques : il sert à évoquer des souvenirs, à soigner des traumatismes de perte, à remplacer la personne aimée" (80).

The third category of fetish objects involves the supernatural, magical, and inanimate objects that become animate. Fusillo sums up the argument of the third chapter with a discussion of the work of Tony Oursler, a visual artist who primarily uses the medium of video in his installations. The projection of his videos onto objects, rather than onto a flat surface, brings the objects to life and creates a fantasy landscape. Fusillo is interested in the videos which show distorted and dismembered body parts, especially facial features, which appear in Oursler's work to be animated. These installations express, according to our author, a deep-rooted and ancestral anxiety (113).

Next are the mythopoeic objects, objects endowed with powers to create or drive the world of the narrative. The fourth chapter discusses items such as a cigar holder, which evokes for Emma Bovary entire scenarios and lets loose her imagination (119, 129). Such objects possess mythopoeic and creative powers and thus lead nicely into Fusillo's fifth category: the theatrical. This type of fetish, highly dramatized and stylized, brings together the different types of fetish-objects discussed in the book and ties them together. The fetish, regardless of its specific role in a narrative, has a performative function that is complex and expansive; the chapter deals with ritual, film, and sexual practices in sadomasochism and BDSM, where the object and/or sexual fetish plays a central part in performance. From James Joyce to camp, the author provides a vision of the object as stylized fetish within the performance of a scene. Fusillo explores the Freudian view that certain objects can come to stand for something that is lost, as in the case of the young boy who discovers that his mother does not have a phallus.

The study then comes to Modernism, and what the author calls "the otherness of matter." Modernism looks at objects in a new way. As opposed to classical literature which was concerned with objects having a certain mystical or historical importance, it values even the most commonplace of objects. Modernism gives importance and assigns mystical powers to ordinary, everyday items. There is a certain idealist anxiety that modernist authors have about being able to speak or write the true essence of an object with mere language. There also appears to be a relationship between objects, language, and memory in Modernism. Examples of this relationship can be found in *À la recherche du temps perdu,* where Proust's narrator describes the old plates from his childhood and the memories of his family that they hold, and in *Solid Objects* by Virginia Woolf, where the narrator

describes a lump of glass and begins to imagine a history and origin story around it. Here the object once again takes on a mythopoeic dimension, much like Emma's cigar holder. "La banalité de l'objet est transfigurée" (172).

Even though the author offers no conclusion as such to his study, the final category appears to synthesize the other functions of the fetish-object examined in these pages. The fetish-object becomes an "icon" through the accumulation of experiences, emotions, and even physical wear. It becomes particularly problematic in the culture of mass-production and mass-consumption, where objects are produced in enormous quantities and infinitely replicable. Why is an autographed item, which might be part of a series of thousands of replicas, priceless? It instantly gains value because of all its counterparts, for it is the only one that can tell a story. What does pop art created by artists like Andy Warhol achieve, if not incongruously exhibit a mundane object in order to make the viewer aware of its banality? In other words, history and memory are what transform the object into a fetish, and render it consequently priceless.

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Michael Mack. *Philosophy & Literature in Times of Crisis: Challenging our Infatuation with Numbers.* New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2014. Pp. 234. ISBN: 9781623566494.

Michael Mack's *Philosophy & Literature in Times of Crisis* is an ambitious book and it does not hesitate to state its ambitions. Its ringing opening sentence tells us that "This work is a study in ethics, literature, economics and medicine" (1) while on the next page we hear that "the book sheds new light on how bio-politics introduces forms of pseudo-scientific certainty into ethics, economics and medicine. In this context, it offers the first analytical account of the as yet ignored pseudo-theological underpinnings of some dubious contemporary economic and medical practices" (2). Such statements, in combination with the chapter headings in the book's table of contents—"What is it about Numbers?"; "Playing the Numbers: Ethics and Economics"; "Medicine and the Limits of Numbers," make one sit upright and take notice, as do the various bold claims that we encounter in Mack's introductory chapter. We are told of "the medical prioritization of longevity

over pain" (3), of how "*ethics and other fields of human behaviour have by now been reduced to prices, to a set of numbers, to statistics*" (9)—Mack has a fondness for italics—that "[d]ue to its subjective nature, contemporary medicine only reluctantly engages with pain and other affects" (11), that the "economist paradigm has by now become homogenous to the point that even human rights organizations perform their work along the lines of the economic principles of calculation" (13), and that the "combination of ethical and economic procedures" that presumably will be unmasked serves the interests of social homogeneity while branding those who do not conform as social, sexual, moral and pecuniary outcasts" (14). I could go on, but the import of these and other similar claims will be clear: we have allowed a calculating and essentially amoral neo-liberal capitalism to take over, or at least infiltrate, practically all sectors of contemporary society. And the cost has been great: "our contemporary neoliberal society bears an eerie resemblance with the brutal economic practices prevalent at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (175).

From Mack's perspective, the rise of neo-liberalism has been a disastrous development, spreading a cold, calculating, profit-driven mentality that only recognizes one truth, that of the so-called free market, an essentialist position that Mack prefers to see in theological terms: "*Market economy reason turns into a secular theology at the point where it denies its position as a point of view*" (18; here and elsewhere Mack suggests that metaphysical or essentialist views are disguised theology). Or perhaps it is more correct to say that for Mack capitalism *per se* has been a moral disaster, why else would he agree that serial killers are "a product of capitalist modernity, not least because of the machine-like non-personal character of their undertakings" (185).

It's not difficult to sympathize with Mack's critique of neo-liberalism, but it's far less easy to accept his far-reaching assertions. Is hunger as widespread in "contemporary neo-liberal society" as it was around 1900, is there a similar lack of access to education, to health care, for large parts of the population? Mack does not back up such claims. In spite of the chapter headings that I mentioned earlier, *Literature & Philosophy in Times of Crisis* provides no numbers, no facts or figures. In fact, the study of ethics, economics and medicine that is announced in the book's opening sentence never materializes. There is no real analysis of contemporary ethics, no discussion of (often conflicting) economic views (or the economic schools that propagate them), not one single medical, or medico-ethical dilemma (such as, say, the question whether congenitally deaf parents who come

in for IVF treatment should have their wish to have a deaf child granted through embryo selection). Mack's real target is not ethics, economics or medicine, even if his book claims to "bring to light *how science, technology and ethics have increasingly become synonyms for economics*" (16). It could not very well be, because earlier he has told us that he includes philosophy and "advances of knowledge in the natural as well as social sciences" in his usage of the term "literature" and for Mack literature is our best hope, an antidote to the poison of neo-liberalism. Modern science, which accepts that its research results can only be provisional, always waiting to be falsified, belongs for Mack to the creative forces that resist the homogenization imposed on us by neo-liberal market principles, as does philosophy, including ethics. So what *is*—to allow myself some italics too—Mack's target? The answer emerges most clearly in his discussion of the way "medicine" is presented in the novel *Seven Types of Ambiguity* by the Australian writer Elliot Perlman. Although it's never said in so many words, let alone illustrated with actual examples, the real enemy is the neo-liberal managerial class that holds the health care purse strings, distorts ethics to justify its policies, and picks and chooses from scientific findings to pursue its own agenda. This does, by the way, raise a not uninteresting question. One can see why doctors would want to prolong a patient's life—it's what they do and it's usually what their patients want, too. Which is not to say that they routinely prioritize "longevity over the alleviation of pain" (3) as Mack has it. But why would a calculating managerial class that exclusively thinks in terms of profit and loss insist on the prolongation of life? The last phase of a patient's life is more often than not very expensive and it's hard to see how the economy benefits from the extra months or even years that a senior citizen who does not contribute to the economy might live.

For Mack, literature resists the homogenization that a neo-liberal managerial class has tried to force down contemporary society's throat: "*Literature focuses on the ethical negotiation between ideas and the messiness of their performance in the embodied and thus affect-ridden context that shapes our actual lives*" (73). Taking his cue from the ethics of Baruch Spinoza, Mack argues that literature, through its ethical awareness, "helps us *discover objectivity not in opposition to subjectivity, but as itself saturated with a plurality of subjective positions*" (7). It is Spinoza's "post-humanist humanism" (53) that most effectively marshals literature's resources against the homogenizing pressure of a neo-liberalism that is not counteracted but in fact supported by traditional humanism, with its belief in the autonomy and self-fashioning powers of the individual—a belief that has played right

into the hands of capitalism. (Not surprisingly, given Mack's insistence on literature's ethical force, we find him downplaying Edward Said's indictment of literature as "a consolidator of empire" [39]).

Mack tries to illustrate literature's ethical awareness and insistence on the subjective and the particular, its championing of heterogeneity, through a wide variety of texts, ranging from *Hamlet* to the poetry of Sylvia Plath, Bernard Malamud's *The Fixer*, E.L. Doctorow's *The Waterworks*, Philip Roth's *Nemesis* and novels by Elliot Perlman. Not surprisingly, he finds what he is seeking. He stands, after all, in a long line of critics who have looked for such things in literary texts and have invariably found them. It's not obvious that Spinoza's post-humanist humanism or any of the more recent contributions to the supposedly new ethics Mack champions—those of Judith Butler, for instance—make a difference here. If anything, Mack's readings of his texts are guided by his deep aversion to neo-liberalism. That aversion is certainly not unreasonable, but it is also a liability. Mack's propensity to find what he is seeking can, at times, prove worrisome. Let me offer a couple of examples. Quoting from Sylvia's Plath's diaries—"I wrote eight poems in the last eight days, long poems, lyrical poems, and thunderous poems breaking open my real experience of life in the last five years: life which has been shut up, untouchable, in a rococo crystal cage, not to be touched"—Mack asks, "What is that which is not to be touched?" and, ignoring alternative interpretations, immediately provides the answer: "It is what society has put under taboo. Taboo concerns that which is dangerous, which is untouchable for certain groups of people, especially women" (121–22). In a comment on a passage from *The Trial* we find a similar jump to unwarranted conclusions. Kafka describes the curious posture of a judge: "The unusual thing about it was that this judge was not sitting in tranquil dignity but was pressing his left arm hard against the back and the side of the chair and had his right arm completely free and just held the other arm of the chair with his hand as if his intention was to spring up at the next moment with a violent and perhaps outraged gesture to utter something decisive or even pronounce judgment." For Mack this intriguing description means only one thing: "Ethics, justice and violence become indistinct," he tells us. "We see the judge in action as a violent and highly biased man" (130–31). Kafka's "as if" is simply ignored and what is possibly an "intention" is turned into actual action.

For this reader, *Philosophy & Literature in Times of Crisis* does not live up to its promise. It never becomes a 'study" of ethics, economics or medicine, exclusively relying for its very serious indictments on (a very narrow

selection of) secondary sources. Its discussions of literary texts fail to demonstrate that Spinoza's post-humanist humanism can add anything new to contemporary critical practice and its view of the role of literature is ambiguous. We are told that "contrary to received opinion, representation and interpretation do not lie at the heart of literature" (178), but then hear that Perlman's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* "represents contemporary Australia" (180), and that the novel "presents specific narratives that represent the social consequences of a seemingly virtual economy" (180). What is more, Doctorow's *The Waterworks* and Perlman's novel are seen as offering crucial insights into the workings of the world they describe: "In *The Waterworks* the high demand for Dr. Sartorius's ruthless work towards producing eternal life shows how *the culture that medicine inhabits is capable of pushing it towards a foreswearing of the Hippocratic Oath*" (156). Novels apparently represent the real world to the point that the fictional world they present us with may be taken as hard evidence.

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Lynn T. Ramey. *Black Legacies: Race and the European Middle Ages.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014. Pp. 192. ISBN: 9780813060071.

Delightfully engaging and meticulously researched, *Black Legacies* is representative of a form of scholarly engagement oft ignored in preference to the currently dominant academic discourses within the study of the Humanities and the Social Sciences today. What strikes the reader most about the nature of Ramey's scholarship in this book is the keen attention to history and historiography. It is truly in every sense of the term an *essai* in understanding the historical processes that constitute the understanding of the category of race in European discourse. Tracing a historical and textual trajectory of medieval understandings and perceptions of race, Ramey's study focuses on intercultural interactions between the Christian and Muslim worlds in the "European Middle Ages" and race as a category that defined these cultural exchanges. Inspired by representations of the "Saracen" in medieval French literature, the author interrogates views of the "foreign Other" in cultural discourses of the present day. It is important to emphasize, as the

author does, that this exploration into the past, though informed by present day theorizations of alterity, is not determined by them.

In six chapters the author provides a clear exposition of how the issues of race and skin color gradually begin to define the European Christian encounter with the "Saracen" Other. Chapter 1 begins by examining the field of nineteenth-century Western medieval scholarship. Exploring the rising din of national consciousness in Europe and America, the author focuses on the recovery and recasting of the Middle Ages within these patriotic discourses. Ramey articulates the lack of attention paid to scientific (or pseudo-scientific) discussions of race that emerge at this time. Focusing on works of Washington Irving, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Georges Cuvier and Arthur de Gobineau, Ramey defines nineteenth-century racial attitudes as running parallel to nationalist discourses and their recasting of the Middle Ages. Chapter 2 then explores the categories of race and skin color in the European Middle Ages. The author articulates the crucial difference between race and racism that must at all times be emphasized in considering any history of race, drawing the reader's attention to the dangers of conflating the two categories. The biblical notion of racial difference was not absent from the Middle Ages. However, the author does not appear to accept the projection of modern theorizations of racism on to an understanding of race in the Middle Ages. Chapter 3 examines race and skin color in the Bible, exploring the familiar narratives of the curse of Ham, the Queen of Sheba, and Abraham's Ethiopian wife. Well aware of the centrality of these narratives to modern race theory, the author explores their reception provides present-day theorizations on race. Chapter 4 is a fuller exploration of an issue touched upon in the previous chapter-the anxieties of miscegenation. Medieval understanding of reproduction was largely influenced by the views held by the ancients such as Aristotle and Hippocrates. These notions are then applied to the understanding of mutations in skin color arising from miscegenation. The author follows the literary representations of these ideas as they appear in medieval romances such as *The King of Tars*, the *Fille du comte de Pontieu*, the *Chanson de Roland*, *Parzival*, the *Beuve de Hantone*, Chaucer's *Man of Laws Tale* and the *Chanson de Guillaume*. The author suggests a possible originary moment for race consciousness in these literary representations of race and gender depicting the interaction between Christian and Saracen worlds. One observes in these narratives a gradual association of skin color with religion, virtue or goodness. These literary representations, as the author points out, represent anxieties of miscegenation between the Christian and the

Saracen, rather than the reality of interactions between the two worlds. Chapter Five traces possible lines of continuity between these medieval notions of race and skin color and the encounters with alterity in the Age of Exploration. Looking westward to new lands and resources, sixteenth-century European explorers met the new world informed by ancient and medieval travel accounts. The fantasy of casting alterity in the role of monstrosity appeared not only in travel narratives by also in literary works such as the *Tier Livre* and *The Tempest*. The author traces this idea of the "monstrous races" in medieval times to the Pliny's "entertaining accounts" in his *Natural History*. The classification of beings and things in the medieval period was borrowed from the classical notion of the Great Chain of Being that was in turn, passed down to subsequent generations. The author argues that this classification, along with Pliny's categorization of the races, would go on to inform the questioning of the status of these races as human in Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*. Adding to Pliny's schematic, Augustine articulates a Christian concern by interrogating the place of monstrous races within God's plans for mankind. If they were indeed descended from Adam or Noah's stock, they could in principle be Christianized. This point coupled with the later notion of rational thinking as a test of humanity, would become central to any discourse of encounters with alterity and the humanness of the Other. Chapter 6 brings the discussion to present times and the various modern receptions of medieval notions of race. It is important to emphasize that the author focuses on present-day recastings of the Middle Ages in narratives of various media- especially cinema and other visual media, such as Butler's *King Richard and The Crusaders* (1954), Cassenti's *The Song of Roland* (1978), Reynolds's *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991) and Junger's *Black Knight* (2001). These recastings of the medieval in modern times, as in Cassenti's *Chanson de Roland*, attempt to rewrite medieval history in an effort to make these stories relevant today. The "notable absence" of Muslims in Cassenti's retelling of the old epic poem reflects, as the author explains, the impulse of most modern medievalism to project present-day societal and political concerns back onto the past.

Stating that Cassenti's work was in all likelihood influenced by the work of his compatriot Fanon and informed by his own political proclivities, the author concludes on an open-ended note:

> The beginning and the end turn in upon themselves—the present was and still is understood through the past—so medieval ideas of difference from

> those of our present, and our present notions refashion our understanding of medieval ones. (125)

While stating this inevitability, the author also very carefully avoids any romanticized vision of the medieval past. The book very clearly shies away from the extremes of imposing an idyllic absence of race consciousness on the Middle Ages or seeking validation for present-day race theory and consciousness in medieval precedents. It is this clarity that the reader finds refreshing in Ramey's scholarship. *Black Legacies* stands apart from other recent scholarly works that, borrowing from the legacies of Foucauldian discourse analysis, follow in the vein of Said's critique of Orientalism. The author makes her intention very clear in the Introduction: she seeks to move toward an understanding of race in the European Middle Ages and amply delivers on her promise to do so. The focus of the book is very precise and specific in dealing with the Christian encounter with Saracen alterity in the context of medieval Europe. This is an important scholarly work for students in both the Humanities and the Social Sciences for it presents an alternative history to the understanding of race and race consciousness not only in medieval Europe but also in present times.

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Walter L. Reed. *Romantic Literature in Light of Bakhtin.* New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. Pp. 192. ISBN: 9781623563462.

Mikhail Bakhtin rose to prominence in post-Stalinist Russia due to his sustained critique of a hierarchical, centripetal ordering of the world where all authority is vested in a singular hegemonic ideology suppressing dissent. In the course of the last half century, as forces of decolonisation and democratisation gained momentum across the world, Bakhtin's ideas have gained greater currency and there have been a regular stream of books interpreting Bakhtin from new perspectives and applying his ideas to new fields of experience. The present volume is a welcome addition to this growing body of scholarship.

Walter Reed, who has published extensively on Bakhtin's work during the last two decades, has chosen to evaluate some of the major texts of British Romanticism from the perspective Bakhtin's ideas. He notes in his Preface: "The main concern of the present book is to provide an energetic

Bakhtinian illumination of the general structures and particular textures of Romantic literature" (xiii). He has conceived the book not as an application of Bakhtin's theories on Romantic texts but as a "conversation between two sets of 'works' or 'activities' that share common intellectual and linguistic ground even as they stand apart from one another" (xiv). The author traces the trajectory of reevaluations of Romanticism from René Wellek to Paul de Man, to contextualize his own reading with reference to Bakhtin. That Bakhtin allows us to grasp opposed ideas about Romanticism not as contradictory alternatives, but as complementary ones, is a point that warrants greater illustration.

In the opening chapter, the elaborate schematic plan the author provides regarding the "Romantic Architectonic of Otherness" does not break any new ground. Romantic temper or its visionary aesthetics cannot be reduced to an inventory of textual traits. Inherent in Romanticism are various tendencies that contradict each other. There is very little that binds poets like Blake, Browning, Wordsworth, and Keats even with reference to their treatment of nature or their allegiance to the concept of imagination, two of the overriding concerns of Romantic poetry. For this reason the author's formulation of the vital presence of otherness in Romanticism is productive only to a limited extent, as demonstrated by his readings of *Kubla Khan* and "The Tyger." It is debatable whether the readings of these two particular poems offer any novel insights. Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* has to be read as a sequence and to isolate two of the poems, "Lamb" and "The Tyger" in order to comment on their monologic or dialogic orientation makes little sense. The poet's imagination conceives of the metaphors of the sequence in a recurring frame of concentric orbits where images speak to each other and create an intertextual field of mutuality.

In the second chapter, "Personalism: Reckoning Voices," Reed focuses on the personalism of meaning. Bakhtin's comment, "Meaning is personalistic: in meaning, there is always question, address, and the anticipation of an answer, in meaning there are always two subjects (as a minimum for dialogue)" is taken as the starting point to explore the dialogic nature of a series of Romantic poems and narratives. The author sees the pervasive tendency in Romanticism to personify or address phenomena or concepts as evidence of this personalism of meaning. He shows how Blake's Milton in the poem, *Milton,* becomes a self-transcending hero, by "redeeming and reclaiming a number of other previously abjected possibilities of personhood" (45). Blake's famous remark that "without contraries, (there) is no progression" allows the author to develop this argument further. Reed also

discusses at length the literary representation of "doubling" in Romantic literature. In Wordsworth, Coleridge, Goethe, Melville, Dostoevsky and a number of other authors, we have the creative artist as a divided person becoming aware of the schism within. The discussion of Jane Austen's novels in this context is not very convincing. *Frankenstein* provides several possible points to discuss the question of otherness. Reed is correct in concluding that, "Within the divided otherness of the Romantic person, authorized as well as authorizing, the idea that a personality is potentially a creator or re-creator of the other selves while at the same time, potentially the creation or creature of others becomes deeply rooted in Western culture" (53).

In the third and final core chapter titled "Chronotopes: Coordinating Representative Genres," the author takes up the question of genres in the Romantic literature. This chapter shows greater coherence of argument and illustration because of the focus on "the chronotope" that runs through the essay. Reed notes that in the great theoretical debates of the last quarter of the twentieth century, issues regarding the generic realities of literature have been for the most part neglected. In the last two decades, however, there has been greater emphasis on the issues of the genres used in the Romantic period. The ode, the ballad, the literary fragment, autobiography, Gothic novel and historic novel have been discussed in various recent books. They have focused on two of Bakhtin's insights regarding genres—that genres cannot be understood in isolation and that a genre always belongs to a system of genres or poetics. Genres are always in flux, as their value and validity are constantly and essentially contested. In fact, Bakhtin's concept of "chronotope" which signifies "a formal matrix of representations of time and space that underlies both literary genre and sociopolitical awareness," embodies this changing time-space relation within it.

The Romantic period was essentially known for its lyric poetry. Reed argues that, along with the new emphasis on the psychological inwardness of lyric poetry, there was also the contrasting strategy of novelizing in this era. He maintains:

> We should note that there are novels that enact the lyricizing turn inward upon the person—the mind and moods of the individual in his or her relations with a world of other individuals and the material objects—as well as poems that enact the novelizing turn outward toward the people—toward the public, the nation, a regional population, or a social class. (90)

The author then demonstrates the relevance of Bakhtin's genre theory by using his essay "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" to analyze various forms of first person singular narratives such as confessions,

autobiographies, and autobiographical essays. Using Bakhtin's framework, Reed distinguishes the confession from the autobiography, the ode from the hymn and song. Wordswoth's *The Prelude* and De Quicey's *Confessions* provide useful illustrations here. All the well-known odes by Keats and Shelley feature in the close readings in this section. The Gothic novel, the *Bildungsroman,* the domestic novel and the historical novel also figure in the lengthy exploration of Romantic prose genres in the last section of this chapter. Obviously, these discussions benefit from the author's long academic experience in the classroom. However, his inability (or refusal) to move beyond the limits set by the teaching experience diminishes the scholarly value of the essay as a whole, as particularly evinced in Reed's reading of London as a chronotope in well-known Romantic poems.

The author is able to demonstrate the continued relevance of Bakhtin's ideas for evaluating aesthetic experience from a coherent framework through close reading, an art and a skill that have moral implications in an era of the decreasing attention span. In the process, he has also succeeded in breathing new life into some stereotypes of Romantic literature as subjective, reflective and idealistic. By focusing on the aesthetic experience, Reed brings home the fact that Bakhtin's conceptual categories such as polyphony, dialogue, heteroglossia, carnival, novelisation, outsidedness, etc. always put human beings at center stage with all their contradictions and conflicts.

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Yang Huilin. *China, Christianity, and the Question of Culture.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014. Pp. 272. ISBN: 9781481300186.

This book by Yang Huilin will especially interest scholars of East-West relations who focus on religion and translation theory. Theologians, specialists in Religious Studies, and literary scholars, will find in it insights into long-standing discussions of core differences between the cultures generalized as the "West" and China, that of the conceptual world of Christianity and Chinese philosophies and religions. In fact, this book treats a variety of attempts to communicate Christian thought to Chinese audiences, ranging from various seeming successes that nonetheless must be considered

mistranslations grounded in loan concepts already known in Chinese culture through Buddhism or in Christian translators' simple struggle to express themselves accurately in Chinese. Divided into three thematically related parts, this volume offers more than a mere study of various mistranslations of the Bible, however, for it delves also into the (im)possibility of actual communication itself as theorized by numerous thinkers, theologians, philosophers, and literary theorists in Asia and Europe.

Part 1 (Christianity and Chinese Culture) covers such topics as the effects of choosing English or Chinese as the language of instruction at Christian universities in China, the interpretation of Christianity against the background of Chinese culture via extant Buddhist concepts used in Chinese language, and Christian ethics in the Chinese language. One example that offers insight into this section involves two Chinese universities at which a conflict arose over the language of instruction. At the one university, Chinese was adopted; at the other, English. Ironically, the students at both universities protested, however, each insisting that the other language would have been the better choice. The choice was a difficult one, for some missionaries felt that English was a language of Christian morality and ethics, while other missionaries believed that teaching in Chinese would allow them both to convey Christian concepts and also to keep their Chinese students away from many secular ideas presented in English-language literature.

Part 2 (Theology and the Humanities) presents an in-depth consideration of the intersection between theology and various approaches in the humanities, including literary theory and Marxism, generally, and Slavoj Žižek's "Theology" and ideas of Heidegger and Derrida in China, more specifically. Literary theorists are well aware of the link between their disciplines' interpretive methods and Biblical exegesis, but one chapter in this book digs deeper into this relationship in an examination of theological hermeneutics as a method for determining meaning. This chapter focuses especially on the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), which extended the practices of exegesis into the broader realm of general interpretation. Schleiermacher's ideas fed into and even shaped German Romanticism, moving away from theological meaning toward a shared feeling of beauty, which Yang Huilin calls "theological hermeneutics" based on Schleiermacher's usage of the concept of "piety" primarily as a specific feeling that allows one to shrug off the limitations of language without forsaking the idea of fixed meaning.

Finally, Part 3 (Scriptural Reasoning) examines various case studies in which hermeneutics underscore the connectedness of biblical exegesis and literary study. Like all of the chapters in the previous sections, this section discusses the ideas of many Western thinkers, but it places something of a focus on James Legge (1814–1897) of the London Missionary Society who worked for thirty years at the Anglo-Chinese College of Hong Kong and then later became the first Professor of Chinese at the University of Oxford. Yang Huilin notes the close relationship between religion and poetry that has been part of Chinese thought since ancient times, exemplarized by various collections of poems written by Buddhist monks throughout the ages. Among Legge's various achievements are his translations of both the Christian Bible into Chinese and also the Chinese classics into English. Legge believed that an understanding of the Chinese classics was necessary not only to understand the Chinese people but also to communicate Christian concepts to them effectively. In considering the ideas in the *Tao Te Ching* (Daodejing), for instance, Legge found a marked correspondence between Christian notions of knowing God and the concept of *Tao*.

China, Christianity, and the Question of Culture contains a wealth of insights into the understanding of Western theology, philosophy, and literary theory in China. It is largely an easy read but sometimes it evinces a playfulness with language that invites interpretive leaps of the kind it seems to make its very object of study. Such moments will likely spur further debate. Chapter 5 ("The Contemporary Significance of Theological Ethics: The True Problems Elicited by Auschwitz and the Cultural Revolution") falls into this category and may strike some scholars as problematic. Thus, it deserves at least brief consideration here.

Scholars of the Holocaust have long discussed the comparability of the Holocaust to other cases of genocide—Alan S. Rosenbaum's (ed.) well-known collection of essays *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide* (1996) is a case in point—but the title of the above-mentioned chapter suggests at the very least something of a misnomer, since the chapter focuses on the question of forgiveness and compassion in the world after Auschwitz and the Cultural Revolution in China (1966–1976). The chapter views these tragedies through the lens of a scholarly paper by Didier Pollefeyt ("Ethics, Forgiveness and the Unforgivable after Auschwitz" in *Incredible Forgiveness: Christian Ethics between Fanaticism and Reconciliation*, ed. Pollefeyt [Leuven, Peeters, 2004]. 121–59), which discusses forgiveness of evil in terms of three differing interpretations of evil.

The chapter remains vague about who seeks forgiveness and from whom and on what terms exactly, although Christian terms seem to be implied. Few will question the claim that both Auschwitz and the Cultural Revolution in China are associated with mass suffering, of course, but the chapter's subtitle also suggests that it has discovered the "true problems" behind the atrocities and their aftereffects, problems with which scholars continue to grapple and some even think can never be explained adequately. Ultimately, the chapter proposes a focus on pursuing responsibility, rather than forgiveness, as a means by which to emphasize theological ethics, but what exactly such pursuit implies about ethics and the two cases treated here remains rather vague.

Despite this critique, Yang Huilin's book makes thought-provoking points about challenges in communicating effectively across cultures. Certainly, most will appreciate its in-depth consideration of how successful communication between the various cultures of the "West" and China has long rested on the work of scholars trying to understand China on China's terms in order to communicate Western ideas in ways that are meaningful to the Chinese. As the book's preface by David Lyle Jeffrey (Baylor University) notes, Christian missionaries in China have long been associated primarily with imperialism, but this book pushes beyond this image, seeking a more positive impact that missionaries had in China. In this regard, the book opens up the scholarly discussion on interactions between East and West that scholars in various disciplines will find worth considering.

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Théocharoula Niftanidou. *Georges Perec et Nikos-Gabriel Pentzikis: une poétique du minimal.* Avec une préface de Dimitris Angelatos. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004. Pp. 284. ISBN: 2747559009.

Bien que sa date de publication soit aujourd'hui un peu ancienne, cet ouvrage mérite encore l'attention pour deux raisons. *Première raison*: Les études précises des rapports entre la littérature grecque moderne et les autres littératures ne sont pas fréquentes—à tout le moins hors de Grèce. *Seconde raison*: l'interrogation qui justifie le rapprochement de Georges Perec et de Nikos-Gabriel Pentzikis porte sur l'hypothèse d'une littérature

minimaliste ou plus précisément d'une poétique minimaliste, à la manière dont on a parlé d'une peinture minimaliste. Cette interrogation ne s'est jamais véritablement imposée dans la critique littéraire.

Cette interrogation est cependant inévitable—c'est là l'origine de l'argumentation de Théocharoula Niftanidou—si l'on considère que, dans les années 1960-1990, prévalent la recherche d'un objectivisme littéraire et les esthétiques de l'écriture. Quelles que soient ses variantes, l'objectivisme tend à ramener toute description littéraire à des données précisément minimales—au point ultime de la combinaison de l'objectivisme et du minimalisme, on vient à la seule caractérisation sémantique de l'objet de la description. Les esthétiques de l'écriture tendent à priver celle-ci de toute implication qui la passe. L'écriture devient son propre objet, sa propre limite, quelles que soient les variations et les étendues que l'on prête à l'écriture. Ces deux pratiques littéraires—objectivisme et écriture—qui, dans leurs principes, n'étaient pas destinées à s'allier, se réunissent sous le signe du minimalisme. Perec et Pentzikis illustrent cette alliance—il convient de noter que cette commune illustration implique que l'on ne tienne pas compte du fait que Pentzikis commence à écrire dans les années 1930 et que la perspective de la poétique comparée l'emporte dans l'ouvrage sur la perspective historique.

Ce sont donc là les premiers constats et les premières justifications de l'interrogation qui commande cet ouvrage. Il est un autre point important que Théocharoula Niftanidou retient. Cet objectivisme et ce minimalisme n'interdisent pas que les œuvres soient complexes. Il suffit de citer *La Vie Mode d'emploi de Perec,* mais aussi son *Penser/Classer* qui enseigne: le minimalisme n'est pas dissociable d'un jeu cognitif qui exclut toute simplicité. Il suffit encore de rappeler *Notes de Cent jours* de Pentzikis: le minimalisme atteint une manière d'impossibilité et, en conséquence, une complexité lorsqu'il entreprend de décrire un homme dont on ne sait pas comment l'appeler—suivant les termes mêmes de l'écrivain. L'argumentation de Théocharoula Niftanidou est, sur ces points, précise: les restrictions qu'imposent l'objectivisme et le minimalisme conduisent à faire de l'œuvre qu'ils caractérisent une œuvre interrogatrice de ses propres objets et d'elle-même, une œuvre qui fait du minimalisme une manière de monde. Une poétique du minimal est, en conséquence, une poétique d'implications maximales et de questionnement des limites qu'elle impose à l'œuvre et aux objets que celle-ci se donne. Le minimalisme est ainsi, en lui-même, un paradoxe. Celui-ci, selon une forte suggestion de l'auteur, se lit à côté de ou contre les paradoxes de l'objectvisme,

de l'écriture ; il est leur dépassement et leur interrogation, en même temps qu'en termes d'histoire littéraire, il est leur continuation et leur réforme.

C'est pourquoi l'ouvrage de Niftanidou, ouvrage de poétique comparée, décrit, à travers ses caractérisations de la poétique du minimal, l'archéologie de cette poétique ainsi que ses arrière-plans anthropologiques. L'ensemble s'organise en quatre parties qui chacune traite du minimal même, de ses antécédents, et de ses données anthropologiques: minimal et objet, minimal et sujet, minimal et textualité, la question de l'ordre. Que cette question de l'ordre, manifeste chez les deux écrivains étudiés, serve de conclusion est significatif: la poétique et l'esthétique du minimal sont moins la question de leur définition, de leur finalité, de leurs effets, que celle de l'intention implicite et du constructivisme qu'elles portent—un constructivisme qu'il faudrait dire lui-même minimal. Ce type de conclusion suggère enfin que la poétique du minimal—aussi bien le minimal de l'œuvre que celui de toute réalité, l'infra-ordinaire, disait Pérec, cela à quoi on ne sait pas donner un nom, disait Pentzikis—fait revenir aux interrogations initiales de toute poétique, l'interrogation sur le faire qui va réaliser une œuvre. La poétique du minimal enseigne alors: cette interrogation commence avec la pauvreté ontologique du réel, avec la faiblesse de toute entreprise et de toute pensée—il faudrait citer le *pensiero debole* de la philosophie italienne contemporaine.

Tels sont les arguments que propose cet ouvrage. Celui-ci n'est pas une double monographie—sur Perec, sur Pentzikis—mais une réflexion systématique de poétique à partir de l'un et de l'autre. Cette réflexion invite à ses propres prolongements. Bien que l'ouvrage ne soit pas un ouvrage d'histoire littéraire, il permet de dessiner, à cause du décalage chronologique entre Pentzikis et Perec, les antécédents du minimalisme littéraire contemporain. Il permet encore de s'interroger sur les arrière-plans culturels de ce développement du minimalisme. Il invite enfin à entreprendre une histoire comparée des minimalismes littéraires en Occident durant le seconde moitié du XXième siècle, à discriminer, de manière fonctionnelle, minimalisme de la prose (ce à quoi s'intéresse Théocharoula Niftanidou) et minimalisme de la poésie, et à reconsidérer toute la philosophie linguistique (le mot et la chose, pour parler comme Michel Foucault) qui est à l'arrière-plan aussi bien de l'objectivisme que de l'esthétique de l'écriture

Le lecteur de ces lignes doit se convaincre, comme nous l'avons fait nous-même, de l'attention qu'il convient de porter encore à cet ouvrage.

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Dorothy M. Figueira. *Aryans, Jews, Brahmins: Theorizing Authority through Myths of Identity.* New Delhi: Navayana, 2015. Pp. 205. ISBN: 9788189059712.

In *Aryans, Jews, Brahmins: Theorizing Authority through Myths of Identity,* Dorothy M. Figueira examines the construction of the Aryan myth of racial superiority that was embraced by both European and Indian thinkers. Such a study is an ambitious project in the field of Comparative Literature. The author shows how both the West and the East claimed a common heritage in the Aryans, represented as an evolved and superior race, in order to create a national imaginary of a celebrated and shared historical past. The book is a timely reissue of an American edition (SUNY Press, 2002) launched by the Navayana publishing house, a press that, according to its website, publishes "on the issue of caste from an anticaste perspective."[1] The work, uncannily reflects on significantly contemporary issues, especially with respect to the current political debates in mainstream Indian society and the polemic of *Hindutva* that is being touted today in Indian politics as the only discourse worth preserving from our nation's imagined past. The Preface to this Indian edition examines the very timeliness of its reissue today in India. It details the production, dissemination, and containment of the Aryan myth by European and Indian intellectuals. This volume focuses on how this myth was structured to reveal a past based on (mis)readings of Sanskrit canonical sources.

The book is divided into two sections, arranged in chapters with subheadings and a conclusion to each chapter, summarizing the argument and linking it to the next chapter. Figueira provides a detailed introduction and afterword, exhaustive notes, and bibliography. The first section, "The Authority of an Absent Text," examines the construction of the Aryan myth in Europe and the discourse that surrounded it from the Enlightenment to the Romantic period, moving on to Nietzsche and twentieth-century European thinkers. It details the works of intellectuals such as Voltaire, Max Müller, Gobineau, Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Alfred Rosenberg. In the work of Nietzsche, the Aryan utopian past involved the creation of the *Übermensch* as "the goal of human striving" (56) of a rank-based system of social formation or order. The European Aryan had to escape the fate meted out to the Indian Aryan and avoid their moral and physical degradation. Towards this end, European racialist thinkers turned to Indian Brahminical texts such as the *Vedas*, *Shastras*, *Upanishads,* and the *Laws of Manu*. India could be looked upon as the ancient place of

wisdom. Such a construction allowed Europeans to challenge the Church and distance themselves from their supposed Hebraic heritage. This dynamic was initially codified in the Enlightenment and subsequently developed. It was believed that the real heritage of Europe rested with the Aryans, thus not only challenging, but ultimately eliminating the role of the Jews from Christian history. Max Müller, who as an Indologist studied the *Vedas,* presented Hinduism as a religion that branched off from its Aryan lineage and became corrupted over time. Müller's work proved crucial in portraying the Aryans as key actors in shaping the history of Europe and, in the tradition of Voltaire, Müller's views further devalued the role of the Jews in history. Tracing similar arguments in the works of Enlightenment and Romantic writers and thinkers who noticed the similarities between Sanskrit and other languages such as Greek, Latin, Persian, and German, Figueira discusses how the various discourses of philosophy, anthropology, and historiography developed theories that supported a vision of Aryan racial, moral, and cultural superiority, an *imaginaire* in which "the Aryan was solidly identified with everything good" (67). In her conclusion to this section, the author shows how European intellectuals deliberately carved out this myth of Aryan racial superiority for the consumption in the West. She shows how they based it on loose arguments and far-fetched linguistic phantasms.

Section Two, "Who Speaks for the Subaltern?", is a quip on, and a tangential answer to Gayatri Spivak's question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", which in the field of South Asian historiography is a primary concern for Subaltern Studies intellectuals in the postcolonial framework. In this section, the first three chapters primarily focus on the work of Indian reformers such as Raja Rammohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Justice Ranade, Lokamanya Tilak, and Swami Vivekananda. These figures wielded considerable authority under colonialism and codified an interpretation of Brahmin elitist identity through their study of scripture. They were instrumental in various crosscultural currents that envisaged religious reform. Figueira shows how through the manipulation of the Aryan myth, the Indian Brahminical intelligentsia found a means of aligning themselves with their colonial masters by claiming a common European heritage. The loss of Aryan manhood under contemporary Hinduism had made colonialism possible. In response, Indian reformers stressed the importance of caste and claimed to fight for women's rights in order to recover this lost Aryan manhood, inscribing (as Figueira notes) identity onto the Indian female body. The last chapter from this section shows how the creation of

a nation's mythic past was not a homogenous activity. Among subaltern populations, one finds dissenting views of the Aryan age. There were other reformers, notably Jotirad Phule and B.R. Ambedkar, who realized this glorification of the Aryan past was exclusionary and worked towards the empowerment of only a few sections of society, namely the Brahminical elite. Phule's equally mythic alternative to the Aryan past in his depiction of the reign of King Bali and Ambedkar's challenge to canonical Brahminical texts, subverted the Aryan myth to expose caste-based discrimination and show how the depiction of the Aryan was detrimental for any future reform movements, a point that the author suggests still holds true today. These various constructions of the Aryan myth, either depicting a utopian past or a debauched race, became aspirational for Indian intellectuals, functioning for the Brahminical intelligentsia as a means of explaining a desirable past. For Phule and Ambedkar, the Aryan myth was unmasked as exclusionary and promoted segregation. It needed to be overturned.

Both sections of the book show how the European and Indian intellectuals relied heavily on their reading of Sanskrit canonical sources in order to legitimize their study of the Aryan. Figueira details the use of these texts in a Foucauldian manner, showing how elements of hegemony played significant roles in the interpretation of the Aryan myth both at home and abroad. The author shows how European intellectuals and Brahmin reformers both functioned at the center of power. Their power extended to their ability to shape identitarian projects of a glorious past and rewrite history to suit their needs. Due to their status as intellectuals concerned with the general welfare of their respective societies, they were able, like Derrida's *bricoleurs,*[2] to reinterpret the Sanskrit texts and impose on them an ideology of the past that became a key component of their respective national projects. Figueira's book is an enriching and comprehensive study of the construction and politicization of the myth. It is of interest to students of cultural history, literature, and translation studies. In light of recent events in India, its reissue by Navayana is timely and significant.

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1. http://navayana.org/about/.

2. Derrida, Jacques. "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." *Writing and Difference.* Trans. Alan Bass. London: Routledge, 1978.

Chris Danta. *Literature Suspends Death: Sacrifice and Storytelling in Kierkegaard, Kafka and Blanchot.* New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011. Pp. 176. ISBN: 9781441139726.

In *Literature Suspends Death*, Chris Danta considers various analyses and retellings of the controversial events of Genesis 22. Termed the *Akedah*, or 'binding,' this passage of the Old Testament starkly details the trial of faith Abraham undergoes when told by the Hebrew god to sacrifice his son Isaac. Writings on the *Akedah* historically appeared in midrash, narratives created by Jewish commentators on the Old Testament that provide descriptive detail in biblical narratives lacking substantial background. Drawing on interpretations made by midrashic authors and contemporary analysts, Danta focuses on unorthodox variations on the story provided by Søren Kierkegaard, Franz Kafka and Maurice Blanchot in order to explore the relationship between literary writing and sacrifice.

Danta opens by detailing certain paradoxes inherent in the story that have historically captivated readers. Discussing the responses many have had to the cruelty and absurdity of the proposed sacrifice, he addresses the contradictory nature of the command, in that Isaac was initially to serve as proof of the lasting covenant established by the Hebrew god with the house of Abraham. After assessing the historical uses to which Genesis 22 has been put by Christians, to whom the story is proffered as a means of encouraging obedience, or strength of will in troubling circumstances, Danta focuses on those less pleased with Abraham's willingness to comply. The first and third chapter, therefore, center on Kafka's absurd and comical appropriation of the story. Aware that it can prove difficult for readers to identify with the Abraham presented in the original Genesis narrative, Kafka constructs a series of plaintive Abrahams who deflect the command by taking refuge in the mundane. Claiming that he must set his house in order before traveling to the sacrificial grounds, Kafka's worn, anxious Abraham utilizes a fiction to postpone Isaac's sacrifice interminably. Kafka's Abraham is too comically reduced in stature and capacity to perform the sacrifice, yet Danta claims that in presenting him as such, Kafka locates expressions of faith in the mundane rather than the transcendent.

Drawing on Kafka's letters and journals, Danta finds that for Kafka, Abraham requires no further tests. Faith "is expressed in one's mundane movements around the house rather than in the exceptional circumstances of one's removal," and as such "requires an infinite kind of patience" (9–10). Acknowledging that these variations on Genesis 22 might be

considered midrash, Danta protests that Kafka's response to the original story instead stands as a "profound instance of literary skepticism" as it casts doubt on the religious experience in order to "sever the correspondence the Genesis story encourages us to see between faith and action" (12). Referencing Helène Cixous, Danta finds that Abraham's use of a fiction to suspend death shows that Kafka may "write in relation to death," but that his renegotiation of the original story in fact locates grace and beauty within the mundane (20). Aware that Kafka might easily stand in for Abraham, as the former struggled to understand how he might devote himself to his writing without sacrificing his connection to the world, Danta considers the sacrifices Kafka made to write. Refuting analysts who find that Kafka's struggle indicates a refusal to embrace or even accommodate the mundane, Danta addresses what writers gain by suspending their action in the world to adapt to the demands of the literary imagination.

Danta next segues into an analysis of Kierkegaard by noting that those fixated on the correspondence between Kafka's isolation as a writer and Abraham's experience of alienation may base their analyses on Kierkegaard's treatment of the story in *Fear and Trembling*. The second chapter discusses the four variations on Genesis 22 that Kierkegaard provides, detailing his struggle to accommodate the shocking intensity of the original biblical narrative and respond instead to Abraham's faithful resolve. Recognizing that these stories center on Abraham's suffering, Danta considers the pained, mortified silence he adopts after being informed of his task. Danta here questions Kierkegaard's extensive focus on the manner in which this silence irrevocably severs Abraham from his community, while allowing him to move into a state of haunting, transcendent rapport with the God to whom he has sworn allegiance.

The fourth chapter introduces the alternative focus that Blanchot provides in his narrative *When the Time Comes.* Here, Danta examines the "two apparently contradictory modes of time" contained in the Genesis story (22). In the first temporality, a human sacrifice is required, while the second sees it suspended. Attending to the first temporality, Kierkegaard watches Abraham agree to the sacrifice and consequently move into a deeper, though vexed rapport with his God as he undertakes the painful journey to the sacrificial block. Focusing ultimately on Abraham's troubled though faithful state of mind, Kierkegaard sets forth an Abraham who cannot experience any valid sense of joy at Isaac's reprieve. Danta finds evidence here that Kierkegaard "never considers the heretical possibility that God's sacrificial command might be completely out of character or that

God might be capable of changing his mind" (106). He refuses to work with the entire story, and in this way "subordinates the plot ... to the character of its hero" so that Abraham cannot conceive of himself as having passed a test of faith rather than proven his readiness to kill his child (106). In this way, he attempts to assert a form of control over the act and potential outcome of writing.

In Blanchot's rendering of the story, the second temporality is emphasized. Danta uses the focus Blanchot places on the story's end to examine contemporary responses to the suspension of the sacrifice. Citing the philosopher Jacques Derrida and the poet Wilfred Owen, who prove willing to conceive of Isaac's actual death at the point of sacrifice, Danta addresses what he considers to be misreadings of the biblical passage. Asserting that the story's ultimate point is that Isaac in fact survives, Danta asks if it is not "perverse" to contemplate his death (108). Beyond this conjecture, he addresses the work of critics intrigued that the sacrifice of Isaac did not in fact occur, and who therefore see the story as lacking an essential event. Danta reminds his readers of the anthropocentric nature of this reading, as he explores the ethical and allegorical functions of the ram. Claiming that it serves as a "scapegoat that bears away the sin of the father's murderous intent," Danta finds Blanchot's focus on the ram's substitution essential (110).

In Blanchot's account, Isaac discovers that his sense of his identity becomes spectral upon finding that a ram has been easily substituted for him. Danta refers to this as "the disjunctive moment in the story in which character becomes an obscure function of the plot rather than vice versa" (107). Abraham, kept from the act towards which he has been channeling his vital energy, likewise finds that his identity no longer coheres. Abraham sees the ram in Isaac; identity develops the potential to take on a metaphorical aspect, for if "Isaac is the ram [and] the human is the animal," Abraham may "come to see himself as the sacrificial ram" in a situation in which all exposed to the event become victims of the disturbing story (111). However, Abraham is simultaneously free to explore and imagine an alternative identity. Through this look at the impact of the ram's substitution, Danta develops a more concerted focus on the spectral nature of the writer, who in writing suspends a concrete identity and world for those of the imagination. He thus considers Kafka's and Blanchot's use of literature to pursue visionary realities that may not separate them from the world so much as allow them as writers to "pass over into another sense of time altogether, one that is no longer oriented dialectically towards achieving a project or a task" (121). In this way, he sees them achieve a definitive separation from

Kierkegaard as they allow the act of writing to simply enact itself rather than become subordinated to any programmatic focus.

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Susannah B. Mintz. *Hurt and Pain: Literature and the Suffering Body.* London: Bloomsbury, 2013. Pp. 198 + ix. ISBN: 9781441174482.

"I am a sick man ... I am a wicked man"[1] begins the unnamed narrator of Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground.* The structure of the sentence, with its ellipses providing both connection and distance between the two halves, reflects the nature of the relationship between illness and morality as often characterized throughout literature: the presence of pain indicative of both a physical failing and an ethical perversion. He continues, developing the theme rather dramatically through his complaints:

> An unattractive man. I think my liver hurts. However, I don't know a fig about my sickness, and am not sure what it is that hurts me. I am not being treated and never have been, though I respect medicine and doctors. What's more, I am also superstitious in the extreme; well, at least enough to respect medicine. (I'm sufficiently educated not be superstitious, but I am.) No, sir, I refuse to be treated *out of wickedness.* (3; emphasis added)

Ultimately, it is this connection between the pains suffered through illness and the suspicion that the sufferer may, to some degree, be complicit in the continuation and perhaps even enjoyment of that suffering due to some significant moral failing (i.e. "wickedness") that makes the topics of pain, illness, and suffering so complex. Dostoevsky plays upon this complexity, inverting the expectation that people fear pain and reject suffering by having his narrator develop (and proudly claim!) a concept of consciousness as illness. "To be overly conscious is a sickness, a real, thorough sickness," he explains (6). "It's their sickness that everyone takes pride in, and I, perhaps, more than anyone" (7). In connecting consciousness with illness, the narrator begins to lay the ground for an understanding of not only consciousness, but existence, as fundamentally connected to an act of self-realization that occurs through the claiming of and reveling in one's own, individual, experience of pain. In one of the novella's more

memorable passages, the rambling narrator fixates on the pain associated with a toothache as a source and site of pleasure.

> There is also pleasure in a toothache.... Here, of course, one does not remain silently angry, one moans; but these are not straightforward moans, they are crafty moans, and the craftiness is the whole point. These moans express the pleasure of the one who is suffering; if they did not give him pleasure, he wouldn't bother moaning. ... In these moans there is expressed, first, all the futility of our pain, so humiliating for our consciousness.... and yet there is pain; the consciousness that ... you are wholly the slave of your teeth. (14)

Here in this space between the outward expressions of pain (i.e. the moan) and the individual claiming of that pain (i.e. the pleasure) the narrator posits an argument for existence: in the act of recognizing pain, one is provided with both the distance necessary for the recognition of the self as well as the simultaneous intimacy of the self as the body. Pain reveals a doubly-inflected existence grounded in both perception and reception, and as such, points towards the rich complexity of consciousness that has come to be fundamental to so many of the philosophical, literary, and scientific discussions of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

It is this underlying richness available in the study of pain that Susannah B. Mintz seeks to explore in *Hurt and Pain: Literature and the Suffering Body.* Mintz sees our cultural responses to pain embedded within the history of textual production: poetry, autobiographies, plays, novels, and personal narratives each take up the topic of pain in a variety of ways, and through a conscious effort to see both what these texts (and authors) say about pain as well as how they say it, are able to more clearly see the preexisting "attitudes and assumptions of environments that tell us what pain means and how we ought to react. How we talk, write, and read about pain may thus be as significant to how we react as the physiological factors that cause pain or the drugs we take to soothe it" (2). Mintz seeks to understand "what effect does genre have on the representation of pain? Is the compressed pain of poetry different from embodied pain on the stage? How does autobiographical pain differ from fictionalized pain? What happens when pain is witnessed rather than felt" (3). As she investigates these questions through a series of interesting and often insightful comparative readings, Mintz effectively normalizes a topic to which many have an instinctive aversion. A failure to focus on pain does not remove the reality of pain from lived experience. Indeed, such a myopic approach could potentially not only deaden our own abilities to understand the relationship of pain to both existence and relation, but also our potential for an understanding of what it means to be fully human, both in body and in text. As Mintz explains,

> Molding the myriad physical forms of pain according to the requirements of genre suggests how available it is to the workings of creative revision—how it is, to some extent, always already a function of how we live through language, how we translate raw experience into words, seek metaphor to articulate feeling and sensation. (3)

The book is organized into five chapters, each of which examines the nature of pain as it appears in several works taken from a specific genre. The first chapter, "The Poetry of Pain: Hurting Made Lyrical," focuses on the works of Donne, Dickinson, and the contemporary poet Nancy Krygowski, looking at the ways poetry's inherent linguistic valence interrogates received notions of pain. Ultimately, Mintz finds that it is the poets' "relation to *pain* as a form of knowing" that provides a way to "know the world through their and others' bodies, and thus maneuver through words in a way that brings the profound intelligence of imagination to bear on bodily experience at its most extreme" (50). The second chapter follows the trajectory of individual witness found in poetry through to its logical resting place in the genre of autobiography. Mintz questions the acceptance of an active aversion to stories of personal pain—"no one really wants to know about bodily pain, and certainly not the kind that endures without explanation or lasting assuagement" (52)—through the works of Eula Biss and Sharon Cameron. In particular, both authors engage pain in their projects in a kind of purposeful reclaiming that rejects the assumed need for distance from the topic. "Both authors construct their texts in a way that seems to mimic, rather than recount, the feeling of being in pain: its physical sensations, the habits of mind that accompany and cope with it" (56). While a narrative recounting of pain inherently promotes a sense of separation from the topic, these examples of autobiographical claiming present pain as outside the traditional narrative structures and thus evade the requirements of resolution and closure. In other words, the reality that pain might continue to exist even after the narrative ends is given space in a way that legitimizes pain's ongoing structures, even when those structures come into conflict with the demands of traditional narrative resolution.

It is in the third chapter of the book, which focuses on pain in a performative context (both in plays and in performance art) that I personally found to be most productive. In it, Mintz focuses on the contours (and contortions) of pain as played out in the works of Samuel Beckett, whose emphasis on the staged body as, fundamentally, corporeal lends itself in striking ways to the discussion at hand. "Pain," Mintz explains, "it turns out, cannot be collapsed into itself; rather, pain is always attached to the

specifics of body parts and the labels that categorize and pathologize them" (94–95). Bodies in Beckett exemplify this refusal of the collapse; instead, they continue, however contorted, to wait for the audience to see them as they are, and continue, connected in pain. Following her reading of Beckett, Mintz turns to pieces whose thematic content centers around the experience of pain: Margaret Edson's one-act *Wit,* which takes up the topic of ovarian cancer, and performance artists Bob Flanagan and ORLAN, whose work centers around the display of their own physical pain. The cumulative effect of this chapter is an increasingly persuasive argument for the value, and even necessity, of the staged experience of pain. Mintz contends that in these pieces, "pain operates in that dialogical way, activating a dynamic whereby we enter into an experience even if we do not experience it ourselves" (124). Ultimately, the effect is not to suggest that "pain is not intolerable *to the sufferer*; it is rather to suggest a contention made in these performances that pain ought not to be intolerable to discourse, to our ideas about ourselves" (125).

Following her discussion of drama, Mintz returns to more traditional narrative forms in her fourth and fifth chapters, which take up the novel and the role of the witness respectively. She looks at the way pain operates in Jean Stewart's novel *The Body's Memory* as well as Ana Castillo's *Peel My Love Like an Onion,* focusing particularly on the structural tools the authors use in order to negotiate the demands of pain in a form that often calls for closure. Mintz sees both works as "novels that describe protagonists reacting to pain (at least eventually) through active coping, and so perform coping in ways that offer an alternative to pain as the enemy of both medicine and happiness, pain as the disrupter of interpersonal cohesion and trust" (160). This shift towards coping as a mode of existence leads nicely into the final chapter's focus on witnessing through an examination of three very different forms of memoir: Melissa Febos's *Whip Smart* (focused on her experiences as a dominatrix), Mark Doty's *Heaven's Coast* (a lament on the experience of watching one's partner in pain), and Donald Hall's *Without* (a poetic tribute to his late wife). While the act of witnessing the pain of another is problematic, as Mintz acknowledges, it is ultimately a chance to provide a specific type of support: "Whether or not we can know another's pain in its every permutation, writing that pain does afford us the opportunity to validate, in Patrick Wall's straightforward phrase, 'the lonely abandoned folk who live in pain'" (175).[2]

While such validation is, of course, admirable, after the detailed comparative readings of pain across genre, it is a somewhat sudden place to

end. While I found the book as a whole to be worthwhile and interesting reading, it did, unfortunately, suffer from several problematic issues, the first being this relative lack of a conclusion. The synthesizing efforts put forth throughout this examination of pain would have benefitted from a chance to cohere through the development of a actual conclusion. Additionally, such an effort could have provided an additional space to re-engage the various theoretical ideas developed throughout the book in a way that would have added to the overall value and use of the project. And while Mintz is clearly well-versed in the preceding research on the topic of pain, the use of this research would have greatly benefitted from a more thorough effort at accuracy and consistency.[3] While a few errors are understandable in any work, the frequency of such small errors here was enough to be at best, distracting and at worst, damaging, which is a shame, for the work Mintz performs here is important.

I recommend this book to those interested in the topic of pain (or embodiment more generally) and its literary representation, as well as those interested in thinking through the ways pain enters into the questions of existence and relationality. Additionally, I recommend the book to those interested in the questions of genre and specifically, comparative genre. So often we characterize Comparative Literature in terms of projects that focus on cultural, linguistic, and historical comparisons, but there is something to be said for projects that take genre itself as the point of departure for comparative study. The merit for this project lies, as Mintz says, in the ways "we can locate in each other—the fleshly bodies beside us and the textual bodies we write and read—fellow sufferers with whom to compare symptoms and tactics for relief. ... [P]ain may make us cower and cry, but we too can be shapers of the pain we will inevitably have" (182–83).

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1. Fyodor Dostoevsky. *Notes from Underground.* Trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Vintage Classics, 1994. Ellipses in the original.

2. Patrick Wall. *Pain: The Science of Suffering.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

3. For example, in the introduction there are multiple issues: p. 2 (inconsistent use of page number for quotations); p. 5, n. 5 (works cited are apparently not in the bibliography); and p. 16, n. 8 (title misspelt and another work cited is not in the

bibliography). Or, turning to the references, we find that Lynne Greenberg's name is spelt correctly there, but incorrectly as "Lynn" on p. 36. Such typos and inconsistencies continue throughout the volume.

John Burt Foster, Jr. *Transnational Tolstoy: Between the West and the World.* New York: Bloomsbury, 2013. Pp. 248. ISBN: 9781441157706.

What kinds of textual pairings and close readings are to be expected from the imperative for a new, genuinely "transnational" orientation in Comparative Literature? Readers will find a compelling answer in John Burt Foster, Jr.'s *Transnational Tolstoy: Between the West and the World*, both a significant contribution to Tolstoy studies in its own right and a would-be exemplum of "transnational" critical praxis. "Transnationality" is defined in contrast to "internationality": "If 'inter' assumed orderly, almost diplomatic processes of give-and-take among well-defined units, 'trans' posits a more active, less regulated, even unpredictably creative surge of forces across borders that no longer seem as firmly established" (2). There is also an attempt to separate the key term from "'supranationality,' a word with loftier and more serenely cosmopolitan implications than transnationality" (2). Elsewhere the "transnational" indicates simply, "that cross-cultural issues will be integral to the text" (185) under consideration.

Foster's description of his work as a series of "twelve snapshots of Tolstoy's transnationalism" (205) is too modest, for each of the dozen chapters is, in fact, a substantive, stand-alone essay coupling Tolstoy with authors as far afield as Giuseppe di Lampedusa, Premchand, Naguib Mahfouz, and Gabriel Garciá Márquez, among others. These individual studies of parallelism—Foster is careful to withhold claims of direct influence—are divided into three larger categories: "Facing the West"; "Outside the Soviet Canon"; and "Into the World." The first revitalizes traditional yokings of Tolstoy to Fyodor Dostoevsky, to Stendhal, and to Flaubert with adroit cross-referencing of "transnational" themes: the German spa episodes in *Anna Karenina* are contrasted with those in Dostoevsky's *The Gambler*; Stendhal's Italy in *The Charterhouse of Parma* is compared to the country Tolstoy's Anna and Vronsky visit; and, most unexpectedly, the anniversaries of major events in the career of Napoleon I in *War and Peace* are matched with dates from the life of Napoleon III in Gustave Flaubert's *A Sentimental Education*.

Part II, "Outside the Soviet Canon," disrupts the pigeon-holing of Tolstoy as a "critical realist" endemic to Soviet scholarship by aligning him closely with "transnational" modernist and imagist partners such as Vladimir Nabokov and André Malraux. The prophetic quality of Anna Karenina's recurring nightmare is shown to anticipate the "felt history" and "magical realism" of D. M. Thomas's *The White Hotel* and Garciá Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

The most provocative segment of Foster's widely researched book, Part IV, "Into the World," begins by revisiting Saul Bellow's notorious challenge, "Show me the Zulu Tolstoy," which was widely taken in the 1990's as symptomatic of persistent Western "normative chauvinism" (144). Proposing "Show me the Zulu Milton" (145) in jest as perhaps a better alternate, Foster contends that Bellow's original catch-phrase unjustly turns us away from Tolstoy's hostility to colonialism and his ability to inspire post-colonial literary works: "How could the author of *War and Peace*, with its hostility to an empire-builder like Napoleon, be linked so closely with Western imperialism?" (146).

The next several sections of Foster's book constitute a sustained appreciation of Tolstoy's posthumously published short novel of military and diplomatic life in the Caucasus mountains, *Hadji Murad*. With its Islamist hero and constant interplay of Russian imperial culture with a cornucopia of local customs, styles of dress, languages, and ethnicities, is this Tolstoy's "best effort at writing world literature" (164)? Foster has me convinced. I can readily agree that *Hadji Murad* is a better choice for single-volume, twenty-first century world-literature collections than Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, long more popular with anthologists. The semantic analysis of the various Russian words Tolstoy uses to convey "universal" and "world literature" in *What is Art?* (1897) is compelling and harmonizes with Foster's own gravitation to the "transnational."

Foster argues for parallels in *Hadji Murad* and the works of two of Tolstoy's most distinguished third-world readers, the Indian fiction writer Premchand and the Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz. The "work-shirking untouchables" of Premchand's final short story, "The Shroud," "reflect back on" (174) the lazy Russian peasant who avoids military service in *Hadji Murad*; and in "The Chess Players," the British siege of Lucknow, the capital of India's last formally independent state, parallels the Russian conquest of the Caucasus depicted in Tolstoy's underappreciated short novel. The death of Fahmy episode in Mahfouz's *Palace Walk,* with its "high, expansive" sky, reconstitutes the famous image of the "immeasurably lofty"

heaven perceived by Prince Andrey, wounded at Austerlitz, in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (qtd. Foster, 175–76).

The metaphor of Tolstoy's "*pivot* from West to world" (206, emphasis mine) in Foster's Conclusion over-simplifies the complexity of Tolstoy's lifelong interests in Buddhism and the Far East. The young soon-to-be author majored in Oriental Languages at the University of Kazan. Although he quickly abandoned university studies, he shows his familiarity with Sun Tzu's *Art of War* in the relatively early *War and Peace* when General Kutuzov contemplates building for his French enemy a "golden bridge" to facilitate retreat. It is surprising that a work arguing for Tolstoy's "transnational" status includes not even passing mention of Tolstoy's systematic Buddhology. Yet Foster's work does not claim to be comprehensive, and is most valuable as a study of the author's fascination with Islam in the Russian empire's southern borderlands.

In the final analysis, Foster's groundbreaking book is certain to inspire engaging future research and a variety of compelling debates within both Tolstoy studies and Comparative Literature at large. While Foster himself on occasion suggests integrating the "transnational" with the "cross-cultural," the "transregional," "the global," and "the universal," I would welcome still broader consideration of potential synonyms, for the key term throughout seems to coincide with notions of the "inter-cultural," the "multi-cultural," and the "multi-national." Such rhetorical quibbles aside, readers cannot fail to be impressed with the breadth of Foster's inquiry.

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Comptes rendus de congrès / Conference Reports

Promoting Polish Literature Abroad

National, Regional, Continental, Global:
Literatures and Discourses on Literatures
September 27 – September 30, 2014

The conference "National, Regional, Continental, Global: Literatures and Discourses on Literatures" took place September 27–30, 2014. Held at the University of Szczecin's conference center in Pobierowo (located on the Baltic Sea), the conference was organized by Professor Marta Skwara of the university's Comparative Literature Department. There at Pobierowo, close to thirty scholars and advanced graduate students from across Poland and six other countries gathered for lively discussion within the Polish literature and Comparative Literature communities.

As indicated by her talk "How to Write National Literary History in a "Glocal" World?" Dr. Marta Skwara had very particular goals in mind when organizing this conference. Currently, she is working on a handbook of Polish literature, and her lecture addressed ideas and plans on how to realize this project, specifically how to raise awareness of Polish literature beyond Poland. Skwara notes the necessity of regular intellectual exchanges as well as publicizing the work of Polish writers outside of their country, and this was the intent behind the 2014 University of Szczecin Comparative Literature conference. For this forward-thinking conference, therefore, Professor Skwara should be commended: many current and potential problems of spreading Polish literature were addressed extensively at Pobierowo, as well as related issues of education, identity, and classification. Conference papers were presented over the course of three days, with plenty of time for participants to further discuss ideas. While papers and subsequent panel questions were given in either Polish or English, participants interacted with each other in French, Spanish, and German, as well.

The result was a small community of researchers who were not shy about sharing their insights.

Key-note speeches were provided on Saturday, September 27, by the honorary president of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA), Dr. Dorothy Figueira, who spoke on "What Do We Do When the Other Speaks her Own Language?: Returning to the Ethics of Comparativism," and by the honorary president of the International Federation for Modern Languages and Literatures (FILLM), Dr. Roger D. Sell, who addressed "Where do Literary Writers Belong? A Post-Postmodern Answer." Other special lectures were given by scholars throughout the remainder of the conference. Dr. Brigitte Schultze from Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz (Germany) gave a talk entitled "Hybrid Constellations and National Authorship: Prose Fiction by Jaroslav Rudiš (2002–2013) and Olga Martynova (2013)." Dr. Maria Cieśla-Korytowska from Uniwersytet Jagielloński (Poland) delivered a lecture under the title "Just once ... *Polenlieder*." Finally, on the last day of the conference, a speech was given by Dr. Tadeusz Sławek from Uniwersytet Śląski (Poland): "Workers of the Late Hour: Comparative Studies, Philology, Theology."

In keeping with Dr. Skwara's intentions for the gathering of scholars at Pobierowo, many in-depth discussions took place regarding the future and position of Polish literature in the world, the problems "small homelands" or postcolonial literature faces, uncertainties of identity in various literatures, and roadblocks in teaching literary theory. Schultze posed the following questions: how does one classify an author in terms of nationality? Should classification be based on language or on a subject? Is classification even necessary? Is the national identity of an author something that shifts over time, or does it resist change? Similar issues were addressed throughout the conference. Drs. Brygida Helbig-Mischewski and Małgorzata Zduniak-Wiktorowicz, in their talk "National and Supranational Methodologies Exemplified by a Bilateral Project: *The Youngest Generations of the Writers of Polish Origin in Germany*," proved that, because emigration and immigration are ultimately separate entities, their presence in literature must be addressed in different ways. Dr. Mieczysław Dąbrowski continued this dialogue in "Modern Emigrant Literature: Poetics and Methodology" by claiming that "immigrant literature" is a harmful term: it associates the writer only with his/her country of origin, and not with the country of arrival. Because writers are influenced by various stimuli—not just by the site of their birth or upbringing—a literary critique that ignores an entire culture waters down the authors' projects, Dąbrowski argued.

Discussions were also conducted on the topics of Poland's possible postcolonial status and its position as an "Other" in the field of Comparative Literature. In her talk entitled "Subaltern Cosmopolitans: Postcolonial Interventions into New World Literature (with Some Comparative Excursions)," Dr. Dorota Kołodziejczyk addressed the issue of representing the subaltern in postcolonial regions. Since, according to Gayatri Spivak, the subaltern cannot or will not speak, Kołodziejczyk argued that one must be careful in representing and/or interpreting their stories. Kołodziejczyk suggested that, in a cosmopolitan setting, this tendency to override the subaltern is perhaps even stronger. Citing Kiran Desai's example of immigrants working in an upscale French restaurant, she drew a connection between cosmopolitanism and consumption. That is, cosmopolitanism is not always beneficial to those in lower positions: the mixing of cultures could be done peripherally, as indicated in Andrzej Stasiuk's *Fado*, or it could even be an intrusion of sorts, as presented in Yuri Andrukhovych's *12 Rings*. The result of peripheral or intrusive cosmopolitanism could be ill-defined identities, or even worse.

Along the same vein, Dr. Jakub Czernik in "Is There a Place for Polish Literature in Global Comparative Literature?" addressed the tricky position of Poland in the fields of World and Comparative Literature. From an American perspective, for instance, Poland was never established as a main Other, unlike Germany, France, and similar countries. However, Comparative Literature is now moving in the direction of non-European regions, Czernik claimed, and therefore Poland, as a European country, is pushed yet again out of the spotlight. How, then, can Poland find its place as a notable country of global Comparative Literature scholarship? Similarly, Dr. Bożena Zaboklicka in "Sienkiewicz in Catalonia or, How One 'Small Literature' Becomes Audible in Another One" questioned how less widely-spoken languages such as Polish can successfully be translated into another language. Certain censorship always occurs with translation, Zaboklicka admitted, but perhaps this narrative alteration is even more extreme when the country of origin is not globally well known. In other words, if Polish culture and history are unrecognizable abroad, would not a misrepresentation of a Polish author's message be that much more harmful?

In her talk entitled "Comparative Studies and Mythologies of a Region," Dr. Emilia Kledzik elaborated upon previous discussions of postcolonialism, globalization, regionalism, and uncertain identities. Local identities of postcolonial space, Kledzik illustrated, are under strain from

various sources. With an increase in globalization, for example, ideologies of both centralized and peripheral regions come to the foreground. Globalization is often seen as a utopian solution, Kledzik pointed out, and yet problems in postcolonial and regional areas prove that globalization may in fact be troubling and challenging certain identities, rather than helping or promoting them. A clash between global and regional influences, for instance, has led to a rise in racism and xenophobia in certain areas of Central Europe—that is, in regions that are still fighting to establish their own identities (ones removed from colonial sway) and a defined place in the world. Conference participants debated whether, in light of such difficulties, Central Europe can be seen as an area of tolerance, whether space and identity on a local level can be well established, and whether globalization (as well as the increase of research interest in globalization) endangers small regions and scholarship pertaining to them.

Of course, there were also conversations more broadly related to literature. One particularly lively discussion took place in the question-and-answer session after talks by Dr. Ewa Szczęsna and Dr. Adam Regiewicz ("How Should Digital Literature be Studied?" and "On the Impossibility of the Local Literature: The Case of Audiovisual Narrations," respectively). If, for instance, audiovisual literatures are constructed of fragments that are in constant motion, as Regiewicz claimed, then how can one compare them to written and more stable texts? Participants debated further points: should theory on orality be applied to digital works, or is the field in need of entirely new approaches?

Similarly, extensive discussion occurred in talks relating to theory. Figueira challenged current careerist usage of theory in scholarship and education. Sławek addressed the roadblocks in educating undergraduates on theory. Younger students shy away from theory because the very term is intimidating; therefore, presenting theory without calling it "theory" may be useful in encouraging skeptical or self-conscious students. Theory, when applied carefully, is necessary—it is needed to interpret the language of the dead, Sławek claimed. However, to avoid the problems Figueira raised, Sławek found it helpful to provide undergraduates with an environment in which they feel comfortable and in which they can safely admit a lack of theoretical understanding. Only then can theory be fully analyzed and, eventually, accurately (and in a fresh way) applied to literature.

This theme of education was extended on the last panel of the conference, when Dr. Zbigniew Kopeć presented his paper "Multicultural Teaching of Literature on the Eastern Borderlands of the Second Republic." By

discussing the educational history of the so-called Eastern *kresy* of the 1920s and 1930s, Kopeć proved that a careful educational approach towards regional identities has long been an issue. The *kresy* were home to a variety of peoples—Poles, Jews, Ukrainians. Jewish and Ukrainian children who were forced to study Polish history in Polish schools during the 1920s and 1930s faced many problems, including a basic lack of understanding due to language barriers (while some Jewish children's main language was Polish, for others, it was Hebrew). This problem of a meagerly beneficial education can be applied to contemporary questions of comparative literary scholarship, research of regional identities, and so on. Conference participants, as a result, questioned such authoritative education strategies and reassessed scholars' approaches towards marginalized, postcolonial, and peripheral persons.

Finally, Dr. Krystyna Wierzbicka-Trwoga in "Who is the Reader of Comparative Literature or, on the Role of So-Called Foreign Philologies" questioned the linguistic side to comparative literary scholarship. She asked the conference participants whether research in Comparative Literature should be presented and shared monolingually or bilingually. A bilingual approach would certainly reach a wider audience, she claimed, and yet there is an enormous loss of time when a scholar must rewrite his/her article in a second language. Furthermore, with a bilingual article, typically one of the languages will be English, and yet, as Wierzbicka-Trwoga pointed out, is English always necessary? Would non-English readers be more likely to access an article in English or would it limit the article's circle of influence? She addressed an additional issue—that of so-called "regional" readers or readers who have a low competence in their respective area of research. Is it the job of Comparative Literature scholars to create a dialogue with such an audience, and if so, what language should one use to reach out to them?

The issues addressed at the University of Szczecin's 2014 Comparative Literature Conference in Pobierowo are increasingly relevant to authors and scholars in the field. Each participant walked away from the conference with valuable collegial contacts, extensive knowledge about key problems in educating young students and laypersons on "small" literature, and strategies on how to advocate Polish literature and culture outside of Poland. Professor Skwara's successful efforts to create a supportive forum for examining and promoting Polish literature should therefore be applauded.

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Developments in Indian Comparative Literature

XII CLAI Biennial International Conference
March 1–4, 2015

Organized every two years, the Comparative Literature Association of India International Conference assembled from March 1–4 at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, India. The conference had a specific focus on the "Culture, Arts and Socio-Political Movements in South Asia: Comparative Perspectives." The scope was designed to streamline discussions over the four days to critical perspectives on the changing cultural scenario in South Asia. At the same time it encouraged critical examination of the development of a comparative discipline that would independently mirror the social and cultural ambience of South Asia. Ambitious as it sounds, established scholars and academicians in the field pieced together the history of Comparative Literature in the subcontinent and debated over the skills of the discipline, breaking away from a unique western structural understanding of the discipline. The sessions focused on multiculturalism and diversity as they are practiced in South Asia.

Set in the picturesque university campus of the historic Pink City of India, the conference saw an enthusiastic participation of scholars and academics from all over the world. The organizing committee encouraged participation from students in a variety of disciplines, ranging from Comparative Literature to English, History and other national literatures.

The conference started with a grand felicitation of the chief members of the CLAI organizing committee, the chairperson of CLAI along with the Chief Guest and Guest of Honor. The felicitation was followed by short speeches by a few dignitaries. Dr. Khwaja M. Ekramuddin, Director, National Council for the Promotion of Urdu Language made an inspiring speech on the expressiveness and unity of the languages of South Asia, especially Hindi. Prof. Kapila Vatsayan, Chairperson of the South Asia Project (New Delhi) who could not be present due to frail health, sent a video with her keynote address. She strongly advocated the framing and study of Comparative Literature from an Indian perspective as a means of undertaking the complimentary study of South Asian languages and cultures. Dr. Vatsayan elaborated on a theme similar in her Zaidi Memorial Lecture in 2002, where she had reflected on the fluidity of identities in plural cultures. Her keynote at CLAI also addressed the need to remedy the multiple hidden inequalities in South Asia today.

Discussions started with a panel discussion on "Comparative Indian Literature: Changing Paradigms" chaired by Prof. I.N. Choudhuri, former Tagore Chair, Edinburgh Napier University. The other panelists included Jancy James, E.V. Ramakrishnan, Harish Trivedi and Ipshita Chanda. Harish Trivedi initiated the discussion by looking at the two models of Comparative Literature operative in India, namely the Indiana model introduced by Prof. Buddhadev Bose and the Sisir Kumar Das model, which first advocated the development of an Indian comparative paradigm. Prof. Trivedi reflected on the politics of both models and the selection of languages to be studied as a reflection of power dynamics. Ipshita Chanda, while agreeing with Trivedi, proposed "a way of reading Indian literatures with a specific focus on their individual heritage in the Indian way." The panel saw an eager participation from academics and graduate students and raised questions regarding the claims of the existing paradigms and the issues of adhering to them.

The afternoon witnessed a range of student presentations in different parallel session presentations that dealt with topics such as "The Environment and Literature." Here professors and students presented their research on ecological and textual analysis of texts. A few other sessions focused on approaches in literatures beyond the Indian Subcontinent. Other parallel sessions focused on "Centering Dalit Literature" and "Movement and Memory" with an eclectic selection of texts by Qurratulain Hyder, Rohinton Mistry and Khaled Hosseni. These sessions were then followed by a panel discussion on "Cultural Formations of South Asia," in which Ameena K. Ansari presented research on the different perspectives of teaching South Asian Literatures. Quoting Rohinton Mistri, Ansari sought to establish the migrant creative impulses in South Asian fiction writers and raised questions of the completeness of history in the South Asian experience.

The second day opened with the "Sisir Kumar Das Memorial Lecture" by Prof. I.N. Choudhuri, entitled, "Sisir Das: Conflict between 'Other Asia' and 'New Asia.'" Choudhuri spoke at length about the implicit and explicit methodologies in Comparative Literature, namely the cross-cultural method and the cross-period method. He then spoke of the visionary work of Rabindranath Tagore and his contributions to the methodology of Comparative Literature.

The general theme of methodology was examined throughout the conference. Jasbir Jain, Ipsita Chanda, and Dorothy Figueira spiritedly discussed the rise of different methodologies of Comparative Literature in India and in the US. While Chanda reflected more on the methodologies

being followed at Jadavpur since the inception of the discipline, Figueira raised questions about necessary comparative aspects to be considered before undertaking a comparative project. Graduate students enthusiastically responded to this session and raised questions regarding Comparative Literature in Europe, America, and India. Other panels dealt with diverse aspects of comparative ethics, especially in two panels on "Literature, Religion and Ethics- I and II," which looked at the representational ethics of religion in literature and literary studies. These discussions were further carried on in different parallel sessions on South Asia, Film in South Asia, Feminism, and Religion. The parallel sessions saw an interesting and critical range of scholarly work from both graduates and undergraduates, mostly from India and some from American and European universities. The conference provided an excellent chance to students and scholars to present their research and garner feedback on their ideas.

These discussions were not limited to the conference hall alone, but spilled out over lunch and tea. A major highlight for the four-day conference was a Sufi fusion rock concert deeply influenced by literary texts. The lead musician was raised by a comparatist father! As a whole, the conference acknowledged the need for Comparative Literature, it raised the issues of the feasibility and adaptability of a discipline according to regional and national needs. As the century progresses, it is necessary to develop within the discipline a greater openness to multiculturalism and most importantly to the multilingualism of a country as diverse as India. If each Indian language brings with it a different world, then Indian Comparative Literature must of necessity move away from Western paradigms and create an identity that reflects its more wonderful native plurality. As Ngugi Wa Thiong'o has said "No living culture is ever static," so it rests on the CLAI to further develop the discipline so that it might flourish on the subcontinent.

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

Research Committee on Literary Theory

1. Annual Workshop (2015)

Peter Hajdu hosted the 2015 annual workshop in Pécs, Hungary in May 21-23. The title of the workshop was "Realities of Fiction; Fictions of Reality." Six committee members, five nominated candidates, one guest lecturer and four local colleagues presented papers on this topic. The Committee also held its annual business meeting in Pécs.

2. Future Meeting: Vienna (21–27 July 2016)

Next year's workshop will be held within the umbrella of the ICLA congress in Vienna. The theme is 'Prismatic Translation' and the call for papers appears below.

3. Publications

Nine papers from the 2014 workshop *Literature and Policing* held at the University of Osaka, Japan (7-8 April 2014) are currently being edited by Takayuki Yokota-Murakami and Calin Mihailescu, to be turned into a book. The first round of peer-reviewing is over and the contributors are in the process of revising their manuscripts.

Nine selected papers from the 2015 workshop will appear in a special issue of *Neohelicon* in June 2015. The editors are Yvonne Howell and Francoise Lavocat.

4. Matters Arising

The necessity of a working website for the Committee on Literary Theory was raised. The committee would like to construct a website with a link to the ICLA website.

5. Special Guest Speaker

The committee would like to express gratitude to the Executive Council for supporting the costs of inviting a special guest lecturer. Our first speaker, Richard Walsh, made an excellent contribution and helped establish the keynote for the workshop. His paper will form a part of the special issue next year.

6. Call for Papers: Prismatic Translation

Translation can be seen as producing a text in one language that will count as equivalent to a text in another. It can also be seen as a release of multiple signifying possibilities, an opening of the source text to language in all its plurality. The first view is underpinned by the regime of European standard languages that can be lined up in bilingual dictionaries, by the technology of the printed book, and by the need for regulated communication in political and legal contexts. The second view attaches to contexts where several spoken languages share the same written characters (as in the Chinese scriptworld), to circumstances where language is not standardized (e.g. minority and dialectal communities & oral cultures), to the fluidity of electronic text, and to literature, especially poetry and theatrical performance. The first view sees translation as a channel; the second as a prism.

The prismatic view of translation has yet to be fully theorized. For instance, a historical and intercultural glimpse at translation practices reveals a highly varied relationship between "original" and "copy" that demands further examination. Papers of the 2016 committee meeting could study the pragmatic requirements of translations (e.g. the function of dominant languages, the precarious prestige of specialized vernaculars, shifts in audiences, the situated behavior of authors), their concrete realization in the individual transformation of documents (i.e. in multilingual groups of texts consisting of originals and translations), and their impact on the history of language and literature.

This approach would develop the line taken in the key recent intervention in the study of translations, the Cassin et al. *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles,* itself translated as *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon.* Despite its catchy subtitle or title, the volume in fact tends to deconstruct the binary translatable / untranslatable, revealing instead what Benjamin called "Übersetzung bis zu einem gewissen Grade" ('the translatable to some degree'). Such degrees of translation require standard ideas such as "equivalence," "fidelity," and the binary of "foreignizing" and "domesticating" to be rethought. Attention to non-European languages and translation traditions is likely to be crucial to this endeavour.

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Research Committee on Comparative Gender Studies

1. Newly Drafted Statement of Purpose

At the Committee meetings in Paris and New York, the Committee approved the following statement that outlines its mission and its open invitation for those with a scholarly interest in comparative gender and comparative queer studies to contribute to the Committee's work. The statement appears on the Committee's website and guides its work:

> *The Comparative Gender Studies Committee works to further the comparative study of gender and sexuality through organising innovative seminar programmes at the ICLA and at other conferences, such as the ACLA. The Committee supports 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 national and linguistic borders as these relate specifically to gender and/or sexuality; b) comparative work across historical, postcolonial, and transnational contexts focusing on gender and/or sexuality; and c) scholarship using gender and/or sexuality as sites of comparison themselves, or 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-reviewed 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.*

2. ACLA New York 2014/ACLA Seattle 2015

The Committee sponsored a three-day seminar at the ACLA annual conference in New York in 2014. The seminars were all very well attended despite the listing of nearly 400 seminars in the conference programme, the largest conference in the Association's history. Our Committee also picked up new members. The Committee-sponsored seminar was entitled "Gender, Sexuality, and Geopolitics: New Affinities/New Comparisons."

In Seattle at ACLA 2015, the Committee also sponsored a three-day seminar "Comparing Queer Temporalities" chaired by the Committee's Secretary, Chris Coffman. The Committee has now prepared its call for

papers for the ICLA Conference in Vienna in 2016, based on suggestions from its membership. The seminar for ICLA 2016 in Vienna, which will be sponsored by the Committee, will be "(Queer) Relationality: Gender and Queer Comparatists at Work."

3. Gender Studies Committee in South Africa (University of Pretoria Conference 2015)

In April 2015, the Committee co-sponsored a two-day conference entitled 'Gendered Modernities in Motion: Literary and Cultural Interrogations of Gender and Sexuality in a Time of Transnational Dialogue' with generous financial support from the ICLA Executive Board in the form of US $2000 in conjunction with the Southern Modernities Research Group at the University of Pretoria with matched funding. The purpose of the conference was to move out of the European-North American axis and to have an event in the southern hemisphere so that our Committee members in the global south could attend the conference. Many graduate students from the South African Comparative Literature Association participated in the conference and joined the ICLA; many plan to come to Vienna for the ICLA in 2016, which matches our success in attracting graduate students from North America at the ACLA.

4. Gender Studies Committee in Canada (2014/2015)

The Committee sponsored a one-day seminar at the Canadian Comparative Literature Association/Association Canadienne de Littérature Comparée, May 25–27, 2014, at Brock University, Ontario, for the first time. The seminar was organised by Tegan Zimmerman, a Committee member, and the CCLA/ACLC will continue to have a Committee-sponsored event each year at its annual conference. A seminar, entitled "Sex and Capital" will take place at the CCLA/ACCL in Ottawa in June 2015.

5. Publications of the Committee

The following are the publications of the Gender Studies Committee to date from the earliest to the most recent work that is recently published and forthcoming"

Gender and Literary Studies. Special Issue of *Comparative Critical Studies* 6.2 (2009). Guest Editor Margaret R. Higonnet.

Von Flotow, Luise, ed. Translating Women. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010.

Hayes, Jarrod, Margaret R. Higonnet, and William J. Spurlin, eds. *Comparatively Queer: Interrogating Identities across Time and Cultures.* New York: Palgrave USA, 2010.

The Gender and Queer Politics of Translation: Literary, Historical, and Cultural Approaches. Special Issue of *Comparative Literature Studies* 51.2 (2014). Guest Editor William J. Spurlin.

Comparatively Speaking: Gender and Rhetoric. Special Issue of *Intertexts* 18.1 (2014). Guest Editors Liedeke Plate and Pierre Zoberman.

Critical Healing: Queer and Disability Studies Interventions in Biomedicine and Public Health. Special Issue of *Journal of Medical Humanities.* Forthcoming 2015. Guest Editors William J. Spurlin and Rebecca Garden.

6. Permanent Status of the Committee at ICLA

The ICLA Executive Board in Beijing in September 2014 granted the Committee permanent status as a research committee of the ICLA given its record of accomplishment over ten years since its inception at the Hong Kong ICLA in 2004, given its membership of over 70 members located on all six continents, given the new membership it has brought into the ICLA (especially graduate students, whose research is reshaping the contours of comparative studies), and given its productive record of seminars at ACLA and ICLA, its involvement in Canada and in South Africa, and its productive publication record. The study of gender and sexuality as sites of comparative inquiry will continue to make important interventions to the field of Comparative Literature for many years to come, and the Committee plans to remain active within the Association and internationally within the discipline and within the broader academic context.

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Research Committee on Literary and Cultural Interrelationships between India, Its Neighboring Countries, and the World

1. Presentations of papers in the Panel's focus area were organized by Prof. Chandra Mohan in the plenary sessions at the International Conference on Comparative Literature at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, March 1–4, 2015

Panel 1: "Cultural Foundations of South Asia"

It took its cue from Dr. Kapila Vatsayan's key sentence: "The region called South Asia today is distinct from India or Indian." Professor Ameena

Ansari from Jamia Millia Islamia Central University, New Delhi and Prof. Taqi Abedi from Canada in their presentations developed a broader discourse on South Asia as a space for multiple configurations, of tradition and ethnicity, religious and secular movements, and also movements of resistance and affirmation. Prof. Ameena Ansari focused on the fact that literary production in the Indian subcontinent today foregrounds the emergence of the text as a chronicle to communicate the alternative history of the marginal, the silenced, or the inarticulate. It could be perceived as literary historiography in which the fact fuses with fiction, record mingles with rhetoric, and metaphor, metonymy and allegory shake hands with dates, events and people. Prof. Abedi underlined the importance of the psyche of the South Asian culture and literature.

In her presidential remarks, Prof. Rachel Bari stated that given the insecurities and apprehensions about identity prevalent in the diasporic South Asian communities, it is also time that one approach them with openness and lucidity and look more at that variety rather than their role as a challenge and a threat.

Panel 2: "Socio-Literary Movements in South Asia"

Prof. Prof. Jasbir Jain in her paper entitled "Travels of Maoism in China, Nepal, Tibet and India" explained how Maoism's application has appeared in different cultural contexts in adjoining countries. She dealt with different literary texts to illustrate the vital viewpoints.

Prof. Manorama Trikha presented a seminal paper on "Apotheosis of Gandhi in the Independence Movement and its Literary Space." Through the explication of three plays Asif Currimbhoy's *An Experiment with Truth* (1969), Nand Kishore Acharya's *Bapu* (2005) and Partap Sharma's *Sammy* (2005), revealed how Gandhi broke new ground on the socio-political, personal and spiritual levels, altered the country's patterns of thought and changed the way of living. In a similar vein, Prof. Nandini Bhattacharya in the paper "The Politics of Embodiment: Gandhi and Satyagraha" referred to the Satyagraha movement as a redemptive act.

Prof. Safdar Imam Quadri, in his research-based presentation on "The Literary Impact of Sufi Bhakti Movements in South Asia: A Multilingual Discourse" analyzed the rich corpus of Sufi and Bhakti narratives and explained their interesting mode of transferring themes and symbols from one religion to another.

Prof. Munazza Yaqoob in her paper entitled "Cityscapes of South Asia in Hamid's *How to get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* and Adiga's *The White Tiger*" presented a political-ecological analysis of urban spaces. The paper

explored and discussed the two authors' viewpoints regarding socio-economic, political and ecological processes that shape cityscapes in India and Pakistan. This comparative study presented a powerful critique of capitalist expansion as it served to activate resistance to capitalistic oppressive urban social control policies.

Prof. Anisur Rahman, took stock of the points made in the above presentations. He stated that there was a strong thread that brought all the presentations at par with each other. Violence, being a way of socio-political activism, could be contained only with a proportion of nonviolence as practiced by Gandhi. Further he emphasized that this culture of tolerance owed its origin to the Sufi-Bhakti tradition of the Indian subcontinent.

2. Member Contributions in the Form of Lectures / Addresses Relating to the Theme of the Project

Professsor Chelva Kanaganayakam from the University of Toronto elaborated on the idea of South Asian Literature as a more enabling category than that of national literatures. He made a distinction between history of literature and literary history and stated that the latter allowed for a nuanced exposition of the processes of canon formation. He proposed an approach that allowed for understanding the genealogy of English writing in South Asia outside of the notion of influence and a singular model of modernity. This point was supported by the late Prof. Kanaganayakam at the seminar of Literary Historiography in India: Contemporary Perspectives, organized by Prof. E.V. Ramakrishnan at the Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, on January 10, 2014.

Prof. Kavita Sharma, President South Asia University, delivered the Convocation Address on Higher Education in South Asia as Chief Guest at 7th Convocation Program of Purbanchal University, Biratnagar, Nepal on March 14, 2015. She also made a presentation on Education and the Widening of the Consciousness in South Asia during 4th International Conference on Human Values in Higher Education—from 27th to 29th March, 2015 at Gaeddu College of Business Studies, Royal University of Bhutan, Gaeddu, Bhutan. Professor Senath Walter Perera, Dept. of English, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, presented a paper entitled " 'Imagined' Censorship and the Sri Lanka Exilic Novel in English" at the IACLALS Annual Conference (*Space, Place, Travel, Displacement, Exile*) held in Goa, India, February 2015.

3. Preparation of E-content for Comparative Literature Pedagogy

The program has been launched by the faculty members of the Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies, chaired by Prof.

P.C. Patnaik at the University of Delhi. It has provided an impetus to the impact of cultural and literary inter-relationships for Comparative Literature. It is welcome as the most recent and significant addition to the development of ICLA Research project. This landmark project, sanctioned by the University Grants Commission of India, is currently engaged in developing e-content material that will be most useful for research and comparative literary studies in India and its adjoining countries.

4. Introduction of Academic Course Relating to the Development of the Project

Literatures of South Asia and Literatures of Bangladesh were introduced as optional courses in a Comparative Literature M.A. course being taught under the auspices of the Centre for Comparative Literature, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan, West Bengal.

5. Recent Publications Relating to the Project

Discoursing Minority: In-Text and Co-Text, edited by Anisur Rahman, Supiya Agarwal and Bhumika Sharma (Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 2014).

Call of the Hills: A Course Text for Nepali Literature made available in Bangla, edited by Seemantini Dasgupta and Kabita Lama (UGC Centre for Advanced Study [Phase I], Jadavpur University, 2014).

Tamang Selo, Annotated Text and English Translation edited by Sayantan Dasgupta and Shradhanjali Tamang (Jadavpur University Press in collaboration with Centre for Translation of Indian literatures, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, 2015). This is a collection of the Nepali-language Tamang Selo songs in a bilingual edition.

Between Memory and History: Forgiveness by Jasbir Jain, forthcoming monograph.

The Diaspora Writes Home: Subcontinental Narratives by Jasbir Jain (Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 2015).

"Habitations of Resistance: Role of Translation in the Creation of Literary Public Sphere in South Asia" by E. V. Ramakrishnan, published in the book *Translation and Global Asia: Relocating Networks of Cultural Products,* edited by Lawrence Wong and Uganda Szepul, (Chinese University Press).

"Consciousness-Raising of Women in South Asian Fiction in English: A Critique" by Munazza Yaqoob in *Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies*. Another work edited by her and Sofia Hussain is *Women Writers of the Subcontinent (1870–1950)* by EMEL Publishers, Islamabad.

Ipshita Chanda, "Bonobibir Johuranama: A Method for Reading Plural Cultures" forthcoming in *The Delhi University Journal of the Humanities and the Social Sciences* Vol. 2.

Chandra Mohan, Chair (c.mohan.7@hotmail.com)
General Secretary, CLAI (India)

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Research Committee on Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature

In 2014 the Research Committee on "Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature" held the following conferences to foster and support the SR spirit and thinking among Chinese scholars.

1. March 17–19, 2014, the conference on "Constructions of East and West: Translating Classical Texts," with a special focus on the variation and outcome in the process of translation. About ten scholars from UK, USA, Hong Kong and mainland China participated in this conference.

2. May 18, the Committee held a Workshop with the University of Chicago on "Human Cultures and Transcendent Meaning". Scholars from the University of Chicago dialogued with the scholars from Renmin University of China.

3. May 20–24, the Committee helped organize a panel on dialogue between Confucianism and Christianity at the Nishan Forum. About ten scholars held a lively discussion in the panel.

4. In September 2014, the Committee helped with the organization and design of the 4th World Conference on Sinology, which gathered about 300 hundred scholars from all parts of the world and from mainland China. There were ten roundtables and forums, providing a special platform for scholars in the areas of humanities and social sciences. This conference represented a praxis of SR spirit, in which different civilizations, cultures and thoughts were shared and exchanged as a mutual reflection.

5. September 22–25, 2014, the Committee helped organize the 10th Summer Institute and a roundtable in the 20th Congress of Chinese Comparative Literature. The theme of the roundtable and Summer Institute was "Comparative Literature and Scriptural Reasoning." About twenty-four scholars from UK, USA, France, and mainland China presented their papers in Yanbian, Jilin Province.

6. October 15, 2014, a special seminar was organized in honor of the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann, who dialogued with Chinese and British scholars on political theology and hope theology.

Apart from the conferences and seminars, we had several publications. Yang Huilin published his English book, *China, Christianity and the Question of Culture* (Baylor University Press), and this book won the *Christianity Today* 2015 Book Award. Two issues of the *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* were published, and their topics are related to Scriptural Reasoning: "Moving Boundaries" (Issue 31) and "Trajectory of the Classics" (Issue 32).

Through these activities we keep promoting inter-disciplinary, inter-religious and inter-cultural studies. In 2015 we will publish the *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* issues 33 and 34 on "Controversies over the Translation of Scriptures" and "The Significance of Hope." We will work with Brill to select the best articles published in the past issues of the Journal and translate them into English. Baylor University Press will publish the essays of the conference in March 2014 under the title of *A Poetics of Translation.*

The Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature Research Committee plans to host three major conferences in 2015. In April, there is an international symposium on "East-West Art: Contemporary Development" co-sponsored by the Committee. This meeting will seek to practice Scriptural Reasoning in arts, philosophy, and literature. We have gathered artists and philosophers with different faith interests, presenting diverse artist forms and lively academic dialogues on spirituality and art. In July the 11th Summer Institute will focus on the crises we have today and direct a discussion about the different traditions and resources upon which people may draw from. In October, the Committee will help host the Executive Council Meeting for World Sinology Conference and a small seminar on the past and future of sinology.

YANG Huilin, Chair (yanghuilin@ruc.edu.cn)
ZHANG Jing (Cathy), Secretary (jing.cathy.zhang@ruc.edu.cn)
Renmin University (China)

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Research Committee on Literature and Neuroscience

The ICLA Research Committee on Literature and Neuroscience held an interdisciplinary, international symposium on October 21–24, 2014 at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory on Long Island, New York. This group included

noted comparatists and neuroscientists who probed mental processes associated with creativity in the arts and sciences. Among the fifteen speakers, six permanent members of the committee gave papers, including Peter Schneck, Donald Wehrs, S. Nalbantian, J. P. Changeux, Robert Stickgold, and Paul Matthews. There was significant, innovative exchange between the disciplines on this topic of wide interest. The symposium was organized and directed by the chair of the committee, Suzanne Nalbantian, who is now seeking publication of an interdisciplinary volume on creativity (to be edited by herself and neuroscientist Paul Matthews) based on this latest exchange.

Along with the ongoing collaborative work on the new volume, the research committee will take on a new topic in preparation for a series of group sessions to be held at the ICLA Vienna Congress in 2016. This next topic will be the neuroliterary study of emotion. This subject is prompted by the ICLA's designation of the theme of fear for its forthcoming symposium connected with the Executive Council Meeting in Lisbon, June/July 2015, at which Nalbantian will be giving a paper. The research committee will henceforth be seeking comparatists to offer papers for its sessions at the Vienna 2016 Congress, which will analyze emotion as enacted and exemplified in literary texts. As is customary for the work of this committee, comparatists in these 2016 ICLA sessions will interact with a group of invited neuroscientists in a shared effort to explore emotion in its literary and neurobiological manifestations.

Suzanne Nalbantian, Chair (rey.sn@juno.com)
Long Island University (USA)

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Research Committee on the 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 interest has led to a multitude of theoretical writings trying to explain the origin and functions of dreams and to decipher their meaning ("dream discourse") through factual and fictional representations of dream in literature and many other media.

The Research Committee will try to study this phenomenon in as many cultures and periods as possible. In March 2015 we convened a Workshop in Berlin on "Writing the Dream II." Our next major project will be a symposium in Mulhouse (September 2015) on "Theorizing the Dream." For details, see our new homepage at www.dreamcultures.org, which also includes a rapidly growing searchable database of dream researchers and

publications on dream. If you have been active in this field please enter your personal data and publications (-> Database / -> Submit).

We are still looking for committee members with a special competence for dream-discourse and literary dreams in Eastern Europe, India, China, Japan, Korea, South America, and Africa.

Bernard Dieterle, Co-Chair (bernard.dieterle@uha.fr)
Mulhouse (France)

Manfred Engel, Co-Chair (manfred.engel@mx.uni-saarland.de)
Saarbrücken (Germany)

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Research Committee on Religion, Ethics, and Literature

The research committee on Religion, Ethics and Literature was inaugurated as a new research committee of the ICLA in September 2014. The committee was formed initially by interested ICLA members at the "Fault Lines of Modernity: New Contexts for Religion, Ethics, and Literature," conference hosted by Professor Kitty Millet at San Francisco State University in San Francisco, CA, June 2014. At that time, Professor Kitty Millet was elected by vote to chair the committee and guide it through certification with the ICLA. The research committee's first collection, entitled *Fault Lines of Modernity: The Fractures and Repairs of Religion, Ethics, and Literature* (co-edited by Kitty Millet and Dorothy Figueira), has been accepted for publication by Bloomsbury. The purview of the committee is the examination of the current overarching discourse of religion and society since such a discourse signifies a change resulting from a particular historical conjuncture in the "west." However, the committee does not seek to limit itself to a "western" view of the three main nodes, i.e. religion, ethics and literature. Therefore, in the interests of a "multi"-cultural committee, we seek a more speculative rather than epistemological view of these three disciplines.

Recently, members of the committee received a generous invitation from CLAI to host two panels at its 2015 international conference in Jaipur, India. Shortly after this event, Professor Figueira, a member of the committee, celebrated the new edition of her definitive text, *Aryans, Jews, Brahmins: Theorizing Authority through Myths of Identity.* The committee expects to propose several panels for the upcoming congress in Vienna and if ICLA members wish to join this committee, please direct your inquiries to Kitty Millet.

Kitty Millet, Chair (kmillet1@sfsu.edu)
San Francisco State University (USA)

Nouvelles des Comités / Committee Updates

Balakian Prize Committee

See announcmenet on p. 156.

Coordinating Committee

I am pleased to report on the activities of the Coordinating Committee for the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages from July 15, 2013, when the Committee met in Paris, to July 21st, 2014, and beyond. This period includes also our Committee meeting (June 16–17th) in Aix en Provence, France. We thank Fridrun Rinner for hosting our business meeting and Conference at the University Aix Marseille, as well as Crystel Pinçonnat and Alexis Nuselovici for helping with the necessary arrangements for our Conference on June 18th through June 21st.

1) Publications with Benjamins

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

Regarding the various publications projects that the Coordinating Committee has sponsored recently, the Benjamins website provides blurbs and selective Google views of our volumes. Sets of volumes can now be bought at a discount and all volumes can be purchased in digital

form. The volumes devoted to the *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe* continue to garner reviews, which have been posted separately on the CHLEL site. *L'époque de la Renaissance*, vol. III, *Maturations et mutations (1520–1560),* John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011, was recently reviewed by Toni Veneri in *Semicerchio* 1–2 (2013): 245–47. The four volumes of the *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe* have been reviewed by Miloš Zelenka (vols. 1–3) in *World Literature Studies* 1.1 (2009): 77–80; Libuša Vajdová (vol. 1–3) in *World Literature Studies* 1.2 (2009): 89–91; Florin Berindeanu (vols. 1–3) in *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 53 (2007) 227–32; Monika Báar in *Comparative Critical Studies* 4.3 (2007): 468–71; and Ileana Orlich in *Literary Research/Recherche littéraire* 24.47–48 (Summer 2008): 51–58. Earlier reviews of other published projects can be found at http://www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=.CHLEL under "Comparative Literature History Series," where each title appears, followed by links to the reviews.

Our ten current projects continue to make significant progress, as directors gather contributions, translate, and copy-edit them. One volume in the "problem" series has been favorably reviewed by two external specialists and one member of the Coordinating Committee and has been published at the end of 2014. Entitled *New Literary Hybrids in the Age of Multimedia Expression: Crossing Borders, Crossing Genres,* this volume edited by Marcel Cornis-Pope is 770 double-spaced pages long and covers a broad range of topics (literature and other media such as film, visual art, digital work, sound work, etc.) and geocultural areas (Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, the Orient, Africa and the Americas).

Other book manuscripts that are in advanced stage, some ready to be reviewed by our committee and designated external readers are: the first volume of *A Comparative History of Nordic Cultures* focused on "Scopes and Practices" and edited by Steven P. Sondrup and Mark B. Sandberg; vol. 2 of this project is ready to go to outside reviewers. The second volume of *A Comparative History of Literatures in the Iberian Peninsula*, edited by César Domínquez Prieto, Anxo Abuín, and Ellen Sapega, is in process of completion. We have also recently received a full draft of the *Orality Project* as a challenge to comparative literary history, coedited by Daniel Chamberlain and J. Edward Chamberlin. This project has been reviewed by two external evaluators and by a member of our Committee as is currently undergoing final revisions.

Other projects in different stages of elaboration include: César Domínguez Prieto's *Medieval Comparatism / Comparatist Medievalism*; this project has been delayed because of César's work on the Iberian project. Fridrun Rinner and Franca Sinopoli have solicited position papers for the transnational project on *Migration and Literature in Europe in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century* and have collected abstracts for the case studies section of their volume. In December 2014, the editors and members of this research group met at Sapienza University (Rome, Italy) to discuss the collected articles and to organize the peer review process. They hope to have a final discussion of this volume in the early part of 2015 and submit the volume for review and publication in the summer of 2015. Also targeted for completion in 2015 is the first volume of the *History of Transatlantic Literatures in European Languages in the 20th Century*, edited by Jean Marc Moura. Two more volumes are in advanced stage of conceptualization: *La Nouvelle Cultures* (Renaissance II), edited by Eva Kushner and Conrad Eisenbichler, has most articles in place. We expect to receive a full draft of this volume towards the end of April 2015. *Conceptualizing European Literature(s)*, volume edited by Vivian Liska and Thomas Nolden, has gone through several reconceptualizations, not unusual for a volume meant for our "problem" series. In similar ways, another volume targeted for the problem series, focused on realism redefined and edited by a team that includes Margaret Higonnet, Dirk Göttsche, and Patrizia Lombardo, is currently undergoing a significant overhaul of its conceptual structure. Following several preparatory panels, a detailed outline for the project on "Landscapes of Realism" was drawn up at a meeting organized in London in 2014 by committee members Robert Weninger and Patrizia Lombardo, who summarized the premises and goals of the volumes proposed. The realism steering committee submitted this outline to CHLEL; it was presented at the meeting by Dirk Göttsche. Concurrently several papers were read at the Aix en Provence Conference in June 2014 on a panel chaired by Cornis-Pope; this panel extended its attention to later avatars of realism through the twentieth century (surrealism, neorealism, socialist realism). The Committee voted to approve this proposal in a motion that states "The Committee is impressed with the proposal on Reconsidering Realism(s) and approves the suggested conceptual framework and course of action, beginning with the planned conference in January 2015. We understand that the working

committee that has developed the most recent version of the Realism proposal, presented to us in Aix en Provence, is ready to move forward and develop fully this publication project. The Coordinating Committee offers its full support to this project and its successful completion."

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

2) Website and Editorial Review

www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=.CHLEL

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

3) Committee Meeting in 2015

Our 2015 Coordinating Committee Meeting and Conference will take place in Siena (Italy) and in the nearby Certosa di Pontignano center, on June 10th and 11th, followed by a conference on June 12th-13th. Organized by Francesco Stella, the conference will be focused primarily (but not only) on the interaction of literature with electronic media, and the digitalization of both literature and criticism. Thirty-five international scholars from Europe, Asia, North and South America will present at the CHLEL Conference on literature and multimedia.

MARCEL CORNIS-POPE, CHAIR (mcornis@vcu.edu)
Virginia Commonwealth University (USA)

Nominating Committee

After having been appointed as chair of the Nominating Committee following the Paris ICLA General Meeting, I sounded out a number of colleagues as to their willingness to be part of the Committee. I found David Damrosch (Harvard), Mads Rosendahl Thomsen (Aarhus) and José Luis Jobim (Rio de Janeiro) willing to be part of the Committee, and am still looking for a fourth and possibly fifth member to address both geographical and gender balance. Several attempts to do so have failed until now.

The present members of the Nominating Committee are actively circulating names of possible candidates for all offices of ICLA as of the 2016 General Meeting. After sounding out the willingness of those proposed to indeed serve, the Committee will propose a list of candidates to the Executive Committee at the upcoming June/July Lisbon meeting. Again, geographical and gender balance will be observed as far as possible.

After approval by the Executive Committee, the definitive list of candidates will be made public well in time for the 2016 ICLA General Meeting.

Theo D'haen, Chair (theo.dhaen@arts.kuleuven.be)
University of Leuven (Belgium)

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Research Committee

The AILC/ICLA Research Committee members are Zhao Baisheng (Peking University), Sibylle Baumbach (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz), Montserrat Cots (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Bala Venkat Mani (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Mariano Siskind (Harvard University), Jola Škulj (Inštitut za slovensko literaturo in literarne vede), Mads Rosendhal Thomsen (Aarhus Universitet), Hein Viljoen (Noordwes-Universiteit).

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

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

A short description of the proposed project, with a clear statement of the problem to be investigated (500 words maximum).

A more detailed description of the project field, including including sections on overview of the project field, project rationale, objectives and plan/timeline for implementation (2000 words maximum).

Team composition, including short biographic profiles (200 words per bio).

Information regarding the links of the project with both local and international institutions.

Information regarding research and teaching outcomes of the project.

Information regarding a plan of activities (a detailed schedule of planned activities for the next 3 seminars, workshops, etc.) and publications.

Information regarding measures to make the project visible (media-dissemination, public outreach).

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

Since 2011, the AILC/ICLA Research Committee has approved the following projects: "Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies" (2011), "Literature and Neuroscience" (2011), "Literary and Cultural Inter-relationships between India, Its Neighbouring Countries and the World" (2011), "Literary and Cultural History of the Dream" (2013), "Religion, Ethics, and Literature" (2014), and "Comics Studies and Graphic Narrative" (2015).

César Domínguez, Chair (cesar.dominguez@usc.es)
Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

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Structures Committee

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

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Translation Committee

Chair: Sandra Bermann (sandralb@princeton.edu)
Princeton University (USA)

Appel à communications AILC 2016 / Call for Papers: ICLA 2016

The XXIst Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association will take place at the University of Vienna, Austria, from July 21st until July 27th, 2016. The Call for Papers is now open.

Congress Theme: The Many Languages of Comparative Literature

The comparison of literary texts from different cultural spheres and in different languages was at the origin of Comparative Literature. Even after comparatist paradigms have changed and developed, and after comparative criticism has expanded considerably, the crossing of borders between languages is still essential to the discipline.

For the first time, the theme of a congress organized by the International Comparative Literature Association will be "language"—language in all its meanings and embedded in various contexts: as a "national" idiom, the basis of literary texts, as source-language and target-language in literary translation, as the set of languages forming "World Literature" in its literary manifestation (and as the canon of languages "World Literature" is actually concentrating on). And language—both written and spoken—is not just the self-evident medium of all objects of Comparative Literature, but also the indispensable meta-language of scientific discourse and poetological terminology. The multilingualism of Comparative Literature is both a challenge and an opportunity: from its beginnings, the polymorph diversity of World Literature has constituted the attraction and surplus of comparatist reading. Even the most accomplished polyglot comparatist can master only a relatively small range of languages. This fact conditions the discourse more than might be apparent in a knowledge culture increasingly influenced by the English language.

The congress will also focus on language in its broadest sense: the usage of language by 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 the various literatures of the world, and even in its metaphorical sense, as "languages" of styles and forms. As an infinite code with constant need for decryption, the international sign system of literature perpetually reproduces the myth of the confusion of tongues and sets new tasks to multilingual mankind: its literature and its criticism.

Congress Sections

The Arts as Universal Code

- Languages of form and genre
- Languages of style
- Language in the 2nd degree quotation, intertextuality, and meta-reference
- Comparing the arts: art as a universal language
- Language and literature—general semiotics
- Different media, different expressions

Language: The Essence of World Literature

- The Tower of Babel: myths about language
- Languages as a literary topic
- Languages of the world: languages of World Literature—world language?
- Nation and language
- "Translational" literature
- "Major" vs. "minor" languages
- The comparison of languages: one origin of literary comparatism
- Expressing regionalism
- The language of power: the language of resistance
- Literary translation: histories, methods, markets

Many Cultures, Many Idioms

- Language and culture
- Cultural images and their linguistic representation
- The language of the "others"
- Language and identity
- Multilingualism as a traditional phenomenon
- Multilingualism as a contemporary phenomenon
- Multilingualism: problem or opportunity

Who is speaking? Comparatism and the social sciences
Hybridity and comparatism
Crossing cultural borders

The Language of Thematics
How to speak about themes? Terminology of Thematics
Meaning: interpreting texts in a comparatist framework
The renaissance of metaphor studies
Language of the sexes: languages of gender
The languages of emotion
The language of concern: international ecocriticism

Comparatists at Work: Professional Communication
The knowledge of literary criticism and its various codes
The evaluation of literature: the language of criticism
Comparatism as a verbal procedure: how to compare with words?
Speaking about: the metadiscourse of literary historiography
Digital humanities
Analytical philosophy and logics in the critical discourse
Spoken and written discourse
The multilingual library of Comparative Literature
The comparatist's dictionary: International terminology

Proposals

Individual proposals may be submitted for congress sessions (one session = 3 papers = 90 min.).

All topics presented above may be considered as suggestions. Congress sessions will be composed according to the number and variety of proposals. In general, two types of proposals are possible:

1) individual proposals for papers to be presented in congress sessions (until August 31, 2015)

2) proposals to organize group sections (until April 30, 2015)

Proposals must be written either in English, German, or French.

Please find more details on submitting proposals, registration, conference fees, venue, accommodation etc. on the ICLA 2016 website http://icla2016.univie.ac.at/

Thème du Congrès: La littérature comparée: multiples langues, multiples langages

La comparaison des textes littéraires de différentes cultures et diverses langues est sans nul doute l'origine de la littérature comparée, s'affirmant comme discipline universitaire à part entière. Même si l'on a connu de nombreuses mutations du paradigme comparatiste, même si le travail sur le texte littéraire s'est souvent et profondément transformé, il n'en demeure pas moins que la traversée des frontières reste l'une des opérations magistrales et essentielles du comparatisme.

Pour la première fois, les langues et les langages constitueront le thème central du congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée: entendons les langues/les langages dans tous les sens les plus divers de ces deux mots et replaçons les dans les contextes les plus variés: par exemple en tant que langues «nationales», qui ont été utilisées lors de la rédaction originale des textes littéraires; considérons les comme langues sources et langues cibles dans l'opération de la traduction littéraire; regardons les en tant que somme ou bouquet des langues dont les diverses concrétisations littéraires constituent la «littérature mondiale», et finalement embrassons les comme «canon de langues», qui reflète le 'marché' réel de la littérature mondiale. Du même coup, l'ensemble des langues et des langages—écrit(e)s ou parlé(e)s—n'apparaît pas seulement comme le médium évident de tous les objets d'étude du comparatisme, cet ensemble va représenter aussi l'indispensable métalangage du discours critique et de la terminologie poétologique. Le multilinguisme de notre discipline pose sans doute un problème, mais aussi il offre en même temps une chance. Une chance, parce que la diversité de la littérature mondiale a toujours été un aspect riche et satisfaisant de l'acte de lecture, et ceci étant entendu de l'Antiquité jusqu'à nos jours d'aujourd'hui. Un problème sans doute aussi, du fait que le comparatiste le plus brillant et le plus polyglotte ne maîtrise tout de même qu'un nombre d'idiomes plutôt limité. Et voilà qui caractérise au plus haut point le discours courant, même si le phénomène est peut-être obscurci par le fait que l'anglais est devenu la *lingua franca* de toutes cultures, de toutes connaissances, dans le monde d'aujourd'hui.

L'intention qui sous-tend la piste ici proposée est aussi de thématiser les langues et les langages dans un sens plus ample: entendons par là la pratique linguistique des groupes sociaux ou ethniques variés; quelle est leur langue? entendons encore par là les langages des thèmes et des discours; comment se disent-ils et se parlent-ils? entendons toujours par là la langue comme sujet propre de la littérature; le mode d'expression des idées et des

problèmes centraux que traitent les littératures diverses. S'y ajouterait aussi, bien entendu, la question du langage par métaphore: le langage des styles et des formes littéraires, dont le code perpetuel doit être toujours à nouveau déchiffré, et ceci alors même que la littérature internationale reproduit sans cesse le mythe—babélien—de la confusion des langages. Pourtant ce défi représente en même temps aussi l'objectif le plus élevé de la littérature, de son analyse critique: comprendre l'humanité, embrasser l'humain dans la multiplicité de ses langages.

Sections du Congrès

Les arts comme code universel

Les langages des formes et des genres
Le langage du style
Le langage au second degré: citation, intertextualité et métaréférence
Les arts comparés: l'art comme langage universel
Langage et littérature—la sémiotique en général
Différences des médias, différences des expressions

Langue et langage—l'essence de la littérature mondiale

La Tour de Babel: des mythes métalinguistiques
Langues et langages comme sujets littéraires
Les langues du monde, les langages du monde littéraire, une langue mondiale?
Nation et langue
La littérature « translationale »
Langues « majeures », langues « mineures »
Comparaison des langues—une origine de la littérature comparée
L'expression du régionalisme
Langue/langage du pouvoir—langue/langage de la résistance
La traduction littéraire: histoire, méthodes, marchés

Plusieurs cultures, plusieurs idiomes

Langue et culture
Les images des cultures et leur représentation linguistique
La langue/ le langage des « autres »
Langage et identité
Le multilinguisme: phénomène historique/ traditionnel
Le multilinguisme contemporain
Le multilinguisme: problème ou chance ?

Qui parle? Comparatisme et sciences sociales
L'hybridité et le comparatisme
Franchir les frontières culturelles

Le langage de la thématique

Comment parler de la thématique? Terminologie des études thématologiques
Texte et signification—l'interprétation dans le contexte comparatiste
La renaissance de la métaphorologie
Langage du sexe—langage du genre
Les langages de l'émotion
Le langage engagé—l'éco-critique internationale/ les humanités environnementales

Les comparatistes au travail—la communication professionnelle

Les codes divers de la critique littéraire
L'évaluation de la littérature—le langage de la critique littéraire
Le comparatisme parlé—comment comparer avec des mots?
À propos de: Le méta-discours de l'historiographie littéraire
Les humanités numériques
La philosophie analytique et la logique dans le discours critique
Discours oral et discours écrit
La bibliothèque polyglotte de la littérature comparée
Le dictionnaire comparatiste: terminologies internationales

Propositions

Des propositions individuelles peuvent être soumises pour les séances du congrès (une séance = 3 conférences = 90 min.).

Tous les thèmes présentés ci-dessus peuvent être considérés comme des suggestions. Les séances du congrès seront organisées en fonction du nombre et la diversité des propositions. Deux types de propositions sont—en général—envisageables:

1) des propositions individuelles pour des conférences singulières données lors d'une des sessions du congrès (31 août 2015)

2) des propositions visant à organiser des sections et des groupes de travail (30 avril 2015)

Les propositions doivent être soumises en langue anglaise, allemande ou française.

Pour plus d'information, veuillez visiter le site http://icla2016.univie.ac.at/

In Memoriam

Ulrich Weisstein

Ulrich Weisstein, 88, Indiana University professor emeritus of Comparative Literature and Germanic studies, died on October 10, 2014 in Graz, Austria, his home for nearly twenty-five years. By his students and colleagues at Indiana University Professor Weisstein will be remembered as introducing the study of the "mutual illumination of the arts" and for inaugurating the field of comparative arts.

A prolific scholar and editor, he counted 400 titles among his publications, including fourteen books. He served on the executive council of the Modern Language Association and the International Comparative Literature Association.

In 1968 he published, in German, an introduction to and survey of the discipline of Comparative Literature. In 1973, an expanded version appeared in English that soon became a standard work in the field, as did other translations.

As a pioneer in exploring the relationship of literature to the other arts, he established a course that he taught at IU for more than thirty years. In recognition of his contributions the University of Lund in Sweden conferred on him an honorary doctorate in 1993.

In Graz, Ulrich Weisstein continued his interest in the interrelations of arts: some fifty essays were published in 2007 under the title *Selected Essays on Opera.*

Prix Balakian / Balakian Prize

Appel à soumissions / Call for Submissions

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

RULES FOR SUBMITTING BOOKS:

1. Books can be submitted if they are a first book in Comparative Literature studies by an author under forty years of age at the time of the book's publication.

2. The book must have a literary-critical approach that deals with areas such as the following through a comparative optic: literary aesthetics or poetics, literature and the arts, literary movements, historical or biographical influences on literature, cross-fertilization of regional or national literatures, or literary criticism on an international plane. Studies that are primarily ethnic or gender-related or that are restricted to single literature are not eligible for the Prize. Electronic publications are excluded.

3. The winner will be invited to attend the AILC / ICLA Congress in order to receive the award. Travel costs will be reimbursed by the AILC / ICLA Treasurer up to a maximum of US$1000.

4. All material must reach the office of the ICLA President by January 15, 2016. The author should also provide a permanent mailing address as well as their current e-mail address.

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