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International Comparative Literature Association

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Table des Matières / Table of Contents

Essais / Review Essays

Comptes Rendus / Book Reviews

Comptes rendus brefs / Book Notes

Comptes rendus des congrès / Reviews of Conferences

D'autres matières / Other Items

In Memoriam: Professor Douwe Wessel Fokkema, 1931-2011

The AILC/ICLA mourns the passing of one of its most devoted members, Douwe Fokkema, who was a secretary of the Association (1973-79) and then president (1985-88). Educated at the University of Amsterdam, at Leiden, and at UC Berkeley and Columbia, he became Professor and Chair of Comparative Literature at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. In 1966-68 he held a diplomatic position in Beijing. His publications include *Theories of Literature in the Twentieth Century* (1977, with Elrud Ibsch), *Literary History, Modernism, and Postmodernism* (1984), *Modernist Conjectures: A Mainstream in European Literature 1910-1940* (1988, also with Elrud Ibsch), and *Knowledge and Commitment: A Problem-Oriented Approach to Literary Studies* (2000, again with Ibsch). Soon to appear will be *Perfect Worlds: Utopian Fiction in China and the West.* He was also the author of a volume of poetry and two novels. Professor Fokkema was a visiting professor at Harvard in Spring 1983 and for shorter periods thereafter at Göttingen, Princeton, Peking University, University of Alberta, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, University of Wroclaw, and Sichuan University, Chengdu.

PARIS 2013 INFORMATION

Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée.

XXème Congrès, 18-24 juillet 2013. Lieu : Paris Sorbonne (Paris IV).

http://icla-ailc-2013.paris-sorbonne.fr (ouverture du site : septembre 2011)

APPEL À COMMUNICATIONS

Thème du Congrès : Le comparatisme comme approche critique

Depuis la fin du XIX^{e} siècle, les comparatistes ont mené une réflexion continue sur la définition de leur discipline, ses domaines d'application, les extensions possibles du champ de leurs recherches. A l'ère de la mondialisation, le dialogue entre réflexions émanant de pays occidentaux et théorisations émanant de pays extra-occidentaux enrichit et multiplie les perspectives. C'est en présentant les différents axes de recherche du Congrès sous la forme de questionnements, plutôt que d'orientations figées, qu'une telle réflexion sur l'apport du comparatisme à la critique littéraire permettra de mesurer les mouvances et l'évolution de la discipline. Nous vous invitons donc à venir débattre de ces questions à Paris à l'occasion du XXème Congrès de l'AILC, et à soumettre une proposition qui puisse rentrer dans l'un des cinq axes suivants :

Axes du congrès (description complète des axes sur le site du congrès)

1) La littérature comparée : une science comparative parmi d'autres ?
2) Comparables et incomparables ?
3) Littérature comparée et traductologie : la traduction est-elle une approche critique ?
4) De nouvelles théories, pourquoi et comment ?
5) Au-delà des nations : aires linguistiques, continents littéraires, mondialisation ?

International Comparative Literature Association.

XXth Congress, July 18-24, 2013. Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV).

http://icla-ailc-2013.paris-sorbonne.fr (website opening: September 2011)

CALL FOR PAPERS

Congress theme: Comparative Literature as a critical approach

Specialists of comparative literature have regularly questioned the nature of their discipline, its domains of application, and the possible developments of their field of research. In our era of globalization, the dialogue between theoretical constructs coming from Western countries and those from non-Western nations contributes to diversification and multiplies perspectives. To provide an opportunity for discussing what comparative literature brings to literary criticism and for assessing the evolution of our discipline, we have chosen to present the various sessions of the Congress in the form of questions rather than fixed and assertive directions. We invite you to come to Paris to discuss these issues during the XXth Congress of the ICLA, and we invite you to submit a proposal for one of the following sessions:

Congress Sessions (fuller description of topics on the Congress website)

1) Comparative Literature: Just Another Comparative Science Among Others?
2) Comparable and Incomparable Literary Objects?
3) Comparative Literature and Translation Studies: Is Translation a Critical Approach?
4) New Theories, How and Why?
5) Nations and Beyond: Linguistic Areas, Literary Continents, Globalization?

PRÉSENTATION DES RÉDACTEURS

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

TRANSITION IN THE EDITORSHIP: FIGUEIRA SUCCEEDS FOSTER

It is with considerable humility that I assume the editorship of *RL/LR* from the able stewardship of John Burt Foster, Jr., who resuscitated this journal after a period of recurring publication difficulties. He was able to produce three annual issues and get them into the hands of the association's membership through generous funding from George Mason University.

The two of us were able to establish this sponsorship during my eight months as President pro tempore of AILC/ICLA following the death of Professor Tania Franco Carvalhal. I am very grateful to him and his university for enabling us to reestablish the journal's production and regular dissemination. For me, his appointment as editor and his ability to secure funding were the most significant acts of my tenure as President pro tempore. While our relationship with George Mason University has now reached its scheduled conclusion, John's department did provide some assistance this year, by advancing funds to cover copyright fees for translating Herta Müller's plenary address at the 2010 Seoul congress. John also volunteered a full month of his time this summer to oversee production of this issue.

Professor Foster used the four years of his involvement with *RL/LR* to reinstate its original and intended format as an international review journal of publications in the field of comparative literature. He has also enlarged its scope to report on the activities of affiliate organizations of AILC/ICLA. As I assume full responsibility for the journal, I will continue these efforts.

From my long experience on the AILC/ICLA Board and my brief period at the helm, I understand very well how this organization's workings can, at times, appear opaque to members. This is especially true because we meet as a group only every three years, and it is often difficult for many members to attend these triennial congresses on a regular basis. I therefore wish to use this official organ of the Association to build a greater sense of community. A real concern for me has always been how often members do not know anything of the remarkable activity taking place in our association, particularly the collaborative work that is done by the various research committees. The very existence of these committees, which are listed on our website and also on page 56 of this issue, and the breadth of the topics currently under study need to be made known so that individual members of the association can participate more readily in their initiatives. Participation is possible either as a permanent member of a committee or as a guest member in congress panels, ancillary conferences, and committee publications. I see one major purpose of this journal to lie in informing the members of such research opportunities.

I also wish to expand the geographical scope of the publications reviewed in *RL/LR*. Toward this end, the assessors of the Executive Board, who represent the membership of the Association in its worldwide breadth, will be encouraged to take more active roles in making available for review important publications from their host countries. Finally, there will be an effort made, as shown by the reports on pages 78-89 of this issue, to publicize the activities of comparative literature member associations so that the general membership can learn of opportunities outside their own national associations. We will, of course, continue to publish position papers that arise from the triennial congress or from the committee "mini-conferences" in non-congress years.

I have heard, on occasion, from members who feel that *RL/LR* is the only tangible thing they receive from their AILC/ICLA membership. I am very conscious that for many members it is a burden to attend the congresses in these straitened times. These circumstances make it all the more important for the Association to live up to its aim of providing members with a review of comparative publications that do not always make their way into the journals of the national comparative literature associations or more general literary publications. As a secondary goal, I feel that publicizing the research opportunities currently available within AILC/ICLA can only increase participation in these committees by introducing a broader spectrum of the members to the important work done by the Association. While this journal might be the "only tangible thing" that AILC/ICLA gives its members for their dues, we can certainly do our best to make it more useful and informative!

* * * * *

This year's issue is the first in several years to be produced largely with funds from the AILC/ICLA; as a result, it is somewhat shorter in length. However, the two Forum sections will give members unable to attend the 2010 congress in Seoul the texts of four plenary talks of compelling professional interest. Two of these talks came about through the good offices of our colleagues in the Korean Comparative Literature Association. They will eventually be reprinted in the proceedings of the Seoul congress, which will also include several other plenary talks as well as a selection of papers by scholars from Korea and around the world.

The first Forum pays tribute to the power of words, the expressive material with which we work every day as teachers and researchers. Steven Sondrup's address on assuming the presidency of the AILC/ICLA, "The Word: An Appreciation," reminds us of a wide array of achieved assertions, many from the deep past. His address moves freely among a variety of global regions, manifesting a spirit that attests to our growing familiarity as comparatists with traditions worldwide. It thus offers a fitting retrospect on a congress devoted to "Expanding the Frontiers of Comparative Literature." In an experiential counterpoint to the enduring statements evoked in President Sondrup's talk, Nobel Laureate Herta Müller's address, "The Barber, the Hair, and the King," records, with terse eloquence and a strong sense of biographical and psychic complexity, how a seemingly chance utterance—"it belongs to me" (p. 20)—can fend off a formidable challenge to free expression, mounted here by the Ceaușescu regime in Romania. Her address, previously untranslated and presented at the congress in German with cue texts in Korean and

English on videoscreens, has been rendered into English by President Sondrup.

The second Forum gives the responses of two seasoned comparatists to the Seoul congress's theme. Jasbir Jain, from India, reflects on the changes that an Asian perspective on comparatism can bring to a field that arose two centuries ago in Europe. Prominent among her topics are the new circuits of comparative study that are emerging across the global South, throughout Asia's varied cultures, and within a multilingual country like India. Jain also draws fresh insights from Edward Said's concept of contrapuntal reading and from recent fiction by Orhan Pamuk and Kazuo Ishiguro. Manfred Schmeling, in his address as departing president of the AILC/ICLA, highlights the changes that he has seen during his career: the turns toward cultural studies and intermediality, the greater theoretical and methodological rigor, and the growth of links among cultures, not just in a Europe once splintered by hostilities but throughout the world.

Perhaps in confirmation of this greater closeness, both Jain and Schmeling draw on Kafka's famous story *Die Verwandlung* [The Metamorphosis] to bring out their distinctive viewpoints on our field. For Jain, Gregor's startling transformation testifies to the depth of his resistance to an enforced homogenization of identity, one that can be seen to parallel the impact of hegemonic pressures in the world at large. For Schmeling the story has a place within the long tradition of "metamorphic" motifs in western literatures, from Ovid onwards; but it also shows the greater, even unexpected possibilities for linkages between cultural regions. The telling example here is Mario Vargas Llosa's *El Hablador* [The Storyteller], where Kafka's story resurfaces, transformed in its own right, among a small tribe of native Americans in the Amazon rainforest.

The essays in the next unit illustrate two of our main priorities as a review journal: to cover comparative scholarship not written in French or English (the Association's official languages) and to draw attention to the work of our research committees. Hiroshi Oshima's discussion of Yuriko Yamanaka's ambitious study of the fortunes of the Alexander the Great story in the Islamic world models the first of these goals, while also providing insights into the nature of comparative study in Japan. It thus supplements similar articles (for example, on Spain, China, France, or the United States) in previous issues. The other two articles review major research projects published by the AILC/ICLA's Committee on the History of Literatures in European Languages (CHLEL). One is the third volume in a four-volume history of Renaissance literature, edited by Eva Kushner, the founder of this journal as well as a past president of the Association. The other is the first volume of a projected two-volume history of the literatures of the Iberian Peninsula. Other volumes in this series, on the literatures of East Central Europe, on Romantic prose fiction, and on modernism, have been covered in earlier issues.

The following unit, which consists of standard-length reviews, "expands frontiers" in several directions, both topical and geocultural. President Sondrup comments on the third and final volume of the proceedings from the 2007 Brazil congress (the other volumes were reviewed in last year's *RL/LR*). He notes that in addition to representing our first congress in South America, the book can serve as an introduction to comparative work from and about that continent, along with publishing papers on the theme of "Identities in Process" in other regions. Margaret

Higonnet, current chair of CHLEL, reviews a study of female excision in multiple cultures along two "belts" running south from Egypt to Tanzania and west from Yemen to Senegal. This is a topic in which cultural studies, autobiographical writing, human rights discourses, trauma study, and the impact of globalization connect in ways that bear out points that both Jain and Schmeling make about comparative study today. My review of a volume produced by our French affiliate, the Société de littérature générale et comparée (which will host our 2013 Paris congress, as announced on the page facing the opening of this introduction, just after the table of contents) demonstrates the interest in worldwide comparative inquiry that has emerged within Europe itself. Carolyn Jones Medine, finally, comments on the interweaving of cross-cultural and interdisciplinary approaches that marks the proceedings of an AILC/ICLA-sponsored "mini-conference" on comparative literature and comparative religious studies, which was held in Bremen in 2008.

The section of short reviews known as "book notes" samples a varied array of recent comparative works, beginning with studies of South Asian diasporic literature in Canada, of the multilingual and multiethnic writing of the Pacific region, and of issues in East Asian modernity. Notable as well is the report on a collective volume honoring the late Earl Miner, a long-time leader in the AILC/ICLA and a pioneer in "intercultural" study as distinguished from cross-cultural or transcultural approaches. Reviews of books on the rich fortunes of Menippean satire and on the many-sided nature of Proustian originality round out this section.

This year's issue ends with assessments of recent meetings in our field that were held in Germany, India, Japan, and North America, with the aim of furnishing insights into the kinds of research being pursued by some of our national affiliates. Here as elsewhere we have tried as much as possible to rely on reviewers from different countries, even different continents, than the works or events that they review, as befits an organization committed to internationality.

Readers interested in previous issues of this journal will find that digital versions, beginning with Volume 23 in 2006, can be consulted or downloaded in PDF format at the AILC/ICLA website, <www.ailc-icla.org>.

Most of the support for this issue has come from the AILC/ICLA through contributions from its national affiliates. We value this assistance from far-flung groups of scholars. Translation rights for the talk by Herta Müller were funded in part by the George Mason English department, through its Global English initiative. For assistance of various kinds we are grateful to Gerald Gillespie, Randolph Pope, and Manfred Schmeling from the AILC/ICLA leadership, to Robert Matz and Barb Gomperts of the George Mason English department, and to Sung-Won Cho and Yun-Young Choi of the Korean Comparative Literature Association. As always, special appreciation goes to our contributors for sharing their insights into recent trends in our many-sided, ever-evolving field.

Finally, in tribute to a former officer and long-time supporter of the AILC/ICLA, who was also a good friend of *RL/LR*, we dedicate this issue of the journal to the memory of Douwe Fokkema.

Dorothy Figueira and John Burt Foster, Jr., Co-editors.

FORUM I

TRIOMPHES DU MOT / TRIUMPHS OF THE WORD

THE WORD: AN APPRECIATION

As King Hui of Liang said to Mencius, "叟不遠千里而 來" [You, sir, have come all this distance thinking nothing of a thousand *li*] (*Mencius, Book 1, Part A.1: 2–3*). Many of us have also come long distances like Mencius, but not for the reasons King Hui supposed had occasioned the visit of the philosopher. Surely no one imagines we are here to offer advice on governing the kingdom, but we have rather gathered for what some may deem a more self-indulgent purpose. We have traveled great distances because we love the word, and we are here in this beautiful country of Korea to celebrate it and sound its depths for new treasures of insight and understanding. We have gathered to extend our individual and collective cognizance of the variety of its uses and manifestations.

When words are combined in artful and masterful ways, we have been deeply moved but also know only too well that they can be abused and burdened with dissimilation and obfuscation contrived to mask everything from minor inconsistencies to gross and destructive ethical transgression. It is no wonder that ancient Chinese philosophers—among many others—have been deeply concerned about the proper naming of things or, perhaps better said, the correct segmentation of the world. Concerning the Confucian precept of the 正 名 [Rectification of Names] the sage is very clear.

> When names are not correct, what is said will not sound reasonable; when what is said does not sound reasonable, affairs will not culminate in success; when affairs do not culminate in success, rites and music will not flourish; when rites and music do not flourish, punishments will not be exactly right, the common people will not know where to put hand and foot. Thus when the gentleman names something, the name is sure to be usable in speech, and when he says something this is sure to be practicable. The thing about the gentleman is that he is anything but casual where speech is concerned. (*The Analects* XIII, 3: 120–21]

This suggestion that the health and well-being not only of the powerful and influential, but also and more importantly of society as a whole are a function of the integrity of the words that ground social, political, and aesthetic interaction can only heighten the esteem with which we regard them and amplify our regard for poets who—as Heidegger, for example, on many occasions has argued—have supplied them.

Similarly the Sanskrit वच् [Vāc]—from which the Latin *vox* and *voco* down to, at a far remove, the German *erwähnen* derive—has a wide semantic range including the verbs to speak, to tell, to utter, to recite, to announce, to declare, and to raise the voice. More importantly वच् was syncretized with सरसवती [Sarasvatī] as the goddess of eloquence, learning, the power of speech, the literary arts in general, and music. She is often understood as a celestial or oracular voice and a woman of excellence. Mystically she is revered as the source of the Sanskrit language and the sinuously elegant Devanagari script. The name सरसवती derives from सरस [saras] meaning anything flowing or fluid like springs, streams, and rivers and metaphorically even knowledge and speech.

A powerful example of regard for words—or here more precisely names—is seen in the case of those that will not be uttered. Many readers of the Hebrew Bible, for example, will not directly speak the name of the Deity, of the Tetragrammaton יהוה [Yahweh > Jehovah], not because it cannot be accurately articulated—not as סבלת [sibboleth] as opposed to שבלת [shibboleth] (Hebrew Bible, Judges 12:6)[1]—but rather out of respect for the ineffable holiness of a name that is not to be taken in vain.

In a quite different age and intellectual tradition, Lau Tzu opens the 道德經 [*Tao Te Ching*] with two intellectually vexing propositions each involving a play on words that celebrates their magnitude but also acknowledges their nearly paradoxal limitation. The way that can be named is not the true or constant way: 道可道非常道. And the name that can be named is similarly not the true name:名可名非常名.

Within the Christian tradition, the term for word itself, λόγος [logos], is understood in a divine sense. Inherited from the Greek, it has a very broad semantic range: speech, story, principle, analogy, and proposition among others. Early in the history of Greek philosophy, Heraclitus may well have been among the first to hint at the existence of universal essences behind the flux of empirical experience associated with this term. Philo of Alexandria, a Jew with Greek intellectual background and training, explicitly conceived of the λόγος as the mediator between imperfect material existence and the divine idea. The orthodox Christian conception of the λόγος is principally derived from the first verses of the first chapter of the Gospel of John where the λόγος is described in terms similar to those of Philo but goes much further in identifying the λόγος as the power that created all that was and is and without which nothing that exists was made. The third verse of Genesis to which John alludes is even more explicit in characterizing the nature of primal creations as fundamentally lingustic: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

The examples I have so far cited all have deeply religious or ethical components, which in part explains the wide-ranging intercultural regard for the word. But there are those who have taken issue precisely with that conception, and one of the most obvious is Faust in Goethe's great poem in which traditional Judeo-Christian conceptions are evoked but in the highly unorthodox context of nascent European romanticism. For Goethe's Faust, the passage from the Gospel of John is most compelling but apparently altogether too abstract. As is well known, Goethe has Faust offer an alternate translation (ll. 1225–37).

Geschrieben steht: "im Anfang war das *Wort*!"
Hier stock' **ich schon! Wer hilft, mir weiter fort?**
Ich kann das *Wort* so hoch unmöglich schätzen.
Ich muß es anders übersetzen. (568)

[It is written, "In the beginning was the *Word*!"
I am stuck already. Who will help me onward?
I cannot esteem the Word so highly.
I must translate it differently.]

Goethe then has Faust explore other possibilities—*Sinn* [sense] and *Kraft* [power]—until he finally settles on the dynamic and forceful *Tat* [deed] as a suitable German rendering of λόγος. Throughout both parts one and two of the poem, Faust is a man of action: in the first part often self-indulgent, in the second, more generally creative down to his massive land reclamation project. Although I take it as a grave responsibility to disagree with Faust and through him, perhaps, with Goethe, I am clearly of a different mind.

I would first like to turn to the last words of a very famous Japanese poem consisting of just five syllables and three Japanese characters: the closing lines of what is surely Bashō's most famous poem, which in its concision, wit, and surprising but consummate appropriateness has captured the wonder and appreciation of many readers over the centuries. All these qualities have made it all but untranslatable. Literally it evokes an old pond into which a frog jumps. On the face of the description, it is nothing astounding.

古池や蛙飛びこむ水の音 (262, no. 152)
An old pond / a frog jumps in / water's sound (59, no. 152)

The first character in the last segment 水 [*mizu*] means *water,* the second is the possessive marker, and the third 音[*oto*] is *sound*. The last segment stands in surprising contrast to the preceding two in part as a result of its strikingly original use of the received image of a frog previously known for its croaking rather acquatic splashes. This characteristic notwithstanding, its dramatic turn results from utter simplicity and evocation of what must necessarily follow. Sometimes the essence of genius is pointing out the obvious. In evoking the sound that anyone present could have heard but would not necessarily have noticed—and this is an absolutely crucial point—Bashō brings it, albeit through the linguistic mediation, to the reader's attention. The water's sound—the splash—is not in and of itself of great import, but it is a natural phenomenon whose awareness links the hearer to the natural world and offers variety and immediacy to human existence. To borrow an insight from T.S. Eliot (although he certainly would not draw on such an example), it makes our existence as human beings more fully real.

The American poet Robert Frost is appreciated for—among many other accomplishments—making the richness of rhythms and cadences of colloquial New England speech vibrantly apparent to generations of readers throughout the world. His perhaps most famous poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," is a case that not only foregrounds and validates his expressive mode, but also, like the haiku of Bashō, integrates human life into broader and richer context.

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep
And miles to go before I sleep. (224-25)

Words and particularly words that are deployed in a way that heightens the awareness of the reader and in a manner that offers discernment, sensitivity, experience, insight, and sensations are of consummate value. Near endless examples could be evoked. Words so used are the way in which worlds of our own making are called into existence thereby allowing the reader the freedom of refusing the life situation into which he is cast—Heidegger's concept of *Geworfenheit* [throwness]—and grounding a spiritual kind of aesthetic freedom. Herein we find the answer to Heidegger's query, "Wozu Dichter?" ("What Are Poets For?").

Words—collectively known as language—are not just adornments or embellishments that can rise to the level of deeply moving verbal configurations. They recall what might have been missed; they segment our view of human experience by giving shape and contours to thought; and they are a crucial aspect of any concept of human spiritual freedom. They sustain history and open paths to the future. The last line of Stefan George's poem "Das Wort" (The Word) may well serve as a summary:

Kein ding sei, wo das wort gebricht. (107)
[There is nothing where the word fails.]

Steven P. Sondrup, *Brigham Young University* (USA).

Note

1. Judges 12:6 relates the use of a linguistic test to identify the enemies of Israel: "Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him and slew him at the passages of the Jordan.

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THE BARBER, THE HAIR, AND THE KING

Herta Müller

I am often asked why the king appears so often and the dictator so rarely in my texts. The word "king" sounds soft. And I am often asked why the barber appears so often in my texts. The barber measures hair, and hair measures life.

The barber, the hair, and the king came together long before I knew the dictator, and before I began to write.

No asphalt streets led into the remote village in which I grew up, only bumpy, dusty paths. But the king found his way, otherwise he wouldn't have met me there. He came from my grandfather's chess set, and the chess set was involved with his hair. During the First World War, my grandfather was a soldier, landed in a prisoner of war camp, and there carved himself a chess set.

In the detention camp, the prisoner of war's hair fell out by the bushel, and the camp barber treated the skin on his head with the juice of crushed leaves. The barber had a passion: he played chess whenever and wherever it was possible. When he left home to go to war, he took his chess set with him. In the confusion on the front, the barber, however, lost seven chess pieces. When he played, they had to be replaced by bread crusts, bird feathers, pieces of twigs, or little stones. As my grandfather's hair grew back thicker and darker than ever after a few weeks' treatment, he thought about how he could thank the barber. Then two trees in the detention camp's yard caught his attention, one with a light wax-colored wood, the other with a dark red. From them he carved the missing chess pieces and gave them to the barber. That's how it started, he told me. The time we spent playing bore us up, he told me, we didn't have to endure the emptiness of the time as barren as it was. After being a prisoner of war, my grandfather returned to the village. As with the camp barber, chess had also become a passion for him.

The practice he had in carving the seven pieces and the slowly passing time, he told me, compelled him to continue working with his hands. There was still plenty of wood from the trees; he carved himself a complete chess set. First the pawns—the farmers—he said, because before the war he had been a farmer and because he wanted to go home and be a farmer again.

He had long had, as he explained to me, a proper chess set purchased from a store. I was allowed to play with the pieces that he himself had carved, four of which had been lost in the meantime. Of all of his pieces, I liked the two kings,

the wax-white one and the dark red one best. The wood with time had become old and dirty, grayish white and dark brown like sun-baked and rain-soaked earth. All the pieces were cracked and wobbly, none was like the other. The wood, which was fresh when carved, dried up in each piece just as it liked. The most distorted—in front pot-bellied and behind hunchbacked—were the utterly fragile kings. They staggered because the crowns on their heads were crooked and much too large. For years my grandfather visited his sister, who had married into the neighboring village, every few weeks. And on one of these visits, he met in the neighboring village a "serious" chess partner as he said. Since then he took the train every Wednesday to the neighboring village to play chess. I was often allowed to go along. Just as only Germans lived in our village, only Hungarians lived in the neighboring village. My great aunt's husband was Hungarian and a cabinetmaker. And the serious chess player was also Hungarian. While playing chess my grandfather could indulge two passions at once because his second passion was speaking Hungarian. I was allowed to go along so that while he played chess, I might learn Hungarian.

My grandfather's brother-in-law, the cabinetmaker, wore a sawdust jacket, the brown fabric was only visible under the arms. He wore a beret of sawdust, had temples and ears of sawdust, and a thick moustache of sawdust. He made furniture, floors, doors, baby carriages that could be closed with wooden slats; he made little things like clothes hangers, chopping boards, wooden spoons, and—he made coffins.

All of his cabinetry products were jumbled together as the space in the workshop allowed: a finished baby carriage next to, over, under, or even in a finished casket. There in the workshop, the wood showed me all of the stages between being born and dying. A life time lay there like arms full of wooden spoons, cutting boards, and clothes hangers. Between cupboards, nightstands, beds, chairs, and tables, the coffins looked completely normal, furniture, actually, for the earth. Nothing was hidden: expressed more clearly than in words, the objects just lay there. They did not need any discussions of life and death, they were what one needs to live and die.

For me the cabinetmaker could do everything. In my eyes, he made the world. It became clear to me that it does not consist of drifting skies and grassy fields of grain, but of ever-constant wood. He could put up wood everywhere as a protection against the fleeing seasons and against barren as well as the grassy seasons of the earth. Here stood the Panopticon of the days of human mortality as smooth, polished, angular material. A clarity in muted colors from off white through honey-yellow to dark brown, colors that no longer changed but only gleam slightly more darkly in themselves instead of fluttering like a landscape and squandering themselves. They have a mute nature, a quiet certainty. They did not frighten me, kept so still, when touched, that their peace expanded in me. The cabinetmaker also had a sewing machine, he sewed funerary cushions to the coffins, "white damask," he said, "filled with the shadows of a plane as for a king." The long wooden curls that fall out of the plane are not called wood shavings but plane shadows. I like that expression. Back then it already pleased me that neither foliage,

straw, nor sawdust filled the cushions for the dead—only the shadow that was still in the wood from the top of a living tree that fell out again when the wood was cut. Alexandru Vona wrote in his novel *Die vermauerten Fenster*: "When one wants to experience the truth, one must discover those words that have mixed themselves together among the others, that do not concern us."

Plane shadows are for me such words.

The plane shadows rustled and smelled bitter. While my grandfather played chess on the veranda, in the workshop I made myself wigs out of the short plane shadows. And out of the long curls of wood, belts, frills, and scarves. In a big box lay gold letters; they had a sharply stinging smell of lacquer. From them the cabinetmaker pieced together the name of the deceased and glued it to the lid of the coffin. From them I made rings, necklaces, and earrings. Today the plane shadows and letters would frighten me. But then, I had seen so many dead, whom while alive I knew well, their voices and their gaits. For years I knew what they wore and ate, how they tilled the soil, and how they danced. One day then, they lay in the coffin, were the same, only motionless, and were keenly awaiting the last visit. They wanted to be important just one more time, rocking and swaying in the carved coach as if on a mobile veranda accompanied by music through the village. God had required his material back from them; the region had devoured them with the season. I scarcely thought about them when I adorned myself with the golden letters. I admired my uncle the cabinetmaker because he took care that the dead got covered beds with golden names and damask cushions with plane shadows so that they will be carried away. Some of the coffins stood vertically and thick against the wall like fences. Some stood horizontally filled with plane shadows on the floor. Not a single time while I was visiting was a name composed of golden letters glued together, cushions sewed and filled with plane shadows, or a coffin sold. At noon, the cabinetmaker's wife brought his meal and placed it in the plane shadows of a coffin so that the pot would stay warm longer.

In the workshop, plane shadows and white damask cushions as if for a king, and over the chess board my grandfather furrowed his brow and ground his cheekbones. Sometimes his, sometimes his partner's king was in check mate. And during the short trip home on the late train, the sky had the rapidly declining, glaring evening color that cannot be compared to anything else. The moon hung like a horse shoe or an apricot, on the roofs weather vanes pointed in the opposite direction of the train and like nothing but chess pieces. Some were like the king. The following days, chickens in the grass also wore crowns, not combs. Every week on Wednesday and Saturday, I had to kill a chicken. I did it like every other job, expertly and without feeling, like peeling potatoes or dusting, like a job that one has learned for a lifetime. It was women's work. Not to torment a chicken, not to be able see blood, that didn't happen. At least among men, while shaving. And very rarely with women who—so it was said—were not much good. Perhaps later I would not be much good, then I was worth something.

I dreamed of things crazily cobbled together. I cut the chicken open, and its stomach is a decorated case full of chess pieces, red and blue instead of white and black. They are completely dry and hard, one must have heard them rattle as the

chicken walked through the grass. I take the chess pieces out of the stomach and place them according to their color in two rows. There is only one king, he reels and bows. He is green and while he bows turns red. I hold him in my hand, feel how his heart beats. He is afraid, and I therefore bite into him. Inside he is yellow and soft, has sweet flesh, like an apricot, I eat him.

The things had their king individually, but individual kings signaled to the other kings whence they emerged. The kings did not abandon their objects, they knew one another, they met in my head and belonged together there. They were a shared king, who always sought out new material in which it was possible to live: The wooden king in a chess set, the tin king in the weather vane, the meat king in the chicken. The material, out of which the objects were made, experienced upon examination that heightening which makes heads spin. What was commonplace about the things exploded, their material turned into attendants. Among the same things, hierarchies arose, and they emerged even more so between me and them. I had to consent to the comparisons that I had initiated and could only draw out the shorter one. Compared to wood, tin, or the feathered coat of a chicken, skin is the most ephemeral material. I was unavoidably dependent, sometimes on the good, sometimes on the evil power of the king.

in the feather house lives the cock
in the foliage house the avenue
a rabbit lives in a pelt house
in the water house an ocean
in the corner house the patrol
throws someone from the balcony there
over the elder tree
then it was again suicide
in the paper house lives a judgment
in the bun lives a lady

This text is a late reflexive reaction to the cobbled-together king of the village, and with the patrol's corner house, with the murder that on paper is falsified as suicide in the official adjudication, the city king has long been at work. He is a king of a state. He haggles about the dividing line between living and dying: he secretly throws those who have become tiresome out of the window, beneath trains or cars, from the river bridge, they hang on the rope, they are poisoned—stages his killing as suicide. He has those fleeing on the border torn apart by attack bloodhounds, he leaves them lying there so that during the harvest the farmers find half decayed bodies in the fields. He has those fleeing across the Danube hunted and ground up by the boats' propellers. Fish and gulls have something to devour. One knows this but can never prove what happens on a daily basis. When a person disappears, there remained silence, relatives and friends with big eyes. The city king does not let the weak notice when he reels, one thinks he bows, but he bows and kills.

The village king "bowed a little," he reeled as the region reels. One lived in this region that devoured itself until it devours someone, until someone dies from devouring himself. At first the city king provided the second part of the sentence: "the king bows and kills." The city king's tool is fear. Not the imagined village

fear, but rather planned, coldly administered fear that gnaws through the nerves. According to what I know from the fringes of the village, in the city the asphalt became a carpet on which instead of the Panopticon of human mortality, the death planned by the state crept around the ankles: Repression. In the early years, I could see it everywhere. It befell people whom I did not know personally. I only feared it in general, lived too near not to see it, but too far to grasp what havoc it wreaked. It chased along beside me, never through me during this early period. A great measure of sympathy for those who fell victim to it, this spontaneous empathy filled me for a time and then left again on its own. Standing there with clinched fists, with finger nails painfully pressed into the palms of my hand, biting my lips together while watching how someone whom one does not know is arrested, beaten, and trampled in full view. Then continuing on their way with dry gums, a hot neck, and stiff straight steps as if their stomachs and their legs were pumped up with stinking air. The lax feeling of guilt at not being able to prevent what happened to others and at feeling the shabby happiness that the punishment was not imposed on oneself. It could strike everyone who watched; other than breathing, everything was forbidden; everywhere one looked there were innumerable reasons for each and everyone.

It was not until the next year, that I had friends who were shadowed and regularly interrogated, whose apartments were thoroughly searched, whose manuscripts were confiscated, who were "de-matriculated" from their studies, and who were arrested. What I from then on felt as a suffocating atmosphere became tangible fear. My friends were tormented, I knew precisely where and how. We talked about it for entire days between jokes and fear; audacious and distraught, we sought ways out that did not exist anywhere because backing out of our own actions was inconceivable. The retaliations pushed me into life. And a few years later they pushed me very powerfully—I was supposed to spy on my colleagues in the factory, and I refused. And everything that I knew from friends about interrogations, searching through houses, and death threats repeated itself in my case. I was already well practiced in brooding about it, how indeed the next interrogation, the next work day, the next street corner may lay their trap.

In the city, I had a bicycle for four days. On the fifth day, a truck hit me and threw me through the air. I had a few scrapes and scratches on the ribs but otherwise nothing. Two days later, I was summoned to an interrogation. The secret police officer said completely out of context, "Yes, yes, there are certainly a lot of traffic accidents." The next day, I gave the bicycle to a girl friend. I did not tell her the reason for the gift but only, "I don't want it any longer." A day later, I went to have my hair cut. I had barely sat down in front of the mirror when the hair dresser asked: "Did you come on your bicycle?" I had never told her that I had a bicycle. "Shouldn't we perhaps bleach your hair," she asked, "I've got a preparation to lighten your hair from France." Why not, I agreed. At least blond hair, I thought to myself, if I cannot even have a bicycle. She stirred up a paste out of powder and water and spread it on my head. It burned with a scorching heat. I complained. It's got to be that way, she said, that's how the hair gets lighter. The next day all

of the skin on my head was a wound. It turned amazingly quickly into a scab, for two weeks, I wore it like a nut shell, then while combing it, it crumbled like fresh bread crusts. It was already fading away, it could no longer be seen under my hair, when the next interrogation took place, and the secret police officer completely out of context said, "Being blond must hurt, doesn't it." He said something that he could not know about just as the hair dresser had inquired about the bicycle.

As I explained the scabs the next time I got my hair cut, the hair dresser abruptly said "I'm sorry," the way one says hello. She was not frightened. Instead she showed me before I left three different French perfumes that she wanted to sell. They were not found in stores, it was a black market deal, and the black market was forbidden. I opened the small decorative glass bottles one after the other and held them up to my nose. I didn't, however, smell the perfume, but rather the topic of the last interrogation in which the secret service police accused me of black market dealing in clothes, cosmetics, and foreign currency and threatened me with prison. All the accusations were fabrications. Was the hair dresser only in business for herself, or was she enticing me out onto thin ice.

As I returned home from the hair dresser without any perfume, a slip of paper with the hand writing of a girlfriend was in the bowl on top of the refrigerator: "I wanted to have my hair cut, too bad that you are not home." Every few weeks at the factory, I had cut her hair. I had long since had been let go. And the next day, I went to her and wanted to know how she had gotten into my apartment. She had left the slip of paper on the door handle in the stairwell, she said. Then suddenly in the middle of a sentence, she placed her index finger vertically over her mouth, took the telephone, and put it in the refrigerator. For a long time, she had suspected that her telephone was bugged, she said. And while the telephone was in her refrigerator, I told her about my refrigerator where the bowl was into which her slip of paper from the door handle had been placed. I had to repeat everything several times, she continually interrupted saying: "Are you sure." And: "Are you crazy." And: "Think that over again." Until I brusquely offended her, and while having coffee, we stirred it for a long time. The steam rose past her hand, and she said, "Look, they are also in my coffee." The world was putting itself together piece by piece in opposition to reason. My girlfriend knew nothing about the bicycle, nothing of the scabs after bleaching my hair. The fact that at exactly the same time as I was at the hair dresser having my hair cut, she wanted me to cut her hair, I have chalked up to coincidence, even though quite a few ghosts crouched in the sequence of events. But her slip of paper could only have ended up in the bowl on my refrigerator in the same way her telephone ended up in her refrigerator. My girlfriend was a jurist schooled in logical explanations. But now, of all people, she sought natural explanations for the wandering slip of paper: Perhaps a draft, perhaps a whirlwind between the gaps in the door and the window frame. She didn't believe it herself and my explanation only partially. She made a childish impression. Nonetheless I would have gladly believed her rather than having to accept the fact that the secret police were in my apartment.

I still know everything so precisely because what then happened for first time afterwards took place regularly. Or better said, for the first time the secret police

then wanted me to notice it.

The bicycle, thus, no longer remains a bicycle, bleaching my hair cannot remain bleaching the hair, the perfume not perfume, the door handle not a door handle, the refrigerator not a refrigerator. The unity of things with themselves had an expiration date. Everything round about appeared not to be sure of itself, whether it is this, or that, or something completely different. In the short and long run, there were still only empty things with important shadows. No fantasy, it was not the fun of the surreal, but rather this uninhibited nakedness or pupation, this indiscretion with which everything had joined together. I was already used to walking through my apartment whenever I returned home to examine what had changed. With this monitoring procedure, I wanted to keep the apartment familiar, but it became all the more strange to me. That a living room chair was in the kitchen could not be overlooked. But in the case of little changes, when I discovered them, I didn't know if they were today's or if I had not seen them yesterday or several days ago.

When a day is, thus, over and nothing has been resolved, one goes to bed in the evening. With each renewed lucid threading of events together, one's skull was bustling just a hair's breadth from madness. Nonetheless one had to fall asleep instead of thinking things over, turn the head off, because when it was light again, a day of empty things with important shadows was there again.

In this daily routine, the Foreign Gaze originated. Gradually, quietly, mercilessly in the familiar streets, walls, and objects. The important shadows pass fleetingly around and take their place. And one follows them with a heightened sensibility that constantly flickers and burns inwardly. Thus, more or less, the stupid word "persecution" appears. And this is the reason, as has been confirmed in Germany, I cannot leave the FOREIGN GAZE where it was. The Foreign Gaze is old, finished, brought from what is known. It has nothing to do with the immigration to Germany. For me, foreign is not the opposite of known, but rather the opposite of familiar. The unknown must not necessarily be foreign, but the known can become foreign.

According to what I have learned in thinking about and evaluating life, things cannot be separated from their shadows. The facts are not everything. That to which they have given rise also plays a part. But that would be withdrawn from my understanding. It is quite a new luxury for me to be able to think for longer periods. It became possible because the dictatorship fell. As long as it existed, I lived with death threats, the last three years thereof in Germany. And during that time, I thought for the most part without making any progress. Certainly from one place to another because the day went from one place to another. But always surrounded by the day, not extending over it. It was training in getting on, every day had to learn to walk again and contrary to my knowledge that it could not walk at all. The essential point remained invisible. And glaringly visible the tracks that are left behind, indiscreet, naked, iridescent, pupated in a self.

Contemplation, speaking, and writing are and remain makeshift measures. They will never find what has happened, not even approximately. I do not understand what and how I came through, however more precisely memory has retained the details. They are only quarter and half pages to look through, and every time I try

it they are different. To think clearly so that the things just shimmer as they should.

Certainly, or for that very reason, one knows a great deal about one's self and the surroundings when compared to people, who with freer lives could regularly disregard themselves for long periods of time. Actually too much and therefore so little. Not because one has a better memory, but because one was compelled to. Because one could not disregard oneself while something was happening. Every human being gladly disregards himself, it is easier for him when things happen than when they continually happen to him himself.

Of the things that I have experienced without being able to keep myself inconspicuous, the most I have had to endure is that which was contrary to my curiosity, to my intention, well beyond the expected, and more than nerves could bear. The days just narrated that show a bicycle, bleaching the hair, and a refrigerator alternate with one another. But in the succession of all worthless things, the important shadow remains because of the threat.

One can and must come to this simple conclusion: The less freedom a country has, the more one is observed by the state, one has in the long and short run to be concerned with all the more things in an uncomfortable way. Even more rarely can one disregard oneself. Self-perception automatically intercedes, one is observed, judged, so one must observe oneself. Persecution is not just apparent when one is required to answer questions in an interrogation. Having crept in, it sits in the things and in the days that outwardly keep themselves concealed. Therefore the missing parts of the day and of life, the casual things that one carries around without judgment and goal, will have to be given up. The constantly necessary caution moves the day on a paper ruled off in millimeters. The passing by of things without tracks, the experience of thoughtless seeing become impossible. The word *gucken* and how it is used in Germany for every kind of seeing is for me just the thoughtless seeing that I could not afford. I was able to look which does not necessarily mean to see. Only to interpret concurrently what is viewed is to see.

In a surveillance state, every situation involving persecution must be recorded. This must be as precise as the observation and record of the state.

One's own lived millimeter is forced to accommodate itself to the foreign millimeter of the observer. There is in the case of each threatened individual a necessary alignment of his way of life with the tactics of the pursuer. The pursuer carries out his observation on an order of the state. To know it precisely is an occupational requirement. The threatened individual for his part observes the pursuer in order to protect himself from him. The pursuer practices attack, the threatened defense.

The pursuer does not need to be physically present in order to threaten. As a shadow, he sits anyway in the things into which he has injected fear, into the bicycle, the bleaching of the hair, the perfume, the refrigerator, and made everyday, inanimate objects into threats. The private objects of each threatened individual personify the pursuer.

Clearly the pursuer personally appears at calculated distances necessary to maintain the threat. On such a day, his physical presence is for the eye of the threatened person a fleeting confused muddle of emerging and submerging ap-

pearances. He stands in front of the apartment building reading a newspaper, then in the streetcar although he was not seen at the stop. He disappears in getting off. Sometimes in entering and leaving a bread or clothing shop or in the doctor's waiting room, he is there again or gone again. Sometimes the target having taken a seat in a sidewalk cafe, he arrives at the cafe on a bicycle, gets off, and sits down at the next table. During the trip home, the target sits in the bus, and he drives his car alongside. It goes on and on. And days later at the interrogation, one is surprised that the day when the spy was visible is not mentioned at all, but rather only the intervening days on which the spy was not physically visible. One must disabuse oneself of belief in what one sees.

Since the pursuer can observe not only when physically present, but also out of the most intimate things that personify him, the one threatened feels himself—whatever he does in his apartment alone or with his things—face to face with the pursuer and simultaneously observes himself and him. There emerges a scene of reciprocal lying in wait on both sides, a wild, closed circle from which the one side cannot let the other out. In an interrogation, the magnetic circle is the most dangerous.

In the interrogation, the indictment is not limited to the observations of the spy. It makes use of the actual facts only as an outline in order to move on to an enormous fabrication. But the outline is important. The interrogator must know which and how many fabrications he can hang on the facts. Pedantic logic must govern his working model so that he holds the strings in his hand. That something did not take place is not a drawback, but rather an advantage. Within the fabrication, the interrogator can move around more freely than in tied down and finished reality.

The best that the accused can offer in his defense, in his completely unsatisfactory present position, is a contradiction that centers on the fabrication. The word NO might suggest itself, it could and must be continuously repeated in defense. But in the defense NO is certainly the stupidest word. It is too short, it gets lost and lets the interrogator not take notice. In an interrogation, NO is the opposite of defense, the accused has given up and lets the accusation roll over him, when he says NO instead of speaking. Moreover, the less the accused speaks, the more time he gives the interrogator for the elaboration of the working model.

SPEAKING in an interrogation means dealing with the fabrication. As an accused, one must disregard himself as he really is. One must concern himself with himself as portrayed in the fabrication—but without confusing himself with the fabrication. One must strictly concentrate on the fabrication, may never go out beyond its content, thinking thus to avoid the next fabrication. With details that tumble out of the fabrication the doors are pushed open that on his own the interrogator perhaps never would have opened. New nuances or sweeping attacks come from a single word that one has said too often. In defending oneself, one may never say anything about what has not already been discussed in the indictment. One may never pose counter questions. One may not disturb the interrogator's sense of superiority. But when it is one's turn, one must talk until interrupted. Repeatedly saying NO interspersed with silence makes the interrogator angry. He feels ignored, which spoils his understanding of himself. He wants to keep the

accused busy, needs cooperative assistance. The accused must be on task with his entire head and with his entire head remain outside and continually consider whether it involves chewing over the old accusations or new guilt. When chewing over previous interrogations, one must be most careful in order to repeat oneself precisely, best of all verbatim. One must be just as distanced from oneself as from the interrogator without becoming indifferent. Only in this way can one help himself. Only in the reciprocity of the magnetic gaze does one have a chance.

One, however, only has one head. How many different half and quarter persons does one become in each interrogation, and which ones vanish or remain in the skull when it is over, and the next one most certainly lies ahead.

One's own head becomes so crazed—like the state's own destructive tactics—and in its own context normal, the magnetic reciprocal gaze becomes second nature and a supposed stability.

To see the Foreign Gaze as the consequence of foreign surroundings is therefore utterly absurd because the opposite is true: it emerges from the familiar things whose matter of factness is taken away. No one wants to give up one's matter of factness, everyone depends on things that remain submissive and do not abandon their nature. Things with which one can work without reflecting oneself in them. Where reflection begins, only events that come crashing down still take place, one looks out of every small gesture into the depths. The agreement with things is precious because it treats us with care. It is called a matter of factness. It is only there as long as its possession is not realized. I believe matter of factness is the most effortless quality we have. It keeps us at a proper distance from ourselves. It is the perfect form of caring treatment when one is not present to one's self. And the most difficult aspect of the flight from matter of factness, is that it does not leave people abandoned as individuals, as countable entities behind, but rather much is abruptly no longer available to be united as one with itself. A seat of sensory power develops, that flutters and flickers without pause. Continual self-awareness is incestuous with outer surroundings and a disloyalty in the individual person. One feels the overextended nerves literally in the body as threads and cannot get rid of them. One grows tired of oneself and must love oneself.

The interrogator contemptuously asked in the interrogation, "What do you believe you are?" It was not a question at all, but I used it all the more as an opportunity to answer, "I am a human being like you." That was also necessary and important for me, because his demeanor appeared so arrogant as if he had forgotten it. In the turbulent parts of the interrogation, he called me shit, filth, a parasite, and a bitch. When he was more moderate a whore and an enemy. During the harmless part of the interrogation, I was simply a way of filling up the time of his shift, this dirty rag which was crumpled up to demonstrate diligence and competence. Frequently he trained his destructive power on me because his shift still had hours to go. In order not to sit alone in the office too long, he kept me there, chewed over everything ironically and cynically that had already furiously been said a thousand times. I had to stay so that his clock would not tick emptily, so that he cannot fall back on himself. After every outburst of rage, he practiced his technique for

hunting people down on me in order not to get out of practice, in the way that for him was restful, casual. For every mood he had a routine. The childish question, "What is my life worth?" became obsolete. Such a question can only come from within. When it is posed from the outside, one becomes stubborn. Completely out of obstinacy, one begins to love one's life. Every day receives a value, one learns to live happily. One says to oneself within one's head, one is living. Just now one wants to live. And that is enough, that is more a sense of life than one believes. It is a certified sense of life, valid like breathing itself. Also this growing craving to live in opposition to all external circumstances is a king. It is an obstinate king. I know him well. Therefore I have never verbally mentioned him, his name I have kept covered. I have thought up "Heart Animal" for him so that I can address him without needing to name him. Only many years later, when that time was far enough away, I went from the words "Heart Animal" to the actual word king.

> and the king bows slightly
> and night comes usually on foot
> and from the roof of the factory in the river
> two shoes glow
> reversed and neon pale so early
> and the one steps toward our jaws
> and the other steps softly on our ribs
> and in the morning the shoes of neon extinguished
> the crab apple witty the maple blushes
> stars in the sky move like popcorn
> and the king bows and kills

The rhyming in the language of the village brought me from the beginning to the king: allein [alone]—wenig [few]—König [king] I rhymed already in the valley with the cows: "alleenig"—"wenig"— "keing." The rhyme and my grandfather's chess king.

From childhood on, the king was in my head. He hid in the things. Even if I had never written a word, he would have been there in order to get a grip on the newly arrived complications of the day by means of an even if evil-intentioned nonetheless well-known character. Where the king presented himself, there was no consideration to be expected. He nonetheless sorted through life, got to the root of the muddle, without words if the sayable evaded him. The king was always a lived word and in speech no one got the better of him. I have spent a good deal of time with the king, and during that time, fear was either on the sidelines or in the forefront.

The king at first followed me from the village into the city, then out of Romania to Germany as a reflection of the things that were never to be resolved for me. He personalized the magnitude of the things; when in mental confusion no word is any longer adequate, then I say even today: Aha now the king is coming.

At every interrogation when the interrogator in his opinion had me in check mate, he triumphantly proclaimed to me: "Do you see, the things connect themselves." He was right without knowing it, he did not know which and how many things connected themselves and opposed him in my head. Never mind that

he sat at a big polished desk, and I at a small table made of badly planed, filthy wood. "Do you see," yes I saw a table top with many notches from the interrogations of other people about whom no one knew anything, not even whether they were still alive. Since I had to look at him for hours during each interrogation, the interrogator became the king. For his bald head, my grandfather's company barber would have been needed. Also for his calves that between the hem of his trousers and the edges of his socks glistened repulsively white without a single hair. Yes, the things connected themselves in his head to my disadvantage. But in my head completely different things connected themselves: just as a king who stood and bowed among the chess pieces, even so stood in the person of the interrogator a king who killed. It was one of the first interrogations and summer and afternoon and the plane shadows came into play. The glass in the windows shimmered with waves in the sun. White squiggly streaks of light fell on the floor and crept up the leg of the interrogator's trousers when he passed through them. I wished privately that he would stumble, that they would creep into his shoes and kill him through the soles of his feet.

And a few weeks later, the king came not just into his missing hair, but also into my full head of hair. Between our tables, the sun squiggles lay again on the floor, brilliantly wiggling, longer than otherwise, that crept here and there because it was windy outside. The interrogator walked up and down, he was nervous, the plane shadows so restless that he always needed to look. Between my actual but motionless presence and the plane shadows that were only present as reflections jumping crazily about, he lost his self-control. Going up and down, he came to my table screaming. I reckoned on having my ears boxed. He raised his hand but then took a hair from my shoulder and wanted to let it fall from his finger tips to the floor. I don't know why I suddenly said: "Please, put the hair back, it belongs to me." He grabbed me again very slowly on the shoulder with his arm appearing in slow motion as if disabled. He shook his head, went through the patch of light to the window; he looked into the tree and burst into loud laughter. At first as he laughed, I look out of the corner of my eye at my shoulder. He had actually put the hair back exactly as it had previously lain there. This time the laugh of a king did not help him, he was not prepared for this episode with the hair. He had thrown himself too far out of the saddle, he had made a fool of himself. And I felt such a stupid sense of satisfaction that from now on I would always have control of him. His training in destruction functioned only within a given routine, he had to stick to the schedule. For him, improvising was a risk. Not an actual one, I fantasized, but according to my stupid reckoning it counted.

Two more important matters have to do with the king:
My grandfather's hair never fell out again. He took it with him thick and white into the coffin.
In spite of all my grandfather's efforts on my behalf, I never learned to play chess. He doubted my ability to understand, and I let it go at that. I never told him how much I feared and liked the king. About that, I believe one says: my head wasn't free.

Translated from the German by Steven P. Sondrup

FORUM II

FRONTIÈRES DU COMPARATISME / FRONTIERS OF COMPARATIVE STUDY

CONTRAPUNTAL NARRATIVES:

SHIFTING PARADIGMS IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

The debates that have been going on regarding the health and future possibilities of Comparative Literature make it necessary to look at the issues from the perspective of the South. I welcome the opportunity to do so from my location in a multilingual culture. Mainly marked by the conservative spirit and overtly concerned with its insecurities, the discipline has not allowed itself to expand. In India—and this may be applicable to several other parts of Asia—Comparative Literature has retained its exclusiveness.

It is evident that disciplines as defined traditionally no longer hold sway, and the serious scholar is selectively breaking bounds in order to explore other worlds. Most of what is happening has come about because of the need to respond to changed political centers. This response is not necessarily a desire to be accepted or to be part of the larger world. It is often an act motivated by a resistance to hegemonic centers and is a space that has been consciously entered into. Such moves are somewhat limited due to lack of theoretical formulations and also by an over-dependence on English and translated texts. Many of us, in the last few decades, have also been side-tracking into Indian-language literatures, especially languages we are competent enough to read and interpret in the original, forming new links with our own histories, literatures, and traditions. In the process, the relationship with other literatures is constantly being worked out afresh.

When I look back, I ask myself, did we ever consciously decide to do so? No, this happened simultaneously in different places. We have had bilingual and trilingual writers right through the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries; many teachers of English are highly regarded poets and novelists in their own languages. Now, the transition has taken place in the field of theory and criticism—a move which even as it negotiates Sanskrit aesthetics and western frameworks, is also consciously moving towards redefinitions. It signifies a larger protest against hegemonic structures whether of theory, language, perspective, or location and is marked by a need to find recognition for oral traditions, performative art, and indigenous theoretical formulations. In fact, all that does not find place at the "center."

Thus this conscious move to expand the frontiers of comparative literature is both a felt need and a political necessity. We are possessed by a desire to rehabilitate our pasts, to relate to each other horizontally across the surface of our continents, rather than through a centrally governed distribution network. Geographical locations divide us not spatially but through power structures which connect through hierarchies rather than on an equal basis. In psychological terms, comparisons are odious, but strangely enough when we compare cultures and literatures, the comparison adds value. What do we look for when we compare—sameness or difference? Meeting point or otherness? And how do we work—through juxtapositions, pluralities, histories, or simultaneities? How do we dismantle hierarchies to make room for difference? These and questions such as these confront us when we seek to enter this field.

I borrow the concept "contrapuntal" from Edward Said's use, first in *Culture and Imperialism* (134) and then from its surfacing in his writings published posthumously in *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*, a work where Said offers definitive theorizations of contrapuntalism as method and as a deeply historical position (Feldman). Said first used it as a reading strategy but apparently the method is also firmly rooted in the act of writing, especially in the kind of writing which brought together the conflictual relationship between his intellectual and his political selves. In Said's case, as he seems to suggest, it was born out of exile, in Adorno's out of the trauma of dislocation, where participation, witnessing, critiquing, and opposition worked in criss-crossed relationships. The new shifts in comparative literature similarly reflect multiple dislocations and incorporate several rebellions both in literary and political terms, shifts which call for a new approach.

Contrapuntalism as a method extends to both the art of writing and the ways of interpreting. Incidentally it applies equally to the spilling of the text into the world of reality. Every text, in itself, is a fragment of a larger pattern. This pattern makes several kinds of different journeys both inside and outside the text, and works with attitudes and experiences which are oppositional and chaotic and refuse to be controlled. The concept of the contrapuntal has its origins in music and is a relationship between melody and harmony as oppositional tones surface, each working toward accentuation or reconciliation. The move is neither parallel, nor necessarily sequential but a kind of constant pressure pushing against the narrative level. In the literary act the suppressed silences, conflicts, presences, absences, crosscurrents, and undercurrents that disrupt become significant indicators. Contrapuntality pulls the "other" in as a co-traveler.

If definitions are to be constructed through difference then perhaps we need to look at Bakhtin's dialogism which concentrates primarily on language and its multiple contexts, locations, objectives, and interplay as it encompasses the movements of history and social expanse. The dialogic interaction between words and their use is simultaneously a means both of decentering and centering the text. The heteroglossia of the text is matched by its heterogeneous movements. Contrapuntalism, in contrast, begins with a conscious or an unconscious absorp-

tion of atmospheric forces to be reworked in the act of writing through the interplay between the writer, his known world, and his subconscious world as personal responses, situations of history, and political positions clash. Bubbles of pressure points surface both within and outside the text, especially in its addressivity to its heterogeneous readers.

The existing dominant positions/approaches in comparative literature are limiting as they have failed to frontally address its attitudinal hierarchy both in terms of aesthetics and of location. This hierarchy is reflected in the postcolonial discourse, which now in its turn, is being viewed as a threat to the methodology of comparative literature. The theorization in both gets caught in the norm of classical aesthetics. I recall that in the post-60s, protest writing was viewed as non-literary and non-aesthetic. Postcolonialism then came up as an alternative measuring tape, to be gradually homogenized and interpreted through texts in English or in translation, to become the monopoly of the diaspora of various hues, with languages of the erstwhile colonial people remaining outside this fold. Then an attempt was made to include them through translations apparently directed at creating a postcolonial canon. The center of power in all these developments continues to remain the same, whether in terms of theory, recognition, or cross-distribution of texts, resulting in a sidelining of other equally important and valid interventions.

As recently as 2006 Susan Bassnett, in her essay "Reflections on Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century," has gone on to state that for "Spivak and southern hemisphere scholars, the crucial issues of comparative literature are indeed *politicized*. In contrast, however, I believe that the crucial issues for European scholars are as much aesthetic as political" (4-5, emphasis mine). Bassnett's statement displays a lack of humility, which, I believe, any serious reader must possess while approaching a text, and is almost a necessary precondition when we initially approach a different culture. There is also in such a statement a reflection of the belief in a "singular" and perhaps a non-evolving aesthetics, in fact a rejection of all that is "different" and thereby peripheral.

There is no way in which literature is not political, else *The Tempest* and *Heart of Darkness* would not fit in so snugly with contemporary theoretical discourses. Often our recognition of its values, especially as texts have an afterlife and are contrapuntal, is even more political than the writing itself. Location of political power creates a visibility, but the different locations of the writer and of the reader create a counter-discourse. I have been using the word location in more than one sense. It goes beyond the mere sense of physical location—locations are multi-layered, ideologically as well as conflictually, and also subject to a constant oscillation. But they are of significance in the relationship they evoke between the text, its readers, and critics. At one point they directly relate to the evaluation of the aesthetic value of the text.

I would not go all the way with Susan Bassnett's advocacy of the use of translated texts, despite its obvious advantages. True, we are free to enter cultural areas without going through the acquisition of the language/languages of the text/s and it facilitates movement across the literatures of the world. But the method is

fraught with risks. Translations, as both Edward Said *(Orientalism)* and U.R. Ananthamurthy have demonstrated in different contexts, can be manipulative.[2] They impose secondary "fabricated" frames onto the original, thus creating other levels of discourse. Gillian Wright, in her translation of Rahi Masoom Reza's *Aadha Gaon* [Village Divided], has left out chunks of the original, in the process omitting a significant sub-text.[3] At times, the translator's focus shifts from the text to addressivity to a readership from outside the culture, and it tends to gloss over the finer shades of meaning. And at others, the translator has perhaps never really succeeded in entering the world of the text. In this context, Arun Mukherjee in *Oppositional Aesthetics* has pointed out the limitations of cross-cultural translations, especially as the act involves a relationship between the ethos of two different cultures. It requires a complexity of literary and extra-literary activities to come into play—understanding, interpretation, going across, familiarity, addressing linguistic gaps as well as the problematics of readership. The level of integrity one asks of a translator is very high. Is there a philosophical commitment to conveying the "otherness" and relating the cultural specificities, topical references, and local histories? Is there an understanding of cultural codes? In another context, Mukherjee also used the term "cultural density" to describe the residual untranslatability which inhabits translated writing (Introduction). Languages carry with them a whole cultural ethos with its traditions, histories, unverbalized nuances, and contradictions. For the Third World, the resistance to translation is fraught by another concern: the construction of an artificial canon being made out of the translated texts. This fear has surfaced mainly because texts are being translated to fill up the necessary sociological slots in postcolonial studies and as such they are singled out on counts of availability, theme, and market demands and tend to bypass the literary qualities of the texts. We need to be wary of such moves. Moreover, translations often present truncated worlds, removed as they are from much of the writer's work, nonfiction, reviews, and debates. The absence of this surrounding material limits a genuine comparative aesthetic evaluation.

True, many of us have grown up on translations of European literatures, perhaps facing the same limitations. However, it is equally true that the shared theology of several European cultures and the Third World's knowledge of European histories allow us a certain familiarity. The same cannot be said of the west where we are concerned or about us in the context of cultures closer to home. We have been compelled by the fact of colonization to learn about imperial cultures, first through imposed education systems and now through other monopolies. But our cultures have largely been a matter of archaeological, anthropological, or political interest to the west. Even today the inauthentic writer of the diaspora can get away with exoticizing singled out segments of culture and history. As for our neighbors whose borders we can touch, of their histories we know very little—as for instance the Japanese occupation of China or of Korea, or their movements of survival, that the year in which I was invited to Korea (2010) was the sixtieth anniversary of the commencement of the war in Korea, or the thirtieth of the Kwangju Uprising. (Though we all remember Tiananmen Square because the ide-

ological resistance it put up was of significance to western policies). I confess that despite my desire to read Asian literatures, I do not know enough. And obviously, because I do not know these languages, I will fall back on translations, thus justifying Susan Bassnett's stand. But then one comes up against other requirements in order to support these translations, such as dictionaries and encyclopedias of customs, rituals, terms, myths with their regional variations, and oral literatures of which we hardly have any knowledge in the Asian context. This is a task awaiting comparative literature centers which, in a country like India, literally means an entry into multiple languages and their worlds.

Having expressed my concerns for the growing monolingual base in comparative literature, I would like to dwell on the phenomenon of transformation which a shift in cultural origins demands. Kazuo Ishiguro's short narrative "Nocturnes" serves, for me, a double purpose. It illustrates the contrapuntal and it also comments directly on the complete make-over required by host cultures in the context of globalization. "Nocturnes" is one of five stories, all of which are related to music. Steve, the main character of the story, is a saxophone player whose appearance is not deemed to be stageworthy and who is persuaded to undergo cosmetic surgery to transform his looks. The characters of this story are a carryover from another story in the volume, "Crooner," where the narrator is a guitar-player. Steve, in "Nocturnes," lives in a small rented apartment with cardboard walls and in order to practice his music has to shut himself up in a padded cubicle so that the sound does not carry across. This self-imposed isolation stresses his marriage and his wife leaves him. But she persuades her rich lover to finance Steve's cosmetic surgery, who is finally pressured by his agent into accepting this offer. In the luxury hotel where he is awaiting the removal of his bandages and the return of flexibility to his facial muscles, he meets another patient, a minor star, who makes him aware of the compromises which the visibility of talent requires. This transformation, which is projected as a necessary condition of acceptability into a homogenized world, is also an act of transforming his perceptions of himself and his art. It amounts to what Arvindpal Singh describes as "an act of assimilation," which refutes the possibility of exchange without loss and is a common phenomenon besetting migrant populations.

Despite the counterpoints that the five stories work out for each other, and in addition to Kaziguro's shift of locale to Europe, the musical instruments and the human voices—singer, guitar player, sax player, cellist—all project both consonance and dissonance and work through different auditory sounds. The story also presents a counterpoint to all other metamorphoses—literary and mythical. What immediately concerns me here is Kafka's short narrative "Metamorphosis." Kafka's hero wills this self-alienation and works his way to social and familial rejection, in a search for freedom and his own core self. It is altogether a different matter whether his "will" is free or not, conscious or not. "Metamorphosis'' turns the Nietzschean "will to power" on its head and can be read in multiple ways, but my purpose is served by drawing attention to this comparison. "Nocturnes" is a

counter-discourse and the conflict is in Steve's mind, his self-worth, and its non-acceptance by the world. At another level, the story invites reference to Walter Benjamin's essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Only, in this case, the human being is also at the mercy of an external force. What happens to both originality and authenticity in such cases? And to what extent is Steve's relationship to his art and his self-image going to be affected by this re-modeling?

Comparative literature is not about erasing differences but of understanding and investigating their worth. If a text like "Nocturnes" is to be taken up, a comparative exercise would have to extend beyond the comparisons in literary tradition and the debates in theoretical and psychological fields; in order to be meaningful it may have to wander further abroad to work with biography, history of dislocation, nostalgia, and music; it would need to work with the notions and concepts of ambition and of fame. "Nocturnes" is located in several discourses as the pressure points surface all over and need to be worked out. One of the categories it questions, is the whole notion of authenticity. If originality is the essence, as Benjamin has said, then the original here has been over-written in every way. Again, where do we look in search of authenticity—the writer, his writing, his multiple relocations, Steve and his sense of self, his music, his relationships, or the reception and aesthetic evaluation of the story, where? How do we test it? Against what norms? Authenticity, as a term, has been variously defined. Trilling's work was an important contribution to this discourse, though now we hardly mention him. But one important fact he mentions is of value to our contemporary writing. Trilling brings out its connections with violence. As he traces the Greek ancestry of the word he points out that *authenteo* means "to have full power over, also to commit a murder. *Authentes*: not only a master or a doer, but also a perpetrator, a murderer, even a self-murderer, a suicide." He goes on to comment on the violence reflected in the creative will, "how ruthless an act was required to assert autonomy in a culture schooled in duty and obedience to peremptory and absolute law, and how extreme an exercise of personal will was needed to overcome the sentiment of non-being" (Trilling 131-32). The process of birth—whether physical, emotional, or national—is possessed by violence, and this violence, representing alike the sacred and the profane, is present in almost all acts of expression as they question, oppose, or resist.

Another significant point, which Trilling makes, is the location of modernism in an environmental disassociation with the idea of the organic (127-28). It automatically privileges difference, fragmentariness, break-away segments, and attacks the notion of a dominant sameness. By relating authenticity to literature, Trilling lifts it out of a purely philosophical or an existential discourse. But in the act of reading, the "authentic" is often attached to the reader's response to and knowledge of the culture he is encountering. Thus aesthetic judgment invariably seems to be moving out of the text to other texts. Marshall Berman defines it as expressive of a radical rejection of things as they are and considers the desire for it as the "most politically explosive of human impulses" (qtd. Jay 49). Critical of

the near-hegemonic use made of the word "authenticity," Adorno observed that it rested on a dubious ideal of self-possession and integrity (Jay 57). Given these shifting views, often contradictory to each other, the category of authenticity is tossed about between Self and God. Why then, one may well ask, is the Third World aesthetics, along with its dominant experiential aesthetics devalued and negated? Is it not possible for politics and aesthetics to inhabit the same world? The creative act absorbs multiple elements, traditions, and philosophies. And it little behoves us to dismiss it on grounds of difference.

Several contemporary writers have been shaped by hostile environments, whether they be colonial or totalitarian; many of them have lost their original selves either through the imposition of a colonial education system, through ideological pressures, or through dislocation and assimilation. Their writing connects up with Edward Said's concept of the contrapuntal, even as it approaches the Derridean idea of the supplement. Comparatists need to move across without yielding to the temptation of tailoring difference for reasons of comprehension or acceptability, and without anchoring themselves in a single aesthetic norm; they need to recognize and relate to the difference. In some measure, premature comparisons suppress the emergence of the original.

The failure to recognize the emergence of experiential aesthetics and to redefine such concepts as beauty and ugliness are barriers in literary appreciation and assessment. When a dalit writer describes her childhood and her washing of lice-infested clothes on the banks of a river, or the strings of animal flesh being hung up to dry in the small hutment, or the liberating experience she has when possessed by the spirit of a goddess, authenticity and aesthetics are both in place. Neither sophistication, nor a consciousness of the other, nor even a stylization of language has come between her experience and its expression (except the act of recollection). These literatures do not yet belong to either classical or postcolonial literature (which more than signifying a historical fact, is now a position which homogenizes and builds clusters). These texts are not preoccupied by any sense of addressivity to the "other," and least of all to the west. Yet they refuse to remain confined to a single discourse, for as they are they express the facts of their existence, they are entering into a discourse with the different worlds inside and outside the text, drawing the reader in.[4]

Contrasted to Ishiguro's *Nocturnes*, the work of writers like Chimamanda Adichie, Kamila Shamsie, or Michael Ondaatje engages with suppressed and unrecorded histories, acts of violence, and with human relationships. These writings go beyond the local to encompass other histories. We have modern classics in Hindi, Urdu, Kannada, and other languages, several now available in translations, which meet all rigorous aesthetic standards and refuse to be dismissed as "writers of the Southern hemisphere" interested in politics. I'll not go into examples of authenticity or of the contrapuntal in them except for a couple of examples from contemporary writing.

Chimamanda Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* is about the Biafra civil war. It has a British character—Richard—an outsider, who later marries one of

the twin sisters. He is engaged in writing a novel titled *The World Was Silent When We Died*. There are nine short fragments, indicative of Richard's intention to write "after the war, a narrative of Biafra's difficult victory, an indictment of the world," marking a shift in his affiliation (374; Richard writes while the outcome of the war is still in doubt). The two sisters—Kainene and Olama—are twins, but very different in appearance. And their life courses are also different as they live through their personal and political conflicts, moving between the need to remember and the need to forget. Adichie writes about the indifference and the brutality which had entered the souls of those who wielded authority, and about the corresponding shrinkage of space for human values. In an interview, Adichie described her novel as a "tribute to love, the unreasonable resilient thing that holds . . . and makes us human." She also dwells on the decentering of the narrative and writing about people "driven by impulses that they may not consciously be aware of; without subjecting them to an analysis." She has, for the purpose of the narrative, disrupted linearity, chronology, and locations, but has not strayed away from the factual core. Moving thus between remembering and forgetting, between the real and the imagined, her primary concern throughout was in presenting the "emotional truth" of history ("Interview" 2). Not only is the category of reality being tested as a literary method but simultaneously individualism as formed by the ego is pushed aside and a larger collective sense of belonging is foregrounded. In its own way it addresses the very challenges which are perceived as threats to the field of comparative literature by projecting not only a critique of past histories but also turning around perceptions of reality through its multiple narrators and by working out an aesthetic integral to its origins.

Silences need to surface as well as to be heard, just as borders need to be crossed. They form a counterpoint to the existing discourses and divisions. Jung Chang in her autobiographical, three-generation work *Wild Swans* writes how her mother when she came to England was unable to engage with the world outside. Her restlessness was caused by her desire to talk. And then she "talked everyday for months about herself, her mother, her childhood, the ideals of beauty, the value of love and devalue of personal choice, wars, invasions, revolutions, repressions—all of them. By the time she left Britain, she had done sixty hours of recordings" (xxii). Memory and history work from two different points, looking for junctions; they are directed not only towards the past but also prepare one for the future. Memories, especially when they are of repression and suffering, are difficult to face; one wants to forget them. When her mother talked about the past she also showed her how to face it as also the future.

The mystery of narration is such that language tries to capture the silences of absence and memories, which long to be buried—and through the non-rationality of suffering and endurance reach the human core in the reader, sharing and unveiling the past. And literature is all about sharing. There is a young teenager in Orhan Pamuk's *Snow*, who has always dreamt of the day when he'd have a chance to share his ideas with the world (282). It is this kind of sharing which needs to go across to the other, move horizontally and vertically, across time and space. One

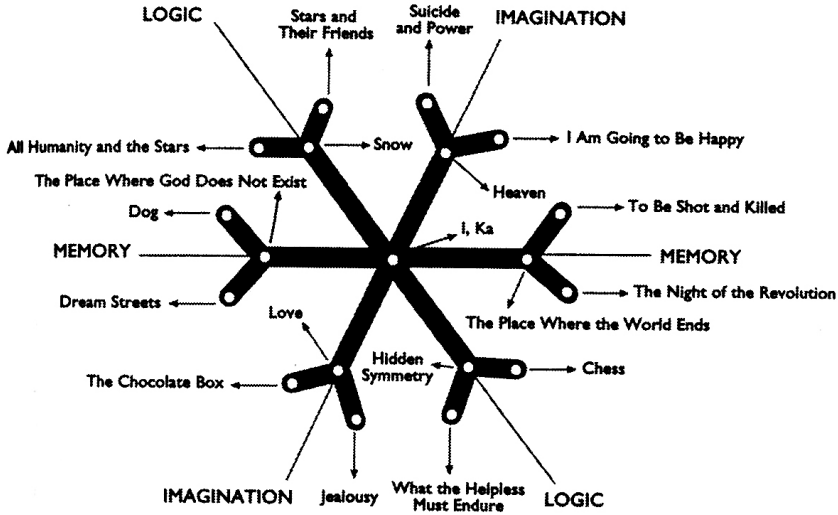
needs to ask why comparative literature seems hesitant to move into these areas of old traditions, and into their unfamiliar aesthetics, which fall outside classical studies or European frameworks? This reluctance to engage with collective and individual revolutions and the recurring motifs of resistance in our histories, results in conveniently pushing them into the postcolonial.

The contrapuntal as a way of writing is a constant endeavor to grasp contradictory emotions, histories, and aspirations—in fact to bring order in presentation to the creative surging of chaos. I return to Pamuk's novel *Snow* for two reasons. First, it is a novel in translation—from Turkish—and second, it is in many ways a border novel as the writer as well as the narrator move between Frankfurt and Kars, the far eastern Turkish city where the Turkish part of the novel is set. Like many another cross-over novel, it is about a creative writer and the phenomenon of blocked creativity as it engages with the process of the inner and the outer world yielding to each other. Wrapped in the continuing snowfall, Kars evokes responses to the visual image and sensuous feel of the snow flakes. The momentum of constant change, the mixed predictability and unpredictably of the outside, the frozen surfaces and the melting of the flakes, their constant brushing against the human body—are all images of transmutation into different forms conveying a fluidity and an impermanence. Pamuk, in his own records "From the Snow in Kars Notebooks" (Feb. 24, 2002), has written of his need for the "ever-falling snow to cut the city of the book off from the rest of Turkey" (*Other Colors* 273). Strangely enough, it is the evocation of loneliness and melancholy that insulates him against the rest of the world. Elsewhere he describes Kars as a spiritual experience. Snow carries within it a multi-pronged symbolism of color, form, sensation, and a constant metamorphosis, creating an equivalent for the poet's mental and emotional states. In the narration it acts both as an organizing principle and one which frames the fears of enclosure, darkness, and imprisonment. In effect, the choice between the two—the outside and the inside—is difficult. Both are places of being at the mercy of others—yet so different. There is a constant sense of tension between the two, as there is between creativity and non-creativity, between belonging and exile, between Frankfurt and Kars.

More than halfway through the novel (267), there is a hexagon representing a snowflake and the complexity of the creative act. The first reference is made to it much earlier (216). From one line logic runs through to the other side encompassing stars, snow, chess, the suffering of the helpless; the second strand is of memory which likewise cuts through the novel's protagonist Ka, who is at the intersection of these lines and goes on to the other side carrying with it dreams, places where God is absent, revolution, and the end of the world, beyond which obviously there can be no memory. The third and final strand is of imagination, which like the other two has conflicting and contradictory inputs—suicide and power, desire for happiness and the home of heaven, and emotions like love and jealousy. These conflicting inputs in each strand and their common assault on Ka's mind and memory are in themselves a powerful illustration of the contrapuntal. Memory and imagination are polar opposites, but both together clash with logic.

Logic which tries to decipher, explain, and organize them is confronted alike by the fact of human suffering, which really has no logic and cannot be rationally explained. Other inputs like chess, representing a game of anticipation, timely action, and the ability to outwit your opponent, and the dark hole represented by the absence of God, leash the mental and the spiritual vacuum together. Yet they all feed on each other.

Pamuk provides the following diagram for these contrapuntal relationships:



Later, when Ka's friend finds the Notebook and reads it, two different time-spaces are connected through the act of reading. The primary time is the time of writing in Kars, the second act is the act of reading by a different person, after the assassination of the poet in Frankfurt, where he had lived for the last four years. This act of reading is doubled as the reader becomes a second reader, looking over the friend's shoulder. The hexagon rises up as an experience which destroys all kinds of singular worlds, an experience which is full of contradictions, presents rival claims on our responses, and is simultaneously fragmented and coherent. Incidentally, the hexagon also comments on the multiple themes of the novel.

How does one read *Snow*? As a novel about creativity? Or about a revolution? Or a novel in the tradition of writing of uncertainty like Dostoevsky's, Kafka's, and Camus's work? It can also be read as a work about human resilience. The "I" is perpetually in the process of being formed. Life is contained in different places—the notebooks, the dreams and the poems. There is, however, another literary tradition, which conjoins with this somber world. Pamuk traces this back to his several readings of the *Thousand and One Nights*, readings carried on at different stages of his life. His readings took him on a journey encountering the miraculous and working through love and hate towards an understanding of the deep humanism of the tales. The *Thousand and One Nights* has stories where men

learn to retain their faith even in their ongoing struggle against despair; they possess a "secret internal geometry" as the reader is brought face to face with mortality. The novel is strewn with the telling of stories in the face of death. Literatures travel from one culture to another with their themes, forms, atmosphere, and symbols. Pamuk points out that the *Thousand and One Nights* boasts of a mixed heritage from India, Iran, and the Arab world and in its turn has found its way into Cervantes, Coleridge, De Quincey, and Poe (*Other Colors* 120). But this traveling has largely been downplayed and perceived as part of the imperial gains.

The performative element and the carnivalesque when they inhabit a literary narrative, as in several novels of Dickens and Hardy, project another kind of narrative edge. Performance assumes the presence of the listener/observer. Oral traditions have several performative forms where impersonations are carried on openly—in fact, they constitute the main strand of the narrative and disrupt its dominant discourses. Pamuk also has a play performance, *My Fatherland and My Scarf,* to which he devotes two chapters in order to comment on the veil as a symbol of Islamic nationalism. The novel had begun with the spate of suicides being committed on the issue of the veil, an issue that encompasses a whole set of questions—tradition and modernity, religion and identity, and the looming shadow of the "clash of civilizations" over freedom, peace, and love.

Classical aesthetics, including the Indian *rasa* theory that is aesthetic pleasure, is viewed in itself as a total indivisible experience. Today classical theory has become exclusive as it has failed to stretch itself to meet new art forms emerging from the hitherto silent cultures; also at times, it is rooted in an elitist/classical argument that is in favor of this democratization and the need to recognize that art cannot but be political and yet it does not cease to be art. Most of the problems of comparative literature and the hierarchies within it arise from this inability to recognize the new idiom. A whole new area is open to the discipline once its practitioners are bold enough to democratize it. My argument is in favor of this democratization.

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Endnotes

1. Plenary talk delivered at the XIXth International Comparative Literature Congress. Seoul 15-21 August, 2010.
2. Also see Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* and his reference to Alexander Duff's use of the term "second birth," an easy substitute for twice-born, for religious conversion to Christianity (101).
3. Gillian Wright has omitted some important passages, including one on the Muslim participation in the First War of Independence in 1857. As the novel is about the position of the Muslim who has not moved out of India after the partition of the country, the loyalty demonstrated to the national cause is of great significance. By leaving it out, the meaning of the novel has been curtailed in its expression.
4. But words and translations transfer emphasis. The work I am referring to is by a dalit woman Baby Kamble and is originally titled "Our Life" signifying an objective narration of life as it is for them. In its English translations it has acquired the title *The*

Prisons We Broke, targeting a specific market and sending out a signal about a cultural and a gender position.

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LITERARY COMPARISON—INTERCULTURAL COMPARISON:

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE BETWEEN TRADITION AND RENEWAL

Three years ago during the ICLA congress in Rio de Janeiro, I used the image of a gingko leaf—a leaf reminiscent of the shape of a heart—as a symbol for the activities of comparative literature. Today I would like to take up that comparison again and speak about the activities of comparative literature and the importance of the gingko leaves in a more theoretical context. Within the context of this talk, I propose to address a range of comparative activities and to present the new perspectives that are available to us, most notably those concerning methodological approaches.

In order not to disturb you with the complexity of forty years of experience in comparative literature, I intend to concentrate my theoretical reflections on formulating some theses. At the end of my address, I will offer you a short practical analysis.

I. Comparative Literature is a Scholarship Devoted to Relations.

In one of the poems in the cycle *West-Östlicher Divan*—a kind of intellectual manifesto—the German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe evokes the leaf in the shape of a heart of the gingko that travelers of his epoch had brought to Europe as a symbol of the suitable understanding of the cultures of the east and the west as well as between all human beings. And since it is as well a love poem, Goethe works with complex relations: culture, humanity, amour.

Gingo Biloba (Second Stanza)

Ist es ein lebendig Wesen,
Das sich in sich selbst getrennt?
Sind es zwei, die sich erlesen,
Dasz man sie als Eines kennt?

[Is it a living essence?
That has divided itself within itself?
It is two who have chosen themselves
That are recognized as one.]

Let me formulate the idea more abstractly: For the late Goethe, the poem has without doubt expressed the "difference within unity." In seeking a difference within unity, the poet chose a dialectic approach. The comparison of cultures must bring to light both that which is held in common and that which is different. However, the idea of the currency of Goethe should not be pushed too far since

during the twenty-first century the humanistic and idealistic foundations leap less forcefully to our attention since they are repressed by global, material, and political interactions that one certainly cannot control. If globalization draws nearer to widely varied cultures, does it not at the same time risk leveling the differences? I will return to this problem later.

The number of comparative literature manuals has multiplied over the last thirty years, and I will forego offering a bibliography here. I will as well forego speaking of a German work, *Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft: Theorie und Praxis* [Comparative Literature: Theory and Praxis], which I edited and published in 1981. This book has had its period of recognition—especially since the connection between literary and cultural studies had not yet become a current and broadly accepted methodology at the time. But it is interesting to note that the ideas on the topic were developed in a manner generally parallel to one another on the international level. It can be said that there is almost an European consensus concerning the content of the discipline, if not as well an international consensus. Since comparative literature has become the object of study of literature internationally, it can very easily transcend national boundaries of scholarly communication. In my capacity as president of the International Comparative Literature Association, I can clearly observe that the intellectual exchange between worldwide comparatists (the Association has more than four thousand members in sixty countries) has developed in an especially dynamic manner. We see a great interest on the part of countries such as Georgia, Ukraine, and the Baltic countries etc., which after the collapse of the Soviet Union wanted to integrate themselves into the greater community of comparatists. Political openings and intellectual openings were joined.

Without the slightest degree of condescension, comparative literature can be discussed as a "scholarship of relations." This concerns the structure as well as the socio-political mission. Compare means quite simply establish some relation, to go beyond that which is one, which is monolithic. It is absolutely correct that in scholarly discussions of literature and culture the prefixes like "inter," "trans," "crossed," and "in between" henceforth constitute part of the standard vocabulary. Interculturality, intertextuality, intermediality are at the center of our comparative research. But what in fact does one actually understand by the term "general and comparative literature"? The object of its study is the relation between different cultures, different literatures, between parts of certain texts, between differing cultures and theories, etc. . . . and especially in the case in which they are separated by linguistic boundaries. In our time—in the era of mobility—when exchanges between cultures have become conspicuously evident, comparative literature has gained an imposing importance in the study of the process of the perception of the Other. Just like other university programs, it has constantly modified, amplified, and refined its domain of activity, and this, above all, in terms of that which involves its methods. But for the most part, the domains have remained constant: the comparison of genres, of literary periods, of myths, and of themes; literary criticism; and research on reception (linked today to the study of intertextuality), and the image of "other countries" (today in relation to intercultural studies). The

term "media" today has, as you know well, a very broad significance and includes all forms of transmission: of texts of all the genres as well as visual media, for example those traditions like painting and the electronic media (video games, to wit).

In this complex array, comparative literature is supposed to recognize clearly the different domains of study and analyze them. This does not mean that as in so many other scholarly disciplines, it will not devote itself to exploring the concept of world literature (a term that remains to be discussed), but it also fulfills a methodological function. This exercise constitutes a suitable definition of a *tertium comparationis* as a basis for comparison: i.e., who compares the compared and the common elements. It constitutes, thus, one of the central problems of the discipline since the choice of common parameters establishes to a certain degree the final results.

I will give you an example. It is interesting to observe at close proximity the translation or the successful adaptation of Kafka's novel *The Trial* because the fundamental questions like the phenomenon of "alienation," the narrative perspective, or even the question of the sociological situation in the cultures of Prague (German, Czech, Yiddish, and French, etc.) provide us with the most suitable parameters. It thus involves applying the comparative method in a critical and reflexive way.

I would like to give a second example emerging from the fruitful collaboration with a Korean colleague (Hu Byeong Yoon), who took part in a publication edited by Monika Schmitz-Emans and myself entitled *Das Paradigma der Landschaft in Moderne und Postmoderne* [Modernist Terrains: Landscapes, Settings, and Space]. In his impressive contribution on modern Korean literature, the theme of landscape, for example, is inadequate as a *tertium comparationis* for the study of the poem "The World in the Morning." To understand this poem in its totality, it is necessary to take into account the complex conditions of transmission that exist in a movement from America and Europe to Korea as well as the historical, political, and social context of the respective cultures and all this in the literary epoch in question, that is to say modernism. In effect, the Korean representative of the modernist trend [Hyeondae munhak] has been deeply influenced by western trends. In which aesthetic criteria, does the influence of T.S. Eliot's poem "The Waste Land" manifest itself? What importance does modernism have for Korean poets? It is not without justification that Ho-Byeong Yoon speaks of a crisis of modernization in terms of a westernization.

What relation has Goethe with Persian poetry? And what is the relation between Kirim Kim and American poetry? Did Kafka influence magical realism? Such questions lead us directly to the field of study of a poetics of relations, a study that appears destined for the comparatists.

II. Comparisons Lead to a Deconstruction of the National.

Deconstruction is a poststructural philosophic concept. Here it is used to characterize a dialectical process. As soon as I analyze a text apparently "well situated" in a national literature from a comparative point of view, that is to say in

confronting a text with a different culture, with different intertexts, with different influences or parallels, the category of "national" becomes problematic. And moreover, which literary texts can presume an absolute integrity? The surface of a national language most frequently hides multiple points of origin, the adhesion to an entire web of relations (that the comparatist does not always succeed in entirely discovering).

To tell the truth, in claiming responsibility for a new method of literary criticism that takes into account foreign influences, cultural processes that cross borders, and different traditions, we open some doors. Issues like French as a Foreign Language, German as a Foreign Language, academic programs with a European orientation, or in a general manner the analyses concentrating on problems of linguistic or literary alterity cannot function without taking into consideration a comparative perspective enriched by cultural studies. (I will return later to cultural studies.)

In having spoken of the deconstruction of the national, I did not mean that the cultural adherence of the observers or interpreters is without importance. Beyond an unquestionable opening of the mind to cultural phenomena without borders, it is evident that the perspective of a comparatist always retains a cultural imprint for avoiding the discussion of the national. In the same way, he enters into a discussion on the polemic side of Eurocentrism: nothing has the necessary stature to catapult itself into a space void of culture in order to gain a neutral perspective, pure so to say, and entirely objective with regard to non-European cultures. Eurocentrism, European criticism often criticized by postcolonial theory, remains a problem to note with care and to control. But differentiations must be made. It is evident that for students, German or French comparatists must try to relativize the interpretive parameters of a Korean, Japanese, or Chinese fictional text in order not to risk misunderstandings. On the other hand and on a more general level of European thought, I claim loyalties as a European imprinted by Cartesianism, the idealism of socialism, or by other mental attitudes that catch up with us every day.

In this context, I see a certain contradiction between our theories, the postmodern and postcolonial on the one hand and the practices of comparatists on the other. It is true that international mobility—and in its wake, cultural hydridization—has recently taken on a particular direction of late. But it is also true that the concept of différ*a*nce of Derrida, that of the "third space" of Homi Bhabha, and of homelessness with Rushdie, etc. are in conflict with the fact that cultural particularity and that binarism—the existence of a difference between the One and the Other—are ineluctable and cannot be ignored from the methodological point of view. In spite of mondialization, it is not necessary to underestimate the hiatus between cultures, a difference that already exists at the level of the language. This hiatus constitutes the precondition of all comparison.

From a historic point of view, the comparative approach has always existed, even if it is true that it is often intimidated by national tendencies. But one can see how the Leitmotiv of criticism changes bit by bit as a function of the evolution of society: the relationship between the national and the foreign, the known and the

unknown, and the near and the distant etc. evolve in terms of their internal structure toward a greater flexibility. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries narrow-minded opposition, the perception of the enemy, have given way to a dialectical approach to the problem and to a productive discussion among literatures.

III. The Social Process of Modernization Brings About Perception and a Very Important Mutual Infiltration of Cultures.

Taking into account the changing socio-political, economic, and technological conditions, the scholarly capacity of a comparative approach proves indispensable. Literature has never been monolithic, and it is less and less so. As a matter of fact, no text reduces itself to itself because it arises from multiple influences, from the intertext, and from foreign elements that define it. Without the advances with regard to mobility, I would not be able to approach the problem in such a detailed way. I will mention, nonetheless for those interested, the analysis of Ulrich Beck and Wolfgang Bonaß, *Die Modernisierung der Moderne*. This work contains an article with the title "From Pilgrim to Netsurfer." The authors proceed by laying out the historical distinctions over the span of history between different types or functions of their conception of displacement: the pilgrim or the trader (up to the eighteenth century), the stroller, the flâneur (during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), the cosmopolitan and the migrant (during the nineteenth and twentieth century), and finally the tourist, the global manager, the "digital nomad" (or technomad), and so forth for the period of the twentieth century up to our times. A tendency toward a globalized mobility can be observed, so to speak. As schematic and simple as the model appears, it clearly shows this social and technological evolution, which is reflected in literature.

I would prefer to talk here of the process of ethnolization in literature, that is to say of an integration crossing from one culture to the Other in its literary texts and of a general tendency in art today, as a reason for different modes of displacement and of communication that we will describe. This is valid particularly for the postcolonial literatures that find themselves in conflict with the dominant cultures, but also for a considerable number of other texts with an intercultural character, as for example for the literature about the migration of labor.

IV. Comparison Is Not a Method in the Strict Sense of the Term.

Comparison is not a method in the strict sense of the term, but rather a natural, logical, and heuristic tool that is based on the processes of reflection. And yet, in certain scholarly areas, comparison has acquired a particular status and is applied for specific ends. From a historical point of view, comparison is a heuristic procedure, that has never ceased to be "modern": Lessing, Herder, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Goethe, Wilhelm Schlegel, and the Humboldts, etc.—to cite a few writers of European renown—had already discovered this comparative and intercultural dimension in their works, even if the view of the other side of the border formerly served rather to reinforce and confirm their belonging to their own

country. Before the creation of the first official comparative literature organizations and institutions in the middle of the second half of the nineteenth century in Germany, the first theoretical and conceptual initiatives were drawn up in France. Still in our day, the university chairs for general and comparative literature remain rather few in Germany, but "the comparatist" approach has earned an undeniable importance in many new academic programs with an intercultural orientation, in schools and doctoral universities, and research groups set up by national scholarly research councils.

When, in comparative literature, the question of "comparison" from a systematic point of view arises, it concerns among other things a comparative view from above (the perspective of the flying bird). The points of reference can be the historical context, the social structures, psychological questions, or literary and aesthetic interests. Literary criticism has recourse to this array of parameters (or *tertium comparationis*) for extracting common forms, criss-cross connections, "typical traits," and parallels or differences between the two comparable unities. According to the celebrated formula of the Czech researcher Dionýs Ďurišin, general and comparative literature rests on a combination of genetic (a relation of contact) and typological approaches.

The term "general," of great importance in the name of the discipline (general and comparative literature) attests to the fact that the fundamental idea of the study does not relate exclusively to simple, bilateral contrasts between two texts or two contexts. On the contrary, indeed, the practice of literary study implies as well the acquisition of a knowledge, as far as literature is concerned, of the construction of the poetics of a work of literature. The contacts between the cultures that are established in accordance with a dynamism of their own necessitate, however, a supplemental perspective: the cultures that mutually preconceive themselves, judge themselves, criss-cross themselves, do combat with one another, and make reference to one another. The questions of perception, of transference, and of aesthetic construction are here of crucial importance. A typical example of a genre in which fruitful contact occurs with other generically related works is the story of voyages. Even if the comparison is not expressed in an explicit way, it manifests itself, in spite of everything, in the action of the subject who makes the distinction—or rather the intermediary between the horizons—known or unknown. For this reason among others in general and comparative literature, one speaks of "genetic" relationships.

The professional comparatist who explores from such a perspective the thinkers, the poets, the narrative voices, or the protagonists of a text moves forward in a space already preliminarily structured: in other words, he compares that which has already been compared before him. The writer—the protagonist—also becomes a "comparatiste" when he discovers the Other. (The Other as culture, country, landscape, or strange character etc.) Karl Roßmann, the hero of Kafka's novel *Amerika*, discovers an unknown continent with the help of repeated comparisons, that is to say by referring to his own cultural memory: the silhouette of the unknown urban setting formed by the New York skyscrapers "cut with scissors" and

the orderly interminable houses result from a comparison with Prague, the native city of the narrator accustomed to the layout of little streets pleasantly sinuous. It would be possible to cite a great number of other examples: the novel of voyage, of exile, the novel of the migrant, but also all kinds of non-fictional reflections that have as their object a foreign culture. There are so many representations of the unknown that mix information, pretexts, and predispositions, that is to say aesthetic constructions that one calls alterity.

V. Comparative and General Literature is the Conjunction of Literary Criticism and Cultural Studies.

Comparative and general literature as the study of literature is as well the study of culture and of civilization in the sense of an interdisciplinary and intercultural contextualization (even a civilizational one) and also of a contextualization among different media. If one observes different efforts to define what cultural studies are, the supplement value thereof results on the one hand from their extensive materiality and methods and on the other hand from the supposition of the existence of a supporting framework of meaning woven together by different cultures. The complex thus formed by the collective construction of meaning crosses different historical, social, and literary strata from which it asks to be disengaged.

On the other hand, cultural scholarship supports to a certain extent the thesis of "culture as text," which since the research of Stephen Greenblatt and Clifford Geertz established a new proximity between cultural studies and the study of literature. To "understand" and describe the culture signify that the ethnologue imitates the methods of the specialist in literature. Conversely the idea of a "text" for literary study is found here generalized, thus, no longer having much to observe in terms of traditional philological concepts. A corresponding opening toward the cultural context and interdisciplinarity has as its consequence the fact that literary studies, beyond the phrase visually perceptible, is of interest in terms of nonlinguistic and nonlinear signs. It looks as well into texts that do not belong to the canon, it ignores the differentiation between "high" literature and "popular" literature, it examines completely as many nonfictional as fictional works, and it forges relations to different media.

The efforts of literary criticism (*Literaturwissenschaft*) to enlarge its field of study toward that of cultural studies (*Kulturwissenschaft*) are not something new in comparative studies. One will recall that the discussions concerning the idea of intermedia (that is to say an opening of creative thinking outside of every restriction except the single domain of art) were the first tentative steps in establishing imagologies, thus the study of cultural alterity as a new area of research. Today the respective areas are better delimited from a theoretical and methodological point of view. It relies on semiotic-cultural models for that which is linked to other forms of art and/or media and on ethnological foundations and tools coming from cultural studies for the exploration of the transcultural processes within and across literature.

VI. Conclusion.

To conclude, here is a little example from the novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, born in Peru, who might be able to illustrate this idea. Like all authors, Vargas Llosa is not only a narrator but also a reader. Intertextuality is easily spotted in his works. Intercultural memory and interliterary memory are joined there. Following the tradition of Latin America, he is confronted with Kafka, whose works are often assimilated into magical realism. His novel *El Hablador* [The Storyteller] presents a paradigm typical of a postcolonial story in the fact that the author voluntarily relies on cultural hybridity. In the present case, Vargas Llosa uses the most celebrated novella of Kafka, *Die Verwandlung* [The Metamorphosis], to describe a meeting—rather grotesque—between cultures. The metamorphosis of Gregor Samsa into a beetle is metamorphosed in turn in an episode during which the author transposes this same motif into an Amazon rainforest, and presents it as a dream of the storyteller Tasurinchi. Gregor-Tasurinchi, thus named for the metamorphosis, embodies the fusion of two worlds far removed from a geographic, linguistic, and mental point of view. The western myth of the metamorphosis, circulated by numerous authors ranging from Ovid to Vargas Llosa, is incorporated into the aboriginal myths. The literary memory of this fact is enshrined in the cultural and collective memory occasioning a fusion of a work of "Weltliteratur" with the oral narrative tradition of the Indians of Amazonia. This synthetic construction is meant to be programmatic. The Algerian writer Assia Djébar has attempted in *Les nuits de Strasbourg* (1997) a comparable symbolism, characterizing the intercultural but unrealizable love between an Algerian woman and an Alsatian with a hybrid neologism "alsagerie" (a fusion of Alsace and Algerie). The creation of such linguistic compromises reflects the problematic nature of the experience of alterity and the cultural rift on an aesthetic level.

At present, I would like to return to my ginkgo symbolism. If by means of a poem, Goethe has presented us with an idealistic and humanistic idea of "difference in unity," we find ourselves today confronting a completely different poetics of relations that does not always reflect a cosmopolitan, harmonious world but as well one that is intercultural, problematic, nervous, stress-laden—as it is individual and collective—owing to this accelerated modernization (or globalization) in which we daily live.

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ESSAIS / REVIEW ESSAYS

Yamanaka Yuriko. *Alekusandorosu Henso–Kodai kara Chuusei Isulamu e* [Changing Aspects of Alexander the Great in the Ancient and Medieval Islamic World]. Nagoya: Nagoya U P, 2009. 575 pp. 978-4815806095.

Comparative literature in Japan has long been attached to Japanese studies, with the aim of clarifying the meaning and values of Japanese culture and literature more or less in an international context, comparison being considered a very useful tool for the purpose. Like many other academic disciplines in today's Japan, readers should realize, comparative literature got started after World War II, when the Japanese had to reconsider their national identity following total defeat. In that context, comparison focused on issues involving Japan and the West, which necessarily led to evaluations of our modern literature alongside Western equivalents. Since the West had in fact exercised a major influence on modern Japanese writing, comparison naturally involved the *rapport d'influence*. It sometimes had the added effect of deepening an inferiority complex among Japanese intellectuals.

In due course, a counterpart to this manner of comparison arose, one emphasizing the originality of Japanese literature. It became especially active after Japan's increased economic power succeeded in re-establishing its international presence. It goes without saying that nationalistic sentiment entered into this new trend in comparative studies. However, another counterpart from almost the same time should not be forgotten. This trend focused on East Asian literature, both modern and premodern, in its relations to Japanese literature. In this type of comparative studies, which opened a new era for comparative literature in Asia, not only Japanese but Chinese, Taiwanese, and Korean scholars took part.

But even when all these developments are considered, the main trend of Japanese comparative literature remained the same; it continued to be attached to Japanese studies. Comparative literature in Japan has not really gotten rid of the "nationalistic" tendency that penetrated almost all the country's human sciences. Of course, not all comparative studies over the last five decades can be blamed for nationalistic bias; some have genuinely contributed to giving readers an objective vision of their literature. Nevertheless, comparative literature should not remain at this stage; it should open new horizons on literature.

One such initiative, at the beginning of the 1990s, was the doctoral dissertation by Sugita Hideaki on Islamic fine arts in Persian and Arabian literature. Following his path, Yamanaka Yuriko pursued studies on the literatures of the Islamic world including Persia, the fruit of which is the book to be discussed here

on Alexander the Great's changing images in the Middle East.

Written in Japanese, the author's mother tongue, and published in 2009, this book gives a history of "the stories" of Alexander the Great that prevailed in the ancient and medieval Islamic world. The author, who knows Arabic, Pahlavi, Persian, and ancient Greek and Latin as well as modern European languages, researches the changing images of the legendary Alexander through careful reading and analysis of diverse literary texts that exercised a considerable influence over ancient and medieval Persia and other Islamic countries. As the author says in the introduction, she is not interested in discovering "the true" Alexander, which is a task for historians. As a literary scholar, she studies the fictitious Alexander and that figure's changing aspects, meanings, and roles in Islamic literature of different periods and countries. George Cary has already done similar work on Alexander's portrayal in Western medieval literature, and Yamanaka's book can be considered a huge complement to his research.

The author chose Alexander the Great for the broad geopolitical dispersion of his stories and for their influence on the Islamic world. Indeed, there are few legendary figures whose reputations spread so widely and that penetrated so deeply into peoples' spirits. If Alexander hardly appears in Yamanaka's own East Asian literary tradition, he does figure not only in the West's Judeo-Christian literature but also in the Pahlavi and Islamic literatures of the Middle East. This book's research into Alexander's changing aspects in literatures from several languages makes a fascinating "story" of the stories.

The author begins by introducing the three main sources for Alexander's role in Islamic literatures. The first is *Pseudo-Callisthenes' Alexander Romance*, the second is the so-called *Aristotle's Letters to Alexander*, and the third is the *Zoroastrian Legends* in pre-Islamic Persia. On the first, she supposes that because it contains miscellaneous subjects—from historical events to fantastic fictions or philosophical dialogues—it could enter quite freely into Persian and Arab literatures, where it assumed a different color and tone each time it was transmitted to a new place. What is interesting about the author's discussion of this source is that from the beginning this literary Alexander was a romance taken as truth. This point, which can be applied to any literature anywhere in the world, shows that a literary truth often influences a people's mentality more than an historical one. Romance can affect history more than historical facts.

The same can be said about the second source, *Aristotle's Letters to Alexander,* which proved to be fictitious. The author compares the ancient Greek historians' commentaries on Aristotle's influence on Alexander with the Islamic equivalents, concluding that the latter put much more emphasis on this relationship and that Muslims valued Aristotle as a philosopher with an ideal of uniting East and West, while for Greeks he was an ethnocentric thinker with no such "unrealistic" aim. This difference is of interest because it suggests a cause for conflicts that still exist today between the two civilizations.

As for the third source, consisting of Zoroastrian legends in pre-Islamic Persia with a negative, even diabolic image of Alexander, the author tries to find an his-

torical basis for them. Going back to Alexander's destruction of Persepolis, the Zoroastrian religious center (an actual historical event), she evokes the collective memory of a traumatized people whose religious tradition was utterly destroyed. She admits that posterity could exaggerate the existence of such a collective memory, which was to be found only in Zoroastrian religious settings, yet she insists that this source derived from an undeniable historical tragedy. Her thesis here on how a traumatized people creates "stories" is interesting, especially for scholars concerned with relationships among history, literature, and collective memory.

It is interesting as well to see how these negative images of Alexander later vanished, after Islam prevailed in Persia. If the Zoroastrian tradition created the devilish image of a conqueror swayed by the malevolent God Ahriman, a totally different image arose once the nation converted. The notorious Alexander turned out to be a good man, a religious hero, even a prophet.

Yamanaka attributes this drastic change more precisely to the influence of Judeo-Christian literature on Islamic writers. This implies that it was the Western monotheistic literature that first conceived of Alexander as a religious hero, an image that was then transmitted to the Islamic world. According to Yamanaka, a difference of perspective still persisted between the two traditions, in that Judeo-Christian literature could criticize Alexander's hubris while Islamic literature did not hesitate to see him as a chosen one. It is in the Islamic world that the earthly conqueror became a divine figure and Alexander's image could symbolize *jihad*.

Now, the Islamic texts to which the author refers as bearers of Alexander's sacred image are the following: Tabari's commentaries on the sacred book *Tasfir*, Thalabi's and Naysaburi's *Legends of the Prophets,* Dinawari's *A Long History*, and Nizami's *The Book of Alexander.* These four all call Alexander a great defender of Islam, which is of course not literally true. The author seems to appreciate especially Nizami's epic on Alexander, because of its high literary quality. She explains that by borrowing selections from earlier literatures like the *Pseudo-Callisthenes' Romance* and Judeo-Christian legends, this poet of Persian origin created a coherent story of Alexander's personal evolution, his *Bildungsroman*, from conqueror to philosopher, and from philosopher to prophet.

Now, in the first of the four sources just mentioned, *Tasfir*, the author says that Alexander's name did not appear, but only mention of a "young Greek" who had "two horns" and built the city of Alexandria. Many scholars have had no difficulty in identifying Alexander with the "two-horned" hero, but had trouble deciphering that feature's symbolic meaning. Yamanaka, by carefully examining the Islamic texts and earlier interpretations of them, concludes that because *Tasfir* was a religious text, the "two-horned" epithet must mean "religious hero." That Alexander's destruction of Zoroastrianism made him a hero in the Islamic world, since he had defeated heretics to found a monotheistic religion, certainly makes sense. But the question remains: why "two horns"?

One of the author's leading traits as a comparatist lies in her attention to the specific historical and cultural context within which a literary text was created. This tendency becomes manifest especially in her third chapter, which seeks to

establish the context in which the Islamic "mirror for princes" genre developed, so as to create the image of Alexander as a "prince philosopher."

According to Yamanaka, despite certain similarities and continuities between Western "mirrors for princes" and Islamic ones, the latter resulted instead from the encounter with sources unknown to the West. Those sources are ancient Persian *andar* (lessons for a prince to be a good sovereign), Islamic correspondence literature, and Aristotle's famous but faked letters to Alexander. All these items combined to become a "mirror for princes," with Aristotle as a great master who taught many useful lessons to his ambitious disciple, Alexander.

Now, as noted above, these so-called letters of Aristotle's were faked, but it would be more precise to say that they were mostly adapted to Islamic needs, except for one part that was translated from Greek to Arabic without distortion. The translation combined with the adaptation resulted in a well-known "mirror for princes" entitled *Secret of Secrets*, which spread widely in the Islamic countries and in Europe. The author does not go so far as to say that the book became a source for Western "mirrors for princes," but her discussion may encourage us to draw that conclusion.

Secret of Secrets consists of Aristotle's ethical, philosophical, or political advice to Alexander, but also contains other advice or teachings about health care, nutrition, music, language, and so on. The most striking and interesting item may be the astrological and alchemical section, which is the book's last "secret." Aristotle appears there as a teacher of the "secret" science and Alexander as an eager pupil who does not want to miss a single piece of information.

According to the author, this last part of the book later became an independent work, which gave birth to a new genre in Islamic literature, a kind of scientific fantasy. Such stories, in which the philosopher teaches the prince to intervene in the movements of the stars, spread among the Islamic countries and were later translated into Hebrew and Latin so that Westerners could enjoy them. Since the author refers to their resemblance with today's children's literature, we might go further and think of a possible influence on science fiction.

Now, let us remember that Islamic literature made Alexander into a religious hero, a prophet. We can only wonder at how this image of a young prince fighting for religious truth could coexist with one of a young philosopher seeking a better intellectual life based on reason. This question does not seem to preoccupy the author, who leaves us with an Alexander seen in some books as a passive follower of God, but in others as a philosopher willing to use "science and technology" to change the movements of the universe. Did she prefer to leave this question open as an Islamic enigma?

History is a notion that was developed in ancient China and Greece. As the Islamic world absorbed Greek philosophy and science in the Middle Ages, it is not surprising that an historical literature should develop. But we also know that the entire Islamic world is religious, thus non-historical in basic orientation. We then might ask how religion and history could be reconciled there, how history was used to justify or defend Islam. This question is not restricted to the Islamic

world but appears elsewhere as well. For every human being feels himself or herself to be living between the eternal and the temporal; many people wish to go beyond history despite being in history.

Yamanaka's fourth chapter treats this problem in detail. First, she explains how an historical literature developed in the Islamic world, from such sources as Islamic oral history, Persian historical works based on the biography of kings, Byzantine Christian historical documents, and so on. She then attempts to classify Arabic historical works in chronological order, but with mixed success, at times losing readers in the flood of proper nouns, authors' names, and book titles. Is her real intention here to pursue the thematic problem of Alexander or just to give a panoramic survey of Islamic historical writings?

At the chapter's end, however, Yamanaka's true intention is revealed, which is to show Alexander's shifting image in this historical literature. At last we see that Alexander had a trickster's role in these writings, with a meaning that changed with the demands of each period. However, even as he went from devil to saint and from prophet to philosopher, his symbolic meaning as a revolutionary who opened a new era in history did not alter.

Now, one key feature of Yamanaka's book is its breadth of scope. The author refers not only to Arabic documents but to Pahlavi-Persian ones and even to others as she pursues the shifting images of the great conqueror and emphasizes his importance to the Islamic world. Drawing on sources from different cultures, she does not overlook contextual differences, nor is she blind to linkages that actually existed. As a result of her exhaustive research, we realize that Alexander was one of the most important figures in Islamic literature, and that Judeo-Christian and Byzantine literature were not irrelevant to the formation of his image. We come to accept one of the author's first assertions in her introduction: if Europe could establish a more or less historical image of Alexander, while the Islamic world adopted mythical ones, that is not simply because they used different sources, but also because science and religion could not develop separately in the Islamic world, while they could do so in modern Europe.

As said above, the problem Alexander poses in Islamic historical literature reflects one that confronts all human beings. Since the author is Japanese, her research into the changing aspects of this great Western conqueror inevitably suggests the problem of history in Japan. To be sure, this book has no apparent relevance to Japan, and the author seems uninterested in relating this Islamic problem to a Japanese one. But that does not prevent us from discerning a certain parallel between the Islamic and the Japanese creations of an historical literature.

One commonality between these historical writings is that in both cultures, history was written to establish or fortify a national identity that was closely tied to religion. In Japan, unlike in Islam, the religion was neither monotheistic nor prophetic, and history was not related to prophecy but to mythology. But it abounded in divinized heroes and history itself was divinized, a situation that approaches to some degree the Islamic conception of history.

In this regard, the book's most striking and interesting part comes when it

explains the reversal of Alexander's image in Persia. The very man who was seen as a devilish destroyer of Persepolis and of Persia's religious tradition became a religious hero once the Iranians became Muslims. This situation implies that people are capable of "inventing historical facts" that never existed if those "facts" can "justify" their political and cultural reality. This point is quite revealing, for example, if we think of Japan's first historical literature. For the conquerors of the Japanese archipelago and founders of Japan as a nation created the first books of history entitled *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* in the eighth century, books that combined local myths with historical facts to "justify" their political position. Since these books determined Japanese historical consciousness and even now many Japanese remain unaware of the "invention" of these facts, Yamanaka's remarks on the Islamic invention of history are really revealing, whatever her original intention might have been.

To conclude, the exceptional qualities of this book were recognized in 2010 when Yamanaka was awarded the prize of the Japanese Comparative Literature Association. One of the book's strengths consists in her relatively neutral position vis-à-vis the Islamic world. Coming from a society that is neither Christian nor Islamic, she seems to keep a suitable distance from both Western and Islamic perspectives on Alexander, thus allowing her to contribute to Islamic literary studies and to literary studies in general.

A Japanese comparatist remarked after the prize ceremony that Yamanaka should have written this book in English, not in Japanese, so that people all over the world with an interest in Alexander could enjoy it. He was right in a sense, but we should add that parts of the book were first written in English or French and published in the West. There is also some merit in having it appear in Japanese because most Japanese readers who know Alexander the Great by name have hardly any knowledge of Islamic literature, much less of its deep relation with him.

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Eva Kushner, ed. *L'Époque de la Renaissance (1400-1600). Tome III: Maturations et mutations (1520-1560)*. Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages 26. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2011. ix + 636 pp. 978-9027234599.

Of the several questions still attending historiography (determinations of accuracy are well beyond doubt), there lingers the problem of method, that is, presentation of materials. The time of a single person addressing a complex, multi-national, and lengthy period such as the Renaissance is over. This is an occasion where less is more. There are some unfortunate examples. One is W.K. Ferguson's *Europe in Transition: 1300-1520* (1962), which I mention partly because of the author's merited distinction. But the questions persist: how is this work to be read? and can even so learned and skilled a scholar as Ferguson write with the same knowledge and interest over so wide a spectrum of subjects? The point is made clearer when we turn to his collection of essays, *Renaissance Studies* (1965), in which every essay is a dense and focused, informed and readable model of historical understanding. To come up to date (but from a different period) the same contrast is afforded between the late Tony Judt's *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (2005) and his smaller texts with luminous essays, such as *Past Imperfect*: *French Intellectuals 1944-1956* (1992). It seems that choices must be made from among several procedures: they include thematic limitations of subject matter, restricted chronological periods for study, and an increase in the number of specialized contributors.

Any two of the three will do. John H. Elliott's classic study, *Europe Divided (1559-1599)*, is an example of a highly successful recourse to the first two. Professor Eva Kushner and her committee of international comparatists are well aware of these issues and have opted for the last two strategies. They have divided the general sub-series *L'Époque de la Renaissance* into four volumes, two of which have appeared, and the third here under review, as tome III, *Maturations et Mutations (1520-1560),* an abridged yet obviously significant time-period. To address the multitude of issues falling within the period, marked by the onset of the Lutheran revolution and extending to the last years of the Catholic council at Trent, launching the counter-Reform, Professor Kushner has brought together a brigade of some 50 scholars, contributing 55 essays of various lengths, averaging about 10 pages each. This provides the volume with a knowing intensity and a remarkably broad scope of interests.

Such an arrangement obviously presents problems for reader and reviewer alike. But, as it turns out, they are not insoluble problems. This is a work for consultation, not for reading from beginning to end. Each reader will have his own cadre of recognized names, to whose work he or she can readily turn. That is a given. As a help to the reader Professor Kushner has arranged twelve chapters, each with headings to provide subject guidance. Since I cannot list all of the authors, I here indicate the intended topical range of this enormous volume by listing the chapters ("chapitres"—a misnomer since there is a great variety

even within the separate sections): I. Transformation de l'Occident (5 essays); II. Mouvements réformateurs et littérature (5 essays); III. Diffusion et répercussion de l'évangélisme (4 essays); IV. Défense et illustration des langues nationales (3 essays); V. La civilité nouvelle (4 essays); VI. Conscience littéraire et artistique (7 essays); VII. Pour l'aristocratie de l'esprit (5 essays); VIII. L'humanisme érudit (4 essays); IX. Progrès de la science (6 essays); X. Morales nouveaux (4 essays); XI. La culture populaire (5 essays); XII. La Renaissance en crise (3 essays). This is a very rich, varied, and inviting *Table des matières* with eminent scholars quite adequate to the challenge.

There are other ways, unfortunately omitted, that Professor Kushner could have aided the reader. She could have provided dates for each of the essays; she regrets the death of contributors but does not indicate who are among the *disparus,* with their years of death. She laments the loss of Paul Chavry, who also served as translator of "plusieurs" of the essays presented, but there is no indication which they are. These, however, are minor infractions in what must have been a long and arduous task shepherding 55 essays through to publication. To produce a coherent volume of this caliber is a monumental achievement, one indicative of the age of heroic simplicity for comparative literature when the ambitious goals for this series (to write a "histoire comparée" of the literatures of the modern European languages) were first established.

Professor Kushner's strategy is inductive, as she explains in her *avant-propos,* that is, by many discrete perspectives and varied topics to fill out the contour and content of the Renaissance for the formative, tumultuous years of 1520-1560. The essays themselves are written with a mind to extensiveness, each including the graduated appearances of renascent developments among the various European national literatures. Moreover, many of the essays begin with a brief précis of what is to follow.

The reviewer can be of assistance by bundling together some of the persistent themes. The first recurrent theme addresses the fortunes of Italy, central at the beginning and the end of the period, and central in literary and cultural preeminence as it would be in political and intellectual decline. Yvonne Bellenger, in chapter VII, states quite clearly the poetic primacy of Italy: "La période 1520-1560 voit s'épanouir en Europe des courants poétiques venus d'Italie (307). She is mainly speaking of the work of Cardinal Bembo in the spread of the vogue of petrarchism first to Spain, then to France and England. Eva Kushner for her part in the same chapter refers to petrarchism as the first major theory of poetic love to reach an international level since that of medieval courtly love (311). She attributes this new prevalence to two components: a definite poetic idiom and a concern with the subjectivity of the poetic persona (320). Both Bellenger and Konrad Eisenbichler (chapter XII) enter a not-so-secret preference for Michelangelo. Bellenger makes room for other Italian poets such as Bembo, Ariosto, and Giovanni della Casa; but she reserves a "place of honor" for the sculpted and original verse of Michelangelo, whose poetry incarnates ("peut-être á lui seul") what the Renaissance possesses of grandeur and what is most human (308). Even more ardently Eisenbichler writes

of Michelangelo abandoning the elegant dialectic of petrarchism to plunge himself into the "douleureux discours" where physical and spiritual love, rapture and ecstasy, man and God confront each other (560).

Italy's cultural preeminence was shattered by the convulsive effects of the sackings of Rome and Florence in 1527-30. The brutal assault on Rome shocked the European consciousness. Rome was "la capitale moderne de la république des lettres" (Bonner Mitchell, chapter I, p. 35). The heights of its cultural ascendancy may be calibrated by the dismayed reactions to its fall. Followed by the collapse of Florence, these catastrophes began the more than three-century long period of Italy's political subjugation. These events, however, did give rise to a new method of historiography (cold comfort?), exemplified by Machiavelli and Guicciardini, among the most insightful and enduring, who amidst the ashes of defeat, devoted their understanding to searching out the causes of disaster. Thus history is born. (See Claus Uhlig, chaper VII, "L'historiographie savante," who distinguishes between the more positive quality of *virtù* in Machiavelli and the tragic acceptance of Guicciardini, 378-79).

This volume may be seen as terminating with the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis and the apparent end of dynastic wars, with the onset of religious hostilities, with the dismemberment of Italy and its dispirited morale, but also with the coming into supremacy of of the military might of Spain. Charles V had retired and the new era of Phillip II was to begin, marking the apogee of Spanish power, beginning with the Duke of Alba's Napoleonic march up the Italian peninsula, across the rich Burgundian lands and into the southern Netherlands where he reestablished control over restive populations (1567). But unfortunately, the brutality of his regime became the stuff of legend. Aided by the renewed flow of silver discovered in Mexico and Potosi, the interests of Spain took a turn for the better when the brilliant Alexander Farnese, the duke of Parma, pacified the Walloons and seemed to have at hand the ever-elusive unification of the northern and southern Netherlands (1580).

The Netherlands could provide a microcosm of Europe at large. The fate of Catholicism in some ways hung upon the fortunes of Spain. A few years after 1560 the twenty-year span of the Council of Trent would come to closure, which brought some reforms to the Catholic Church (see "La restauration catholique," by Miguel Battlori in chapter II, along with the plentiful essays outlining the Protestant interests). The rearmed and refurbished Catholic cause solidified the division of Europe into a Catholic South and a Protestant North, which division would only become more aggravated with the coming years. While this pervasive and enduring divide ("the Great Divide") is beyond the chronological limit of this volume, still there are some hints of future developments. Lazslo Makkal writing of "un nouveau marché" describes the gradual loss of the Spanish and Portuguese shipping markets. While the symptoms of this decline were only beginning to be felt, the directing trend was clear and certain: "il faut atttendre quelques décennies pour que s'instaure, au début du siècle suivant, un nouvel ordre économique, dans lequel les Hollandais et les Anglais joueront un rôle de premier plan" (10).

Bonner Mitchell quotes from Paolo Giovio's *Elogia virorum litteris illustrium* (1546) "que les étrangers avaient enlevé á l'Italie non seulement ses libertés mais aussi 'les ornements de la paix, de l'érudition, et de la fleur des arts'" (42), adding that this observation "was much appreciated in the North of Europe." Claus Uhlig, in the essay quoted above, advances Jean Bodin's "fundamental polarity" between the countries of the North which are "forts" and those of the South which are "faibles" (386-87). Bodin unfortunately attributes these differences to the unsteady proposition of climate.

Another unifying thread that runs through these various essays is one that involves the character, the role, and the fortunes of Erasmus. He is indeed the hero with many faces (for Luther this meant he was like Proteus, not to be pinned down). But he stands out as representing the activities and the fate of the moderating humanist, trying to find a middle way between the two confessional powers that are squeezing him like a vise. Erasmus was a cosmopolitan, finding a home wherever there was an active printing press, which he converted into his personal ateliers with many editions of his treatises, *Colloquies*, and *Adages*, some of the latter two becoming major essays in their own right. He brought out special editions of the Christian and pagan classics (see Charles Béné, "Imprimeurs et editeurs, philologues et leurs oeuvres," 371 ff.) Erasmus's most enduring contribution was as a philologist, and he was the prime "biblical humanist" of his day (See Paul Chavry, "La bible en langues vernaculaires," 106, 111.) Although a self-proclaimed man of moderation, Erasmus found himself embroiled in many a controversy, thus fitting in André Stegmann's two essays, "La littérature de combat" and "La littérature d'édification " (chapter III). Erasmus was the first preceptor of Europe, called by none less than R. R. Bolgar, "the greatest man we have come across in the history of education." While that quotation is extratextual, in a classic essay, J.-C. Margolin, describes Erasmus's efforts to bring together manners and morals, quality of life with harmony of thought, as the new humanistic contribution to formation of the young (chapter V). It is no accident that Rabelais has been rightly called "the last of the French erasmians" (quoted by Rummel, 93).

It is impossible to do true justice to all the essays in this enormous and valuable volume. Its value lies in the wide range of topics but also in the extensiveness of the individual essays. The development of the Renaissance itself, even within the forty years allotted, requires such leaps in national awareness and examples. But such a volume also enters into profound labyrinths of judgment. One of the more amazing but somehow not surprising facts attending the opening of the "new worlds" is how little this world-changing event affected scholars and intellectuals. (See chapter X.) Another raised by Erika Rummel and sharing the same qualities of wonderment and lack of surprise is why "l'humanisme évangélique," with its characteristic emphasis on faith, its disdain of dogma and of an organized Church should be only a "transitory phenomenon" (93). These are not passing queries but arise out of the heart of humanism itself, which had one of its greatest and yet most fragile moments in the four decades of this extraordinary volume.

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Fernando Cabo Aseguinolaza, Anxo Abuín Gonzalez, and César Domínguez, eds. *A Comparative History of Literatures in the Iberian Peninsula.* Vol. I. Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages 24. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2010. xiv + 750 pp. 978-9027288394.

As part of the monumental challenge of publishing comparative histories of all the literatures in European languages, the International Comparative Literature Association now presents volume 24 of its *A Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages*, dedicated, as the title indicates, to the Iberian Peninsula. It aims to be "multilinguistic and intercultural [. . .], transnational and interdisciplinary" (ix). Complete coverage is not a goal (nor, of course, a realistic possibility); rather, the volumes aspire to synthesize, provoke reaction, and promote dialogue among thinkers and readers eager to grapple with transnational literatures and cultures. The volume under consideration here focuses on the literatures of the geographic space that encompasses the linguistic and spatial zones we call Portugal, Galicia, the Basque Country, Castile, Cataluña, Andalusia, and the melded/fused contact areas between and among these political divisions.

In volume 1 (of a two-volume project), the editors strive to "break with the old nineteenth-century historiographic models" (xi) and to renounce explicitly "those chronologically organic and narratively omniscient histories" (xi), meaning, there will be no panoramic overview of "Spanish" literature (that has been attempted numerous times), but rather case studies chosen to illuminate specific issues weighing on comparative inter-literary relations in the "imagined community" (xii) of the Iberian Peninsula.

The general editors divide the work into five broad sections, each coordinated by a different scholar. These are: "Discourses on Iberian Literary History" (F. Cabo Asequinolaza and César Domínguez), "The Iberian Peninsula as a Literary Space" (Sharon Feldman), "Multilingualism and Literature in the Iberian Peninsula" (Ángel López García), "Dimensions of Orality" (Paloma Díaz-Mas), and "Temporal Frames and Literary (Inter)Systems" (Fernando Gómez Redondo). In turn, each section is comprised of individual chapters, written by experts in the field. I shall try to give a fair description of the contents, but the restrictions of a review clearly stifle any sustained discussion of the book's significant achievements.

A Comparative History of Literatures in the Iberian Peninsula's strengths are multiple. Thirty-eight talented scholars have approached the broad challenge with style and conviction, and the volume is crammed with new information often presented in highly original ways. To start off, Cabo ("The European Horizon of Peninsular Literary Historiographical Discourses") offers an elegant overview of histories of literature in Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Portuguese, Basque and some hybrid languages that flourished in the interstices of shifting geo-political spaces. He recognizes the eighteenth century as the initiator of a nationalist literary historiography, which then became solidified in the nineteenth century as nation states came into being and as the middle class needed to identify "roots" to justify its fading empire. He sweeps through Sarmiento, Masdeu, Lampillas, Velázquez, and

Andrés, then Schlegel, Ticknor, Pidal, Amador de los Ríos, Menéndez Pelayo, Milá, Blanco, and others who helped to shape what we now think of as "Spanish Literature." He folds—as the topic of the book demands—the other literatures of the Peninsula into a cogent discussion of what history, or histories, should be and do. Domínguez ("Historiography and the Geo-Political Imaginary. The Iberian Peninsula: Between *lebensraum* and *espace vécu*") then provides theoretical musings on "literary regions," followed by a sustained and well-researched discussion of the historian-critics who attempted to wrestle the vast categories into some semblance of coherence.

Feldman's section addresses the "problem of identity" (134) as it informs our discussions about what constitutes the subject of study. Thomas Harrington ("The Hidden History of Tripartite Iberianism") talks about what might be done to "join the Peninsula's major nationalist projects together in a united yet simultaneously multi-polar fashion" (138), as he traces the history of past attempts by intellectuals to cultivate "the idea of a Peninsula" (138). "On Lusism and Lusofonia. From Identitarian Reinforcement to the Mapping of Difference" is Laura Cavalcante Padilha's discussion of Portuguese "identitarian cartography" (163), including, wisely, nods not only to Portugal but also to the various African and Brazilian national literary projects. Inocência Mata also looks at the Portuguese language in "From Iberia to Africa. The Construction of a Literary City," in which she discusses the "motherland of language," hegemony and colonization in Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Principe. Luis Fernández Cifuentes ("Travel Writing") provides an engaging look at this marginalized genre and bids for histories to open up not only to travel writing in the national language, but also travelogues written in other peninsular languages and by foreign writers traveling in the Peninsula; he then ably discusses the best of these writers from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Michael Ugarte ("Empires Waxing and Waning. Castile, Spain and American Exceptionalism") points to the Generation of 1898 as the pivotal creators of "Spanish difference," and draws parallels between them and the American frontier. "Bilbao and the Literary System in the Basque Country," by Jon Kortazar, focuses on Bilbao as a "cultural center where two literary systems collide" (222) and provides a valuable overview of the development of Basque culture in the last two centuries. Dominic Keown and Jordi Larios ("Contemporary Catalan Literature. Fact or Friction") choose polemic as their overriding posture in order to demonstrate that "In the course of the last three centuries [. . .] a homogenising authoritarian impulse has been fixated on the systematic extirpation of any literature not written in the official idiom of Castilian" (237). Anxo Tarrío Varela ("Literary and Cultural Production Centers in Galicia, 1840-1936") divides the period into three sections—Prerrexurdimento (1840-61), Rexurdimento (1862-1906), and Época Nós (1916-36)—and lays out the various work done (much of it in Castilian) in seven "territorial" cities (A Coruña, Ourense, Lugo, Ferrol, Pontevedra, Vigo, Santiago de Compostela).

The south of Spain is the "consummate imaginary space" (278) in Lee Fontanella's view ("Southern Spain"), since it was Southern Spain that most of-

ten drew the attention of foreign travelers; in fact, more foreigners commented on Spain than did Spaniards themselves. "The Canaries. Between Mythical Space and Global Drift," by Bertrand Westphal, suggests that these islands came into history slowly, were forgotten by the West, then rediscovered in the thirteenth century, at which point they worked their way into European literature and history. Westphal mentions numerous individuals who came from, went to, or imagined the Canary Islands (from Ulysses, Dante, and Viera y Clavijo to David Lodge and Carmen Laforet), although the absence of any mention of Galdós is puzzling. The final entry in Feldman's section of the book is Ana Salgueiro Rodrigues's "Insulated Voices Looking for the World. Narratives from Atlantic Islands," in which, playing with "island/isolated/insulated" she turns her attention to the work of "ex-îled" authors Cabral do Nascimento, João Varela, and João de Melo.

Linguistics, language, and interlinguistic texts—where languages coincide, either by use of multiple languages or through translation—are the focus of the nine chapters organized by Ángel García López. Roger Wright ("Bilingualism and Diglossia in Medieval Iberia, 350-1350") defends the science of linguistics against the "soggy morass of literary criticism, where [the term diglossia, for example] is little more than a symptom of wooly thinking" (334). He sweeps across Latin, Portuguese, Galician, Castilian, Aragonese, and Catalan writers, dividing the period into four useful stages, which he clearly spells out (350-711: complex monolinguialism; 711-1080: multilingual, but with one Romance continuum; 1080-1256: the introduction of bilingualism; 1256-1350: bilingualism and multilingualism). "The Impact of Arabic Diglossia among the Muslims, Jews and Christians of al-Andalus," by María Ángeles Gallego, discusses classical/standard Arabic as opposed to dialectical Arabic (literary vs. spoken) and how these languages appeared in various contexts and texts of the period. Mariano Gómez-Aranda ("The Jewish Literature in Medieval Iberia") concludes, in his excellent study, that "In the process of transmitting Greek and Arabic science to the Western world, the Jews played an important role as intermediaries" in the process of modernization. José María Estellés González and F. Jorge Peréz y Durà ("The Latin Language, a European Continuum. The Hispanic-Portuguese Contribution") discusses the evolution of Latin through Visigothic times, the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and the eighteenth century. Graça Videira Lopes ("Galician-Portuguese as a Literary Language in the Middle Ages") writes of the *cantigas*, "one of the most notable legacies" of the bilingual Middle Ages. Ángel Marcos de Dios ("Castilian and Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century") points out that "Up until the seventeenth century, Portuguese and Castilian were much more similar than they are today" (413), and bi-lingualism was common for two and a half centuries. In "Literary Language and Diatopic Variation. Catalan Literary Cultures," Vicent Salvador discusses the influences of other languages on Catalan as a literary language (Arabic, Provenzal, French, Castilian, etc.) and generously defends the use of dialects in literary expression. Karmele Rotaetxe ("Basque as a Literary Language") provides useful statistics on the rise of the Basque language and issues a hopeful call to arms for the twenty-first century: "Basque literature will not only have

cultured writers as it currently does, but it will also continue to have many readers" (455). The final chapter in this section, Fernando Romo Feito's "Ideology and Image of Peninsular Languages in Spanish Literature," poses the question, How were languages (Basque, Galician, Castilian) portrayed in literature?

The six chapters in Paloma Díaz-Mas's "Dimensions of Orality" focus on the oral literary traditions (normally excluded from the literary canon, or marginalized as mere folklore in literary histories) and considered as literature "preserved in the memory" (475). To that end, her own masterful contribution, "Comparativism and Orality. Critical Approaches to the Ballads of *La boda estorbada*" [The Thwarted Marriage] follows this one text—a work with wide geographical and temporal reach—in its many variants. She concludes that "comparativism is an obligatory condition; the oral text cannot be studied in isolation" (501). Samuel G. Armistead ("Epic and Ballad in the Hispanic Tradition") addresses one problem: "the direct and genetic relationship between epic and ballad in oral tradition" (502). Work in the field is inhibited by the "truly pitiful repertoire" of Castilian texts (only 3 in Castilian, while France claims 297 primary texts), and yet, when one takes into account all of the overseas variants, a more optimistic panorama emerges: "the Pan-Iberian *Romancero* can confidently be characterized as the largest and most geographically diverse of all the European ballad traditions" (505). Margit Frenk ("The Traditional Iberian Lyric of the Middle Ages and Golden Age") points out "textual coincidences" in the old lyrics composed in different Iberian languages and dialects. "Linguistic Borders and Oral Transmission," by José Luis Forneiro, follows up with a discussion of Gallego-Portuguese versions of the *Romancero*. José Manuel Pedrosa's "Iberian Traditions of International Folktale" addresses the migratory nature of folktales, the folk-motif catalogues and collections at our disposal, and asks, "How can we describe the life and transmission of a traditional folktale in the Iberian Peninsula?" Finally, the globalization of folklore is the subject of Luis Díaz de Viana's "Literature and New Forms of Orality," where he wisely distinguishes between folklore and folklorism.

The book's last section, "Temporal Frames and Literary (Inter)Systems," comprises seven substantial chapters, ranging from the middle ages to the present day. In "Building a Literary Model. Prose in the Court of Alfonso X, 1252-84," Fernando Gómez Redondo points out how Alfonso "was educated in a Gallego-Portuguese surrounding, inherited a Castilian political ideology, took part in the Andalusian campaigns and married an Aragonese infanta" (582), that is, he was the essence of early multiculturalism. "Literature at the Crossroads of Politics. Spain and Portugal, 1580," by Tobias Bradenberger, talks about the relationship between literature and politics during the period when the thrones of Spain and Portugal became one; only the Restauracão of 1640 allowed Portuguese and Spanish literatures to begin to "distance themselves" from one another once again (599). Víctor de Lama de la Cruz ("The Court of the Catholic Monarchs, 1474-1504, or the Break in the Equilibrium Among Peninsular Literatures") traces the rise of Castilian literature as it paralleled the decadence of Galician and Catalan literatures. Still, "there was a strong bond among the Peninsular languages during

the Middle Ages, proved by the exchange of literary forms and genres" (610). Raquel Bello Vázquez ("Theatrical Repertoire Models in Portugal. Conflict and Circulation, 1737-93") explains the persistence of successful Spanish and—even more—Italian theatrical models in Portugal in the eighteenth century. Literature and nationalist ideology is the topic of Leonardo Romero Tobar's "The Spanish Literary System in the Nineteenth Century," in which he points out that "Spanish literature [. . .] became a privileged mirror of bourgeois groups that took the lead in initiatives for historic transformation" (631). The following century, the twentieth, attempted (successfully) to use languages as "an instrument of nationality" (643), according to José Carlos Mainer ("The Dialogue of Iberian Literary Nationalisms, 1900-50"). And last, but certainly not least, Randolph D. Pope ("The Shifting Systems for Literary Creation in the Novel During the Transition and Democracy, 1975-1982") concludes with a statement that sums up the state of language and literature in Spain today: "What is clear is that there was not only a systemic change, but a collapse of the old paradigm which was not replaced by a new one, but by a proliferation of new generative systems . . ." (654-55).

Is this volume weighed more heavily on pre-modern languages and literatures than on more modern issues (which seem to leak in near the end)? Perhaps, but this might be a result of the fact that there existed more cross-fertilization of linguistic systems, more natural comparativist writing during a time when political and geographical borders were more fungible. Yet, while it is rich, complex, and useful, some less successful moments and elements also surface, moments which might have been smoothed over by more careful editing. For example, Cabo Aseguinolaza's introduction is marred by some gelatinous prose and sentence fragments, other authors (translators?) make weird word choices, and several chapters smack of hasty translation from non-English originals (Kortazar, Romo Feito, Bello Vázquez). Oddly, some of the chapters include quotes in the original language in the text, with translations into English in the footnotes; other chapters have it the other way around. Keown and Larios mar an otherwise useful chapter with overblown rhetoric that sounds shrill and strident (they write unfortunately of a "final cleansing") rather than passionate and convincing. Yet these are minor flaws in an otherwise monumental and welcome undertaking.

César Domínguez notes that "everything suggests that the geographical imaginary in Iberian historiography has remained unperturbed since its beginnings [. . .]. This imaginary has served as a base for both the central position that Spanish historiography has attributed to literature in Castilian and the subordination that this same historiography has effected on 'peripheral literatures,' including the Portuguese" (129). If the authors of this impressive tome have anything to say about this situation—and they have plenty to say—that orientation will change.

But will it?

David T. Gies, *University of Virginia* (USA).

LES COMITÉS DE RECHERCHE DE L'AILC
RESEARCH COMMITTEES OF THE ICLA

The AILC/ICLA currently has two permanent Committees directly concerned with research projects and four term-limited Research Committees. Members who are interested in working with these committees are encouraged to contact the chairs, whose e-mail addresses are given below, for information regarding the activities of these committees.

Comité de Coordination pour l'histoire des littératures de langues européennes /
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Margaret Higonnet (margaret.higonnet@uconn.edu)

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La Littérature comparée dans l'âge numérique /
Comparative Literature in the Digital Age
Hans-Joachim Backe (hans-joachim.backe@rub.de)

Multilinguisme dans la littérature mondiale /
Mapping Multilingualism in World Literature
Alfons Knauth (alfons.knauth@rub.de)

Étude sur le Genre / Gender Study
William J. Spurlin (william.spurlin@brunel.ac.uk)

Research committees are limited to a maximum of three three-year terms, and must report on their activities and achievements at AILC/ICLA business meetings. Proposals for new topics should be submitted to the Comité de Recherche et de Projets / Research Committee for consideration at these annual meetings. The chair of that committee is César Domínguez (cesar.dominguez@usc.es).

The Co-ordinating Committee on the History of Literatures in European Languages has been particularly active in promoting comparative scholarship. To date it has overseen the production of twenty-six volumes on broad comparative topics that require collaborative research by international teams of scholars.

A complete list of these volumes, two of which were reviewed in this issue by Ricardo Quinones and David Gies (pp. 47-55), can be found by going to our website at <http://www.ailc-icla.org>, then clicking on the publications tab at the top of the webpage, and finally clicking on the "Comparative Literature History" heading along the left margin.

COMPTES RENDUS /

BOOK REVIEWS

Eduardo Coutinho, ed. *Identities in Process: Studies in Comparative Literature. Beyond Binarisms,* Vol. III. Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano, 2009. xi + 422 pp. 978-8578200169.

This tome completes the series of three volumes devoted to presenting the text of many of the papers delivered at the XVIII Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association in Rio de Janeiro during late July and early August of 2007. The presentations collected here—forty-six in total written in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish—are grouped into four sections: "Questions of Cultural Identity"; "Multiculturalism, Miscegenation, Hybridity"; "Gender Studies"; and "Latin America: Unity in Diversity." The editor's forward explains that the title of the series represents the effort of the congress as well as the two previous volumes in this series to think beyond simply comparing two works, two traditions, or two modes of production and reception, but rather to employ methods of study and analysis that go beyond dualities and migrate instead toward more complex and richly nuanced critical approaches involving more variables and, thus, more complex questions. The opening outward of this hermeneutic strategy suggests a methodology "permeable to other voices, coming from previously neglected places and from groups whose production was considered secondary or irrelevant" (ix).

Following the text (in Spanish) of the opening plenary address delivered by the eminent Cuban poet, essayist, literary critic, and president of the Casa de las Américas Roberto Fernández Retamar and a tribute paid to Tania Franco Carvalhal, who played a seminal role in establishing comparative literature as a viable academic discipline throughout Latin America, who served as president of the ICLA until her untimely death in the midst of her term in office, and who laid the foundation for the congress in Rio de Janeiro, attention turns in earnest to questions of cultural identity. Collectively the four essays in this section address issues centering on the way in which personal identity is a function of cultural structures that vary widely in the manner in which they are engaging and engaged. The essays by John Burt Foster, Jr. ("Three 'Comparative' Autobiographies: Cultural Multiplicity in Mary McCarthy, Wole Soyinka, Edward Said"), Wiesław Krajka ("Failed Appropriation of the Contribution of the Other in Conrad and Kosinski"), and Keiko Nakano ("Language, Identity, and Home: Transnational Writers in Japan and America") make clear from the beginning that they are working in a broadly international and fundamentally comparative frame of reference in their endeavor to tease out details concerning the dynamics of culturally based

identity in one context by its juxtaposition to others. Erika Greber's examination of the epistolary novel as a discursive space in part defined by divergent cultural encounters explores a genre with a venerable history of cross-cultural involvement well into the twenty-first century. The theme that the exchange of letters fictionalizes the exchange of cultural norms and orientations provides a particularly informative foundation for the study. The detailed analysis of culturally diverse, contemporary, but rather traditional epistolary works that have commanded surprising attention makes effective use of Bakhtin's concept of dialogicity in accounting for cultural confrontation and ultimately the closely related characteristic of hybridization.

The second section—"Multiculturalsim, Miscegenations, Hybridity"—is not as a whole as obviously internationally comparative in its focus, in that several essays deal with the competing and sometimes conflicting cultural norms within a single nation or a single work. Marc Maufort, however, illustrates how a highly effective comparative approach can be brought to bear on fundamental but contending cultural orientations within a single nation. In "Voices of Otherness: Multicultural Dramaturgies in Contemporary New Zealand," for example, he brings to the fore voices from the margin of general cultural awareness that are, thus, rarely heard. His essay deals with a part of the world whose literature is rarely critically examined. Although attention is limited to one nation, a trenchant and incisive analysis of how the various differing cultures within that nation have staged—both figuratively and literally—their perception of their position within the broader community by drawing on distinctive traditional modes of theatrical presentation is offered.

Two contrasting dangers are endemic to the topics discussed in this section. On the one hand, the approach may be so broad in an effort to demonstrate widely divergent aspects of multiculturalism that wide-ranging and occasionally unfounded generalization may arise. On the other hand, the focus can become so narrow and highly specific that a comparative strategy can scarcely be deployed. Of the twenty-two essays in this section—by far the largest section in the volume—some veer toward one of these tendencies while yet others drift toward the other. On the whole, however, given the breadth of the section, a critically defensible course is most typically navigated.

The third section, "Gender Studies," certainly admits of intercultural comparisons but often places the most prominent accent elsewhere. The eleven essays comprising this subdivision of the volume tend to fall into two fairly distinct groups. On the one hand, there are those that clearly and sometimes quite narrowly consider feminist issues and questions, occasionally interculturally but not necessarily so in all cases. On the other hand, other essays deal more broadly with gender in its contrasting modes of definition and coding in a single region or by comparing the processes across national borders or in very broad fields of interest. Representative of the first group are, for example, Cláudia Heloisa Impellizieri Luna Ferreira da Silva's "Vanguardia andina y la búsqueda de la nueva mujer," Louise Viljoen's "Nationalism, Gender and Sexuality in the Autobiographical Writ-

ing of two Afrikaner Women," or Annie Gagiano's "African Female Aspiration in Colonial Rhodesia and Post-Colonial Botswana—Affective and Oppositional Strategies." These essays draw on well-grounded aspects of feminist theory and apply them in contexts that reveal not only the precepts of the better known theoretical positions, but also on dimensions of feminist research in parts of the world that have not always figured prominently in discussion of gender issues. Among the essays considering gender issues more broadly are, for example, Tania Alice Felix's "L'inscription du feminine/masculin dans la création contemporaine: l'oeuvre de Camille Laurens" and Rita Terezinha Schmidt's "Engendering the Latin American Novel: Erotic Codes and the Difference They Make." In the latter, the author deploys a wide range of analyses of the relationship of gender formation in both men and women to their necessary relationship to the developing sense of national identities in post-colonial areas. Although the theoretical precepts are illustrated on the basis of Argentinean and Brazilian examples, their application in other areas is also abundantly clear.

In the last section of the volume, attention is specifically drawn to Latin America as the region hosting the congress from which the papers were drawn. The sense of its subtitle, "Unity in Diversity," is not prominently apparent in any one of the seven essays, but rather emerges clearly from their being read together in such a way that they augment one another. But for one dealing with French Guyana, all the other essays concern Brazil or Argentina and some of that region's major writers. The explanation for the absence of the literature of other parts of that vast continent may well lie in the fact that only Argentina and Brazil have well developed and entirely functional comparative literature associations, although fledgling organizations are endeavoring to establish themselves in other areas. The perception with which one concludes a seriatim reading of these essays is that in spite of a tendency in some parts of the world to view Latin America as an area characterized by similar cultural contours, attributes, and bearings, there is, more importantly, a diversity of literary orientations—even in the limited part of the continent discussed here—that looms very large and is critically inviting indeed. The subtitle's reference to diversity is entirely apt, but whether what they share can convincingly be described as a unity is, perhaps, a question one may want to consider in greater detail.

With this tome, the three-volume series presenting the intellectually and culturally impressive results of the first ICLA congress to be held in Latin America is completed. These three volumes offer a broadly encompassing wealth of new insights not only into the area hosting the conference, but also into the state of comparative literature as an internationally accredited discipline in the early years of the twenty-first century. They are volumes that should be in the collection of university libraries at all institutions throughout the world where comparative literature is more than a marginal field of study. The investment will pay off handsomely in many ways over coming decades.

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Chantal Zabus. *Between Rites and Rights: Excision in Women's Experiential Texts and Human Contexts*. Stanford CA: Stanford UP, 2007. 324 pp. 978-0804756877.

Chantal Zabus is an authority in the complex and controversial field of female excision, who has also edited *Fearful Symmetries: Essays and Testimonies around Excision and Circumcision* (2009) and co-edited *Changements au féminin en Afrique noire: anthropologie et littérature* (1999). A clear goal of this book is a "politically correct" critique of excision, rooted in medical arguments, that accommodates a wide-ranging understanding of many subject-positions, including even that of the traditional matron-excisor. As co-author of two books on postcolonialism in a global era, however, Zabus is sensitive to the neo-colonialist implications of white Westerners judging African cultural practices, in what Françoise Lionnet has described as a dissymmetry of authority. Zabus rehearses the history of backlash or "reactance" by African nationalists such as Jomo Kenyatta, who made excision into a nationalist issue, rejecting not only colonial administrators and missionaries, but also recent human rights advocates, for whom the health and capacity for free choice of female children come into question. Zabus therefore seeks to create space for the voices of African women that have emerged since 1960, centered on shaping a new female subjecthood. As a specialist in West African language uses, Zabus tackles with erudition the significant differences in linguistic formulations for this practice that convey many-layered cultural attitudes through metaphoric expression and that distinguish forms of cutting according to their severity, as practiced in different regions. Her panoptic overview embeds her exposition of the theme in over two dozen texts (English, French, and Arabic) and across a broad cultural geography: two diasporic "belts" where excision is practiced that stretch from Egypt to Tanzania and from Yemen to Senegal, and meet in the Sudan. She presents this practice as an ambiguous, multilayered writing on the female body with knives, thread, and thorns, to which women's own writing has now begun to respond.

The topic of excision is a demanding one at this moment of economic and social change. International and interdisciplinary, its study brings together anthropology, medicine, the history of religion, feminist theories of identity and agency, and human rights law. According to UNICEF, at least 70 million women and girls in 29 countries have undergone some form of genital operation. In 2003, the African Union adopted the Maputo Protocol promoting women's rights that proposed to end female genital cutting, and within five years 25 member countries had ratified the protocol. As her title indicates, Zabus traces the tension between discourses of communal rites and cultural identities on the one hand, and individual identities and human rights on the other. These competing identities, which include tribal, familial, communal, and linguistic links, suggest the multiplication of selves that Trinh T. Minh-Ha celebrates in *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (1989). Responding to the assumed symmetry of male circumcision to cliterodectomy, Zabus here crisply distinguishes the two,

noting the complex of medico-religious assumptions bearing on male circumcision. While she shows that both procedures are variable, and both rites of genital purification are performed across religious boundaries, the health consequences for women, she suggests, are more dire.

Zabus foregrounds the emergence of narratives that perform a testimonial exorcism of early trauma and that claim personal agency as they dramatize this experience. The texts bring together "ancestral memory" with individual memory of pain. While she considers pain to be a mnemonic, Zabus also draws on trauma theory to address the painful suppression of memory and its reclaiming through autobiography as "a form of psychotherapy" and a narrative step toward affirmation of selfhood (117). One pattern she discerns is the invocation of this taboo sexual topic by euphemism and avoidance, "in passing." Thus early texts such as Nigerian Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* (1966) describe the dramatic context rather than the act of cutting itself. Some of Zabus's most interesting analyses unpack layers of metaphor, such as the cutting of the "mulberry" in Alifa Rifaat's "Bahiyya's Eyes" (1983). Since ritual involves public witnessing, and the surveillance of female bodies engages the "scopophilic gaze of men and matrons" (142, see 173), Zabus also develops readings that highlight the spectacle, the dramatic performance of heroism, the theme of "playacting," and the Western consumption of exotic female bodies (191). Somali fashion model Waris Dirie's three autobiographies (the first turned into a film) underscore these themes, drawing on a narrative convention of rags to riches, but also contrasting mother to daughter, and traditional orature to the modernity of written text and photography. Displacing a matriarchal lineage and transmission of knowledge, in many of Zabus's texts we find the "horizontal" theme of sisterhood, which leads some girls to embrace a terrifying experience but also brings outside support to resistant protagonists who must confront repetition of the early trauma by later experiences such as defloration, rape, or reinfibulation. Thus Zabus takes the mistrust of the mother that Sandra Ponzanesi has traced in Somali Sirad Hassan's *Sette Gocce di Sangue*, and shows that it leads to a fresh narrative pattern of identity-formation.

Narrative structures shared by many of these texts include an ironic narrative voice (speaking from a distance), a rhythm of repetition of violent acts, a quest for autonomous identity together with formation of a new community, followed in the most optimistic stories by symbolic liberation. The occasional happy endings may spring from the body, e.g. surgical undoing of the narrators' condition, but even more often from a new social identity, found through an embrace of activism. Egyptian doctor Nawal El Saadawi is the most famous activist to have condemned genital mutilation, in both fiction and polemic texts, and at great cost to herself. Waris Dirie has become an ambassador for the UN, combatting excision in Europe as well as Africa. Whereas mockery and social opprobrium complicate choices for unexcised women (as Obi Nnaemeka has argued), mockery and irony can also become effective indirect tools of narrative resistance. Zabus suggests that anger "seethes" under the surface of El Saadawi's narratives, for example. She uses neat turns of phrase to challenge our critical premises. Thus she concludes, after re-

viewing the ambiguities of definitions of autobiography as a performance of self, and of literature as an encoded inscription of self, that "autobiography is not so much a mode of literature as literature is a mode of autobiography" (70).

The tilt of this book is toward cultural anthropology rather than literary criticism. Zabus loads her close readings of individual texts by splicing into them a historian's account of discourses on male and female circumcision; some are Western, drawn from classical antiquity to Renaissance medicine to Freud and Marie Bonaparte, and others are drawn from anthropologists and African sources that trace beliefs about women's vestigial masculinity, their initiation into adulthood and bonding with an age-group, the control of their sexuality, and a corporal aesthetics. The first chapters address linguistic matters and the history of discourse about the use of cutting to control the female body, often linked to Egypt and Africa. Chapter 9 on women in exile develops the conflicting legal cultures with which cultural refugees must deal. Chapter 10, "The Exciser," examines the changing practices of women who have shifted to "virtual" excision or who have changed profession altogether—but there were no autobiographies (or recorded oral testimonies) for Zabus to draw on as a literary critic. And the Conclusion makes a self-distancing move to summarize Western practices of self-mutilation by a youth culture of modern "primitives." Since most of Zabus's autobiographical examples would be unfamiliar to an anglophone audience, she retells the narratives she has lined up, at the same time that she criss-crosses them with discourses on related themes. Sadly, because she is focused on the representation of this one thematic cluster, she finds herself engaging with texts whose didacticism threatens to overwhelm narrative and literary form. As a result, while she admires Julie Okoh's *Edewede,* she perceives a dangerous turn by Okoh to "polemics" (213). Similarly, she finds Waris Dirie's *Desert Children* (2005) disappointing because of its "militant, moralizing tone" (244). This aesthetic anxiety suggests that we may need now a more literary examination of contemporary African women's autobiographies, one that would focus on the power gained by the new forms of narrative devised to capture women's somatic experiences.

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Françoise Lavocat and Anne Duprat, eds. *Fiction et cultures*. Pref. Jean-Marie Schaeffer. Paris: Éditions Lucie, 2010. Poétiques comparatistes 5. 320 pp. 978-2353710935.

This attractively produced nineteen-article collection, which has been sponsored by the ICLA's French affiliate, the Société française de littérature générale et comparée, is the fifth entry in an annual series that addresses specific comparative problems and themes. Previous volumes dating back to 2006 have covered such issues of current interest as myth, literature and anthropology, literature and sexual identities, and questions of reception. The majority of the contributors to this particular book are French academics with specialties in literatures from different world regions, but there is a significant international representation as well, with

contributors from neighboring Belgium, Switzerland, and Germany but also from Israel, India, Hong Kong, and Japan.

The tension between singular and plural nouns in the book's title neatly captures the problem it proposes to study, as does the sponsoring organization's very name—on the one hand, the aspiration to formulate an all-inclusive general theory of fictionality versus, on the other, a comparatist's recognition of the cultural variety that makes such theories problematic. The introduction by Françoise Lavocat, who is one of the editors, stresses this point with a typically lucid definition by Gérard Genette. Its incisiveness and justice would impress any student of western literature, except there's no reason to believe its thesis about fictionality has any validity outside the west. Professor Lavocat makes it clear that the chapters to follow will give this need for greater diversity a full hearing, dealing not just with the world's different cultures in space but also back through time.

As a result, the book's treatments of the Arab world, China, Japan, and India consist in each case of two separate essays, one on the deep past of these literary spheres and another on their current situation broadly understood. Additional single chapters deal with medieval Hebrew literature and biblical exegesis and, for obvious historical reasons, with relatively recent developments in the Latin American novel, in Caribbean literature, and in African writing, and with the role of fictionality in the new media. The west, which spreads eastward and westward to include Russia and North America, receives fuller coverage. The book's first chapter, in which Claude Calame emphasizes the emergence of the literary from ritual and performance in the Greco-Roman world, gives a stimulating reinterpretation of the often cited principles that the European vernaculars received and reworked from these classics. Then, after a full circuit through the book's accounts of other times and places, which further unsettle any sense of universality in the ideas about fiction derived from these ancient classics, the book devotes three chapters to developments from 1300 onwards, beginning with the middle ages and Renaissance, moving to the neoclassical period and the enlightenment, and ending with realism, modernism, and postmodernism.

The book concludes with a select bibliography of relevant scholarship, with fuller commentary amounting to topic-specific reviews of the six most notable entries. Inevitably one notices omissions: Persians and Turks get no attention alongside the Arabs; Southeast Asia and Oceania meet with silence; while Brazil and Korea, to which ICLA conferees enjoyed such vivid introductions in the 2007 and 2010 congresses, vanish almost completely amid their Latin American and East Asian neighbors. Nonetheless, the variety that the book draws from five continents is ample enough to give full support to the priority the editors give to comparison over generalization. Indeed, the range of cultures represented accomplishes this mission with thought-provoking flair.

If Genette, as a representative of the theory boom from the 1960s onward that made French criticism so alluring to comparatists, has been firmly but respectfully set aside, where do Lavocat and Duprat take us? In lieu of a full-fledged theory, the introduction offers a classification scheme featuring three distinct op-

tions—the monistic, the binary, and the triadic—in the way literary cultures have handled the nature and status of fiction. The first, relatively rare option applies mainly to cultures in the deep past, most clearly the Greco-Roman and the Indian, where verbal art that we now recognize as fictive was tied so closely to these cultures' authoritative rituals that questions of fictionality simply did not arise at the time. The third option, where the fictive occupies a middle space between truth and falsehood that the culture deems acceptable (or at least tolerates), is also quite rare. At times, in fact, this book gives the impression of doubting whether this option's enabling doctrine of literary autonomy has ever really convinced the culture at large of fiction's "epistemological independence." This position contrasts strikingly with Pascale Casanova's celebration of an achieved autonomy in *The World Republic of Letters*; clearly two very different notions of "world" are at stake in these two products of French scholarship.

The far more numerous binary option, finally, covers a plethora of possibilities that are relatively easy to identify, since, as Lavocat nicely puts it, binaries foment controversy and are therefore hard to overlook. At one extreme are situations where fictionality is aligned emphatically and dismissively with falsehood, but in many cases either referential or didactic ways of reading manage to redeem a fictional work by tying it to regimes of truth. In more subtle or manipulative ways, an author's choice of framing devices (for example, the pseudo-document) or of style (prose rather than verse) also sharpens an audience's sense of veracity along the truth-falsehood continuum.

Roland Barthes gets several mentions in the discussion, but remains mainly in the background. It is the narratologist and the proponent of the "plaisir" or the "jouissance" of reading who is cited, not the theorist of *écriture*; indeed, one of this book's central claims is that fiction, or still better a culture's "compétence fictionelle" (304), should be the master term that deserves scrutiny in seeking to come to terms with cultures worldwide, rather than words like literature, writing, or textuality. Among classic theorists, it is Bakhtin, with his interests in "otherness" and "heteroglossia," who seems to have had a greater impact on the contributors. However, the real moving force behind this project was probably Jean-Marie Schaeffer's *Pourquoi la fiction?* (Paris: du Seuil, 1999), a book unfamiliar to this reviewer. In one of the commentaries in the bibliography, Anne Duprat (the other co-editor) states that Schaeffer, whose book ranges from Plato's critique of mimesis to contemporary virtual realities and who covers visual as well as written materials, argues that fictionality be understood, not in and for itself, but with primary attention to its cultural contexts. This call resonates with and has clearly been an impetus for the case studies in *Fiction et cultures*, whose goals in this regard Schaeffer himself endorses in his preface. Another telling item that receives comment in the bibliography is *Fiction de l'Occident, Fiction de l'Orient*, edited by Yasusuké Oura in 2008, which collects papers from a symposium held at the University of Kyoto. This book, which features an essay by Schaeffer, anticipates and complements Lavocat and Duprat's findings in other ways as well. Thus Oura reappears in *Fiction et cultures* with an essay on legal cases brought against two

books in today's Japan; such conflicts, he compellingly contends, represent "un des lieux privilégiés où la fiction rencontre la société" (176).

From further afield, the book responds somewhat polemically to several initiatives in the English-language version of Franco Moretti's *The Novel* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006), specifically in the first volume subtitled *History, Geography, and Culture*. Lavocat welcomes Constance Gallagher's rigorously argued "The Rise of Fictionality" (reprinted by Moretti), emphasizing its shift away from narrower generic concerns, an orientation highlighted by the title's echo with a difference of Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel*. Even so, *Fiction et cultures* moves the locus for reflections on fictionality far beyond eighteenth-century Britain, thereby relativizing its authority and raising, yet again, the issue of theoretical rigor versus comparatist scope. In much the same spirit, both Lavocat (28-29, n. 27) and Duprat (309) mention the striking range of Moretti's brief but stimulating unit on "The Semantic Field of Narrative." Its rapid juxtaposition of specific Hebrew, Greco-Roman, Chinese, Japanese, Arab, medieval European, and Russian words for narratives of distinctive kinds anticipates the scope of their own book. But of course their emphasis is broadly cultural, rather than linguistic or semantic, while elsewhere much of Moretti's collection focuses exclusively on issues of genre.

As for the substance of *Fiction et cultures*, readers will respond differently depending on their backgrounds and interests. In addition to Calame's and Oura's pieces already mentioned, this reviewer especially appreciated Christoph Singler and Anya Bandau's attention to Wilson Harris in the Caribbean chapter, Sebastian Veg's cautions regarding the presumed radical modernity of the May 4th generation's break with Chinese tradition, and Xavier Garnier and Jean Derive's discussion of the contrast between the "parole de nuit" and the "parole de jour" in African conceptions of fictionality. In a class of its own was Rukmini Bhaya Nair's vivid presentation (and even enactment) of a startling variety of issues involving fiction and culture in Indian traditions, plus her reminder, as a creative writer herself, that "la fiction est bien trop anarchique" (193) to accept confinement by our critical formulas.

Taken as a whole, this book splendidly fulfills its stated purpose of encouraging us to widen the scope of our reflections on fictionality, whether through the differing approaches chosen in specific chapters, the varied definitions given or assumptions displayed about fictionality and culture, or simply the incitement to move toward a more fully global literacy. In the process, *Fiction et cultures* also contributes to the less "professional" goal of broadening our horizons as readers of world fiction. For with its compact, well-focused, and informative essays it helpfully brings to light, from the past as well as the present and across a wide array of settings, important cultural specificities. By promoting a better awareness of these specificities, it works to enrich our responses to works that come to us from afar, in ways that counter the homogenizing tendencies of globalization. In contributing to that larger goal both the Moretti volume and this one perform a much-needed service.

John Burt Foster, Jr., *George Mason University* (USA).

Hans-Joachim Backe and Manfred Schmeling, eds. *From Ritual to Romance and Beyond: Comparative Literature and Comparative Religious Studies*. Saarbrücker Beiträge zur vergleichenden Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft, 53. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011. 316 pp. 978-3826045837.

Interdisciplinary work reframes disciplines, bringing into relief insights and questions that one discipline cannot realize alone. Hans-Joachim Backe and Manfred Schmeling's *From Ritual to Romance and Beyond: Comparative Literature and Comparative Religious Studies* is an interdisciplinary work that brings together a group of over twenty scholars who investigate the intersections of religions—including Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and other traditions, as well as Latin American and Polynesian mythologies—and theology, literature, and other art forms. The unexpected meetings—as in Steven Shankman's "(m)Other Power: Shin Buddhism, Levinas, and *King Lear*—of texts and voices and the multiplicity of literary and other artistic processes—as in Shigemi Inaga's reflection on Hitoshi Igarashi's translation of Salman Rushdie and Monika Schmitz-Eman's work on photography, commemoration, and secularization—open the discipline of Arts, Literature, and Religion to new territory. The volume includes essays written in both French and English, but they look at a variety of texts.

The title of the work, *From Ritual to Romance,* refers to Jessie L. Weston's work, which was published, first, by Cambridge University Press in 1920. Weston's work documents multiple mythologies, though its focus is on the Grail legend. Weston, inspired by Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough,* intuited that behind the Christian Grail legend were older myths:

> Some years ago, when fresh from the study of Sir J. G. Frazer's epoch-making work, *The Golden Bough*, I was struck by the resemblance existing between certain features of the Grail story, and characteristic details of the Nature Cults described. The more closely I analysed the tale, the more striking became the resemblance, and I finally asked myself whether it were not possible that . . . we might not have the confused record of a ritual, once popular, later surviving under conditions of strict secrecy?

As Robert Segal explains in *The Myth and Ritual Theory,* Weston traces the origins of the Grail myth to "primitive myths," particularly the myth of the "rejuvenation of the king" (209). Her work was influential on T. S. Eliot, who used the study in *The Waste Land*.

The editors write that Weston's method inspires their work. The intention of the volume is to be comparatist and to be "concerned with relations between cultures" (9). The volume questions the changing relationship between literature and religion, analyzes the heritage of myth and ritual by looking at single cases, and traces the intercultural and interreligious encounters of the past and the present. Doing so, it is faithful to Weston's sense of continuity and change, while moving the frame.

It is impossible in a short review to comment on all the essays. I want to emphasize, by looking at a few, the links between literature, religion, and per-

formance. Bettina Gruber, in "Literature and Religion: Features of a Systematic Comparison," gives us an insight into the methodological basis of the volume when she writes that both religion and literature "share communication media" (36). Religion, however, she argues depends on performance. While a narrative can be at the point of "changing into performance," *"[l]iterature without performance is text—religion without the performance just does not exist*" (40, emphasis in text).

This insight, coupled with Weston's understanding, taken from her thinking, no doubt, about Frazer's dying-rising god structure, that change can involve continuity, emerges in the volume in elegant and surprising ways. Hans G. Kippenberg's piece on Shi'ite Islam and the (re)performance of Karbala, suggests that even modern revolution follows a classical historical pattern. Kathleen Komar, in "'The Gods Made Us Do It.' Women as Sacrifice" looks at how playwright Ellen McLaughlin looks at a "founding" patriarchial moment—the sacrifices and renaming of women (the Furies becoming the "tamed" Eumenides)—and sees in it a possible undoing of patriarchy through the personal, peace, and a turn away from the gods to human relationship (130). Chung-Ho Chung introduces us to a Korean Buddhist poet, Han Yong Un—for which I am very grateful—but reads his work comparatively, with Christianity, emphasizing common virtues and values that emerge from focusing on the lover and beloved relationship: compassion, the paradoxical relationship between absence and presence, the possibilities of freedom in submission, and the importance of the moment. In another essay, Dorothy Figueria looks at Pietro della Valle's travels in India. Valle is also a poet, and he writes a poem to a widow who commits *sati*. In that act, Valle finds a condensation of all that he finds "noble and honorable about Indians—their courage, valor, constancy, and honesty" (214). This allows him to make "a claim for spiritual equality in a world of cultural difference" (216). This claim was not just an intellectual one; Valle carried it out, Figueria suggests, performed it, in his life.

The authors remind us that this act of performance is one that the critic makes too. Anke Bosse, in "'Clash of Civilizations'—Clash of Literatures," reminds us that the critic is responsible to make ethical readings because of the power of literature to shape how we read the culture of the "other" (in this case, Islam). Tomo Virk turns to this issue in the final essay of the volume, highlighting the tensions in linking art and ethics. Using the work of Levinas, primarily, Virk examines "literariness," how the writer, in consciously creating "an-other" world opens us to new emotions and experiences. The reading experience can move us to respect for and to assumption of responsibility for the "other" whom we encounter in the literary text. The critic, therefore, is charged with responsibly explicating the mechanisms of that encounter and response.

From Ritual to Romance and Beyond is a very rich text. It helps us to encounter numerous "other" voices in multiple literary texts and artistic and cultural forms. It is a book that one can read selectively, but there is a movement to the text, from speculating on the links between religion and literature to suggesting one such link: a (meta)ethical principle, the encounter with the "other." I think that

this work, with its global and comparative frame, has much to teach the Religious Studies scholars who engage in the discipline of Arts, Literature, and Religion. The primary lesson is in how these essays recognize how already complicated the encounter with the "other" is. The work is skilled in making translucent the dense layers of cultural complication—the hybridities, recognized and unrecognized—that are always already and always have been present in any encounter of persons and cultures in the world, whether ancient, medieval, modern, or postmodern and postcolonial.

Carolyn M. Jones Medine, *University of Georgia* (USA).

Référence / Work Cited

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR THE ANNA BALAKIAN PRIZE

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 2013 AILC/ICLA Congress in Paris for an outstanding first book in comparative literature studies by a single author under 40 years of age. Books published from January 2010 through December 2012 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 books must have a literary-critical approach that deals with such areas 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 a 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. Entries must be received by January 2, 2013. Interested and eligible scholars should contact Professor Steven P. Sondrup at <sondrup@byu.edu> or Box 26118, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602-6118, USA.

COMPTES RENDUS BREFS / BOOK NOTES

Devika Khanna Narula. *South Asian Diaspora: Summer Blossoms in Winter Gardens: History, Memory and Identity in Canadian Fiction*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2005. 158 pp. 978-8180430220.

"South Asian" Canadians hail not only from South Asia, but from many regions of the globe. As a result of the labor and mercantile migrations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries under British colonialism, the subsequent migrations associated with the political transitions at the end of empire throughout the former British empire, and then the continuing migrations of our postcolonial world, South Asian populations are found dispersed around the globe—in Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago; in South Africa and East Africa; in various countries in the Middle East; in Mauritius, Malaysia, and Fiji; in the United States, Canada, Australia, and the UK. Narula's book is interested not only in writers who have emigrated to Canada directly from South Asia, but also in writers whose families had already left South Asia perhaps several generations ago, and who have subsequently emigrated to Canada.

The set of writers who fall within the field that Narula defines is quite large and includes such figures as M. G. Vassanji, Sam Selvon, Shyam Selvadurai, Michael Ondaatje, Shiva Naipaul, Bharati Mukherjee, Rohinton Mistry, Harold Sonny Ladoo, Neil Bissoondath, Shauna Singh Baldwin, and Moin Ashraf—but she discusses extensively only a couple of these figures. Her book focuses particularly on the early work of M. G. Vassanji (*The Gunny Sack*, 1989, *No New Land*, 1991, *Uhuru Street*, 1992, and *The Book of Secrets*, 1994), with a supporting interest in works by Rohinton Mistry (*Tales from Firozsha Baag*, 1987, *Such a Long Journey*, 1991, and *A Fine Balance*, 1997), and decidedly secondary consideration of Ven Begamudre's *Sacrifices* (1986) and short stories by South Asian women in North America collected in the first two volumes of *Her Mother's Ashes* (1994 and 1998). The book briefly touches on Mistry's *Family Matters* (2002), but does not engage with Vassanji's later works, such as *Amriika* (1999) and *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* (2003), nor, of course, with those of his works that have appeared since Narula's study was published, such as *When She Was Queen* (2005), *The Assassin's Song* (2007) and *A Place Within: Rediscovering India* (2008).

The works by Vassanji examined by Narula are primarily set in British East Africa, in the period from the late nineteenth century to the decades after independence in the early 1960s: they focus on the experience of the "Asian" (Indian) community there and especially on the Ismailis (whom Vassanji treats under the fictional label of the "Shamsis"), and the exodus of "Asians" from the countries of East Africa in the early 1970s constitutes a framing event for many of these

works. Mistry's fiction focuses on the Parsi community in Bombay (Mumbai) and its changed circumstances in postcolonial India. Both authors are concerned, thus, with minority communities that are viewed as privileged "aliens" by segments of the majority community in their local contexts, and they focus on the changing situation of these minority communities in relation to local nationalisms and post-colonial political transitions.

Vassanji and Mistry may be "Canadian writers" but their fiction is focused on worlds elsewhere. This poses a challenge for Narula's interpretive framework, since she begins the book with a chapter outlining the history of South Asian immigration to Canada and the development of a policy of multiculturalism in Canada. But this chapter and the frame it provides seem largely divorced from the actual terrains engaged by the authors she examines most centrally. Vassanji himself has argued that as immigrants from elsewhere (especially from other parts of the former British Empire) become part of the Canadian world, their histories, the histories of their parts of the world, become intertwined with Canadian history. English Canada's sense of the world, then, comes to resonate not only with events in the modern history of Britain, but with events throughout the Commonwealth, giving the Canadian outlook a more global inflection. It is these contexts elsewhere that need elucidation in any reading of the fiction of Vassanji and Mistry: their works help us examine the precarious position of minorities in the post-colonial world more than they illuminate the "immigrant experience" that serves as the main theme of Narula's interpretation.

Narula's book usefully focuses our attention on an important set of works which show us how dependent individual lives can be on communal destinies, but it's not clear that her analysis sufficiently deepens our understanding of these works and the late colonial and postcolonial histories they engage. She does, however, leave her reader with a longing to re-engage with these works by Vassanji, Mistry, and other South Asian diasporic writers and perhaps that is the ultimate aim of her work, in any case.

Alok Yadav, *George Mason University* (USA).

Cultural Crossings. Negotiating Identities in Francophone and Anglophone Pacific Literatures / À la Croisée des cultures. De la négociation des identités dans les littératures francophones et anglophones du Pacific. **Ed. Raylene Ramsay. Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2010. 301 pp. 978-9052016559.**

Cultural Crossings is a collection of sixteen essays that explore the representations of identities in Pacific literature. The essays in the collection engage with Anglophone, Francophone, and, in one case, Lusophone writings from the Pacific region. Edited and introduced by Raylene Ramsay, who also contributes an essay, the volume brings much-needed insight to our understanding of the cultural production of the Oceanian region.

A number of the contributors to the collection explore the works of Pacific

writers of both indigenous and settler origins. They include the Polynesian writer Jean-Marc Tera'ituatini Pambrun, New Caledonian authors Déwé Gorodé and Hélène Savoie, Samoan writer Albert Wendt, and the East Timorese author Luis Cardoso. Together, the essays in the collection reveal a rich portrait of the ways in which these writers—whether they are Polynesian, New Caledonian, Timorese, or from elsewhere in the Pacific—constantly negotiate between Western and autochthonous cultural, religious and linguistic traditions. In the volume, Pacific writing emerges as one that breaks down and blurs a number of binary divisions: the oral narrative versus the written text, Christian tradition versus indigenous myths, metropolitan versus colonial identities. The collection also pays careful attention to the historical origins of contemporary Pacific identity formation, such as eighteenth-century encounters between European explorers and indigenous Tahitians, the varying influences of British and French missionaries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and Pierre Loti's mythical colonial imagination of Polynesia. Still other essays in the collection wrestle with the important question of how literary and other anthologies institutionalize and represent Pacific literature as a whole. While *Cultural Crossings* is primarily focused on literature, some essays also engage with other artistic genres such as performance poetry of the Pasifika diaspora, and the visual culture of the Pacific.

The subjects covered in the collection span several centuries, engage with literature in three languages, and pay equal attention to both oral and written literary and cultural traditions. Despite this diversity, the volume is remarkably coherent and cohesive. The interrelated themes of hybridity, métissage, and syncretism run through virtually every chapter in the collection. The thematic attention to hybridity in the volume at large is further bolstered by two essays that interrogate the theoretical notion of hybridity. Both theoretical essays offer useful suggestions on rethinking postcolonial hybridity within the Pacific context.

Last but not least, the volume is refreshing in its bilingualism. Since some essays are written in English and others in French, it will undoubtedly reach a wide audience. *Cultural Crossings* will be of interest to scholars and students of the Pacific, colonial history, and postcolonial literature.

Pratima Prasad, *University of Massachusetts, Boston* (USA).

Inaga Shigemi, ed. *Artistic Vagabondage and New Utopian Projects: Transnational Poïetic Experiences in East-Asian Modernity (1905-1960)*. Kyoto: Uno, 2011.

This new volume, edited by Shigemi Inaga (at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies), presents papers from the August 2010 ICLA congress in Seoul. The book has three main parts, the first of which presents five papers from the workshop "Intellectual Interactions in East Asia in the 1920s and 30s: Poetry, Art, and New Utopianism," organized by Toru Haga (University of Tokyo). This is followed by four papers from the panel "The Noguchi Legacy: Artistic

Vagabondage and Internationalism—From Poetry to Sculpture in Conflict between the East and the West," organized by Inaga. Finally, Inaga contributes a short essay reflecting on the 2010 congress in relation to the state of the discipline, highlighting the significance of the congress's being held in Seoul by including numerous references to Korean writers, scholars, and cultural figures. The papers from the congress are in English, Inaga's essay in Japanese.

Most of the essays in the first section reveal their origins as conference papers in that they are relatively short and are written for quite specialized audiences. Keiko Saito's work on the spread of Esperanto in East Asia during the 1920s and 30s, for example, or Noriko Hiraisha's research on the East Asian reception of Swedish feminist Ellen Key's ideas about "modern love" will certainly be of interest to specialists in those fields, while Masahiko Nishi's essay on Miyazawa Kenji contributes to the growing critical conversation about the poet's relationship to environmentalism. Liu Anwei's essay on Zhou Zuoren's complex relationship to Japanese culture and above all Toru Haga's research on the international influence of the "New Village" movement offer insight into the increasingly important question of modern Chinese literature's relationship to broader Asian and global contexts.

The second set of essays, on Yone and Isamu Noguchi, reflect the recent surge of interest in both of these pioneers of international literary and artistic modernism. Collectively the papers explore a range of biographical, historical, and aesthetic connections between the sculptor and his father, who, the presenters assert, have been too much studied in relative isolation from one another until now. Thinking about the father and son together represents less the restoration of family ties (the two barely knew each other) than an occasion to think about the continuities, and discontinuities, between pre- and post-war generations of diasporic Japanese literature and art.

Unfortunately, it has to be said that production of the book is uneven, with typographical errors to be found throughout, including a misspelling of "Association" in the name of the ICLA, "Laurens Binyon" for "Laurence Binyon," and even a reference to *The Sound and the Furry*. Such distractions aside, the volume contains papers that should be of lasting value to scholars working on specific aspects of East Asian modernism and its international contexts.

Christopher Bush, *Northwestern University* (USA).

Steven Shankman and Amiya Dev, eds. *Epic and Other Higher Narratives: Essays in Intercultural Studies*. Delhi: Longman Pearson, 2011. 269 pp. 978-8131716021.

Epic and Other Higher Narratives is a useful introduction to worldwide epic traditions and other examples of "higher narratives"—that is, works about elite characters and lofty themes recounted in a sublime, stylized, or grand manner. As expected, one major focus of the volume involves Western, Indian, and Chinese classical narrative (Amiya Dev on the *Mahabharata*, Wai-yee Li on Sima Qian's

classic Chinese historiography, Kam-Ming Wong on *The Story of the Stone*, Aviva Doron on medieval Spanish poetry). The collection also includes a discussion of Korean heroic poetry (by Peter H. Lee), several investigations of the relation of novelistic discourse to predecessor pre-modern narratives in diverse cultural contexts (Anindita Banerjee on the iconography of film and television retelling of Indian epics, James W. Earl on the legacy of Indian epic in the Indian novel, Massimo Lollini on the fate of higher narrative forms in Cervantes and Manzoni), and a comparative study of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* and *Clarissa* (by Steven Shankman). There are also three essays on theorizing the notion of "the intercultural" (as distinct from the cross-cultural and the trans-cultural) by Eugene Eoyang, Mineke Schipper, and the late Earl Miner, to whom the volume is dedicated.

While the cross-cultural addresses how one culture may speak to another, or how genre and theme from one cultural context is refashioned in another, and the trans-cultural refers to what is shared or common to diverse cultures not related geographically or historically, the intercultural denotes comparative work in widely distinct traditions that, in the words of Peter H. Lee, looks "for norms common to the higher narrative of East and West, norms comprehensive and neutral enough to encompass all similar texts regardless of language" (39). The pursuit of the intercultural may take the form of highly elaborate narratology (as in Miner's opening essay), a questioning of the primacy of formal unity or established genre theory so as to illuminate common features of oral and written texts (as in Eoyang's and Schipper's essays), comparative historical-cultural contextualization of narrative features (as in Lee's and Shankman's essays), or comparative accounts of Western and non-Western "rises of the novel" and dialogic literary discourse (the essays of Jones, Wong, Shankman, and Lollini).

All the essays are cogently argued and serve as insightful guides to the literature they discuss. Peter H. Lee's essay stands out as an exemplary introduction to pre-modern Korean narrative, a subject, it seems fair to say, little known except to specialists, but one that may well, given South Korea's economic and political influence in the contemporary world, garner increasing interest in the coming years. James W. Earl's "How to Read an Indian Novel" offers an extraordinarily valuable account of what is distinctive to Indian fiction and how the abiding cultural presence of the Sanskrit epics informs that distinctiveness. It is an essay that anyone teaching Indian fiction to North American or European undergraduates or graduates would be advised to assign. While the notion of the intercultural informs all the essays, its delineation (as one might expect from a collection) remains rather loose, particularly on the question of exactly how the cognitive-formal-narratological, the historical-cultural, and the affective-ethical-political converge. There may well be common features in all three spheres, but whether interaction among the spheres also exhibits common features, while implicitly raised by the collection, remains open.

While the collection represents a formidable amount of diverse scholarship and considerable guidance and stimulus for future research, the volume is hampered

(indeed, defaced) by a remarkable number of proofreading errors. Given the work took more than a decade to achieve realization, and given the number of fine scholars involved, it is lamentable that typesetting somehow transferred uppercase letters into lowercase letters followed by a space so that "God," for example, is rendered throughout as "g od." It is simply difficult, on a material level, to read the text. One may assume that this is a case of cost-cutting by a multinational corporation run amok. I can only imagine that the editors, after all their labors, must want to tear their hair out. We may hope a second edition will undo the damage.

Donald R. Wehrs, *Auburn University* (USA).

Werner von Koppenfels. *Der andere Blick oder das Vermächtnis des Menippos: Paradoxe Perspektiven in der europäischen Literatur*. München: C.H. Beck, 2007. 320 pp. 978-3406556777.

Only rarely does a book come along onto which a host of very different experts can graft additional appropriate examples stretching over a tremendous range of cultural periods. Werner von Koppenfels has isolated a set of "genes" in the European literary DNA which, since the ancient Greeks, has appeared in a myriad of variations stretching from Menippos' better-known follower Lucian down to instances of so-called postmodern play with literature. This heritage is behind what the eminent literary comparatist Harry Levin (not cited by Koppenfels) termed the "Cervantine principle," or the finally-built-in "self-critical" mentality of most of the best Western narration beyond the Renaissance. Around 1800, Hölderlin (not cited by Koppenfels) was formulating a complex theory of primary generic tendencies or modes (the epical, dramatic, and lyrical). During this same axial period, Jean Paul (of course, cited by Koppenfels) was formulating the missing fourth polarity or mode, the "humoristic" and "comic."

Before Koppenfels launches into closer examination of some of his own favorite moments, he offers us an indispensable introductory chapter toward sorting out the generic traits and boundaries of "Menippean" satire as it unfolds over time. He rejects narrow formalistic definitions—e.g., the earlier notion of genre-transgressing mixtures of prose and verse, or modern exclusively novel-centered approaches—as inadequate to capture the fuller literary history. Rather, Koppenfels recommends we follow "chains" of creative agents after Lucian, such as Erasmus, Rabelais, and Swift, and recognize the cumulative and specific influences of their works on the thinking of more recent theoreticians such as Frye and Bakhtin. Critics can profitably amplify on examples mentioned by Koppenfels or apply his "DNA" model in *Der andere Blick* to cases he does not take up. (Among countless examples that leap to mind are the Baroque author Grimmelshausen's theory and practice of "Satyra" in *Simplicissimus*, odd occurrences such as a talking sofa in a tale by the rationalist Crébillon *fils*, the desperate wit of the anonymous Enlightenment-Romantic narrator in *Die Nachtwachen von Bonaventura* who em-

ulates Sterne, the absurdist playwright Valle-Inclán's concept of the *esperpento*, the "postmodern" American novelist John Barth who in *Giles Goat-Boy* reaches back to Cervantes and Grimmelshausen for inspiration, and so forth.)

The array of works Koppenfels offers on display is dazzling enough to convince us that a deep coding is indeed at work. This is diacritical appreciation (genetic, formal, and thematic) of a very high order. He conducts us through an amazing repertory of satirical perspectives launched in ancient writing and expanded in the Renaissance and Enlightenment. In some works, the human world is viewed as if from heavenly heights or hellish depths, or through observers in an animal state, or in picaresque tours through the social structure. Sometimes authors engage in parodic treatment of philosophic assertions, or transpose our affairs to some alien or exotic realm, or clothe them in mythological travesty. Related methods of criticism are the use of dream and nightmare, the projection of values and customs in utopias and dystopias. Quite frequently, the author works through comic exposure of suspect rhetoric, in the deconstruction of entire literary forms like the novel and drama, by pillorying learned expression through bizarre footnotes and by grotesque admixture of foreign and classical locutions, by positing alternate ways to carry out a story or treatise, by romps through fields of vocabulary and explorations in imaginary libraries, in celebrations of fantasy and nonsense over cramped or hollow normalcy, and more.

It is a hopeless task to attempt to list even just the principal authors and works that we get to visit or revisit, there are so many (as the helpful index quickly reveals). More is at play in *Der andere Blick* than a very welcome sharing of the quite extraordinary learning which Koppenfels commands. What lifts this book onto a special plane is his skill as a guide who, besides indeed having a lot to say, says it elegantly and cogently with remarkable verve. We feel something of the joy experienced by the daring humanists when we follow the trail further, with Koppenfels, down to our own times. Naturally, we expect to arrive at a figure like Joyce who magisterially marshals the whole gamut of means from this heritage in the *Wake*. A great deal of literature (and by extrapolation, a great deal of cinema) of recent vintage stands out more clearly. Almost every genre of fantasy writing, including science fiction, acquires deeper dimensions in Koppenfels' presentation. *Der andere Blick* closes on a high note, paying tribute to the powers of imagination of Borges, O'Brien, and Nabokov, storytellers who exhibit an important legacy. After centuries of serving the aims of social and philosophical criticism, the finely honed devices of jocoserious satire (especially from the Romantics onward) have been turned upon the status of language and the question of meaning in the twentieth century. Thus the Menippean approach has become a very keen metaphysical scalpel indeed, an instrument potentially very dangerous, as well as liberating. In weighing this great heritage, Koppenfels never forgets the sheer pleasure of the finest texts embodying it—and that, too, stamps his book as a major statement.

Gerald E. P. Gillespie, *Stanford University* (USA).

Philippe Chardin, ed. *Originalités Proustiennes.* Paris: Editions Kimé, 2010. 297 pp. 978-2841745180.

Literary scholars of all backgrounds cannot help but be drawn to the work of Marcel Proust and his masterpiece, *A la recherché du temps perdu*. It is this very interest that brought a group of scholars together in March 2009 for a conference focused on the concept of originality and Proust. This collection represents the achievement of this intellectual collaboration and provides modern scholars with new ways to approach Proust and his work in the twenty-first century. Directed by Philippe Chardin, the compilation continues the rich discussion of a literary master and explores the notion of originality in triplicate: that in the mind of Proust himself, that of Proust's work seen as a progressive conquest, and finally that of the reception of Proust's work. This study of Proust and originality touches on questions faced by all scholars in the humanities: what is originality in literature? how do we define it? and what does it matter?

The first section entitled "La notion d'originalité dans la pensée de Proust lui-même: Exaltation et contradiction" is comprised of eight essays that attempt to unearth Proust's own perspective on originality in his writing. Françoise Leriche presents this well in her paper, "Fluctuation des notions d''originalité' et d''artiste original' dans la genèse du roman proustien." We see quickly that within Proust's novel originality is often too simply equated with newness and this alone is the criteria upon which a work is evaluated. At the same time Proust explains that he would rather read an original writer who writes well over one who writes poorly. Leriche demonstrates that there is a desire for an originality that is deeper than age, but one that is illusory.

The second grouping of papers, "De l'originalité comme conquête progressive," addresses issues of intertextuality and seeks to answer the question: How are "originals" incorporated into later literary exploits and what impact do they have on originality? This grouping of papers explores the ways in which the past is incorporated into a Proustian present. From Homeric and Egyptian influences to more contemporary comparisons made with Hugo and Baudelaire, the complexity of originality becomes clear. This culminates in Thanh Vân Ton-That's discussion of Proust's juvenilia, "Les œuvres de jeunesse de Proust : Une écriture périphérique?" The intertextual play between *A la recherche* and those works Proust penned prior to gaining recognition raises questions about where the origins of originality are found. Juvenilia thus become a step on the path to originality and a breeding ground for greatness in the case of Proust.

The final section, "L'originalité de l'œuvre de Proust à la lumière de sa réception par la critique et de sa réception créatrice par quelques écrivains," begins to close the circle begun by Proust himself with a look at how Proust has been received by others, regardless of his intent. In "Les idées reçues au sujet de Marcel Proust" by Bernard Brun we see the tension between the author's intended originality and the interpreted originality by his reading and critical audience. Brun

highlights the different beliefs that critics and readers alike hold of Proust's greatest work. Whether the work is seen as a pleasure read, a study of illness, a story of worldliness and snobbery, or an exploration of sexuality, originality is always a component of the critique. The remaining question is whether the author or the reader is the original.

Antoine Compagnon, renowned Proustian scholar, ties the collection together with his paper, "A la recherche des lectures originelles et du critique original perdus." Compagnon describes his relationship with *A la recherche du temps perdu* and the continual quest for originality that has accompanied him on his journey. His opening statement, "On croit être original, et on s'aperçoit qu'on a juste été typique," speaks to his position as reader, scholar, and critic, but also to all of those who consume literature. He suggests that to be original is to be a part of the present one inhabits, a present wherein the sameness of so many things has yet to be observed. It is only with time and perspective that originality begins to slip away. This quest for originality is of particular interest in the humanities where, he asserts, definitions are more vague than precise. At a time when the value of the humanities is constantly called into question, Compagnon demonstrates that there is value in ambiguity. He completes the collection with a reminder that the pursuit of originality is both undefined and unending, a perfect storm of uncertainty. Readers can continue to discover a Proustian past and engage in an examination of originality for themselves.

Lisa R. Van Zwoll, *Florida Coastal School of Law* (USA).

COMPTES RENDUS DES CONGRÈS / REVIEWS OF CONFERENCES

GERMAN COMPARATISTS IN BONN, 15-18 JUNE 2011

The fifteenth convention of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft lived up to the challenge of its ambitious overarching theme, "Figuren des Globalen: Weltbezug und Welterzeugung in Literatur, Kunst und Medien." No fewer than three former presidents and one current secretary general of the International Comparative Literature Association were in attendance, including Manfred Schmeling (Saarbrücken) who had presided at ICLA's world congress in Seoul, Korea, in August 2010. The new ICLA president Steven Sondrup (Brigham Young) sent written best wishes from Paris where he was working with French colleagues on arrangements for the next world congress there in July 2013. Günther Schulz, dean of humanities at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, the institution hosting the DGAVL, set a fine example in the opening ceremonies by detailing the institutional history of literary studies in Bonn and its pioneering role as a center for Comparative Literature. The chief organizers, Linda Simonis (Bochum) and Christian Moser (Bonn), in turn, cogently explicated the structure of the program at hand and the longer intellectual history and problematics of the concept "global."

Selected highlights must suffice to represent the broad array of over 50 presentations. The first lead-off keynote address by David Damrosch (Harvard), titled "Geopoetics: World Literature and World Music in the Global Mediascape," surprised many by being confined to a survey of contemporary hiphop music culture. There was no reference to already heavily studied earlier instances of such mentioned phenomena as literature being absorbed into other media, mixing of poetic forms and languages, use of pornography, and multimedia blending. Erhard Schüttpelz (Siegen) furnished historical and theoretical depth in the second lead-off keynote titled "World Literature from the Perspective of longue durée," outlining huge episodes since the first globalization in the diffusion of homo sapiens and offering a careful explanation of how, in the recent half millennium, because of world-altering technologies, the European geocultural area emerged as preeminent globally among the several extant deeply rooted "partial world systems." Fascinating was his thesis that by the eighteenth century one consequence of "re-hierarchization" was "cosmopolitanism in reverse," the rediscovery of Europe, too, as "provincial."

The first full conference day consisted of a morning plenary session on "(Re-)

Konzeptualisierungen von Weltliteratur" and parallel sections in the afternoon on "Weltgenres" and "Weltwissen, Weltdiskurse," plus an evening program on "Globalität in Literatur, Kunst und Film." Things started propitiously with a lively discussion sparked by Dieter Lamping's (Mainz) keynote titled "Die Welt der Weltliteratur: Denotationen und Konnotationen eines suggestiven Begriffs," in which he ranged from Goethe to Rilke and differentiated our currently more "spatial" thinking from their more empirical interest in exchanges among poets and peoples, in socially purposeful experience and communication in a humanistic spirit. The forenoon brought a two-part presentation, "Der vermeintlich 'neue' Weltliteraturbegriff als Restaurierung kultureller Beschränktheit," by Gerald Gillespie (Stanford) and Dorothy Figueira (Athens, Georgia), and a response by Damrosch. A vigorous discussion ensued, and audience members seemed enthused by the debate. Gillespie portrayed current American-style WL as retrogressive, a disturbing concession to the effects of lower standards of education since the 1970s in North America, and at best a confused or unwitting attempt to reinvent "general literature," woefully out-of-date in contrast with the more sophisticated development and current status of collaborative comparative studies internationally. Figueira deconstructed the American-style WL movement as yet another manoeuvre by reactive elites, on top of multiculturalism and political correctness. Emanating notably from English departments, its game is to maintain control of cultural politics in the academy, and to avoid the far more difficult challenge of a genuine meritocratic system inclusive of former subalterns; hence it inhibits any serious competent dealing with so-called Third World cultures. In his keynote titled "Keine Globalisierung ohne Philologie: Von Eratosthenes zu Daoud Hari," focused on Africa and spanning the centuries, Robert Stockhammer (Munich) helped fill-in the gap which Figueira decried. Barbara Ventarola's (Würzburg) paper on "Marcel Proust und Jorge Luis Borges als Paradigmen der Weltliterarizität," as a more detailed comparison, helpfully anticipated and augmented what was come the next morning.

Full day two began with a plenary session on "Grands récits—Narrative der Totalisierung," and continued with afternoon parallel sections on "Globale Zirkulation: Literarische Modelle von Welthandel, Weltverkehr und Migration" and "Geographie—Geopolitik—Geopoetik." The outgoing chair of DGAVL, Achim Hölter (Vienna), held his audience spellbound with a vibrant keynote address on the formidable term "Totalität." His tour de force through romantic and modernist writings, with excursions into such fields as baroque world theater, exhibited both synchronic texture and diachronic logic. Especially powerful was his sweep through attempts to convert specific genres (e.g., novel chains) into vehicles of completeness. Maria Moog-Grünewald (Tübingen) then approached the term "Unendlichkeit," as a complementary concept given new birth by the romantics and passed on as a problem to modernism, as we see in such examples as Beckett's fascination with the painter Friedrich.

No slump in the quality of papers detracted from the final half day. Notable for its attention to live drama in minority cultural enclaves was the paper by

Marc Maufort (Brussels), "Forging Native Voices: Canadian and Australasian Performances of Indigeneity in an Age of Globalization." There were several papers on film in relation to literature—e.g., by Claudia Schmidt (Saarbrücken), Ursula von Keitz (Bonn), and Keyvan Sarkosh (Vienna). Another important contribution that simultaneously delved into non-Eurocentric culture and demonstrated the relevance of crossing media boundaries was the paper by Monika Schmitz-Emans (Bochum), "Sprachen der Bilder: Kontrastierung und Hybridisierung kulturell differenter bildkünstlerischer Stile im Spiegel literarischer Beschreibung." She treats the encounter of Turkish artists, notably Palmut Osman, with western painting and photography, and examines how the response to initially "outside" media contributes special dimensions to the grasp of a complex home place like Istanbul.

Full day two ended with the General Assembly of DGAVL and a festive meal afterwards in a local Turkish/Near Eastern restaurant. Entering its eleventh year, DGAVL's excellent yearbook *Komparatistik* carries articles, reviews, reports, and useful information. The General Assembly spent some effort considering ways to maintain this publication under today's strained circumstances. As a cost-saving measure, those members attending picked up the latest copy in the all-purpose convention war room where one could register, enjoy coffee breaks and receptions, check the book display, and stop for a chat. There was an unmistakable collegial air all through the conference. In the election renewing the officers and board of DGAVL, Christian Moser was chosen as next chair, Linda Simonis to continue as deputy chair, and Joachim Harst (Bonn) as new secretary of the organization, replacing the hard-working, much appreciated Keyvan Sarkhosh (Vienna). The new working address of DGAVL is now the Institut für Germanistik, Vergleichende Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft, Am Hof 1d, D-53113 Bonn, Germany, or by e-mail in care of <komparatistik@uni-bonn.de>.

Gerald Gillespie, *Stanford University* (USA).

CROSSING BOUNDARIES

International Symposium on Comparative Literature
Kanagawa University (Yokohama, Japan), June 11, 2011

We are pleased to announce the successful conclusion of this one-day, three-session symposium, which featured presentations by seven speakers based in Japan, the UK, the US and Finland. Organized by Mayako Murai and Stefan Buchenberger, both of Kanagawa University, and convened with the support of several units of that institution, it was the first in a series of planned annual events designed to foster international and interdisciplinary exchange, as well as to encourage broader conceptions of comparative study within Japanese culture, where there is a tendency to view the field of "cross-cultural studies" as one limited to the identification and analysis of differences that exist between "Japan" and "not-Japan."

In our first session, titled "Comparative Perspectives on Japan," we heard presentations from Noriko Hiraishi from the University of Tsukuba, Bernard Wilson from the University of Tokyo, and Mayako Murai from Kanagawa University.

Hiraishi, in a talk titled "Japanese Literature and the Fin-de-Siècle Imagination: Women Writing at the Beginning of the 20th Century," discussed the representations of 'femme fatale' that we find in several works by period authors, including those by women associated with the earliest developments of the feminist intellectual movement in Japan. Interpreting these characters not as developments of the "evil women" or "poison women" that were popular in 18th and 19th century Japanese drama and popular literature, but rather as a conscious incorporation of late-19th century European treatments of powerful, independent, and sexually liberated women, Hiraishi explained how educated young women after the turn of the century re-imagined the "femme fatale" as a positive symbol of feminine modernity, one that served as a catalyst for new explorations and expressions of sexuality.

In the second presentation, "The Celluloid Samurai: Cultural Clichés in Western Cinematic Interpretations of Japan," Wilson provided detailed analyses of two films from 2003, Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation* and Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill Volume 1*, having first given an overview of filmic representations of Japan produced from the early 1940s to the present. Identifying and contextualizing many of the clichés and stereotypes these two directors either consciously or unconsciously include in their works, Wilson directed attention not only to the dangers of orientalist misrepresentation, but also to the potential for cliché and stereotype to provide a means for informed, critical commentary.

Murai rounded out the session with a talk titled "*Guro-kawaii* Re-envisionings of Fairy Tales in Contemporary Japanese Art," introducing re-conceptions or re-employments of well-known fairy tale narratives (such as Little Red Riding Hood and Hansel and Gretel) by the artists Junko Mizuno, Miwa Yanagi, and Tomoko Konoike. Murai's primary interest was in the way that these artists make use of the guro-kawaii ('grotesque-cute') aesthetic register as they disrupt the gender stereotypes traditionally associated with fairy tales, and reconfigure the tales to carry new narratives about gender, female sexuality, feminine discourse, and desire.

Our second session, "Rethinking 'Popular' Literature," featured two presentations, one by Peter Swirski, Research Director at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, and one by Stefan Buchenberger from Kanagawa University. At the outset of his talk "Beachbooks for Intellectuals: Contemporary Trends in Literary Culture," Swirsky provided a detailed examination of the modern information explosion, convincingly describing it as a phenomenon that has now rendered it impossible for any individual—no matter how specialized—to directly know more than a fraction of the information that exists, whatever the field of inquiry. Among Swirski's contentions was the idea that, in terms of literary culture—fiction and the critical apparatus built up around it—the huge number of publications that has now been produced has made notions of literary authority suspect: how can proclamations about "good" or "bad" literature, valuable or worthless genres, be countenanced, when no one expert can hope to read more than a fraction of all the texts that might populate any given corner of the literary

world? It is inevitable that works of compelling merit exist in any genre, no matter how vilified, a fact that calls into relief the limits of elitist literary discourse.

In his paper "Three Plots Against America: Alternate Histories in Fiction, Science Fiction and Graphic Fiction," Stefan Buchenberger explored the similarities, in terms of critical potential, of three very different texts: Philip Roth's novel *The Plot Against America*, Ward Moore's science fiction classic *Bring the Jubilee*, and Mark Millar's graphic novel *Superman: Red Son*. Comparing one example of elite or "highbrow" literary culture (Roth's novel) with two from genres that have generally been disparaged ("pulp SF" and "comics") allowed Buchenberger to extend some of the themes raised in the previous presentation; particularly noteworthy in this regard was his compelling argument that both Moore and Millar employ the alternate history trope (to comment upon the nature of American society by reimagining the end of the Civil War in the first case, to do the same by having Superman grow up in the Soviet Union in the second) more effectively than Roth, producing "genre" texts that more completely fulfill their critical potential than does Roth's novel.

In the final session, "Literature and Philosophy," we heard presentations by Dionysios Kapsaskis from Roehampton University and John Burt Foster, Jr., from George Mason University. In his talk "Marguerite Yourcenar, Existentialism and the 'Indefinable Hiatus,'" Kapsaskis offered a complex and satisfying analysis of both the ways in which Yourcenar positioned herself vis-à-vis the proponents of existentialism (among them Sartre and de Beauvoir), and the ways in which certain of her works of fiction (*Memoires d'Hadrien* foremost among them) incorporate and express her own philosophical stance. Kapsaskis contended that this second phenomenon is of particular interest, given Yourcenar's well-known desire to maintain literature as literature; to defend the space of literature in relation to modern philosophy. By analyzing and contextualizing such quotes as "There is between me and [the] acts that compose me an indefinable hiatus" (from *Memoires d'Hadrien*), Kapsaskis adroitly described the relationship between philosophy and literature in Yourcenar's work.

In the final talk of the symposium, "Questions of Philosophy in Tolstoy: The Example of *Anna Karenina*," John Burt Foster, Jr. explored several ways in which Tolstoy's novel can be discussed in terms of its links to the philosophical culture that prevailed at the time of its creation, as well as Tolstoy's own relationship to that culture. Introducing his topic, Foster described contemporary censorship practices and the suspicion authorities felt towards philosophical discourse, explaining that to many literature was a less-vigorously-policed venue for the declamation of philosophical views. Foster then described the characters in the novel who are themselves philosophers, or philosophers of a sort, and considered what their depictions tell us about Tolstoy's sense of the place or function of the philosopher. Of special interest was Foster's analysis of several passages of dialogue from the novel that serve to illustrate Tolstoy's use of "cross talk"—representations of interplay between highly-varied positions or conceptions, propounded by different characters—as a device to propel the flow of thought through the novel.

The atmosphere of friendly, collegial academic exchange that permeated these three sessions persisted during the post-event reception and beyond, ensuring that the following day's walking tour of nearby Kamakura was both intellectually as well as aesthetically stimulating. We will be very much looking forward to next year.

Christian Ratcliff, *Kanagawa University* (Japan).

THE WORLD BETWEEN FICTION AND REALITY
ACLA Vancouver, April 2011.

When the first world's fair took place in London in 1851 with the pretentious title of "Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations," more than art and industry from all over the globe were on display. The Crystal Palace where the exhibition took place was itself one of the new wonders that promised a great future for the industrialized and colonizing world. During the following exhibitions, particularly those in Paris and Chicago, the cities were also on display as sites where "all nations" met to expose and compare their inventiveness and more or less promising grip of the future. New street layouts, architectural principles, and urban transport systems told the visitors that here was the proper locale for a global encounter. Mounting the Eiffel Tower or taking a dizzying spin on the Ferris wheel, the two iconic emblems of the exhibitions of 1889 in Paris and of 1893 in Chicago, revealed the city below in all its splendor and enormity.

During the annual conference of the American Comparative Literature Association in Vancouver from March 31 to April 3, 2011, these fragments from the history of world's fairs were brought to my mind. The conference title "World Literature, Comparative Literature" expressed the same vision as the world's fairs. For a couple of days Vancouver gathered comparatists from "all nations" to reflect on the role and the future of literature and to compare its status and development in practically all nooks and crannies of the globe. Like the site of the fairs also, Vancouver and the conference's host institution of Simon Fraser University are multicultural, multilingual, and intercultural venues, characteristics that were abundantly visible outside the meeting rooms and the comparatists' discussions of their research. Here the world as a real place, as creative dynamics in literature, and as point of departure for new directions in literary research and criticism merged into one location.

One location or not, nobody could be present in all the lecture halls like Ariel or the spirit of Aladdin's lamp and witness the richness of the event. And even those otherworldly creatures could not have also observed the equally fruitful informal discussions in corridors, at dinner tables, or in the streets. With a program of paper presentations totaling 300 pages, participants had to realize from the first minute that even if the entire world of literature is gathered in one place, this

concentration also demonstrates that the world is still too multifarious to allow for an Archimedean point from where to gain an overview as from the top of the Eiffel Tower or the Ferris Wheel. It is a world with as many choices as there were literatures and local cultures that were involved in the intercultural encounter of the conference.

Being myself the lead speaker in the panel "The Global Street" and the organizer of the panel "European Literature/European Literatures?" I could not help feeling that although I gained a lot by choosing to accept these roles, they also left me ignorant of what I was missing. In a sense, this is also the core predicament of comparatists opening their field up to a world literature perspective today and was clearly manifested in the many panels of the conference. They can be gathered roughly into four groups.

First, being deeply ingrained in our regional expertise, with the European and Western literatures dominating the field together with the criticism that engages so closely with them, we tend to miss out on what other regions have to offer in aesthetic richness and cultural insights. We also miss a fuller understanding of the consequences of the dominance exercised by Western paradigms, inside and outside literary studies, in today's complex global world. Many of the lectures and panels approached exactly this issue, which without any doubt will define the heart of the discipline for years to come. In this sense the ACLA conference was more than an ACLA event. It pushed the discipline forward as a whole, and was not limited to the American context.

Second, a world literature perspective is not a perspective from above, but is best adopted at street level, where the local and the global meet in frictions, in clashes, in mergers, in dialogues—in short, in all kinds of encounters. This is precisely how literature itself works in a globalized, intercultural perspective: taking issue with the world at large in the local context where this confrontation is transformed into visionary language. Literature is therefore closer to the real complexity of the world today than the abstract analyses of politicians and economists, placed as they are in an Eiffel Tower at a safe distance from the messy life of the streets. Literature is lived experience turned into visionary aesthetic expression, which for that reason is still part of the concrete life of local cultures exposed to global conditions. This tension between the local and the global inspired many of the panels, embedded as they were in concrete topics related to various regions of the world, to gender issues, to colonial and postcolonial perspectives, to migration literatures, and so on.

Third, a globalized world is also a new and constantly changing media landscape. The rapid development of digital media has emphasized that literature is not isolated from non-verbal media of expression or from forms of communication different from aesthetic and fictional ones. Moreover, the new media have forced us to look back on the entire history of media, realizing that literature, also when it is removed emphatically apart—or above—other media and modes of expression, always has been an active part of a larger media landscape, both shaped by it and shaping it. Such topics were discussed in a series of panels on modern

technology, cross-overs between art forms, journalism, and related issues.

Fourthly, and finally, new perspectives require new theories, and this is certainly true of the world literature perspective. Although the tradition of world literature studies goes back quite far in cultural history, the content and consequences of using the concept and developing methodological and didactic stepping stones for its institutional implementation, always reflect our understanding of the world when and where we actually carry out world literature studies. A rich panoply of panels on theoretical issues revealed that world literature as a trend in comparative studies is not a fashion, but a deeply rooted scholarly concern. It is not a catch word or a dogmatic paradigm, but a point of future oriented reflection that opens up the entire discipline.

Plenary panels added to this fourfold profile of the Vancouver conference, while also relating the world of literature to the real world of institutions. This year's ACLA continued the tradition of panels on the status of the humanities, including literary studies, at the universities, on the job market, and on the current situation for the life of literary journals.

I returned to Denmark from the literary world's fair at Vancouver, recognizing that although literatures differ around the world and will continue to do so, literary studies as a global scholarly enterprise share interests, hopes, ideas, and practices that make conferences like the ACLA's more than worthwhile. They are necessary for the further development of our field as an important scholarly endeavor and as an attempt to enhance civilized cultural encounters across the world. This is the ever challenging reality test of the world of literature and of world literature.

The organizers deserve a big round of applause for their often hidden efforts behind the scenes. They received our compliments during the final dinner. Let me just join in the appreciation here. Moreover, as a Danish visitor to the Great Exhibition in 1851 realized when he returned home: London may be big and mighty, but the rain there is not much different from the rain at home. Vancouver, apart from our interests in world literature and comparative literature, we share the rain!

Svend Erik Larsen**,** *Aarhus University* (Denmark).

RECENT COMPARATIVE LITERATURE CONFERENCES IN INDIA

This has been a busy year for Comparative Literature in India. On February 28, 2011, a one-day seminar was arranged by the Centre of Advanced Study (CAS) at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, entitled "(M)other Tongue: The Marginalized Languages of West Bengal." Participants from the department at Jadavpur and various language institutions in the state as well as independent scholars in languages like Santhali, Rajbangshi, Lepcha, etc. participated in this seminar, held to mark Mother Tongue Day, which is observed in West Bengal on February 22. This is an annual feature of the Centre of Advanced Study's annual calendar of events,

with a mandate to introduce marginalized and minority languages into Indian academia. Accordingly, the process of syllabus formation for introducing Urdu and Nepali into the Bachelors' degree curriculum in the Department of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University has been completed, facilitated by the CAS with resource persons from Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi; Southfield College, Darjeeling; and North Bengal University.

Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar (established by an act of Parliament in 2009), hosted the Tenth Biennial Comparative Literature Association of India (CLAI) international Conference between the 3rd to 6th of March, 2011, on the theme of "Social Imagination in Comparative Perspective: Languages, Cultures and Literatures" at its campus in Gandhinagar. The School of Language, Literature, and Culture Studies of Central University of Gujarat, which runs an integrated M.Phil/Ph.D program in Comparative Literature, developed the conference program.

In the inaugural session, Professor R.K. Kale, the Vice Chancellor, emphasized the significance of humanities and the relevance of Comparative Literature to present-day society. Professor E.V. Ramakrishnan, the organizer of the Conference, gave a thematic introduction and noted how the shaping spirit of a people's collective imagination has an impact not only upon the production of artistic works but also on social movements and political transformations. Professor Harish Trivedi, Vice President, CLAI, spoke of recent developments in the field of Comparative Literature. Professor Chandra Mohan, General Secretary, CLAI, presented a report on the Association's activities during the previous two years. A message from Professor Steven Sondrup, President of the ICLA, was read out on the occasion. Professors Bholabhai Patel, Balachandra Nemade, and Amiya Dev were felicitated on the occasion by Vice Chancellor Professor Kale. Their substantial contributions to the field of Comparative Literature in India were recalled and commended. The representatives of the Central Bank of India and the Adani Group of industries who generously supported the Conference were also felicitated by Vice-Chancellor Professor Kale on the occasion. The session ended with a Vote of Thanks by Dr. Ishmeet Kour.

The conference was dedicated to the memory of Tagore on the occasion of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his birth. Professor Amiya Dev delivered a second keynote address contextualizing Tagore in contemporary India. He traced the ideological trajectory of Tagore's great works and showed how his understanding of "viswa-sahitya" is roughly equivalent to the parameters of comparative literature as it is practiced today in academe. Professor Balachandra Nemade, an eminent Marathi novelist, in his keynote address spoke of the need to understand Indian literature and society critically. The well-known critic, Professor Emerita Jasbir Jain, chaired this session of Keynote addresses. It was followed by a plenary session on the topic of "World Literature and Viswa Sahitya." Professors Subha C. Dasgupta, P.P. Ravindran, Avadhesh K. Singh, and T.S. Satyanath presented papers debating the issues involved from different perspectives. Professor Harish Trivedi presided over the session.

Professor Chandra Mohan presided over a session where Professor Dorothy Figueira (University of Georgia) examined the question of colonialism through the medium of letters written by Indian soldiers during the First World War, and Professor Sieghild Bogumil (Bordeaux) explained the significance of methodology in Comparative Literature.

A Second Plenary session was held on the subject of "Literature and Resistance: Contemporary Indian Writing from the Margins." The session was chaired by the eminent Marathi critic, Professor Chandrasekhar Jahagirdar, and papers were presented by Professors Jasbir Jain, Harishchandra Thorat, Anisur Rahman and Raghuvir Chaudhary, the well-known Gujarati novelist. The papers brought out various aspects of contemporary Marathi, Gujarati, Urdu, Indian English, and Hindi writing.

The Third Sisir Kumar Das Memorial Lecture was delivered by Professor David Damrosch (Harvard). He spoke on the subject of "Literary History in a Global Age: the Legacy of Sisir Kumar Das." Professor Jancy James, President of the CLAI, presided over the event. Professor Damrosch and Mrs. Sushmita Das were felicitated by Professor Kale.

The Third plenary session was held on the theme of "Reception and Re-evaluation of Tagore" under the chairmanship of the eminent Tagore scholar, Professor Indranath Chaudhary. Papers were presented by Mridula Garg, Dr. Anila Dalal, and Professor Jancy James on various aspects of Tagore's works. The conference ended with a panel discussion on "Comparative Literature in the Class Room." Professor Dorothy Figueira presided over the panel comprising Professors Subha C. Dasgupta, E.V. Ramakrishnan, Avadhesh K. Singh, and P.P. Raveendran.

The conference was attended by over four hundred delegates from all over India, and also from France, the U.S.A., Germany, and Iran. The conference was tri-lingual as it allowed papers to be presented in English, Hindi, and Gujarati. It gave the younger scholars from the universities and colleges an opportunity to interact with senior scholars in the discipline as well as with creative writers from many Indian languages. With two key note addresses, fourteen presentations at plenary sessions, one special address in memory of Professor Sisir Kumar Das and over two hundred presentations by delegates, the conference generated excellent discussions and debates on a large number of issues related to Comparative Literature.

This conference was immediately followed by an international conference on Comparative Literature organized by the Department of English, Central University of Rajasthan, on the theme "Shifting Paradigms of Comparative Literature" in collaboration with the Comparative Literature Association of India on March 8-9, 2011, at the Kishangarh Campus, Ajmer. Participating scholars included Dorothy Figueira, Chandra Mohan, Jasbir Jain, Avadhesh K. Singh, Pia Thielman, Santosh Gupta, and Rama Rani Lal. Professor Chandra Mohan, General Secretary of the CLAI, in his inaugural address provided a survey of the multicultural nations and emphasized the need for interdisciplinary studies in comparative literary contexts. Professor Figueira focused on the issue of multiculturalism in her keynote ad-

dress "Recognition as a Form of Equality of Multicultural Literature," which was chaired by Professor Jasbir Jain. The session was addressed by the two plenary speakers, Professor Avadhesh K. Singh from the Ahmedabad Knowledge Centre and Professor Pia Thielman from Germany. Professor Singh focused on comparative politics and its relationship with the aesthetics and values attached to literature. Professor Thielman based her talk on the fiction of Amma Darko, an African writer, exploring the position of women divided between two worlds. She then spoke of how Indians in Germany serve as model immigrants for groups seeking assimilation into the German polity.

In an intervention, Professor Amiya Dev discussed how minority voices have been effectively co-opted in recent developments in the field. He claimed that, contrary to what some might think in the metropolitan West, "The diaspora is not us." Professor Dev also questioned how old categories seem to find new formulations, as in the recent popularity of World Literature.

Professor Jasbir Jain's lecture dealt with the topic "The Limits of Experience: Some Thoughts on the Creative Arts," in which she interrogated the inner dynamics, the representation of reality, and the role of imagination located within experience as much as in memory, especially in the context of confessional and autobiographical writings, particularly in Dalit literature. The topic of Dalit literary production, which was amply treated at the CLAI meeting, was examined here in terms of a literature of experience as opposed to a literature of empathy. Jain also noted this recent scholarly interest in Dalits by non-Dalits.

In all, more than twenty-five papers were presented at this conference by faculty members and students of literature from local and adjoining universities. These contributions were thought provoking and well framed. This conference was very well organized by the coordinators, Dr. Supriya Agarwal and Dr. Avinash Jodha.

In Kolkata, the Centre of Advanced Study in Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University hosted Professor Dorothy Figueira and then Professor Jasbir Jain as visiting faculty for the year 2010-11. Both scholars spent a fortnight each at the Department of Comparative Literature in Jadavpur, and the lectures they delivered there form the foundation of a monograph series, "Questions From/In Comparative Literature," being published by the CAS. The first, by Professor Figueira, which is being readied for publication, was based on the methodology workshop for students, held between March 15 and 17. This workshop dealt with current theoretical trends and issues in Comparative Literature, and Professor Figueira chose as the focus "Comparative Literature: Where we have been, where we are now, where we are going, and do we want to go there?" This is also the title of the first monograph in the series "Questions From/In Comparative Literature," written out of the experience of the workshop. There was much lively interaction during this workshop. A "theory and history" video, made by the students in response to the workshop, was presented at the National Workshop on Methodology, also organized by the CAS in Comparative Literature, held on 22 and 23 March. This subsequent workshop was attended by 25 registered participants, teachers

Comparative Literature and Indian languages from Jadavpur University as well as other universities in the state. Participants were addressed on the various aspects of Comparative Literature methodology by Professors Jasbir Jain, Jancy James, Probal Dasgupta, Avadhesh K. Singh, E.V. Ramakrishnan, Anisur Rahman, T.S. Satyanath, D.R. Purohit and P.P. Raveendran. The students of Comparative Literature also performed "Electric Ramayan: Revised and Enlarged," as Part 3 of the series, The Comp Lit Plays, dramatizing the travels of the Indian epic across genres, cultures, time, and space. The Comp Lit plays have been an annual feature of student activity at Jadavpur's Department of Comparative Literature, and the CAS plans to base teaching material on the epic as a genre on video tapes of these performances.

The Jadavpur workshop was conceived as a continuation of a workshop that was held in March 2010 at the Central University of Kerala in Kasaragod, of which a position volume is currently in press. This attempt at continuity bears testimony to the fact that work in Comparative Literature in India is a collaborative effort, with the Centre of Advanced Study located in Jadavpur and under the direction of Professor Ipshita Chanda serving as a nodal point. This collaborative effort on the part of Indian comparatists to streamline and coordinate efforts of many schools, departments, and centers devoted to the discipline across the country is truly refreshing. The efforts of CLAI, under the able direction of Chandra Mohan, have greatly facilitated this collaborative effort; and the ability of this group to work productively with literature scholars and administrators throughout India should serve as a model to other national associations.

Dorothy Figueira, University of Georgia (USA).

NOTICES BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHIQUES SUR LES COLLABORATEURS / BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Christopher Bush is Associate Professor in the Department of French and Italian and Director of the Program in Comparative Literary Studies at Northwestern University. He is the author of *Ideographic Modernism: China, Writing, Media* (Oxford UP, 2010) and co-editor and co-translator of a critical edition of Victor Segalen's *Stèles* (Wesleyan UP, 2007).

Dorothy Figueira is Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Georgia and Honorary President of the ICLA. She is the author of *Translating the Orient* (1991), *The Exotic; A Decadent Quest* (1994); *Aryans , Jews and Brahmins* (2002); *Otherwise Occupied: Theories and Pedagogies of Alterity* (2008); and editor most recently (with Marc Maufort) of *Theaters in the Round: Multiethnic, Indigenous, and Intertextual Dialogues in Drama* (2011) and *Cybernetic Ghosts: Literature in the Age of Theory and Technology* (2004).

John Burt Foster, Jr., is University Professor of English and Cultural Studies at George Mason University. After editing *Recherche littéraire/Literary Research* since 2008, he is now a general secretary of the AILC/ICLA. Widely published in 19th- and 20th-century literature and thought, he recently coedited *Dramas of Culture: Theory, History, Performance* (Lexington, 2008). He is now writing a book called *Transnational Tolstoy: Between Western and World Literature*.

David T. Gies is Commonwealth Professor of Spanish and former Chairman of the Department of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese at the University of Virginia. He has published fifteen books and critical editions of Spanish literature, including *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture* (1999), *Theatre and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Spain* (Cambridge, 1988), and *The Cambridge History of Spanish Literature* (2004).

Gerald Gillespie is Emeritus Professor of Comparative Literature at Stanford University. The augmented second edition of his *Proust, Mann, Joyce in the Modernist Context* appeared in autumn 2010 (Catholic U of America P). He edited the special issue, *Toward Rethinking our Mission*, for the *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, 35.3 (Sept. 2008), and was lead co-editor of *Romantic Prose Fiction* (John Benjamins, 2008; reviewed in *RL/LR* 2009). Another recent book is *Echoland: Readings from Humanism to Postmodernism* (Presses Inter-universitaires Européennes, 2006).

Margaret Higonnet, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Connecticut, is a past President of the American Comparative Literature Association. She is President of the AILC/ICLA committee for the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages (CHLEL). She co-edited *Comparatively Queer* (Palgrave 2010) and is now working on *Margaret Hall's Letters and Photographs from the Battle Country, 1918-1919*.

Jasbir Jain is an independent scholar formerly with the University of Rajasthan at Jaipur (India). She has worked extensively on Diaspora Studies and currently works on narratology and space. Recent publications include *The Writer as Critic* (2011) and *Indigenous Roots of Feminism*: *Culture, Subjectivity, Agency* (2011).

Carolyn M. Jones Medine is Professor in the Religion Department and The Institute for African American Studies at the University of Georgia. She is the co-editor, with Theodore Trost, of "Teaching African American Religions," published by Oxford, and the co-author, with John Randolph LeBlanc, of a forthcoming book on transitive identities, to be published by Palgrave-Macmillan.

Svend Eric Larsen is Professor of Comparative Literature at Aarhus University, Denmark. He is editor of the comparatist journal *Orbis Litterarum*, co-author of *Signs in Use* (Routledge, 2002) and author of *Tekstens Grænser* (Aarhus UP, 2007). He is currently working on a book dealing with forgiveness and literature.

Herta Müller is the 2009 Nobel Laureate for literature, when she was honored for depicting "with the concentration of poetry and the frankness of prose . . . the landscape of the dispossessed." She is the author, among other books, of *Herztier* (1996), *Der fremde Blick* (1999), *Im Haarknoten wohnt eine Dame* (2000), and *Der König verneigt sich und tötet* (2003), titles whose phrasing reappears in the talk translated and published in this issue of *RL/LR*, with permission from Carl Hanser Verlag.

Oshima Hitoshi is Professor of Comparative Literature at Fukuoka University, Japan. He is author of *El Pensamiento Japonés* (EUDEBA, 1987), *Le Développement d'une Pensée Mythique—pour comprendre la pensée japonaise* (Editions Osiris, 1994), and many books in Japanese, among which *Hikaku Bungaku Ronko* [Reflections on Comparative Literature] (Hana-shoin, 2011) is the most recent. He is currently President of the Japan Comparative Literature Association.

Pratima Prasad is Associate Professor of French at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. She is the author of *Colonialism, Race, and the French Romantic Imagination* (Routledge, 2009), and coeditor of *Novel Stages: Drama and the Novel in Nineteenth-Century France* (U of Delaware P, 2007).

Ricardo Quinones is Professor Emeritus at Claremont McKenna College. He is currently completing the third volume in a series of books, this one on the topic of *North/South: The Great Divide*. Previous works in the series include *Dualisms: The Agons of the Modern World* (2007; reviewed in *RL/LR* 2008) and *Erasmus and Voltaire: Why They Still Matter* (2010).

Christian Ratcliff is Associate Professor in the Department of Cross-Cultural Studies at Kanagawa University. His publications include "Telling Secrets: Mumyozoshi, Abutsu, and the Transmission of Literary Expertise by Women" (*Jinmon kenkyu* 169, 2009) and "Willful Copyists and the Transmission of Suspect Narratives of Literary Production" (in *Reading Material: The Production of Narratives, Genres, and Literary Identities*, *PAJLS* 7, 2006).

Manfred Schmeling is a past president of the AILC/ICLA and Emeritus Professor of General and Comparative Literature at the University of the Saarland. His interests include the history and poetics of twentieth-century literature, the theory of comparative literature, German-French literary relations, intermediality, and literary translation. He is also general editor of the Saarbrücker Beiträge zur vergleichenden Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft.

Steven P. Sondrup, the president of the AILC/ICLA, is Professor of Comparative Literature at Brigham Young University. A long-time editor of the journal *Scandinavian Studies*, he has published recently on romanticism, literary historiography, modernism, and philosophy and literature. He is also coediting the forthcoming *Comparative History of Nordic Literary Cultures* for the AILC/ICLA series on the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages.

Lisa R. Van Zwoll holds a Ph.D. in French from the University of Georgia, with a primary area of research in aristocratic women's memoirs of the early nineteenth century. She has worked as an Assistant Professor of French at the US Air Force Academy, where she was also the Director of Faculty Development for the Department of Foreign Languages. Currently she has returned to the classroom as a student to pursue a J.D. at Florida Coastal School of Law.

Donald R. Wehrs is Professor of English at Auburn University, in Alabama. He is co-editor of *Levinas and Nineteenth-Century Literature: Ethics and Otherness from Romanticism through Realism* (U of Delaware P, 2009), and author of *Pre-Colonial Africa in Colonial African Narratives* (Ashgate, 2008) and *Islam, Ethics, Revolt* (Lexington, 2008).

Alok Yadav is Associate Professor of English at George Mason University. He is the author of *Before the Empire of English: Literature, Provinciality, and Nationalism in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) and is currently working on a book on Kipling's *Kim* and political criticism of literature.

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AVIS AUX COLLABORATEURS PROSPECTIFS

Recherche littéraire / Literary Research a comme but de communiquer aux comparatistes du monde entier les développements récents de notre discipline. La revue publie les comptes rendus des livres notables sur les sujets comparatistes, les nouvelles des congrès professionels et d'autres événements d'une importance majeure pour nos membres, et 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.

D'ordinaire les comptes rendus sont écrits ou en français ou en anglais, les langues officielles de l'AILC. Un compte rendu prendra une des formes suivantes: des annonces brèves de 500 à 800 mots pour les livres courts ou spécialisés, des comptes rendus proprement dits de 1200 à 1500 mots pour les livres d'une portée plus ambitieuse, ou des essais de 2000 à 3000 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 notre discipline, *RL/LR* acceptera les comptes rendus de recueils d'essais bien organisés, y compris les numéros spéciaux des revues.

Ceux qui voudraient écrire un compte rendu sont priés de considérer les besoins d'un public international de comparatistes. Les comptes rendus devraient être lisibles, informatifs, et judicieux. Il faut qu'ils soient lisibles pour qu'ils puissent être accessibles aux lecteurs comparatistes en général, non pas seulement aux spécialistes. Il faut qu'ils soient informatifs parce que bien que les comparatistes s'intéressent tous aux belles lettres comprises dans un sens étendu et interculturel, ils ne partagent pas nécessairement de sujet particulier en commun. Les comptes rendus devraient être judicieux parce que, afin d'atteindre une compréhension plus approfondie de leurs études, nos lecteurs ont besoin d'une discussion raisonnée et bien réfléchie.

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INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE CONTRIBUTORS

Recherche Littéraire/Literary Research exists to inform 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 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 official languages of the ICLA. Book notes of 500 to 800 words cover short or relatively specialized works, standard reviews of 1200 to 1500 words are for works of greater scope, while review essays of 2000 to 3000 words deal with a work of major significance or for joint treatment of several related works. Given the importance of collaborative work in promoting comparative scholarship, *RL/LR* welcomes reviews of well-conceived edited volumes, including special issues of journals.

Contributors need to take the needs of an international audience of comparatists into account. Reviews need to be readable, informative, and judicious. They should be readable so as to be accessible to a general comparatist readership, not just to specialists. Reviews have to be informative, because although comparatists share a wide, cross-cultural interest in the verbal arts, they have no specific subject matter in common. Reviews should be judicious, because to give our readers a broader sense of their field they need a reasoned, thoughtful evaluation of the work being reviewed.