

BOOK REVIEWS

- 668 GRAFTON, ANTHONY, AND GLENN W. MOST, EDs. *Canonical Texts and Scholarly Practices: A Global Comparative Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016. Pp. 388. \$144.95 CDN hardcover.

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The front cover of the book under review is an intriguing piece of Chinese ceramic from the Western Jin Dynasty (265-316 CE): two scribes face each other, almost kissing, as they collate and check the accuracy of a text. As Anthony Grafton and Glenn W. Most write in their introduction, their activity “is at least as much interpersonal as it is intertextual” (1). This figurine becomes a fitting symbol of the volume as a whole and, it is fair to say, the editors’ relationship to each other. Grafton and Most have had by now a decades-long “interpersonal and intertextual” partnership: from their translation of Friedrich August Wolf’s *Prolegomena to Homer* with James E.G. Zetzel (1986) to their *Arnaldo Momigliano: Ausgewählte Schriften zur Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung* with Wilfried Nippel (1999) to the huge omnibus *The Classical Tradition* with Salvatore Settis (2013), and now *Canonical Texts and Scholarly Practices*. Communities of learning, of course, are more than Bouvard and Pécuchet affairs; they exist as collectives. And here, Grafton and Most have assembled a stunning group of scholars of the highest calibre.

This volume is the fruitful result of a research group sponsored by the Max Planck Institute in Berlin, “Learned Practices of Canonical Texts: A Cross-Cultural Comparison” (www.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/research/projects/DeptII_GraftonMost_Canonical), which itself is part of a much welcomed revival of the study of philology in recent years. The project “Comparative History of Philology in Early Modern

Asia” between Oxford, Princeton, and Columbia has resulted in *World Philology*, edited by Sheldon Pollock, Benjamin A. Elman, and Kevin Ku-ming Chang (2015). Yale has recently launched Archaia (archaia.yale.edu), a program for the cross-cultural study of the ancient world, and Humboldt University of Berlin has a program on the “Globalized Classics” (globalizedclassics.antikezentrum.hu-berlin.de). The journal *Philological Encounters* is published by Brill, along with a monograph series of the same name. Renmin University of China has created the International Centre for the Study of Ancient Text Cultures (wenxueyuan.ruc.edu.cn/article/?3856.html). Other recent titles include James Turner’s *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of the Modern Humanities* (2014), Werner Hamacher’s *Minima Philologica* (2015), and John T. Hamilton’s *Philology of the Flesh* (2018).

Canonical Texts and Scholarly Practices consists of fourteen dense chapters from a truly “global, comparative approach,” each written by an expert in his/her field. Spanning Near Eastern, Greek and Roman, late antiquities, the millennial tradition of the Vedic commentary, the European, Byzantine, Arabic, and Coptic Middle Ages, to the early modern Ottoman Empire, Europe, China, and India, the contributors display a dazzling and precise technical mastery, but also manage always to keep the “big picture” in the foreground. Like the scholars they study, they are always reaching for something more, striving toward a more synthetic vision of erudition and a cross-cultural understanding in our world republic of letters. Since the volume is such a rich and dense assortment, I will discuss the chapters through some questions that arose in my reading rather than in the volume’s sequential order.

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It goes without saying that canonical texts are most often old works written in different languages or forms of languages than those of later readers; thus, they can be difficult to read. But this raises the basic but fundamental question: “What is interpretation?” In the second chapter, Ineke Sluiter uses the category of “obscurity” (Gk. *to skoteion*, Lat. *obscuritas*) as a method of interpreting texts. Sluiter divides obscurity into two types, “unintentional” and “intentional,” and further subdivides each into “good” and “bad” ones. For her, the work invested in interpreting difficult texts is the hope of a genuine “aesthetic experience” (51).

The problem of how to decipher a hidden text leads to the third chapter, Glenn Most’s chapter on allegoresis and etymology. Using the Derveni papyrus, he argues that both practices turn one meaning that is “manifest, familiar, or easily recognized into another one that is hidden, strange or surprising” (56). In this way, they “transcod[e] meanings from one discursive system to another” (59): for example, things that appear to be divine are seen as only elements of the physical world by natural philosophers.

In Chapter Seven, Lianbin Dai is concerned with the transition from philology to philosophy in the works of the Song-dynasty intellectual Zhu Xi. Dai examines how Zhu’s commentary begins in textual philology and ends in ethical philosophy. His edition becomes an “open text” (151) whose notes invite readers to reconstruct the text as a means of cultivating their sagehood. Megan McNamee’s jumping-off point in

Chapter Ten is a square within a square in a manuscript of Macrobius's *Commentary on Cicero's Dream of Scipio*. She discusses the relationship between the geometric illustrations on the marginalia, the text that they supplement, and the understanding of mathematical truths that both the text and images aid.

670 Though the title of the book uses the phrase *Canonical Texts*, and the editors discuss this category in their introduction, one still wonders about the differences between "sacred" and "secular" texts. The *Rigveda* is the prime example of the former in ancient India. In his chapter, Paolo Visigalli uses the example of a classificatory system known as the "deity-of-the-formula," in which commentators wrote lengthy introductions, marginal and interlinear headings, translations, definitions, etymologies, synonyms, citations, and pictures. Visigalli concludes that this sort of hermeneutics, similar to what Dai says about Zhu Xi, is "open ended." Like Visigalli, Aaron Tugendhaft, in Chapter Eight, is interested in the names of the gods. He examines the "Weidner God List" written in Sumerian, Hurrian, and Ugaritic in order to consider the creation and transmission of pantheons. He finds that "the lists of the gods do not so much record present reality as transmit an imagined past" (170) because by the time of the old Babylonian period, Sumerian "was already obsolete for any practical purposes—and all the more esteemed as a result" (168).

Christopher Minkowski's Chapter Five also concerns the scholarly practices of traditional India, using as his test case the sixteenth-century Appayya's polemic against the thirteenth-century Madhva to explore "Sanskrit textual practices as a sort of social history" (109). The stakes in these debates, concerning the use of dubious sources to authenticate less well-known authoritative texts, rules of prior analytics, and the etymological derivation of Vedic words, are all more than scholarly quibbles because they in fact lead to the deepest questions of life: "the nature of the self and identity, the relational of the self to God, God's connection to the world, the nature of the highest good and the path to it" (92).

Ronny Vollandt's Chapter Nine recapitulates the cover image. In 1242 CE (639 AH), a Coptic scholar sat face-to-face with a Jewish polymath to study together an Arabic translation of the Pentateuch. For Vollandt, this represented a "momentous juncture of medieval Jewish and Coptic learning" (183). Saadia's *Tafsir* (translation, interpretation) became a foundational text of the Coptic Church and a significant contribution to scholarship, for he demonstrates that the Hebrew urtext had its own variants and internal textual history. Filippomaria Pontani adopts the Islamic principle to *i' jāz* (the inimitability of the Qu'ran) and shows how rhetoric is legitimated as an autonomous discipline in Eustathius, the Belgian abbot Rupert, Al-Zamakhsharī, and Moses ibn Ezra (all around the twelfth century). The Hebrew Bible, Homer, the Vulgate, and the Qu'ran all turn out to be the "inimitable source[s] of every science and of every rationally apprehended truth" (250).

In his fourteenth-century *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, an encyclopedic synthesis of ancient myths, Boccaccio vividly states:

[As] if I were collecting fragments along the vast shores of a huge shipwreck, I will collect [*vastum litus ingentis naufragii fragmenta colligerem sparsas*] the remnants of the pagan gods strewn everywhere in a nearly infinite number of volumes, and once found and collected, even if they are ravaged and half eaten by time and nearly worn to nothing, I will reduce them into a single corpus of genealogy [*unum genealogie corpus*]. (Book 1, preface 1, §40)

What are the strategies of this textual healing? How does one reconstitute a text? In Chapter Twelve, András Németh studies the “deconstructions and reconstitutions” (253) of the *Excerpta Constantiniana*, the efforts of Emperor Constantine VII (954-59) to unite all historical knowledge into a vast single textual work. The imperial team followed a method that reconciled the tension between textual integrity and alteration by epitomizing, anthologizing, selecting and rejecting passages. In Chapter Six, Robert Kaster, a practicing textual critic, combines rich methodological questions with an empirical study of two scribes of Suetonius in the twelfth century. He contrasts one “attentive reader who points to real lexical and cultural difficulties in the text” (121) with another who is “willful and aggressive.” Yet, contrary to our expectations, it is the latter who makes the fifty good corrections accepted by modern editors. Kaster asks: “where would we be if an earlier reader had wrought the same kinds of changes—often very intelligent and learned, yet far more often entirely irresponsible from a modern point of view—and thereby shaped, not a third-generation descendant of the archetype, but the archetype itself? Second, how do we know that one did not?” (130). In Chapter Thirteen, Anthony Grafton and Joanna Weinberg discuss the notebook of Johann Buxtorf (1546-1629), the professor of Hebrew at the University of Basel. The author of many books on Hebrew grammar and lexicography, and editor of many Hebrew texts, Buxtorf published *Jüden Schul* (*The Synagogue of the Jews*), a synoptic, polemical survey of the worship and customs of Ashkenazic Jewry. Grafton and Weinberg argue that what made his enterprise possible was the humanist technique of commonplace books.

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One of Max Weber’s central concepts is the transition from charismatic authority to institutional bureaucracy. How does society transform the exceptional, disruptive powers of an individual (Jesus, the Buddha, Confucius, Muhammad) into a “routinized” social order of politics, law, economy, and religion? Guy Burak begins the first chapter by examining how legal texts were canonized in the early modern Ottoman Empire. Canon formation, needless to say, is a mode of establishing authority. Here, the fixing of a legal canon represented the tension between a “diverse and multicentric textual landscape of the empire” and the attempt to “consolidate an imperial jurisprudential canon” (16). Surprisingly, instead of relying on the new technology of print for centralization, jurists preferred the decentralized production of manuscripts because of the hierarchical nature of Ottoman learning.

In the final chapter, Paolo Molino examines the bibliographic methods and physical structures of court libraries at the end of the sixteenth century. At heart, it is about the interrelation of knowledge and power: “libraries were not only institutions

in which rare manuscripts and curious scientific objects were displayed but also the laboratories and archives where documents confirming the supremacy of a certain family were materially constructed” (300).

What is interpretation? What is a sacred text? How does one (re)make a text? What is an institution? No doubt, these questions are at the heart of the human sciences, and they can be answered in an endless variety of ways through the different disciplines that have sprung from *Geisteswissenschaft*. Grafton and Most foreground their answer back to philology in the broadest sense. Perhaps one may say they are doing *metaphilology*, a new methodology for the history of scholarship as it informs the formation of the institutional production of knowledge. “Philology is the study of the spirit (*Geist*) that fuses the inner and outer life of the classical world and its textual sources,” Friedrich Ast wrote in his 1808 *Grundriss der Philologie* (1808); “True philology harmonizes the study of material and form to reach a true and lifelike intuition and understanding of classical antiquity, thus this is the activity of genuine *Bildung*” (qtd. in Güthenke 269). Two hundred and ten years after such a lofty pronouncement, where do we go from here? In today’s political climate, we may need to revisit the ideological, racial, gender, and nationalist assumptions that go into the making of any discipline (see e.g. Adluri and Bagchee; Olender; Zuckerberg). However, that is another topic for another day. For now, I would confidently claim that this magisterial volume is certainly an “activity of genuine *Bildung*.”

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CHAMBERS, ROSS. *An Atmospherics of the City: Baudelaire and the Poetics of Noise*. New York, Fordham UP, 2015. Pp. 208. \$35.00 US hardcover.

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Ross Chambers's penetrating essay focuses on Baudelaire's late works: the major verse poems of *Tableaux parisiens*, which were included in the second edition of *Les Fleurs du mal* in 1861, and the prose poems of *Le Spleen de Paris*, an unfinished project at the time of Baudelaire's death in 1867. While still holding artistic beauty as a transcendent value (what Chambers terms "fetish aesthetics") like his contemporaries Gautier and Nerval, Baudelaire evolved in these late works towards a new conception of "supernaturalism" that moved from the natural world and the sublime to the artificial city and its strident chaos. The "natural supernaturalism" that, according to M.H. Abrams, characterizes Romantic aesthetics is thus subverted into a paradoxical "urban supernaturalism."

Historically, this turn in Baudelaire's poetics corresponds with the poet's disenchantment with politics, after the brutal crushing of the 1848 revolution and Louis Napoléon Bonaparte's coup d'état of 1852; it also coincides with Paris's increasing overpopulation and poverty, and with the dramatic destruction of old neighbourhoods under Haussmann's modernization project. Ever present in Baudelaire's late verse and prose poems, noise is an overwhelming fact of daily urban life, which anchors the works in the harsh reality of the poet's time.

Chambers reads time in Baudelaire's poetry on several interwoven levels: as the inner experience of ineluctable passing; as the continuous weight of violent historical events on that experience; and as absolute Evil, the destructive force of "le Mal," which Chambers strikingly equates with entropy. In Baudelaire's poems, he argues, subjective time and historical time are metaphorically interconnected with the weather, which, as scorching sun or violent storm, bears down on urban activities (notably on the *flâneur's* walks) and moods—a connection Chambers encapsulates in the phrase "the weather of time." Far from neutral, this connection is permeated with unease,

the diffuse sense that the everyday, though familiar, is strange and inscrutable. The inability to know what is familiar, precisely because it is familiar, a notion Chambers borrows from Hegel, saturates the atmosphere of the city: an alienating otherness lurks in the physical, emotional, and moral milieu that surrounds its inhabitants. In making the reader aware of this secret otherness, the poetics of noise, Chambers argues, has a disalienating effect.

In the great poems of *Tableaux parisiens* written between 1859 and 1861, the agent of disalienation is allegory, a trope that, in itself, enacts otherness. Chambers offers complex readings of some of these enigmatic and often discussed poems, “Le Cygne,” “Les sept vieillards,” and “A une passante” in particular, and shows how specific formal disruptions function as poetic noise, unsettling our reading and alerting us to the limits of our understanding. In these poems, fleeting encounters with perturbing figures amongst the deafening din, disorder, or stormy weather of the city weave together noise, atmospheric phenomena, and emotional shock into a melancholic recognition that the “empty sky” leaves us at the mercy of the malevolent action of time and death, the downward movement of history.

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The prose poems of *Le Spleen de Paris* move from supernaturalism to irony. God’s withdrawal from the world, Chambers argues, has abandoned it to an invisibly ironic and impenetrable immanence. Anonymity governs daily social relations. This “cruel but transparent irony that haunts the everyday” is made visible in the prose poems, in which seemingly transparent anecdotes of urban life turn ironically on to themselves, introducing interfering noise into interpretation. In “Perte d’auréole” and “Le Mauvais vitrier,” for example, Chambers shows how, in the course of the poem, irony shifts undecidedly between the poet and the man he encounters (a fellow poet, a glazier), so that the lofty figure of the poet, and our reading assurance, end up lost in the gutter or shattered. Social distinctions are tumbled in a “poetics of anonymity.”

Chambers pays particular attention to the fact that Baudelaire was unable to complete and shape *Le Spleen de Paris* before he died. This inability adds an unplanned and structural irony to the work: while the poet intended a radically new form of lyricism, he created a model of what Chambers terms “urban diary.” Comparable, in its lack of global structure, to the journalistic “*flâneur*” pieces of the period, or to the current *New York Times* Metropolitan Diary column, it points towards collective writing and depersonalized subjects. The poetics of noise thus defines modern beauty by what is alien to it: Baudelaire is, in this, the precursor of modern poetry and art. The process of disalienation that Chambers shows at work in the late poems is at once political and ethical: the poetics of noise is, ultimately, a poetics of veracity, that bears witness to “history as a story of loss.”

In this book, Ross Chambers furthers, with important shifts, a reflection he has pursued in his previous books, particularly *Room for Maneuver: Reading (the) Oppositional (in) Narrative* (1991), *The Writing of Melancholy: Modes of Opposition in Early French Modernism* (translated from the French, 1993), and *Loiterature* (1999). A central concern in those former works, as in this one, are the ways in which a literary

text can undermine the very historical forces that constrain it and engage its reader in a freer relation to them. By limiting his study to Baudelaire's late (and most revolutionary) poems, instead of discussing a wider range of authors as in previous books, Chambers can draw, from the extraordinary vitality of noise in these famous poems, a truly original perspective on Baudelaire's poems and poetics. His remarkable talent at detecting fault lines, or atmospherics, within poems and at tracing multiple configurations of meaning between them, offers a compelling framework for reading them anew. His study also opens new paths of reflection, such as the idea that, as an incomplete collection of short texts, *Le Spleen de Paris* is a sort of "urban diary"—a notion that is connected to the literature of digression that Chambers named "loiterature" in his eponymous book, and that could encompass inventive contemporary narratives such as Teju Cole's *Open City* or, though they are not specifically urban, Lydia Davis's stories. More broadly, a poetics of noise, linked as it is to the ideas of interference and dissonance, extends directly into contemporary music and art. Geographers' new attention to noise as a long-neglected component of a landscape shows another way in which Chambers's study can connect to current preoccupations.

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KENT, BRAD, ED. *The Selected Essays of Sean O'Faolain*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2016. Pp. 516. \$110.00 CDN hardcover; \$37.95 CDN paperback.

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Despite his prominence as a public intellectual throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and well into the 1950s, Sean O'Faolain has gained most of his recognition from his short story writing. *The New York Times* even called O'Faolain "an Irish Master of the Short Story" upon his death in 1991 (Flint B12). At his best, O'Faolain certainly rivalled in quality, if not consistency, other major names associated with the Irish short story, such as his friend Frank O'Connor. Later in life, O'Faolain lamented that he spent too much time on his non-fiction writing to the detriment of his first love. His loss is our gain. Many of the essays in this, the first serious scholarly selection of his non-fiction writing to date, are taken from O'Faolain's contributions to *The Bell*, the foremost literary journal in Ireland during the 1940s and the 1950s, of which O'Faolain was chief editor from 1940-45. His editorship was key in establishing the journal as an essential outlet for writers of the post-Yeats and post-Joyce generation; the diversity and quality of *The Bell* can be gleaned from the essays that Brad Kent has selected for this collection.

O'Faolain's essay writing is insightful and probing, and often features a biting and incisive wit. When William Magennis, the Chairman of the Censorship Board, attempted to justify to the Dáil (Irish House of Representatives) the proscription of a book that had been given the stamp of approval from Church hierarchy, O'Faolain

quipped about his long, meandering speech: “it is always depressing to see a man whorling about in the mazes of his own mind in the effort to stave off the humiliating admission that he has done a wrong thing. One sympathises with him. It is, nonetheless, an embarrassing public spectacle” (“The Senate and Censorship” 187). Two of O’Faolain’s works of fiction, the short story collection *Midsummer Night Madness* and the novel *Bird Alone*, had been censored, which perhaps added a tinge of vitriol to his portrait of Magennis. Yet, in essays such as “The Dangers of Censorship,” he moves beyond mere critique and proposes ways that the censor might fulfill a beneficial potential for Irish society; namely, that the board ought to be composed of more intelligent individuals who understood the writer’s craft. These fifty essays depict a writer who wished to foster a community for Irish public intellectuals that prized rigour over and above any one particular point of view. In other words, O’Faolain held the merits of intellectual debate in the highest regard.

676 O’Faolain’s knack for aphorisms and quips, which could otherwise run the risk of glib universalization, suggest a writer who has both his own art and reader accessibility in mind. The ease of access in these essays is all the more impressive considering the range of topics and references that O’Faolain takes up in his writing. O’Faolain was a devoted student of history—Irish and otherwise—and of European literary traditions. Russian and French realists such as Ivan Turgenev, Gustav Flaubert, and Guy de Maupassant feature prominently in his conception of literary forbears. But he also admired the social concerns of Victorian novelists, especially Dickens at his most artful, as in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, at least before “you come to Eden and that truly shocking piece of flummery, the reform of Martin, and you begin to feel uncomfortable” (“Dickens and Thackeray” 70). Perhaps most striking for a writer in the 1930s and 1940s, though, is the lack of references to those now associated with high modernism. Joyce, inevitably for the interwar generation of Irish writers, makes frequent appearances in O’Faolain’s thoughts, as do, more occasionally, Faulkner and Hemingway, though mostly for their proximity to realism. Still, these essays suggest that O’Faolain was aware of the diverse literary scene of his time: without ever explicitly stating so, he very much aligns with T.S. Eliot when assessing Dickens and Thackeray on the merits of their influence for the writers of the 1930s. O’Faolain might not use the word “tradition,” but he often thinks about the continuum of literature created across generations of writers and texts.

Almost always, O’Faolain casts the eye of tradition back to the context of Ireland. As a pupil of Daniel Corkery in the years leading up to the war for independence, O’Faolain became enthralled with the revolutionary movement that found particular strength in his native Cork. He worked as a bomb-maker for the Irish Republican Army in the Anglo-Irish War (1919-21) and as a propagandist during the civil war (1922-23). By the time he wrote the essays that appear in this collection, though, he had long become disillusioned with the cause of revolutionary fervour, a sentiment captured in a damning essay on his former mentor, titled simply “Daniel Corkery.” As Kent argues in his lucid introductory essay, O’Faolain writes against a backdrop

of his own disillusionment with the conservative, parochial, and isolationist direction in which post-independence Ireland was moving. When returning the outward gestures of his essays to the context of his own nation, he does so not as a fervent nationalist but as a writer who believed a cosmopolitan outlook could lift Ireland to its full potential. O'Faolain wanted to raise an Irish literary scene to the world stage from within Ireland.

A commitment to debate ensures that his disillusionment never topples into pessimism. O'Faolain's critical voice always assumes that Ireland could do better, and that it deserves better: "a very little more and a very little less...and [Ireland] would be—shall we say She will be—the land we all dreamed of thirty golden years ago" ("The Pleasures and Pains of Ireland" 299). The context in which O'Faolain wrote these words, towards the end of the Second World War where Ireland remained officially neutral, explains some of the optimism that underlies many of these essays. His is not a blind optimism but an understanding of the complexities that arise when a nation-state fights for independence from British colonialism through bloodshed. Real lives, lives that O'Faolain knew, were affected by the history of this struggle. At the very least, these essays are valuable for examining the cross-sections of intellectual, political, and personal rigour from a context of uncertainty.

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Kent's introductory essay makes easy work of untangling these complex historical and political contexts. His meticulous editing, especially in annotating cultural, literary, political, and historical allusions, makes this selection of O'Faolain's essays a welcome and important contribution to Irish literary and cultural studies. Kent offers potential thematic groupings for these essays at the beginning of the collection, but the chronological presentation of the essays has the added benefit of showing the development of O'Faolain as a writer and a thinker. While his essays from the late 1920s can at times read as ungenerous to writers whom O'Faolain dislikes, especially Carlyle, by the mid-1930s he is less dismissive, with positive results for his appreciation. Generally, O'Faolain's literary and cultural criticism sharpens in focus when he forgoes any indictment of his subjects. As far as intellectual rigour goes, O'Faolain practices what he preaches.

Sean O'Faolain believed in the grounds of interpretation. He fundamentally believed, as is quite evident in this collection of essays, in the intellectual power of people who have access to ideas. This impetus lends a certain weight to O'Faolain's writing. The essays selected in this collection indicate a writer determined to make the grounds of interpretation a stronghold for a more forward-thinking Ireland while the nation was, at least to writers like O'Faolain, in danger of closing itself off from the world and from progress. As such, this book offers plenty to those interested in Irish studies, and the intersection of history, politics, culture, and literary criticism. O'Faolain's writing feels as intimately illuminating and worthwhile amidst the whirlwind of global politics as it did in the writer's context of Ireland in the mid-twentieth century.

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Flint, Peter B. "Sean O'Faolain, An Irish Master of the Short Story, Is Dead at 91."
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SO, RICHARD JEAN. *Transpacific Community: America, China, and the Rise and Fall of a Cultural Network*. New York: Columbia UP, 2016. Pp. 260.
\$60.00 US hardcover.

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678 *Transpacific Community: America, China, and the Rise and Fall of a Cultural Network* tells the compelling story of a pre-Cold War cultural scene in which a group of American and Chinese writers and artists, fueled by mutual fascination with each other's political and aesthetic insights, collaborated on and circulated projects on both sides of the Pacific. The book is meticulously researched and written with keenly observed details about this short-lived cultural network. Forged through bonds of friendship, admiration, and political affinity, this "transpacific community" did not survive the Cold War when the rigid ideological division between the two nations effectively severed avenues for further relations during the ensuing three decades. Author Richard Jean So is concerned not only with recovering this relatively overlooked piece of cultural history, but also with its relevance as "a lesson for the present" (217). The book demonstrates an analytical approach that views creative collaboration as a "coeval" process that mediates conflictual political investments and cultural differences. It also contends that literary histories of the twentieth century must be understood as "histories of media" (xxv). Paying particular attention to the effects of emerging communication technology, the book shows how the period's "new media," which include the telegram, gramophone, and radio, inspired aesthetic possibilities, facilitated political and philosophical dialogues, and expanded avenues for the transnational circulation of creative works.

The book consists of five interconnected case studies, each focused on a protagonist who was active in the cultural network. Chapter One reassesses writer Agnes Smedley's significance in the history of the American Cultural Front through a study of her role in the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)'s campaign to free Chinese writer Ding Ling from imprisonment during the 1930s. The chapter documents Smedley's budding internationalist leaning, already nascent in her early work *Daughter of Earth*, which took her to Moscow, Berlin, and eventually Shanghai, where she became deeply involved with prominent Chinese leftist writers including Lu Xun, Hu Feng, and Ding Ling. Ding Ling's arrest in 1932, during a period of brutal "White Terror" when the Nationalist government (KMT) routinely censored,

kidnapped, and executed leftist writers, motivated Smedley to push for the ACLU's involvement. The chapter shows how the telegram, an emerging form of media at the time, facilitated not only an effective transnational campaign to free Ding Ling, but also a lively debate between members of the ACLU and leftist Chinese writers over notions of "rights" and "democracy." Furthermore, the chapter shows how an aesthetic style most suited for transmission through the telegram, which So dubs "long-distance realism," facilitated the successful transnational circulation of Ding Ling's fiction. Chapter Two examines the work of Pearl Buck, whose novel *The Good Earth* was a literary bestseller both in the US and in China during the 1930s and early 1940s. The chapter explores the influence of Buck's childhood in China, her familiarity with Chinese literary classics, and her bilingual ability on the style of her fiction. So characterizes her style as a hybrid blend of realism influenced by both the modern American novel and vernacular Chinese fiction. This hybrid style creates a "shared discursive space" between readers who are familiar with either tradition, allowing issues that are specific to one cultural space to become issues of another during the process of reading. The popularity of Buck's novel amongst literary publics in both the US and China was further aided by a Pacific book trade that made full use of new communication technology to market the book rapidly and simultaneously across distance. Chapter Three recounts African-American musician Paul Robeson's collaboration with Chinese folk musician Liu Liangmo during the 1940s, when they produced a recording of Chinese folk songs performed by Robeson. This chapter makes a thoughtful contribution to recent scholarship on Afro-Asian cultural history and studies of the Black Pacific. Eschewing the more polemical approach commonly favoured in scholarship on the subject, which tends to assume solidarity and ideological affinity between politically radical artists, So describes Robeson's and Liu's collaboration as "a long process of discovery" in which both insights and contradictions were worked through in a sustained and disciplined manner. The chapter analyzes in fascinating detail how Robeson developed his notion of the "human stem" through his interest in the sound of the Chinese language. Robeson's and Liu's painstaking process of translating and transliterating the songs reflects the musicians' vision of a "universal" democratic impulse that manifests itself in non-Western culture's preservation of the pentatonic scale. The chapter also shows how the broadcast medium of the gramophone allowed Robeson's voice to be intimately transmitted across transpacific contexts, producing receptive listening publics for a "Black voice in Chinese" (112-13). Chapter Four explores Chinese intellectual and writer Lin Yutang's admiration for American liberalism, his literary celebrity in the US during the 1940s, and his subsequent experiment with developing a Chinese typewriter. So analyzes Lin's (ultimately failed) project as an attempt to "reimagine the English language through the Chinese character" (155) and a means to demonstrate that core liberal values are inherent in the Chinese language. While Lin's literary reputation has largely faded in Chinese and American literary scholarship, and his typewriter project is remembered, if at all, as an obscure failed idea, So sees something much

more interesting in Lin's work. He identifies Lin's fascination with typography as a prescient echo of contemporary experimental artists such as Xu Bing and Young-Hae Heavy Industries, whose works destabilize cultural categories and linguistic boundaries through media and technology. The last chapter examines writer Lao She's mediating role between leftist and liberal writers in the Chinese Literary Writer's Association during the 1940s and his subsequent visit to the Yaddo artist collective in New York, where he collaborated, amidst considerable tension, with American writer Ida Pruitt on a translation of his fiction. Expounding on Lao She's fascination with the expanding capacity of *xuanchuan* ("communication" or "propaganda") enabled by new broadcast media at the time, the chapter argues that the success of Lao She's fiction in the US and China was due in part to the use of a narrative technique, which So calls "free indirect propaganda," which simultaneously generates both the radical voice of a grassroots protagonist and the liberal voice of a "wise," omniscient narrator. The literary device allows Lao She to harness both the expressive power of literature and its communicative or propagandist function. It allows the same piece of fiction to be both a subjective representation of the oppressed, as it was received in China, and a rational expression of liberalism that the US State Department at the time found appealing. This "double voice," which So argues runs throughout Lao She's work, represents an aesthetic that both resists structures of oppression while at the same time "works generatively with the state and not merely within a coerced or complicit form" (209).

In a spirit not unlike that of its protagonists, *Transpacific Community* practices a form of analysis that does not regard cultural phenomena as acts of either resistance or accommodation. Instead, the book demonstrates that the complex *process* of creative collaboration and cultural exchange always involves contradictions and ambiguity, and may be resistant in one context of power while accommodating in others. Rather than adjudicating the subversive potential of a work, the book values practices that allow writers and artists to mediate their different ideological propensities, whether liberal or radical, through friendship, curiosity, and mutual interest in each other. As the book recovers a historical moment when the Pacific was an exemplary site of such mediation, at a time when the changing infrastructure of communication technology opened up new pathways of connection, its approach to cultural practices is also vital and relevant to understanding the contemporary moment.

Two thematic strands in the book offer some opportunities for further engagement. First, the fascinating chapter on Robeson is the only chapter that studies a non-literary artist, while all other chapters focus on writers. The book would be more balanced if it also referenced other non-literary artists in the network or at least included a discussion of the relation between its predominantly literary protagonists and other non-literary artists. Second, the book's exclusive focus on the US-China nexus runs the danger of reifying the US and China as the unquestioned centres of the Pacific, especially in a contemporary context in which these two nations are dominant cultural and economic superpowers. The transpacific sphere is, of course,

much larger than the circle around China and the US. It is full of other protagonists whose tracks and traces run through and across these centres of power. As the book so eloquently demonstrates the value of transnational perspectives, and as it so sympathetically attends to writers and artists whose legacies had been obscured or forgotten, it should also compel us to look beyond the US and China, towards the obscured margins and forgotten corners of the transpacific worlds.

Overall, *Transpacific Community* is an impressive work of cultural history and a valuable roadmap for understanding creative practices in our mediatized and globally connected world.

NGUYEN, VIET THANH. *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2016. Pp. 374. \$27.95 US hardcover.

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How do we as individuals, societies, and nations remember war? That is the central question animating Viet Thanh Nguyen's groundbreaking book *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War*. By critically deconstructing the myriad memories of the American period of the war in Vietnam, from roughly 1965 to 1975, constructed by the people, communities, and states that were drawn into its destructive maelstrom, he not only demonstrates the complexity of the project of remembering on both a personal and collective scale, but makes a compelling argument for the establishment of a "just memory" of the war in Vietnam that will help bring an end to what he sees as America's near-century of perpetual conflict. According to Nguyen, a just memory is an ethical practice that involves both the "dialectic" of "remembering one's own"—generally the heroes—and "remembering others"—the enemy or victims—in war, as well as recognition of one's own inhumanity (19). Since it is our ability to construct a memory of war, particularly around its dead, that demonstrates that "nothing ever dies," a quotation from Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (269), such an inclusive and self-critical approach to remembering America's wars is essential for the American people to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past and continue to fight costly and destructive wars of their government's own making.

Viet Thanh Nguyen, an associate professor of English and American studies and ethnicity at the University of Southern California, is no stranger to the war's memory. It is part of his identity, as a refugee who left Vietnam as a small child with his family in the chaotic spring of 1975, and it serves as the narrative vehicle for his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Sympathizer*, a fictional account of a Viet Cong spy living among the exiled South Vietnamese community in Southern California told as a confession to a mysterious Vietnamese commandant. Both his personal attachment and professional interest guide this study.

Nguyen turns to the “artistic work on war and memory” as his subject matter in appraising how the war in Vietnam has been remembered, mining “the writing, photography, film, memorials and monuments” of the Americans, former North Vietnamese, South Vietnamese exiles, Laotians, Cambodians, and South Koreans (12-13). Naturally, this involves critical appraisal of such well-known memorials as the Truong Song Martyrs Cemetery in Quang Tri province, Vietnam, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. But its greatest strength is its consideration of the edifices of memory that have been overlooked by a Western—read American—audience. To identify but a few examples, Nguyen discusses the forgotten national cemetery for the Southern Army of the Republic of Vietnam, on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City; the exhibit commemorating South Korea’s contribution to the War in Vietnam in the Korean War Memoria in Seoul; and the work of the Cambodian filmmaker Rithy Panh, which tries to come to terms both with the genocide perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge and with the monstrous inhumanity of the perpetrators themselves.

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The central theme that ties the various strands of Nguyen’s argument together is what he refers to as the “industrialization of memory.” This is a powerful phenomenon that reinforces the “ideas, ideologies, fantasies and words that justify the war” for all sides (106). In what is the book’s most novel feature, Nguyen compares both the industries of memory and their products of the war’s participant nations. He demonstrates a caustic asymmetry that exists in the way the war’s losers have been able to monopolize the memory of the war over its victors, which serves to grossly distort how the war has been remembered globally. For the United States, the industry of memory is a product of the connection between capitalism, memory, and the military, an unspoken partnership between Hollywood and the military industrial complex that “exploits memory as a strategic resource” (13) to recreate the memory of America’s war in Vietnam in such a way to “refine” the war’s identity as a cause more noble than it was (13-15). Not only does this “reproduce power and inequality” (14) between the United States and the other belligerent states in the struggle for the memory of the war, but it also acts to deliberately “fulfill the needs of the war machine” (14). One of the many examples Nguyen uses to make this point is Clint Eastwood’s *Gran Torino*. According to Nguyen, this film recreates the “legend of the white male saviour” (124) by telling the story of a racist Korean War veteran living in Detroit who redeems himself by saving a neighbouring Hmong family from a Hmong gang. Just as the United States is purported to have done in Southeast Asia, the film’s antihero “sacrificed” himself “to the bad Asians so that good Asians can live and prosper” (124). Nguyen argues that *Gran Torino* is a “dangerous film” (124), as it exemplifies the ability of the American industry of memory to keep the American people from coming to terms with the brutal reality of their government’s efforts “to exert its dominion over the Pacific” (7), enabling Washington to perpetrate its forays into the Middle East along with its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In the case of Vietnam, the industry of memory is dominated by the state. It exists

to rationalize the revolutionary memory of the conflict, as in the case of Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum. Here, as Nguyen points out, the government in Hanoi put the body of its "revolutionary icon" on display as a reminder of "everything he lived and died for" to try to "pacify a people who may not be satisfied with the regime" (157-59). But because it cannot compete with the power and global reach of the American industry of memory, Nguyen argues that the official Vietnamese memory of the war has "at best, local and national distribution and impact" (15). This means the victorious Vietnamese can only counter the juggernaut of the American industry of memory on their own soil, "where they control the memorial apparatus of museums, monuments, schools, cinema and media" (15). Here, as in Laos, which also suffered at the hands of the Americans during the period of the war in Vietnam, the state has coupled its industry of memory with its tourist industry to wage their own "asymmetrical war" of recollection and expose the American visitor to the "vertiginous experience" of seeing "themselves through the eyes of the other" (171). This can be seen on Con Son Island, the former French penal colony, which was used by the Republic of Vietnam to house enemy prisoners. In contrast to the polished glitz and glamour of a flashy Hollywood spectacle, the "crude, even cartoonish" (173) mannequins and dioramas on display in the former prisons depict the brutality of the Saigon regime and its American backers toward its opponents. Though the island is a product of flagrant state-sponsored propaganda, the book suggests that to American visitors, it serves as an uncomfortable reminder of their own country's inhumanity in the war.

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One minor quibble with this excellent book is that Nguyen does not provide clear or concise definitions of some of its key terms. For example, the idea of an "ethics of memory," a vital concept for his argument, is left to the reader to divine. Though its meaning as a memory that uses the sacrifices made by the war's losers, victims, dead, and forgotten as a counterweight to the memory of the war's victors and heroes gradually emerges throughout the text, a brief definition at the outset for those readers who may be unfamiliar with the topics of social or popular memory would be helpful. That said, this is a beautifully written book and a must-read for any students—graduate and undergraduate—or scholars of Vietnamese Studies, the Vietnam War, Asian-American Studies, or War and Society.

BOLAKI, STELLA. *Illness as Many Narratives: Arts, Medicine and Culture*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP. 2016. Pp. vii+255. £24.99 paperback; £70.00 hardcover.

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684 Stella Bolacki's *Illness as Many Narratives: Arts, Medicine and Culture* is a "critical interloping" (13) into the field of medical humanities, which developed in the last few decades of the twentieth century as medical professionals began to incorporate perspectives from the humanities and social sciences into the practice of medicine in an effort to humanize what was perceived as its increasingly scientific and technological focus. Whether from the perspective of sociology, philosophy, literature, or medicine, the medical humanities have often centered on the literary illness narrative and the doctor-patient relationship. One of Bolacki's goals is to enlarge the field of narrative by including photography, artists' books, performance art, theatre, film, animation, and online narratives. Another is to redress what she sees as "limited," "instrumental," and "reductive" (3) methods of analysis in the medical humanities by creating "more sophisticated and interdisciplinary readings of health, illness and medicine" (3), bolstered by contemporary methods in literary and cultural studies. She argues for "the need of more cross-fertilisation and mutually illuminating conversations between contemporary arts and media practices/scholarship and the fields of illness narratives and the medical humanities, as well as between medicine and broader culture" (14).

To that end, Bolacki analyzes a series of artistic expressions in a variety of media. In Chapter One, "Re-Covering Scarred Bodies: Reading Photography," she focuses on the works of Jo Spence and Sam Taylor-Wood, both of whom created representations of their experience of breast cancer. The works of both artists, Bolacki maintains, "resist existing and often reductive narratives about women's health [...] and create opportunities for the proliferation of feminist subjectivities" (48).

Chapter Two, "Artists' Books in the Medical Community," focuses on the work of Martha Hall, who created books that are "part narrative, part object, [and] part performance" (53). Bolacki argues that the books created during a decade-long experience of breast cancer that eventually metastasized serve both to empower and communicate, by "transforming the empty space or distance between [doctor and patient] into a space of proximity, and the silence (or the words on the page) into a form of contact through touch" (84).

Chapter Three, "Performance Medicine and Radical Pedagogy," focuses on the work of performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña. Performance encounters, Bolacki suggests, "address [...] questions of social justice, democracy, human rights and community care which are often missing from medical ethics/humanities discussions" (89).

Chapter Four, "Collaborative Film as Terminal Care," carries on the theme of

performance and shifts the book's focus from individual to collaborative projects. Bolacki examines Wim Wenders's *Nick's Film/Lightning over Water* (1979-80), a documentary that deals with the cancer and death of his friend, the film's director Nicholas Ray. According to Bolacki, the film is at once an aesthetic object and the record of a painful shared experience.

Chapter Five, "Messy Confrontations: Theatre and Expert Knowledge," focuses on Lisa Kron's play *Well* (2004), which traces the playwright's and her mother's experiences with allergies. The play shares with Wenders's film an inherent contradiction between the authentic and shared account of personal suffering and the shaping of that account into art.

Chapter Six, "Animated Documentary and Mental Health," focuses on a series of short documentaries called *Animated Minds* (2003), which were collaboratively created for the purpose of increasing awareness of various forms of mental illness. The films combine actual personal accounts with animation, and the project as a whole "negotiates a [...] tension between concealment and visibility" (22).

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The Afterword considers the recent proliferation of illness narratives in social media, which lack the deliberate structuring of the verbal and visual narratives considered in the rest of the volume. Bolacki traces the strengths and weaknesses of the various types, from personal health blogs to *Facebook* and *Twitter* updates.

Bolacki's book presents a powerful argument for considering illness narratives across a wide range of media and for opening them to the kind of critical examination dominant in literary and cultural studies. Reminding the reader of her "interloper" status, however, she concedes at the end of the book that that her academic background as a scholar of literature does not make her an expert in the "relationship between medicine/health and different art forms and media" (221). This observation equally applies to all those engaged in the interdisciplinary field of the medical humanities, populated as it is by scholars of the humanities and social sciences on the one hand and medical practitioners on the other, and highlights both the importance and the hazard of undertaking interdisciplinary study, particularly when the disciplines involved have such strikingly different goals. What appears a reductive and instrumental reading to a humanities scholar may be very useful to a medical practitioner, who may regard the kind of intense critical scrutiny applied by a humanities scholar as unnecessarily complex. Still, Bolacki's book, in its introduction of less well-known verbal and visual illness narratives and its careful consideration of their personal, political, and aesthetic qualities, is a valuable contribution to medical humanities scholarship.

MARTIN, MIRCEA, CHRISTIAN MORARU, AND ANDREI TERIAN, EDs.
Romanian Literature as World Literature. London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2018. Pp. 376. \$84.00 US hardcover; \$59.40 US ebook.

Letitia Guran, North Carolina A&T State University

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As its editors and contributors explicitly claim, *Romanian Literature as World Literature* (RLWL) is a manifesto that functions at multiple levels. At the most fundamental level, the book addresses issues of critical misreading and (self-)misrepresentation that have been perpetuated internally by the nationalist paradigm dominating Romanian literary history for the past two centuries. On the world market, misreadings of Romanian literature were caused by the ideological impositions of the Iron Curtain era, the lack of good translations, and the biased mechanisms of promotion coupled with cultural colonialism. Under these circumstances, the editors and contributors make the case for an urgent repositioning of Romanian literature on the world scene by claiming that “when reframed intersectionally, as nodal sub-systems of a vaster, ever fluid continuum, the so-called ‘marginal,’ ‘minor,’ and ‘small’ literatures acquire an unforeseen and unorthodox centrality” (“Introduction” 5). The first step that Romanian criticism should take, therefore, in keeping with theories in world criticism welcoming connections beyond spatial borderlines, is to destabilize the “one language-one nation-one literature organic correspondence” (“Introduction” 9). Since it was the prevalent nationalist paradigm of literary history and criticism throughout modernity that made categories such as *locality* and *specificity* of the “national spirit” central, it is time to bring neglected worldwide networks of cultural interaction front and centre.

What the book proposes instead, in concert with the latest developments and debates in network and system theories, postcolonial studies, and comparative literature are new ways of discussing the world literary canon, of rearranging the world cultural map, and of promoting the kind of literary criticism that is “world-oriented,” “nodal,” and based on a “liquid epistemology”—a criticism that takes us beyond “nationally territorialized realit[ies]” (“Introduction” 16). The critical models at work in the book can be surmised from the references proposed in most of the chapters: Wai Chee Dimock, David Damrosch, Pascale Casanova, Emily Apter, Arjun Appadurai, Homi Bhabha, Anthony Appiah, John Neubauer, Marcel Cornis-Pope, Gayatri Spivak, Mario Valdez, Linda Hutcheon, Katherine Verdery, Larry Wolff, and Romanian names equally engaged in the redefinition of world literatures.

Placing deterritorialization of literary history at the forefront, the contributors propose to “weaken the ‘umbilical cord’ between determinate locations and cultural formations such as discourse, identity, and community” (“Introduction” 7) which have been traditionally considered as organically linked to certain national territories. In decoupling the spaces of “nation” and “literature” the book challenges the nation-building project of modernity (Goldis) rooted in the premise of the “indis-

soluble connection among language, literature, and nation” (Moraru 9). More importantly, it takes on the urgent task of questioning the “homogeneous,” “ethnocentric,” “racialist,” and even “racist” viewpoint (11) of G. Calinescu’s magnum opus, *Istoria literaturii romane de la origini pana-n prezent* (1941), which has dominated the landscape of Romanian literary historiography since its publication, and authoritatively imposed the critical style that the contributors to and editors of this book challenge and seek to replace. As Andrei Terian maintains, this approach breaks the “epistemological mold of methodological nationalism” and proposes instead “supra-, extra-, and transnational sites of expression, commerce and interchange” (13). The result is, in the wake of Dimock and Spivak, a reading that “unpack[s] a text’s wordliness [...] as a bundle of relations with other texts, people, and places” (18) beyond those circumscribed by the nation-state. Alex Goldis argues that such an interactional approach, which reconsiders the relationships between translations and transcultural intertextuality on the one hand and creativity/originality on the other, is able to reposition Romanian literature in the world arena as a system of flows and interactions.

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Carmen Musat points out that at the beginning of the twentieth century, Eugen Lovinescu, the Romanian proponent of cultural synchronization, followed similar principles when maintaining that cultural imitation has been and should be a necessary step in creating original artworks. Though many misunderstood Lovinescu’s enthusiasm for imitation, Musat reminds us that imitation and creativity have never been one-directional flows between core and periphery. Looking afresh at canonical writers such as Ion Luca Caragiale, Tristan Tzara, Eugen Ionesco, and Emil Cioran, as many contributors of the book do, considering transatlantic connections established by American critics of Romanian origin such as Matei Calinescu, Mihai Spariosu, Marcel Cornis-Pope, and Thomas Pavel, or by the 1980s generation of writers’ symbolic dialogue with the American Beat poets draws attention to effective ways in which individual Romanian writers originally harnessed the energy of cultural mimesis.

In the same vein, contributors Caius Dobescu, Mircea Diaconu, Imre Jozsef Balazs, Paul Cernat, Doris Mironescu, and Bogdan Cretu reinforce the book’s thesis by unveiling “how the worldness of Romanian literature has emerged at particular junctures in its history” (128) when it contributed creatively and uniquely to international movements such as the avant-garde, modernism, and post-modernism, and in so doing “plug[ged] itself into the world networks” (“Introduction” 21). In the wake of Franco Moretti’s and Gayatri Spivak’s programmatic texts postulating the entering of world literature into a “planetary era,” the contributors join Christian Moraru in hailing the remapping of world literatures made possible by the *planetary turn* in criticism and cosmopolitanism, which Moraru previously defined as a “rationale and vehicle for a new togetherness, for a solidarity across political, ethnic, racial, religious, and other boundaries” (*Cosmopolitanism* 5).

RLWL enthusiastically joins this project by unveiling ways in which canoni-

cal Romanian writers such as Mihai Eminescu (Terian 35) and I.L. Caragiale can be “plugged” into the world networks. Several contributors also point out that the Romanian avant-garde, and internationally renowned authors such as Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran, and Eugene Ionesco, are already part of the world-network since they functioned *de facto* within the international context. With locally known authors such as Dimitrie Cantemir, Nicolae Milescu (Cretu 55), Ion Budai Deleanu (Dobrescu 77), and even more so with regionally and ideologically-specific cultural phenomena such as Socialist Realism (Martin 235), the world reader needs to be provided context according to a theoretical model emphasizing worldly exchanges among cultures instead of local isomorphisms. It is precisely in this respect that *RLWL* decidedly contributes to connecting the wider world with Romanian literature and vice versa by undertaking the effort not only to *translate* Romanian literature *to* the world, but to *translate* it *for* the world in a manner that is already *of* the world. Since the articles collected in this book are all written by Romanian scholars, many of them

688 in Romanian, these texts themselves went through the process of “worlding” at the hands of the book’s translators (Laura Walker) and editors. This invisible effort behind *RLWL* is yet another step toward a transnational world literary history that reconfirms the project’s status as a manifesto.

In this spirit, Bogdan Stefanescu and Caius Dobrescu challenge and complicate the traditionally linear model of comparatism, which worked with static and dichotomous concepts such as “centre-periphery” and “East-West,” and thus gave rise to “complexes” and a rhetoric of vacuity regarding Romanian modernity. In his study upending the model of cultural commerce with various empires in which Romanian literature has traditionally been engaged, Dobrescu points out the often ignored existence of *paraimperial*, *transmetropolitan* (82-87) modes of cultural “soft commerce” in which modern Romanian literature *played* various empires’ cultural pulls one against another, thus escaping the full blast of the mimetic paradigm and the condition of cultural periphery. In comparing the reaction to the cultural trauma provoked by “malignant modernity” in the Second World (ex-communist) and Third World (formerly colonized) cultures, Bogdan Stefanescu proposes an alternative model of identity formation: instead of “the void” as a trope for the belated, mimetic modernization and modernity of non-Western cultures, he opts for a *transhistorical*, *nodal* approach that focuses on discursive similarities of world cultures which, though worlds apart, share generic, structural, and relational similarities (265). It is during such a process that traumatized subjectivities that had no points of contiguity in time and/or space, such as post-Holocaust and postcolonial traumas (Eaglestone) may come together “by virtue of their shared and generic features” (Stefanescu 265) and thereby advance their own perspective about the traumas they experienced.

In “Socialist Realism, a Geoliterary *Ecumene* of the East,” Mircea Martin puts the book’s geomapping model to work in a minute, cross-cultural analysis that fleshes out specificities that singled out Socialist Realism as a vector of Sovietization in Eastern Europe. By comparatively examining how the former affected Czech, Polish,

and Romanian literature, Martin makes the case that the rift with modernity that Socialist Realist poetics/ideology caused throughout Eastern Europe is responsible for the difference in priorities that define the communist and the Western worldviews beginning in the 1960s, even as the Socialist Realist experiment was abandoned. Martin notes, “Understandably, retrieving national tradition and resuming modernist experimentation struck Romanian writers and critics as more urgent than critiquing modernism and moving into the postmodern” (253). By the same token, insists Martin, these circumstances explain why Romanian intellectuals “felt solidarity with a nation-state whose sovereignty continued to be threatened by the USSR” (253) and they also illuminate why Eastern Europe was again out of sync with its Western counterparts in the 1960s and 1970s and seemed to exhibit symptoms of yet another phase of its proverbial “belatedness.” Conversely, Martin’s analysis provides a corrective to such an implicitly colonial reading of Eastern European cultures, and suggests instead the need for dialogue between Eastern European and Western critical models in the spirit of truly inhabiting the same Republic of Letters.

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Overall, the reading model advanced by *RLWL* also does justice to writers living in multicultural and multilingual spaces such as those of Bukovina and Transylvania. Such authors, as discussed by Mircea Diaconu and Imre Jozsef Balazs, join those “deracinated” names to which Ovidiu Morar refers when discussing the role of Romanian Jews in the international avant-garde, or famous Romanian exiles either from the inter-war period or post-1960s, such as Herta Muller, Andrei Codrescu, and Norman Manea, whom Mihai Iovanel, Paul Cernat, and Doris Mironescu consider. Teodora Dumitru makes the case that Romanian postmodernism is yet another node attesting the fluid, intertextual interaction of ideas that has often defied ideological impositions and spatial borders. However, in order for such nodes to persist, Romanian literature needs to exist within a constant flux of translations *from* other world texts and *for* the world market. This is what Mihaela Ursa also maintains when rhetorically asking “Do You Speak Translatese?” while pointing out that this ideal Republic of Letters might be in jeopardy now that the Romanian state is not subsidizing translations and the international market is allowed to dictate how much and what is being translated.

Ursa’s article, placed last in the book, strengthens its argument about the multiple dimensions of cultural translation and the need to constantly feed its flows and expand the networks between various literary hubs of the planet. For the contributors and editors, *RLWL* signals that Romanian literature is also part of the world club. As the Bloomsbury series of “Literatures as World Literatures” already demonstrates by publishing collections about Dutch and Flemish, Brazilian, African, Danish, and American literatures, the time has come for “a novel approach to world literature by analyzing specific constellations-according to language, nation, form, or theme-of literary texts and authors in their own world-literary dimensions.” Considering the breath and the depth of the studies in *RLWL*, the editors and contributors proved not only to be up to this task, but in many respects to have enriched the initial project.

EMMERICH, KAREN. *Literary Translation and the Making of Originals*. London: Bloomsbury, 2017. Pp. viii+224 illus. \$108.00 hardcover; \$26.96 paperback; \$21.56 ebook.

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690 This book starts from one main premise: a literary translation makes an original. This is bolstered with a series of related ideas that are fleshed out in five interesting and detailed case studies, further cementing the argument that literary translation does not first and foremost transfer meaning or produce equivalence, but stabilizes an unstable original. Karen Emmerich's argument runs counter to the conventional notions about source texts and target texts that have largely framed Anglo-American/European work in academic translation studies over the past half-century, and that underlie most non-academic ideas about translation as well, at least in the Anglo-American Eurozone. She states point blank that the binary view of source and target texts and the expectation of "equivalence" and "faithfulness" this brings with it, always condemn translation to failure and to accusations of "loss," if not treachery.

On page 3 of the introduction, we read:

Reference to this vague notion of faithfulness or accuracy crop up time and again in reviews and popular discussions of translated literature, and even in many translators' descriptions of the work they do. Yet this stance betrays a misconception as deep as it is widespread. Translation has no truck with modest changes. The entire translation is a text that didn't exist before: all the words are added; all the words are different. A translation adds a new iteration, in a different language, to the sum total of texts for a work.

This statement sets the tone for the book, and rests on the argument that there is no such thing as one stable source text to which a translation must or can ever remain faithful and loyal, or which it can render with accurate equivalence. There are "texts" that make up a "work" (16), and these may or may not underlie the translation. A translation, in fact, fixes one version of a work, one version of a piece of writing that is rarely a stable unit and can often consist of various texts, edited differently at different times and for different purposes, excerpted, adapted, reframed, anthologized, used in multimodal applications. Indeed, Emmerich argues, a work only becomes an "original" when another derivative text comes along to make it so (13-14). And translation, as "iterative proliferation" (5), plays exactly that role of establishing an "original."

The instability and indeterminacy of textual meaning has largely been asserted, proven, and demonstrated, if not accepted in all parts, in what Emmerich refers to as our "post-poststructuralist intellectual environment" (2). A translation is therefore always an iteration of something indeterminate. Second, and more importantly for this book, there are many very practical reasons that make for the inherent uncertainty of the text being translated: unfinished works, variant versions, different editions by different editors, authors' attitudes, rewritings and reworkings over

the ages. These are developed in the introduction (1-36) and elaborated in the case studies. Third, Emmerich insists on the “textual scholarship” that underlies the iterative growth translation brings to any work it creates in a new language, recognizing the “collaborative or social aspect of textual production” (12). Textual scholarship addresses the texts that make up the translated work and elaborate its becoming.

Emmerich is most emphatic about the fact that translation is not transfer, but proliferation; like writing, it is a citational, recombinatory, derivative mode. She vehemently dismisses contemporary work that has produced theorizations about “untranslatability” by basing them on translation as “false coin,” an “epistemological scam,” and “faked-up alterity” (187). Such theorization “has set up a conceptual straw man, a false demand that translation provide a ‘genuine translinguistic encounter with a foreign literature’—a demand which translation can, of course, never meet” (187). Drawing from her own teaching practice in which various translations of an existing work such as the *Iliad* or the Bible are studied, Emmerich describes translations as rich, historically situated objects of interpretation that need not focus solely on semantic meaning (193). Demands for a specific, invariant content of a work that might suit a specific reader are not demands that translation can or should be expected to fulfill.

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Emmerich’s position is supported by references to much contemporary work in the field of translation studies: Andre Lefevere’s 1992 book *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* is important, and so is the work of other established scholars who have studied translations as serious and valuable literary productions, such as Gideon Toury, Theo Hermans, Lawrence Venuti, and Lydia Liu. But many of her insights come from actual translation experience: for example, the fact that her first contract to translate a book (*The Few Things I Know About Glafkos Thrassakis*, 2002) stipulated that she provide a “faithful rendition into idiomatic English” (3) but also edit the text down from about 700 to 500 pages. They also come from seminars she attended in the aid of teaching a “world literatures” course, in which Homer, Dante, and others were read in translation, but where this was treated as a problem—because the speaker/teacher/scholar running the course might not agree with the particular translation—and translations systematically end up being viewed as poor substitutes for “originals.” The question of who established the Homeric “original” centuries after the death of the poet, and how this was done, was rarely raised.

This pragmatic approach to countering the overarching conventional assumption of and demands for “equivalence” made in regard to translation continues in the five chapters of case studies. The first examines the “modern construction of the Ancient *Epic of Gilgamesh*” (37-64), a text which is the result of a “century and a half of decipherment, scholarly reconstruction and translation” (38). This chapter explores the history of how various, fragmentary pieces were interpreted and pieced together, and how the translated reproductions of these pieces, some from cuneiform inscriptions, eventually became “the work.” It raises questions about how the Orientalist views of nineteenth-century British archaeologists affected this work, how scholarly ambi-

tion and competition led to “a search for confirmation of presumed knowledge” (47) and assimilated the materials to existing knowledge, how a translation competition between scholars to test the interpretations of the ancient texts was based on “sameness as proof of correctness” (49) using the same “equivalence” standards still largely in effect today and conveniently disregarded the very different outcomes, and finally how the establishment of word-to-word glossaries, the largest developed since the mid-1950s, then condensed to pocket format, further cement the assumption that equivalences between our contemporary time and the stories of Gilgamesh that date from around 300 BCE are a given.

It is the *obsession with origins* [my emphasis], the desire to pinpoint some original text, that drives the ongoing discourse around source text and equivalent target text. But Emmerich asks whether the history of proliferations, paraphrases, and other rewritings of this particular work may not be far more in keeping with an ancient understanding of textual production and reproduction than “the attempt to arrive at a single cuneiform text to represent this long-lost work” (64).

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In Chapter Two, Emmerich engages with folklore studies, and more specifically the series of motivated rewritings of Greek folk songs in nineteenth-century Europe. Translation, done to “romance the nation,” construct, fix, and deploy vernacular language and text in print in an anachronistic philhellenist fervour, but also in support of Greek resistance to Ottoman control. The chapter traces early French, then English, and ultimately modern Greek translations of supposed folk poetry and song that “display the particular character of the nation” (93). Emmerich’s approach to the question demonstrates what she calls the “problematic assumptions [...] that print confers stability, but also the assumption that a collective, recognizable “folk” existed prior to its discursive construction” (94).

The next chapter, on reading Emily Dickinson as “a history of editorial forms” (95), continues in this vein, showing in fascinating detail how Dickinson’s acute resistance to closure “continually invites editors to find new ways out of the presentational binds it reveals” (95). Here, Emmerich’s focus is on how textual scholarship reveals the many different editorial actions put into effect to create coherent editions of the texts and text fragments the poet left behind. This further undermines any notion of stable source text. Editors’ hands are visible in countless reworkings, which have increasingly been assigned the label of translations: though one critic in the 1990s announces that “studying Dickinson in any standard typographic edition is effectively to read her in translation, at one remove from her actual practices” (101), using the trope of translation for monolingual practices “for its unfortunate (and frankly unreasonable) connotations of loss” (102) is Emmerich’s assessment. Indeed, she comments on the “lazy terminology” of such critics, who “define a process in terms of its failure to do what it clearly cannot do” (103). In order to understand what translation is, she writes, “we would do well to attend to the ways in which it happens instead of continually returning to discussions of things it manifestly isn’t” (119).

Chapter Four discusses the texts that, taken together, are the work of Greek-

Alexandrian poet Cavafy—revisions, with deletions and insertions, on recycled printings bearing crossings-out and alternate lines, serving to demonstrate again, and in different circumstances, the instability of an “original” body of work. Cavafy’s work was “stabilized” after his death by editors and translators, who selected one set of variants over another, making textual decisions where Cavafy did not. Emmerich analyzes these versions in interesting detail, wondering whether the “unfinishedness” of Cavafy’s texts, which editors have sought to finish and produce in print form, is indeed incompatible with good poetry, and how translations might approach the “issue of textual instability head-on, in inventive and exciting ways” (156). In conclusion, she argues that the “recuperative editing” that has been inflicted on both Dickinson’s and Cavafy’s works—in attempts to arrive at some point of origin, or at least editorial fixity—in fact just produces another mediated image of the work in question, and brings it no closer to “an original” than does a translation.

The final case study looks at American poet Jack Spicer and his practice of citational correspondence in translating Garcia Lorca and Charles Baudelaire via Stefan George, and where the translator’s task becomes strikingly “similar to the poet’s: to keep the chain of correspondence alive even in death” (167). His translations of Lorca, Emmerich says, invite the reader “to explore the consequences of the very impossibility of deciding” (167) on what is and what is not Garcia Lorca. But not only is Spicer important as a poet translator, his stance as a poet who says he took dictation “from outside” and hardly saw himself as the author, further supports Emmerich’s scepticism about “originals.” By figuring all writing as rewriting, all authorship as multiple and at least partly anonymous, Spicer moves claims about authorial originality to “wishful thinking at best, damaging ideology at worst” (184). This ideology comes out in the responses from reviewers, critics and literary scholars, for many of whom Spicer’s erosion of the boundary between translation and writing, and his refusal to assign authorship some privileged status, remains troublesome. This trouble, writes Emmerich, may well be a sign of an “ongoing unwillingness to let go of dearly-held yet problematic preconceptions” (189).

Emmerich’s parting comment focuses on moving “beyond our campuses” to see what can be learnt from activities of actual editing and translating practices, which may slowly begin to shift institutional cultures in a direction that recognizes, values, and engages with creative difference, iterative creativity, “messing around” (20), and moving texts forward in excitingly non-original ways. This book is a translational inspiration.