

## BOOK REVIEWS

- 568** ELAINE FANTHAM. *Roman Literary Culture: From Plautus to Macrobius*. Second Edition. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2013. Pp. 368. \$33.00.

### H. Christian Blood, Yonsei University

When I was a graduate student, a mentor cautioned me against reviewing books I could not write myself. Had I heeded this advice, I would not dare to evaluate the second edition of Elaine Fantham's *Roman Literary Culture: From Plautus to Macrobius* (RLC). Enormously ambitious and just as successful, RLC is a triumphant synthesis of decades of thinking, offering a rigorous account of how, and why, some Romans produced texts and others consumed them.

RLC's most provocative section is its introduction, in which Fantham sets out her methodology and motivations for writing a social history of Latin (not Roman) literature, one that *mutatis mutandis* mobilizes the tools of reception studies to interrogate how author, audience, and medium interact to create the primary Roman reception of a text. As Fantham herself readily admits, this project has its own strict limitations: RLC "does not try to be a literary history" (xvii) for two reasons. First, that task is too large, and second, the publication of an updated and expanded English translation of Gian Biagio Conte's *Latin Literature: A History* renders it dilatory. Indeed, Fantham reminds her readers that her book is intended as a "companion volume" to Conte's (xvii), and I agree; RLC works best when the reader has Conte at hand to fill in factual gaps that are outside RLC's scope. As well, in order to have the time and space to tease out various primary receptions, RLC "must renounce analysis and interpretation of individual works, leaving literary criticism for other, more specific discussions" (1). Rather, RLC positions itself as a way of helping scholars deepen their understanding

of the rapidly changing social contexts in which particular authors wrote, and in this way, *RLC* wonderfully supplements the history and literature a reader already knows, even if its short treatment of particular texts or authors often left me eager for more.

Before I review the contents of individual chapters, I want to offer an apology of sorts. *Roman Literary Culture* contains multitudes, discussing such a great number of authors, topics, themes, and historical elements that there is no way I can faithfully review it all, or even come close. Hence, in what follows I only scratch the surface.

In the first chapter, Fantham takes us from Livy's account of the origins of Roman drama, through the fluorescence of comedy, the instantiation of the tragic tradition and historical writing, and up to Cato, Lucilius, Catullus, and Lucretius. Her discussion of Naevius, Plautus, and Terence, authors who have suffered the disregard of a tradition that has not consistently honoured comedy, is most arresting. Arguing that "we can extrapolate from the excerpts of these lost playwrights as much as from the many surviving scripts attributed to Plautus" (18), Fantham advances a deft reconstructive analysis of the text, composition, and staging of Naevius's *The Girl of Tarentum*. 569

Chapters Two and Three address Rome's gradual absorption of Greek and Ptolemaic literary culture (libraries, book production and reproduction, popular reading habits) and the growing role of amateur readers and professional scholarship. The extended treatment of Roman education is of greatest interest. This section's discussion of what we know, and largely don't know, about the workings of the Roman classroom, lesson plans, and pedagogy fascinates. At what age did wealthy Roman boys start to learn Greek? How did Romans approach second language acquisition, or written versus oral proficiency? In what way did the presence of multilingual immigrants shape the experience of second-language learning? Although I did not find all of Fantham's answers completely convincing (the argument consistently appeals to the uneasy coexistence of French and English in Quebec, without considering other latter-day examples that could shed light on the issue, such as the emergence of "business English" in Korea, China, and Japan, or the ubiquity of native-level English among local-language speakers in Vietnam, Indonesia, or Thailand, but my own biases show), the picture she paints still riveted me. Chapter Three begins with the strangeness of 46 BCE, extraordinary not only for its length, but also because it was the moment when Roman political writers, acknowledging the defeat of republicanism, "turned from looking forward" and began to look "backward" to the commemorative genre of praise and blame (53). *RLC* declines to discuss Virgil in detail, and instead dedicates its attention to Cornelius Gallus; rather than seeking to recuperate our sense of his poetry's merits, Fantham accounts for his role as a colleague and friend of Virgil, thereby filling in our sense of the latter's work with others in a cooperative artistic context. The chapter extensively considers how the book changed models and expectations of patronage, further arguing that the publication of Virgil's *Eclogues* consolidated the book itself as a closed form and an integral whole, with implications for how poets wrote and readers received texts.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six complete our picture of the highs and lows of literary cultures in Rome. Fantham then considers youth culture, and its relationship with Catullus and the changing genre of elegy, from Greek marching songs to a vehicle for friendly advice-giving and finally to a genre best-known for expressions of love, “whether fleeting or passionate” (121). Ovid’s exile, a test case for the portability of literary culture, forces us to ask whether literary culture itself is predicated upon the resources, such as libraries, collaborators, and patrons, of a particular setting. The fifth chapter begins by noting that literary culture during the early Julio-Claudian dynasty was “inhibited” by imperial suppression (137), and argues that, although “in this climate one might have expected the complete cessation” of some genres, authors adapted new strategies of composition: Velleius Paterculus shifted his attention to less well-known Greek sources, while Valerius Maximus adapted a new style of self-consciously vacuous and sycophantic writing, which Fantham calls “imperial ‘newspeak’” (142). Chapter Six, covering the 40 years from the start of Nero’s reign to the end of Domitian’s, addresses the (relative) rebirth of literary culture under emperors who were themselves invested in literature exploits and successes. The evaluation of Nero himself as a poet is especially enjoyable, particularly how his self-proclaimed genius for the arts undoubtedly complicated the work of other, less powerful authors, namely Lucan and Petronius, and later, Statius under Domitian.

570

The seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters wind down the discussion while tracking the “decline” of Rome itself. In the seventh, Fantham considers several sorts of decline, from the incoherence of the ruling class to the growing power of the equestrian class, and the changing role and status of philosophers. Suetonius, Tacitus, and Pliny the Elder receive the greatest attention. The development of earlier discussions of Roman educational practice is particularly interesting, as teaching itself evolved into something that takes place in an auditorium and by means of a lecture. In the eighth chapter, Fantham discusses sophistry, provincial literature, Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, Aulus Gellius, and Apuleius. The ninth chapter capstones the previous eight by teasing out the nuances of the several large changes experienced by the empire, most especially the growing power of Africa, as typified by the rule of Septimius Severus, and relatedly, the rise of Christianity, and specifically, African Christianity. The discussion focuses on Tertullian, Diocletian, Symmachus, Prudentius, Claudian, Jerome, and Augustine, with the most attention dedicated to a vibrant discussion of Ausonius.

*RLC* is strongest when it addresses the sociology of Roman literary production, drawing from what we know about classrooms, pedagogy, book production, and the public and private ways literature was consumed. It has some weaknesses, and while I hesitate to criticize a book I could never write, a few minor matters distracted my attention. Fantham has a habit of sprinkling modern-day examples throughout her analysis, the sorts of comparisons that are productive fillips for undergraduates during a class conversation, yet are glib and problematic in a scholarly discussion. I will offer just one illustrative example: Perhaps the claims of ownership proffered

by the Nestor cup are somewhat similar to “claims of ownership and identity persist in the legends on mass-produced T-shirts, or coffee mugs like the one I proudly use, inscribed ‘University of Toronto Grandmother,’ combining my workplace and family status” (xiv). Yet, I wonder how productive these parallels are without a larger consideration of the effects of capitalism not only on the textual production and consumption *RLC* discusses, but also the ideology of individualism, identity, and consumption as an identity marker. Of more bearing on the success of the book’s argument, Fantham tends to avoid theory, even when some consideration of post-colonial studies, sexuality studies, or the pedagogy of second-language acquisition could have informed the analysis. For instance, to note that Petronius’s *Encolpius* is “bisexual” without even passing mention of the decades’ worth of scholarship since Foucault and Dover that problematize and/or recuperate the modern category of “bisexual” is strange for a study that, in other ways, rigorously historicizes (167). Nonetheless, these shortcomings are minor and do not detract from *RLC*’s numerous strengths, with or without Conte at hand. It would be appropriate reading for accomplished undergrads, and I could easily envision assigning excerpts in lower- and upper-division courses. Graduate students will enjoy *RLC* as a model of the survey, and more advanced scholars will delight in *RLC*’s reassessment of familiar authors and texts.

571

HALA HALIM. *Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism: An Archive*. New York: Fordham UP, 2013. Pp. xviii+459.

### **Dina Heshmat, American University in Cairo**

Challenging depictions of the Egyptian city of Alexandria as the cosmopolitan city *par excellence*, this book reframes the very narrative of “Alexandrian cosmopolitanism” as “a Eurocentric colonial discourse” (3). Hala Halim—assistant professor of Middle Eastern Studies and Comparative Literature at New York University, born in Alexandria, and a connoisseur of its archeological, historical, and literary scenes—reexamines historical ‘facts’ presumed by cosmopolitan discourse, including cosmopolitanism’s very origins in Hellenistic Greece. The core of the book is a masterful “critique of the critique,” in which Halim proposes an alternative reading of works canonized as world literature masterpieces supposedly representing the city’s spirit, and excavates others that have been overlooked. Scrupulously documented with ninety pages of notes and nearly forty pages of works cited, the book is a key reference for studies of Alexandria.

Halim dedicates the first part of the introduction to research by Alexandrian historians about the city’s flourishing between the seventh and nineteenth centuries during the Islamic period, a period denigrated in many sources as one of decline. Halim

offers instead “a historiographical brushing against the grain” (37). She reminds us of “the diversity of cultures and intellectual currents in Islamic Alexandria” (34), and underlines the colonial context in which the discourse on cosmopolitanism was born. In her critique of that discourse, Halim reviews scholarship on the subject that systematically traces the origin of the phenomenon to ancient Greece. She critiques the “Eurocentric genealogy of cosmopolitanism” (7) by exposing critical scholarship that “has brought out other [non-Western] genealogies and articulations” of the concept (11). Furthermore, she uses the concept of class to deepen her critique of a discourse that identifies the cosmopolitan individual as belonging, by definition, to deracinated elites (13).

572 Halim then turns to the central impetus of her project; namely, interrogating “the canonization of a given set of writers,” and excavating “overlooked” texts to highlight their “unexpected solidarities” (3). In her first chapter, she analyzes poems by the Greek poet Constantine Cavafy (1863-1933), side by side with some of his prose texts. She draws a picture of a poet much more aware of and sensitive to the works of his Egyptian colleagues than western readings would suggest. Although much of his writing was suffused with “Hellenic” chauvinism and far from unfamiliar with Orientalist imagery, Cavafy was also the author of lesser known, non-canonical poems that demonstrate an anti-colonial sensitivity. Furthermore, “his intercultural positionality opened his texts to competing discourses from multiple cultures—Western European, Greek, and Egyptian” (119).

In “Of Hellenized Cosmopolitanism and Colonial Subalternity,” the book’s second chapter, Halim analyzes two of E.M. Forster’s (1879-1970) canonized works about the coastal city, *Alexandria, a History and a Guide* (1922) and *Pharos and Pharillon* (1923). She shows how the *History* organizes Alexandria’s cityscape according to a “European imperative” (124), noting Forster’s “obliviousness to non-European(ized) areas of the city” (151). She systematically confronts both narratives with sociological, historical, and urban facts, and compares them with the author’s own “Notes on Egypt” (early 1920s), “an explicitly anticolonial text” (121). Halim shows that, despite proclaiming a deep love for the city’s spiritual legacy, Forster in fact displayed a deep “contempt for Egyptian Christianity” (140) and relied upon a “monolithic image” of Islam (141).

In the third chapter, “Uncanny Hybridity into Neocolonialism,” Halim identifies Hellenism and Orientalism as the two frames of reference for Lawrence Durrell’s (1912-90) seminal *Alexandria Quartet* (1960). Noting how Durrell’s depiction of the city in the *Quartet* relates to Freud’s concept of the “uncanny,” she explains that the “text produces [...] an image of Eastern superstition, irrationality, and excess” (198). Underlining instances that describe the city as alien to the country and continent in which it is set (for example, Alexandria is “built like a dyke to hold back the flood of African darkness” [203]), Halim uncovers what she calls the “racist paranoia” of the *Quartet* (204). Most significantly, she critiques those readings that insist on finding “traces of postcolonial discourse” (212) in the novel. She argues, instead, that the text

performs “a new gesture in which literature and neocolonial power [...] are in collusion” (213). To illustrate this point, she offers an original reading of one of the main plot elements in the *Quartet*, namely, the “highly contrived Coptic-Jewish anti-Arab nationalism pro-Zionist conspiracy” (213), involving two main characters, Nessim Hosnani and his wife Justine. She shows how Durrell, who was working in Egypt for the British Foreign Office at the time of his writing, “forges a fictional division within the region” (219), by drawing the picture of an alienated Copt Egyptian community connected to a colonial Zionist enterprise.

In Chapter Four, entitled “‘Polypolis’ and Levantine Camp,” Halim analyzes the mostly unpublished work of an atypical writer, Bernard de Zogheb (1924-99), who was born in Alexandria to a Syro-Lebanese elite family. An autodidact actor, painter, and columnist who lived for many years in France, Italy, England, Morocco, and Greece, de Zogheb was trilingual, but wrote his libretti in pidginized Italian. Despite the liberal tone, de Zogheb’s multicultural background, and the “queer aestheticization of Levantine lifestyles” in his libretti (239), Halim finds that his work “falls short of wholly embracing other ethnicities and less privileged classes” (227).

573

Halim closes with a dense epilogue in which she looks briefly at the legacy of the “triumvirate” (Cavafy-Forster-Durrell) in other narratives, in nostalgic memoirs of colonial cosmopolitanism written by Alexandria émigrés, but also, more importantly, in modern contemporary Egyptian texts by Naguib Mahfouz and Alexandria-born novelists Ibrahim Abd al-Meguid and Eduard al-Kharrat. She then focuses on a novel by Tareq Imam, *The Second Life of Constantine Cavafy* (2012), and two films that reenact poems by Cavafy, *Al-Madina* (1999) by Yusri Nasrallah and *Ithaki* (2005) by Ibrahim Battut. The book ends on a promising note, as Halim announces her project to write on Egyptian literary representations of Alexandria that display a “radically different cosmopolitan orientation” (311).

WILLIAM CALIN. *The Lily and the Thistle: The French Tradition and the Older Literature of Scotland*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2014. Pp. x + 415.

**Andrea Cabajsky, Université de Moncton**

The back jacket of *The Lily and the Thistle* features endorsements by Kate Ash of the University of Manchester and Rhiannon Purdie of the University of St. Andrews to the effect that the book provides “fruitful approaches” to its subject matter and is a “valuable reference work.” Both endorsements of *The Lily and the Thistle* accurately describe the book’s extremely detailed and revisionary engagement with the recorded literary texts of Scotland’s Middle Ages and their French textual influences. Calin’s objective in *The Lily and the Thistle* is, broadly, to reconsider the French sources for Scottish literature in the medieval period in light of the fact that, in the

last half-century, both French and Scottish literatures of the Middle Ages have benefitted from “new ways of looking at [them].” These new ways of seeing things are the result, notably, of reading practices that rose to prominence with the advent of literary postmodernism, reader-response theory, and gender and women’s studies. Consequently, the corpus of potential candidates for inclusion in the scope of Calin’s literary analysis has expanded or changed in light of the fact that new texts have been uncovered or well-known texts have been reconsidered by specialists in Scottish and medieval literatures.

574 In order to achieve his objective, Calin divides *The Lily and the Thistle* into four sections. The first concerns itself with medieval narrative texts in the high courtly mode. Taken together, the constituent chapters in this first section (which treats works by Robert Henryson, Gavin Douglas, William Dunbar, and John Rolland) are preoccupied with generic designation, classifying as tales of love those texts that have traditionally been seen as Chaucerian. In doing so, these chapters work to broaden the generic roots of Scottish texts beyond the works of Chaucer to the French *dits amoureux*, “one of the major genres, perhaps the major genre, in late medieval France” (4). The second section again treats works by Henryson and Dunbar, together with David Lyndsay and others whose works can be classified as ecclesiastical, didactic, and satirical, at once appealing to a courtly audience yet not defined by a “courtly ethos.” The third section focuses on medieval romances composed in Scotland, such as *Lancelot of the Laik*, *Golagros and Gawane*, *The Taill of Rauf Coilyear*, and *Eger and Grime*, which carry the traces of French romance and of the Old French epic. The fourth and final section shifts from the Middle Ages to the Scots Renaissance and contains chapters on Mary Queen of Scots, James VI/I, William Alexander, and William Drummond of Hawthornden. Calin justifies the unconventional inclusion of Mary Queen of Scots in this section by implicitly recalling his objective to treat neglected works. Given that Mary’s poetry is composed in French, “until the last ten years or so [it] was neglected by Scottish literary scholars” (5).

In the introduction, Calin admits that he does not intend for his corpus to be exhaustive. Absent from the primary corpus, then, are direct translations, texts by the Makars which have little to no French connection, history (either in verse or in prose), or chivalric conduct books. In effect, Calin excludes from his corpus those texts that have little demonstrated connection to the literature of France, or those works whose “Frenchness” has been sufficiently discussed or proven. With the exception of Mary Queen of Scots, who wrote in French, the writers considered here wrote in Scots. Despite his acknowledgement of “the continued presence of Gaelic” (8) in the sixteenth century, Calin’s primary focus lies with the growth and development of literature in Scots in the Medieval and Renaissance periods.

Towards the middle of the introduction, Calin clarifies that he is unconcerned with the “microanalysis of Scottish texts and their French sources” (6). Instead, he is concerned with “situating the Scottish books in an enlarged intertextual frame of reference.” The method here is one of intertextuality, in this case, of close read-



ings of and among texts, or in Calin's terms, "practical criticism" enriched by "other approaches" that are informed by the contents of the primary texts themselves. These other approaches, Calin observes, include psychoanalysis, gender criticism, reader-response, and "aesthetics of reception."

Calin's primary argument builds on the proposal that "so much of traditional, medieval and early modern Scottish culture, which a number of previous scholars thought was native to Scotland or came primarily from England, is strikingly international and European" (7). The objectives and argument around which *The Lily and the Thistle* are organized are broad and accessible. It would seem to follow that the content of individual sections or chapters would remain equally accessible. However, the argumentation and method seem directed more towards specialists than non-specialists. A premier authority on medieval French literature, Calin has shaped the field by virtue of the fact that his own scholarship has variously formed and informed the scholarship of some of the very people he takes the time to thank in his acknowledgements. These other specialists, colleagues in Scottish Studies, Medieval French, and Studies in Medievalism, remain Calin's primary audience. Apart from occasional mentions of shifting literary tastes or trends, *The Lily and the Thistle* provides little context in the form of explanatory details about material conditions of literary production and reception; for example, how exactly did literary texts travel from France to Scotland in this period? Furthermore, the theories that Calin admits to having privileged in various readings of primary texts (psychoanalysis, gender, reader-response, and so on) remain integrally embedded in the close readings themselves, thereby resulting in argumentation that is at once dense and profoundly engaged.

575

Taken together, the endnotes, the bibliographical references, and the entries in the index number over one hundred pages. They bear witness to the formidable amount of research and scholarship that underpin the analyses contained in Calin's book. *The Lily and the Thistle* will surely be obligatory reading for years to come for scholars specializing in Older Scots literature.

SHEILA DELANY (ED.). *Anti-Saints: The New Golden Legend of Sylvain Maréchal*. Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 2012. Pp. 175.

**Erica J. Mannucci, University of Milano-Bicocca**

This book offers a fascinating cultural find: a strong and significant text from the first phases of the French Revolution which is virtually unknown even among specialists of the period and never reprinted in modern times. *The New Golden Legend* was an anti-clerical parody of a medieval and early modern best-seller by Jacopo da Varazze, or Jacques de Voragine, a Dominican friar who became bishop of Genoa: a hagiographic collection written in simple Latin in the second half of the thirteenth



century and then translated into many vernacular languages. It was known in France as *Légende dorée*. The 1790 parody was focused not on the lives of all saints like the original, but on female saints only.

The author was radical intellectual Sylvain Maréchal, well known for his atheistic works, both in verse and prose, and for his revolutionary activity as a journalist and playwright and, later, as a member of the Directory of Babeuf's Conspiracy of Equals. Since before the Revolution, he was also characterized, as an author, by the way he developed popular genres like the almanach and various moral or devotional *formes brèves* in a religiously and socially subversive direction.

576 Delany's unearthing and decoding of Maréchal's satirical lives of women saints is first of all a truly original intellectual achievement, thanks to an uncommon combination of scholarly competences in both medieval and French revolutionary history and literature. The editor and translator is particularly interested in the subject of "deconstructive appropriation" not only as an "extension of medieval literature and ideas into the modern period", but as an actual—albeit special, of course—"instance of hagiography" (21). She includes this contrarian appropriation under the larger category of the "afterlife" of a medieval genre. Although in the introduction Delany qualifies this notion, which she proposed in previous works, stressing institutional continuities from the Middle Ages to the eve of the French Revolution, it still seems quite fitting to speak of the genre's afterlife when the focus is on cultural and intellectual history, a dimension in which the discontinuities were already predominant before the Revolution started.

Reading Maréchal's work, we see a perfect reversal of a model for purposes that are parallel to those of the original. Both the original genre and its later parody have, in a broad sense, educational purposes—aimed at a large public, no cultural levels excluded—although they significantly imply opposite views of what education entails, indoctrination on the one hand and teaching a critical approach on the other. Both imply uses of the past—counter-history, as the editor, citing Amos Funkenstein, calls Maréchal's effort, versus Voragine's mythography.

When Maréchal stated that "Religious texts are ideal for satire" (20), as the editor reminds us, he was part of a long and solid tradition, both socio-cultural and intellectual. The revolutionary period would of course add considerably to the materials and imagery involved in this tradition, although in 1790 radical views on religion and the Church like Maréchal's could still be the object of censorship and police inquiries, as his own newspaper *Tonneau de Diogène* was, in the first months of the year, when he published in it extracts from his atheistic text *Catéchisme du curé Meslier*. Thus, Maréchal's satirical hagiography was still a bold undertaking at the time: while he was explicitly the author of the *Nouvelle légende dorée*, the printer was dissimulated (the place of publication was ironically disguised as "Rome"), and in May the weekly *Révolutions de Paris*, advertising the book, addressed readers to a bookseller in Brussels. In other words, this rare book was a semi-clandestine publication.

This dictionary of women saints, moreover, was focused on sex. As Maréchal wrote,

mocking the mystic encounters of Saint Benedict and Saint Scholastica, brother and sister: "Perhaps it is in reading the Bible too much, or saints' lives, that modern philosophers have been tempted to become somewhat materialists" (132). Sanctity was deeply gendered, in Maréchal's view. In women, it was basically defined by virginity, a denial and distortion of natural sexual desire, as he saw it—or in some cases, a distorted definition of another condition, as in the instance of the love relationship he infers between Saints Sabina and Serapia (129-30). As Maréchal writes of Saint Lioba or Liebe, "Liebe, in German, means 'soul' and 'love'. This last signification little suits a saint and one who was a recluse all her life. It is true that the sacred chronicle says that from that convent that directed Liebe they secretly sent out from time to time babies that had never entered" (97).

Secondly, women's holiness was defined by forms of martyrdom which invariably revealed a darkly erotic subtext. Typically, Maréchal also saw martyrdom and virginity as coinciding, as in the story of the Blessed Lidwine, whose life "was a continual illness": the "cruel maladies of this virgin, came only, no doubt, from her reckless vow to die a virgin, so that she could be placed in the rank of martyrs of virginity" (97).

577

Delany's excellent translation, as sparkling and spirited and ironic as the original French, but also as stark and uncompromising, renders the way the author plays with words: potentially ridiculous names, possible ambiguities in language. The roots of this kind of parody, the editor reminds us, went all the way back to the high Middle Ages, although until early modern times the Church had usually been able to control this form of inversion as a social safety valve. Maréchal's more direct inspiration was the discourse and style of the eighteenth-century radical critics of religion, who certainly did not ignore those cultural anti-clerical antecedents. However, as he proved in various moments, when motivated by political expediency Maréchal was capable of graduality in his anti-religious or anti-clerical communication. Here, though, he was at his most explicit, because he saw the issue of religion as a crucial political stake: primarily for this reason, it is difficult to see this all-female legendary, addressed to both male and female readers, as an attempt at persuasion aimed in the first place at the devout, women in particular. It would seem more likely that Maréchal wanted most of all to reach and influence some more congenial readers: active male citizens.

The gendered (or chauvinistic) nature of Maréchal's wit cannot be denied; his whole production reinforces the common stereotypes of women that are visible in this book (for example, shrewish wives) and his cultural and political anti-feminism is manifest in revolutionary times. Delany, however, detects an inherent contradiction in his arguments and thus in the messages he conveys, comparing two later works by Maréchal, the infamous *Projet d'une loi portant défense d'apprendre à lire aux femmes* and *La Femme-abbé* (the story of a woman who, posing as a boy, becomes a seminarist to be near the Catholic priest she secretly loves), both published in 1801, in her introduction. In this novel, "in portraying the success of young Agathe in the seminary, Maréchal has, paradoxically, to rely on exactly the rational arguments for female equality that his *Projet* attempts to refute" (17). In this perspective, the editor

re-opens the discussion on Maréchal's overall representation of women, "at a time when the role and rights of women were sharply at issue" (22), taking into account, once again, his medieval antecedents and the continuities and discontinuities in the afterlife, more specifically, of the all-female legendary.

Cultural and intellectual historians of the French Revolution—and fellow appreciators of Maréchal and other turn-of-the-century democratic continuators of an important strand of the Enlightenment—can only be grateful for Sheila Delany's ongoing effort to introduce the English-speaking public to the lesser-known and rarest works of an author who is often mentioned out of turn or misinterpreted.

578 The act of translation, the creation of a new, equivalent text which is recognizably Maréchal, but the way he, who wrote in the language all educated people in Europe could use in his time, would sound in English—the common language of cultural communication of the present—is a significant enterprise that deserves a more specific literary discussion. It is a cultural act, which is also a choice to make Maréchal's text potentially relevant to public life in the present. The editor mentions North American "public conversation", but the relevance of a deconstruction of religious delusions and forms of irrationalism could be much broader.

MICHAL PELED GINSBURG. *Portrait Stories*. New York: Fordham UP, 2015. Pp. 224. \$50.00.

**Michelle E. Bloom, University of California, Riverside**

Michal Peled Ginsburg's *Portrait Stories* offers a clearly-written, rigorous, in-depth and enlightening examination of fictions about painted portraits. With well-defined chronological, national, and generic parameters, *Portrait Stories* examines nineteenth-century short stories and novellas from European and American literary traditions (American, British, French, German, and Russian). The timeframe in question reflects the distinctiveness of nineteenth-century stories, according to Ginsburg, in which the figures of the artist and the viewer play as important roles as the portrait itself. Ginsburg suggests that nineteenth-century portrait stories entail a shift away from the equation of the figure represented in the portrait and the person that the image represents (the "subject"). That is, the author notes, the portrait no longer "refers unambiguously to a real, existing, specific person" (4). This shift away from direct referentiality results in a complex dynamic absent from pre-nineteenth-century tales, which more often featured supernatural or magical portraits without a known human creator. Along with the artist and viewer, the process of painting the portrait comes to the foreground in the tales that Ginsburg examines.

To her credit, her literary repertoire runs the gamut from the usual suspects, including Poe's "The Oval Portrait" and Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*, to texts

less familiar to the anglophone reader, albeit in some cases by canonical authors. Students and general readers, and even some scholars, are unlikely to be familiar with anglophone stories such as Henry James's "The Special Type" and "The Tone of Time" no less than French works such as Balzac's *La Maison du chat-qui-pelote* and Georges Sand's "Le Chateau de Pictordu." In these cases, as well as those on the spectrum between well known and little known, the reader will certainly come away from *Portrait Stories* with insights into familiar texts or inspiration to read new ones.

Ginsburg distinguishes her study from books such as Françoise Meltzer's *Salome and the Dance of Writing*, which diminish the specificity of the portrait (10). By contrast, Ginsburg highlights the portrait within stories as the site "where intersubjective relations of desire, identification, rivalry, projection, aggression, guilt, idealization, misrecognition, get organized" (10). Of course, as the author suggests, stories in portraits are purely verbal constructions.

In the introduction, Ginsburg frames her subsequent discussions of artist-portrait-viewer relationships with Charles Sanders Pierce's concepts of the iconic, the symbolic and the indexical. The "iconic" characterizes the relationships between the portrait and the subject, since the portrait resembles the subject, more or less, but definitionally. Pierce's symbolic (conventional) may supplement the iconic in describing the portrait-subject connection. Finally, the "indexical" describes the relationship between the artist and the portrait, as the latter bears a trace or imprint of the former (6).

Close textual analysis constitutes Ginsburg's forte here and the book's prime strength. The highlight of the first chapter, on Poe's "Oval Portrait," lies in the analysis of the description of the eponymous portrait's "absolute *life-likeness* of expression." Ginsburg astutely calls other critics on their slippage from Poe's neologism "*life-likeness*" to the more common word, "life-likeness" (21). She traces "life-likeness" intertextually to Poe's "The Premature Burial," interpreting it as being buried alive (22). Other moments of insightful, nuanced textual analysis that occur include the discussion in Chapter Five of the names "Nicolo" (an orphan) and "Colino" (a Genovese nobleman) in Kleist's "Der Findling," ultimately a merely semantic resemblance which fails to prove a connection between the foundling and the portrait of the nobleman, despite suspicions to the contrary (85). Chapter One also sets the stage for several of the themes developed throughout the work, including the portrait as a representation of an individual; the power of the painter over the subject; and the role of gender, albeit not necessarily through the typical paradigm of the male gaze as embodying the male subject's power over the female object (25).

The second chapter, on James's portrait stories, also addresses themes that recur throughout the genre and Ginsburg's book; namely, the relationship between the verbal and the visual, and gender. Ginsburg emphasizes the specificity of the genre of portraiture in James's stories not limited to "The Special Type" and "The Tone of the Time," on which she focuses in this chapter. Further, she does well to consider James's complication of the male subject-female object paradigm through the love triangles

in these stories. He does so, she argues, by pitting two women against each other for the affections of the same man as well as through the portrayal of a female artist (Mary in “The Tone of Time”), albeit one who merely copies and thus is not empowered. Ginsburg’s analysis of “The Tone of the Time” calls into question not only the gender paradigms typically associated with portrait stories but also the cliché of portraits immortalizing the living, as the character Mary paints her male subject (object) posthumously and in the manner of the past (38).

In shifting to German tales by E.T.A. Hoffmann and French stories by Théophile Gauthier and Gérard de Nerval in Chapter Three, “The Portrait Painter and his Doubles,” Ginsburg might have addressed the differences between national traditions, with the book also extending to Russian literature in the penultimate chapter, devoted to Nikolai Gogol’s “The Portrait.” The literary historical background in the book’s introduction explaining the choice of the nineteenth-century timeframe offers this sort of extra-textual material, which might also have enriched the comparative study’s treatment of texts representing different national traditions. Perhaps the “modern European” parameters of the work implies that the material is coherent and similar enough that it may be treated without respect to national, cultural, or linguistic differences, with the thematic and conceptual emphases of each chapter instead offering the axes of difference (type of portrait, gender dynamic, etc.). That authors such as Poe, translated by Baudelaire, and Hoffmann, also appreciated in translation by French readership, cross national boundaries between traditions treated in the study also offers an explanation for considering the stories as a coherent whole without paying undue attention to national differences. Such attention is not absent from this work, though. In Chapter Six, Ginsburg alludes to the post-French Revolution “crisis of paternity” in Germany and France, which she distinguishes as “countries with different sociopolitical histories” (138). She suggests the influence of the “challenges to hereditary power” in these two stories on the “way class relations inflect the power to represent” (138). More such insightful comparative cultural, historical, and even linguistic analysis might have enriched this already excellent study, as would addressing the reasons for focusing on the similarities transcending such differences.

Ginsburg does well to reach beyond the world of story portraits, connecting them to literary works outside the genre. For instance, in Chapter Four, “On Portraits, Painters, and Women,” her discussion of nineteenth-century Paris as depicted in *La maison du chat-qui-pelote*, with reference to Balzac’s later realist novel *Illusions perdues*, sheds light on the role of commerce in destroying the Guillaume family of *La maison* and “their kind” (68). The discussion of social class in Chapter Four sets the stage for Chapter Seven’s focus on the role of money and the analogy between it and portraiture in Gogol’s “The Portrait.”

Examining narratives by Kleist, Hardy, and Wilde, the fifth chapter, “Portraits of the Male Body,” has the virtue of continuing the examination of varied gender roles and paradigms in the genre. As reflected aptly by the chapter title, these works (“Der Findling,” “Barbara of the House of Grebe,” and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*)

consider male objects, but also go beyond the portrait (face) to the “full-body” (81). Pushing the boundaries of the portrait in this way is fruitful. In Hardy’s “Barbara of the House of Grebe,” the movement from two dimensions into three comes with the statue that the character Edmond commissions of himself while in Italy following his marriage. Following his disfigurement in a heroic act which leaves him burned, his wife Barbara is disgusted and Edmond leaves, but adores his statue, even after her marriage to another (89). The statues in Hardy’s story (there are two) call into question the accuracy of the “Portrait” of the chapter title, but Ginsburg reflects on the move from painting to sculpture, which she likens to that from the portrait to the rendition of the full body (with which it overlaps). Like the full-body portrait, the statue is less likely to be as particular as the painted portrait, which tends to represent specific features (90). In addition, statues, like bodies, occupy space. In one of the more interesting plot elements in the portrait stories examined here, Barbara’s second husband, jealous of her adoration of the statue of her former husband, maims it so that it mirrors his disfigured predecessor, rather than making a second, disfigured statue, an option that Ginsburg points out (95). Extending beyond the definition of the portrait “proper” leads into interesting territory in terms of imitation, the male figure as the object of desire and the body.

581

The final two chapters also delve into fruitful areas. Earlier in the book, Ginsburg complicates the typical discussions of male artist and female creation, or male subject enamoured of female object, in part by choosing texts which offer variations on normative versions of such paradigms. Chapters Five and Six are innovative in that they focus on themes other than sexuality and desire, which are commonly considered in relation to portraits in literature. However, Chapter Five considers gender in the form of the maternal in Sand’s “Le Chateau de Pictordu,” which is the only female-authored text examined in this book. This chapter considers the fruitful topic of the role of the portrait in the relationship between parent and child in stories that are often about “transmission,” as the author puts it. Here, Ginsburg also considers death and representing the dead. In this chapter, her referencing of theorists ranging from Jean-Joseph Goux on fathers, to Freud on “family romance” (111); and her use of Derrida on the “logic of supplement (or the *parergon*)” to de Man on prosopoeia (133-34) to read Sand’s story exemplifies her more generally skillful and balanced use of theory and other scholarship in the book. Her theoretical referencing, rich and vast, illuminates the fictional works rather than obscuring them.

Chapter Seven, “Gogol’s ‘The Portrait,’” would benefit from a more informative title, though it seems that, unfortunately, the author leaves those for chapters that examine more than one story. In any case, this interesting chapter deals, as Ginsburg suggests, with a story unlike any other she treats because it lacks “intersubjective relations” in a book centered on them. Instead, this story considers what she calls rivalry and envy. Its title aside, this chapter, which focuses on the commercial, develops the relationship between portraiture and money touched on earlier in the book.

*Portrait Stories* delimits its terrain clearly and sets out its objectives and meets

them. Along the way, it engages in insightful, nuanced textual analysis; sheds new light on well-known tales and calls attention to little-known ones; reveals the complexities and subversions of what seem to be clichés about portraits as imitations and about the gender paradigms in these stories; and evokes important themes such as family and money in innovative ways. The reader comes away with far more insight into Western European portrait stories and with the desire to read and reread the works she treats. Although one book or even one scholar cannot do it all, and Ginsburg does well at what she sets out to do, *Portrait Stories* also makes one want to break out of the confines of Western European modernism, and whets the appetite for more examination of photographic portraits and sculptures.

- 582 ALOYS N.M. FLEISCHMANN, NANCY VAN STYVENDALE, AND CODY MCCARROLL (EDS.). *Narratives of Citizenship: Indigenous and Diasporic Peoples Unsettle the Nation-State*. Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 2011. Pp. 350.

**Katherine Miller, Concordia University of Edmonton**

The title *Narratives of Citizenship: Indigenous and Diasporic Peoples Unsettle the Nation-State* points at the unwieldy structure of this collection of thirteen essays. Editors Aloys N.M. Fleischmann, Nancy Van Styvendale, and Cody McCarroll offer two narrative snapshots of “articulations of citizenship” (xv). Proposing an exploration of “how the cultural production of Indigenous and diasporic peoples enriches and ‘unsettles’—that is, interrogates, decolonizes, and re-routes/roots—the founding assumptions and practice of universal citizenship” (xiv), the editors include essays examining not only literary and historical texts, but also photography, film, and ideographic writing. Looking at the ways citizenship is narrated in both private and public spheres “across juridical, political, and affective registers” (xii), the writers “offer new strategies for reading the topoi that both carry the nation’s anecdotes and offer new space to question the inevitability of those plots” (xvii).

Several of the included essays provide illuminating insights into the construction of citizenship. Lindy Ledohowski’s “‘I am Enchanted’: The Home Country as Dead Lover in Myrna Kostash’s *The Doomed Bridegroom*” provides both a comprehensive summary of the changing categorization of “ethnic literature” in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries and a succinct overview of the text in question. Ledohowski focuses on Kostash’s construction of the doomed Ukrainian poet Vasyly Stus as a “dead metonymic representation for Ukraine as a diasporic home country” (136). In “Grazia Deledda’s *The Church of Solitude*: Enfolding Citizenship and Mussolini’s Demographic Politics,” Dorothy Woodman unfolds layers of identity to examine the state’s “outsiders” as embodied within Maria, an Italian-Bedouin woman suffering from breast cancer. Woodman argues that “the novel challenges



the idea of the sovereign citizen by destabilizing its founding characteristics of inside and outside as the delimitation of citizenship" (45). Finally, claiming that "we narrate not only our identities and practices as citizens *but also citizenship itself* [emphasis in original]" (327), David Chariandy's essay "Black Canadas and the Question of Diasporic Citizenship" examines the role of Black Canadian literature, specifically the work of George Elliott Clarke and Dionne Brand, in "a re-storying of citizenship in Canada" (329), deconstructing the multifaceted meanings of diaspora.

Other essays illuminate neglected or silenced periods of history. Daniel Coleman's "Imposing subCitizenship: Canadian White Civility and the Two Row Wampum of the Six Nations" focuses on the changing dimensions of the territory given to the Six Nations of Grand River, pointing out the ignored historical and legal implications of the narrative "written" into the two row wampum belt. Noting that "history is most often manifested in relation to land" (192), Coleman calls on readers to see the validity of other civil codes and constructions of citizenship. Also foregrounding the connection between land and history, Jennifer Bowering Delisle's "A Citizen of Story: Wayne Johnston's *Baltimore Mansion* and the 'Newfoundland Diaspora'" explores competing narratives of citizenship in Wayne Johnston's moving memoir of three generations in Newfoundland. Marco Katz's intriguingly titled "Whose Diaspora is This Anyway?: Peruvians, Japanese Perhaps, and the *Dekasegi*" examines the disparate experiences of Peruvian-Japanese *nisei* and *sansei* who have returned to Japan, discussing both negative and positive experiences contained within literary and musical products.

583

The essays mentioned above offer accessible discussions of the cultural products. Other essays are less comprehensible. Benedict Anderson's "imagined community" figures largely in many of the texts. Although the editors claim that the collection will "serve as a gathering place for students and scholars from any discipline concerned with citizenship and its cultural propagation" (xv), it is unlikely that an "imagined" undergraduate student would grasp the following sentence: "I shall focus on how *Dictee* functions as a site of convergence for the exiled subject's twinned influences of postcolonial resistance and generative postmodern decentring" (268). In Laura Schechter's "'Cracked tongue. Broken tongue': The Incomplete, Resistant Translation of Language and Culture in Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee*," an analysis of a fragmented and seemingly incoherent text becomes itself incoherent. After providing a brief history of Japanese oppression and occupation in Korea in the twentieth century, Schechter then claims that *Dictee* is written primarily in French and English because these are the languages of colonial expansion. Surely in the context of this text, Japanese is the language of colonialism.

In places, writers seem to have forgotten the initial polarity in a writing community: writer/reader. In other words, the writers have not considered their audience. For example, in "Camera Ready: Narration Through Photographs in Hawai'i," the lack of reproductions of any of the photographs being discussed leaves the reader with only the interpretation of an absence. The reader cannot "read" something that

is not there. Printing costs may have dictated the omission, but the essay, despite its fascinating analysis of the feminization of Hawai‘ian culture and landscape, remains oddly blank because of this lack of photographic evidence.

Robert Zacharias’s comparison of interrogations of citizenship in Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan* with Larissa Lai’s *Salt Fish Girl* founders in the deep waves of academic jargon. Zacharias’s analysis draws on Giorgio Agamben’s concept of the “state of exception”: “*Obasan* insists that the life that confronts power in the exception is not ‘pure life, without any mediation’ at all, but rather a *racialized* form of mere life that is key to the production of the exception and which continues to be a mediating factor facilitating the camp’s operation” (11). Opening the collection with this essay was an odd decision: I almost gave up on the book after attempting several times to read Zacharias’s complex prose. In addition, Zacharias critiques *Obasan* for remaining “fatefully entrenched within the nation-state” (14), negating the novel’s groundbreaking exposé of the treatment of Japanese-Canadians by the Canadian government. Ignoring the historical, social and cultural parameters within which writers create and the transformative power of texts such as *Obasan*, this type of criticism is belittling and anachronistic.

584

*Narratives of Citizenship* unsettles the reader, but not, perhaps, in the way the editors intended. Given the wide range of cultural products and “multiple point of entry” (xv), it is not surprising that the collection itself is uneven. Although writers such as Lindy Ledohowski, Daniel Coleman, Jennifer Bowering Delisle, Dorothy Woodman, and David Chariandy interrogate constructions of citizenship in insightful ways, the omissions and convoluted prose in some of the essays alienated this reader.

LARISSA LAI. *Slanting I, Imagining We: Asian Canadian Literary Production in the 1980s and 1990s*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2014. Pp. 274.

### Denise Cruz, University of Toronto

The title of *Slanting I, Imagining We: Asian Canadian Literary Production in the 1980s and 1990s* announces Larissa Lai’s interest in the particular: two decades in Asian Canadian literary and cultural history. Indeed, one of the book’s important achievements is its analysis of the development of Asian Canadian literature during this period on its own unique terms. But what is even more striking is Lai’s careful attention to how Asian Canadian literary production must be read not only for its emergence out of opposition to histories of oppression and exclusion but also via coalition across different communities. The book as a whole, therefore, uses Asian Canadian literature and the 1980s and 1990s as a case study to explore broader questions about the vexed intersections of art and activism, theory and politics, and aesthetics and ethics.

Alongside an analysis of literature, *Slanting I, Imagining We* is also a history of artistic and activist resistance and coalition building. Lai's introduction offers a lucid discussion of pivotal points in the development of Asian Canadian studies. Rather than tracing a "linear and heroic history for Asian Canadian literature," Lai focuses instead on examining what she calls ruptures and relations. Her opening paragraph, for example, begins by contextualizing the rise of Asian Canadian studies amid the context of the Japanese Canadian redress movement, the 1988 Multiculturalism Act, the formation of 'Asian Canadian' as an identity in the 1960s and 1970s, and poststructural theory. These developments were, without question crucial to Asian Canadian literature, but Lai also contends that Asian Canadian studies has a history that must be viewed as "profoundly relational." The book resists a persistent strategy of comparison (between the origin of Asian Canadian Studies in comparison to Asian American studies, often with the assessment that Asian Canadian studies lacks the activist core so central to its American cognate). In contrast, Lai contends that the series of ruptures imagined by Asian Canadian literature must be read on their own terms, and as shaped by Canada's own unique history of artistic and activist coalitions. To that end, Lai—alongside scholars such as Smaro Kamboureli and Iyko Day—memorably highlights the intersection of indigenous and feminist studies as important for theorizing Asian Canadian literature and as critical to its development.

585

The timeliness of this study is urgent. Lai focuses on the 1980s and the 1990s, but she also frames her intervention by recalling two more recent "scandals" that reveal the continued complexities of studying Asian Canadian literature. The first is the 2010 publication of the "Too Asian" article in *Macleans*' magazine, regarding student perceptions about number of Asian students at Canadian university campuses. The second is the plagiarism lawsuit filed against Ling Zhang, author of *Gold Mountain Blues*, by SKY Lee, Wayson Choy, and Paul Yee, who argued that Zhang's novel, published in the People's Republic of China and later translated into English, included significant similarities to books previously published by Lee, Choy, and Yee. In Lai's reading, these cases and the media attention attached to them underscore how conversations about race, culture, and identity are hardly resolved, and continue to emerge in print.

Lai is a fiction writer who was actively involved in activist, artist, and community movements, and she has a capacious and incisive understanding of the literary scene of the 1980s and 1990s. The first half of the book is especially compelling. Chapters One to Three analyze institutional and structural developments that affected Asian Canadian literature: the turn to autobiography as a genre, special issues devoted to race and literature, and the creation of anthologies of Asian Canadian literature. Lai reads these moments for their promise, but she also carefully highlights their possible shortcomings. While she recognizes that the publication of autobiographies, special issues, and anthologies created what Sau-Ling Wong called a textual politics of coalition in that they drew attention to Asian Canadian literary production, she cautions that we must be wary of being overly celebratory in our reading of these

texts. She demonstrates that each of these ventures carried with them the potential to reconsolidate oppressive stereotypes of Asian Canadian authors, bodies, and communities, or to problematically continue cycles of exclusions.

In the second half of the book, Lai reveals how the structural and institutional ruptures of the first half might be read alongside comparative close readings of authors such as Hiromi Goto, Jam Ismail, Rita Wong, Margaret Atwood, and Dionne Brand. This comparison between individual textual readings and the broader patterns represented by genre and publication venues provide a portrait of the 1980s and 1990s that examines the complexity of the field and its architecture. Lai draws upon deconstructionist, postcolonial, and feminist critique (Derrida, Spivak, Bhabha, Deleuze and Guattari, Hardt and Negri, and Harvey all figure prominently in the analysis). Stylistically, her readings sometimes get lost amid reference to these theorists, but this is just a minor flaw.

586 Overall, *Slanting I, Imagining We* makes a strong case for how literature is not merely a response to histories of exclusion and oppression, but rather also a venue for creating artistic and political changes. The book stages a discussion about what we might learn from the 1980s and 1990s. These authors' responses to questions regarding identity, community formation, reconciliation, and recognition—and Lai's reading of them—ultimately model paths that resist the continued oppression of racialized identities and communities in a neoliberal and globalized world.

SONALI PERERA. *No Country: Working-Class Writing in the Age of Globalization*. New York: Columbia UP, 2014. Pp. 230.

### Michelle M. Tokarczyk, Goucher College

Working-class writing is still a neglected and under-theorized genre. Associations with it follow a familiar and reductive pattern: literature written about, and often by, white men from the global North. Often this literature focuses on pivotal moments in labour history, notably strikes or the Great Depression. Literature about workers by writers from the global South is queasily placed in the category of postcolonial literature. The erasure of working-class writing from the global South impedes not only the advancement of literary study, but also the recognition of an international workers' literature that might reflect worker identification, if not solidarity.

Sonali Perera's *No Country* stands as a corrective to a Eurocentric male conceptualization of working-class literature. Her slim but pithy text considers writers across continents: Muk Raj Anand from India and Mahasweta Devi from Bangladesh, Ambalavaner Sivanandan from Sri Lanka, the fiction and poetry of Dabindu (a collective of garment workers in Sri Lanka), and Bessie Head from South Africa. Mindful of the pitfalls of adding a minority or neglected strain of literature to a genre—what

can be called the “add global writers and stir” approach—Perera revises theories of working-class literature, asking “What does it mean to invoke working-class writing as a mode of internationalism in an age of comparative advantage and outsourcing?” (4). In addition to challenging Eurocentrism and white male dominance, it means challenging other commonplaces of what constitutes working-class literature.

One of these constructions is of the proletarian writing of the 1930s as the heyday of working-class literature. Carefully reading Marx, especially his later, unfinished work, and drawing upon Raymond Williams, Perera writes against the historicism theorized in working-class writing, in which she finds a tendency to privilege fixed beginnings and endings rather than fluidity or, more important, interruption. Repeatedly, she evokes Marx’s statement, “Proletarian revolutions constantly engage in self-criticism and repeated interruptions of their own course.” The texts she examines are marked by interruptions, deferrals, and open or unfinished endings.

In her focus on non-linear forms, Perera follows a feminist strain that critiques the straightforward narrative of progress. She extends her critique to a rights-based agenda that sees caring for others as contrary to self-interest and counters with a responsibility-based ethics in which care of the self necessitates care of others, an ethics that can only emerge by substituting an individual sense with a collective one.

587

The first chapter in *No Country*, on Mulk Raj Anand, notes that this anticolonialist and modernist (he lived in London and knew T.S. Eliot and E.M. Forster) claimed to have written *Coolie* (1936) as an answer to Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim*. The divergent fates of the two are epitomized by their names: Kipling creates an individual, fortunate character, while Anand represents the nameless impoverished Indian workers in cities. In analyzing ellipses, interruptions, and shifts in focalization, Perera unearths the tensions of an international socialist writer in a nation striving for independence. The close readings are well chosen and carefully rendered, though the argument here is not as convincing as in later chapters.

The second chapter marshals Sivanandan’s conception of black socialism for a consideration of ethics in *When Memory Dies* (1998). Here Perera sees an ethics of care, and I would say affiliation, as an alternative to an ethics of self-interest that characterize nationalist moves. As Perera notes, placing the adjective “immigrant” before “worker” others workers of different origins. Sivanandan’s own ethical development, Perera argues, coincides with a move from journalism to literature, entailing a dialectical thinking that grapples with the complexities of shifting race and class positionalities. The novel’s breaks in chronology and its polyvocalism break the confines of historicism and linearity. This intergenerational tale is further read as a critique of attempts to locate labour in specific origins rather than recognizing the undecidability of origins, which is a particularly cogent point given the history of ethnic violence and imported labour in Sri Lanka. Acts of reading as interpretation stand in sharp relief to the blunt language of manifestos supposedly requiring no interpretation. At the end of this chapter, Perera argues, “the terrain of socialist ethics versus race and class politics are mapped out in the middle ground of literature

and in practices of reading in the robust sense" (74).

The third chapter, "Gender, Genre, and Globalization," is the most ambitious in its wide-ranging discussion of Olsen, Devi, and the Dabindu Collective. Perera focuses on the widely-cited scene in *Yonnondio* in which a voice interrupts a harrowing account of a mining disaster with an angry address asking the reader if he/she will make a cameo in the scene. How, Perera asks, do we write about ephemeral, disappearing objects of working-class history without fetishizing them? In discussing a text that was interrupted for forty years and influenced not only by the proletarian writing of the 1930s but by the feminism of the 1960s and 1970s, Perera argues with the assessment of *Yonnondio* as a *bildungsroman* and highlights its unfinished, deferred nature of workers' lives. In her study of the Dabindu Collective's writings (serialized forms that inevitably create interruptions and remain unfinished), Perera draws a comparison between one story's protagonist and the narrator of Olsen's "I Stand Here Ironing": both of these women's lives are defined not by grand move-  
**588** ments, but by the back and forth movement of daily living. The final pages of this chapter discuss Mahasweta Devi's "Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay, and Pirtha" (1995). The pterodactyl that mysteriously appears in a famine-ravaged area is interpreted by Perera not as precapitalist, but as outside of capitalism. Significantly, the appearance of the creature cannot be empirically verified, but figures as a ghost or a sensibility.

The final chapter is on Bessie Head, primarily on *A Question of Power* (1974). Perera sees this text as an inverted migration tale; while the usual trajectory for women in the global South is to leave rural areas for metropolitan ones, the protagonist Elizabeth, like Head herself, leaves South Africa for a rural village in Bechuanaland (now Botswana). While critics have focused on the psychological elements in the text (notably the appearance of the ghost Sello) and its biographical elements, Perera reads the novel as an examination of rural labour and socialist ethics. The text turns, Perera tells us, on the statement, "Love is two people mutually feeding each other." The cooperative labour in the village of Motabeng is a singular instance of socialist ethics, of caring for the other in self-interest. Ultimately, Perera argues, "Proletarian writing—both as a genre and as an international social movement—facilitates other connections and other collectivities beyond those vouchsafed by identitarian claims and identity politics" (162).

In the end, Perera argues for a reconsideration of the social in a world where workers do not work or live in close proximity but rather are isolated in call centers across continents. She works to make visible not a description of horrors such as those represented in Tillie Olsen's "I Want Your Women Up North to Know" but an ethics of representing and reading that is attuned to internationalism, the urban-rural divide, and gender.

Perera is correct in stating that proletarian writing has been, and too often still is, conceptualized as male. Yet critics such as Paul Lauter and, especially, Janet Zandy have been making this point for over twenty years. While she does discuss Paula Rabinowitz's *Labor and Desire*, Perera omits any mention, even in footnotes, of

Lauter and Zandy.

My other critique is of the prose itself, which is dense with jargon and, like the texts Perera studies, filled with gaps and interruptions. At times readers must struggle to make meaning. Consider, for example, this quotation from the chapter on *When Memory Dies* concerning the narrator Rajan and the stateless plantation worker Sanji: “The doubling of the subject and antisubject (of the political and economic migrant) is predicated on a self-reflexive/deauthorizing movement. The two figures converge/disband as a dialectical image” (59). Theorists have often chosen specialized layered language, but many working-class scholars are sensitive by the exclusivity of jargon-packed prose. (I am not advocating the elimination of jargon.) I wish that Perera had moderated her jargon not so she could reach a common audience—this is usually an unrealistic goal for academic work—but so it might be more accessible to scholars who, like many in the Working-Class Studies Association with which I am affiliated, labour at regional state colleges under a 4/4 load or teach at community colleges with a 5/5 and strive to stay involved in their disciplines.

589

These criticisms, however, do not detract from the ambition, insight, and originality of Perera’s text. *No Country* could and should change the way that we conceptualize international working-class writing.

ALESSANDRA FERRARO. *Écriture migrante et translinguisme au Québec*. Venezia: Editio da La Toletta edizioni, 2014 (Nuove prospettive americane, n° 9). Pp. 155.

**Peter Klaus, IRTG, Université de Montréal/Universität Trier**

L’auteure de ce rafraîchissant petit volume n’est pas une inconnue dans le monde de la recherche sur la littérature québécoise, loin de là. Elle est connue pour ses implications concrètes dans l’enseignement et la recherche sur cette littérature « lointaine » et c’est depuis longtemps qu’elle organise ou co-organise des colloques universitaires sur le Québec, souvent en collaboration avec les Université de Graz en Autriche et/ou avec celle de Maribor en Slovénie. On s’attend donc à une découverte, une réflexion originale concernant cette matière si diffuse que sont les « écritures migrantes », dont l’appellation est contestée depuis quelque temps, mais personne n’a encore trouvé un terme plus adéquat pour la remplacer.

Dans son « Avant-propos », elle aborde déjà le noyau de sa thématique en développant sur quelques pages un substantiel survol historique de ce qu’on appelle « la naissance de l’écriture migrante » au Québec et l’« élaboration de la transculture à Montréal ». Le lecteur apprend que son analyse se focalisera sur le « fonctionnement textuel et les caractéristiques formelles de quelques œuvres significatives. » Après l’avant-propos, le livre se divise en deux grandes parties : « Cadres contextuels » et



« Dynamiques textuelles ». Chaque partie est divisée en plusieurs chapitres, ce qui rend la lecture encore plus agréable.

Le chapitre un de la première partie jette les bases de l'approche de l'auteure en ce qu'elle évoque les liens très étroits qui existent entre « textes migrants » et « littérature québécoise », et elle insiste à juste titre sur l'importance des intellectuels italo-québécois et leurs liens avec la transculture. Sa remarque concernant la création de la revue trilingue « Vice Versa » qui aurait contribué à « dédramatiser le bipolarisme canadien » (16) est très judicieuse, de même que la nécessité invoquée de revoir les notions de littérature nationale et l'importance toute relative d'un canon littéraire national. Il est donc plus que compréhensible que Ferraro commence son chapitre « Textes migrants et littérature québécoise » avec un aperçu de la littérature québécoise tel que Régine Robin le représente dans son essai « Le roman mémoriel » de 1989 où elle anticipe cette « internationalisation » de la création littéraire québécoise qu'on connaîtra dix ans plus tard.

**590** Après la présentation de ces différents axes de réflexion concernant les stratégies narratives et surtout celles des auteurs italo-québécois l'auteure nous présente tout un éventail d'approches théoriques propres à cette littérature émergente caractérisée entre autres par une interdiscursivité et une hétéroglossie prononcées. Ces constatations qui n'excluent pas le discours sur l'immigration nous révèlent également un « dialogue » à distance entre auteurs québécois et auteurs italo-québécois (par exemple, le poème-manifeste « Speak white » de Michèle Lalonde, la réplique de Marco Micone par « Speak what » et celle du « Speak watt » de Régine Robin).

Il est intéressant de noter que Ferraro se penche également sur le phénomène de la « surconscience linguistique » (31) qu'on croyait réservé aux Québécois depuis que Lise Gauvin nous en a révélé son importance. Cette surconscience linguistique se voit concentrée dans quelques œuvres des années 1980 comme « Babel » d'Antonio d'Alfonso, « La Québécoise » de Régine Robin et le « Cerf-volant » de Pan Bouyoucas. Ces quelques pages constituent un excellent constat et offrent une bonne base de réflexion sur la création protéiforme de cette phase de la création littéraire au Québec.

Dans le chapitre intitulé « L'Archéologie [sic] de la transculture », Ferraro élargit son champs de réflexion et revient à la « rencontre entre les créateurs d'origine italienne et la culture québécoise » (43). Elle se base en partie sur les travaux de Pierre L'Hérault qui a mis l'accent sur l'importance de l'intervention italo-québécoise concernant la discussion de la transculture, et l'auteure de constater que ces phénomènes, la littérature migrante et la transculture, sont liés au postmodernisme. Ceci la motive à inclure un autre facteur déterminant pour le devenir de la littérature et la culture québécoise: l'apport de la communauté haïtienne (46) et elle cite comme événements phares qui accompagnent cette évolution la création de la revue « Dérives » (1975-86) par Jean Jonassaint et Frankétienne, la fondation par Antonio d'Alfonso de la maison d'édition « Guernica » qui se consacre à la publication d'œuvres littéraires en anglais et en français et la publication de l'anthologie « Quêtes. Textes d'auteurs italo-québécois » par Fulvio Caccia et Antonio d'Alfonso en 1983.

On a certes souvent discuté de l'importance de ces auteurs et de ces œuvres-charnières qui ont contribué à faire entrer le Québec et sa littérature dans la modernité (ou même la postmodernité), mais Ferraro réussit à faire passer son message avec concision et précision. Son point fort dans cette publication est bien sûr la contribution des écrivains d'origine italienne qui s'affirment sur les scènes culturelles de Montréal, mais aussi de Toronto (59), et elle constate dans ce passage que l'adjectif « migrant » ne renvoie pas à l'origine géographique ou ethnique de l'écrivain, mais souligne le *déracinement vécu* (mes italiques). C'est un aspect qui n'a peut-être pas été assez approfondi jusqu'ici et Ferraro donne comme exemple le livre d'essais d'Antonio d'Alfonso intitulé « En Italiens. Réflexions sur l'ethnicité » (2005). Marco Micone et Antonio d'Alfonso offrent encore d'autres aspects intéressants dans ce domaine, car ces auteurs pratiquent également l'autotraduction, une autre forme de surconscience linguistique (67) d'après Ferraro.

La deuxième grande partie du livre s'intitule « Dynamiques textuelles » où l'auteure développe les parcours de quelques auteurs-types (Carole David, Marco Micone), leurs thèmes principaux (l'italianité, le silence, la confrontation avec l'Amérique et une nouvelle conception de l'identité).

591

Dans le chapitre « Du vertige autotraductif » Ferraro nous présente Antonio d'Alfonso comme un exemple classique d'imaginaire translinguistique. D'après Filippo Salvatore qu'elle cite, Antonio d'Alfonso serait le miroir de ce que le Canada contemporain est devenu (« urban, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic reality ») et elle revient sur l'importance de la culture et du dialecte de départ (le guglionese dans le cas d'Alfonso).

Dans le chapitre « Diffraction intergénérationnelle et fragmentation identitaire », Ferraro se concentre encore une fois sur la carrière d'Antonio d'Alfonso qui ne se limite pas à un genre littéraire dans sa création, mais qui, au contraire, se sert de la poésie, du roman et du film pour arriver à des réécritures réfléchies et réfléchissantes entre les différentes manifestations artistiques et les interrelations entre écriture et œuvre filmique, photographie incluse. Mais Ferraro ne privilégie pas exclusivement les créateurs d'origine italienne. Elle ouvre également une porte sur d'autres origines et sur d'autres facettes de la création littéraire qui font date depuis. Il est question de Monique Bosco et de Régine Robin, toutes deux d'origines juives qui nous font vivre l'expérience d'une création non pas ex nihilo, mais bâtie sur les ruines de la mémoire, sur un certain vide. Et Ferraro de rajouter un autre aspect passionnant arrivé dans la personne du Libanais Wajdi Mouawad qui a foncièrement contribué à transformer le théâtre québécois depuis une quinzaine d'années.

Un livre original, une approche originale, qui privilégie peut-être trop exclusivement l'apport italo-québécois, mais dont on ne peut qu'approuver la constatation de Ferraro, lorsqu'elle dit : « Ainsi, à travers l'évolution récente de l'écriture migrante, la question de la recherche identitaire, présente dans la littérature québécoise dès ses origines, semble perdre son caractère national et territorial pour en acquérir un autre, plus élargi, voire universel » (128). Le livre couvre donc, de par son intitulé,

deux aspects : l'« Écriture migrante » au singulier et le translinguisme au Québec, deux aspects que l'auteure rattache surtout aux activités des écrivains et créateurs italo-québécois.

ELIZABETH SABISTON AND ROBERT DRUMMOND (EDS.). *Pluri-Culture et écrits migratoires/Pluri-Culture and Migrant Writings*. Human Sciences Monograph Series, 17. Toronto: Canada-Mediterranean Centre, 2014.

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592 *Pluri-Culture et écrits migratoires/Pluri-Culture and Migrant Writings*, edited by Elizabeth Sabiston and Robert Drummond, is a volume of thirty-three papers in French and English that emerged from a conference held at York University, Toronto in 2012. According to Sabiston's introduction, the conference and, in turn, the volume offer an "interdisciplinary" approach to migration, with papers drawn from literary studies and the social sciences. In particular, it seeks to emphasize the "cultural values that each migrant takes with him" and how these mediate the "interaction of the immigrant's original culture and that of the host country" (11-12). These claims position the volume within recent debates in migration studies, where scholars have submitted to critique such fundamental concepts as "culture" and the "nation-state," have problematized the claim to an "interdisciplinary" approach and have called us to interrogate those categories and perspectives we take for granted (Dahinden 2016, Levitt 2012). What is unique in the way this volume approaches such concerns is twofold: the first is the frame provided by the keynote address from Patrick Imbert (Université d'Ottawa), and the second is the volume's division into eight sections that approach migration through different perspectives based on a particular author, nation, methodology, identity or social activity.

Imbert's keynote address asks us to consider our understanding of migration in light of the binary between a zero-sum and non-zero-sum attitude. The former assumes that to take on a second culture and language is to replace one's first culture and language, while the latter would allow for a more open and fluid conception of the interaction between one's different cultural engagements. This illustrates an important point in relation to Sabiston's claim that the volume emphasises the interaction between a migrant's "home" and "host" cultures: in doing so, it is important to break down assumptions about the position and role of each of these cultures. Thus, if we take Imbert's paper as a frame for the volume as a whole, it asks us to read the papers that follow, not as attempts to explore a particular migrant experience in terms of the movement from A to B, but as opportunities to explore and problematize the unbounded movement they represent both between and within "home" and "host" cultures.

The eight sections that follow cover a lot of ground, but given that they have been dictated by the material available to the editors as a result of the conference, they are inevitably somewhat unbalanced in their coverage. For example, there are eight papers in the first section on an author-focused approach to migration. These explore the work of Hédi Bouraoui, a Tunisian-born writer who spent his childhood in France before moving to Canada and taking up a position as lecturer at York University. The impressive range of Bouraoui's work and the strength of his reputation in Canada render him an ideal subject for the conference, and for the reader coming to this volume from outside a Canadian background, there is much to learn here about him. Several overlapping ideas are explored in the papers, and from these emerge an appreciation of the way Bouraoui's work idealizes the world as a borderless society. The opening paper, for example, "Signes prémonitoires de crise et perspectives d'avenir dans les écrits miratoires d'Hédi Bouraoui" by Nicola D'Armbrósio, considers how Bouraoui represents the migrant not as an exile but as someone who "fait de son mieux pour contribuer au progress culturel, scientifique, social et économique de son nouveau pays" (69). The ideal of progress highlighted here connects with the second paper, "Identité et altérité dans l'œuvre de Hédi Bouraoui" by Rafik Darragi, which illustrates how Bouraoui's work explores the extent to which everyone is a form of migrant; this renders the concept a means of encouraging "incessant interrogation" (79) of the self in relation to others, encouraging the positive progression of humanity. Here, the focus on the self connects with the fourth paper, "Migration des langues et des cultures" by Boussad Berrichi, which considers the 'origin' concept in Bouraoui's work and the Berber culture from which he comes, underscoring the importance of knowing one's origins in order to transcend them and better know oneself.

593

This extended focus on Bouraoui establishes a particular interest in Francophone-African migration that is maintained throughout most of the volume. The subsequent two sections, for example, comprised of five papers each, address a range of migration contexts in which France or Quebec are the "host" cultures and the "home" cultures are primarily African. Some variation begins to emerge here in terms of disciplinary perspective, with Nadia Grine's paper "La construction identitaire chez les Maghrébins de France: Entre le désir d'être soi-même et le souci d'intégration," which uses discourse analysis of online discussion between African-French women to investigate their ideas about national identity, and Liliane Rada Nasser's paper "Libanais à Marseille: Un exemple de pluri-culture," which draws on qualitative data from interviews with Libyan immigrants to Marseille. From a literary studies perspective, there are also a range of approaches in addition to textual analyses. Kay Li's paper "Interactive Cross-Cultural Encounters: Pluri-culture and (Im)migration in the writings of Geo Xingjian" reflects on the aesthetics and attitudes of the 2000 Nobel Laureate in Literature, a Chinese immigrant to France, while Olga Stein's contribution, "Literary Prizes and Diasporic Writers in Canada: Valorization or Containment," compares the terminology of migrant discourse in Anglophone and

Francophone contexts and critiques the unity she finds across cultural perspectives.

The next section is comprised of six papers, and while it is dominated by literary perspectives, it explores a range of comparative methodologies. Sabrina Alessandrini and Francesca Gisbussi represent the social sciences in "Migration et changement social en Italie: La littérature de la migration en italien pour une éducation interculturelle," a French sociological study of Italian schools and the position of their second generation migrant children. From a literary perspective, in "La question de la transmission dans la littérature migratoire franco-arabe," Ines Horchani uses literary works to compare Arab immigration in both Canada and France, and Mouhamadou Cissé's paper "Sujets migrants et conflits dans le roman francophone: Caraïbe, Maghreb, Afrique subsaharienne" compares three texts from Caribbean, Maghreban, and Sub-Saharan African contexts, exploring the ways in which they engage with ethnic violence in migrant memory.

594 The last three sections are considerably smaller, but they each represent a very different approach to migration through the Sephardic identity, the Female perspective and various social and creative activities. Again they focus mainly on African 'home' cultures: the opening paper of "Sephardic Literature," Nina B. Lichtenstein's "Unpacking Her Cultural Baggage: North African, Jewish, and French," uses a female writer to illustrate the need to consider the Jewish presence amidst Arab and Beur migration to France in the 1950s and 1960s; Allan Weiss's contribution, titled "The Culpability of Innocence: The Encounter of Canadian Women and Africa in the Short Stories of Isabel Huggan," explores Huggan's fictional exploration of the worst of the colonial relationship between Canada and Africa. The final section is made up of two contrasting papers brought together under the rather unwieldy title "Arts, Sports, and the Creative Process: A Transcultural Dialogue." Dahou Malika considers the case of Francophone-African theatre in "L'influence occidentale dans le théâtre noir francophone contemporain," while Wally Dyba and Hernan Humana consider the case of international sport competitions in "Sport and International Relations: Does It Foster Friendship or Animosity?" The latter explores the idea that literature uses words to communicate while sport uses the language of competition, and from this premise the authors construct the broadest idea of migrational movement in the volume, as a form of movement enacted by travelling sport teams which helps to forge international relations.

The volume is brought to a conclusion by co-editor Robert Drummond, who reflects on each of the papers in turn from a social sciences perspective. Acknowledging that the majority of the papers have come from literary studies, he notes the ways in which the two disciplines can work together on migrant realities, with one interested in reaching verifiable relations and variables and the other interested in exploring individual expression and emotion. He draws a link between "genuine interdisciplinarity" where these perspectives will be taken into one another's own analyses, and the notion of pluriculturalism, as opposed to multiculturalism, where there is not only acceptance of other cultures, but a dialectic or interaction between them that creates

new processes and values. This takes us back to Imbert's discussion of the "non-zero-sum" approach, where a fluidity between "home" and "host" cultures in a migration context can allow for a more open exchange and growth. This volume reveals that there is still some way to go before attaining such fluidity, with the balance of its papers revealing the privileged position of French, of literary-textual approaches, and of Francophone-African relations. Nonetheless, the depth of insight it offers to those outside these perspectives represents a valuable contribution to the global discourse on migration studies.