Book Reviews

336 Angus Fletcher. *The Topological Imagination: Spheres, Edges, and Islands.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2016. Pp. 215.

William J. Urban, York University

In his latest work, Angus Fletcher does not so much double-down on the Romantic bet that humanistic concerns always-already trump enlightened 'progress' as suggest something much more paradoxical: it is only by returning to science that art can be shown to take precedence. But this is not the science of Galileo, Newton, or Descartes. The science of these men is deemed negative on net, having led, for instance, to the ecological catastrophe said to be awaiting our Earth. Rather, it is the science which Euler effectively inaugurated in 1735 when he solved Königsberg's Seven Bridges problem, *viz*. the mathematical field of topology. *The Topological Imagination* is to be lauded for championing the transformative power that topology has to fundamentally reshape our thinking on everything from language and literature, to reality and the world at large.

Far from anything like a formal treatise, Fletcher nevertheless begins by introducing topological principles that are, regrettably, only elaborated slowly and haphazardly throughout the remainder of the book. In these pages you learn how topology distinguishes itself from geometry by dampening concerns for the quantitative. As a logic of positioning, site or place, topology avoids measurements of size and similar magnitudes to instead focus on the perception of shape, sequence and order, as well as disparity and other deviations from ideal unity. In this way "topology insists on the human primacy of the qualitative" (169) and should therefore be a welcome addition to our interpretive arsenal, as it provides a suitable guide to our

Canadian Review of Comparative Literature / Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée
CRCL JUNE 2017 JUIN RCLC
0319–051x/17/44.2/336

aesthetic sensibilities.

Key for Fletcher is the principle of homeomorphism. Topology considers any two objects (e.g. a sphere and pyramid, or a coffee mug and doughnut) as equivalent if one can be stretched, twisted, or moulded into the other without cutting into their continuous form. Such transformations prove analogous to the complex changes taking place in our environment and in the mimetic arts. By studying the abstract field of topology, you gain insights into these and other concrete fields. *The Topological Imagination* is a work which lays out many of these insights, with the help of Einstein, Bohm, Shakespeare and Coleridge, to name just a few enlisted to the cause.

This methodological approach also raises the question of "invariance amidst change—perhaps the chief property of topological thought" (139). With Fletcher's tendency to define topology strictly in homeomorphic terms (cf. also 15, 79, 172-73), his accent on this question is coherent enough. Hence, when our imaginations mold and reshape materials into a more flexible union, we do so against the backdrop of "previous fixities" (58). Enter *the* topological figure of the book: the sphere. Of the dozens of transformations explored in this book, each is invariably discussed against an "*esemplastic* unifying vision of things" (57) of which the sphere is the ideal model. Such a model has no edges, so its smooth surface can hold out a promise of unity—at least in some future time. For Fletcher repeatedly points out how no actually existing sphere, or its topological equivalent, is completely devoid of edges. Our oblong Earth, for instance, possesses the natural edges of mountain ranges, shorelines and cellular membranes, while we continuously populate our immediate environs with the artificial edges of national borders, buildings, tables, and CDs. All of these objects equally rise up from Earth's two-dimensional surface. But in doing so, they do not substantially alter the underlying sphericity of our place in the cosmos. If Donne wrote that "no man is an island" in a phrase used to entitle the final chapter, Fletcher goes one better in fine Heideggerian fashion: islands *themselves* are never truly isolated from the "larger continent," but are instead to be "imagined to incorporate the single personhood into a vaster scale of being" (184).

Conflating topology with homeomorphism, however, has a downside. It overlooks the radical potential this science has when coupled with our human concerns. By only considering "bounded transformations" (9) of the type which leaves the underlying topological shape intact, we remain forever caught in the spherical universe of meaning. Such transformations cannot therefore account for the fact that nonmeaning and nonsense *can* and *do* exist in our universe.

Topologists, however, equally consider transformations of the non-homeomorphic type. They have established operations which effect certain cuts and sutures into spherical surfaces to arrive at aspherical surfaces like the Möbius strip and cross-cap. While Fletcher does acknowledge that the "cut creates but also threatens the continuity of a surface manifold" (166), this insight, into how cuts can effectively double as sutures, remains undeveloped. This is unfortunate since it would greatly assist his project. Thinking with the cross-cap, for instance, could free us from having to "lean

upon the sphere" (194) in our "quest for unity" (21), since this paradoxical figure harbors within itself a singular point which, nonsensically, embodies or collapses its horizon. Directly assuming such a point would suspend the need to offer up "a prayer to the horizon" for an imagined "emergent occasion" (194) to instead strategically place us within striking distance of our supposedly ailing biosphere. Doing so would not achieve the "balance of temperament" that Fletcher is looking for when praising Obama as its exemplary model (171); arguably, it is precisely the latter's reticence to act on the global stage with the full force of his office that has put our globe in grave peril, threatening to upset the delicate balance in play since 1945. Rather, the cross-cap would call us, paradoxically, to double-down on our "conquests of nature" (194) if we wish to enact the type of cuts—environmental, political and otherwise—that are necessary to sustain our Earth for current and future generations.

Despite not cutting deep enough into its spherical contours to come to pointed conclusion, *The Topological Imaginatio*n is nevertheless enthusiastically recommended. The sheer scope of Fletcher's literary excursions will be enough to entice the humanities scholar, while any scientist looking to expand his field will find it of equal value. It is a fine addition to the growing literature on how topology allows science and art to be thought together.

Yves Chevrel, Annie Cointre et Yen-Maï Tran-Gervat, éds. *Histoire des traductions en langue française XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*. Paris : Verdier, 2014. Pp. 1371.

Sathya Rao, Université de l'Alberta

L'*Histoire des traductions en langue française XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (*HTLF*) est le 2e volume d'une série qui en compte quatre, dont le dernier portant sur le XXe siècle est à paraître. À contre-courant des histoires littéraires et nationales traditionnelles, ce projet d'envergure vise à reconnaître la contribution des traducteurs et de la traduction à l'histoire culturelle de la France durant la période classique. À l'image des autres volumes de la série, celui consacré au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles est le fruit d'un travail collectif réunissant une soixantaine de chercheurs provenant de plusieurs pays.

Dès le premier chapitre, les éditeurs s'expliquent à la fois sur leur choix singulier de périodisation ainsi que sur l'importance donnée à la problématique historique du « génie des langues » à la lumière de laquelle se trouve envisagée la traduction. Traditionnellement circonscrite au seul genre des « Belles infidèles » incarné par Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt, la question de la traduction au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles se trouve ici replacée au sein d'une conjoncture sociohistorique plus large où le renforcement de l'autorité symbolique du français doit s'accommoder de l'importation

de nouveaux savoirs et figures de l'altérité (provenant notamment de l'Orient et non plus exclusivement du passé gréco-latin), mais également de la naissance d'une conscience européenne portée notamment par Benjamin Constant. Parallèlement, les XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles voient une diversification des pratiques traductives et genres traduits ainsi que l'élaboration de nouvelles formes de théorisation de la traduction.

Totalisant près de 1300 pages, l'ouvrage se compose de 14 chapitres auxquels s'ajoutent deux index, dont un regroupant quelque 1500 traducteurs en langue française. L'*HTLF* est organisé en deux parties complémentaires. La première dresse un panorama exhaustif de la pratique traductive au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles en examinant successivement la compétence linguistique des traducteurs, leurs outils de travail, leur statut socioprofessionnel ainsi que les modes de publication de la traduction. En ce qui a trait aux chapitres IV et V, ils proposent un regard plus théorique sur la traduction. Redondant à première vue, ces deux chapitres—dont les titres « Discours sur la traduction » et « Penser la traduction » paraissent se recouper—adoptent néanmoins deux perspectives distinctes. Tandis que le chapitre IV présente l'évolution diachronique de la réflexion sur la traduction qui ne saurait se limiter aux « belles infidèles », le chapitre V élargit cette réflexion à d'autres genres que la littérature tout en s'intéressant aux termes (y compris les métaphores) dans lesquels la traduction a été conceptualisée. Toutefois, certaines sous-sections de ce chapitre reprennent des points abordés dans des chapitres ultérieurs comme la traduction de la Bible et celle de la science. Du reste, ce chapitre, contrairement aux autres, ne comporte pas de conclusion, ce qui a pour effet d'en obscurcir la finalité générale.

La seconde partie de l'ouvrage explore la traduction d'une variété de genres dont les textes sacrés, la philosophie, les sciences et arts, les récits de voyage, l'histoire, le théâtre, la poésie, la prose narrative et les livres pour l'enfance et la jeunesse. Ces études de genre s'appuient, dans l'ensemble, sur une analyse détaillée aussi bien de traductions que d'éléments paratextuels (couverture, notes, avertissements, etc.). Ces analyses ont le mérite à la fois de nourrir l'enquête historique et de l'ouvrir à la réflexion traductologique. À cet égard, le choix des éditeurs d'insérer des extraits —parfois dans les langues source et cible—d'œuvres significatives est fort appréciable. Comparativement aux autres chapitres, celui consacré à la traduction des récits de voyage apparaît relativement court, soit à peine une quarantaine de pages—et possède une bibliographie pour le moins limitée. À l'image de l'excellent chapitre consacré à la poésie dont l'auteure principale est Florence Lautel-Ribstein, certains chapitres comme celui portant sur les textes sacrés—qui fait la part belle à la traduction des textes des religions abrahamiques—auraient sûrement bénéficié de la collaboration de spécialistes d'autres religions et traditions religieuses.

Au terme de son parcours de deux siècles de traductions en langue française, l'ouvrage monumental édité par Yves Chevrel, Annie Cointre et Yen-Maï Tran-Gervat révèle un panorama infiniment plus diversifié que le lieu commun (historique et traductologique) des « belles infidèles » que les théories romantiques de la traduction du XIXe siècle ont entretenu. On y voit en particulier se dessiner une

différenciation significative entre traducteurs littéraires et traducteurs scientifiques (qui pose, en filigrane, la question du statut du traducteur des sciences humaines) et apparaître une nouvelle posture de traduction qualifiée « polycentriste » (plutôt qu'ethnocentriste) en ce sens qu'elle veut ménager la sensibilité linguistique du public cible tout en s'efforçant de transmettre le génie désormais reconnu des langues source. Par le truchement de la traduction, de nouveaux genres font leur apparition à l'instar de la littérature de jeunesse, tandis qu'une poignée d'auteurs européens à l'image de Dante, Cervantès et Shakespeare accèdent au panthéon de la littérature aux côtés d'illustres classiques comme Homère et Virgile. Il ne fait aucun doute l'*HTLF* apporte un éclairage qui faisait jusque-là défaut et qui inspirera assurément de nouvelles recherches dans le domaine.

340 Rudolf Weiss, Ludwig Schnauder, and Dieter Fuchs, eds. *Anglo-German Theatrical Exchange: "A Sea-Change into Something Rich and Strange?"* Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2015.

David Barnett, University of York, UK

The title of this volume addresses a dynamic dialogue between two distinct theatre cultures, and the tome's sixteen essays cover material from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century. The blurb on the back-cover, written, presumably, by the editors, calls the collection a "seminal contribution to an under-researched field at the intersection of literary and cultural criticism, comparative literature, and theatre as well as translation studies." The text's authors do not, however, appear to acknowledge that it is their readers who make such judgements and that only time will tell just how influential the essays might be.

The essays all appear in English, something that signals an appeal to a wider audience, given the fact that German is the majority of the contributors' first language. Yet this decision is not unproblematic. First, there is no uniform policy on the treatment of German material itself. Some contributors provide translations into English throughout, others only retain the German original, and one, for reasons that are not at all clear, alternates between putting the original in the main text with a translation in a footnote and vice versa. Second, the result of translating essays into English by authors whose mother tongue is German is often messy. While translator Michael Raab offers flowing English prose, most of the other Germanophone essays are creaky and inelegant. Taking Norbert Bachleitner's essay on the censorship of English plays in Vienna as a representative example, one finds numerous Germanisms in the translations ("scientific books" (22) instead of "academic books;" the invented "apocryphic" (23) for "apocryphal"), Germanisms in textual practice (the use of the period after ordinals, in this collection particularly in the rendition of

regnal numbers), mistranslations ("police court department" for "Polizeihofstelle" (20) when 'court' is ambiguous in the sense of an aristocratic versus a legal institution) and the un-English use of prepositions ("having a child from her" (26)). In addition, one finds lengthy sentences that are not unusual in German because, as an inflected language, its structures make clear sense. In English, however, the lines can become clunky and confusing. As such, many of the essays are not the easiest of reads and can sometimes irk due to the lack of care taken in the editing process. That the three-man editorial team did not seek input from a native English speaker is hard to fathom.

The essays are certainly varied in terms of both their subject matter and their quality. The strongest are marked by clarity of argument, nuanced movement from the particular to the general, and strong scholarly practice with respect to primary and secondary material. All the following essays satisfy these criteria: Beatrix Hesse on Michael Frayn's treatment of Max Reinhardt in *Afterlife*; Christoph Houswitschka on the reception of German drama in Britain around the French Revolution; Margarete Rubik on a popular adaption of *Jane Eyre* in nineteenth-century Vienna; Ludwig Schnauder on director Peter Zadek's negotiation of Jewish characters at Vienna's Burgtheater; and W.E. Yates's study of adaptions of a play by Nestroy. Others, that are strong in parts, do not quite hit their marks uniformly. John Bull's essay on the impact of the Berliner Ensemble's residence in London in 1956, for example, certainly demonstrates a palpable effect on certain aspects of London theatre, but it is difficult to see how he reaches the conclusion that the encounter 'can be confidently argued to "have changed everything"' (63). It is also odd that Bull talks about the allegedly major effects of *Look Back in Anger* (1956) in terms of a book published in 1962 while ignoring Dan Rebellato's more measured revision of the phenomenon in his 1999 monograph *1956 and All That*. (However, in a different bibliographical league altogether, another contributor cites seven separate Wikipedia articles in his essay.) There is also a factual inaccuracy: the Ensemble's tour lasted three and not two weeks (Monday 27 August-Saturday 15 September).

The main problem with the collection concerns the role of the editors. Time and again, one finds an array of inconsistencies that should not appear in a serious academic publication. In their introduction, for example, they prioritize the term "exchange" over that of "transfer," suggesting quite rightly that the emphasis should lie on "a multi-lateral perspective" (9). However, the essays themselves almost exclusively employ the term "transfer," the one-way movement the editors criticize. As a result, there is a distinct lack of cultural interchange in many of the essays. Michael Raab's, for example, is sub-titled "New Scottish Drama at Home and in the German-Speaking Theatre." The essay, however, is more focused on the blossoming of Scottish drama and tends only to list where the plays in question have been produced in the Germanophone countries, if at all. The title is thus asymmetrical and misleading. The lack of analytical enquiry also makes the essay more journalistic than academic, and it sacrifices depth for breadth, considering too many plays and playwrights in its

twenty-eight pages.

There is also a lack of consistency in formally related essays. Fritz-Wilhelm Neumann solely discusses Alan Ayckbourn's *Season's Greetings* without offering the reader an outline of the play's plot or characters, something Raab does helpfully throughout his piece. It is dangerous to assume prior knowledge of the play, especially as Ayckbourn is a most productive playwright with an oeuvre of about eighty full-length plays. It is thus difficult to know why the editors did not request a brief explication for the benefit of the curious reader.

Elsewhere, it appears that the editors failed to address contradictions between different contributors' positions. Bernhard Reitz's essay comparing German and British theatre does not acknowledge that some of Simon Stephens's plays were commissioned and premiered in Germany, although Christopher Innes identifies this aspect in his piece. And Reitz asserts that Brecht's theatre theories "remained a mystery" (275) for reviewers of the tour in 1956 because they had not been published in English at the time. Bull, however, discusses the tension between perceptions about the theory and reality of the practice in his essay (51-53), clearly demonstrating that the reviewers did have some purchase on the issues involved. While no one expects the authors to cross-reference their texts themselves, the editors should be conferring and making suggestions to their contributors.

Methodology is also an issue that needs to be addressed in a collection that purports to consider central concerns about cultural exchange. There is an amount of assertion in several of the essays. One of the starting points for some of them is the contrast between the German as a directors' theatre and the British as a playwrights'. While this distinction is undeniable, it is treated in remarkably absolutist terms whenever mentioned, with Schnauder, for example, contending that directors "rule supreme" (305) in the Germanophone context. This reductive assessment has been challenged frequently in recent years, and while Peter Boenisch's book *Directing Scenes and Senses: The Thinking of "Regie"* (2015) may have come too late for this volume, Duška Radosavljević's award-winning *Theatre-Making: Interplay Between Text and Performance in the 21st Century* has been available since 2013.

Elsewhere, one can detect some odd argumentative practices. Dieter Fuchs's essay on the reception of Synge and O'Casey on the Austrian stage imposes a Freudian interpretation on *The Playboy of the Western World* and is then surprised when it is rarely acknowledged in production reviews. Such *ex negativo* criticism undermines the author's claims and gives a distorted understanding of the play itself. And even a very solid analytical essay, like Rudolf Weiss's on Ronald Harwood's *Collaboration*, can be formally sluggish as it takes a scene-by-scene analysis of the play rather than identifying certain dramaturgical features and then drawing in material from the scenes themselves. The slender essay by Susanne Vill describes an intertextual student adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, yet, of the eleven pages, six are taken up with plot description (342-47) when the full text is supplied in the appendix. Interesting questions about the development of the material and the acting process

are glossed over in a matter of sentences.

What is perhaps the greatest shortcoming of the volume is its failure to deliver on its title's promise to address broad issues concerning the interactions between two theatre systems. The majority of the essays are case studies of particular instances of cultural interchange, yet there is little engagement with theories of cultural transfer or indications of how the particularities of the analyses might inform the bigger picture in a meaningful way. Neumann's conclusion that a German translation of *Season's Greetings* is bound to fail (222) may be true for that play, but does not extend beyond it. Norbert Greiner's argument that "each production calls for its own translation, because every production is a translation" (144) at least shows that both text and context might inform the mediations required for a successful production. This is one of the few essays that moves beyond its own case studies to make some wider claims.

As should be evident, I have found the collection disappointing, although the fault cannot wholly be attributed to the contributors. It is the editors' responsibility to fashion the various pieces into readable and engaging essays. They cannot choose the topics selected by their authors, but they can influence their direction, approach, and presentation. It appears from the variable quality of the essays that the authors have been virtually untouched by the editorial process. The result is an uneven volume that has missed several opportunities to make major contributions to the topic of intercultural theatrical exchange.

Timothy J. Van Compernolle. *Struggling Upward: Worldly Success and the Japanese Novel*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2016. Pp. 264. $39.95 hardcover.

Yukiko Shigeto, Whitman College

Timothy J. Van Compernolle's *Struggling Upward: Worldly Success and the Japanese Novel* makes a meaningful contribution to existing studies of modern Japanese novels by probing the intersection between the novel and the nation from the angle of *risshin shusse* (ambition and worldly success). This is a fresh approach that allows for the crisscrossing of not only literary genres but also a wide range of non-literary print media. Most important, it brings to centre stage an investigation into the literary chronotope as it relates to the dominant time-space of the nation. It comes as somewhat of a surprise that this is the first monograph to undertake a concerted engagement with the topic of *risshin shusse*, given, as noted by Compernolle, its role as "one of the most powerful ideologies of modernity" (2). In Meiji Japan (1868-1912), the discourse of *risshin shusse*, along with the related ideas of individualism, self-help, and social evolution, played a key role in forging a particular type of aspiring,

forward-looking national subject. These attributes were necessary for the emergent capitalist nation-state in its drive to gain equal standing with its western counterparts in the age of imperialism.

One of the key terms in this book is "chronotope of success," a phrase Compernolle coined. This particular chronotope consists of linear temporality and hierarchically organized space. In a typical success story, an ambitious individual moves from a rural area to the metropolis in order to attain higher education and subsequent social advancement. Compernolle, for his purpose in this book, draws on Jay Ladin's reorientation of Mikhail Bakhtin's conception of chronotope "around the portrayal of character in fiction and with the way authors, narrators, and readers relate to that character" (10). Building also on Nancy Armstrong's formulation of novelistic narratives as what "inscribes this desire [ambition] in the hero or heroine as a rhetorical additive and follows his or her effort to close a gap between that desire and the circumstances of birth" (8), Compernolle sets out to analyze the protagonist's subjective experience of time-space and of the narrative strategies employed to make that legible for readers. In keeping with Ladin's argument that it is in relation to other space-time-event clusters that an individual chronotope gains contour and becomes visible, throughout the book Compernolle carefully attends to the tensions and negotiations that the chronotope each protagonist inhabits bears with the dominant chronotope of success. In fact, the final decade of the Meiji period, the book's focus, witnessed the production of less straightforward success stories than were provided in the earlier decades of the period. Writers during the last decade of Meiji instead produced more nuanced narratives that unfolded the chronotope of success with varying inflections. This owes not only to the maturation of novelistic form, but also to how the late Meiji was a time, particularly with the onset of the economic downturn triggered by the financial panic of 1907, when social advancement became fiercely competitive and only attainable for those who could survive the race. It was a time when "a range of important issues related to social mobility and national space come to the fore" (15). Some of these issues are dealt with in the novels explored in this book.

In Chapter 1, through clever and close analyses of works by one of the representative writers of Japanese naturalism, Tayama Katai, Compernolle foregrounds a "chronotope of inertia" (37) in which the chronotope of success is inverted. Tayama's novel *Inaka Kyoshi* (*A Country Teacher*, 1909) is examined as a paradigmatic example in which the protagonist is forced to take up a job in the countryside due to his family's dire economic straits, and endures perpetual deferment of his desire for social advancement. The beauty of Compernolle's study lies in his exposition of the way nature functions within the chronotope of inertia as a compensatory object for deferred desire. The second chapter likewise turns to the novels in which the countryside figures importantly, but this time as a place where success can be attained. These novels are called *rishi shosetsu* (novels of ambition), non-canonical novels serialized in the magazine *Seiko* (success) whose mission, echoing the government's concern, was to disseminate the ideologies of ambition, self-help, and success for the

purpose of revitalizing the rural areas that were threatened by rapid industrialization and urbanization. *Rishi shosetsu*, Compernolle contends, provided readers with models of alternative, less-individualistic pathways to success in the countryside. These success novels, while keeping with the progressive temporality of the standard chronotope of success, presented an altered spatial configuration in which rural society was valorized as a utopian organic community sustained by both mutual aid and capitalist entrepreneurial spirits.

The strongest contributions Compernolle's book makes on the topic of *risshin shusse* are in Chapters 4 and 5, which the issues of gender and colonialism take centre stage, respectively. While the topic of *risshin shusse* has received critical attention in previous scholarship, Compernolle may be the first one to explore the question of *risshin shusse* as it pertains to women. Through careful intertextual analyses, he throws light on the shared narrative structure and ideological orientation between Kosugi Tengai's melodrama, *Makaze koikaze* (*Demonic Winds, Passionate Winds*), serialized in the Yomiuri newspaper in 1903, and sensational newspaper articles. The city is represented as a dangerous place for women who, moving there to gain higher reaches of education, find themselves seduced by romantic liaison. He goes on to argue that the time-space the novel's heroine inhabits is the "chronotope of scandal" which "feature[s] a temporal axis that borrows from the chronotope of success, but, in its anxiety over corrupted female purity, savagely distorts it so as to make social mobility impossible for the female character" (152). Such a literary chronotope, he points out, ominously foreshadowed the delimitation of "success" for women that was to take place with the 1910 reform of the Women's Higher Education Act. This reform confined the goal of women's education and "success" to becoming good wives and wise mothers for the sake of the nation.

Chapter 5 explores colonial and semi-colonial spaces in relation to the ideology of *risshin shusse*. Similar to the way the countryside functioned in Tayama Katai's work, colonial lands functioned as a space for those derailed from the path of success in the metropole to pursue new opportunities and adventure. Compernolle illustrates how the colonial and semi-colonial spaces of Korea and Manchuria in many of the novels became the outermost ring of a concentric circle that constitutes the chronotope of success. Through his analysis of Takahama Kyoshi's 1910 novel *Chosen* (*Korea*), he persuasively argues that "once colonial and semicolonial lands were moved from offstage to the main site of novelistic action after annexation, that outer ring of success was in turn subdivided into still more discreetly coded rings to account for ever finer distinctions of failure, all connected by the railroad" (196).

Whether it is an inverted or distorted chronotope they experience, none of the characters in the novels examined in Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5 fundamentally put to question the ideology of worldly success. In this sense, Chapter 3 stands out, for the novels examined here, the first trilogy of Natsume Soseki, foreground the protagonists who have not internalized the ideology of *risshin shusse* and remain at odds with it. Compernolle shows the subtle ways in which Soseki overlays principal human

relationships dictated by monetary and utilitarian values with one governed by affective values. He argues that by doing so, Soseki obscured the distinction between these two contrasting values from within. While illuminating in its own right, this discussion of values could have been more fully integrated into the discussion of the chronotope. The chapter would have merited more thorough considerations of how the foregrounding of affective value shaped the spatio-temporal configurations of Soseki's novels.

Overall, the book would have been made more cogent had discussions of peripheral topics been better linked to the main thread. To give one example, the discussion of psychoanalytic theory in Chapter 4, disrupts and compromises, rather than aiding, his otherwise compelling textual analysis. Despite this small drawback, however, *Struggling Upward* is a welcome study, enriching the existing corpus of studies of Meiji novels. As noted in the preface, since the ideology of worldly success pervaded all industrializing and industrialized countries in the turn of the last century, I believe this book would be of interest also to those outside the field of Japanese literature who are researching the mutually constitutive relation between this prevailing ideology of modernity and the modern novel.

Imelda Martin-Junquera, ed. *Landscapes of Writing in Chicano Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Grażyna Zygadło, University of Łódź

Ecotheory studies categories of human commitment to the natural world in order to demonstrate how various social and cultural norms exert unjust dominance over minority groups and women as a result of different power structures and numerous associations made between nature and those groups. While there exists a long tradition of representing women as irrational, emotional, and mystified beings driven by their biological impulses, ethnic minorities have been similarly represented as barbarians, lustful beasts, or childlike creatures who need to be controlled or tampered. The consequences of these depictions are far-reaching for both women and ethnic minorities. Both groups have been discriminated against and exploited by white men on the basis of their assumed superiority resulting from their rationality, capability of directing others, and rootedness in culture, which Western civilization places above nature. Moreover, as indicated by the postulations of the Christian tradition and the Biblical order, nature was to be conquered and all life forms, due to their inferiority, could be used by man according to his will. Ecophilosophy advocates, like many First Nations and indigenous cultures, believe that the alternative worldview that values the earth as a sacred place, embraces all life forms as valuable, and recognizes human beings' dependency on the natural environment is not only

desirable, but achievable. Yet, it requires a profound change in our mentality and an acknowledgement of the fact that in order to end patriarchal systems and privilege hierarchies, women, minorities, feminist scholars, and ecological activists need to work together to include local and minority cultures and their spiritualities in mainstream discourse, and make interdependencies of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality visible. In order to achieve environmental justice, liberating and empowering strategies must be as inclusive as possible, thus celebrating the diversity of both human and natural world. Gloria Anzaldúa called that idea the theory of inclusivity, or New Tribalism, in which rejecting the model based on binary oppositions we have to "leave our safe Self and look through the eyes of the Other," thus accepting the fluidity and flexibility of our identity and the concept of *mestizaje*. Once we adopt the theory of inclusivity, "the whole world may become *un pueblo*" (Anzaldúa 568).

These and other aspects are dealt with in the book under review, which is a collection of eighteen interdisciplinary essays written by a number of prominent European and American scholars. All of the papers in the study revolve around broadly understood concept of a landscape as it is reflected in the variety of Chicano/a works. They comprise short stories, novels, and poetry, as well as films and theoretical approaches. The authors of essays included in the volume examine diverse "physical, ideological, symbolical and spiritual" (1) aspects of landscape from the perspectives of ecofeminism and ecocrticism. At the same time, the writers under discussion represent the whole panorama of Chicano/a literature.

Dealing with the recurrent interrelationship between nature and culture in Chicano/a literature the collection fills the gap in "the apparent lack of diversity in ecocritical studies that analyze literary works" (1). Therefore, the texts included in *Landscapes* contribute to the broader understanding of, first, the role of minority literature in ecotheory, and second, the ideas of space in both rural and urban settings and landscapes of power in the Chicano/a context.

The volume is divided into three major parts. The first part discusses female authors; the second examines male authors; and the third is devoted to more theoretical and linguistic issues. I must admit that this division is very clear, and allows ideas to flow efficiently from one text to another. As a result, *Landscapes of Writing in Chicano Literature* reads almost as a monograph, and not as a collection of essays, because at the moment one author leaves a certain topic or issue, the next one picks it up smoothly and continues his/her message.

The first part features several essays on Sandra Cisneros's writings. For example, Elisabeta Careri discusses the landscape of domestic sphere in Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* as a gendered space, a popular approach in feminist theory, Toni Morrison's and bell hooks's[1] theoretical essays being the most apparent examples. Yet, while in many cases home becomes a realm of freedom and empowerment for women, in Cisneros, according to Careri, it is a place of reclusion and isolation, and moreover, women are often denied the possibility to escape it. This limitation of urban space is juxtaposed with the liberating features of natural environment such

as trees, earth, and sky.

In turn, Elena Aviles examines the links between the notion of homeland and the idea of cultural heritage seen through the feminist cultural lens in Cisneros's short story "Woman Hollering Creek," thus stressing the fact that female authors alter the traditional representation of landscape, creating their own female geography that crosses gender, race, class, and sexual borders. She aptly claims that they also concentrate on the healing and empowering aspects of Nature which allows those who were silenced for a long time to "holler" loudly. Female writers subvert and manipulate representations of landscape in order to create a female-centered perspective. Finally, Ellen McCracken provides a comparative reading of Cisneros's literary footnotes and perfomative strategies, which she calls epitexts, and sees them as the author's deliberate method of using ethnic signifiers to stress her ethnic identity. She then juxtaposes them with the ostensive lack of such devices in the works of Junot Diaz, who instead uses linguistic spectacularity to display a macho image of Dominican reality.

Elyette Benjamin-Labarthe discusses this contrast between male and female writing when she distinguishes Chicana poetry from its counterparts written by male authors, because the former associates women with nature in order to liberate them. Therefore, many of the most renowned representatives of Chicana poetry, such as Alma Villanueva, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Gloria Anzaldúa, Bernice Zamora, and Pat Mora, use the omnipresent imagery of desert landscapes, particularly depicting women as resilient as cacti, as common metaphors. Though this chapter is well argued, for me there has always existed a danger in relating women with nature, since in most cases throughout history, this association was used against women, and sooner or later, it led to alienating them from culture. Therefore, this imagery should be treated with caution. Still, as long as writers and readers are aware of this tradition and its consequences, it remains within acceptable limits to make such a connection. Simultaneously, it is also a perilous task to divide literature into feminine and masculine within a cultural scheme with a precisely-defined hierarchy in which male writing is considered to be universal and human, while female writing is often referred to as just "women's scribbling." The challenge for female authors is to find a way to escape these dangers and at the same time sustain ethnic and gendered distinctiveness. Benjamin-Labarthe demonstrates that the authors she discusses successfully weave a feminine flavour into the landscapes they describe.

The greatest weakness in the collection is Carmen Melchor Iniguez's essay, which seems to have no central idea or leading motif. For example, on several occasions, the author uses the phrase "these women," but it is not clear to whom specifically she is referring: all Chicanas, female writers, or female Chicana writers. This essentializing approach not only blurs the overall message of the text, but also displays a very general level of reasoning. Additionally, some errors appear in this article; for example, Cherie Moraga's book is entitled *Waiting in the Wings*, not *Waiting for the Wings* (86), Todorov's first name is Tzvetan, not Check (86), and on page 91, the author mentions Ana Castillo's essay but neither provides its title nor cites it in her references.

Furthermore, some statements can qualify as at least debatable and controversial, if not as falsehoods. For example, claiming that "Malinche sold her roots and her peoples in exchange for a more comfortable life" (87) is disputable, but referring to the feminist movement as anti-male (95) is erroneous. Overall, there is some potential in this text, but that potential becomes lost in the chaos of generalizing argumentation.

The second part of the volume concentrates on male Chicano literature, and here we see that the authors focus on particular Chicano writers, including Rodolfo Anaya. For example, in his thought-provoking paper, Manuel Broncano reflects on the celebration of hybridity and the notion of convergence in Anaya's writings. He compares Anaya's view on frontiers to Gloria Anzaldúa's border theory since, according to him, both authors see the border as a site of cultural and racial negotiations and a place of mediations between various people. They also use mythical elements in their works, and stress the healing powers of nature and the unity of land that is inextricably linked to communal identities.

Carmen Flys Junquera also examines Anaya's work, but she emphasizes the ideological significance of the use of nature and landscape motifs as two essential elements of his oeuvre. She refers to Anaya as a "poet of the *llano*," a term frequently used to describe him, since *la tierra* is the grounding of his Chicano heritage, and both he and his characters undergo an "epiphany of landscape" (162) in which they experience absolute recognition of being one with the earth. This leads to a stimulating discussion of the effects of globalization on both the environment and the lives of people, especially those who are migrants, displaced, and/or refugees. As Junquera observes, although modern technologies and globalization have reduced the significance of homeplace, migrants and displaced people still suffer from uprootedness, proving that our sense of belonging is interrelated with the notion of place. It is no wonder then that ecocriticism and ecocritical theory and literature stress the importance of communal identity and privilege the local over the global. Anaya's contribution to the formation of the myth of Aztlán and the fact that his characters rarely travel illustrate this continuous presence of nostalgia for rootedness.

Furthermore, Diana Tey Rebolledo claims in her paper that "representations of landscapes by Chicano and Chicana writers are […] intrinsic to a poetics of belonging" (131) and she cites Pat Mora, Richard Rodriguez, and Jimmy Santiago Baca to demonstrate how their works expand this concept. Moreover, she notices that where Mora upholds her cultural heritage, Richard Rodriguez rejects it in favour of the possibility of embracing his homosexuality, and Baca joins these two perspectives.

The last section of the volume is devoted to the linguistic aspects of Chicano/a literature, in which the authors problematize the usage and reception of Spanish in the United States. Jose Antonio Gurpegui analyzes the reasons behind "the gradual decrease in the historic importance" (189) of Spanish, even though it had been present in the territory of the US long before English, and it was also the language of early colonial literature and official documents. Maria Lopez Ponz aptly notices that translation of US Hispanic literature into Spanish requires a "special translating

approach" (209) since it poses numerous difficulties related to the fact that Latino/a writers use a hybrid border language that is not standardized or homogeneous, and as such, cannot be easily translated. She then discuses different methods for translating these texts, her major argument being that the in-betweenness of this hybrid language makes reproducing the cultural plurality in the original a demanding task. Finally, Cecila Montes-Alcala discusses the state of research on code-switching and provides her own analysis of a number of works by contemporary Chicano/a authors who have incorporated this technique into their writings. She concludes that while code-switching in oral communication still leads to social stigma and accusations of illiteracy, on the literary stage it has been legitimized, though "most bilingual texts have not been given full credit as part of canonical US Latino literature" (226).

For me, the most influential essay in *Landscapes* is "Sitio y lengua: Chicana Third Space Theory" by Norma Elia Cantu, probably partly due to my personal academic interest in Border Studies, but also due to its effective contribution to feminist theory.

Cantu describes the Border region, the place where she grew up and which influenced her academic and personal life, and develops her earlier hypothesis that "geography is our destiny" (173) while introducing a new theory that she calls Third Space Chicana Feminist Theory (TSCFT). According to Candu, TSCFT is needed to deconstruct the existing mythology of the border. It is a remarkable epistemology, based on the well-established theories of Gloria Anzaldúa, Emma Perez, and Chela Sandoval, that also provides new paradigms and tools for critical analysis of the literary and cultural productions of the area. For that purpose, Cantu examines celebrations of three festivals: Los Matachines, La Quinceañera, and the Princess Pocahontas pageant. One element of this theory that is particularly worth mentioning is the concept of third space, the invention of which explains how "binaries cease to exist" (180). As a result, hidden transcripts and melding traditions that resist cultural hegemony lead to new cultural expressions that constitute and contribute to border identity.

On the whole, *Landscapes of Writing in Chicano Literature* is an informative and valuable volume, enriching the discipline of Chicano/a studies with the ecofeminist and ecocritical perspectives of an international body of scholars. The authors of these essays concentrate on significant contemporary issues of the Chicano/a community such as the processes of transculturation, the motif of home, and an increasing focus on the earth. They debate the pros and cons of the fact that diaspora writers are often perceived as carriers of cultural tradition and are thus required to resist acculturation, and how this expectation influences their role in American society. The essays' focus on posthumanist and nature-friendly perspectives proves that Chicanos/as show interest in environmental justice and share concerns about the future of our planet. In fact, this earth-centered approach to literary and cultural studies is the major asset of the whole volume, expanding our knowledge of the Nepantla concept and contributing to our understanding of how it influences the contemporary border identity of Chicano/a people.

Note

1. See hooks's "Homeplace: A Site of Resistance" and Morrison's "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation."

Works Cited

Anzaldúa, Gloria, and AnaLouise Keating, editors. *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*. Routledge, 2002.

hooks, bell. "Homeplace: A Site of Resistance." *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. Turnaround, 1991, pp. 41-50.

Morrison, Toni. "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation." *Black Women Writers, 1950-1980,* edited by Mari Evans, Anchor-Doubleday, 1984, pp. 339-45.

Laura Robson, ed. *Minorities and the Modern Arab World: New Perspectives*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2016. Pp. vii+318.

Ziad Bentahar, Towson University

The Arab World continues to be too often gazed upon as though it were a monolith, despite decades of knowledge production aiming for the subversion of such reductive yet tenacious views. The very phrase "*The* Arab *World*," which remains the proper expression used to refer to the region, suggests a singular world of its own, separate and insular, but also consistent in its peculiar features. The implication is not only that it is distinct from other "Worlds" (including, presumably, the "Western World"), but also that its inhabitants are the same wherever they are found across a remarkably vast geography, and of whatever walk of life they may be, while attributes such as complexity, diversity, and heterogeneity are the monopoly of The West.

This is the sort of outlook that this book of essays edited by Laura Robson challenges by contributing new perspectives on the various manners in which "minority," as an identity, functions in an Arab context. Explicitly building on Albert Hourani's seven-decades-old book *Minorities in the Arab World*, Robson updates the understanding of Arab minorities from one that essentially means "either non-Sunni Muslim or non-Arabic-speaking or both" (1), to one that accounts for the processes through which these minorities have been formed and constructed since the late nineteenth century. Therein lies the second constructive contribution of the book, in that it not only shuns reductive characterizations of this so-called Arab World as an essentially uniform place (basically inhabited by Arabic-speaking Sunni Muslims, with a few exceptions here and there), but it also claims for Arab societies a place in

modernity. If Orientalist outlooks frequently reduce Arab societies to single attributes (Islam, more often than not, or the Arabic language for instance), they are also problematic when they paint these societies as relics of the past. Robson's volume challenges such standpoints as well by examining the concept of Arab minority within a dynamic contemporary social context.

Ultimately, Robson and the contributors to this book show how the notion of minority in the region took its current meaning in a historical context marked by nationalism and the rise of Arab nation-states, yet also became defined beyond these nation-states with contributions from diaspora communities. Rooted in the discipline of history but also including multidisciplinary approaches, the book consists of an introduction and three parts, each containing four chapters. The chapters in the first part, "Conceptualizing Minorities," collectively provide a useful theoretical framework by building a nuanced definition of "minority," as a concept, in the wake of the Ottoman Empire. The second part of the book examines various instances of ways in which minorities have defined themselves in a context of rising nationalism. The chapters in this section address cases in Iraq, Egypt, and Yemen, and include religious (Jewish, Coptic Christian), ethnic (Assyrian), and linguistic (Mahri) minorities. Finally, the third part shows the role of transnationalism in the processes that create minority identities.

"Conceptualizing Minorities" focuses on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, namely the decline of the Ottoman Empire, in order to show how the concept of "minority," as defined by States in the Levant and Egypt in that historical context, served political purposes but did not necessarily reflect actual experiences and senses of identity. The communities studied in this part are religiously-defined, and illustrate how the popular view of non-Muslims in Arab societies as minorities came to be constructed. The second part, "Minorities, Nationalism, and Cultural 'Authenticity,'" builds on the preceding part by analyzing ways in which given communities responded to their new minority statuses in the twentieth century. The cases addressed in the four chapters in this section suggest that minorities in Egypt, Iraq, and Tunisia have tended to resist the imposition of this label, and championed alternative nationalist discourses. The final part, "Minorities in the Transnational Sphere," takes a more global approach, and brings diaspora communities into the analysis. The chapters in this section suggest that the identities of minority communities have not been shaped by local factors only, but that international factors have often been equally important in their formations.

One striking and most welcome aspect of this book is the vast geographic spread that it covers. Part of the issue of overgeneralizing attributes of Arab societies is precisely that these societies differ quite a bit from one another in many respects. Consequently, any scholarly endeavor focusing on one corner of this vast geography will be problematic if it claims to further our understanding about Arabs at large. Rather than provide the reader with a set list of minorities and a specific description of their defining attributes, Robson focuses instead on the processes whereby they

came to be defined. As a result, the essays in this volume better theorize the formation of minority identities by finding commonalities in a wide range of contexts. Particularly commendable are the book's forays into North Africa when the bulk of research on Arab societies focuses on Egypt and the Levant (a fact reflected by the other titles in the series on Middle East Studies at Syracuse University Press, where the present work appeared).

One aspect of *Minorities and the Modern Arab World: New Perspectives* that may leave the reader wanting is the absence of a conclusion. While it is not uncommon for edited volumes not to have a conclusion, in this case a word of closing might have helped distill the overarching arguments to better show their broader implications, as well as suggest avenues for further research on minorities not covered in this book. Overall, however, such avenues are inevitably opened by the publication of this volume, and one only hopes that it will not be as long a wait before more research is conducted on this subject as it has been since Hourani's aforementioned book upon which the present one builds.