

BOOK REVIEWS

WHITE, R.S. *Avant-Garde Hamlet: Text, Stage, Screen*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2015. Pp. viii+209. US\$82.00 hardcover, US\$42.99 paperback, US\$40.50 ebook.

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At first glance, the title of R.S. White's study of *Hamlet* and the avant-garde, and of *Hamlet* as avant-garde, may seem paradoxical and perhaps even oxymoronic, given the play's reputation as "a high-water mark of canonical art" (1) and the ambivalent attitude Hamlet expresses toward many of the newer theatrical trends of Shakespeare's own time (e.g. *Ham.* II.ii. 38-45, 337-40; V.ii. 184-91; see White 69-71). However, the canonical status of Shakespeare in general, and of *Hamlet* in particular as "the most performed and most famous play in the history of the world" (2), can easily lead present-day readers to forget that in many ways *Hamlet* is a revolutionary play, in both form and content. Within its own fictional world, its protagonist questions the workings of his society and of his own mind in equal measure; and in the world(s) of authors and readers, it challenges the conventions of Elizabethan revenge tragedy, and the worldviews that informed that genre, even as it uses those very conventions and worldviews. Though the editors of the First Folio classified *Hamlet* specifically as a tragedy, it incorporates, and has incorporated, elements of many other genres, bringing to mind Polonius's listing of "tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene indivisible, or poem unlimited" (*Ham.* II.ii. 392-98), and it has been adapted into numerous forms including stage productions, films, novels, illustrations, musical compositions, and interactive games, to name but a few.

White reads *Hamlet* as an avant-garde play, or as a play about the avant-garde, because of its “experimental form and adversarial stance, unlike other plays of its period” (2), characteristics that would go on to inspire many of the twentieth-century artists, writers, and directors to whom the term *avant-garde* is most commonly applied. For him, the enduring appeal of *Hamlet* is not only as an iconic piece of literature/drama in itself, but as a work that inspires and invites change both in-world and in reality: “it exhibits elements of disjunctive absurdism, numinous symbolism, surrealism, dark humour, and theatre of cruelty” (4); and its title character is an archetype of “those who [...] seek to challenge authority and the trappings of power” (5), yet also one who resists action even, and as much, as he resists authority. It has provided avant-garde creators such as Bertolt Brecht and Heiner Müller with some of their ideas for their radical approaches to drama and to politically-charged storytelling, which then reciprocally inform productions and studies of *Hamlet* itself, simultaneously reinforcing its canonical status and making this familiar work—or set of works—and the world(s) in which it is appreciated into something new.

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The first chapter, “Aspects of Avant-Garde,” discusses the difficulties in defining such a slippery term as *avant-garde*, particularly the appropriateness of using it to describe a play that was written long before the concept as we know it was codified—as much as avant-garde can claim to be codified at all. Although the term as a reference to artistic movements meant to challenge the social, political, and aesthetic traditions of their parent cultures was first used in the early twentieth century, many of these movements did draw upon the dramatic and literary conventions of Shakespeare’s time, using the artistic and sociohistorical past as pathways to possible futures. White here describes as avant-garde those works and creators that are driven not so much by specific aesthetic concerns as by seeking to subvert or overturn existing conventions and norms, especially ones that these creators see as oppressive, stifling, or false. White also differentiates *avant-garde* from the related categories of *modern*, *contemporary*, and *postmodern* in that *modern* and *contemporary* are relative terms dependent on time and place rather than on artistic and social trends, while *postmodern* can be taken as a synonym, an antonym, and/or a subset of avant-garde but ultimately “denies the concept of originality and artistic authenticity” (21) by which the avant-garde generally defines itself. For White, avant-garde works are those that “have the rare quality of maintaining their newness through time, often over centuries” (15) rather than quickly flaming out, becoming dated, or becoming part of the mainstream. It is this paradoxical combination of novelty and familiarity, which Ben Jonson acknowledges in the introduction to Shakespeare’s First Folio, that White argues makes *Hamlet* an avant-garde play both because of and despite its exalted position in the canon(s) of world literature.

In the second chapter, “Avant-Garde *Hamlet*, Then and Now,” White situates the play in the context of its immediate predecessors, Christopher Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus* and Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*. Both Marlowe’s *Faustus* and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* attended the University of Wittenberg, whose historical association with

Martin Luther was well known to Elizabethan audiences, and both confront questions of life, death, and morality. Both Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* treat themes of revenge and madness, and use devices such as ghosts and embedded plays. Marlowe and Kyd were also both accused of sedition, a charge that Shakespeare himself narrowly escaped when the Earl of Essex commissioned a production of *Richard II* just before his failed rebellion in 1601, around the time that *Hamlet* was being written and/or first performed. All three authors and their main characters, then, formed what White characterizes as "an unholy trinity of early modern avant-garde drama, pushing against artistic conventions, religious restrictions, and political orthodoxies" (36).

Though the story of *Hamlet* was already familiar to his immediate audience, Shakespeare added new characters, built upon existing ones who had merely been in the background in the source texts, and injected humour into what was generally treated as a dark tragedy. He further confined most of the action of the play to Elsinore itself, rather than spreading it throughout Denmark and England as in his sources. But perhaps his greatest innovation in *Hamlet* is his use of soliloquies as glimpses into a character's mind, with the title character having no fewer than seven (*Ham.* I.ii. 129-59, I.v. 92-112, II.ii. 501-60, III.i. 56-90, III.ii. 351-62, III.iii. 73-97, IV.iv. 32-66). White links Shakespeare's innovations in soliloquies both to the rise of essays, as exemplified by Michel de Montaigne and Francis Bacon, and to the popularity of sonnets, a poetic form with which Shakespeare would also become indelibly associated. He further regards them as ancestors of Brecht's defamiliarization technique, which sought "to challenge audiences with moral and political questions that provoke them to think instead of allowing them to bathe passively in emotion or identify through empathy with only one character's viewpoint" (41).

The third chapter, "*Hamlet* as Avant-Garde Text," examines the play as a conflation of multiple texts, genres, worlds, and themes, "a self-destructing artifact, subverting and blowing up its own plots" (55). It uses the conventions of the revenge tragedy, for example, only to invert them; it has come down to us in three distinct versions in varying degrees of fidelity to an "original" production now lost to time, and these three versions have often been conflated in modern editions; and its central figure is a young intellectual student existing on the borderline of law and sanity despite being the son and nephew of kings. Although the editors of the First Folio classified *Hamlet* as a tragedy, the First and Second Quarto texts call it a "Tragical History," and as White notes (61-63), there is even some warrant for thinking of it as a comedy despite its ending with the deaths of all the main characters, particularly because of Hamlet's wit—an ironic contrast to the Old Norse meaning of the name *Hamlet* as *foolish*. Its use of embedded narratives and of self-conscious commentary about acting draw attention to the artificiality of the fictional world; and both within and outside that fictional world, it often seems to ask more questions than it answers, giving the impression of an experiment in fragmented narrative.

White sees the influence of *Hamlet*, in varying degrees, on Einsteinian relativ-

ity, Romanticism, modernism, postmodernism, Foucauldian philosophy, Lacanian psychology, quantum physics, poststructuralism, and various literary theories, all of these stemming from the play's emphasis on uncertainty and multiple interpretations. One particular manifestation of this uncertainty and multiplicity is its treatment of insanity (73-81). A common theme in revenge tragedy, insanity has also been connected to the notion of the avant-garde, particularly in Roy Porter's studies of the linkages between insanity, creativity, and exclusion from sociopolitical and cultural norms. Indeed, White points out that the Mousetrap in *Hamlet* is an example of the role that the avant-garde, and insane, playwright Antonin Artaud envisioned for drama, as "an active intervention in real life in order to precipitate change in people and situations" (77-78). So, perhaps, in its own way, is what is probably the best-known passage in all of Shakespeare, Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy (*Ham.* III.i. 56-90). The speech sets up several oppositions, analogies, and choices: to live or to die and to accept or to oppose—which could be read either as *to live is to accept and to die is to oppose*, or as *to live is to oppose and to die is to accept*. The questions that Hamlet asks himself in the play's world and the reader/audience in the actual world, and the multiple interpretations thereof, have helped to make this soliloquy an inspiration to many throughout the world, in the centuries since the play's first performance, who have positioned themselves as "existentialists, freedom fighters, [and] rebels against conformism" (85). In Shakespearean iconography, especially in the paintings of Eugène Delacroix, this soliloquy has often been conflated with an equally memorable moment, Hamlet's address to Yorick's skull in Act V, scene i. According to White (82-89), these two scenes serve similar purposes. They have helped to codify Hamlet in the popular imagination as a brooding figure, often dressed in dark colours, preoccupied with the idea of death—an image that is also often stereotypically associated with avant-garde artists. They also remind both the characters and the reader/audience of the ultimate absurdity of life and the inevitability of death, while simultaneously ensuring the immortality of the fictional world and its central figure.

The "afterlife" of Hamlet and his world is a key theme in the remainder of White's book, beginning in the fourth chapter, "*Hamlet* and Avant-Garde Literature," which examines how *Hamlet* has inspired other authors and works that have themselves been seen as avant-garde in their own time and later. White chooses as his starting point Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (91-93), whose recurring character Parson Yorick is both a literal and a literary descendant of the Shakespearean jester. In the Romantic era, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and *Wilhelm Meister's Apprentice* helped set the groundwork for the nineteenth-century German fascination with "a temperamentally melancholic Hamlet, a figure later to be amplified by Nietzsche into a representative modern man full of rejective disgust for the world" (93). The chapter includes four subsections on early twentieth-century writers in English who were inspired in different ways and degrees by *Hamlet*: T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, D.H.

Lawrence, and William Butler Yeats. The protagonist of Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is both a type and an antitype of Hamlet: he is a timid every-man in comparison to the noble Hamlet, and is seeking love rather than revenge, but they both ask themselves the same kinds of questions about the world and their place in it, with Prufrock ultimately concluding "I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be" (qtd. in White 99). Joyce's character Stephen Dedalus in *Ulysses* can also be read as a Hamlet-figure, especially given the novel's many Shakespearean allusions and its focus on "the son's tangled relationship with his lost or estranged father" (100). By contrast, Lawrence's response to *Hamlet* in *Twilight in Italy* and elsewhere is one of visceral dislike, marked by a sense of "iconoclasm and antiauthoritarianism" (104) born in part from his reaction to Elizabethan literary treatments of sex, disease, and death. Yeats's last play, *Purgatory*, is strongly influenced by *Hamlet* in its depiction of ghosts, the afterlife, revenge, and the father-son relationship, with its protagonist, the nameless Old Man, a counterpart of sorts to both Claudius and Hamlet.

The fifth chapter, "On Stage: *Hamlet* and Avant-Garde Theatre," focuses on various innovative and experimental productions of the play, and works inspired by it, from the eighteenth century onward. Ironically and paradoxically, early 'traditionalist' productions such as David Garrick's, Edmund Kean's, and William Poel's could be seen as avant-garde for their respective times in their desire to return to as close of approximations as possible of Elizabethan theatrical conventions. White identifies the 1909-12 collaboration between Constantin Stanislavsky and Edward Gordon Craig in Moscow, combining the former's approach to psychological realism with the latter's minimalist design, as the first production of *Hamlet* that could truly be called avant-garde as we know the term today (114-15). Bertolt Brecht used many of Shakespeare's plays, including *Hamlet*, as inspirations for his own, and his ideas of epic theatre and the defamiliarization effect were strongly influenced by Shakespearean dramatic traditions, particularly their potential as responses to both German Romanticism and Marxism (115-21). Productions such as Charles Marowitz's 1965 "collage" (121) and Heiner Müller's *Die Hamletmaschine* (123-25) drastically cut, rearrange, and rework the text(s) into something both *Hamlet* and not-*Hamlet*, radically challenging audience expectations yet still demonstrating the endurance of the character and his world even as everything is changed. Revisionary, and sometimes also revisionist, adaptations such as Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (129-30) and Howard Barker's *Gertrude the Cry* (130-31) create counterpart worlds to Shakespeare's by telling the stories of other characters and providing commentary on the nature of fictional worlds. Conversely, one-person productions such as Robert Wilson's *Hamlet: A Monologue* and Robert Lepage's *Elsinore* (133) take Hamlet's position as the play's central figure to its logical conclusion, in having one actor play all the roles.

The sixth chapter, "On Screen: *Hamlet* and Film Genres," reminds us that like Shakespearean drama itself, film represents the intersection of old and new, of popular and classical, of mainstream and avant-garde. Indeed, Shakespearean adaptations

helped give legitimacy to film as a medium while also experimenting with its possibilities. White chooses several specific examples of *Hamlet* on film and films inspired by *Hamlet*, from around the world, as brief case studies in this chapter. Svend Gade's 1920 German film featuring Danish actress Asta Nielsen as Hamlet (142-45) was revolutionary not only in its reimagining of Hamlet, in both the fictional and actual worlds, as a woman playing a male role, but also in Nielsen's often sexually-charged approach to the role and to the relationship between Hamlet and other characters, particularly Ophelia and Horatio. Laurence Olivier's award-winning 1948 film (145-48) is perhaps a surprising choice given its acclaim and popularity, but White makes an intriguing case for it as an avant-garde production in terms of its use of film-noir imagery. Grigori Kozintsev's 1964 Russian film, based on Boris Pasternak's translation, became a thinly-veiled commentary on the "spying [...] corrupt machinations, problems of political succession and attempted assassination" (149) present both in the fictional Elsinore and in the actual Russia of the post-Stalinist era. Metin Erksan's 1976 Turkish film *Kadin Hamlet* follows Nielsen's example in casting women as Hamlet, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern, a decision meant to underscore the idea of the play as the typically feminine genre of "family melodrama" (156). Celestino Coronado's 1976 film featuring Helen Mirren as Gertrude and Ophelia (157) shows influence from fellow avant-garde filmmakers such as Jean Cocteau in its depiction of the play and its world as a meditation on madness and dreams. Bruce Robinson's 1985 cult classic *Withnail and I* uses *Hamlet* as a leitmotif of sorts for its title character, an out-of-work actor who laments he "will never play the Dane" (160) and ends the film with a poignant recitation of Hamlet's speech "What a piece of work is a man" (*Ham.* II.ii. 280-91). Three modernized versions—the 1987 Finnish film *Hamlet Goes Business* (162-63), Stacy Tittle's 1999 independent film *Let the Devil Wear Black* (163-65), and Michael Almereyda's 2000 film featuring Ethan Hawke as Hamlet (165-67)—all set the play in the late-twentieth/early-twenty-first-century world of big business, with Hawke's Hamlet in particular explicitly characterized as an avant-garde art student. Steven Cavanagh's 2005 English/Gaelic bilingual adaptation for the Derry Film Initiative (167-69) uses the play as an analogue to the religious conflicts in Northern Ireland, with Hamlet's study at Wittenberg, a centre of early Protestant thought, as an important background reference. Vishal Bhardwaj's 2014 film *Haider*, the third of a trilogy of Shakespearean adaptations set in India, similarly transposes the play to the border disputes between India and Pakistan as a plea for "the Gandhian way [...] that conflict cannot be resolved by further deaths but only by some kind of peaceful means, including hard-won and painful forgiveness" (173). White ends the chapter with brief references to other films, both mainstream and independent, in many different genres, including Western, comedy, action-adventure, mystery, and fantasy, that have used *Hamlet* and/or its characters as inspiration, acknowledging that even if these films are not avant-garde in themselves, their transformations of the play are "tirelessly ingenious" (177).

The book concludes with an epilogue reminding readers that *Hamlet* has been such

fertile ground for avant-garde writers, artists, and filmmakers precisely because of its status as both single and multiple texts, both popular theatre and classic literature, both a political fable and an existential fable, both a psychological study and a family story, juxtaposing Catholic and Protestant influences, “mingling kings and clowns, tragedy and comedy, madness and sanity” (185). For writers, *Hamlet* is a reflection on influence and nostalgia, represented by the Ghost and Yorick; for dramatists, it is a means of challenging orthodoxies via orthodox texts; and for filmmakers, it is a manifestation of the desire to change both actual and fictional worlds. White’s book is a fascinating addition to scholarship on Shakespeare and Shakespearean adaptations that invites and challenges its readers to (re-)examine this familiar work, or set of works, from new and different perspectives.

SHIRANE, HARUO, TOMI SUZUKI, AND DAVID LURIE, EDS. *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016. Pp. xx+847. CDN\$223.95 hardcover, US\$42.00 ebook.

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Creating a literary history of the writings of a single author can be a daunting task, and one that can consume a significant portion of the career of a scholar; creating such a history for the literary output of a nation is a vastly more challenging undertaking, especially for a nation that has been producing literature for nearly two millennia. The simple act of defining what constitutes literature itself presents a conundrum, as does defining a starting point when the origins of that national literary corpus lie in orality rather than the written word. But this is the task that the editors of and contributors to *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature* have set themselves, and it is a challenge to which they have magnificently risen.

The word *literature* can cover a staggering range of material, from poetry to governmental proclamations. It is the challenge of categorization to which the editors first turn, before presenting the eighty chapters which the sixty-seven contributors from around the world have prepared. The sheer organizational scope of the project is impressive, as is the tremendous scholastic depth of the material in those chapters. The arrangement is chronological, but within each section we find a diversity of voice, focus, and approach that permits an intelligent and illustrative survey of the myriad forms and themes of Japan’s literary realm, across the many ages and divisions that establish the canonical branches of its structures.

The editors begin their task of presenting their contributors’ chapters with a general introduction, which explains the process of the collection and justifies its scope. Here, we read a true understatement: “Japan has one of the richest and most complex literary traditions in the world, and defining and describing it is difficult” (1). Quite!

But the editors do an admirable job of placing this literary history within an effective set of frames—those of the main periods familiar to every historian and scholar of Japan, from ancient times through the Heian, medieval, Tokugawa, and modern eras. This progression from era to era is most natural, of course, but it presents the benefit of allowing the reader to appreciate the continuities and innovations across time in the flow of literary ideas. Within each period, key literary forms dominate the tastes and conceptions of writers, readers, and scholars; the contributors to this volume demonstrate how these forms interact, influence, and transition into each other synchronically and diachronically to provide a rich tapestry of connections and patternings. The editors further address the fundamental questions of what constitutes “literature,” and, more pertinently, what constitutes *Japanese* literature. Although this has been a question since the earliest days, when scholars and poets often wrote in Chinese even after the development of the native Japanese *kana* syllabaries, it has become especially important in the modern period, in which writers

248 in Japan may be using languages other than Japanese, and the ethnicities of those writers may be international. This particular set of issues receives special focus in the final section of the volume, covering the modern period, from 1868, the year of the Meiji Restoration and Japan’s full embracing of its position in a world of western industrial and colonial domination, to the present day. However, the questions of what constitutes *literature* and *literariness* run throughout the collection, and permit the editors and contributors to include genres as diverse as Chinese poetry, diaries, medieval and contemporary drama, serialized novels, warrior tales, Confucian and nationalistic philosophy, satire, translations of Western works, and even cinema.

One strength of this volume is its situation of literature firmly within the broader historical issues and contexts of the periods it covers—we receive a solid understanding of how literature, conceptions of literature, and of literariness interact and engage with other political, ideological, and intellectual trends and transformations, the better to see literature as an inextricable component of the development of Japan as a whole. Too often historians overlook the function of literature as an engaged, critical aspect of the expression of individual and collective identity—as problematic as this word may be on a “national” scale—to focus instead, and not inexcusably, on the grand events that shape a civilization as it moves through the flow of time. Here, in the pages that introduce the fundamentally chronological divisions of the collection, we see literature as a deeply, organically *necessary* component of its ages; it is through literature that the ages manifest the flowering of their characteristics, and these characteristics, vast and varied, remain primarily two things: political and literary.

Politics and literature merge in productive ways in this collection, as we see the emergence of vernacular literature, in the Heian era (784-1184 CE), as an opportunity for alternative voices and concerns both at court and in the provinces that were gradually gaining the power that would eventually plunge Japan into civil war. The increasing importance of women writers, which the development of *kana* syllabary supported and facilitated during the Heian era, allowed both private poetic collections

and the diary to emerge as significant opportunities for intellectual engagement—and to prepare the way for the growth in fiction, the narration of works that were not histories but rather the product of the human imagination, as an acceptable art form in its own right. It is through diaries and poetic diaries that the voices which come to us from the Heian era retain their grace, but it is through the monumental achievement that is the *Genji monogatari* that later generations received inspiration to *create*—and vernacular literature, the product of a Japanese writing system and the women who made sterling use of it, made this inspiration possible.

One of the interesting features of this volume as a history is that it is not simply a chronological analysis of the development of Japanese literature, but also of the *concept* of literariness, and, importantly, a history of how successive ages have made specific works canonical. We have, then, a history of Japanese literature, beginning with the *Kojiki* and the *Man'yōshū*, for example, as well as a history of these works themselves, from their earliest appearances to their later receptions and their ascension to places of reverence within the realms of Japanese art and civilization. The scholars at work here situate these representative masterworks within their periods and within their genres—so we read how the compilers of the *Man'yōshū* were aware of, and used the structures of, earlier, though now lost, poetic anthologies from both Japan and China. In this regard, this volume gives us a critical engagement with the processes responsible for establishing the contours and dimensions of literariness as an ongoing developmental mechanism, but one that, while expanding to incorporate new additions and variations, maintains its sense of tradition and continuity to preserve pre-existing conceptions of what constitutes the art of words. This is what a true history should do: point from the past to the present, and thence out to the future to facilitate and reassure an open-mindedness to the value of emerging forms and ideas. This is especially true of a history of literature, in that language arts both pull and are pulled by the living voices around them to ever-varying forms of expression, while acknowledging that the *content* of that expression, the essence of the human condition, may well remain constant across millennia.

Having read through the nearly 900 pages of this collection of essays, I can say only one thing: this is a *phenomenal* achievement that belongs in every library, everywhere—university, public, or private. The essays here introduce, in an intelligent, accessible way, the flows and currents that have traversed Japanese literature across the 1500 years of its history, and provide insightful considerations of how those currents continue to influence contemporary writers both within Japan and abroad.

KNOWLES, RIC. *Performing the Intercultural City*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2017. Pp. 274 illus. US\$75.00 hardcover, US\$29.95 paperback.

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250 In the introduction to *Performing the Intercultural City*, Ric Knowles states that his book is intended to deal with what he calls the shifting ecologies of contemporary intercultural performance in Toronto (ix). He is interested in “the performative constitution of social identities and intercultural memories, the development of diasporic cultural forms, performative cultural mediation, and the emergent circulation of performance networks” (4). As part of a critique of both official multiculturalism and traditional intercultural theories, he seeks to understand how “individual gendered, raced, and classed subjectivities and community identities within the contemporary multicultural city are not just reflected or given voice but are *constituted* through performance” (2-4; emphasis in original). Adopting the frames of actor-network theory, rhizomatics, relational aesthetics and radicans, and heterotopics (5), Knowles focuses on the network of companies and actants that he identifies as constituting Toronto’s performance ecosystem. For him, this means analyzing the work of people of colour and companies that challenge the hegemony of whiteness on the city’s stages (17). Therefore, his definition of Toronto’s intercultural performance excludes commercial, mainstream, and classical theatre, as well as francophone and regional Canadian drama. He also excludes productions emerging from European diasporic communities, such as Jews and Roma, and communities of gender and sexual difference. These exclusions may disappoint readers, such as myself, who are drawn to the book’s title.

In the two chapters of Part One, Knowles lays out his critique of official Canadian multiculturalism and government policies for funding the arts. He laments the commodification of ethnicity, the exclusion of First Nations, and the emphasis on cultural memory and heritage that seems aimed at managing diversity with nostalgia. The challenge he sees is to create new diasporic identities through performance in the contemporary urban environment. Two of the examples he proposes—*Fish Eyes* by a Bengali Canadian and *Singkil* by a Filipina Canadian—incorporate traditional dance forms in ways that he claims embody new diasporic identities. *The Scrubbing Project*, by mixed-race Indigenous women, attempts a collective healing of trauma and a renewal of cultural memories through performance. *Body 13* brings together a group of immigrants from diverse non-European countries who work through difficult memories to forge new identities. For reasons that escape this reader, Chapter Two also includes a discussion of *The Sheep and the Whale*, a translation of a French-language play by a Moroccan immigrant to Quebec, which is about Maghrebian and sub-Saharan migrants trying to reach Spain on a Russian ship.

Part Two examines the “development of culturally specific dramaturgical forms emerging from the histories and historicized bodies” as an “essential step in the

performative constitution of intracultural community identities in diaspora” (65). Chapter Three presents Filipino Canadian dramaturgy as developed by the Carlos Bulosan Theatre, founded in 1982 as the Carlos Bulosan Cultural Workshop. Knowles begins with some historical background on the ethnic and religious diversity of the Philippines and Filipino immigration to Toronto, followed by brief descriptions of key productions in the evolution of a distinctly Filipino Canadian dramaturgy. *Miss Orient(ed)* uses the beauty pageant form to play with and undermine stereotypes. The collective creation *People Power* employs an episodic structure to tell the story of the assassination of Ninoy Aquino and the popular, nonviolent uprising that toppled the Marcos dictatorship. Going back to earlier historical periods, *In the Shadow of Elephants* dramatizes resistance to Japanese occupation and other colonial powers, using dance, music, and puppetry, and invoking precolonial belief systems.

Chapter Four, “Indigenous Knowledge, Contemporary Performance: Dramaturgies of Decolonization,” covers a diversity of topics and productions whose connections to the Toronto performance scene often seem tenuous. In describing Native performance culture, Knowles includes works that draw from different First Nations and that cross national boundaries. It was not entirely clear to this reader how the pages on Indigenous mounds in Ohio, Louisiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Oklahoma, or on a play centred on the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair, *Sideshow Freaks and Circus Injuns*, directly pertain to intercultural Toronto.

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The aesthetics and hybridity of Afro-Caribbean diasporic theatre are explored in Chapter Five. After some brief information on the history of Black theatre in Canada, Knowles describes how the four Black theatre companies in Toronto are inventing a distinctive pan-Caribbean aesthetic that is hybrid, creolized, political, and open to queer and female voices. In addition to staging carnival, calypso, and reggae music and dance in new ways, Toronto Afro-Caribbean theatre employs storytelling, call-and-response, and “dub” (performance) poetry. The language of performance is often “nation-language” (the preferred term for African-influenced creolized English) and the action sometimes dramatizes historical resistance to slavery and oppression. *Obeah Opera*, for example, revisits the Salem witch trials from the point of view of Tituba (incorrectly identified as born in Barbados) and *I Marcus Garvey* is a bi-drama based on the life of the Jamaican Black nationalist leader. The most original contributions to Black performance in Toronto are ahdri zhina mandiel’s “dub theatre” and d’bi.young.anitafrika’s “biomyth monodrama” (neither artist capitalizes her name). Knowles describes “dub theatre” as building

upon the heterogeneity and carnivalesque hybridity of existing Caribbean and Caribbean Canadian theatrical forms by introducing into the mix the language and politics of dub poetry “womanized” through the admixture of automythobiography and embodiment in the choreographed movement of powerful Black women’s bodies. (117)

“Biomyth” is defined as “the poetic reinterpretation of the lived experience” using “folklore, myth, and magic” (121).

The final section, “Mediations,” attempts to demonstrate how the theatre companies of the “brown caucus” mediate performative intercultural exchange by using “borrowed or invented aesthetic and technological forms and discourses” (129). Chapter Six considers the work of Modern Times Stage Company and its intercultural productions of high modernist classics by Ionesco, Genet, and Beckett, adaptations of Persian modernist and contemporary Iranian plays, and Eastern appropriation of Western classics such as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* in a minimalist expressionist style. Although this presentation of Modern Times Stage Company is interesting, it could have been clearer on how this work contributes to the constitution of a new diasporic community identity. The same can be said of Chapter Seven (co-written with Jessica Riley), which offers a lengthy account of the improvisational process that produced Aluna Theatre’s collective creation *Nohayquiensepa*. In staging the negative impact of Canadian mining operations in Colombia on Indigenous people, Aluna uses various technologies and postdramatic strategies to test the limits of the audience’s empathy.

252 The brief final chapter presents Cahoots Theatre Company, the first Toronto company with an explicitly intercultural mandate. Knowles credits Cahoots with playing a central role in the developing discourses around multiculturalism, interculturalism, and diversity since its founding in 1986 as Cahoots Theatre Projects (176). Beginning with the 1990 Write About Now conference, Cahoots assumed a leadership role in Toronto and Canada’s intercultural (for people of colour) performance ecology (177). Over the years, different artistic directors have redefined the mandate of Cahoots. Moving away from concepts of identity politics, multiculturalism, and cultural diversity, Cahoots has questioned Western aesthetic expectations and promoted new artists (some from refugee communities) and a diversity of practice.

In his “Acknowledgements” at the beginning of the book, Knowles explains that earlier versions of much of the material have previously been presented in conference papers and invited lectures, and published in essay collections and scholarly journals (xiii-xiv). In the “Conclusion,” he attempts to bring together the disparate strands of the seven chapters by arguing that the different companies and cultural communities frequently “come together in an interculturalism that is multiple, fluid, and dynamic, modeling an emerging rhizomatic practice for other increasingly multicultural cities around the globe” (186). He points to the recent development of increasing involvement in international, hemispheric, and transnational networks. Knowles also reiterates his description of Toronto’s intercultural ecology as “*intracultural*, functioning across cultures *within* the nation rather than transnationally” (189; emphasis in original). He concludes by highlighting Aki Studio, a site administered by the Indigenous Native Earth Performing Arts, which has become a site in which various groups of formerly marginalized people (of colour) are coming together to perform the intercultural city.

FALARDEAU, MIRA. *L'art de la bande dessinée actuelle au Québec*. Laval : PU Laval, 2020. Pp. 175 illus. CDN\$29.95 paperback, CDN\$29.95 ebook.

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Le livre de Mira Falardeau est à la fois très intéressant et très utile. Et cela est dû au fait que l'auteure travaille et s'amuse comme femme-orchestre dans le milieu de la BDQ depuis plus de 40 ans. Elle a en effet terminé son « mémoire » [maîtrise] en histoire de l'art à l'Université Laval sur « L'humour visuel » en 1978 et sa thèse de doctorat sur « la BD faite par des femmes en France et au Québec » à la Sorbonne en 1981. Elle publie alors presque chaque année, ici un article (dont le plus fondamental s'intitule « la BD française est née au Canada » [2000]), et là, un livre : de *La Bande dessinée au Québec* en 1994 (Boréal), en passant par des études sur la caricature et le cinéma d'animation au Québec, jusqu'à ce livre aujourd'hui. Mais Falardeau est davantage qu'une auteure, elle fonde aussi une maison d'édition (Falardeau), enseigne quelques années au niveau post-secondaire, crée ses propres strips et BD (dont une adaptation de « *La Mercière assassinée* » de Anne Hébert en 2000 chez Soulières), organise des expositions, et participe activement à de nombreux événements dont les deux grands festivals de la BDQ, à Québec et à Montréal.

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C'est dire que ce livre est l'œuvre d'une auteure érudite et expérimentée. Le livre n'apporte rien de nouveau au sens académique (recherche). Comme ses ouvrages précédents, ce livre est une œuvre de vulgarisation, mais dans le plus noble sens du terme. La « bibliographie des livres consultés » très succincte et très éclectique (de Groensteen et Fresnault-Deruelle à quelques articles académiques, et d'une thèse de doctorat à des articles de journaux [*Le devoir*]) le montre bien. Mais l'organisation claire, appuyée par l'excellente qualité de l'édition, de la mise en page à la qualité du papier et à la reliure, permettra à beaucoup d'apprendre beaucoup sur cette BDQ qui est encore assez peu connue. Nul doute donc que l'ouvrage sera accueilli très positivement par les bibliothèques, les lecteurs et les lectrices francophones, et au-delà du Québec.

L'ouvrage comprend essentiellement trois parties : une introduction, elle-même divisée en quelques brefs chapitres, le cœur de l'ouvrage qui comprend 30 mini-chapitres, chacun sur une auteure de la BDQ actuelle, et une troisième partie faite de plusieurs petits chapitres dont un plaidoyer pour la BDQ.

Une première chose intéressante dans ce livre c'est qu'il ne parle pas seulement des auteur·es de BDQ mais aussi de ce que Howard Becker appelait le monde des arts (*Art Worlds*, 1988, nlle éd. 2008), c'est-à-dire de tous les facteurs et agents qui coopèrent pour que, dans ce cas, les lecteurs aient un livre en mains : les éditeurs, les festivals, leurs réseaux et leurs prix. L'ouvrage contient ainsi une section entière sur les revues dans laquelle Falardeau explique très clairement combien elles étaient utiles tant comme « modèle économique » (3) qui permettait de bien payer les auteur·es, que comme « ferment créatif et de diffuseur » (4) : « les grandes revues

étaient comme le point de départ d'une chaîne de diffusion qui aidait tous les acteurs, publics autant qu'auteurs » (6). Elle y cite aussi une revue peu connue aujourd'hui, contemporaine de ses équivalents français, *Ah ! Nana* (1976-78), et américain, *Wimmen's Comix* (1972-92), intitulée *La vie en rose* (1981-87) où Obom s'est fait le crayon. Pour le chercheur, ceci montre combien il reste encore beaucoup à explorer puisqu'il n'existe aucune étude académique sur cette revue, alors que sur d'autres, « masculines », comme *Croc*, il y a une thèse de Louis Longpré (2006) et un excellent livre tout récent de J-D. Leduc et M. Viau (2020). Elle ne cite pas explicitement les imprimeurs, les distributeurs, les libraires et les bibliothécaires, mais on sait qu'elle connaît leur rôle capital. Et on comprend en lisant l'ouvrage que cette connaissance et conscience de l'importance des multiples facteurs de ce monde de l'art bédéique ne vient pas de lecture académique (comme l'œuvre de Becker, elle-même résultant de l'étude empirique), mais de son immense et profonde expérience du terrain.

254 Cependant, comme le titre l'indique clairement, c'est bien à l'art qu'elle s'intéresse. Après l'introduction, elle consacre une quinzaine de pages aux genres où elle distingue cinq catégories : l'humour, l'aventure (y compris les « comic books »), la fantasy et la SF, l'avant-garde, et la BD jeunesse. Elle n'aborde que brièvement cette dernière même si cette vaste catégorie se porte plutôt bien et donc n'a pas vraiment besoin de nouveaux soutiens. Elle n'inclut pas non plus la BD utilitaire, ni d'ailleurs la BD québécoise anglophone car, écrit-elle (2), cela a déjà été fait par Andy Brown (même si j'arguerais que le livre de Brown n'est pas du tout le pendant ou équivalent au sien puisqu'au-delà des différences de format et de style, *BDQ : Essays and Interviews on Quebec Comics* est presque exclusivement dédié à la BD d'avant-garde et aux relations entre les deux solitudes dans la BD montréalaise). Dans cette section dédiée au « genre », on constatera que, d'une part elle offre peu de pages sur les catégories 2 et 3, et ceci est dû au fait qu'elles sont les moins développées dans la BDQ. En effet la BD de genres (aventure, SF, policière), contrairement aux USA et même en France (sans parler du Japon) est quantitativement pauvre. Sans doute est-ce le résultat de la petitesse du marché québécois. Conséquemment, les auteurs qui veulent travailler dans ces genres vivent et/ou publient à l'étranger. Beaucoup des auteurs québécois (masculins !) travaillent en France et aux USA, certains y sont très populaires (Djief, Shelton, Labrosse, en France; et Yannick Paquette chez DC et Marvel, François Vigneault chez Study Group Comics). À l'inverse, Falardeau consacre de nombreuses pages à l'avant-garde (ici classée de manière intéressante comme un genre!). Elle personnalise même les huit auteurs de ce genre en leur donnant des surnoms poétiques (e.g., « le graffiteur prolifique » pour Eric Asselin plus connu sous le nom de Leif Tande; « la poétesse intello » pour Julie Delporte). Dans cette section elle nomme et caractérise brièvement un certain nombre d'auteur.e.s que l'on sent bien qu'elle affectionne, mais que, pour la majorité, elle ne reprendra pas dans le cœur de l'ouvrage car l'espace est nécessairement limité.

Le cœur de l'ouvrage (situé au milieu—et quantitativement de loin le plus important—p. 33 à p. 155 = 120p sur 175p) est bien une présentation de l'art des auteur.e.s

québécois·es actuel·le·s. Si le titre est très précis, la définition de « québécois » est plus problématique. Selon Falardeau, la BD est québécoise lorsque son auteur est né au Québec et/ou y est publié (3). Si c'était aussi simple, Joe Shuster, né à Toronto, co-auteur de *Superman*, serait un auteur canadien ! Cependant les 30 auteurs choisis sont tous facilement identifiables comme québécois (le seul étant né à l'extérieur est Jean-Paul Eid). « Actuelle » renvoie à des auteur·e·s encore vivants des trois générations récentes : le plus âgé étant né en 1951 (Real Godbout), le plus jeune en 1986 (Samuel Cantin). Beaucoup de ces auteur·e·s sont connus dans les milieux de la BD mais la majorité vivent difficilement de leur passion. Et c'est aussi cela qui a motivé cette publication.

Dans sa « préface », Falardeau explique que l'idée de ce livre vient de deux événements : le premier, c'est la récompense offerte à deux auteurs québécois underground de longue date, Valium et Siris (1) en 2018; et le deuxième, c'est une journée d'étude sur la situation de la BDQ en 2017, qui elle-même était influencée par les États généraux de la bande dessinée (EGBD) en 2015 où « 1500 artistes français ont répondu à un sondage permettant de constituer une immense base de données sur les créateurs de BD en France » (157). L'hommage à la BDQ (1) se termine donc par un plaidoyer pour soutenir le monde des créateurs et acteurs de la BD comme cela est fait pour « d'autres formes d'art [qu'elle ne mentionne pas mais que l'on comprendra comme étant l'opéra, le théâtre, la musique classique] par une série d'initiatives » qu'elle énonce en 10 points (159-160) très sensés. On notera qu'elle a peut-être oublié la traduction, outil essentiel de diffusion des œuvres, y compris de la BD.

Dans ce cœur de l'ouvrage, chaque mini-chapitre porte sur une auteur·e et fait environ 4 pages complètes, dont une introduction avec photo ou un montage photo et/ou dessin selon, je suppose, le désir de l'auteur·e, à côté d'un mini-texte de présentation, un texte introductif d'une page, une planche exemplaire de l'auteur·e, et une analyse d'une page et demi de cette dernière. Le choix comme elle le dit dans l'introduction à ce cœur de l'ouvrage est nécessairement subjectif mais il me paraît cependant relativement représentatif des trois générations (années 1970, 1990, 2010). On compte 10 femmes et 20 hommes, tous blancs sauf Obom (mais il est vrai qu'il y a extrêmement peu d'artistes non-blancs travaillant ou publiés au Québec), et tous francophones sauf un canadien anglophone bilingue (Daniel Shelton). Le deuxième choix est la planche analysée. Chaque auteur ayant au moins plusieurs albums à son acquis, la sélection n'est pas toujours évidente. Là aussi ces BD couvrent tous les genres de l'autobiographie à l'aventure, de la BD ado (e.g., *Hiver nucléaire*) à la bande dessinée adulte. L'auteure couvre aussi tous les éditeurs (des plus petits—e.g., Front Froid—ou plus grands—e.g., Pastèque), des québécois aux non-québécois (e.g., Glénat-Québec—français; Kennes—belge). Sous la page exemplaire, toutes en noir et blanc, six informations précises et utiles : titre, éditeur, année, pagination (n.p.; x pages), n. et b. (ou couleurs), et public visé (ado, tous publics, adultes). Ces planches sont parfois autonomes au sens de gag d'une page (*Les Nombrils*), mais le plus souvent elles font partie d'une histoire plus longue (venant d'une courte nouvelle de 5-6 pages

[Doucet, Valium]) ou d'un album complet, de 50 pages [*Le Comte des Lumières* de Djief et Gloris, 2009] à 200 pages [*S'enfuir* de Delisle, 2016]).

A la question « Pourquoi cette analyse ? », l'auteure répond : « Parce qu'à travers ces dissections, le lecteur sera invité à saisir toutes les nuances de ce langage de la BD, à la confluence de toutes les formes d'art : à la fois cinématographique, théâtralité, prouesse graphique, jeu d'ombres et de lumière, art du dialogue, acrobatie du mouvement, musicalité des onomatopées, emphase des mimiques, subtilité romanesque et narrative. En fait ça donne un peu le vertige ! ». Effectivement, et encore aurait-elle pu ajouter le jeu avec les couleurs, le lettrage et les polices de caractères, les bulles (rondes, carrées, en couleur), et davantage. Cette mise en évidence de l'hybridité de ce média rappelle les études académiques récentes, de *Naissances de la bande dessinée : de William Hogarth à Winsor McCay* de Thierry Smolderen (2009) à *Comics and the Senses* de Ian Hague (2014). Ce qui montre encore une fois que l'auteure se tient bien au courant de ce qui s'écrit sur la BD aujourd'hui.

256 Une liste de BD pour enfants est fournie en fin de volume, suivie d'une autre liste de BDQ pour la bibliothèque idéale, puis d'un index des auteur·e·s cité·e·s.

Avec une très belle couverture faite d'une trentaine de « personnages » dont certains déjà très connus comme Paul, « Doucet », « Obom » et Vicky, le livre offre donc une vue très ouverte et complète de la production de la BDQ actuelle. C'est un outil agréable pour tous les publics qui désirent apprendre et découvrir une BD qui est encore trop peu connue au Québec mais plus encore dans le reste du Canada : des professeur·e·s du secondaire (pas du primaire dans ce cas puisque les BD sont toutes pour adolescents—12 ans minimum—sauf peut-être pour *Hiver nucléaire* à partir de 9-10 ans) à tous les lecteurs adultes, y compris dans les autres pays francophones.

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FREED, JOANNE LIPSON. *Haunting Encounters: The Ethics of Reading across Boundaries of Difference*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2017. US\$55.00 hardcover, US\$26.99 ebook.

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This book by Joanne Lipson Freed is illustrative of a kind of criticism indebted to, and in one sense following from, the “ethical turn” in literary studies. To make this introductory point is not to reduce the originality of Freed’s study, but it is to suggest that in identifying and discussing a range of “haunting encounters” in narrative fiction, Freed is influenced and aided by important work done in the field of narrative ethics. The influence of James Phelan, whose rhetorical narrative theory provides a significant part of Freed’s theoretical framework, is particularly noticeable. In common with Phelan, Freed is “specifically concerned with the intersection between various formal aspects of narrative and moral values” (Phelan). Moreover, aligning her approach with that of “humanist ethics,” she acknowledges “otherness as important for ethical engagement with narrative” while emphasizing “the benefits of connecting across difference” (Phelan).

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While Freed’s book is inspired by Phelan’s work, it is also influenced—in a positive sense of the word—by scholars such as Adam Zachary Newton. A notable critical gain of Newton’s contributions to narrative ethics is his demonstration, in a series of books from *Narrative Ethics* (1995) onwards, that narrative and ethics are inseparable. There are very few narratives entirely free of ethical issues, nor are there narratives whose moral values are not shaped through narrative form. These moral values may be different both in kind and scope, thus often creating tensions typically related to, and expressed through, the varying views, actions, and attitudes of the text’s characters and narrators. The ethical questions raised by a narrative text are often prompted by such tensions—questions asked by the author via the different agents of a narrative, and questions asked by the reader about the narrative. As Hanna Meretoja and Colin Davis put it, “the ethical dimension of a narrative takes place in dialogue with the reader or the viewer” (Meretoja and Davis 7).

A demonstration of Meretoja and Davis’s important point, Freed’s book is also conversant with the main ideas of narrative ethics expounded by Newman. Emphasizing the crucial role of the reader or viewer, she asks, “what role, if any, can literature play in bringing us into ethical relation with one another?” (3). This is a key question in her book. Focusing on a subset of contemporary ethnic fiction and Third World fiction that “addresses itself, at least in part, to privileged outsiders (frequently white and/or Western) across boundaries of cultural difference,” Freed argues that “these works complicate familiar models of narrative ethics, both those that credit fiction with a special ability to inspire empathy and fellow feeling, and conversely, those [...] that cite alterity, or difference, as the necessary foundation for ethical relationships” (4).

For Freed, variants of haunting are a recurrent theme in the works she chooses to discuss. She argues that in responding to the imperatives of cross-cultural reading, haunted fiction illustrates “the ways in which both sameness and difference are essential to our ethical encounters with literary texts” (30). Following the Introduction, each chapter discusses a pair of works that, partly because they are framed differently both culturally and aesthetically, illustrate how fiction becomes ethical through the interplay of, and tension between, sameness and difference. In Chapter One, “Figures of Estrangement,” Freed discusses Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* alongside Mahasweta Devi’s less well-known novella “Pterodactyl.” This comparative analysis proves critically productive, underscoring the significances of both literary texts’ interventions. Both aesthetic and political, these interventions are distinctly ethical: in different yet surprisingly similar ways, they speak for those at the margins of society: recently freed black slaves in *Beloved*, India’s disenfranchised indigenous minority in “Pterodactyl.”

- 258** Discussing Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony* and Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* in Chapter Two, Freed uses trauma theory “to explore how histories of imperial domination refuse to be confined to the past” (31). The choice of trauma theory in this chapter may seem surprising: although there are links between this large and complex field of study and narrative ethics, the two areas of research are in some ways very different. Yet this very difference enables Freed to make some important points, including the observation that in their (in one sense laudable and understandable) eagerness to give voice to the voiceless, trauma theorists may tend to overlook, or pay insufficient attention to, the ways in which the third-person narrator, who serves as the author’s narrative instrument in *The God of Small Things*, constructs the narrative, deftly manipulating and destabilizing narrative time and perspective. In fact, in Roy’s novel third-person narration performs a key function in establishing the interplay of sameness and difference that, as Freed shows, characterizes both works.

Chapter Three embarks on a more radical variant of critical juxtaposition as Freed discusses haunting traces left in the wake of political disappearance in a written narrative and a filmic one, Michael Ondaatje’s novel *Anil’s Ghost* and Costa-Gravas’s film *Missing*. This kind of critical comparison is even more demanding than those of verbal narratives made in the book’s other chapters, and there are theoretical and interpretive problems here that Freed does not discuss—especially problems linked to, and prompted by, the intricate ways in which a film’s ethics is shaped through film form. Yet the comparison proves critically rewarding as Freed demonstrates that she is a perceptive reader not just of narrative fiction but of film too. An important concluding point made in this chapter is that while the thematic frameworks of *Anil’s Ghost* and *Missing* allow the works to become ethically consequential beyond their particular contexts, their recuperative efforts, however laudable, entail the exclusion of entire categories of victims.

The last pair of works Freed considers are Ayi Kwei Armah’s *The Beautiful Ones*

Are Not Yet Born and Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*. Freed shows that, different as they are, both these novels, respectively depicting life in newly independent Ghana or New York City in the aftermath of 9/11, refuse simplistic forms of optimism through their ambiguous, open-ended narratives. Both encourage the reader to adopt a reading position that questions, and reflects on, the visions of the futures that they appear haunted by and yet call for. As Freed convincingly argues, these questions and reflections are in large part ethical.

In the book's concluding chapter, Freed juxtaposes some of the most important arguments associated with, and employed by representatives of, two significant trends in current literary and cultural studies: on the one hand, critics who argue in favor of sameness and broad circulation of texts; on the other hand, critics who emphasize texts' specificity and untranslatability. There are ethical implications in both sets of arguments, and both positions are, as Freed suggests, "both valid and fundamentally irreconcilable" (34).

It is illustrative of the methodological challenges of ethical criticism that even the constituent aspects of Freed's book that prove particularly productive in shaping her discussion are not unproblematic. For example, while Freed highlights the role and position of the reader in a thoughtful and thought-provoking way, she could have done more to specify her own ethical position. Some of the most interesting passages of her book are those in which, discussing the role of the reader's ethics, she substitutes "I" for "we." Furthermore, while the variant of close reading that Freed practices enables her to make a series of perceptive observations on her chosen texts, her key point that a narrative's ethics needs to be linked to the real world—and to the reader's possibility, even need, to engage in ethical action in that world—would have become even more persuasive had she shown more convincingly how her chosen texts are framed historically and culturally.

Yet, to make this criticism is to ask for a different, and much longer, book. *Haunting Encounters* is a significant contribution not only to narrative ethics, which is becoming a field of study in its own right, but also to literary and cultural studies more generally. Freed's elegant and timely study demonstrates the relevance of, and the need to respond to and seriously consider, ethical questions asked in narrative texts across continents and other kinds of borders.

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DESBOIS, HENRI, ET PHILIPPE GERVAIS-LAMBONY. « *Les lieux que nous avons connus ...* ». *Deux essais sur la géographie, l'humain et la littérature*. Paris : PU de Paris Nanterre, 2017. Pp. 142. €10.00 paperback.

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260 Depuis un certain nombre d'années, le développement de l'écocritique en études littéraires et, par ailleurs, l'émergence du concept de l'être-en-situation en géographie ont fait naître un important dialogue théorique et méthodologique entre ces deux disciplines en apparence très différentes et ont mené à la revalorisation, sur une base interdisciplinaire, des notions d'espace, de nature et d'habitat. Les textes littéraires permettaient ainsi de mettre de l'avant une conception *écologiste* du sujet humain et de ses lieux de vie, de façon à dépasser le simple discours, aujourd'hui assez convenu, sur la dégradation irréversible de l'environnement. De quelle manière, en effet, la rencontre entre littérature et géographie pouvait-elle insuffler à cet imaginaire de la fin une nouvelle sémantique de l'engagement et de l'espoir ? L'imbrication de disciplines universitaires jusqu'alors étrangères l'une à l'autre, soient les études littéraires, la biologie, la géographie et l'écologie, était-elle apte à faciliter indirectement « la transformation sociale et la mise en œuvre de pratiques émancipatoires » (Paré 454) ? Dans l'étude des œuvres de littérature, les représentations des milieux naturels et construits sont depuis lors l'expression, comme le font remarquer Defraeye et Lepage, d'un engagement éthique envers le vivant dans sa complexité et d'un savoir particulier sur l'inscription de l'humain dans l'espace et dans le temps.

C'est dans cette mouvance que s'inscrit l'ouvrage à quatre mains des géographes français Henri Desbois et Philippe Gervais-Lambony. Le premier s'est fait connaître par ses travaux sur l'histoire de la cartographie, tandis que les recherches du second ont porté plus récemment sur les villes postmodernes et la nostalgie. Outre un bref avant-propos, le livre présente un premier texte substantiel d'Henri Desbois sur l'histoire de la géographie en tant que discipline scientifique et son omission catégorique de la dimension humaine, celle d'un sujet individuel et collectif au cœur des espaces habités. Suit un second essai critique, beaucoup plus proche de l'analyse littéraire, dans lequel Philippe Gervais-Lambony se penche sur la notion d'espace subjectif chez des écrivains aussi divers que Marcel Proust, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Albert Camus et Blaise Cendrars. Dans l'avant-propos, les deux essayistes expriment l'espoir d'ouvrir les champs disciplinaires en explicitant, par le biais de la littérature et de son travail sur le représenté, « de quel humain parle la géographie » et de quelle manière « l'humain peut émerger dans cette discipline » (10). Sans susciter un véritable dialogue, les deux volets distincts de cet ouvrage cherchent néanmoins à renforcer la légitimité épistémologique de la géographie dite humaniste, telle que définie par Yi-Fu Tuan dès la fin des années 1970, et à souligner la fonction méthodologique de la littérature dans cet axe en émergence de la recherche interdisciplinaire en sciences humaines.

Pour Henri Desbois, une telle légitimation passe nécessairement par la déconstruction de la cartographie moderne en tant que modèle d'objectivité scientifique. C'est que la carte est centrale dans l'histoire de la géographie, puisqu'elle s'est imposée comme « mesure désincarnée » de l'espace et principe d'autorité scientifique : « la carte est si indissociable de notre façon de concevoir l'espace géographique qu'il nous est extrêmement difficile d'imaginer ce qu'ont pu être les visions du Monde des époques et des cultures sans cartes » (15). Pour accueillir la présence d'une subjectivité spatialisée et habitée par l'espace, telle qu'elle peut se manifester dans les œuvres des écrivains, il conviendrait de rétablir la filiation perdue avec un héritage philosophique capable de dépeindre le territoire comme le résultat d'une coprésence du réel et de l'imaginé. Dans son essai, Desbois s'en remet d'abord au livre fondateur d'Éric Dardel, *L'homme et la terre*, paru en 1952. « Dardel n'esquive pas la question du réalisme et de l'exactitude factuelle », assure l'essayiste. « Pour lui, le jeu de l'imagination, ce qu'il appelle une "technique d'irréalisation", fait pleinement partie de notre géographicit  , de la fa  on que nous avons d'habiter l'espace géographique » (39). Dans cet appel    une revalidation des sciences humaines, Desbois   voque abondamment l'approche ph  nom  nologique adopt  e depuis Tuan et par de nombreux g  ographes am  ricains de la fin du si  cle dernier. On peut regretter toutefois l'absence de toute r  f  rence dans cet historique aux importants   crits en   copo  tique dans le monde universitaire francophone, dont ceux de Fran  ois Gavillon et d'Anne Simon en France, de m  me qu'  lise Lepage et Rachel Bouvet au Canada. Les textes de ces chercheurs auraient permis de faire valoir la centralit   de la g  ographie humaine, tout en rappelant la n  cessit   de concevoir l'*habiter* comme enracinement dans un territoire donn   et, simultan  ment, comme condition d'un sujet toujours d  j   d  localis  . L'essai d'Henri Desbois pr  c  de d'ailleurs d'une ann  e    peine l'anthologie critique de Rachel Bouvet, *Litt  rature et g  ographie* (2018), dans laquelle divers chercheurs mettent    l'  preuve de l'analyse litt  raire le nouveau champ interdisciplinaire de la g  ocritique.

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Pour Henri Desbois, la g  ographie humaniste, s'opposant    une approche purement quantitative de l'espace, est devenue plus r  cemment « une strat  gie oblique de r  sistance » (55) qui permet de relativiser les m  thodes informatiques de transcription et d'  tude syst  matique du territoire. Plus encore, la litt  rature remet en question les modes du fonctionnement m  me de l'  crit scientifique : style neutre, auteurs multiples,   vacuation de la subjectivit   pensante, grilles d'  valuation impos  es, hi  rarchisation du savoir : « [L]a construction de l'objectivit   du texte scientifique passe par un syst  me qui assure, en principe, qu'il ne puisse   tre l'expression d'une individualit   » (58). Au contraire, « la litt  rature sert d'antidote    la dissolution du sujet » (62). Elle invoque avec force la pr  sence d'une conscience profond  ment responsable de la production du savoir et porteuse d'une m  moire singuli  re des lieux, des   v  nements et des enjeux th  oriques.

« *Les lieux que nous avons connus* » comporte un second volet, assez divergent, sous la plume de Philippe Gervais-Lambony. Cet essai d'une cinquantaine de pages

se présente comme une mise en pratique des principes théoriques exposés dans la première moitié du volume. Son auteur entreprend la lecture de plusieurs œuvres canoniques du répertoire européen, notamment *À la recherche du temps perdu* de Marcel Proust et *Le petit prince* d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Dans ce chapitre, le chercheur insiste sur la conjonction essentielle des notions d'espace et de temps, car, pour Gervais-Lambony, les lieux géographiques sont traversés par une mémoire de la perte et un intense sentiment de nostalgie. Bien qu'elle omette assez curieusement de faire référence aux espaces coloniaux, l'analyse du chercheur l'amène à repenser les conceptions géographiques du lieu à l'aune des migrations, des départs et des guerres. Les textes emblématiques de Cendrars sur l'expérience du voyageur, « inquiet du changement du monde » (83), lui semblent confirmer la nécessité de repenser l'objet même de la géographie. Du seul point de vue de l'analyse littéraire, les propos du chercheur se limitent cependant trop souvent à des évidences, sans qu'il soit possible d'y voir l'apport particulier de la géographie à l'étude de la littérature.

262 En aucun moment n'y est exposée une perspective spécifiquement géocritique sur les distinctions entre pays, paysage et lieu, pourtant cruciales dans le champ littéraire. Si, comme le souligne l'auteur, Saint-Exupéry exprime une fascination pour les espaces désertiques, de quelle manière la perte des repères vécue par le narrateur peut-elle être comprise dans les termes d'une géographie encore aujourd'hui dominée par la cartographie ? Ou encore, en parlant de l'œuvre de Marcel Proust, qu'offre alors le géographe à la compréhension du sentiment d'exil du romancier dans le lieu même de sa naissance ? Quels sont cet ici et cet ailleurs dans les termes de la géographie humaniste ? Malheureusement, les études de textes proposées, plutôt scolaires, ne nous permettent pas de répondre de façon satisfaisante à ces questions.

Cela dit, l'ensemble de cet ouvrage à deux voix permet d'entrevoir la richesse potentielle de la collaboration entre géographes et littéraires. Comme le disaient les chercheurs québécois Christian Morissonneau et Denis Sirois au début des années 1980, le croisement entre des disciplines fort différentes force chacun et chacune à redéfinir ses conceptions du lieu, qu'il soit habité ou non, qu'il soit réel ou imaginé, en fonction d'une conscience subjective porteuse de sens et de mouvement. L'espace est donc toujours intentionné. Dans cette rencontre entre approches disciplinaires, ni la géographie ni la littérature ne doivent se départir de leur spécificité épistémologique, au risque d'y perdre la richesse même du processus en cours. Au contraire, il n'y aura enrichissement du savoir que si un va-et-vient théorique et méthodologique s'instaure et forme un système novateur en constant déséquilibre.

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