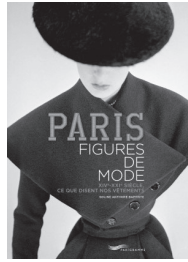


Book Reviews

Soline Anthore
Baptiste, *Paris : figures
de mode. XIV^e-XXI^e
siècle, ce que disent
nos vêtements*, Paris,
Parigramme, 2019



La mode : un sujet souvent associé à la frivolité et qui malheureusement ne fait pas partie des thèmes de recherches sérieuses. Soline Anthore Baptiste a voulu changer le regard sur la mode dans sa thèse de doctorat en cotutelle qui porte sur la mode à Venise au XVIII^e siècle. L'ouvrage suit un axe chronologico-thématique ; chaque chapitre respecte la même structure, avec le texte sur deux colonnes à gauche et une image qui occupe la page de droite.

Le premier chapitre « Ecce homo » commence avec la demande d'homologation des « pourpointiers » de 1323, qui marque la fin de la mode unisexe. De plus, les combats conduisent à une particularisation de l'habit masculin. Les études de l'ouvrage vont jusqu'en 2018 quand les villes françaises ont été classées en fonction de leur adéquation aux hipsters. Étonnamment, les caractéristiques vestimentaires de la dernière décennie ne sont pas prises en compte : le *crop top*, le *over size*, les *dad shoes*. Cependant des pièces oubliées de nos jours y sont présentées : le tassel, ancêtre du corset, les poulaines, qui anticipent les talons, bien pratiques dans les étriers, les braies qui précèdent la braguette, etc. Certains *loci comuni* sont battus en brèche ; notons, par exemple, la signification du noir au Moyen Âge, qui, alors difficile à obtenir

techniquement, est synonyme de pénitence et de droiture.

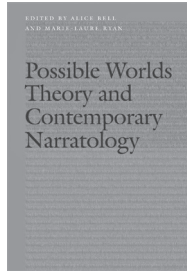
Par ailleurs, Paris doit être interprété au sens métonymique de port d'attache de l'habillement. Le livre mentionne d'autres lieux d'émergence de la mode, comme Deauville où est présentée pour la première fois la marinière ; la chemise sort du cadre intimiste grâce à Marie-Antoinette au Petit Trianon ; le rhingrave est d'extraction néerlandaise.

Malgré la complexité de l'étude, on constate quelques manques. Il est dommage que les références (para-)académiques, anglo- et francophones, soient citées uniquement dans la bibliographie sélective et non dans le texte. On regrette également l'absence de Barbara Vinken, spécialiste de la mode dans la littérature.

De plus, les traités, les films et les articles de presse cités y sont escamotés. Une partie de documents iconographiques, de la photographie à la peinture, connus par le grand public, sont ainsi perçus sous un nouveau jour. D'autres images ne bénéficient pas de la même diffusion et proviennent des banques d'images telles Shutterstock, bridgemanimages.com, akginimages, RMN-GP, Gamma-Rapho et Roger-Viollet. Elles représentent alors tantôt des figures célèbres de la grande Histoire, tantôt des inconnu.e.s, représentés de face ou de dos. Mais toujours, au premier plan, il y a les vêtements. À rebrousse-poil de l'adage « L'habit ne fait pas le moine », l'autrice nous montre que : « *Kleider machen Leute* » (« Les habits font les gens »), pour reprendre Gottfried Keller.

Héloïse Elisabeth Marie-Vincent
Ghislaine Ducatteau

Alice Bell, Marie-Laure Ryan (eds.), *Possible Worlds Theory and Contemporary Narratology*, Lincoln, London, University of Nebraska Press, 2019



P*ossible Worlds Theory and Contemporary Narratology* is a collection of essays with an introduction by the editors Marie-Laure Ryan and Alice Bell which contains an overview of the evolution of possible worlds theory and how it is applied to narrative theory. The collection comes with an afterword by Thomas G. Pavel, in which he provides the reader with a critical response to the collection.

The volume is divided into four parts, each of which contains three chapters. The first part: *Theoretical Perspectives of Possible Worlds* contains essays written by Lubomír Doležal, Marie-Laure Ryan, and Marina Grishakova, who discuss previously unaddressed theoretical matters within the field. The second part: *Possible Worlds and Cognition* includes essays written by Marco Caracciolo, W. Michelle Wang, and Jan Alber, who write of how readers cognitively process different kinds of fictional worlds. The third part, titled *Possible Worlds and Literary Genres*, is composed of essays by Christoph Bartsch, Thomas L. Martin, and Mattison Schuknecht, which focus on how possible worlds theory can help the reader understand fantastical, speculative, and physically impossible fictional scenarios. In the last part of this volume: *Possible Worlds and Digital Media*, Alice Bell, Françoise Lavocat and Daniel Punday discuss the

methods by which possible worlds theory can explore the digital field and, also, how the digital can help with information in the possible worlds theory.

In the first essay of the first part, *Porphyry's Tree for the Concept of Fictional Worlds*, Lubomír Doležal explains that it is important for a reader to have a flexible view of existence to correctly identify the branches of the tree that will help him reach fictional worlds. For Doležal the worlds of fiction are close to the alternative versions of the actual world. In the second essay, *From Possible Worlds to Storyworlds: On the Worldness of Narrative Representation*, Marie-Laure Ryan decides to analyze *storyworlds* from the perspective of the possible worlds theory. She defines *storyworlds* as “worlds as totalities that encompass space, time and individual existence who transform as the result of events.” (p.37) In the third essay, *Interface Ontologies: On the Possible, Virtual, and Hypothetical in Fiction*, Marina Grishakova analyses the alternative possible worlds from the perspective of the narrator who makes readers wish and have expectations from the characters and “the expectations generated by their (readers) existing knowledge of what is likely to happen as the generic convention.” In Grishakova’s view, in narrations, there is a “virtual voice” which is essential for the reader to understand and connect to the fictional world.

In the second part of the collection, it is mentioned that in the past, narratology was preoccupied with how the story plays in the mind of the reader, but today narratology is interested in the cognitive process. The first essay in the second part, *Ungrounding Fictional Worlds: An Enactivist Perspective on the “Worldlikeness”*

of Fiction shows how the theory of cognition correlated with possible worlds theory to define the *worldlikeness* of the fictional narrative. In order to understand *worldlikeness*, Caracciolo points out that one needs to rethink it from a phenomenological perspective. In *Postmodern Play with Worlds: The Case of At Swim-Two-Birds*, Michelle Wang remarks that possible worlds theory can be used as a tool to explore the out-of-touch worlds from postmodernist texts. She seeks to solve the disorientation that readers might feel while reading texts such as *At-Swim-Two-Birds*. Jan Alber, in *Logical Contradictions, Possible Worlds Theory, and the Embodied Mind*, uses possible worlds theory to analyze narratives that contradict the knowledge that one might have of the actual world. Logical contradictions can lead to stimulating textual phenomena because they trigger our experiential background and bring out emotional responses.

Christoph Bartsch in *Escape into Alternative Worlds and Time(s) in Jack London's The Star Rover* explains what the hero named Darrell Standing went through, as he adopts David Lewis's perspective on time. Bartsch believes there are two types of time, external which he identifies as textual actual time, TAT, and personal time which is the character's time. He concludes that in the case of Jack London's hero, the time becomes disjointed.

In "*As Many Worlds as Original Artists*": *Possible Worlds. Theory and the Literature of Fantasy*, Thomas Martin asks why the fantastic remained in the shadows of other literary genres. He thinks that literary critics prefer realistic and pseudoscientific narratives to fantasy.

Mattison Schuknecht in *The Best/Worst of All Possible Worlds? Utopia, Dystopia, and Possible Worlds Theory* rely on the possible worlds theory to construct a theory that should apply to utopian and dystopian narratives. Schuknecht is of the opinion that these genres are not concerned only with social organization, so he turns to the deontic modality to define these genres.

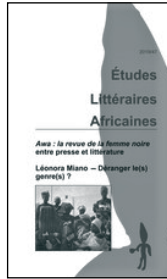
The last part of the collection opens with an essay written by Alice Bell, *Digital Fictionality: Possible Worlds Theory, Ontology, and Hyperlinks*, who observed the ontological effects of external hyperlinks in digital fiction—flickering, refreshment, and merging. She considers that hyperlinks are medium-specific, special means of playing with the boundary between fiction and reality.

Possible Worlds, Virtual Worlds by Françoise Lavocat investigates the ontological status of worlds created by digital media and if possible worlds theory can be applied in this situation. *Rereading Manovich's Algorithm: Genre and Use in Possible Worlds Theory* by Daniel Pundy explores the idea that narrations are like databases, therefore possible worlds.

This collection is a welcomed addition to the field of narratology as it provides updated methods of analyzing fictional narratives.

Maria Chirilă

Études Littéraires
Africaines, vol. 47, Awa:
la revue de la femme noire
entre presse et littérature.
Léonora Miano – Déranger
le(s) genre(s)?, 2019



Awa: la revue de la femme noire was one of the first African magazines created in Dakar by a network of women, between 1964 and 1972. The purpose of the twenty-nine volumes was to cover different genres (essays, poems, stories) on a variety of informative subjects, such as education, political news, journalistic reports, culture, fashion or any kind of artistic field, along with photographs and caricatures. The magazine's main interest focused on the identity of the African community, with a special emphasis on feminism.

This volume aims at assembling a few academic essays regarding the content of *Awa* magazine, which analyze some of its main characteristics. For example, Marie Éve-Thérenty tackles the specificity of the volume and the two main themes that structure it: “une double catégorisation (femme et noire) et donc, en creux, une double discrimination à cerner mais aussi à réparer.” Whereas Marguerite Durand created *La Fonde*, a daily newspaper in France (1897), in which the articles were structured and written only by women, *Awa* also includes male authors, such as Henri Mendy, Tony Stephen, Tapha, Gibé or Birago Diop, on both informative and fictional fields.

In <<Boîte à lettres>> et signatures: l'auctorialité partagée des femmes dans *Awa*, Claire Ducournau discusses the signatures

and the anonymity of the authors. This is a quantitative analysis that presents, in numbers, all the types of writings and all their authors (anonymous or not). She discovers that there are more anonymous female writers, idea that comes against the main principles of the magazine, those of promoting women's identity. However, she further demonstrates that these *polyphony of voices* emphasizes a unity of genders and identities. The content of the magazine also takes into account the feedback from the public. Unfortunately, most of the advice regarding the disturbing information comes from the male public (because of the comics that illustrate the gender discrimination), which will later cause the reevaluation of the content.

The following category highlights the literary works of Léonora Miano, one of the most representative authors of African literature. Among the central subjects that reflects her interests we count ideas such as the reflection on historical background, the question of identity and memory of African community and especially the emphasis on feminist characters and ideals.

In *L'intermédialité dans l'art roman- esque de Léonora Miano*, for example, Chloe Vanderdorpe reflects on Léonora Miano's literary works as the blend between the influence of mass-media and social relations. According to this statement, her writing is widely characterised by all forms of art, such as music, cinema or theatre. As Vanderdorpe states, *the intermediality* is the concept that perfectly describes Miano's style through the constructive, as well as the destructive relation between the social context and mass media. This reference allows us to reflect and anticipate the course of life, the daily consequences. Moreover,

Miano goes further by exploring the relation between media and the fiction "de la couleur", by stating a well-concluded fact: the concept of race is the result of sociological approach, and not biologically provided. Works as *Tels des astres éteints* or *Blues pour Élise* explore the insecure status of individuals and highlights "l'impact de constructions anciennes et abolies (l'esclavage, la hiérarchisation des races)." Thus, Miano's style strengthens the social impact of literature, by rethinking the organization of the society through the compensation of African diversity that was lacked by the French culture. By its continuous metamorphosis, literature becomes a political tool that favours the individuality of the nations. More studies on this topic emphasize the reconciliation of Miano's African characters with themselves as well as the juxtaposition of various forms of art and narrative techniques, the prevalence of music and the authenticity of styles.

Other studies in the volume should not be overlooked, as they shed a light on African literature and the postcolonial context. For instance, K. Ferreira-Meyers discusses the theoretical approach on African literature (regarding *the poetics of the oppressed* and the political recontextualization of applied politics), whereas S. Woodward takes into account geographical representations in African writings. Overall, the present volume reflects a balanced overview on African literature and pays tribute to one of the most important African magazines – *Awa*. Through ideological perspectives and critical approaches, a literature of a great impact needs to be rethought.

Ana Bănică

Giulio Ferroni, *Storia della letteratura italiana. Dalle origini al Quattrocento*, Milano, Mondadori, 2021



L'ouvrage est la réédition d'une monographie publiée plusieurs fois depuis 1991. Il s'agit du premier de quatre volumes qui se penchent sur la littérature italienne depuis ses origines jusqu'à présent. Il faut mentionner que l'auteur a écrit d'autres synthèses de la littérature italienne dont deux qui adoptent la même perspective temporelle que le volume 4, qui analyse le XX^e siècle.

Le premier volume commence par les écrits en latin – quand les langues romanes sont encore dans une phase de balbutiement – et s'arrête au XV^e siècle – où, dans le royaume de Naples, s'impose l'influence espagnole et plus particulièrement aragonaise.

En réalité, le livre va au-delà de ce que le titre laisse paraître. L'introduction et la *Breve introduction à l'étude de la littérature* soulignent la difficulté à définir la littérature, la poésie, l'écriture ; cette difficulté transparait dans l'étymologie, et à travers les acceptations diverses données par les théoriciens du siècle dernier, en particulier Benedetto Croce. Loin de proférer des assertions, Giulio Ferroni montre la diversité des approches de la littérature. Il porte un regard assez critique sur les *études culturelles* et les *humanités computationnelles* qui, selon lui, risquent de dénaturer l'expérience vive de la littérature. Toute interprétation qui ne peut être objective doit garder l'expérience comme fil conducteur.

L'ouvrage comprend quatre époques allant de 0 à 3. L'auteur ne veut pas suivre l'ordre chronologique pour ne pas fausser le réel. Chaque époque est ensuite subdivisée thématiquement. Une grande place est accordée aux cultures et aux littératures étrangères comme en témoignent les encarts sur les *Nibelungen*, François Villon, Geoffroy Chancer. Toutefois il est dommage que l'écriture originale des ouvrages n'y soient pas donnée. Pour certains, seule la version originale est indiquée (cf. Charles Singleton ou Jean de Hesdin), pour d'autres, seulement la version italianisée (cf. Erasmo da Rotterdam ou Alano di Lilla). Des encarts viennent aussi préciser les genres littéraires, les structures de certains chefs-d'œuvre comme la *Commedia* dantesque, les biographies de certain.e.s scripteur.e.s.

La bibliographie finale est très riche et a l'avantage de reprendre la structuration des (sous)-chapitres. Quelques aspects mériteraient néanmoins d'être modifiés. La bibliographie est imprimée en petits caractères ; il n'y a pas de retour à la ligne pour chaque ouvrage et certains auteurs qui ont fait l'objet d'un sous-sous-chapitre entier sont omis : c'est le cas de Bonaventura da Bagnoreggio, Cino da Pistoia, Folgore da San Gimignano et Tarcaniota.

En somme, cette traversée de la littérature italienne serait digne d'être intitulée *Histoire de la littérature euro-italienne* ou *Histoire de la littérature italophone*. Cette dernière appellation permettrait d'atténuer toute supposition nationaliste et de rappeler le fait que l'Unité italienne n'est survenue que très tardivement, en 1861. Elle s'inscrirait mieux dans les recherches contemporaines où la francophonie, l'hispanophonie et la lusophonie supplantent

les anciennes dénominations. Elle favoriserait l'inclusion des écrivain.e.s issu.e.s de l'immigration comme Igiaba Scego ou Kaha Mohamed Aden.

Héloïse Elisabeth Marie-Vincent
Ghislaine Ducatteau

Catherine Gravet et
Katrien Lievois (dir.),
*Vous avez dit littérature
belge francophone ? Le
défi de la traduction*,
Peter Lang, Université
de Caen, 2021



La traduction littéraire constitue depuis longtemps un moyen d'entrer en dialogue avec autrui parce qu'elle encourage le franchissement des frontières spatio-temporelles ; de plus, elle semble annuler les écarts entre les langues-cultures. Ce sujet complexe ne cesse d'interpeller les exégètes ; et cela parce que la traduction constitue une manière privilégiée de forger le réseau de la littérature universelle ; envisagé de différents points de vue, ce riche domaine garde toujours son actualité. Dans ce contexte s'inscrit la démarche de Catherine Gravet et de Katrien Lievois qui ont réuni dans le volume collectif *Vous avez dit littérature belge francophone ? Le défi de la traduction* (Peter Lang, Université de Caen, vol. 48, 2021) les contributions présentées par les chercheurs et les traducteurs « venus d'horizons différents » au colloque *La traduction de la littérature belge francophone*, organisé à l'Université de Mons, les 13-14 décembre 2018. L'ouvrage comprend quatre parties bien équilibrées : « Traduction & création », « Travail &

archives des traducteurs », « Traduction & réfraction » et « Inventaires » ; un vaste projet y est mis en place puisque les buts du recueil sont multiples ; en outre, Catherine Gravet et Katrien Lievois avouent que « toutes les conditions de production des traductions des œuvres d’auteurs belges francophones [les] intéressent. Quelles œuvres, quels auteurs sont privilégiés et pourquoi, comment les textes sont-ils traduits et pour qui, par quelles maisons d’édition les traductions sont-elles publiées ? » (p. 17). Les éditrices essaient de déceler, dans l’introduction, les éléments qui favorisent la traduction d’un texte ; quatre facteurs y sont mentionnés : les prix littéraires obtenus par l’auteur, l’élection d’un auteur au sein d’une institution littéraire prestigieuse, les adaptations cinématographiques ou musicales du texte à traduire et les rapports d’amitié établis entre l’auteur et son traducteur. L’originalité de l’ouvrage réside dans le bannissement de la théorie ; c’est l’exercice de la traduction littéraire qui y occupe le devant de la scène.

La première partie (Maria Baïraktari, « L’œuvre de Maurice Maeterlinck en Grèce. Traductions et retraductions (1893-2018) » ; Irena Kristeva, « Traduire Georges Rodenbach. Tours et détours des versions bulgares de *Bruges-la-Morte* » ; Stéphane Hirschi, « Faut-il traduire Jacques Brel ? » ; Juan Miguel Dothas, « La version espagnole de *Fuir* de Jean-Philippe Toussaint » ; Thea Rimini, « *Faire l’amour* de Jean-Philippe Toussaint traduit par l’écrivain-traducteur Roberto Ferrucci ») est articulée autour de plusieurs études de cas ; chaque article essaie de mettre en avant les particularités de la traduction des auteurs belges consacrés – Maurice Maeterlinck, Jean-Philippe Toussaint, Jacques Brel, Georges

Rodenbach – dans différents espaces culturels : la Grèce, l’Espagne, la Bulgarie, etc. On y trouve des études diachroniques – qui se proposent de montrer que les variations dans la traduction des œuvres répondent parfois au goût des lecteurs d’une certaine époque – et des études plus ponctuelles et plus analytiques – qui étudient le travail d’un traducteur bien précis. Le rapport direct entre la traduction et les lecteurs est au centre de la recherche d’Irena Kristeva qui observe que : « Le temps historique impose ses valeurs aux modes de traduire. La sélection, la rédaction et la réception des traductions sont régies par l’appareil cognitif réglementaire d’une communauté linguistique à une époque donnée. Cela remet en question la traduction équivalente qui a acquis du poids dans les approches fonctionnalistes, en destituant la traduction fidèle, à laquelle aspirent les approches sourcistes (Hewson, 2004, pp. 123-134) » (p. 54). De plus, un autre aspect intéressant de la traduction y est souligné : les traductions vont favoriser le développement de certains courants littéraires dans un espace géographique bien déterminé ; par exemple, le symbolisme s’impose en Grèce grâce aux traductions : « Le public reste dubitatif devant le nouveau courant esthétique du symbolisme scénique (Puchner, 1999, p. 124), introduit en Grèce par les pièces d’Ibsen à partir de 1894, d’après Yiannis Sidéris (1949, p. 689) » (p. 30). En effet, les traductions influent sur la littérature nationale d’un pays ; afin d’obtenir une littérature riche il est essentiel d’encourager les traductions qui vont apporter un nouveau souffle dans l’espace socio-culturel d’accueil.

La deuxième partie, « Travail & archives des traducteurs », (Béatrice Costa,

« Les personnages dans les nouvelles de Marie Delcourt : traduire le non-conformisme » ; Mireille Brémond, « Yourcenar : une traductrice face à ses traducteurs » ; Rodica Lascu-Pop, « *Œdipe sur la route* en roumain : genèse d'un processus traductif » ; Claudio Grimaldi, « Le corps en traduction : l'écriture „corporelle” de Nathalie Gassel ») se penche sur des pratiques de traduction. Mireille Brémond s'intéresse à la richesse de l'exercice de la traduction de Marguerite Yourcenar ; pour l'écrivaine, bien qu'il n'y ait pas de schéma à suivre, la traduction semble répondre à « quelques grands principes [...] : outre les capacités linguistiques et l'érudition, il faut aimer le texte, le traduire avec enthousiasme et passion, et idéalement, travailler en collaboration avec l'auteur, ce qui donne peu d'indications scientifiques sur la qualité objective d'une traduction » (p. 168). En outre, il faut mentionner que Yourcenar est à la fois auteure traduite en plusieurs langues et traductrice ; son sens de la rigueur se manifeste sur les deux plans puisqu'« elle demande fréquemment à relire la traduction avant l'édition, même dans les langues qu'elle maîtrise mal » (p. 154). Toutefois, Mireille Brémond constate à juste titre que l'écrivaine « se permettait des libertés en tant que traductrice qu'elle n'accordait absolument pas à ses traducteurs, ceci étant certainement lié à son désir irrépressible chez elle de toujours tout contrôler » (p. 167). On peut dire que, en fonction du rôle joué dans la démarche traductive, Yourcenar manifeste une attitude plus ouverte ou plus stricte. Traduire et être traduit signifient pour elle deux processus différents. Rodica Lascu-Pop adopte une approche génétique pour parler de son expérience d'enseignante-traductrice et nous présente

le parcours traductif – du français vers le roumain – d'*Œdipe sur la route* d'Henry Bauchau ; son article souligne « la part de la subjectivité du traducteur dans le processus traductif » (p. 176) non sans rappeler l'importance de la créativité dans la pratique de la traduction.

« Traduction & réfraction » (Maria Giovanna Petrillo, « *Un mâle* dans la culture italienne : traduire la sensualité du paysage belge » ; Sündüz Öztürk Kasar, « Traduire la ville en filigrane : Istanbul par Georges Simenon dans *Les Clients d'Avrenos* » ; André Bénit, « Diffusion et traductions de l'œuvre de Marguerite Yourcenar en Espagne. Le cas de *Œuvre au Noir* » ; Marie Fortunati, « *Le Passeur de lumière* de Bernard Tirtiaux en allemand » ; Anja Van de Pol-Tegge, « Amélie Nothomb en traduction allemande. Facettes de la francophonie et transfert culturel »), le troisième volet de l'ouvrage, envisage la réception des traductions de diverses œuvres dans plusieurs espaces culturels. Si la traduction dépasse la dimension communicative et linguistique, c'est parce qu'elle doit reconfigurer l'univers de l'œuvre-source dans le texte-cible. La traduction joue un rôle formatif : elle crée des mondes. Maria Giovanna Petrillo loue les qualités de la traduction italienne d'*Un mâle* de Lucia Manseverini qui réussit à « retrouver le rythme et le vocabulaire de la langue de Lemonnier – en fait elle a reconnu et traduit la polarité entre littérature et peinture –, mais elle a aussi fait en sorte que toutes les occurrences singulières fonctionnent ensemble et composent un réseau intertextuel et intratextuel où a été mise en scène la création littéraire qui procure le plaisir intense d'une sensualité, d'une sexualité, d'un corps ainsi que d'un paysage » (p. 232).

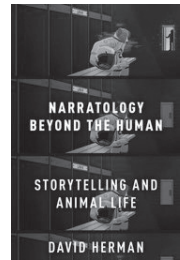
La dernière partie, « Inventaires », ne comprend que deux études : « Les traductions grecques de la littérature belge francophone. Inventaire et étude de leur présence dans la littérature grecque de 1913 à 2018 » de Fanny Sofronidou et « La littérature belge francophone vue par une anthologie mexicaine » de Thomas Barège. Ces deux derniers textes effectuent un travail de synthèse puisqu'ils se proposent de passer en revue la présence de la littérature belge en Espagne et en Grèce. Fanny Sofronidou mentionne que l'objectif de son analyse est de constituer « une base de recherche pour appréhender la question de la diffusion d'un auteur ou d'un texte de langue étrangère au sein des lettres grecques, mais également pour tenter d'évaluer l'impact des traductions sur l'évolution de la littérature grecque et de déterminer leur possible influence » (p. 382). La cohérence du recueil est très forte malgré les approches variées : les études de cas de la première partie, tout en faisant appel à des démarches distinctes, apportent des arguments solidement fondés pour témoigner que les traductions s'intègrent à l'espace littéraire où elles paraissent. En outre, faire des bilans représente un excellent exercice de radiographie d'une littérature ; et cela parce que les synthèses favorisent un regard panoramique sur la culture d'un peuple et, de plus, sur les relations que celui-ci engage avec les autres cultures et civilisations. En effet, dresser l'inventaire des traductions revient à s'interroger sur l'hospitalité des langues, des cultures : « À l'heure de tirer un bilan de ces deux volumes concernant la diffusion des lettres belges francophones dans le monde hispanique, plusieurs constats viennent à l'esprit. Il est évident tout d'abord que ce projet

éditorial est important par ses ambitions, son volume imposant et sa potentielle ouverture au grand public hispanophone qui ne disposait guère d'un outil d'une telle ampleur » (p. 415).

Original par la diversité de points de vue pris en compte dans l'approche de la traduction, le recueil *Vous avez dit littérature belge francophone ? Le défi de la traduction* révèle au lecteur, à travers un corpus impressionnant, le tissage des liens culturels, artistiques, institutionnels qu'engendre l'acte traductif ; en effet, la traduction rend possible le rayonnement de la littérature belge francophone bien au-delà de son champ littéraire.

Anamaria Lupan

David Herman,
*Narratology Beyond
The Human: Storytelling
and Animal Life*, Oxford
University Press, New
York, 2018



The turn towards the non-human in the last decades of the humanities has been most noticeable. It is what we can describe as an attempt to recover what would be “outside of the text”. In fact textuality has become, if I may term it as such, a “hungry metaphor”, swallowing all of culture in accordance to the deconstructionist motto that there is nothing outside the text. While David Herman is certainly not trying to turn the whole tradition of narratology on its head, the effect of this still developing change of paradigm did leave its marks and traces on his work as well. In approaching the topic of his study,

Herman situates his work within a branch of narratology which is more influenced by ecocriticism, cognitive science, ethics, and feminist theory rather than using linguistics as its pilot science. Such a departure allows him to open up pathways that may lead to a reinvisioning and recontextualization of normal narratological science as well – using these pathways he can “explore how specific strategies for portraying nonhuman agents both emerge from and contribute to broader attitudes toward animal life” (p. 2). This has interesting implications: the stories we tell each other are interwoven with what he calls “cultural ontologies” (p. 5), namely “about what sorts of beings populate the world and how those beings’ qualities and abilities relate to the qualities and abilities ascribed to humans” (p. 2).

David Herman’s work explicitly concentrates on the post-Darwinian period, ascribing to it the deconstruction of the hierarchical oppositions between human and non-human forms of life. Building on this perspective, he actively tries to reframe the cultural models that underline the hierarchical understandings of humans’ place in the greater biotic communities of which they are inevitably members of. This means an effort of trying to include animals in our understanding of the selves, or understanding animals as selves. This raises a great number of problems, which could be summarized by the question: how exactly can we achieve that? How can we include animals’ point of view within stories? How can we comprehend being-animal? First of all, anthropomorphic language does not have to discount the animals’ view. In fact, anthropomorphism actually allows us to access other animals’ behavior and emotions. We must be careful here. Arguing in line with

Plumwood, Herman states that while weak forms of anthropomorphism are unavoidable, strong forms may be damaging and not even necessary. That is, while cross-species representation cannot be understood as “colonisation” (p. 6), we still “mustn’t do a Cartesian-rationalist policing of human-animal discontinuity. The discussion on fictional and non-fictional examples in the book (such as Reklaw’s *Thirteen Cats of My Childhood*, Williamson’s *Tarka the Otter*, Auster’s *Timbuktu*, or Julia Leigh’s 1999 novel *The Hunter* and its 2011 cinematic adaptation by Daniel Nettheim) thus explores how narratives at once reflect and help create frameworks for understanding that determine what sorts of beings are and can be included in larger ecologies of selves. The concept of self-narrative is central: these are the stories that humans use to link together what they perceive as relevant events over time, which involve forms of relationality that goes beyond the species boundary. In chapters 1 and 2 of the first part (titled *Storytelling and Selfhood beyond the Human*), Herman locates types of self-narratives “on a spectrum involving more or less fully imagined forms of relationality between humans and other animals” (p. 13). In chapter 3, Herman sets out to investigate the broader context of creaturely life by examining those stories which ground contact and affiliation between animals and humans in a cross-species kinship. In part 2 of the book, *Narrative Engagement with More-Than-Human Worlds*, Herman covers numerous things: In chapter 4, he investigates animal narratives across media, which is a concern about the relevance of medium-specific affordances. In chapter 5, he turns from medium to the question of genre, focusing on the generic hybridity (meaning a mixture of different text types

from different genres, sometimes non-fictional, highlighting the multifaceted culturally embedded animal) which is deployed in order to unsettle presuppositions about the lives of animals. In chapter 6 and 7 we are introduced to the problem of attribution of mental states to non-human animals and how different modes of expressing animal narratives can reconfigure the conventions used to allocate the possibility of subjectivity to non-human agents.

The coda hints at bionarratology. We are told that narrative, even if it is undoubtedly grounded and configured for human-scale phenomena, it still clears pathways and routes for us to access emergent structures beyond the limits of our forms of life – it suggests that a narratology at a species scale can be an important direction towards narratology beyond the human. Herman encourages us to think of new storytelling methods used by members of human cultures to engage with truly other kinds of beings.

János Tamás

Florina Ilis, *Introducere în istoria literaturii japoneze de la începuturi până în epoca modernă*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2020



Compiled the knowledge she has gathered throughout time, Florina Ilis managed to portray the depth of the Japanese literature in the volume she has entitled *Introduction to the History of Japanese Literature from the Beginning to the Modern*

Era. Although it is dedicated mostly to those who study the Japanese language, the book is rather easy to understand, as the explanations are written in such a way that even someone whose interest does not include the Japanese culture could easily go through the pages and be delighted by the content.

The book structure follows the chronological order of the events in the Japanese history, starting from the Nara period (710-794) and going on until the Edo period (1603-1868). The four chapters included in the book are dedicated to the most flourishing periods of the Japanese literature, each of them providing information about the variety of literary genres and the development of associated art forms such as music, dance or puppet shows based on the written stories. As we start our journey in the Japanese mindset, we are soon to discover an undying love for poetry, documented in *Man'yōshū* (*The Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*), a compiled volume that incorporates more than 4000 poems written in the Nara period. The poems chosen for this collection are representative for the old style of writing and depict the favorite topics of the Japanese. Most of the time they would seek to describe the feelings of people who suffer from love, led by the belief that the heart cannot be controlled and the mind cannot be ignored.

At the same time, we come across their unique perspective regarding the creation of the world and the dual forces that maintain the balance of the universe. The Japanese thought that the emperor was chosen by the Gods who sent him to protect the people. In order to do that, the emperor had to prove himself worth of the position he had received by the Gods, as they could

take his power back at any time if they acknowledged him as not suitable. Thereby, the stories about emperors who got carried away by the power were quite numerous, and people were quickly to learn that the actions committed despite the will of the Gods have consequences.

Regardless of the fact that literature was thought to be mostly written by men, some court ladies will join in the field, their personal way of describing emotions being appreciated later on. This is also the case of Sei Shōnagon, one of the court ladies who served the Empress Teishi (Sadako) in the Heian period (794-1185). Her fame increased after the aristocrat public came to know about *Makura no sōshi* (*The Pillow Book*), initially written by Sei Shōnagon as a personal diary in which she talked about all the things she enjoyed in life. The genre of this book could not be identified as it laid between *monogatari* (historical tales) and *nikki* (diary), two other genres that seemed to be opposite to one another. The uniqueness of this masterpiece is brought by the fact that it did not fit into any literary category existent at the time, which made it impossible to reproduce and so, it eventually remained the only writing classified in this new undefined genre.

Another interesting topic the Japanese seem to have been obsessed with is suicide. Although a subject considered taboo, taking your own life was seen as the ultimate honor act, as committing suicide meant that there was no other way in which someone could come out with flying colors from a situation. We will later be acquainted to the complexity of this concept, the Japanese describing four different types of suicide, namely *seppuku/harakiri*

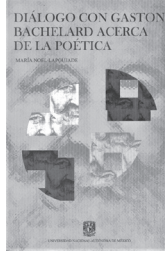
(the voluntary act of cutting your own abdomen; practice used by samurai in order to die with honor, rather than being punished for their wrong deeds), *kanshi* (suicide as a form of reproach), *junshi* (suicide as a form of devotion to the master) and *shinjū* (double suicide of two lovers whose love is impossible). The stories involving the thrilling subject of honor death will be the source of inspiration for *bunraku*, a traditional form of puppet theatre very popular in the Edo period.

Regarding the evolution of poetry, the focus point was set on quality, rather than quantity. That is to say, in the Edo period, the poets desired to express more emotions using less words, relying on the questions *where?*, *what?* and *when?* that would guide taking steps in the right creative direction. Eventually, short poems began to gain popularity, as the new genre, *haiku*, was created. It was defined as a 17-syllable long poem that would deliver a significant amount of emotions hidden behind the ambiguous choice of words.

The dedication Florina Ilis has put into the writing of this book is visible, as she has treated every chapter with interest, seeking to create an enjoyable text for the reader and an accurate description of the Japanese culture and literature. The useful notes she has included in the book make it easier for the reader to understand the Japanese values, and thus to comprehend the meaning of the small things that inspired Japanese poets all along.

Ștefana-Maria Rusu

Maria Noel Lapoujade,
*Dialogo con Gaston
 Bachelard acerca de
 la poetica*, Mérida,
 Universidad Nacional
 Autónoma de México, 2011



The name of Gaston Bachelard carries with it an overpowering antagonism concerning culture and being. The two opposite pillars the French author devoted his entire life to are the epistemology of science and poetic imagination. He started his academic career with an interest in real things, precisely science and epistemology. Afterwards, he spent time questioning the philosophical part of his existence: poetic imagination and the imaginary.

The French philosopher has inspired Maria Noel Lapoujade's work, a philosophy professor at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the National University of Mexico, who, in *Dialogo con Gaston Bachelard acerca de la poetica*, depicts the development and the importance of Gaston Bachelard's thinking in the study of the imaginary.

Starting with a foreword written by Jean-Jacques Wunenburger, the volume consists of two parts or moments. The first section is the playground of Maria Noel Lapoujade, who portrays with ingenuity Bachelard's theory of imagination, offering different aspects of his approaches in *The Psychoanalysis of Fire, Water and Dreams, Air and Dreams, Earth and the Reveries of Repose, The Poetics of Space* and *The Poetics of Reverie*. The second part of the volume is represented practically by an anthology containing some of the most relevant of

Bachelard's texts, accompanied by some pertinent commentaries. The two parts can be referred to separately, but both of them should be read not only for creating your own universe, your own opinion about Bachelard's poetic imagination, but particularly for an in-depth understanding of the philosopher's theories.

Maria Noel Lapoujade introduces the reader to some of Bachelard's most significant essays which are a poetical writing rather than a philosophical treatise. She is capable of emphasizing his ideas, discoveries, perspectives and philosophical positions in a simple way. Nevertheless, despite Bachelard's dualism, the poetics of air, water, fire, earth and space, also known as "the hormones of the imagination," have become an indispensable source for the study of the imaginary.

The poetic imagination of the elements is the most discussed subject in Maria Noel Lapoujade's thesis. It is defined as a function of the surreal that ensures a calm, balanced inner existence. With the help of this surrealism, Maria Noel Lapoujade produces her own theory of imagination and carries us on her journey all the way from reverie to cosmic man. The poetic is the home for the imagination of matter, composed of the imagination of air, water, earth and fire, the four primordial elements merged into substances. They are part of both the cosmic and the human universe and each of them is embodied in one or more myths. Myths are a significant part of Maria Noel Lapoujade's discussion. The fundamental myths represent a small part of the primordial image in the eternal return. Bachelard defines myths as primitive meteorology and complexes as transformers of psychic energy.

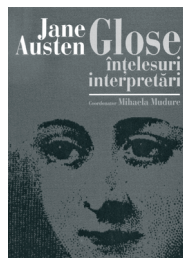
Some complexes such as Novalis, Prometheus, Empedocles and Hoffman, are mentioned in the first analysis of the poetic elements, *the psychoanalysis of fire*, where they can be conscious or partially unconscious. The complexes appeared as the author tried to reach primitiveness. Bachelard considered fire as the most dynamic element of all the poetic elements. Earth and air are presented as antithetical due to the differences between them: the astringency of the earth and the lightness of air. Bachelard presents earth as the cosmic element. Air is the element which offers dynamism to the imagination.

The poetics of space is the thesis which shines a completely new light on the concept of imagination. With the *Poetics of Space*, Bachelard introduces the reader to the phenomenology of the soul and not of the spirit. What is the purpose of phenomenology in relation to the imagination? Bachelard proposes a double type of phenomenology, the resonance which disperses existence and the echo which amplifies it.

Our journey through Bachelard's thinking is intertwined with Maria Noel Lapoujade's reflections, perspectives, and concerns about the idea of imagination and the imaginary. The author extends an invitation to the reader to enjoy Bachelard's complex ideas told and analyzed in a fragmented and concise way. The reader should take his time and reflect on his dialectic work and personality and answer the following question: Are the epistemological and poetic aspects separate or do they converge?

Ariana Sălăjan

Mihaela Mudure (ed.),
*Jane Austen: glose,
înțelesuri, interpretări*,
Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții
de Știință, 2019



Collaborating with different professors and PhD students, Mihaela Mudure managed to gather a significant number of articles dedicated to Jane Austen's works into one single book, namely *Jane Austen: Glosses, Meanings, Interpretations*. Being an English and American Literature professor herself, Mudure cultivated her interest in the feminine literature of these two worlds linked by a single language. That being said, the collection she has edited brings up subjects such as the importance of novel as a genre, gender representation as well as woman's position in the society.

The book is structured into 4 sections, including the conclusions, in which the authors describe their reading experience along with the ideas and associations they have created for themselves. The most captivating section of this book is the second one, dedicated to the possible correlations that were made between Jane Austen and other writers (mostly female ones) of her time but not only. If Austen was usually compared with writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Fanny Burney (from which she let herself being inspired for the title of her book, *Pride and Prejudice*) and, later on, with the Brontë sisters, we come to discover that Austen's work was just as much appreciated as Shakespeare's one was at the time. Although the differences between the two of them are quite obvious, regarding

the structure and also the genre they approached, “the mental space reconstructed in Shakespeare’s plays, as well as in Jane Austen’s novels regarding the self-knowledge” (p. 64) is the same. Besides, Austen lets her readers know about her love for Shakespeare’s plays by using some of his lines in her book, *Northanger Abbey*, so a comparison between them does not seem impossible at this point. But, taking a look at the development of the English novel, Jane Austen must be recognized as having a very important role in it, proving that she is “a master of a deeper emotion than it seems on the outside,” (p. 75) as Virginia Woolf says.

In the context of gender representation, we come across a unique perspective on how translation can affect not only the meaning of the original text, but the way characters are being perceived by the readers as well. A poor translation can make our reading experience unpleasant or deprive us from discovering the real storyline and it can also deform our point of view by creating different characters than the original ones. The first ever French translation of *Pride and Prejudice* (published not long after the original edition) lacks a lot on the dialogue passages that actually made the book famous, especially because of the spicy remarks exchanged between Elizabeth and Darcy. What seems to have bothered the French translator was the fact that in Austen’s book women were not submissive, which was not something the French society would want to promote. In this situation, the anonymous translator decided to interpret the author’s words by their own will, in an attempt to make the text more appealing for the French public. In spite of this potentially good intention, the

only result was that Jane Austen’s fame did not cross the French border, her personality in writing being far from understood.

If the French did not enjoy Austen’s writing, there were a lot of other people that did, so the Jane cults started to appear quite fast as the years passed. The third section of *Jane Austen: Glosses, Meanings, Interpretations* includes an article about a video game inspired from the world described by Austen in her books. *Ever, Jane* was an experiment that gave people the opportunity to create their own fictional character according to what could have been the view of the author. The goal of this project was to see if the literature can exist in the digital world or if the *wit* of it is lost once it becomes a *cybertext*. In other words, the possibilities of this game are countless since the player becomes the narrator of their own story set in Jane Austen’s world.

The authors of this book, along with the coordinator, Mihaela Mudure, succeed in presenting various opinions and theories about the phenomenon named Jane Austen, the woman who refused the only marriage proposal she ever received and for whom every change of location meant nothing else but sadness, discomfort and the loss of inspiration. The way she is portrayed here reveals that she is anything but a naïve writer and that her works are anything but some plain romantic novels.

Ștefana Rusu

Charlotte Mullins, *A Little Feminist History of Art*, London, Tate Enterprises Ltd, 2019



In *A Little Feminist History of Art*, Charlotte Mullins builds a chronology of the ‘female gaze’ phenomenon, a ceaseless effort of female artists to affirm themselves and be visible. In the art critic’s introduction, *THIS IS A MAN’S WORLD*, she relies on quotes such as these from author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: “for centuries, the world divided human beings into two groups and then proceeded to exclude and oppress one group. It is only fair that the solution to the problem should acknowledge that”; and critic Lucy R. Lippard, for whom feminism “was neither a style nor a movement”, but rather “a value system, a revolutionary strategy, a way of life”. The author goes on to explore the art unnoticed by history, referencing works by the likes of Yoko Ono and the installations of Yayoi Kusama “absent from art magazines and newspapers, rarely featured in glossy monographs or survey catalogues”.

The book highlights the work of fifty artists, from 1968 to present day, who confront the patriarchal world, explore body politics, expand global feminism and probe the issues it poses. In the first introductory chapter, *Great Women Artists*, Mullins talks about the feminist group *The Guerilla Girls*, who have tagged their work “the conscience of the art world” in an era declared by academicians as post-feminist, “of a society beyond boundaries and roles”, but which the author names fictitious;

artists such as Cathy de Monchaux, who found success after being shortlisted for the 1998 Turner Prize and became a mother shortly after, reflects the difficulty, still, of having to choose between motherhood and what it consequently jeopardizes, a career. Culture as a form of resistance and art as weapon has been adopted by feminist artists globally: Chinese and Iranian artists, Argentinians and South Koreans, Kenyan, Malawi and South African. Charlotte Mullins manages ‘to represent as wide an interpretation of feminism as possible, and to include artists whose work expands our understanding of what feminism can be’, in other words, a phenomenon deemed by museums, as soon as 2007, as ‘the feminaissance’, par excellence.

The book opens with a symbolic painting of the *Genesis*, signed by Swedish painter Monica Sjöö, namely the 1968 *God giving birth*. The oil paint on hardboard presents a cosmic woman with Black features and a white body in an explicit delivery posture, with a crowning head resembling her own. The genital questa continues with six screen prints on paper inspired by a scene taken from an experimental film, *Genital Panic* from 1969, by Valie Export, Austrian artist, where her genitals are at face level, holding a gun, where “the gun she toted was both phallic stand-in for the director’s ego and a physical threat to connect the audience directly to the action”. Another intensely remarkable performance is that of Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta, from 1973, *Untitled (Rape Scene)*, where she reacted to the rape and murder of a fellow student of hers by staging a recreation of the crime scene, tying herself to a table for an hour, naked from the waist down and

covered in blood. Mullins also highlights the performance of American artist Carol-ee Schneemann, *Interior Scroll*, from 1975. Undressed, wrapped in nothing but a sheet, she climbed on a table and read from her book *Cézanne: She was a Great Painter*; she dropped the sheet and started smearing black paint over her face and body, then she finally pulled a long scroll of paper from inside her vagina, from which she read a text transcribed from her 1973 film *Kitch's Last Meal*: "He said we can be friends equally/ tho' we are not artists equally/ I said we cannot be friends equally/ and we cannot be artists equally". Mullins' quest in not only feminist-oriented, but also anti-racist; she references Adrian Piper, American artist and philosopher, who has printed since 1968 two boxes of business cards: one with white cards, reinforcing her feminist message of self-assurance: "Dear Friend, I am not here to pick anyone up, or to be picked up. I am here alone because I want to be here, ALONE"; and the other delivering the message of racism delimitations: "Dear Friend, I am black. I am sure you did not realize this when you made/laughed at/ agreed with that racist remark".

Charlotte Mullins bets on feminist artists who use photographic metamorphosis as feminine-fictive archetypal narratives, such as American Cindy Sherman or Argentinian Amalia Ulman. Notable is the exploration of the work of artists who feature the body overweight, similar to depictions of goddesses of fertility such as Gaia and Venus of Willendorf. The former appear in domestic attitudes, with bare breasts, like in *Remodelling Photo History: Colonization*, 1981-2, a photographic project of British artist Jo Spence; or *Measures of Distance*, 1988, the video projection of

Mona Hatoum, Palestinian-British artist, filming a mother showering and talking away, in the background of a text in Arabic, fronting the whole screen. The video 'speaks of exile, nostalgia and a deep sense of loss', as the author says, where the stereotype implies the Arab woman as passive and the Arab mother as non-sexual. Mullins moves towards the expansion of global feminism and makes the association between Mona Hatoum's work and the resin-coated print and ink on paper *Rebellious Silence*, from the 1994 *Woman of Allah* series, where the muzzle of a rifle bisects a woman's face and lines of a Farsi roll move across her cheeks and forehead, the words of a martyrdom poem written by a female poet, Tahereh Saffarzadeh, 'whose words are written into the flesh of the gun-toting woman'.

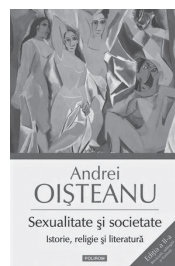
In the photography of Australian artist Tracey Moffatt, Mullins explores paternal misogyny, namely the capture titled *Useless*, from the series *Scarred for Life*, 1994, of a distressed teenager washing a car; underneath it says: 'Her father's nickname for her was 'useless''. The author brings back from her visual arsenal POC artists who deal with racism from the inside, notably Carrie Mae Weems' *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*, 1995-6, which features thirty-three historical photographs of Black men and women; the two pictures chosen by the author display in one a woman as a sexual toy, with the explicit message 'you became a playmate to the patriarch', and in the other a Black nanny and a white girl, with the message 'and their daughter'. South African artist Billie Zangewa and the deconstruction of the myth with her silk tapestry *The Rebirth of Black Venus*, 2010, fighting the oppression

of women based on race, class and gender. Mullins is exceptional in diving into the works of artists such as Nan Goldin, with her photo *Misty and Jimmy Paulette in a taxi*, 1991, of two mesmerizing drag queens whom the artist place in a third gender; Zanele Muholi, from South Africa, whose series of photos *Only Half of the Picture*, 2003–6, offer an intimate exploration of the LGBTI community in her home country. Last but not least, American artist Suzanne Lucy's collective performance *The Crystal Quilt*, organized on Mother's Day, in 1987, had four hundred and thirty women sat at tables of four, and every ten minutes the women's hands moved to a different configuration as a soundtrack by Susan Stone played to a 3,000-strong crowd, who viewed the performance from above. The artists explore the visibility and invisibility of older women and their leadership capacity.

Charlotte Mullins successfully forms an introduction of feminist ideals, of the female body politics, and of visual culture in her book, exploring themes such as gender inequality, ageist invisibility, domestic misogyny, the double sex and race discrimination, as well as personal experiences, intimate and traumatic. *A Little Feminist History of Art* is an impeccable study of the art celebrated by the oppressed second sex and the ambitious and diverse evolution of feminism in the twentieth century.

Lena Chilari

Andrei Oișteanu,
Sexualitate și societate. Istorie, religie și literatură,
second revised edition,
lași, Polirom, 2018



Before *Sexualitate și societate. Istorie, religie și literatură*, Andrei Oișteanu approached in his works more topics recognized as taboo, such as the representation of the Jews or the use of narcotics in Romanian culture.

Andrei Oișteanu confesses that he did not start writing the book based on a well-defined plan and this fact can be seen in the 35 chapters of the book. There is a very subtle mutation of the academic tone to an essayistic one in which personal insertions are glimpsed and some fragmentary information is extended over several chapters. Still, there are numerous inserted illustrations that accompany the examined topics. The study seeks a classification and a deconstruction of stereotypes and myths about sexuality, not through an ideological analysis, but rather anthropological, following comparatively “the vertical axis of time (from antiquity to the present day) and the horizontal of space (from western Europe to eastern Asia).”

These two areas are endowed with a lot of semiological material that make socially perceived sexuality bring into discussion topics just as: the cult of the bride's virginity versus the cult of the groom's virginity, the public display of sexual potency, sexual initiation of girls, erotic habits (in isolation). Notonly aspects of Christianity are explored, but there is often talk about

Judaism or the Roma tradition, by looking for common points in the mythical imaginary of societies. For example, Christianity is understood as the most well-known religious denomination based on a glorification of virginity, but the cult of the Virgin Mary is due to elements of pagan, pre-Christian religions.

The prenuptial girl's responsibility, as a social construct, belongs to the whole family, especially to the mother, and imposes acts of punishment on those who violate the "sacred covenant." This relationship between mythology and contemporary civilisation is explored especially through folk motifs in Romania. One of these motifs is *ius primae noctis*, *le droit du seigneur*, a "rite of passage" in Arnold Van Gennep's terms, which in its primary significance meant a power battle with religious layers. For the most part, *ius primae noctis* refers to the sovereign's right to have sexual relations with brides in his domain, on their wedding night. This custom went through different versions, from the right of monarch or of the landlord to the right of the godfather or father-in-law over the bride. Consequently, discretionary political power is doubled by a precise sexual power. Another enticing chapter is "The Sexuality of Language", in which the author talks about censorship in the official dictionaries of the Romanian language or in encyclopedias of the of the "vulgar", non-scientific words or statements.

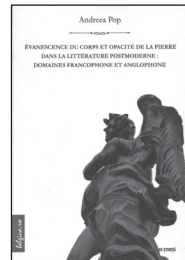
In terms of literature and culture, the books that are mentioned or analyzed start from Ovid, *Ars amandia*, *Epic of Gilgamesh*, *Kama sutra*, *Song of songs* reaching *One thousand and one nights* or *The Decameron*. The authors of Romanian literature are often quoted are Nicolae Filimon, Tudor

Arghezi, Geo Bogza, Urmuz or Mateiu Caragiale, used to prove the myths either as an origin of erotic or pornographic literature itself, through reinterpretations in mundane territory.

In fact, this is the great synthesis of the already stated book: Man being the most graded animal from a cultural perspective, he is the most missed animal of Nature. The advance towards culture it motivated the man to invest in the primary instincts (so identical with those of animals) religious, metaphysical or purely philosophical affinities. By the phrase "cultural (acquired) precepts try to dominate the natural (innate) instincts", we figure out: there is always a struggle between the natural self and the cultural self that want to express their identity.

Adelina Traicu

Andreea Pop,
*L'Évanescence du corps et
opacité de la pierre dans la
littérature postmoderne*,
Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții
de Știință, 2017



Le livre d'Andreea Pop est un livre critique et en même temps d'analyse psychologique. Avec un caractère informatif pour le lecteur, ce livre représente la littérature postmoderne dans la mesure où le sujet abordé est la fragilisation du corps. Ainsi que, le texte plonge dans une actualité temporelle parce que le problème de la matière occupe presque tous les domaines d'aujourd'hui : la science, la philosophie, la psychologie et même l'art, qu'il soit écrit ou visuel.

Dans ce texte, nous sont présentés deux plans, l'un extérieur rendu par les corps matériels et l'autre intérieur rendu par les sentiments. Les deux se rencontrent et pénètrent, détruisant de l'intérieur vers l'extérieur. Aussi, le texte démontre combien l'humanité est liée au matériel, au réel, et à l'éphémère. Le corps représente ce qui est visible de l'homme. C'est la forme dans laquelle l'âme est conservé. Une fois que ce corps est affecté par la maladie, l'intérieur d'une personne est détruit étape par étape. Dans ce livre on a l'exemple d'Anne, une femme souffrant d'une maladie génitale et se sacrifiant pour donner la vie à l'enfant qu'elle a dans son ventre. Dans Anne, on voit une personne forte et capable de sacrifice qui parvient à posséder cette matière, son corps, et de vivre dans une réalité imaginaire. Dans le livre d'Andreea Pop il est important de savoir comment cette corporalité peut être détruite, le processus par lequel cette destruction peut être accomplie, mais aussi le résultat qui est atteint après cette destruction. On peut parler de la statufication de la matière, une transformation de la personne en rien, dans un simple objet à mesure que la maladie progresse. Enfin, il y a une transformation de l'homme en pierre, une transition de l'être à un objet sans vie parce que «< la matière opaque devient translucide, voire transparente >>. De plus, après la destruction de la femme par la maladie, cette pétrification de la matière ne s'arrête pas là. Elle continuera de se propager et d'affecter les autres. Dans ce cas, Max, son mari, sera gravement affecté par cette disparition de sa femme.

La mort est l'un des thèmes de ce livre et la raison centrale pour laquelle les corps sont détruits. Évidemment, tout ce

qui est matériel sera caractérisé par l'effémerité. La mort est, en fin de compte, ce processus de disparition des corps. Dans ce livre, qui emprunte des histoires à d'autres livres, presque tous souffrent de la mort, mais le drame de la perte de l'être est vécu différemment. Par exemple, dans le couple Hasch- Rose, l'homme n'est pas très inquiet de la perte de sa femme, mais quand la tragédie se produit il reçoit un choc. On voit comment cet homme vit dans une illusion qu'il crée lui-même et quand il aura la nouvelle de la disparition de sa femme, il sera pris par surprise et détruit par la statufication immédiate. Il est temps qu'il devienne le rocher pour un moment, mais aussi pour le reste de sa vie à cause de cette perte.

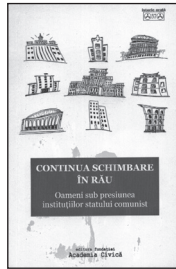
Le caractère scientifique de ce livre est que l'auteur met en évidence trois éléments primordiaux qui interviennent à la destruction de cette corporalité. Le premier est la terre, le second est le feu et le troisième l'air. C'est à dire que le processus de destruction des corps relève de ces trois composantes. Tout d'abord on parle de l'effet opaque de la pierre, puis cette opacité sera détruite par l'âme (le feu) et à la fin, le corps évanescence va être caractérisé par la transparence (il sera transformé en air).

En conclusion, le lecteur trouvera dans le livre d'Andreea Pop des informations pertinentes pour de nombreux domaines d'activité. C'est précisément parce que l'auteur a choisi de discuter d'un sujet très général mais difficile pour l'analyser. Dans nos jours, l'idée de la corporalité est plus abordé que la subjectivité d'un corps. Mais, l'auteur de ce texte tente de saisir comment la vie est vue après la perte de l'effet matériel dont elle est composée. L'auteur nous rappelle seulement une réalité, à travers ce

livre, que les gens sont très intéressés par les choses passagères et ils oublient ce qui est vraiment important, l'âme.

Crina-Gabriela Zegrean

Georgeta Pop, *Continua schimbare în rău. Oameni sub presiunea instituțiilor statului comunist*, București, Editura Fundației Academia Civică, 2019



Seeing that the rhetoric of our time is still shaped by the communist regime of the 20th century, it is essential that we continue to address this tumultuous historical period, as the public has only a meagre awareness of the truly enormous scale of the atrocities that took place. In this sense, Romania embodies a good geopolitical laboratory for observing the long-term effects of life under communism, in order to uncover the many aspects still unknown to historians and other researchers, namely details outside of what has been written in history schoolbooks.

With this in mind, the volume *Change for the Worse. People under Pressure from the Communist State Institutions* (*Continua schimbare în rău. Oameni sub presiunea instituțiilor statului comunist*) proposes a confrontation with our communist past, a period of paradox and decadence rather than the so-called “golden years”. Along the common thematic thread of the citizen-state institutions relationship, the editor, Georgeta Pop, gathers a series of six interviews and a public debate as a means to provide a thorough account of social

discrimination, secret informants, ethically questionable medical procedures, censored education, workplace dynamics and, last but not least, the horrors that the female half of the Romanian population went through.

Before even diving into the contents of the book itself, it is worth mentioning the fact that it brings into the open several recordings archived by The Oral History Collection of the Sighet Memorial. It is precisely this interview format that distinguishes *Change for the Worse* from other, more theoretical, historical works on the communist regime. Yet, this subjective point of view is not detrimental to the topic, on the contrary, authenticity and critical thinking are what define the personal stories of these people with a first-hand knowledge of the Ceaușescu rule. Far from a randomized selection, the recordings hereby transcribed, dating between 2002 and 2018, stimulate a meditation on this power complex that shook the foundations of the entire Romanian society.

These testimonies share something more than just the theme of one's relationship to the communist institutions and that is the bitter and disapproving look back on the period, specifically each interviewee's ability to lucidly analyze, comprehend and critique their own and the nation's past. Moreover, having different socio-cultural backgrounds is what gives diversity to the retellings and the discourse itself, as the chapters feature, as it follows, the impressions of a researcher, a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology, an engineer, a history teacher, another gynecologist, and a miner, while the last chapter is a round table debate organized by the Civic Academy Foundation.

The set of interviews is inaugurated by Nicolae Șerban Tanașoca, classicist philologist with a focus on Balkan history and culture, who assess the dynamics between scientific research and state institutions, in order to highlight the involvement of politics in academia. In the context of purging the academic environment of undesirable people for the Party, examples of political and scholarly personalities who affected either positively or negatively the Romanian historiography are also mentioned. Similarly, Constantin Hociotă's commentary on school education, in the fourth section of the book, reveals the ways in which history and school curriculum were mutilated for ideological purposes.

To continue, the situation in the industrial field is examined by Victor Claudiu Săvulescu in chapter three. Working as an energy engineer, he had to manage, on the one hand, poorly designed plans and absurd expectations dictated by the Party, and on the other hand, disinterested and unprofessional workers who had to carry out such projects. The last recording tells the tragic story of the miner Ioan Drimuș, who, although thought he was doing a decent job, was soon deemed dangerous for the party activists and consequently, marginalized and removed from the work field.

However, the idea that the effects of the communist rule in Romania are large and long-lasting is even more poignantly asserted in the sections dedicated to Ceaușescu's demographic policy that banned not only abortion, but also contraceptive methods. A different take on abortion laws from 1966 and 1985 is provided by each participant at the round table debate or by Traian Rebedea, Mircea Pavel, gynecologists confronted directly with the

disastrous consequences of self-induced abortions in unsanitary conditions. Nonetheless, both the doctors' accounts and the aspects raised during the debate remember the tide of oppression caused by the two decrees, to enumerate: the mutilated female bodies, the large number of unwanted children, born with malformations or even abandoned, and more importantly, the loss of corporeal autonomy and humiliation suffered by women and the psychological effects that still linger on today.

To conclude this brief journey through the testimonies collected by Georgeta Pop, the book *Change for the Worse* will interest not only readers of 20th-century history, but it is also a great informational addition to anyone curious in the true scale of the impact of the communist rule in Romania, since it proves that the attitudinal legacies of the regime are still detectable more than 30 years later. Let us be thankful, however, that today such dialogues are made possible, free and uncensored.

Kocsis Krisztina Bianka

Secolul 21, no. 1-6, Ion Vianu – *Contemporanul nostru*, Fundația Culturală Secolul 21, București, 2019



This issue of the *Secolul 21* journal opens with some biographical considerations, made by Ion Vianu himself. He recounts his life from when he was a child until the present, emphasizing some important episodes, such as his experience

under the Ceaușescu regime, his escape from communist Romania, but also his return.

The next part of the volume comprises a series of articles regarding the life and the oeuvre of Ion Vianu, as a writer, a man of culture, and a psychiatrist. The first article, by Șerban Foartă, proposes a selection of maxims from Vianu's books. One of these quotes is very representative of Vianu's life and struggle during his stay in communist Romania: "Any ideology is a crime". The second article, by Simona Sora, brings into discussion Vianu's ten essential rules for a life well lived. The decalogue revolves around virtues like modesty, love, acceptance and tolerance, both towards ourselves and others. The next article, by Sanda Galopenția, discusses Vianu's draw towards psychiatry, which made him interested in writing essays and, afterwards, even literature. Galopenția's stance is that for Vianu, literature functions as a kind of "extension" of psychiatry. The same thing is examined in the next article, that of Marta Petreu, who ponders upon the intersections between (mental) illness and literature in Vianu's works, and especially upon insanity, that is never to be understood. Petreu adds that Vianu's books show us that the boundaries between this insanity and what she calls "normality" (more like "sanity", I would say) are dim and blurred. The fifth article, by Daniela Zeca-Buzura contains an anecdote: being a university professor, Zeca-Buzura tried to help her students become acquainted with Vianu and with his work. The confrontation between Generation Z and Vianu demonstrated how difficult it is for young people today to understand the struggles of Romanian intellectuals living under the Ceaușescu

regime. The last article (that of Jan Koneffke) revolves around *Amor Intellectualis* and how Vianu's early life is presented in the volume. It works, says Koneffke, as a *bildungsroman* for the most part.

The next section of the journal comprises three essays, the first two belonging to Vianu himself. In the first essay, Vianu discusses his lifelong towards religion. The author recounts his childhood, a period of time when he somehow felt God close to him, but also mentions how the communists succeeded to take that away from him, since they did not teach religion in schools. The relations between religion and freedom, religion and morals are also mentioned. The second essay is centred around Dostoievski's Prince Myshkin, who becomes a "patient" analysed by Vianu, from the point of view of a psychiatrist. The last essay from this section of the journal belongs to Carmen Mușat and introduces the next chapter, talking about the friendship and professional relationship between Ion Vianu and Matei Călinescu. In the next (almost) one hundred pages, the journal presents a series of letters between the two thinkers. They exchange ideas and discuss mostly their (academic) work, but they also seem very eager to share their personal experiences, since both of them had in common the fact that they left communist Romania in search of a better life.

The next chapter brings into discussion Vianu's political stance as a signer of the Charta '77, along with another important Romanian writer, Paul Goma. Gabriel Andreescu and Monica Lovinescu write a few pages about the historical and political context of this civic initiative. This part of the journal ends with a letter written by Vianu and addressed to Goma, a text full

of despair and hopelessness, that shows how tragic the life of an intellectual could become under the Ceaușescu regime. The next part of the journal is a study by the aforementioned Gabriel Andreescu, who takes the reader into the archives of the Securitate and explains what goes on behind closed doors and how the people that signed the Charta '77 were questioned.

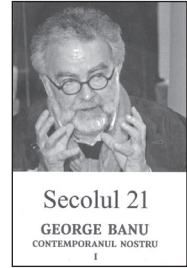
Apart from all these essays, this issue of the *Secolul 21* journal also publishes some of Vianu's poems and some translations of Paul Celan, Federico Garcia Lorca and Hermann Broch (translated by Vianu himself).

Virgil Nemoianu writes an essay about the literary circle founded in Sibiu and discusses about the generation of Ștefan Augustin Doinaș and Radu Stanca, whom Nemoianu calls "the golden generation". The issue ends with two other texts, originally two conferences from 2018, held by Silvia Irina Zimmermann and Shona Kallestrup. Both texts revolve around the Royal Family of Romania and the way it changed the country and its people.

This issue of the *Secolul 21* journal is not only a tribute to an important figure of the Romanian cultural life and literary scene, but also a detailed analysis of what communism meant for people like Ion Vianu. Estranged and forced to leave a system that suffocated him, Vianu is a symbol of the fight against injustice that took place in communist Romania.

Călina-Maria Moldovan

Secolul 21, no. 7-12,
George Banu –
Contemporanul nostru,
Fundația Culturală
Secolul 21, București,
2019



The *Secolul 21* (21st Century) journal, widely recognized as one of the most appreciated cultural projects related to the humanities studies in Romania and worldwide, continues the series entitled *Contemporanul nostru* (*Our Contemporary*) by collecting a set of confessions, works, drawings, poems, quotes or photographs dedicated to George Banu by friends and colleagues. A professor at the University of Paris (Sorbonne) and co-founder of the Experimental Theatre Academy in Paris in 1990, George Banu is one of the most prominent researchers in theatrical studies, particularly recognized through the complexity of his essays. Due to the diversity of the appreciative material received by the editors, the edition dedicated to George Banu also includes a second volume.

The first autobiographical statements are opened by George Banu himself. He writes about his departure from Romania in 1973, because of the communist movement that restricted students and researchers from their individual artistic purposes. George Banu anticipated the *economical exile*, but he strongly insisted on *the survival exile* that he and his colleagues/ friends experienced. There is a major difference between the two concepts, because the last one allowed them to return, but it came with difficult decisions: the impossibility of finding a better opportunity to leave

again and the inaccessibility to French cultural achievement. George Banu assumes his dual identity (Romanian and French) defined by his origins, as well as by the Francophone influence. Banu also states that his identity is perfectly defined by the link between the two spaces that influenced his life and career.

In order to clearly state his perception regarding the reasons of the free choice of exile, Banu expresses his arguments through the analysis of Bertolt Brecht poems. The exile is seen as an ultimate solution, as a consequence based on personal dissatisfaction or on the political background.

The following sections emphasize Banu's cultural contribution in theatrical studies and visual art. A few pages from one of his famous works, *Candoare și virtuozitate. Note despre circul chinezesc (Innocence and Virtuosity. Notes about the Chinese Theatre)*, are revisited in this volume. He explains why the circus is the ancestor of the theatre and the cinema, pointing out the importance of the visual field and the analysis of the symbolic characters in the Chinese culture. Moreover, Carmen Mușat also explores some paintings that portray Jesus, inspired by Eduardo Posada's painting from Banu's work entitled *Spatele omului – pictură și teatru (The Back of the Man – Painting and Theatre)*. The reasons behind this approach is George Banu's reflection on body expressivity.

He is widely recognized by his contemporaries as *the orchestra man, the paradoxical traveler, the contemporary memory of the theatre*. All these titles reflect George Banu's cultural identity and main interests throughout an exquisite career. The dedications are unique and deeply nostalgic. Andrei Șerban, for example, reflects on

Helen Luke's *Old Age* and Shakespeare's play *Antony and Cleopatra*. He correlates some common memories with the main concepts he reflects on, like time, nostalgia and age. Silviu Purcărete also writes about their interest in Shakespearian myths and mysteries. This is why he inserts two of his personal drawings that explore this domain.

The volume does not only present works of appreciation to George Banu, but it also describes him and his correspondents. Moreover, the volume also includes bilingual texts (in French and Romanian) and one of them belongs to Laurent Gaudé. He describes Banu as being *the theatre man*, a receptive and inspiring personality that creatively explores ideas that influence generations. This is why Mariko Azanawa sees him as a strict, devoted and passionate teacher and Roberto Bacci considers that every new meeting with Banu is not only inspiring, but life-changing, because of his clear and compelling speech.

This volume also ends with some essays that mark the 100th anniversary of the Great Union. The topics include works about the architecture of Romanian castles, as well as reflection on the artistic field and the way it was perceived by the Monarchy.

To sum up, the *Secolul 21 (21st Century)* journal succeeds in presenting a diversity of perspectives about an inspiring cultural personality. George Banu is described through the art he admires, his works and, most importantly, through the eyes of the contemporaries who love and appreciate him. Moreover, the purpose of this volume is successfully achieved by masterfully assembling the visual and confessional memories.

Ana Bănică

Luigi Tassoni,
*L'immagine del pensiero
 da Agostino a Derrida*,
 Milano, Mimesis
 Edizioni, 2017



Luigi Tassoni's refreshing perspectives, **L**inquiries and curiosities surrounding what are known to be some of the most important takes on the theorization of the image and the imaginary throughout time, are all collected in his 2017 book, titled *L'immagine del pensiero da Agostino a Derrida*. The texts not only revolve around the (possibly impossible to answer) question: "What is an image?" (although this does not appear to be what the author strives for), but they also closely follow relations between image and thought, as the title precisely suggests. This is the area of novelty which Tassoni brings into the forefront.

What is also impressive would be the considerate and vast amount of information the author manages to expand on, contrasting the rather short length of the book itself (a mere 262 pages). One factor playing a role in this must be the well-organized structure, and the great use of the *logos* in constructing arguments; the discourse almost always offers satisfactory answers.

To receive an answer, one must ask a question, and so does Tassoni when he contextualizes the image and thought in various fields: semiotics, psychoanalysis, philosophy, theology, to name a few.

Starting with Augustine's work and theorization, the problem of the image

of men mirroring the image of God, this overlap, the enigma which is created, as well as the implicit talk about the possible (or impossible) similarities and differences between the two and ultimately reaching the subject of imagination and memory, are all meditated upon in a lengthy first chapter, titled "Il cigno nero di Agostino".

Tassoni impresses with his ability to bring a long-debated subject into the familiar, to choose something of interest for the contemporary. As is the case in the second chapter, "Le simulazioni di Machiavelli", where the Machiavellian lie is discussed in an effort to shine some light on the fictitious mind, simulations and behavioral norms, highlighting the dynamics between image and thought. Or in Chapter 10, "Considerazioni dello straniero. Socrate, Derrida e altri super-eroi.", in which the idea of a stranger who searches for, expects or demands hospitality (a moral code which may not even be possible to stand by, for it may not exist), is extended to our everyday life and how people become the stranger, even in familiar places. The recurring duplicity of living a double life, one online and another offline, leads to alienation, just as our comic book super-heroes, who conceal part of their identities.

Another fruitful topic can be found in the seventh chapter, "Freud e l'immagine come interpretazione", in which the psychoanalyst's theories regarding images, specifically the ones occurring in dreams, are the subject of fascination. The problematization of working with oneiric images, alongside the necessary distinction between awake thought and the ones materializing in dreams, and what exactly are Freud's views on the image, are all subjects of concern for Tassoni in this chapter.

Regarding Derrida's theories, the author starts with the inert entity of every thought, writing, language, and speech, and that is silence, as part of the semiotic process of all verbal and non-verbal language, in an attempt to construct Derrida's position on this subject matter, whilst covering key-concepts such as "the crypt", "anasemia" and "polysemia". In Chapter 9, titled "Intrecci di Derrida", Tassoni explores the two types of narratives Derrida uses in his works, creating a whole philosophy on their basis: the first one resembles a stretched bow with the arrow pointing downwards toward speech; the second depicts a text which opens in different directions, rotating along guidelines, and so the result can be seen at the points of

intersection, creating a metapoetic dimension, no longer relying on direct references.

Although Tassoni confesses that he does not wish to bring a pure semiotic study of the image, in Chapter 13, "L'immagine semiotica", on the basis of Emanuele Tesauro's work, he explores this field, targeting the imaginary, as well as the signs as language, whilst analyzing theories belonging to Saussure, Husserl, Peirce, Barthes, and Eco, dedicating a subchapter to each semiotician.

Covering such a vast and possibly infinite topic, that is the theory of image and thought, Tassoni manages to offer novel and valuable perspectives, in a coherent and well-structured book.

Patricia-Iuliana Leordean