

# Recherche littéraire / Literary Research

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En tant que publication de l'Association internationale de la littérature comparée, *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research* a comme but de communiquer aux comparatistes du monde entier les développements récents de notre discipline. Dans ce but la revue publie les comptes rendus des livres notables sur les sujets comparatistes, les nouvelles des congrès professionnels et d'autres événements d'une importance significative pour nos membres, et de temps en temps les prises de position sur des problèmes qui pourraient apporter beaucoup d'intérêt. On devrait souligner que RL/LR ne publie pas de recherche littéraire comparée.

Les comptes rendus sont typiquement écrits ou en français ou en anglais, les deux langues officielles de l'AILC. Néanmoins, on pourrait faire quelques exceptions étant donné les limites des ressources à la disposition du rédacteur. En général, un compte rendu prendra une des formes suivantes: des annonces brèves de 500 à 800 mots pour les livres courts ou relativement spécialisés, des comptes rendus proprement dits de 1.200 à 1.500 mots pour les livres plus longs ou d'une portée plus ambitieuse, ou des essais de 2.000 à 3.000 mots portant ou sur un seul ouvrage d'un grand mérite ou sur plusieurs ouvrages qu'on pourrait traiter ensemble. En vue de l'importance des ouvrages collectifs pour accomplir une étude assez large de certains sujets comparatistes, RL/LR acceptera les comptes rendus de recueils d'essais bien organisés, y compris les numéros spéciaux des revues. Nous sommes prêts à publier les comptes rendus un peu plus longs de ces textes quand la situation le demande.

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As a publication of the International Comparative Literature Association, *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research* has the mission of informing comparative literature scholars worldwide of recent contributions to the field. To that end it publishes reviews of noteworthy books on comparative topics, information about events of major significance for comparatists, and occasional position papers on issues of interest to the field. It should be emphasized that RL/LR does not publish comparative literary scholarship.

Reviews are normally written in French or English, the two official languages of the ICLA, though exceptions will be considered within the limits allowed by the editor's resources. Reviews generally fall into one of the following three categories: book notes of 500 to 800 words for short or relatively specialized works, reviews of 1,200 to 1,500 words for longer works of greater scope, and review essays of 2,000 to 3,000 words for a work of major significance for the field or for joint treatment of several related works. Given the importance of collaborative work in promoting broad-based comparative scholarship, RL/LR does review well-conceived edited volumes, including special issues of journals, and will publish somewhat longer reviews of such scholarship when the situation merits.

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nialism should be exercised with extreme caution, since hegemonic powers have yet to reasonably reconcile Indigenous concerns ensuing from deracination and transculturation, nor have they made the process of (forced) habituation particularly rewarding for Indigenous peoples.

Objections aside, readers unfamiliar with Ecocriticism or Indigenous Studies will find much value in this survey of the field. However, readers might also find a flaw in the brevity of some of the articles included in this volume and wish to engage with specific case studies more fully. The sheer number of voices included here hinders many discussions from being fully developed. While students and scholars of both sub-disciplines will find this anthology a valuable sourcebook, specialists in one field or the other will find some of the essays more groundbreaking than others, especially those that explore and support indigenous ways of knowing more fully as compared to those that rehash tropes from Western theory or apply terms from unrelated literary scholarship that are less useful than they might, at first glance, appear. Still, Däwes's and Maufort's compilation provides rich readings on Indigenous dramas and illuminates their significance to the field of Ecocriticism.

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Wiebke Denecke. *Classical World Literatures. Sino-Japanese and Greco-Roman Comparisons*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2014. Pp. 368. ISBN: 9780199971848.

What is a classical literary age and what is (a) classic? The questions have been discussed among scholars, mainly in Europe, for many decades, and have engendered debate in every country claiming a literary classical age (regardless of its moniker): from Italy to Spain, France, and Germany. That the entire national literature of a certain epoch can in itself be classical is yet another problem. Also, the question "What is World Literature?" has been asked since Goethe created (or, more precisely: shaped) the term, but the debate was kindled recently during the rise of and in response to post-colonial theory. World Literature may be an explosive term in this context. World Literatures, however, suggest two concurrent foci: the very relevance and exemplary character for a large cultural sphere and a limitation to this cultural region. The concept of "classicism" is, in this sense, to be seen both

as completely independent from any aesthetic models based on the practice of ancient Mediterranean European cultures, and illustrative of a literary continuum developing over centuries for a continent or a world region.

In light of such concerns, the author presents (in eight chapters and an epilogue) a study which can with full justification be called an example of real and serious comparatism, undertaking a confrontation beyond the borders of large cultural spheres (as Earl Miner did in his comparison of Eastern and Western poetologies), i.e. "Sino-Japanese and Greco-Roman comparisons." The basis of such a venture is a priori the absence of synchrony, or vice versa, the thesis of the non-simultaneity of the simultaneous. However one wishes to divide the eras of world history up to the present age, it does not make sense to impose the turning point of the Christian era on Asian kingdoms, dynasties or literary periods. In short, this book supports its rich documentation of diverse literary events and episodes by quoting dates, but the hypotheses of the volume make exact chronology somehow irrelevant.

Despite all linguistic, ethnic, historical, and political divisions, Sino-Japanese and Greco-Roman cultures are each understood as large units, but are also combined as dyads of an "older reference culture plus a younger receiving/ transforming culture." The first chapter questions the comparability of the two regions. The common denominators are in both cases the social, political and economic conditions accounting for the rise of cultures in which literature plays a decisive role. This chapter, therefore, deals with the formation of centers of advanced civilisation, the emergence of literacy, the development of instances of power, etc. In the second chapter, the author does not simply tell the early history of literature and rhetoric in these two linguistic regions, but also inquires how a historiography can, in fact, be written, especially in the case of very early oral literatures in East and West. In the third chapter, the author outlines two parallel longitudinal sections of European and Asian literary history, focusing on the emergence of an average aesthetic ideal position (i.e. a "classicism"). In Greco-Roman and Sino-Japanese literatures, historical lines are traced showing how texts gradually received their aesthetic value (or surplus), how they were able to maintain a balance over time, and how they moved into decline. The fourth chapter deals with foundational myths in literature, comparing e.g. the narrative reconstruction of how the Roman Empire (in Virgil's *Aeneid*) and the Japanese political system (attributed to Prince Shōtoku) were established. The author then draws parallels between the Roman Empire and Japan as respective latecomers. In the extensive fifth chapter, Denecke

shows how the role of both Rome and Kyoto as capital cities led to the development of literary practices, poetical forms, and negotiability of gender roles. The shorter sixth chapter compares classic authors in exile in these two cultural spheres: the paradigmatic Japanese writer Sugawara no Michizane and the most famous exiled poet of European antiquity, Ovid. But the possible comparisons between Europe and Asia go further: the scholarly cultures also produced similar forms of discourse and similar practices. Here the author discovers that the (dis)advantages of learning and rhetoric have similar parallels in European late antiquity and “medieval” Japan.

All these points of comparison between the histories of communication technology, style, speech, writing, the concentration of power, myths, and authorial roles examined in this volume are motivated by a fundamental interest for parallels. If one accepts the hypotheses of earlier historians such as Vico regarding the underlying foundations of comparatism, namely that empires and cultures develop in respective cycles, the construction or reconstruction of historical analogies and correlations remains one of the most appealing challenges for a form of Comparative Literature that goes beyond preaching the obvious and exposing materially plausible, although hidden, intertextual references. In other words, the juxtaposition of the data of world history and significant performative events in the arts, has always exerted as a form of a synchronopsis a subtle appeal to readers and is often evoked today in terms of the popular “material turn.” It works equally well as a dynamic between East and West.

This volume also offers surprises in its exposing of the somewhat shifted parallels between similar phenomena, and the reciprocal “ignorance” of each other’s “classicisms” and “Asianisms.” The historical and methodological roots of Comparative Literature as a discipline can be found in positivism, where demonstrable relationships prevail, or, as the author might put it, where positive data emanate from a certain easy or even idle way of thinking. This book advocates the opposite course, but not within the counter-paradigm known from the history of literary influences as the so-called “typological similarity.” It rather seeks to uncover analogies based on “deep comparison.” In particular, this volume draws comparisons at a level far below explicit cultural contacts and therefore much closer to categories such as “humanity” or “the world.” But the author’s project requires a permanent awareness of gaps, incommensurabilities, and seeming equivalents, which is why the book claims the catachresis as “the master trope of deep comparison” (300). With its numerous original Greek, Latin, Chinese and Japanese quotes, translated into English, with its vast

bibliography, its most useful index, this volume is a paragon of learning and a masterpiece of transcultural literary history.

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**Massimo Fusillo. *L'object-fétiche: littérature, cinéma, visualité*. Trans. Veronic Algeri and Angelo Pavia. Paris: Champion, 2014. Pp. 239. ISBN: 9782745326218.**

*L'object-fétiche: littérature, cinéma, visualité*, Massimo Fusillo's most recent book, appeared in the original Italian in 2012 under the title *Feticci: Letteratura, cinema, arti visive*. This book offers a compilation of essays dealing with fetishes, or "fetish-objects" as the French translation calls them, in literature, film, and art. It presents a series of mini-case studies across multiple genres and literary, cinematic, and artistic periods, from the ekphrasis of Achilles's shield, Dorian Grey's picture, Pamuk's museum, to pop art and "commodity sculpture." Fusillo provides many insights about the given period and artistic movements connecting them with various types of fetishes. The study also shows the complexity of fetishism in the modern context, the significance of which should not be reduced to mere obsession. The book itself is like Pamuk's museum: it exhibits objects that have a mystical significance or are endowed with magical qualities.

The author introduces his subject by expressing the need for an exploration of the fetish. Indeed, he states in the preface that he is concerned with everyday objects that "ont toujours été relégués à l'arrière-plan, et qui aujourd'hui, à l'époque où leur diffusion dans le quotidien augmente de manière vertigineuse, sont devenus des thèmes de philosophie et d'anthropologie" (7). Fusillo defines a fetish, or at least the fetish-objects with which he will be concerned, as items carrying a symbolic, affective, or emotional quality. The author then discusses the different functions of the object as fetish in the modernist tradition, in the wake of colonial interactions with Africa and across various media, singling out at least seven distinct but closely related functions. The centrality and the role of objects in film are easily delineated, since cinema is an art "où la valorisation fétichiste du détail a une valeur fondamentale; on pourrait dire structurelle" (123). However, the book's strength can be found in Fusillo's examination