

Abstracts

- 1207 **Robert J. C. Young**, *That Which Is Casually Called a Language*
 How do we know where languages begin and where they end? It is widely assumed that languages exist as discrete, distinct entities, an idea that forms the basis of mono- and multilingualism, as well as of source and target languages in translation theory. What created that clear-cut division between languages? I argue that our current conception of language was invented as part of the process of the creation of the nation-state. The idea of a language, and therefore of translation, was a product of nation-state formation that required the construction of boundaries to divide homogeneous territories, peoples, and their languages. The Stammbaum model of linguistic filiation emerged as part of the same politicized ideology of modernity. Against this, I consider the alternative model of language mixture, which conceptualizes language as a transformative process of interaction without boundaries and challenges ideas of a language and of translation. (RJCY)
- 1222 **Françoise Lionnet and Emmanuel Bruno Jean-François**, *Literary Routes: Migration, Islands, and the Creative Economy*
 Exploring the links among accelerating patterns of migration, homogenizing forces of globalization, and transnational sites of creativity, this essay highlights the contributions that francophone voices from islands of the global South have made to the diversification of the knowledge economy. We discuss the critical effectiveness of literature as an agent of cultural change, focusing on minor writers who reach wide audiences by negotiating new pathways into the literary marketplace. The Comoran Soeuf Elbadawi, the Malagasy Jean-Luc Raharimanana, the Mauritians Ananda Devi and Shenaz Patel, and the Tahitian Chantal Spitz instigate literary dialogues that underscore ways of reimagining our world and redefining world literature. The issues they raise reveal the enduring relevance of literary studies and its interpretive approaches to a full appreciation of human diversity, which cannot be captured by purely quantitative methods. (FL and EBJ-F)
- 1239 **Tobias Warner**, *How Mariama Bâ Became World Literature: Translation and the Legibility of Feminist Critique*
 How did Mariama Bâ's 1979 novel *Une si longue lettre* (*So Long a Letter*) become one of the most widely read, taught, and translated African texts of the twentieth century? This essay traces how the Senegalese author's work became recognizable to a global audience as an attack on polygamy and a celebration of literary culture. I explore the flaws in these two conceptions of the novel, and I recover aspects of the text that were obscured along the way—especially the novel's critique of efforts to reform the legal framework of marriage in Senegal. I also compare striking shifts that occur in two key translations: the English edition that helped catalyze Bâ's success and a more recent translation into Wolof, the most

widely spoken language in Senegal. By reading *Letter* back through these translations, I reposition it as a text that highlights its distance from an audience and transforms this distance into an animating contradiction. (TW)

- 1256 **Emily Setina**, *Marianne Moore's Postwar Fables and the Politics of Indirection*
Marianne Moore's response to World War II took an unexpected form: her translation, published in 1954, of the fables of La Fontaine. While Moore's project emerged from a wartime effort of European cultural transmission, the fables' indirect speech also served more personal political ends. It afforded a protected means for entering a gendered debate about war and a language for writing about large issues—violence, suffering, injustice—that avoided the oversimplifications and divisiveness of wartime and Cold War rhetoric. Critics have mostly neglected Moore's *Fables* along with her politics, but both are essential to understanding not only her response to war but also the larger goals of postwar American poetry and translation as a political project—one that allowed Moore and her peers to offset the guilt of spectatorship by reclaiming intellectual labor as a mode of war participation. (ES)

- 1274 **Yasser Elhariry**, *f*
This essay argues that there remains a far way to go before the translanguing complexities of contemporary francophone poetry are exhausted. It introduces a new, different constellation of international poets, essayists, and translators to bear on the question of language choice as a means of creative expression. Building on the debates over franco-Arabic textual bilingualism that began in the 1980s, it presents close readings of translations by Salah Stétié and of original poetic compositions by Ryoko Sekiguchi. Two translational moments that foil, in french script, a deeper Arabic intertext show how literature and criticism work in multilingual situations, as they transform literary language through the aspiration of a single phonemic consonant—*f*. YE

- 1284 **Philip Joseph**, *The Pícaro at War: Vernacular Language and Violent Conflict in Grimmelshausen and Saro-Wiwa*
This essay compares Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* (1669) and Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy* (1985), approaching them as picaresque war novels that tell the story of a vernacular language becoming literary through brutal war. Despite differences of language, nation, and time, the novels of Grimmelshausen and Saro-Wiwa share a structural similarity traceable to their respective postwar contexts. These novels rewrite the expected relation between war and language. Instead of privileging the damage done to speech, they authorize a spoken language through the medium of a highly mobile rogue protagonist. Grimmelshausen and Saro-Wiwa contend with the question of whether a language, lacking the official status guaranteed by a sovereign state, is strong enough to constitute and represent a territory divided by civil war. In their works, war tears apart a territory and lays the foundation for its autonomous postwar culture all at once. (PJ)

- 1299 **Taylor A. Eggan**, *Regionalizing the Planet: Horizons of the Introverted Novel at World Literature's End*
“World literature” will always fail because there is no such thing as *the* world. I draw on speculative realism to elaborate how all formations of a single world literature stem from problematic world concepts (particularly “the globe”) that write certain literary traditions out of the world. Using Gayatri Spivak's concept of the planetary, I move toward a mode of reading that attends to how individual texts regionalize the planet vis-à-vis their own centers of production. Instead of imagining a single world sectioned into center and periphery, this method recognizes that, far from dwelling on their own marginalization within the global economy, all localities (and literatures) posit themselves as center and regionalize outward from this center. Reading for regionalization

pluralizes the possibilities of literary worlding. This practice requires us to understand and to honor the formal character of introversion, which I theorize through the case of the Swahili novel. (TAE)

1316 **Carlos Rojas, Language, Ethnicity, and the Politics of Literary Taxonomy: Ng Kim Chew and Mahua Literature**

Through an examination of short stories from the Malaysian Chinese author Ng Kim Chew's 2001 collection *From Island to Island*, this essay reflects on the taxonomic functions of criteria such as language, ethnicity, and nationality, particularly as they inform contemporary discussions of Chinese, Sinophone, and Mahua (Malaysian Chinese) literature. Several of Ng's stories are set on remote islands and feature individuals who, having been forcibly separated from their original linguistic or social environment, offer a vehicle for reflecting on some of the consequences of literary taxonomies that arbitrarily prioritize one criterion (such as language or nationality) over others. Drawing on Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance, the essay proposes a taxonomic system that does not rely on a single criterion but rather attends to the dynamic interaction among a variety of criteria. The resulting model is used to interrogate the naturalized conception of the family on which Wittgenstein relies. (CR)

1328 **Greg Forter, Atlantic and Other Worlds: Critique and Utopia in Postcolonial Historical Fiction**

This essay traces the meanings and effects of postcolonial authors' recent refashioning of classical historical fiction. That refashioning has two aims: a materialist cartography that counters the nationalist vocation of classical historical fiction by revealing the supranational, global aspirations of colonial capitalism as a system; and an effort to retrieve from colonial modernity the residues of premodern, often presecular modes of solidarity that persist in yet lie athwart the colonial-modern. The analysis focuses on two novels: Barry Unsworth's *Sacred Hunger* (1992) and Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* (2006). It engages with work on the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds, with theoretical critiques of utopia, and with the Lukácsian concept of typification (and Ian Baucom's criticism of it). The essay concludes by linking the birth of postcolonial historical fiction to the form of finance capital undergirding our contemporary moment—a form of capital that reprises while intensifying that which held sway at the moment of historical fiction's first emergence. (GF)

1344 **Meg Arenberg, The Digital *Ukumbi*: New Terrains in Swahili Identity and Poetic Dialogue**

In this essay I address the remediation of the centuries-old East African practice of poetic dialogue in the twenty-first-century digital social network of *Facebook*. Focusing on an online duel between two young poets from Mombasa, I demonstrate how East Africa's new media are transforming traditional poetic conventions in Swahili. Even sites that endeavor to preserve authentic literary Swahili have become in practice controversial crossroads of language, culture, and identity. By bringing voices of Swahili cultural authority, which draw from the East, into sustained contact with voices of the contemporary urban youth culture, which draws from the West, these new media are ultimately opening new terrains for literary production and debate. (MA)