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Review: Electric Salome, Loie Fuller's performance of modernism

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BOOK REVIEWS

CAN THESE BONES LIVE? TRANSLATION, SURVIVAL, AND CULTURAL MEMORY. By Bella Brodzki. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007. 272 p.

There is a cartoon from the *New Yorker* reproduced in this book that shows a man standing by his telephone. His fingers mark the page in a book that he has clearly been interrupted in reading by this unexpected call. His face is all anxiety as he says to his unknown caller, "I'm sorry, you have the wrong language." *Can These Bones Live?* is among other things a reflection on what it might be to speak the right language. In other words, when we bring cultural or linguistic material from one site, one time, to another, are we always condemned in that act of translation to speak the "wrong" language, to deform, caricature, approximate, betray the other? Or is the "wrong" language a "right" in the sense of the right of writers and cultures to transmute, transform, and endlessly recreate what they have received from other places and other times to sustain the principle of life itself in cultural practice and aesthetic renewal?

Can These Bones Live? considers what it means to conceive of the passage from death into life as a form of translation. Drawing on Benjamin's notion of the afterlife, the study argues that "[t]ranslation is the mode through which what is dead, disappeared, forgotten, buried or suppressed overcomes its determined fate by being borne (and thus born anew) to other contexts across time and space" (6). Central to the meditation on translation as afterlife is remembering what cultural memory forgets. To this end, the work explores textual representations of translators, the centrality of translation to thinking about narratives around slavery and the generic disquiet the translation pressures produce, the fragility of transmission as translation, and the manner in which translation and loss become complicit in the act of memorialization. In exploring these issues *Can These Bones Live?* considers writings by Cynthia Ozick, Italo Calvino, Barbara Wilson, Philip Roth, Charles Johnson, Buchi Emecheta, André Schwarz-Bart, Claude Morhange-Bégué, T. Obinkaram Echewa, and Jorge Semprún.

Part of Bella Brodzki's implied argument is that translation is too important to be left to translators. In other words, the question of how anything in our cultures survives is all about how we manage to carry cultures or languages or experiences across, or indeed fail to do so, beset by the limits to the translatable. The business of survival—memory, writing, understanding—is fundamentally about issues of translation, translatability, and untranslatability. In common with scholars like David Damrosch, Emily Apter, and Maria Tymoczko, Brodzki is moving beyond positivist, instrumentalist notions of translation as pure linguistic transcoding to an expansive understanding of the phenomenon of translation that liberates it from the prescriptive politics of fidelity and textual propriety. On a planet whose default value is plurilingualism, Brodzki sees the recurrent choice of the translator as a central figure as the inevitable outcome of attempts to both understand and negotiate unstable, shifting multilingual and multicultural realities. However, whether it is Ermes Marana in Italo Calvino's *If On a Winter's Night, a Traveller* or Cassandra O'Reilly in Barbara Wilson's *Gaudí Afternoon*, the translator as mediator is unsettled and unsettling. Brodzki is sceptical of the pastoral fantasies of translation as an irenic love-in with hands extended and bridges built, and she points repeatedly to the intra-diegetic translators as sources not so much of harmony as of tension. The tension reveals the encounter between different languages and cultures to be agonistic rather than convergent. There is not so much fusion as confusion, as the activities of the translators challenge conventional

understanding of languages, communities, and identities. As is apparent in Brodzki's readings of Cynthia Ozick's novella "Envy; or Yiddish in America" and Philip Roth's *The Professor of Desire*, the trope of translator as vampire demands to be reversed. In both texts the act of translation is seen not as a parasitic feeding off cultures in some kind of derivative delirium but as a means of reinvigorating the depleted or stagnant body of cultural and linguistic meaning. Transfusion rather than fusion, but transfusion as transformation, where to live on is to live anew, in the shape shifting of living language.

Brodzki outlines similarities between slavery and translation, noting that both "involve passage, movement, displacement, the transfer of bodies, languages, and texts" (72). Drawing on Buchi Emecheta's *The Slave Girl*, she depicts the Middle Passage as a true Babelian nightmare, an orchestrated confusion of tongues, a black hole of translation from which no sense could seemingly emerge to countenance the physical and symbolic horror. When rupture and discontinuity are so keenly felt and articulated, is it possible to continue to speak of the possibility of translation? Is there any sense in which a source culture or language can be carried across in conditions of extreme violence and dispossession? What materials are left for memory to translate? In her discussion of Charles Johnson's *Oxherding Tale*, Brodzki contends that such are the pressures and difficulties of translation in these circumstances that the generic conventions of the slave narrative as defined in earlier centuries break down and reveal themselves to be inadequate. Johnson's subversion of generic expectation is bound up with his attempts to produce a more exacting translation of the experience of slavery, even if the project must inevitably founder on the limits to the translatable.

What these limits are is a recurrent trope of Holocaust literature, but Brodzki chooses to go beyond the singularity of the Shoah to consider what might be at stake in any situation where intergenerational or intercultural transmission is an overriding preoccupation. For this reason, she reads Claude Morhange-Bégue's *Chamberet: Recollections from an Ordinary Childhood*, a Holocaust narrative, alongside Nigerian writer T. Obinkaram Echewa's *I Saw the Sky Catch Fire*, a fiction interrogating memory and postcolonial identity. Thinking about how and what it is possible to transmit from one generation to the next inevitably raises questions as to who will be the inheritors of this knowledge and what they will do with it. If the inheritors, willing or unwilling, have to do something with what has been passed on, they must engage in the task of translation. They must, in other words, work with what is often untranslatable (the trauma of extermination or of cultural dislocation), and in a repeated act of return and reinterpretation attempt a translation into the present for the future. What soon becomes clear is that there is no way in which an "original" experience can be captured in its entirety. In fact, what the history of translation reveals is the incompleteness of the original, the need to go back again and again to Dante's *Inferno* or to Rilke's elegies to produce translations that will in their turn be endlessly superseded, as if the original were an infinitely receding horizon for those tasked with translating it. Like Derrida before her, Brodzki eschews a fashionable pessimism about the impossibility of translation to argue that it is the very impossibility of translation that constitutes its necessity. Where she goes beyond Derrida is to situate this translational impossibility/necessity in the realms of historical experiences, experiences that have crucially shaped the imaginary in many different parts of the globe.

It is the experience of historical loss rather than structural trauma that Brodzki sees as central to the memorializing of Spanish writer Jorge Semprún. In translating the circumstances of his private and public life into autobiography and fictionalized autobiography, Semprún grapples with a series of losses that trigger repeated attempts to retrieve that which eludes translation into narrative. Translation, like autobiography, can bring the dead back to life, but there are certain kinds of death, such as the bleak fact of the crematoria in Buchenwald, that make the task of the translator even more arduous and uncertain. As Brodzki demonstrates in a moving and illuminating epilogue to *Can These*

Bones Live?, which recounts a family visit to a Polish cemetery where her Jewish aunt who was murdered by the Nazis as a child is buried, translation as afterlife is not a celestial promise but a material reality, encoded in the photographs of the living and the bones of the dead. Babel is a living tower, not a dead mausoleum.

Translation scholars worry about analogous uses of translation as if translation is a singular coin devalued through usage. However, what Brodzki shows with deftness and sensitivity in this work is that translation studies and comparative literature stand to gain immeasurably from more flexible and extended understandings of translation. Crucially, what translation offers is a paradigm of instantiation of issues around similitude and difference that recur in every branch of the human and social sciences. To think through the implications of what translators do is to address issues that, as Brodzki argues passionately, are literally and symbolically a matter of life and death. *Can These Bones Live?* is a valuable and timely contribution to our understanding of the task of the translator in its widest and most subversive sense. When we hold the receiver of language difference, the world is speaking to us beyond the grave.

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ON BORROWED TIME: THE ART AND ECONOMY OF LIVING WITH DEADLINES. By Harald Weinrich.
 Translated by Steven Rendall. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. 243 p.

Harald Weinrich's subject is the individual's awareness of time. He begins his book with the statement that "We all know intuitively that human life is short" (1) and ends it by quoting a portion of the Marschallin's great speech near the end of the first act of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's libretto for the opera *Der Rosenkavalier*:

Die Zeit, die ist ein sonderbar Ding.

 Sie ist um uns herum, sie ist auch in uns drinnen.
 In den Gesichtern rieselt sie, im Spiegel rieselt sie.
 In meinen Schläfen, da fließt sie.

Weinrich comments that "her concern about losing her very young lover, and perhaps already the imminent danger of this painful loss, triggers in the Marschallin an awareness of time that is entirely based on the aspects of time that are dwindling and flowing away. She first feels this 'flowing' time in her temples. She has now understood in her own body what time is for her. It is her life-time. Time in short supply" (209). The last sentence is a literal translation of the book's German title. *Knappe Zeit*, literally "limited time," might be translated as *So Little Time*. The original title gives a better idea of the book's subject than its American title *On Borrowed Time*, a phrase, as defined by the *New Oxford American Dictionary*, "used to say that someone has continued to survive against expectations, with the implication that this will not be for much longer."

Weinrich's point of departure is the aphorism "Life is short and art is long," often cited in Latin as "vita brevis, ars longa." The saying is frequently taken to mean that a work of art may outlive its creator, a notion that underlies hundreds of texts, among them Ronsard's

“Quand vous serez bien vieille, le soir à la chandelle” and Shakespeare’s sonnet “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day,” which ends “So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.” Weinrich, however, is not concerned with this theme but with a quite different sense of the aphorism, which he traces back to the Greek physician Hippocrates. For Hippocrates, τέχνη has nothing to do with arts like poetry or painting, but denotes instead “a complex object of knowledge formulated in rules that can be taught and learned” (2), a sense retained in the phrase “state of the art.” Hippocrates says that the art of medicine is too complex to be mastered in a single lifetime, an idea precisely expressed, albeit with a different sense of the word “art,” in Chaucer’s “the lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne” (4).

On Borrowed Time is organized in much the same way as Weinrich’s *Lethe*, also available in an excellent translation by Steven Rendall. Each chapter is divided into several sections centered on one or more texts, which may be as short as the saying “Time is money,” examined in a number of quotations from Benjamin Franklin (74–69), or as long as Balzac’s novel *La Peau de chagrin* (discussed together with his *La Femme de trente ans*, 43–49), which offers “an entirely different perspective on life and life-time.” “Life-time” (*Lebenszeit*), as Rendall explains in a translator’s note, is “a kind of technical term” that refers not to one’s lifespan, but to “time considered as life, and life experienced as or in time” (212 n15).

The interest of Weinrich’s book lies both in the texts he chooses for comment, many of which will be unfamiliar to most readers, and the sometimes surprising ways in which his comments connect them to other texts and to the reader’s own experience of life-time. The section “Midway on Life’s Journey” in chapter 2 begins predictably with Dante’s “nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita,” moves on to some quotations from Petrarch—“la vita è breve,” “in questa breve mia vita mortale,” “si breve è il tempo e’l penser si veloce,” “perché il cammin è lungo e’l tempo è corto”—and ends with three poems by Hölderlin. Chapter 3, “Limited Time in This World and the Next,” similarly moves from Dante (“In Purgatory, Time is Precious,” 69–74), to Benjamin Franklin’s repeated assertions that “time is money” (74–79), and finally to Max Weber’s thesis that modern capitalism rises out of the spirit of Protestantism (79–81).

Although Weinrich’s subject is limited time, his exposition proceeds at a leisurely pace. He sometimes stops to savor a particular text, as he does with Hölderlin’s “Hälfte des Lebens” (24–25) and the title poem of Ingeborg Bachmann’s *Die gestundete Zeit* (60). He is not always solemn; in chapter 9, “Short Stories about Short Deadlines,” he looks at Jules Verne’s *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours*, Marc Camoletti’s farce *Boeing-Boeing*, and Tom Tykwer’s film *Lola rennt*. He also finds connections in disciplines as different from one another as the history of medicine (Hippocrates, the eighteenth-century German physician Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland) and numismatics (106–07), where he goes from a discussion of coins as substitutes for sacrificial animals in ancient Greece to remarks on brevity as an ideal of style in French classicism, summed up in LaRocheffoucauld’s maxim that “la vraie éloquence consiste à dire tout ce qu’il faut, et à ne dire que ce qu’il faut” (109).

Weinrich’s epilogue takes him back to his own academic discipline, romance philology. The “flowing” time that the Marschallin feels in her temples (“In meinen Schläfen, da fließt sie”) recalls a discussion earlier in the same chapter of the etymology of the French *tempe* and Italian *tempia* (200–02). The French and Italian words for the temples are derived from the Latin neuter noun *tempus*. Its plural is *tempora*, which because of its ending in *-a* was treated as a feminine singular, like French *feuille* and *œuvre*. Weinrich explains the shift in meaning from “times” to “temples” by the fact that in a large region that extended from northern Italy, through southern France, and into Catalonia the temples were also indicated by a form like Catalan *pols*, which derives from Latin *pulsus* and originally meant pulse beat: “in earlier times physicians regularly took the pulse . . . not only at the wrist but also and especially at the temple, or more precisely at the temples (*in temporibus*)” (203).

Perhaps the greatest appeal of Weinrich’s book is that it suggests ways of looking at the role of time in works he does not discuss: for example, Jorge Luis Borges’s “La biblioteca

de Babel,” which Weinrich might have included under the rubric “Too Many Books, Too Little Time,” or “Funes el memorioso,” in which the protagonist’s inability to forget the past constitutes a very special kind of life-time. Weinrich’s discussion of brevity as an ideal of style might lead us to take another look at Italo Calvino’s chapter on “Quickness” in his Norton Lectures *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*. Every reader will be able to think of other examples.

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THE COMMON POT: THE RECOVERY OF NATIVE SPACE IN THE NORTHEAST. By Lisa Brooks. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008. 319 p.

In recent decades, scholars have actively tried to recapture and prioritize the voices of the Native peoples who lived in early America. The presumption behind this enterprise is that such voices would force us to rethink the common narratives we tell about the colonial era. As Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin have put it, we would hear the “empire write back.” With a few exceptions, non-Indians have done most of this scholarship. While these scholars have often tried earnestly to find ways to “decolonize” their methods, an exciting new vision of what exactly this might mean is only now emerging with the new generation of Native American scholars hailing from Northeastern tribes. Lisa Brooks (Abenaki), an Assistant Professor of History, Literature, Folklore, and Mythology at Harvard, is probably the most preeminent of these new voices, and her volume *The Common Pot* has been eagerly anticipated.

In many ways, *The Common Pot* does not disappoint, and, like Greg Sarris’s *Keeping Slug Woman Alive* (University of California Press, 1993), it will undoubtedly influence a whole generation of scholars, Native and non-Native alike. In her book, Brooks uses spatial theory channeled through Abenaki linguistics to create a new approach to early Native American texts. As in her earlier essays, Brooks hopes her genealogy of early Native American literary history will make visible an indigenous intellectual and critical tradition. At the center of Brooks’s analysis is the idea of *awikhigan*, “which originally described birch-bark messages, maps, and scrolls, [but] came to encompass books and letters” (xxi). Thinking about early Northeastern Native writings as *awikhigan* allows Brooks to focus not only on the “instrumental activity of writing,” but also on the ways in which writing creates and re-members space, much as a map would (xxii). The genre of *awikhigan* helps Brooks remind us of the continuity between pre-contact writing systems and later written works, as well as between the oral and written traditions. Within early Northeastern *awikhigan*, Brooks is particularly interested in the explicit and implicit use of the trope of the *włógan* or “common pot,” which changes over time from “an abundant bowl that feeds the whole to an inescapable dish enmeshed in conflict, to a clearing in which its participants strive to create a kettle of peace, and finally to a dish reclaimed in an attempt to protect its inhabitants from the sources of destruction” (xl-xli). This trope provides an important cohesive element to Brooks’s story, as she traverses the terrain between different Algonquian communities, as well as different modes of inquiry.

The Common Pot draws from the fields of literary criticism, history, environmental studies, GIS, and folklore. Not surprisingly, then, the book’s seven chapters vary widely in length

and disciplinary focus. The first chapter provides an historical and theoretical context for the chapters that follow. The next four chapters each focus on one *awikhigan* written by four figures now considered to be crucial to the canons of early New England history and literature: Samson Occom, Hendrick Aupaumut, Joseph Brant, and William Apess. The final two chapters step back and consider questions of genre and the oral tradition.

Chapter 1 lays the groundwork for much of the remaining volume by helping the reader “enter into Native space.” This chapter introduces the idea of the “common pot” (*wlôgan*) through an analysis of a single petition from the Connecticut River Valley. As Brooks points out, the “pot” that feeds the body is linguistically related to the river intervals in which the Algonquians lived: the “pot is made from the flesh of birth trees or the clay of the earth The pot is Sky Woman’s body, the network of relations that must nourish and reproduce itself” (4). Thus, the motif of the common pot helps us understand how *awikhigan*—like wampum—is a *spatialized* writing tradition (12). The majority of what follows is an analysis and contextualization of Petition “at [Fort or Town] No. 2” from the Deerfield Conference of 1735. In the introduction, Brooks comments that the “richness of the historical detail” in the volume may appeal to historians while “other readers may find the details tedious” (xxxix). I would agree with her concern, although I suspect that editing and not “historical detail” is at fault here. Brooks is at her best when she is performing a close reading and theorizing: in the historical sections she sometimes gets too wrapped up in the particulars and loses sight of where her larger story is headed. Surely one could have historical detail without sacrificing a compelling narrative.

The same love of detail riddles chapter 2, “Restoring a Dish Turned Upside Down.” This chapter places one of the most important early Algonquian writers—Mohegan Samson Occom—in the “network of relationships” surrounding the Mohegan land case. This is an important chapter because Occom’s work has usually been read in the colonist-centered context of the missionary Eleazar Wheelock and his charity school. Brooks’s Occom is much more of an agent and a key figure in Algonquian politics. This remapping of Occom is one of the many important contributions of this volume. Those who are interested in teaching this new vision of Occom will find Joanna Brooks’s marvelous *Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan* (Oxford, 2006) to be a useful source for primary texts.

Chapter 3 takes us northward to Fort Drummer, where Mohawk leader Hendrick Aupaumut and Mohican Joseph Brant served during Greylock’s War in the era following the American Revolution. This chapter relies heavily on journey and treaty journals and provides an important temporal bridge between the world of Samson Occom and William Apess. In it we see how two important leaders navigated relations with the early Republic. Perhaps the most methodologically interesting moment in the chapter is when Brooks weaves in stories from the oral tradition regarding Sky Woman, Lynx, and Skyholder: here we see Brooks emphasizing the connective tissue between the world view embodied in the oral tradition and Algonquian lives.

In chapters 4 and 5, Brooks picks up the pace while keeping a perfect balance between detail and narrative. These two chapters treat Pequot William Apess and the works he wrote while living and preaching among the Mashpee Wampanoags on Cape Cod. Not since the publication of Barry O’Connell’s groundbreaking collection of Apess’s works in *On Our Own Ground* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1992) has such an important contribution been made to our understanding of Apess and the Mashpee Wampanoags. In many ways, Apess serves as a precursor to Brooks herself in that he, too, uses *awikhigan* to recover Native space in the Northeast, first through his account of the Mashpee Woodland Revolt and then through his “Eulogy on King Philip.” Placed in the context of the “common pot” tradition, Apess emerges as a rounder and more embedded figure.

Brooks concludes her analysis on the common pot through two well-crafted chapters: “Genres of Indigenous Writing” and “Literacy and the Oral Tradition.” In the chapter on indigenous writings, she places the most commonly used eighteenth-century genres (peti-

tions, letters, journals, treaties, communal histories) in the context of early Native Northeastern writing traditions like the birchbark *awikhiganak* and wampum. This chapter should help scholars think about ways to reread and rethink recently published collections of early native Northeastern writing, such as Joanna Brooks's previously mentioned *Collected Writings of Samson Occom* and Laura Murray's *To do good to my Indian brethren: The Writings of Joseph Johnson, 1751–1776* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1998). In the final chapter, Brooks argues that we should see oral and written traditions as “interrelated and intertwined” and that both can “feed us all” (254). As Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel puts it, Brooks demonstrates that “Native New England’s literary heritage actually represents Good Medicine” rather than a sad tale of defeat.

A key part of the cure Brooks offers are the sixteen maps that she intends to serve as “interactive guides.” Through her focus on the common pot and *awikhiganak*, Brooks encourages us to think of the New England confederacies not as separate peoples or tribes but as a “network of relations” connected in part by a “network of waterways, which people traveled by canoe and footpath from the southeast coast to the northwest lakes” (2). Such a vision of the Native New England challenges most prior studies, which tend to focus on Southeastern New England, the Northwest lakes, or the upper Northeast, but not all three areas together. Some of these earlier divisions were based on linguistics, but more often than not they reflected the borders of the colonial powers, as scholars of this era often study the French or British colonies, but usually not both. By mapping the region according to Algonquian—not colonial—space, Brooks changes the vision of New England. The beauty and power of this space, however, is much clearer and more persuasive in the large-scale color versions of the maps available on Brooks’s homepage (<http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~lbrooks>). The role of waterways in creating networks is particularly striking in the color maps.

The Common Pot is an impressive first book that should radically change the way we think about early Native American writings from the Northeast. Beyond their appeal to specialists in the field, Brooks’s methods are most likely to be of interest to other scholars who are interested in “decolonizing” their ways of reading. Brooks’s methods may not be easy to reproduce elsewhere, though, because her approach derives from a specific linguistic, literary, and spatial tradition. The lesson here is one of the local: if Brooks is correct, our readings should be intimately tied to the cultural and geographic landscapes from which literature emerges.

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ELECTRIC SALOME, LOIE FULLER’S PERFORMANCE OF MODERNISM. By Rhonda K. Garelick. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007. 288 p.

When, in 2007, two monographs on the American dancer Loie Fuller appeared almost simultaneously, a colleague wondered aloud: “yes, but why Loie?” In the apostolic succession of North American female dancers who created modern dance, Fuller has long been treated more as a side-show than a major player. Her pioneering efforts in lighting and costuming and her business acumen have been duly noted, but as a dancer? Certainly,

Loie Fuller moved, but she moved swaths of sensuous fabrics that mostly hid her at a time when the art of dance was becoming increasingly preoccupied with exposing the body, showing the movement's source. At the dawn of a century when theatrical dance lay bare its devices, Loie remained decidedly clothed.

As Rhonda Garelick notes in *Electric Salome, Loie Fuller's Performance of Modernism*, Fuller was an unlikely dance star: "She had no formal training, and exhibited, frankly, little natural grace" (3). Fuller possessed neither the requisite glamour of the dance stars of her age nor a tabloid-friendly personal life. She traveled with an ailing mother and lived for more than two decades with a banking heiress who dressed in men's suits. And even the latter failed to spark controversy; Garelick writes that Loie was considered somehow chaste. Yet swathed in luminous, artificially lighted silks that whirled around her as she performed serpentine dances, Fuller was transformed; and, despite the rather low status typically granted to "transformational" dances in histories of dance, Garelick sees in her performance an enactment of modernism's "newly blurred boundaries" between man and machine and notes how Fuller's art "balanced delicately between the organic and the inorganic," an important accomplishment at this juncture of Art Nouveau and Futurism (5, 6).

Garelick's book begins, necessarily, with the mechanics of Fuller's performance, with diagrams of patents for stage apparatuses and costume designs. There was more to Fuller than smoke and mirrors; Garelick compares Fuller's experiments with light and shadow on the stage to the work of later theater theorists such as Gordon Craig and Adolphe Appia, and details how Fuller's foray into cinema late in life afforded her "an arena in which to indulge her desire to dissolve all performers into mere beams of light" (56).

Fuller starred at the Paris World's Fair of 1900 in her own theater, and Garelick juxtaposes Fuller's performances to those of the array of colonial women on display at the fair (some "exotic" dancers; others only visible through veils and barred windows). Garelick reads this as a kind of clash of competing empires—French and emergent American—with Fuller's technological enactments of Art Nouveau forms a telling portent of competing national narratives.

The most surprising chapter of Garelick's book concerns Fuller's relationship to nineteenth-century ballet. While Garelick acknowledges that Fuller's work "bespeaks a deep ambivalence toward ballet" (152), she draws compelling comparisons between these very different types of dancing: "By stripping away or minimizing libretto and the other trappings of Romantic ballet, while retaining so many of its formal, visual, and technical desiderata, Fuller was actually uncovering the underlying modernist potential in ballet. Effectively, she pared ballet down to a deeply aestheticized meditation on the human body's relationship to gravity, physics, mechanicity, and light—the most crucial elements of twentieth-century modern dance" (151–52). To give one example, whereas ballet's dancing birds and flowers remained recognizably female, Fuller's body disappeared in the flowers and flames she conjured.

One of the delights of Fuller's biography is the variety of cameo appearances by so many lights of fin de siècle Parisian life: the Curies, Cocteau, Diaghilev, Marie of Romania. Garelick is nearly as dexterous as her subject in teasing out provocative connections to so many nineteenth- and twentieth-century artists and movements. Fuller's fascination with the latest in scientific discoveries led her to dance with lunar images projected onto her body—not to mention photographs of cancer cells and fish skeletons. Garelick links this fascination with the biological to theatrical naturalism, and certainly August Strindberg, sometime alchemist, shared Fuller's fascination with science and technology. Like Strindberg and other Naturalists, Fuller was also pre-occupied with the modern theater's investigations of the fourth wall. She created her own, a glass box lit from within: "the glass became a perfecting reflecting surface, a mirror for Fuller performing within, and a transparent window for spectators" (210). These kinds of insights throughout the book are intriguing because they are rarely examples of influence; instead, they reveal a diverse

tribe of early twentieth-century thinkers grappling with artistic problems in a surprising variety of ways.

Garelick sees in Fuller's notion of unconscious performance something akin to the acting style Strindberg advocated in his "Preface to Miss Julie," a move away from the self-consciousness declamation that still dominated the European stage. Garelick unlocks an important key to Fuller's performance here and the notion that her carefully choreographed acts, theatrical discoveries, and scientific experiments were mere happy accidents. According to Garelick, "unconsciousness was not just a convenient pose for Fuller. It reinforced a very powerful element of her performances: their ability to provoke the projection of audience fantasies upon her dancing person" (210).

In the final chapter, "Thoughts on Contemporary Traces of Fuller," Garelick describes "flagging," a club dance form that emerged in gay discos in recent decades and remains popular today, in which "flaggers" wave colorful blocks of silk fabrics to the sounds and lights of the dance floor. Garelick compares present-day descriptions of the ecstatic state flagging arouses in participants and spectators to the strikingly similar accounts of ecstasy and hypnotic power that characterized the reviews of Fuller's dancing a century earlier. These kinds of observations bring an evanescent art form such as Fuller's back to life. While Garelick's book will not likely elevate Loie Fuller to the pantheon of modern dance pioneers, where Isadora and Martha reign supreme, this insightful volume certainly makes the case for Fuller as a pioneering multi-media artist. The danger, as always, is to limit Fuller's achievement to the technological, when, as Garelick amply demonstrates, Fuller's accomplishments extended well beyond stagecraft.

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THE JAPANIZATION OF MODERNITY: MURAKAMI HARUKI BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES.
By Rebecca Suter. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008. x, 236 p.

There was once a debate—stronger in Japan but present, too, in other countries—about whether Murakami Haruki should be taken seriously as a writer. This debate has largely subsided, and the conclusion is an unequivocal yes. One can now find in almost any good bookstore in Tokyo, for example, an entire shelf of Japanese literary-critical works on the country's most famous author, and two English monographs on his fiction appeared in 2002. Rebecca Suter's thoughtful study is the third such monograph. The existence of three scholarly books on a living author in the relatively small field of Japanese literary studies in the English-speaking world is unprecedented.

Like any ambitious literary-critical book, Suter's study is inhabited by several lines of inquiry, one of which centers on Murakami Haruki's cultural capital. Murakami occupies a unique place as both a Japanese author who is widely read around the world and a distinguished translator of American literature into Japanese. The subtitle of Suter's study foregrounds her desire to see her subject "as a cultural mediator between Japan and the United States" (1) and leads a reader to expect a book in which Murakami occupies a privileged place in the two-way street funneling literary and cultural traffic across the Pacific. Suter does provide a richly documented chapter on the different ways in which Murakami's

fiction has been received in the U.S. and Japan: she shows that in the U.S. Murakami is widely perceived as a highly “Americanized” Japanese writer due to his frequent allusions to U.S. popular culture; she highlights the heated debate Murakami’s work has provoked in Japan about whether he is a socially committed writer. This is an important issue in Japan, because an author who does not exhibit an intense engagement with current social issues and problems is seen as escapist and is consequently labeled a popular writer. A single chapter on reception, though, is not enough to be able to claim that the monograph is about Murakami’s role as a cultural mediator. And Suter also does little with Murakami’s role as a translator of American literature, a serious limitation in light of what this monograph purports to be about. Rather, the book’s focus on nuanced, often riveting close readings of short stories tends to reduce the intended two-way street of cultural traffic to one: Murakami’s extensive and anxiety-free use of literary ingredients from the West looks like a confrontation with Japan’s literary establishment over the notion of literature.

This book’s greatest interest, then, lies less in the promised comparative framework and more in the way it situates Murakami as a writer in the Japanese tradition of modern fiction reaching back to the mid-nineteenth century. In contrast to the growing habit of labeling Murakami a postmodern writer, Suter references key moments in Japanese literature’s vexed relationship with modernity—the Meiji period (1868–1912) and especially the part of the Showa period (1926–1989) that comes after WWII—in order to create for Murakami the category of “paramodernist.” She defines such an author as one “who relates to modernity and modernism not as ‘past’ but as ‘foreign’ things” (7). Suter thus attempts to remove Murakami from the diachronic framework of premodern, modern, and postmodern and to situate him in a more synchronic world in which a non-Western writer estranges the reader from both Western and Japanese modernity. Suter is using the term “modernism” in two ways, as she herself clearly articulates in the first chapter. The Japanese use the borrowed term *modanizumu* to refer to the literary and artistic movement of modernism, which flourished in the first half of the twentieth century around the world and exerted its greatest influence in Japan in the 1920s and 1930s. The Japanese term *kindaishugi* (modernism) can be called the ideology of the modern, which can be dated to the mid-nineteenth century; it centers on the frantic program of modernization and nation building in Japan in order to “catch up” to the West.

The Meiji era and the postwar era are crucial in Suter’s framework. The grand story of modern Japanese literature related to us in the book’s first chapter is the tale of how *kindaishugi* helped foster a socially engaged literature from the middle of the nineteenth century to the present. In the wake of the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japanese writers tended to view serious literature as a body of works critically engaged with modernity, at the level of both new institutions and new discourses, the most important of which was individualism. The intellectuals who emerged in the wake of WWII tended to see modernity as something interrupted by the growing fascism of the first half of the twentieth century and as under threat in the postwar era by a society being fitted for economic growth at all costs. Under this influence, the postwar generation of Japanese writers has also been very socially engaged, taking up once again the project of modernity, with the relationship between the individual and society one of the most important themes. This is why social commitment is such an important badge for the postwar Japanese writer. The difficulty some intellectuals have with Murakami, as Suter rehearses for us, is that he does not in any obvious way exhibit this kind of valorized social engagement, either in his fiction or in his life. Scandalously, Murakami takes seriously the art of entertainment in storytelling.

But Suter argues that Murakami’s fiction is preeminently concerned with the characteristically modern problem of individualism and that this fictional world has also produced a new vision of the socially engaged writer more suitable for the age in which we now live. Suter concentrates on the metafictional and fantastic elements of Murakami’s short fiction in order to show how the protagonists of the stories, and by extension we as

readers, become estranged from cultural norms and must thus come to terms with both the contingent nature of individual identity and the connections between distant realities. The idea of paramodernism helps theorize these devices of estrangement. For Suter, the privileged timeline of premodern, modern, and postmodern creates yet another framework in which the West gets to set the standard of progress for the rest of the world. By focusing on the continuing impact of the legacy of modernity, Suter gives contemporary Japanese writers a space for exploring and critiquing the conflicted nature of identity in a postcolonial world (one in which Japan was both victim and aggressor) rather than condemn them to playing “catch up” to the West’s new postmodernity. In Suter’s words, “if we read Murakami’s works for what they tell us about the constructed nature of identity and reality, the geographical nature of modernity, and the power of the imagination to create connections between different realities and different individuals, they have the potential for having a strong social impact” (189–90). Suter argues that proponents of the kind of serious literature that dominated modern and postwar Japan have missed this aspect of Murakami’s fiction. In effect, Murakami Haruki is here placed within the 150-year tradition of modern fiction in Japan, but as a writer with a critical perspective on that tradition.

Presumably this critical perspective has much to do with the shrinking of the globe. What emerges obliquely in this book is a particular view of the relationship between literature and the imagining of global citizenship. Benedict Anderson does not appear in the bibliography and is not mentioned in Suter’s book, but his shadow seems very present to me. As is well known, Anderson conceived of the nation as an “imagined community,” with the novel, the newspaper, and print capitalism more generally playing a significant role in creating national identity. As Suter pursues her argument, Murakami’s literary imagination becomes something like this Andersonian national imagination writ larger: “The ability to provide such spaces of imagination, such mirrors that allow us both to gain an awareness of the complexity of reality and to connect to each other, is ultimately the most significant strength of literature for Murakami Haruki, and what gives it social relevance in the contemporary world” (189). This is the imagined community on a global scale, one that helps create a feeling of kinship for people we will never meet, not just in our own country but around the world. Had Suter more fully pursued this analogy between her own work and Anderson’s, it could have become the strongest argument for seeing Murakami as she wishes to see him: as a cultural mediator between Japan and other places. Nevertheless, this stimulating book, in its introduction of the term paramodern, adds a new dimension to the lively debate about Murakami’s fiction and, in its close reading of Murakami’s fantastic worlds, contributes to the growing body of work on the meaning of globalization for literature. Paradoxically, it accomplishes this by situating Murakami Haruki as a distinctly Japanese writer.

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