New Comparisons in World Literature

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New Comparisons in World Literature offers a fresh perspective on one of the most exciting current debates in humanities by approaching ‘world literature’ not in terms of particular kinds of reading but as a particular kind of writing. We take ‘world literature’ to be that body of writing that registers in various ways, at the levels of form and content, the historical experience of capitalist modernity. We aim to publish works that take up the challenge of understanding how literature registers both the global extension of ‘modern’ social forms and relations and the peculiar new modes of existence and experience that are engendered as a result. Our particular interest lies in studies that analyse the registration of this decisive historical process in literary consciousness and affect.

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Regenia Gagnier

Literatures of Liberalization

Global Circulation and the Long Nineteenth Century
To study literatures in which global processes criss-cross distinct environments requires (1) translators and transculturalists who know diverse literary histories and history of genres, and (2) the disciplines relating to environments of nature (natural sciences), culture (the humanities), and technology (social sciences, engineering, and medicine). Since 2009, as Editor of the Global Circulation Project http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1741-4113/homepage/global_circulation_project.htm and since 2016 as Co-Editor with Laura Doyle of UMass, Amherst, I have had the benefit of collaboration with many multilingual specialists in, for example, the PRC, India, Russia, Turkey, North America, Australasia, and Europe. I acknowledge all of these in the notes but here I especially want to thank Professors Pradip Datta, Sambudha Sen, and Sumanyu Satpathy in Delhi; Lu Jiande and Luo Xuanmin in Beijing; Boris Proskurnin in Perm; Yunus Balci in Denizli; Chana Kronfeld in Berkeley; Wendy Singer in Gambier; Jock Macleod in Brisbane; Grace Moore in Melbourne. This book shows the brutality and barbarism of so much of what we call globalization, or international trade under neoliberal ideology, but globalization has also produced some good, notably international scholarly collaboration. When I began my academic career in the 1980s, an American academic might have travelled from the West Coast to the East Coast of the USA. Now, with the blessings of our Deans and Vice-Chancellors, it is normal for British academics to travel to Delhi, Shanghai, and Mexico City.

I have also had the benefit of collaboration with colleagues at Exeter in English, Modern Languages, Translation Studies, the Centre for Imperial
and Global History, Global China and the Sino-European Political Languages Group, and the South Asia Studies Centre, with a full range of expertise in the long nineteenth century’s sciences, cultures, and technologies. I would especially like to thank Ting Guo with whom I have worked on Chinese, Japanese, and Korean literatures since 2009, Dario Castiglione in Politics, Asma Char for help with Arabic, Ayesha Mukherjee for help with Hindi, Susan Hayward for years of conversation on Francophone cultures, and Exeter’s Centre for Victorian Studies, especially Paul Young, John Plunkett, Corinna Wagner, Tricia Zakreski, Kate Hext, Angelique Richardson, Simon Rennie. I am convinced that the future is in translation and collaboration.

Since 2006, I have also been a Senior Research Fellow at an interdisciplinary research center, Egenis, the Centre for the Study of Life Sciences http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/sociology/research/sts/egenis/. Egenis (est. 2002) roughly coincided with the first mapping of a human genome in 2003, and it specializes in the social implications of the life sciences. We have developed a symbiological, processual approach to specific environments at moments of change and transformation. A crucial concept for analyzing the intersection of the local and the global is that of the developmental niche, from niche-construction in biology, which we have adapted for specific niches of nature, culture, and technology. This has evolved with the studies here of modern geopolitical commodities within total environments, following on magisterial studies by Fernando Ortiz and Sidney Mintz on tobacco and sugar, Redcliffe Salaman on the potato (on which the work of distinguished Victorianists has been based), Francesca Bray and Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney on rice (see Chapters 7 and 8 for bibliography). Their works have served as models for me in analyzing the material niches of modern commodity circulation (i.e., globalization) and its impact on diverse cultures. This book is dedicated to the Director of Egenis, the philosopher John Dupré, and to our sons the philosopher Gabriel and chef Julian Gagnier Dupré.

Ultimately, though, it all goes back to Friedrich Engels’s *Dialectics of Nature* (1872–1882). The Marxist biologist Richard Lewontin recommended it to me over 30 years ago, and it’s been on my mind ever since. These two optics of global literary circulation and specific niche-construction of nature, culture, and technology underpin the book.
I am grateful to a British Academy Research Development Award (2009) for initial funding of the Global Circulation Project, which gave me the confidence to pursue the project on a large scale, and to a Macgeorge Fellowship at the University of Melbourne (2012), which gave me time to plan its initial stages. After that, my editors at Palgrave have each been exemplary in their roles from submission through production, and I want to thank Neil Lazarus, Pablo Mukherjee, Tomas Rene, Vicky Bates, Balaji Varadharaju, Hemapriya Eswanth. Elements of the following papers have been reconsidered and revised in writing this book. I am grateful for their publishers’ permissions to develop them here.


I also gratefully acknowledge the following contributors to the Global Studies entry and their areas of expertise: Sara Thornton (Université Paris-Diderot, France); Mariaconcetta Costantini (Università degli Studi “G. d’Annunzio,” Italy); Kirby-Jane Hallum (University of Otago, Australasia and the Pacific); Arlene Young (University of Manitoba, Canada); Paula Guimarães (University of Minho, Braga, Portugal); Graham Law, with Rieko Suzuki & Toshiyuki Takamiya (Waseda University, Japan); Meili Dang and Saiping He (Shanghai Sanda University, China, fiction); Yin Miao (Shanghai Sanda University, China, poetry); Ngozi Chuma-Udeh (Anambra State University, Nigeria).


Chapter 8: Regenia Gagnier, “A Symbiological Approach to Sex, Gender, and Desire in the Anthropocene,” (2017) Angelaki:
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


The image of the banyan tree “Dada” on the cover is Courtesy of Subodh Gupta and Hauser & Wirth. I am grateful for the photograph by Sambudha Sen, Delhi.

Full caption: Subodh Gupta
Dada
2010–2014
Stainless steel
680 × 930 × 930 cm / 267 ¾ × 366 ¼ × 366 ¼ inches
Variable dimensions

Devon 2018

Regenia Gagnier
PrAise for Literatures of LiberaLization

“Regenia Gagnier’s Literatures of Liberalization advances a compelling new method for global literary studies, tracking processes of ‘transcultur-ation’ in the movement of literatures and ideas across geographical and historical contexts. A major contribution to our understanding of the long nineteenth century as well as to the literary history of liberalism and neoliberalism.”

—Amanda Anderson, Andrew W. Mellon, Professor of Humanities and English, Brown University, USA

“Literatures of Liberalization is a remarkable piece of research, long in the thinking, reading and making. Regenia Gagnier’s career interests in economics, nineteenth-century literatures and the politics of liberal subjectivity, as well as her deep commitment to scholarly collaboration across borders of all kinds (linguistic, geopolitical, disciplinary), is the perfect grounding for this powerful re-think of the global circulation of Victorian writing. Here, in a major methodological reconfiguration, Victorian literature itself becomes a complex and powerful actant in the cultural co-creation of our globalised modernity.”

—David Amigoni, Professor of Victorian Literature and Pro Vice-Chancellor, Keele University, UK

“This stunning transnational study, attentive to the interaction and interdependence of world movements, sweeps from 19thC global liberalisms to the re-mediation of modernisms in different world cultures.
From the circulation of crucial commodities to desire and sexuality, Gagnier shows how the symbiology of the anthropocene affects the most intimate aspects of our lives. Dickens, Trollope, Dostoevsky, Herder, D. H. Lawrence, Huysmans, Su Tong, Knut Hamsun, Gabriel García Márquez, Jiang Rong, are among the writers dazzlingly re-read.”
—Isobel Armstrong FBA, Emeritus Professor of English (Geoffrey Tillotson Chair), Birkbeck, University of London, UK

“At once an irreplaceable guide to Victorian writing’s global transits and a meditation on liberal thinking and feeling, Gagnier’s book illuminates a rich and complex future for the study of nineteenth-century literature. Ardent, provocative, and intellectually generous, it confirms the value of attending to texts’ transculturations—not only how they change when translated but also how they adapt to new cultural environments and alter those environments in turn.”
—Douglas Mao, Johns Hopkins University, USA
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