

For reasons of space, I cannot discuss the remaining chapters in detail. Let me simply note that, although the idea that the animating principle of Wittgenstein's philosophy lies in training, exercise, and the cultivation of a philosophical skill is certainly intriguing, one may wonder whether its combination with an idealistic interpretation of the *Tractatus*, together with the substantial theoretical weight assigned to its ontology (albeit distinguished from metaphysics) and to the notions of logical scaffolding and scaffolding of the world, provides the most fruitful framework for developing those methodological insights. That said, readers interested in these issues should examine the following chapters for themselves, beginning with Chapter Nine, which contains a curious discussion of what Milkov calls "Wittgenstein's Ways," where 'way' is said to be synonymous with 'method' from an ontological standpoint.

It is, however, in the third and final part of the book that the issue of method receives more sustained attention, especially in Chapter Eleven. Milkov offers here a closer account of what he terms Wittgenstein's philosophical skill, the "principle of immediacy" operative in Wittgenstein's philosophy, and several examples of these methodological tendencies at work. The final chapter, while continuing the anti-resolute polemic, presents Wittgenstein as the exemplary analytic philosopher and portrays his epigones as responsible for partial and selective appropriations of his philosophical project. At this point, readers may wish for a more detailed account of the relation between these successors and Wittgenstein's philosophy, which is treated somewhat briefly. Still, the book already offers a wealth of material for reflection and concludes with a short epilogue in defense of the value of Wittgenstein's philosophy for thinking better.

In conclusion, Milkov's book is undoubtedly challenging and original in its presentation of central issues in the debate on the *Tractatus*, at times in decidedly heterodox terms. It is occasionally controversial, and readers interested in Wittgenstein's philosophy will find in it many stimulating (and divisive) lines of argument worth engaging with critically.

Notes

¹ Interestingly, Cora Diamond herself, while continuing to endorse a resolute reading of Wittgenstein on nonsense, has stated: "One relatively minor change in my views about such issues is that I think the image of the 'frame' of the *Tractatus* turned out to be unhelpful" (*Reading Wittgenstein with Anscombe, Going On to Ethics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 2019, p. 5).

MARCELLO DI MASSA
University of Parma, Italy

THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO GLOBAL COMPARATIVE LITERATURE. By Zhang Longxi and Omid Azadibougar (Eds). New York and London: Routledge, 2025, 423 pp.

This edited volume of twenty-eight chapters is organized in four sections and endeavors to decenter Eurocentrism from the discipline of comparative literature studies adding to the ongoing conversation in the field with other twenty-first century projects such as *A Companion to Comparative Literature* (2011), *Comparative Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (2018), *A Companion to World Literature* (2020), and *The Cambridge History of World Literature* (2021).

In Part I, "Institutions and Comparative Literature," Ali Behdad and Dominic Thomas accentuate the travailing work of defining the discipline when it is progressively becoming a site of development for modern language and literary studies. The newer generation of comparatists study non-European literature and linguistic traditions in a bid to decolonize and get past its rooted Eurocentrism, with the universities and colleges also adapting their curriculum and pedagogy to edify students

with “a comparative frame of mind” who understand the insignificance of an external locus of comparison. Ben Hutchinson acknowledges his Western European education and talks about the non-neutral methodology of comparativism where a *priori* comparativism (epistemological) must be complemented with a *posteriori* comparativism (geo-political). He seeks the naivety of comparing two (or more) texts sans the theory wars because it inadvertently buttresses the hegemony of the Western paradigms and recommends the Western comparatists to listen to the world in place of talking at it. This is crucial since our position in the discipline is predetermined, built on historical, cultural, and geographical preconceptions. Ken Seigneurie discerns the potency of European education, belief in disintricated thought, and determinism of European power to be red herrings and thus his response to the editors’ query, “A centerless comparison is neither possible nor desirable.” He suggests provincializing “deep Eurocentrism”, a term derived from Charles Taylor, which simply means the resolve to preserve the buffered self, rather than trying to get rid of it entirely. Debjani Ganguly probes into world literature, postcolonial studies, and global Anglophone literatures through her decolonial pedagogy along historical, cartographic, and linguistic axes as it continues to frame contemporary comparative studies. In her courses, she departs from the nineteenth century idea of world literature held by Goethe, Marx, and Engels, and moves towards oriental scholarship, philology, translation, and comparatist methods. The students learn to think by way of the “oceanic” and thalassography, which offers minted denotations of the empire, settler colonialism, slavery, labor history, postcolonialism, and diaspora in the literatures of the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, and decolonization happens as the English language transforms with the literary cultures of the world.

Part II, “Translation as Comparison, Comparison as Translation”, apprehends translation to be innately comparative and vice versa, where the texts of different languages are collated in “a mutually illuminating relationship”, however, it runs the risk of European cultures appropriating or erasing other cultures in the process. Hence, Emily Apter interrogates the efficacy of paradigm in the “knowledge worlds” when it comes to handling the impasses of untranslatability. She sees untranslatability as a method of analogizing languages, literatures, and cultures where it makes its way through transregional sites and vernacular histories of discourse without the comparative device, id est, the paradigm. Similarly, Thomas Oliver Beebee propounds a translanguaged glossary of untranslatables for critical theories and terms ranging from the Sanskrit *rasa* to Japanese *yūgen* to Greek *mimesis* because a multilingual, intercultural lexicon is a maneuver of meta-critiquing systems of cultural thoughts, meaning, and communication in world poetics and attenuating the control of a few European languages. In Chinese, many critical terms are not defined and generate meanings through their contexts; Yan Liu chooses one such term for her chapter, *feng*, which translates to “wind” or “air” and leads to more incongruencies when it branches into compounds that have no English equivalent. The resonances of words like *feng* make it tougher for translators and readers in another language because neither “wind” nor “air” has as many interconnections as *feng* in Chinese. Comparative literature must welcome this untranslatability and respect the alterity, or “otherness,” of Chinese poetics without attempting to universalize it. Diana Roig-Sanz and Ana Kvirikashvili employ a *longue durée* approach to theorize the global translation zone paradigm to decenter and diversify translation history. It performs historical and sociological readings of texts in multiple geographical spaces, aiming to solve the issue of the center and periphery when it comes to minor, less translated, and oral literatures with their concepts of space scale, time, connectivity, and agency. Suman Gupta digs into technological advances in translation; testing the potential of machine translation (MT) in the field of comparative literature with his indistinguishable output principle, boundary-reduction principle and the principle of scientific rationales being realized if there is a commercial or governmental demand for it. Last but not least, Martin Powers avers how political thought is shaped by translation and its insufficiencies exemplified by Chinese *gongyi* and Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s “public opinion”. His popular sovereignty was molded by Chinese texts and its lapses in translation, which overturn the presumed unidirectional flow of linguistic dependency from the West/Europe.

“Comparisons, Literatures: In Plural” or Part III comprises chapters that decenter the field in their own ways. Like, Karen Thornber investigates the interrelation between disease and (social and self) stigmatization, and between environmental crises and gender-based violence, and how societies take on these global challenges differentially. She believes engaging with global literature in the areas of medical and environmental humanities would open it up to the injustices and inequalities of the world. According to David Damrosch, comparative literature was largely a Western European phenomenon till its expansion into world literature which problematized the discipline, requiring viable theoretical frameworks for the broader area because theories developed from literature have very specific historical and cultural context, yet a non-hegemonic comparison is attainable through contrapuntal reading. In another instance, Soviet Russia’s non-Occidentocentric interest in world literature is explored by Galin Tihanov, which burgeoned after the 1917 October Revolution and was sustained by the shifting ideological horizons (*humanistic, global leftist, and anti-colonial*) and de-Westernized by Konrad and Bakhtin. Considering the Russia-Ukraine aggression. The author highlights this non-Occidentocentric perspective towards world literature should not overlook the country’s imperial stance towards cultures they think are “younger” than them, and thus dependent on their guidance and protection. Firat Oruc argues that the circumstances of world literature (*Weltliteratur*) are contingent on the global flows of modernity (*Weltverkehr*); it is never monolithic or universal and has been sculpted by the growth of modern plebeianism, or mass-subjectivity, with the parallelly rising mass-print. With the steadfast intent of going beyond Eurocentrism, Theo D’haen urges not to completely exclude European literature in comparative studies, instead devising a theoretical approach that compares European/Western literature and non-Western literature “on an even keel.” Haun Saussy finds that the divergent experiences of land/terrestrial and sea/marine empires give rise to distinct modes of transculturation and translation needs in their literary worlds that have more than one kind of center and periphery, which overlap sometimes. Terminology turns out to be a hurdle for literatures that are not in contiguity with each other, requiring a methodology that allows for contactless comparison. Alexander Beecroft responds to this problem; he counsels recognizing that loaded terminologies have their own histories and using abstract metacategories for comparison without any universalization. A South-South comparative enquiry is proposed by Francesca Orsini to assess the effects of colonialism on the literature of India, Morocco, Eritrea, and Ethiopia, and how their impact varied depending on the length, type of occupation, strength of local elites and traditions, and their distance from Europe. José Luís Jobim shows New Worldism or theories of lack in Brazil, where they were utilized for intra- and supranational comparatism; for example, the indigenous oral culture lacked a written script with respect to the European world. New Worldism led to the theories of acclimatization, which posit that new elements are modified when they set foot in the New World. Wail S. Hassan states that scholarly attention paid to postcolonial studies written in colonial languages has invigorated English and French departments in American universities. Consequently, he seeks to adopt a transregional approach gathering from philological and polyglot resources of comparative literature, wherein the South-South relations shift the reading practice from the postcolonial to the decolonial. He depicts this through Arab-Latin American relations, renouncing the centrality of Europe. A South-South axis relativizes or de-universalizes the North and takes decoloniality forward without undermining the work of postcolonialism.

Now, coming to Part IV, “Worlds and Literary Historiographies”, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen claims literature that circulates internationally is regulated by four factors — its proximity to Western literature, a component of enchantment while staying true to history and culture, representation of violence universally, and short formats which justify why all national canons are not available in the international circle. Alfred Hornung juxtaposes the self-written epitaphs in medieval Chinese autobiographical writings with the classical life writing forms of the West, where the former dwells on death in their self-description and is part of their life writing, while the latter excludes it and

perceives life writing as an antidote to death. In his chapter on *vernacular comparatism*, Baidik Bhattacharya postulates the College at Fort William, Calcutta, to be the first institutionalized pedagogic implementation of comparative literature. Founded in 1800, the academy was meant to train colonial officials and clerks in the living vernaculars and the local “customs and manners”; thereby, what emerged from the colonial necessities of governance became a paradigm for decolonizing the discipline of comparative literature through the eclectic subaltern practices of the Indian subcontinent. César Domínguez interposes the subfield of *environmental comparative literature* at the juncture of biocultural diversity and comparative literature to address the *urgency* of language extinction. He cautions against the risk of reification of languages and literatures, whereas they are but processes of social and environmental interaction that are threatened in similar ways to nature. In his examination of two modern poets in the Middle Eastern tradition, Badr Shakir al-Sayyab and Nima Yushij, Levi Thompson expounds a South-South literary comparison of poetic forms dodges Euro-American influences as they are typical to the Arabic, Persian, and other contact languages of the Islamicate world, which does not extend to the modernist West. Lital Levy presents the case of “diasporic difference” in world literature through the Jewish-language journey of Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, reflecting on the divergent “Jewishness” in global Jewish reading cultures. Jewish readers had their earliest access to *Crusoe* via the German translation *Robinson der Jungere* (1779), then through Hebrew adaptations like *Sefer kur ‘oni* (1861), which was again retranslated in 1849 and 1861 before Sitruk’s Judeo-Arabic *fin-de-siècle*. Marie Thérèse Abdelmessih peruses Afro-Arab circulations within the framework of a voyage where their intermingling had brought about the vernacularization of Arabic literature and métissage of African literature, establishing a decentralized approach in world literature. Historiography, an eminent discipline in nineteenth century Europe, degenerated in the twentieth century primarily due to the postmodern criticism of the “grand narrative”. The volume editor Zhang Longxi contends that this cannot result in historical nihilism, even if the historian’s value judgement carries its own biases and blind spots, but in what language should a history of world literature be written? Longxi opines that resisting the “hegemony” of the *lingua franca* English in today’s world will keep the major Western literary traditions as the only canon of world literature.

We witness comparative literature’s inclusive and pluralistic nature in a transcultural, transnational world facilitated by the institutional changes in research, publication, and pedagogy. This volume marks a paradigm shift in decentering not only Eurocentrism but also other forms of Ethnocentrism. Part III and Part IV of the book contest each other’s claims of inadequate representation of non-European literatures, especially from the Asian and African traditions. In all honesty, this collection would not serve readers looking to initiate themselves into comparative literature but is specifically meant for those familiar with the evolution of the discipline. I reckon the book could have had a better thematic assembly of chapters, as oftentimes they are clubbed together in non-aligning sections with disparate over-arching themes.

CHAYANA MONDAL

Jadavpur University, West Bengal, India

THINKING THROUGH DATA: HOW OUTLIERS, AGGREGATES, AND PATTERNS SHAPE PERCEPTION. By Maja Bak Herrie. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2025. 154 pp.

Aesthetics and digitality are much more strongly connected than what appears at first sight. Data, the bedrock of the digital sphere in many ways, inform algorithms, language models, research and information disorders, to name just a few areas of its influence. But data also have immense