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Miloš Mendel

Rethinking the Islamic Hijra: A Religious Paradigm
or an Ideological Instrument of Political Action 1–26

The article examines the phenomenon that occurs in three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – and which has been constantly referred to in the European tradition under the Greco-Latin term, *Exodus*. The Islamic variant of it (in Arabic, *hijra* – emigration, or originally and more precisely, cutting kin and tribal ties) is briefly defined and put into the broader historical context. At the same time the article comprises partial information and critical remarks on the state of the research in relation to the issue of Islamic hijra, including a list of bibliographic data, based on the collection of relatively representative samples of sources and studies. The contribution also includes a preliminary survey of typified cases of hijra-style events in the course of the history of Islamic countries, as well as a concrete example of how this “archaic” religious pattern functions if utilized as an ideological framework of a particular political process. The relevance of the phenomenon for modern and contemporary history is demonstrated through reference to the sedentarization of Bedouin tribes during the Ikhwan movement in the Arabian peninsula (1912–30).

Keywords: Hijra – Islam – Exodus – Religious movements – Arabian peninsula

Faten I. Morsy

Nation and Translation: The Character as Translator
in Leila Aboulela’s *The Translator* and Ahdaf Soueif’s
The Map of Love 27–42

The concept of cultural translation (the non-textual and non-linguistic function of translation) has found an echo in contemporary writing, both critical and creative. While Salman Rushdie once suggested that to understand a culture, one should focus on its untranslatable words, Lahiri maintains that in all literature that involves traveling, all the characters are translators in so far as they must make sense of the foreignness to survive. It is against the backdrop of such insights into the concept of cultural translation that a reading of Ahdaf Soueif’s *The Map of Love* and Laila Aboulela’s *The Translator* will be presented in this paper. The hybrid position of both writers suggests that they are constantly engaged in “translating” foreignness into discourse. Their task as writers is viewed here as an attempt to search for the appropriate narrative strategies to “translate” their history, culture and nation within their fictions. In a sense, cross-cultural difference is represented in the texts as one of the many names for “the Other” and constitutes “the original” or “source” text that gets translated into those “meta-translational” narratives.

Keywords: Cultural translation – Foreignness – Anglo-Arab cultural encounters

Anne Castaing

Foi, doute et aliénation dans le roman
Dard la dava (1975) de Krishna Baldev Vaid 43–58

The works of fiction of K.B. Vaid (born in 1927) question the relationship between post-modern literature and religiosity. The novel *Dard la dava* (1975), a long non-referential monologue, close to the Beckettian “absurd”, parallels the concepts of exile and the mystical quest, where the notions of “pain”, “doubt”, “alienation” and “separation” are equally convoked. Nevertheless, the lack of “faith”, as claimed by the author, finds its “raison d’être” in his refusal to employ definite religious categories, such as orthodoxy, the polarisation of Islam and Hinduism, and the divine authority itself when blasphemy is exploited. The religious discourse, the author insists, should be human, secular, mixed and polyphonic. The purpose of this paper is, primarily, to bring to light the way Vaid’s most unreferential narratives continue to draw their metaphysical discourse from indigenous sources. Subsequently, from this metaphysical and mystical discourse, I will investigate the way the author elaborates a new form of “faith”, non subservient to the constraints often conveyed by orthodox religious discourses. What the author calls “mystical agnosticism” is not just a matter of the re-appropriation of an indigenous discourse, but also a matter of the hybridization of sources.

Keywords: Hindi novel – Samuel Beckett – Absurd – Existentialism – Sufism – Bhakti

Vladimír Liščák

Odoric of Pordenone, a Franciscan Missionary
to Mongolian China 59–77

Odoric of Pordenone (c. 1275/85–1331), a Franciscan friar and one of the chief travelers to Asia during the later Middle Ages, traveled between 1314/1318 and 1330 to the “eastern parts of the world” (*orientalium partium*), and on the return journey he may have visited Tibet (or some of its outlying areas). After his return in 1330, he dictated an account of his travels, which soon became a best-seller. Since it included many descriptions and facts not mentioned in Marco Polo’s “*Il Milione*”, the text became an important source both for the fictitious account of “John Mandeville” and the famous *Catalan Atlas* of 1375. There are many mysteries about Odoric and his travels, including some doubt as to whether he was actually in China. In addition, very little is known about his missionary activities in China and about his journey back to Europe. One of the everlasting questions is: Was he really in Tibet, as mentioned in his account?

Keywords: Odoric of Pordenone – China – Marco Polo – Tibet – Medieval missionaries

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Articles

Getnet Bekele

- Weaving the Breadbasket: The Political Roots of a Globalizing Food Market in Ethiopia (1907–1955) 89–121

Drawing on a wide range of sources, including informant testimonies, government and diplomatic archives and contemporary published accounts, the present article seeks to investigate the Ethiopian experience in international food exchange in the first half of the 20th century. Specifically, it sheds light on the primary causes of the internationalization of the country's food market and the impact this has had on the important question of access to the valued agricultural resources at production sites. Its findings reveal how first the absence and then the slow growth of the food market within the country's boundaries – most notably in the capital Addis Ababa – contributed to the globalization of the country's food trade in the half century after its expansion in 1907. The paper demonstrates that the country's experience in transnational food exchange was unprecedented, and its growth and transformation was embedded in politics rather than the economics of supply and demand alone.

Keywords: Food market – Agricultural resources – Land grants – Ethiopia

Mariusz Kraśniewski

- Tradition in the Shade of Globalization:
Ritual Bondage in Ghana 123–142

Globalization is a process. It is sweeping away old cultural norms and social orders and is bringing death to traditional beliefs and customs. This is a process of change, and many aspects of culture are changed forever. It is possible for this kind of transition to happen in many different ways and in many situations “the clash of civilizations” does not necessarily result in conflict. Cultural norms are voluntarily exchanged between various groups, but when differences in social standards are too difficult to accept, one culture begins to change the other. In such cases, one important question emerges – “Who has the right to decide which cultural norms and traditions are better?” This is a question about “cultural borders” and the universality of human rights and social norms. In this discussion, the issue of ritual slavery finds a place. *Trokosi*, and similar practices that can be found in some West African countries, are clear examples of the traditional bastions in the “war” against globalization. Those are the practices considered as being harmful by international society but defended by traditional believers. The exploration of ritual bondage from both modern and historical perspectives is the main purpose of this article; it also aims to shed some light on the discussion about the legitimization or suppression of cultural norms that are considered as being harmful.

Keywords: Trokosi – Ritual bondage – Globalization – Slavery – Ghana

Mariola Offredi

Myth and Religion in Kṛṣṇa Sobti's *Zindagināmā* 143–168

This paper takes into consideration the role of myth and religion in Kṛṣṇa Sobti's novel *Zindagināmā* [A book of life, 1979]. The introduction highlights the composition of Sahjī's household, where people of different faiths live, and explores the fellowship among Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, which was a distinguishing feature of Sufism in pre-partition Panjab. The introduction is followed by a section which deals with the core theme of myth and religion. Three main myths are dealt with in the narrative: the Islamic myth of Khvājā Khizr; a Hindu myth based on the concept of *avatar*; and the Hindu myth of the sun and the moon. When compared with the myth, however, it is religion which plays a more important role in the novel. The paper analyzes the subject of religion through three main characters: spirituality, through Sahjī's younger brother, Kāsī Sah; religion in everyday life, through Sahjī's wife, Sahnī; and human love and divine love, through the young Muslim girl, Rabyā, with whom Sahjī falls in love. Her name recalls the greatest woman Sufi mystic poet, Rabi'a of Basra (c. 717-801), who introduced the concept of Divine Love. As the theme of divine love is closely linked to Sufism, it is the love-romances of the Panjabi Sufi poets, in particular, that are incorporated into the story.

Keywords: Hindi novel – Krishna Sobti – Myth and religion – India

Gábor Kósa

Pangu's Birth and Death as Recorded
in a Tang Dynasty Buddhist Source 169–192

During the last decades Chinese scholars have been intensively collecting the oral transmissions of the cosmogonical Pangu 盤古 myth in order to clarify its role in Chinese culture. While the number of the orally transmitted versions of the myth is constantly increasing, the quotations from historical records used to substantiate the historical roots of this myth remain unchanged. In this paper I present an important and so far completely neglected source of the Pangu myth, preserved in a Tang dynasty Buddhist text, and compare it with the already extant versions of the *Sanwu lijī* 三五曆紀, the *Wuyun linianji* 五運曆年紀 and the *Shuyiji* 述異記. This version of the Pangu myth is unique in many respects: in its first part, it contains passages rather similar, though not identical with the versions in other sources, while in its second part, it offers a new set of homologous alloforms. This new source is presently the most complete version of the myth, and may contribute to clarifying both the provenance and the transmission of the Pangu myth.

Keywords: China – Mythology – Cosmogony – Pangu – Chengguan – *Sanwu lijī*

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(Karel Fiala) 193–197

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Miroslav Šedivý

- Austrian Relations with the Ottoman Empire during the First
Mohammed Ali Crisis (1831–33) 201–218

The first Mohammed Ali crisis of the early 1830s significantly influenced the situation within the Ottoman Empire as well as the relations among the European Powers. The goal of this paper is to analyze the diplomacy of the Austrian Chancellor Metternich in the Levant during this important affair and thus to reveal how Austria's vast economic interests in this region, and particularly in Egypt, determined the decision-making process of the cabinet in Vienna. At that time the extent of Austrian trade with Egypt exceeded that of other European countries and prevented Austria's active involvement in the conflict. The arguments of the paper are based upon a research of the archival materials housed in Vienna, Berlin, London and Paris.

Keywords: Metternich – Austrian-Ottoman relations – Egypt – Mohammed Ali

Theo Damsteegt

- The Hindi Pluperfect as a Narrative Device 219–232

This article deals with the use of the pluperfect as a narrative device in six short stories written by the Hindi-author Kamlesvar and published in 1964. The article distinguishes two ways of using the "absolute" pluperfect, that is, the pluperfect found in a context other than retroversions. The first type is the pluperfect that signalizes Free Indirect Discourse. In the second type, the pluperfect expresses a feeling of helplessness, as experienced by a character or narrator. The use of the pluperfect in FID is a result of the tense shift that characterizes this semi-direct style. Its occurrence in the second type, on the other hand, comes close to the central meaning of the Hindi pluperfect of indicating an action that (according to Montaut's explanation) does not go on to, and is separated by a time interval from, the present. Here, however, that meaning should be taken metaphorically.

Keywords: Hindi – Pluperfect – Verbal tenses – Narrative techniques

Jean-Charles Juster

L'identité okinawanaise vue à travers le corps
dans les danses empreintes d'éléments combattifs 233–253

The question of Okinawan identity is a specific subject in contemporary Japan. In order to study it, the present article addresses the use of the body in Okinawan society, since dances and martial arts, which are important cultural points on these islands, are strongly connected to it. Firstly, I explain that the dances which feature martial arts moves have different functions according to the place to which they originate. In the rural environment, they are thought of as a distinctive cultural production, whereas in the cities, they are used to counter discrimination from central Japan. After this, I develop an analysis of these dances as techniques of the body and their educational significance in the hamlets, relying on the system of authority and imitation, all of which share a range of sociological and psychological aspects. In the final development, I emphasize the values conveyed by the body: some dances belong to classical culture and others to folk tradition.

Keywords: Okinawa-Ryūkyū-identity – Ethnochoreology – Dances – Martial arts

Isabella Samoilovna Gurevich

The Changes of the Historical Grammar
of the Chinese Language during the 3rd–14th Centuries 255–297

The aim of the paper is to trace the development of the grammatical structure of the vernacular (colloquial) Chinese language through the changes which took place in the grammatical system (specifically in the system of function words) during the 3rd–14th centuries. In other words, I intend to closely follow the entire process of the changes from the moment the function element originated up to its status (or disappearance) in the modern language. To fulfill the task a thorough examination of an extensive body of source material was undertaken. A precise selection of the source-material was the first step towards a successful response to the proposed project. With regard to the paper under consideration the following source-materials were carefully examined: the early Chinese translations of the Buddhist works (as the main source) for the Liuchao epoch, the *Chan-Buddhist yulu* for the Tang, the texts in the *ss* genre and *San Chao bei meng hui bian* for the Song-Yuan period. The essay consists of three parts: the grammar of the 3rd–5th cc A.D., or Liuchao period, Chinese grammar of the Tang Dynasty, and the changes undergone during the Song-Yuan epoch.

Keywords: Chinese language-history – Grammatical development – Vernacular Chinese

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Philippe Bourmaud

- The Political and Religious Dynamics of the *Mawlid al-nabawī*
in Mandatory Palestine 317–329

The politicization of the Nabī Musa festival during the Palestine Mandate is a well-established and publicized fact, yet other Arab Palestinian festivals experienced a similar transformation in the same context. Such was the case of the *Mawlid al-nabawī* (the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad). The intention of Arab nationalists was that it should evolve into a communal festival for all the Palestinian Arabs. However, for mainly denominational, geographical and political reasons, the attempt met with varied success throughout the territory of the Palestine Mandate. Attendance at public festivities remained decidedly Muslim in character. Repeated appeals for Christian participation were to little avail. Yet the attempts to include Christian Arabs in the festival throw light on the Arab nationalist ideologies in Palestine at the time – from that point of view, the celebrations linked to the birth of the Prophet Muhammad stand out as an axiological inspiration, regardless of denominational boundaries. In 1937, the political mobilization on the occasion of the *Mawlid al-nabawī* reached a peak but, even then, attendance was greatest in Gaza and Acre, places where the festival was traditionally important. Furthermore, the degree of mobilization, varying as it did from place to place, seems to be a reflection of the influence of the main Arab Palestinian factions, whose rivalry was reaching a climax in the late 1930s.

Keywords: Mandatory Palestine – Mawlid al-nabawī – Middle East-history

Magdalena Zaborowska

- Man in the Dynamic World:
Reflections of Iranian Intellectuals 331–347

This paper deals with contemporary Iranian philosophical and religious thought. It focuses on the reflections of a few of the most famous and highly regarded contemporary Persian intellectuals and philosophers, as well as on theologians such as Abdolkarim Soroush, Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestari and also Mohsen Kadivar and Mostafa Malekian. In modern Iran, intellectuals play a key role in shaping and developing various debates and disputes concerning present-day problems and issues. Among the many ideas that have emerged in Iran in recent years, we can observe an attempt to reconcile the sacred with the humane. Persian thinkers try to define what in the world can be considered as being sacred, and which elements no longer belong to the sphere of the sacred and should,

therefore, be considered as being humane and temporary. It appears to us that one of the main problems here lies in the separation of what is everlasting and eternal and what can be changed and modified by people. An analysis of the discussions that take place among Persian philosophers and religious thinkers reveals that the keynote which underlies the current Iranian debate is deeply rooted in the idea of the dynamic nature of the world. The idea of a constant movement leading to evolution can be found in mystical poetry as well as in philosophical works and is also a characteristic element of the Iranian outlook on life. It implies, therefore, a particular way of understanding: what changes and develops and what remains immutable.

Keywords: Iran – Philosophy and religious thought – Middle East

Michael Benisek

References to the Dombas in *Rajataranginī* 349–366

This paper analyzes references to an untouchable caste, namely the *domba*-, which appear in the Sanskrit chronicle of the Kashmiri kings, *Rajataranginī*. Its author, Kalhana, depicts the Dombas as itinerant people, living by music and dance and having a liking for rich adornments. Although he regards any association with them as ritually polluting, he records that in the year 936 AD a Domba family was given an audience at the court of King Cakravarman, following which the ruler married one of the Domba singers. In spite of this, the same king is also displayed as a supporter of the Brahmanas and Brahmanas, as receivers of the king's favor, even though there is a sharp condemnation of Kalhana. Thus, it seems that the untouchable status of the lowest castes was not too strict in the Kashmir of the 10th century. This is confirmed by evidence that indicates that the Brahmanical King Yaśaskara retained the functionaries who had previously served the Dombas. There is also evidence of one other ruler, Ksemagupta, specifically seeking out Domba company. Only at the end of the 11th century is there evidence of a certain degree of segregation, when King Harsa was to reject the inclusion of Domba women in his harem. The paper shows how the *Rajataranginī* can be utilized as a valuable source of knowledge relating to the ethnography and social history of pre-Islamic Kashmir.

Keywords: Domba caste – pre-Islamic Kashmir – Social history of Kashmir

Jan Bečka, Jr.

A Changing Relationship: The Impact of World War II
on American Foreign Policy toward Thailand 367–389

The article focuses on the relationship between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Thailand before and after World War II. The author first seeks to show how this relationship developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries and what the salient characteristics of it were. The second part of the article describes the American attitude toward Thailand during the war and the importance of wartime events for the future of the Thai-American

relationship. Finally, the closing section deals mainly with the postwar developments and the reasons for the emergence of the strategic partnership between Bangkok and Washington. Attention is paid to the motivations and expectations of both sides, as it relates to their cooperation. The aim of the article is mainly to show the changed nature of this bilateral relationship, resulting from World War II and events that followed closely in its wake. It also seeks to point out that the common struggle against communism, although important in later years, was neither the sole nor the prevalent reason for the newly emerging American interest in Thailand in the immediate postwar period.

Keywords: United States – Thailand – Foreign policy – World War II – Sovereignty

Jana Benešová

From the Quest for Love / Knowledge towards the Magic of
Alternative Worlds: The Change of the *Dominant* in the Works
of Su Weizhen 蘇偉貞? 391–414

This article uses Brian McHale's interpretative model of postmodern change as a dominant shift, i.e. as a transition from epistemological to ontological poetics, to explore trends and developments in the fiction by Su Weizhen, one of the most prominent Taiwanese women writers to appear on the Taiwanese literary scene at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, a period which witnessed the revival of women's fiction in Taiwan. Firstly, I reexamine some of the basic characteristics of Su Weizhen's earlier work and try to demonstrate what might possibly have directed it to the epistemological dominant of modernist literature. In the second part of the article, I trace the subsequent shift towards ontological poetics, described by Brian McHale as being a characteristic of postmodernist fiction in general, something which has been partly realized in Su Weizhen's more recent works. This, however, is not to say that I wish to argue that Su Weizhen should be placed among the pantheon of modernist or postmodernist writers; rather, I would like to point out that by using McHale's model to (re)interpret her works, we can arrive at some new elucidations and interesting insights into the development of Su Weizhen's fiction (including both form and content), especially as regards her more recent works.

Keywords: Su Weizhen – Taiwanese women's literature – Modernism – Postmodernism