

ical and corporate systems,” with *plan-tarianism*, a concern for the “biospheric, multicultural, and eco-centered interrelationships that often form the core of resistance to globalization.” In his contribution to the book, “Braided Channels of Watershed Consciousness,” editor Tom Lynch deepens this perspective. Lynch rejects the “false and unproductive dichotomy between lococentrism versus a global perspective.” He opts instead for a perspective borrowed from the poet Gary Snyder, who writes, “The watershed is the first and last nation whose boundaries, though subtly shifting, are unarguable.” When we see the environment as distinct but interconnected systems, it becomes possible to be at once place-based and planetary.

Great change is upon us, and *Thinking Continental* is an important testimony to the emerging Anthropocene.

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Ismail Kadare  
*Essays on World Literature*

Trans. Ani Kokobobo. Brooklyn. Restless Books. 2018. 304 pages.

Ismail Kadare’s first and only collection of essays translated into English, this time directly from the Albanian originals written between 1985 and 2006, offers profound and highly personal meditations on canonical figures of world literary history. Together, the essays consider the circulation of “world” literature (always distinctly European, and by men, in Kadare’s account) in Albania and, in doing so, argue for the significance of tragedy to Balkan people’s lives, imaginations, and self-identification. This includes the impulse to elide cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and historical differences in service of a distinct “Balkanness” that attests to the unifying pain of ethno/geocultural conflict over the millennia.

Twyla M. Hansen’s “Communion” captures the soul of the collection with a lament for a liminal place, the windbreaks between fields where the poem’s speaker wandered as a child. Alive now only in memory (and vivid verse), these places have been replaced by “a factory of corn / and soy-bean” built to the scale of machines, and the earth is the body of Christ torn in a heedless and irreverent Eucharist. Ann Fisher-Wirth’s “Mississippi Delta Lay Down” merges the speaker’s memory of her earlier vow to never live in the turbulent South with a poignant description of that very place, now home. Walter Bargaen’s poem “A Line from Dogen” summarizes the project. “These clocks are useless,” he writes, “They only measure themselves.” We are urged to “follow the geese / that follow the stars,” and to the repeated question “Where do we turn?” Bargaen offers, as the last line in the book, one answer: “Into the turning.”

In their introduction, the editors explain how the wide variety of texts fits with their critical purpose. The editors contrast *globalization*, “transnational polit-



Craig Santos Perez  
*from unincorporated territory [lukao]*  
Omnidawn

The latest installment by native Chamorro poet Craig Santos Perez, *[lukao]* dons many genres. From shape poems and snatches of interviews to historical “introductions” and periodic “poemaps” that visually trace the paths of US military bases and the leak of toxic chemicals, Perez’s staunchly indigenous and decolonized verse personalizes and exposes legacies of exploitation on his home island of Guam and in the western Pacific (see *WLT*, May 2017, 68).



Iryna Starovoyt  
*A Field of Foundlings*  
Trans. Grace Mahoney  
Lost Horse Press

*A Field of Foundlings* is author Iryna Starovoyt’s first book in English translation and part of a dual-language series of post-Soviet Ukrainian poetry. With far-reaching narratives and poignant meditations, Starovoyt sets out to “salve” the national “amnesia” of a place where “the left hand erases all that the right draws,” creating in the process a vibrant pin-map from points of everyday relevance, mythic origin, and national significance.

Kadare reflects in three essays on “great” writers in the world literary tradition: Aeschylus, whom he calls the “lost”; Dante, the “inevitable”; and Shakespeare, the “difficult prince.” Kadare’s essays provide histories of these writers’ place in the Albanian intellectual and mythohistorical imaginaries as well as in Kadare’s own thinking about the purpose of writing. Aeschylus enjoys a more or less constant presence, but Dante and Shakespeare are latecomers as a result of repressive Ottoman rule, arriving in Albanian translations only following independence in the twentieth century. Dante makes a particular impression on Kadare, who says that the Florentine poet’s greatest lesson was that “the natural state of the great writer is . . . to travel alive among the dead.” Dante is thus figured as the ultimate poet of the Albanian experience; “Dantesque” describes nothing if not the spiraling centuries of Albanian life under multiple empires and then Hoxha.

Aeschylus, the topic of his earliest and longest essay, represents to Kadare the largely lost origin of world literature and thus of “civilization” itself; though Greek, Aeschylus’s sense of the tragic emerged from a uniquely Balkan understanding of mourning, Kadare argues, and he was therefore, like any Albanian, haunted by pains peculiar to Balkan life. Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, in the final essay, represents the “impossible drama” of Albania, of the blood feuds of the traditional Albanian legal code, the Kanun, and of the centuries of ceaseless squabble over land, power, and identity that, like Hamlet’s own blood feud, made life a tragedy.

In his indelibly humanist understanding of art, Kadare conceives of literature—the work of canonically great writers—as art that “cries with the world,” seeking through letters to understand the uniquely and most deeply human: tragedy, violence, pain. He adopts the language “crying with the world” from a Gjirokastër idiom that describes intimate mourning among rela-

tives and nonrelatives alike; tragedy, for Kadare, speaking always through the violent history of the Balkans, is a binding tie among the people of Albania and its neighbors, the purest if the most painful source of literary inspiration.

Literature as a “crying with the world” is not only a lament for the self but also a reminder of those hurt in the production of the self. Kadare attests as much in his reading of Homer, one who made the Greeks’ deceitful destruction of the Trojans, murdered while they slept, the basis of Greece’s greatest epic of unified mythohistoric selfhood.

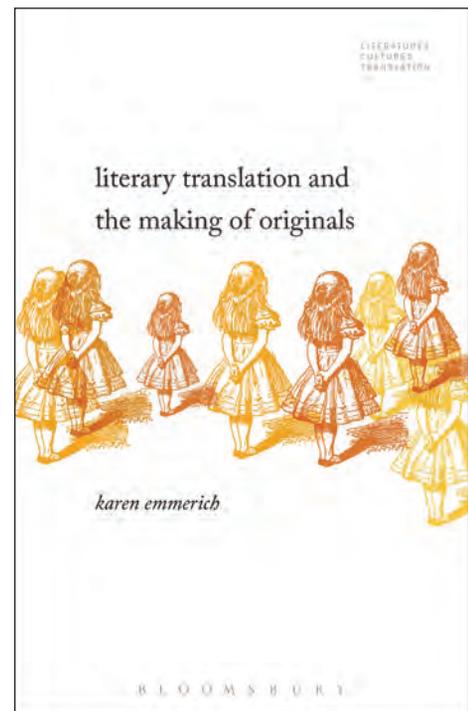
Through his provocations on Aeschylus, Dante, Shakespeare, and the vicissitudes of Albanian history, Kadare argues that to see Albanian literature as world literature is to see Albania simultaneously as the subject of its own self-inflicted tragedy and as the object of violence committed against it. It is to see Albania as European and therefore part of Europe’s imperialist history; within Europe, as unremittingly Balkan and thus always peripheral to the flows of European power; and among them all, as an ethno/geocultural essence apart—lost like the origins of tragedy, inevitable like the violence of the political, difficult like the ghosts of the past. The “world” of Kadare’s three essays on “world literature” is a reflection of Albania’s “impossible drama” on the global scale of human history, an observation at once parochial and profound, like the greatness of great art.

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Karen Emmerich  
*Literary Translation and the Making of Originals*

New York. Bloomsbury. 2017. 234 pages.

Of the thousands of adages that elucidate translation, one of the most oft-quoted is Jorge Luis Borges’s “The original is unfaith-



ful to the translation.” In these seven words, Borges at once invokes and turns on its head the notion of fidelity, a highly contested concept within the field of literary translation, and one that Karen Emmerich interrogates in *Literary Translation and the Making of Originals*, especially as it relates to the notion of original text(s).

Emmerich adroitly slays each of these sacred cows in a single blow, arguing, “The commonplace insistence of an ideal of translational ‘fidelity’ means that promiscuity is for originals alone; the last thing we want is for a translation to go messing around with an unstable text, much less with several at once.”

This is but one of many salvos Emmerich fires in her book, which, according to the author, “has the perhaps immodest goal of challenging the time-honored tradition—long upheld by readers, reviewers, publishers, literary scholars, even many translators and scholars of translation—of referring to the objects of literary translation as if each were a known quantity, a singular entity whose lexical context is stable or fixed: the ‘original,’ ‘the Arabic original,’