

“French and Beat Literatures: A History of Mutual Appropriation, Reception, and Translation”

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abstracts

Véronique Lane, “Introduction: Materializing the ‘Eternal French Connexion’”

This special issue takes up a position within the recent “transnational turn” in Beat Studies by shifting the field’s dominant critical paradigm beyond its traditionally American-centric focus and toward more text-based approaches. While it attends to neglected as well as major Beat writers, and opens a dialogue between Anglophone and Francophone scholarship, it also reveals the importance of the cultural *passeurs* who shaped the reception of French literature in North America and of Beat literature in France. One of its main aims is to inspire further archival and textual work by giving new weight to the crucial yet problematic role of publishers, editors, and translators to convey French and Beat literatures across and between languages and cultures.

Maarten van Gageldonk, “The Representation of Literary and Cultural Paris in *Olympia Review* (1961-1963)”

Between 1961 and 1963, Maurice Girodias’ Olympia Press published four issues of *Olympia Magazine*, an English-language magazine published from Paris. Largely left unstudied so far, this article argues that *Olympia Magazine* was representative of Girodias’ unique reconceptualization of Paris for an anglophone and largely foreign readership. Employing Bruno Latour’s notion of the cultural mediator and John Urry’s idea of the tourist gaze, the article argues that *Olympia Magazine* functioned as a travel guide though its selling of Paris to a foreign readership, but also significantly contributed to the global 1960s as a transnational, urban cultural movement.

Oliver Harris, “William Burroughs’ Cut-Ups Lost and Found in Translation”

Burroughs’ experimental “cut-up” texts of the 1960s have presented great challenges to readers, critics, and translators, and their French translations have proved especially controversial. This article argues that what has been lost in translation for Francophone readers can, however, make visible key features of cut-up texts that have been missed or misunderstood by anglophone readers, above all their intertextuality. As revealed by a close comparative study of his first cut-ups in *Minutes to Go*, published in Paris in 1960 and translated into French in the 1970s, Burroughs’ work was not only intertextual from the start but itself constituted a practice

of translation.

James Horton, “Mary Beach and Claude Pélieu’s Translations and Adaptions of Allen Ginsberg’s Work”

This article explores the ways the perception of Beat writers in France was influenced by the translations produced from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s by Mary Beach and Claude Pélieu. It combines an editorial history of Beat translation in France with a close textual reading of Beach and Pélieu’s 1967 version of Allen Ginsberg’s *Kaddish*. This study points to an innovative albeit idiosyncratic approach, heavily influenced by Pélieu’s own poetics. An analysis of this first effort alongside Ginsberg’s later revisions to the French text further reveals divergent literary projects that crystallize within in the cultural transfer implied by the translation.

Hassan Melehy, “Godard Gets the Blues: Movies, Music, and Baraka”

This article addresses Jean-Luc Godard’s quotations from Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) in two movies. In *Masculin féminin* (1966), Godard stages a scene from Baraka’s 1964 racially charged play *Dutchman*, while two of the film’s characters watch it as though it were a real event. In *One Plus One* (aka *Sympathy for the Devil*) (1968), Godard’s Rolling Stones documentary, as a counterpoint to footage of the band’s recording sessions an actor reads from Baraka’s writings on the relationship of rock and roll to black music. The article demonstrates how these quotations complement Godard’s thematics, politics, and aesthetics.

Olivier Penot-Lacassagne, “La Beat Generation en France: Avant-garde vs Underground”

La réception française de la Beat Generation est contrastée. Aux premières lectures, intéressées ou enthousiastes, du début des années 1960 succède une critique sévère, venue de *Tel Quel*, avant-garde formaliste qui promeut d’autres écritures et défend une “revolution” d’inspiration maoïste. En contrepoint du telquélisme, la presse alternative naissante (en particulier le journal *Actuel*) publie les grands textes de rupture de la contre-culture américaine. Les écrivains de la Beat Generation bénéficient de cette diffusion *underground*. En marge des institutions, la *free press* est relayée par d’autres publications populaires, destinées cette fois “aux masses les plus larges.” C’est le cas, longtemps méprisé, de la revue *Planète Plus* qui, en 1971, rend hommage à Bob Dylan et aux poètes *Beat*.

Andrew Hussey, “From Bucharest to the Beat Hotel: Isidore Isou and the Lettrist Revolution on the Left Bank”

Isidore Isou has largely been forgotten or ignored by historians of culture. This is partly because he believed something that was absurd and impossible: he was a fanatic who held the fantastical belief that he was the Jewish Messiah sent to lead all humanity to redemption. His most tragic belief was that through the philosophy and practice of *lettrisme* he could find the secret of immortality. The aim of this article is however to reinstate Isou to his true position in the twentieth century by considering his practice as an avant-gardist. The article focuses on the parallels between *lettriste* word collages and the “cut-ups” of William Burroughs. Although Burroughs and Isou never met, there is striking similarity in the practice which reveals the cross-currents at work in 1950s Paris, where Isou and Burroughs lived and worked.

Véronique Lane, “Tristan Corbière’s *Amours jaunes* in Allen Ginsberg’s Early Poetry”

From the 1950s to the 1980s, Allen Ginsberg inscribed Tristan Corbière’s poetry in his own,

in ways that concealed as much as they revealed. Working backwards from Ginsberg's long cryptic allusion to Corbière in the 1986 variorum edition of "Howl," this article offers the first intertextual reading of their poetry. Comparatively analyzing the two translations of Corbière's *Amours jaunes* that Ginsberg acquired in 1947 and 1955, it uncovers how Corbière's prosody and meta-irony informed Ginsberg's "Howl" and "The Lion for Real," and shows the extent to which the French poet's aesthetics shaped the American's in the crucial period that preceded and followed his breakthrough with "Howl."

Franca Bellarsi, "Jean Cocteau et le sang poétique de la Beat Generation"

Cet article examine l'influence de Cocteau sur la Beat Generation. Pour la première fois, *Doctor Sax* de Kerouac et plusieurs poèmes de Ginsberg, dont "Howl," sont analysés à la lueur de l'esthétique coctalienne du rêve éveillé. Au-delà d'une écriture réfléchissant la transe hallucinée, Cocteau suggéra l'enchevêtrement des mondes par une poétique de type filmique fortement teintée de gnosticisme, ainsi que jouant sur l'accélération ou l'épaississement de l'espace-temps. Cette synthèse coctalienne entre une lecture gnostique du réel et un traitement surréaliste de l'image permit aux *Beats* de moderniser la sensibilité gnostique qu'ils héritèrent de sources antérieures allant de Blake à Bouddha.

Susan Pinette, "Jack Kerouac's French, American, and Quebecois Receptions: From Deterritorialization to Reterritorialization"

This article explores the statements Deleuze made about Kerouac's works, not to discount the use of Deleuzian concepts to analyze them, but to clarify the paradox underlying Deleuze's reading of Kerouac and how this paradox exemplifies Kerouac's reception in France and Quebec. While critics increasingly follow Deleuze in using Kerouac's œuvre to exemplify the process of escaping a dominant state, they overlook the ways in which Deleuze holds Kerouac up as symbolizing reterritorialization; and while Quebecois readers have recognized Kerouac as one of their own, their appropriation seeks to overcome his diasporic condition. While both the French and the Quebecois critical traditions reflect key aspects of Kerouac's life and works, neither speak to Kerouac's condition as a Franco-American author "split in the cradle."

Jason Earle, "American Schizo: William Burroughs and *Semiotext(e)*"

This article analyzes the role of William Burroughs within the theoretical, aesthetic, and political project of New York-based journal *Semiotext(e)*. Burroughs was a key participant in *Semiotext(e)*'s 1975 "Schizo-Culture" conference, and his contributions appeared in several of the journal's special issues from 1978 to 1987. The article demonstrates how *Semiotext(e)* fashioned an image of Burroughs as theorist by choosing to foreground his politics, sexuality, and radical philosophy. As *Semiotext(e)* deliberately shifted focus and format over the course of a decade, Burroughs served as a crucial link between the American counterculture and post-1968 French thought.