such as Gauri Viswanathan,[1] Bernard Cohn,[2] Thomas Trautmann,[3] and Arvind-Pal S. Mandair[4] have accomplished on the more researched context of (post)colonial India. Pugach's examination of the epistemological implications of *Afrikanistik* for both Germany *and* Africa also offers a renewed standpoint from which to appreciate such seminal works as Valentin Yves Mudimbe's *The Invention of Africa* (1988), Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), and so on. One limitation of this book certainly derives from a title that foregrounds "translation" more prominently than its content actually does. The concept of "translation" is, for the most part, lightly deployed in the book and it seems to acquire overall little productive relevance—a notable exception being chapter 6. Pugach's notion of "translation" functions as an under-theorized trope to connote the (no-less-significant) process of collection, codification, and transposition of African knowledge into useful and readily legible information to German missionaries, scholars, and colonial administrators. Overall, despite a seemingly ill-chosen title, the book remains a must for anyone interested in the history of German colonialism and in the genealogy of (colonial) discourses on Africa.

MÉLISSA GÉLINAS
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
mgelinas@umich.edu

Reading Marechera
By GRANT HAMILTON
Editor JAMES CURREY
2013, 196 pp.
doi:10.1017/pli.2016.22

This is a collection of fresh and illuminating essays on the works of the Zimbabwean writer Dambudzo Marechera (1952–1987). The ten essays provocatively engage the political and aesthetic dimensions of Marechera's fictional, dramatic, and poetic titles. The contributors (Grant Hamilton, Tinashe Mushakavanhu, Anias Mutekwa, Anna-Leena Toivanen, Bill Ashcroft, David Huddart, Mark Williams, Madhlozi Moyo, Memory Chirere, and Eddie Tay) represent a wide range of nationalities and are based in geographical locations spread across Africa, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Such diverse locations have possibly shaped the perspectives of this collection and given it a unique global outlook.

1 Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).
2 Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).
3 Thomas Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
4 Arvind-Pal S. Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality, and the Politics of Translation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

https://doi.org/10.1017/pli.2016.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Therefore, it seems accurate to consider Marechera's literary oeuvre as belonging to the corpus of "world literature" not just "African" or "postcolonial" literature for as David Damrosch has observed, "world literature" subsumes "all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language."[1] In fact, one of the notable achievements of the collection is that some of the essays have examined Marechera's works in juxtaposition with some others from around the world in order to stress what is unique about Marechera's writing. Consider, for instance, that Williams's essay attempts a comparative examination of Marechera's *Black Sunlight*, Darius James's *Negrophobia*, and China Miéville's *The Scar*. Both fantasy authors, James and Miéville are respectively African American and British. And Williams analyzes Marechera's novel with James's and Miéville's to "explore the ability of Marechera's fiction to function as a counter-literature within globalization" (122). In exploring Marechera's works from a multi-perspectival angle, the essays draw conceptual and theoretical inspiration from anarchism, classical allusion, Shona customs, Menippeanism, Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, Deleuze and Guattari's "nomadism," Baudrillard's "interpretive violence," Mbembe's "aesthetics of vulgarity," Bakhtin, Fanon, and Said, among others.

Some of the contributors have raised important questions on some issues that have been the perennial sources of critical debate in African literature. The language question—that is, the appropriateness or otherwise of African literature in European languages—is one such issue. Chirere's essay on the play "The Servants' Ball," the only Shona-language work by Marechera, touches on the tricky nature of the language debate while auditing Marechera's position on the issue. The question we are forced to consider is why would Marechera who demonstrates competence in his mother tongue as evident in this play write the rest of his works in English? Chirere boldly asserts that the language question "is a dilemma that is not easy to resolve since Shona, the mother tongue, the creator of life, is animated by English, the colonial language, the life giver—the route to a good job, a good house, and a good living" (169). Does this mean that Marechera and the rest of African authors writing mainly in European languages are doing the wrong thing for the right reasons? If so, does doing the wrong thing for the right reason mean doing the right thing? How valid is Chirere's criticism of Shona and, by extension, the rest of indigenous African languages? Is he being justifiably frank, or is his position injurious to African literature? Indeed, the provocative manner in which the contributors have addressed the problem of language and other issues makes the Hamilton-edited collection an intriguing work of criticism. The language of the collection is charmingly unctuous; each contributor's academic prose seeks to communicate rather than impress. Therefore, the reader can easily understand what he or she chooses to agree or disagree with. *Reading Marechera* is a very important addition to preceding scholarly works on Marechera such as Flora Veit-Wild's *Source Book on His Life and Work* (1992), the collection of essays in *Emerging Perspectives* (coedited with Anthony Chennells) (1999), and the collection of essays titled *Moving Spirit*: *The Legacy of Dambudzo Marechera in the 21st Century* (2012), edited by Dobrota Pucherova and Julie Cairnie. Like these preceding titles, however, the Hamilton-edited collection need not be considered the final word on

1 David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature*? (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/pli.2016.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Marechera. He remains a widely acclaimed avant-garde author whose writings will continue to pose serious hermeneutical questions. Several contributors to this latest collection are mindful of this fact. Acknowledging that "[t]here are . . . many ways to read Marechera," Hamilton, for instance, humbly concludes that this collection "can do nothing other than present itself as a tentative step into the territory of Marechera's literary universe" (10). Could he have put it more succinctly?

CHIMA OSAKWE
York University
osakwech@yorku.ca

https://doi.org/10.1017/pli.2016.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press