

Mary Helen McMurrin. *The Spread of Novels: Translation and Prose Fiction in the Eighteenth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009. x+252pp. US\$27.95. ISBN 978-0-691-14153-4.

This innovative study holds that translation practices “changed drastically in the eighteenth century,” increased fiction’s “mobility,” and fostered a cosmopolitan sensibility that led the novel to operate self-consciously within and beyond national boundaries. While early eighteenth-century practices would not distinguish between source and target texts, this resistance was normal, partly because prose fiction aimed traditionally to transmit classical stories in vernacular languages. As this aim became less of a priority, translation became a cultural project that sped the emergence of the novel. Mary Helen McMurrin’s larger claim is that translation was “endemic” to literary culture and correlated with Enlightenment humanism and progress. At this point in the exposition, readers familiar with discourse analysis will wonder at the privileging of literariness since fiction bulked so small in the book trade output and since the classical languages remained prominent in science, medicine, the professions, and pedagogy. Another problem for literary history arises from tautological applications of literary categories. McMurrin often speaks of novels and emerging novels before *the* novel is given either *a priori* or *a posteriori* definition. However, setting aside circularities in cause-and-effect analysis, it is an absorbing proposal that the novel grew out of a “changing mode of transmissibility,” moving “from a nation-blind transfer to a transnationalized exchange.”

McMurrin keenly observes definitional problems, as her critique of Ian Watt’s view of realism moving from English novels to “the novel form” and a universalized modernity attests. To McMurrin, Watt’s focus on secular clock time, which places national and novelistic identity in one conceptual field, too easily detaches the novel from earlier prose fiction and distracts attention from the plural and mixed provenance of English and French fictions. In dismissing French novels as too stylish, while maintaining that narrative authenticity depends on exhaustive representation of daily life, Watt turned his back on fiction’s multilingual, protean nature. After reminding us that translation was the common denominator of earlier histories of the novel, McMurrin details the conditions under which translators worked from the late seventeenth century onward: there was no standard of linguistic or stylistic fidelity; translators were independent authors; and there was systematic collusion to hide sources. The book trade circulated prose fiction without much regard to authorial and national identity. The French press mediated English fictions to Europe. The London industry, including foreign booksellers, produced

foreign-language books. Exiled communities and language learners motivated publishers to exchange books across national borders. However, if translators were not hacks working on an industrial basis, conditions evolved to their disadvantage. Frances Brooke's career is illustrative: an author and book-trade agent as well as translator, she did not fit into the social networks that capital investment in the trade fostered. Competition among translators reduced their autonomy and increased their contractual responsibilities. Copyright law protected English but not foreign writers. These limitations on translators coincided with the novel's evolving procedures.

The mid-eighteenth-century textual procedures of prose fiction derive from the conflation of the tropes of amplification and abbreviation habitual to translators with the sentimental codes that led novelists across Europe to make the transmittal of feeling their chief task. Since translators treated source texts as amalgamations of elements rather than as fixed objects to be copied, they did not impose organic unity on the novel; they wanted to be free to attach readers sentimentally to characters. To McMurrin, Eliza Haywood's translations with their heightened declamation and emotionalism typify the newly feminized literary production of France and England. In a fine account of La Place's translation of Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* that puts Imoinda at the centre of the plot, McMurrin shows how the French author softens the original novel's feelings and uses him to argue that the new novel's liberal translation procedures herald desire for its own sake and make pathos an affective agenda. This argument is nicely extended by consideration of dialectical tensions between nationalism and cosmopolitanism in translation's cultural work, which holds that nation-based cosmopolitanism was unique to "the mid-eighteenth-century cross-Channel arena." In a compelling account of how authors accepted and resisted extranational aspects of translation, McMurrin examines Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa* in terms of conflicted intentions and divergent European responses to the novels. If Richardson thought, while composing *Pamela*, that translation might harm national identity, he realized that it could be culturally enriching when he wrote *Clarissa*. While he associated Pamela's virtue with textual autonomy, the notion that an English novel could sever itself from Continental influences was derided and satirized on both sides of the Channel. Clarissa's virtues enabled him to put national identification in cosmopolitan terms of order, manners, and moral purpose. In praising Richardson as poet and moralist, Denis Diderot elevated secular sentimentalism over traditional spiritual reading, saw *Clarissa* as the new universal novel, and helped institute the founding contradiction that the novel must be no more than its particulars and simultaneously universal.

McMurrans final chapter broadens the field of translation perhaps too much by seeing transatlantic settings that perform an imperial “interculturality” as a powerful strain in the emergent novel. The link between multilingual communities in the new world and linguistic and cultural translations in texts is not well theorized. Note is made of Robinson Crusoe’s learning of Portuguese, but attention is not paid to his analogies to England, ignorance of marine terms, and categorical dullness to natural history. Nor is the contextualization of *The History of Emily Montague* persuasive. It is a very optimistic reading that sees this novel’s bilingual and translational texture correcting nationalisms with sympathy and wit, for its georgic and pastoral imagery stems primarily from canonical English poetry. This is not to belittle this study’s dialectical stance, the subtle flexibility of which is not captured in this short review. This volume has been well edited, and there are few printing errors. However, for my taste there are too many neologisms and mixed metaphors (for example, fuel that is titillating, a backlash that heats up). Some readers will be disappointed to see no references to “polysystem theory.” Others may wonder that Enlightenment progress passes unchallenged.

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Leslie Ritchie. *Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England: Social Harmony in Literature and Performance*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2008. 280pp. US\$99.95. ISBN 978-0-7546-6333-1.

Very little is known about women’s musical composition in eighteenth-century England, and this excellent book makes a solid foundation for the subject. Leslie Ritchie’s argument, in a nutshell, is that “women composed, performed, and wrote about music in nearly every imaginable place, and in every available genre” (219). She pulls together information on many lesser known women composers, and makes the startling revelation that far from publishing anonymously, as many as 75 per cent of the women who registered musical compositions at Stationer’s Hall did so under their own names. She reproduces quite a number of musical texts here—for those who read music—with title pages bearing women’s names. The book also covers well-known women performers and their influence; Ritchie observes that “in Britain, the eighteenth century was the century of the performer. Broadly stated, it was the era of Garrick, not Shakespeare” (15). She treats songs and