

Forward Editor's Introduction

JENNIFER A. REIMER

Greetings shipmates! As I write to you, the first snow has fallen on Bend, Oregon (USA), the wood-burning fireplace snaps and pops while a large stag munches on the last of the summer's herbs in the front garden ("Expecto Patronus!"). And speaking of food and hospitality, I take after my father when it comes to feeding guests—always better to have too much than not enough. My worst hosting fear is not having enough. And so, headed into fall, I was worried that this year's Forward section would be slim and undernourished. Despite my fears (and on-brand for my tendency to over-order at restaurants), we've convened a true feast of eclectic new works in transnational American studies. It's impossible to summarize all that's on offer here, in what is the largest and most topically diverse issue of *Forward* that I've had the pleasure of curating. You'll recognize some familiar recent trends in the field: transnational Pacific studies are well-rep'd, as are transatlantic Anglophone literatures. But you'll also find a fascinating biography of Pedro Albizu Campos, new insights on how American women influenced French fashion, exciting work in an emerging field of comparative Mediterranean and Mediterranean American ethnic studies, a hemispheric and gender-inclusive approach to the Beats, a transdisciplinary take on the aesthetics of global migration, and one very haunting study on the specter of the pandemic in nineteenth-century literature. I hope you're hungry. Bon appétit and buen provecho, Fearless Readers!

Disorienting the Pacific

Two new impressive monographs intervene in Pacific and Oceanic studies. Denise Khor's *Transpacific Convergences* (University of North Carolina Press) reconfigures the history of US filmmaking and filmgoing, as well as conventional approaches to film historicism. Drawing on extensive original archival research, Khor documents how film practice and movie-going offered an alternative public sphere for Japanese and Japanese Americans in the United States before World War II. Not only were Japanese filmmakers making movies in the United States during the industry's first decades, films from Japan traveled to and circulated within the United States. Khor's excavations also take readers across and

BOLD Ideas, ESSENTIAL Reading



"This close study of Beat writers in the context of their experiences in Mexico is a revelation many times over. The author has plumbed the depths, discovering whole new dimensions in the US avant-garde, with an emphasis on women Beat writers long overdue. What we have here is a critical classic in the making, a must-read for anyone interested in the saga of the Beats."

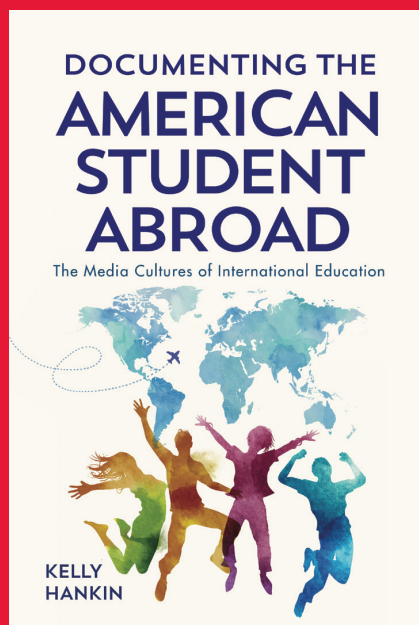
—Paul Buhle, co-editor, with Harvey Pekar, of *The Beats: A Graphic History*

"With *The Beats in Mexico*, David Stephen Calonne finally fills a critical gap in Beat Generation scholarship—tracing not only the influences of Mexico on the major Beat writers, but on their predecessors, followers, and contemporaries. We devoured this thoroughly-researched, beautifully written study. Highly recommended!"

—Arthur S. Nusbaum, Third Mind Books

THE BEATS IN MEXICO

David Stephen Calonne



"Kelly Hankin's wide-ranging and deftly argued analysis of the 'study abroad gaze' is a welcome addition to current debates about tourism, travel, and intercultural exchange. She expertly guides us through such diverse topics as theories of mediated travel, reality television and vlogs, the foreign homestay, and the risks and rewards of overseas experiences."

—Ben McCann, University of Adelaide, Australia

"This book offers an original and critical account of an influential domain of media practice—the 'study abroad media culture' through which Americans learn about, experience, and document educational travel abroad. Kelly Hankin traces how visions of the 'globally engaged student' have emerged from a web of media histories, technologies, institutions, and stakeholders."

—Katie Day Good, author of *Bring The World to the Child: Technologies of Global Citizenship in American Education*

DOCUMENTING THE AMERICAN STUDENT ABROAD

The Media Cultures of International Education

Kelly Hankin

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through the Pacific to show how Japanese film culture shifted in response to developments in film technologies and emerging audiences (such as Filipino moviegoers). In reenvisioning Asian and Asian American media pasts, “*Transpacific Convergences* charts these divergent and disjunctive trajectories to unsettle a successive and linear conception of film history. It traces a cinema no longer present and illuminates a past made available only across its relics, fragments, and archival traces. In doing so, *Transpacific Convergences* calls for a reimagining of the US media past, not only for what that history is but also how and by what means it is told” (Khor 5).

Similarly, Erin Suzuki’s *Ocean Passages: Navigating Pacific Islander and Asian American Literatures* (Temple University Press) elegantly parses Pacific oceanic passages as “critical and dynamic sites from which to analyze how Asian American and Indigenous Pacific subjectivities have been constructed against and alongside one another in the wake of the colonial conflicts that shaped the emergence of the modern transpacific” (Suzuki 3). In attempting to push back against the abstraction of neoliberal transpacific frameworks, Suzuki asks how literary composition and interpretation demand attention to position and context. Situated as a decolonial and decolonial feminist project, *Ocean Passages* centers “kinesthetic, experiential, and nonlinear modes of knowledge” (4).

Teaching Tools: Transatlantic Anglophone Anthologies

Two new publications in transatlantic Anglophone literatures caught our eye this year: Jude V. Nixon and Mariaconcetta Costantini’s edited collection, *Becoming Home: Diaspora and the Anglophone Transnational* (Vernon Press), and Linda K. Hughes, Sarah Ruffing Robbins, and Andrew Taylor’s collection from Edinburgh University Press, *Transatlantic Anglophone Literatures, 1776–1920* (with associate editors Heidi Hakimi-Hood and Adam Nemmers).

The excerpt of *Becoming Home* contains Elaine Savory’s preface as well as the table of contents, both of which raise intriguing questions about the collection’s interrogation of home and belonging by honoring “the plethora of ways individuals navigate transitions, voluntary or involuntary, and the reinvention of self they so often demand” (xi). From canonical A-listers such as Virgil and Derek Walcott to Ben Okri and Monica Ali, this collection explores how migrations are taken up and understood. Keja Valen’s contribution, “Home Cooking: Diaspora and Transnational Anglophone Caribbean Cookbooks,” cues cravings for callaloo, coucou, and conch.

In *Transatlantic Anglophone Literatures, 1776–1920*, editors Hughes, Robbins, and Taylor present unexpected samplings of literatures that reflect the networks of connection and interrelationship that mark the literature of the Atlantic world in English (including translingual texts). The editors are clear that they offer a new kind of teaching text: “Personally and anecdotally, we found that instructors of transatlantic literature classes were obliged to cobble together a curriculum from various sources, scanning a dozen different books while navigating issues related to public domain and textual authority and fidelity. By bringing together a number of these texts within one volume, we hope to offer a resource for teaching Anglophone literature published across the Atlantic world during the

long nineteenth century (Hughes, Robbins, and Taylor 2). The book's ten sections are organized thematically and include primary texts, readings guides, and lesson plans, as well as paratextual elements for instructors and students and digital resources helpful in guiding research projects. A classroom essential to revamp the syllabi of The Long Nineteenth!

Another exciting newcomer in transcultural and comparative scholarship is Yiorgos Anagnostou, Yiorgos D. Kalogerras, and Theodora Patrona's edited volume, *Redirecting Ethnic Singularity: Italian Americans and Greek Americans in Conversation* (Fordham University Press). Drawn from scholarship in Australia, Europe, and the United States, the collection uses a comparative methodology to complicate single-ethnic group approaches to Italian/Italian American and Greek/Greek American studies (hence, its loose and somewhat awkward placement in our collection of transatlantic studies. Imagine the book's Australian perspective gate-crashing our Pacific studies section). Part critical whiteness work and thoroughly interdisciplinary, the volume will interest scholars of immigration history, architecture and built cultures, religious studies, the Mediterranean, US ethnic studies, and literary film studies.

From this collection, we are including Jim Cocola's contribution, "Mediterranean Americans to Themselves." Cocola's comparative analysis of US and Australian texts by Italian and Greek immigrants and their descendants highlights a shared tension between embracing the racial logic of whiteness as part of assimilation, and a distinctly Mediterranean difference, marked by religion, skin tone, and other ethnocultural markers of otherness. "In American and Australian spheres alike," Cocola contends, "the expressive cultures of several Mediterranean diasporas have been marked by fraught identifications that consistently trouble—and are troubled by—the discriminatory norm of whiteness" (Cocola 75). Particularly compelling to me are the critical readings of Italian representations of Greece and Greek representations of Italians in expressive culture (that Tennessee Williams can be linked to Anatolia via Elia Kazan offers further proof that my Anatolian friends might be correct when they claim that everything can be traced back to Anatolia). Pop open your favorite Super Tuscan or pour a chilled mastixa and tuck in.

Tapas, Meze, Smorgasbord ... Take Your Pick (of Culinary Metaphor and Material) from this Nineteenth-century Sampler

Three of this year's offerings focus on figures and forms of the nineteenth century. *Forward* alum and *JTAS* editor Greg Robinson is back with a new edited collection of the writings of James Theodore Holly, a leading early Black Nationalist whose transnational life and career took him from the United States to Canada and Haiti. In the selection from the introduction included here (*James Theodore Holly*, Le Centre International de Documentation et d'Information Haïtienne, Caribéenne et Afro-canadienne), Robinson lays out the contours of Holly's sojourns in Canada and Haiti. Of particular interest to readers may be Robinson's treatment of Holly's internationalist vision and commitment to Black emigration to Haiti. Holly, Robinson writes, passionately believed that "Blacks everywhere had a special mission to maintain the independence of Haiti against foreign assault:

‘From this view of the matter, it may be seen that if Haytian independence shall cease to exist, the sky of negro destiny shall be hung in impenetrable blackness; the hope of princes coming out of Egypt and Ethiopia soon stretching forth her hands unto God will die out; and everlasting degradation become the settled doom of this downtrodden, long-afflicted, and then God-forsaken race.’ To deny the claims of Hayti was to go against God. (Robinson 26–27)

A must-read for anyone interested in the transnational roots of Black Nationalism, hemispheric Afro-American studies, and the intersections of race, religion, and justice movements.

Just in time for spooky season (I write this on what is Día de los Muertos for many in my hemisphere), fans of the nineteenth century (or of Gothic literature) will want to take a peek at “The Specter of the Pandemic: Politics and Poetics of Cholera in Nineteenth Century Literature—An Introduction” by Davina Höll. For *Forward*, the author has translated her introduction from her German monograph *Das Gespenst der Pandemie: Politik und Poetik der Cholera in der Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts* (frommann-holzboog). Working transnationally and transhistorically, Höll demonstrates how “analyzing cholera as a human, medicinal, and narrative borderline experience [...] expedites a productive interaction between life science and literary studies and emphasizes the significance of consolidating these cultures of knowledge, which are often considered disconnected” (Höll 54). Drawing on methodologies and theories from the medical humanities, literary trauma studies, postcolonial studies, and ecocriticism, Höll’s literary case studies feature British, German, and North American interdiscursive-transnational writing of the nineteenth century. In the introduction included here, Höll conjures a compelling case for a *spectral aesthetics* in nineteenth-century literature, where “cholera’s function as a specter is clearly more subtle in that it is not only a spectral motive but a definite structural element of the text” (69). While grounded in research on the transformative aftereffects of cholera outbreaks throughout the nineteenth century, Höll’s work unpredictably overlapped with a much more contemporary pandemic experience, thus offering a haunting (and haunted) lens on comparative pandemic studies and their far-reaching effects on science, as well as political and social life.

I was personally very excited to include a selection from Elizabeth L. Block’s *Dressing Up: The Women Who Influenced French Fashion* (MIT Press). As the author writes in her introduction, the book “examines the influential and discerning clientele of elite women who bolstered the French fashion industry through a steady stream of orders from the United States [and] engages the consumer perspective: it repositions wealthy U.S. women buyers as active participants in the large, transnational fashion system while looking critically at the cultural impulse toward all things French” (Block 3). The selection included here, from Chapter Five, “International Clientele,” places French couturiers at the center of a transnational web of royalty, society women, stage actresses, opera singers, and courtesans who were integral to the success of the top French fashion houses. As the

market for French couture diversified alongside class divisions, Block explores how socially constructed ideas of “taste” became important markers of rank. Required reading for anyone who has ever dreamt of a House of Worth ensemble (and not the 1999 reboot kind) (asking for a friend ...).

Thoroughly Modern Marvels

Our next two selections bring us into the twentieth century, transnationalizing two well-known topics, the life and work of Puerto Rican champion Pedro Albizu Campos, and the writers of the Beat movement. In spite of the publishers’ reservations about reprinting an excerpt from a simple biography in an academic journal like *JTAS*, I am convinced Aoife Rivera Serrano’s fascinating transnational study on the influence of Irish self-determination on Albizu Campos is sure to excite. In *The Quickening of Albizu Campos: How Fenianism Galvanized the Last American Liberator* (Ausubo Press), Serrano uncovers how Campos absorbed an insurgent education from Fenian Irish nationalists, and how Irish nationalism seeded the nationalist revolution against the US occupation of Puerto Rico. In the selection included here, “In the News,” Serrano connects Campos’s decision to enlist in the army with a biography of Patrick Collins, an alum of Harvard Law and member of the American Anti-Imperialist League and Irish American Union, whom Campos encountered in Harvard Library. The biography describes how many Irish soldiers fought for the Union to learn skills they could take back to Ireland in the struggle for independence from Great Britain. “In this spirit,” Serrano writes, “Albizu readily volunteered in the US Army in 1916, hoping to acquire military skills in World War I that he could bring back to his own country” (Serrano 30). Truly groundbreaking comparative work and written in a clear, engaging style, *The Quickening of Albizu Campos* is required reading for anyone looking for advice on (re)starting the revolution.

Rare within Transnational American Studies are entire monographs devoted to the study of poetry. So it was with much giddiness that I opened David Stephen Calonne’s *The Beats in Mexico* (Rutgers University Press). Also: the Beats. I was excited to see a sustained treatment of the iconic movement’s fascination/entanglement with Mexico, as well as a substantive inclusion of lesser-known female Beat writers. There is much to admire in the text (including a rare take on the influence of the Beats on twentieth-century Mexican writers). As Calonne lays out in his introduction, *The Beats in Mexico* tackles several undertheorized and interrelated topics:

- (1) the importance of hitherto understudied women—Margaret Randall, Joanne Kyger, and Bonnie Bremser—in Beat literary history;
- (2) the significance of Mexico as a place of spiritual exploration and mystical experience for the Beats, especially their interest in shamanism and the use of entheogens;
- (3) the Beat confrontation with the “Other” in Mexico;
- (4) the centrality of Mayan and Aztec history, archaeology, and literature in their works;
- and (5) the ways the Beats adapted and incorporated

ancient Mexican myth—such as the myth of Quetzalcoatl—into their poetics while simultaneously commenting on contemporary issues. (Calonne 17)

Perhaps you will notice what I did here—no mention of situating the Beats' Mexican experiences and writings within a history of Anglo writing about Mexico, one that has much to do with racial, gendered, colonial, and imperial logics. Unfortunately, this topic is left largely unaddressed by Calonne. Recommendation: Supplement your reading with Daniel Cooper Alarcón's [The Aztec Palimpsest: Mexico in the Modern Imagination](#), Gilbert González's [Culture of Empire](#), Emma Pérez's [The Decolonial Imaginary](#), and Rosa Linda Fregoso's [meXicana Encounters](#).

Odds to End

I recently found thirty dollars in cash in a drawer I refer to as the “odds n ends” drawer, what our British friends might call “bits n pieces.” You never know what treasures you might find amongst the odds and ends, bits and pieces, and miscellany. And so, our final two texts are odd fits, for different reasons. Coincidentally, this *JTAS* issue features a Special Forum on “Teaching and Theorizing Transnational American Studies around the Globe,” a topic which I have a particular interest in. So, I was delighted when Kelly Hankin's *Documenting the American Student Abroad: The Media Cultures of International Education* (Rutgers University Press) crossed my desk. Hankin's considered analysis of the visual and verbal rhetoric used to market study abroad to American students reveals a set of competing claims, assumptions, and ideologies about the so-called transformative power of learning abroad in shaping the ambiguously defined “global citizen”:

each set of media reveals a distinct vision of who the globally engaged student is—from what they look like and what they look at to how they should (and should not) comport themselves in the global arena. Occasionally the distinct stories converge. But more often these visions are at cross-purposes, revealing a lack of consensus among stakeholders on the meaning of global engagement and its north star of citizenship-cum-competence. Instead, these ideals and practices are revealed to be constructed categories given ideological shape by numerous arbiters with different and sometimes competing agendas. Recognizing the contours of these various shapes and unpacking their agendas are the main goals of *Documenting the American Student Abroad*. (Hankin 18)

This is an absorbing read in discourse analysis, visual cultures, marketing, and narratives of American exceptionalism and cosmopolitanism, regardless of whether or not you regularly interact with study abroad programs or students seeking to study abroad. Special shout

out to NYU's Summer in London class of '01 and the bar that endured a group of American kids determined to karaoke Weezer's entire *Blue* album in one go.

Finally, the editorial board encouraged me to conclude with a shout-out to a project that I was privileged to coedit alongside Stefan Maneval, PhD (Freie University, Berlin). Written from a large variety of disciplines, *Forms of Migration* is a rich collection of essays, poetry, creative nonfiction, interviews, and visual material which explore the literary and aesthetic forms of expression that are shaping our understanding of the dynamics in and around transnational migration processes. Through literary analysis, diasporic fashion, cinema, music, and mixed media installations, as well as photographic work, collages, drawings, and performances turned into writing, *Forms* shows how innovative storytelling and artistic material offer a chance to apprehend migration differently, to grasp the complexity of migration processes and to challenge common perceptions of im/migrant experiences.

"So Elizabeth Gilbert, Katherine Boo, Mourid Barghouti, and Myung Mi Kim walk into a bar" You can find the punchline in this sample essay from *Forms of Migration: Global Perspectives on Im/migrant Art & Literature* (Falschrum Books), a collaborative piece I coauthored with Ikram Hili, PhD (University of Sousse, Tunisia) on life writing, memoir, and transnationalism. Although I struggled with the question of whether or not to include my own work, I believe our essay showcases the potential for a truly transnational American studies methodology not just in content but also in practice. I am grateful to Ikram for the opportunity to learn from her expertise. Come for Ikram's poignant commentary on Barghouti's *I Saw Ramallah*, stay for my rant about why *Eat, Pray, Love* is garbage.

That's all for now, folks. I wish those of you attending the American Studies Association's Annual Meeting in New Orleans a fabulous conference—I will be thinking of you while I promote [OSU-Cascades's Low Residency MFA in Creative Writing Program](#) and [my latest poetry book](#) at the Portland Book Festival. As always, write to me with comments, questions, suggestions. And if you or someone you know has or will be releasing a text you think should be featured here, email me at: jennifer.reimer@osucascades.edu. If you want to follow along on any of my literary adventures (and appreciate pictures of adorable cats), follow me on Instagram: [@jenniferareimer](#)

See you next year in Montreal! In the meantime, stay safe out there!

Forward Selections

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<https://tupress.temple.edu/books/ocean-passages>

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<https://www.amazon.com/James-Theodore-Holly-Nationalist-Religious/dp/1643825348>

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