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Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature (Literature Now)

By Rebecca L. Walkowitz



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As a growing number of contemporary novelists write for publication in multiple languages, the genre's form and aims are shifting. Born-translated novels include passages that appear to be written in different tongues, narrators who speak to foreign audiences, and other visual and formal techniques that treat translation as a medium rather than as an afterthought. These strategies challenge the global dominance of English, complicate "native" readership, and protect creative works against misinterpretation as they circulate. They have also given rise to a new form of writing that confounds traditional models of literary history and political community.

Born Translated builds a much-needed framework for understanding translation's effect on fictional works, as well as digital art, avant-garde magazines, literary anthologies, and visual media. Artists and novelists discussed include J. M. Coetzee, Junot Díaz, Jonathan Safran Foer, Mohsin Hamid, Kazuo Ishiguro, Jamaica Kincaid, Ben Lerner, China Miéville, David Mitchell, Walter Mosley, Caryl Phillips, Adam Thirlwell, Amy Waldman, and Young-hae Chang Heavy Industries. The book understands that contemporary literature begins at once in many places, engaging in a new type of social embeddedness and political solidarity. It recasts literary history as a series of convergences and departures and, by elevating the status of "born-translated" works, redefines common conceptions of author, reader, and nation.



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Editorial Review

Review

A work of resounding insight and unremitting freshness, *Born Translated* matter-of-factly deconstructs the assumption that national belonging is natural to literature, showing how this assumption structures the sense we make of contemporary world fiction and how much more sense that fiction makes without it.

(Bruce Robbins, Columbia University)

Erudite and meticulous, with a comfort zone extending from Cervantes to Roberto Bolaño, Orhan Pamuk, and Haruki Murakami, Rebecca L. Walkowitz gives us a theory of world literature based on works that are 'born translated,' incorporating cross-lingual circulation as part of their compositional processes. Eye-opening and field-defining.

(Wai Chee Dimock, Yale University)

Walkowitz transforms our understanding of the contemporary novel by demonstrating how far translation has become its engine rather than its afterthought. We cannot think of the history of the novel any more without considering its intimate and dynamic relation to translation. A remarkable tour de force.

(Robert J. C. Young, Julius Silver Professor of English and Comparative Literature, New York University)

An excellent proposition for literary history.

(Will H. Corral *World Literature Today*)

An ambitious work that strives to redefine not just one field but two: world literature and contemporary fiction.

(Sarah Chihaya *Contemporary Literature*)

One explosive conclusion [from *Born Translated*] is that a novel's surface is no more important than other larger, more overlooked stylistic units.

(Adam Thirlwell *Times Literary Supplement*)

Born Translated is about a kind of multilingualism internal to contemporary English-language novels, and like the works it studies, the book seeks to deprovincialize anglophone literature from within.

(Dora Zhang *Public Books*)

Walkowitz's engaging book gives enlightening close-readings-at-a-distance of many novels.... Walkowitz's readings move both writers and translators into a collective of writing, publishing, and reading that de-emphasizes sources and celebrates their interaction.

(Geoffrey C. Howes *Translation Review*)

Walkowitz's book is well informed by theories of world literature and translation, and her prose is never less than readable and accessible. She shows us in *Born Translated* how important the role of translation is in contemporary Anglophone literature and, at the same time, how it complicates that very notion.

(*The Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory*)

Review

Born Translated offers a fresh approach to contemporary fiction. Among the first to offer a convincing explanation of how national traditions morph into the world novel, Walkowitz succeeds in showing?brilliantly, to my mind?how novels by J. M. Coetzee, Kazuo Ishiguro, David Mitchell, Kiran Desai, Peter Ho Davies, Caryl Phillips, and W. G. Sebald force us to confront a world where languages, territories, and nations no longer line up.

(Nancy Armstrong, Duke University)

About the Author

Rebecca L. Walkowitz is professor and director of graduate studies in English and affiliate faculty in comparative literature at Rutgers University. She is the author of *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation* (2006) and the editor or coeditor of several books, including *A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism* (2016, with Eric Hayot). She is the past president of the Modernist Studies Association.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jackie Sneller:

Nowadays reading books be than want or need but also be a life style. This reading routine give you lot of advantages. The advantages you got of course the knowledge the actual information inside the book that will improve your knowledge and information. The information you get based on what kind of guide you read, if you want have more knowledge just go with knowledge books but if you want experience happy read one using theme for entertaining for instance comic or novel. The actual *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature* (Literature Now) is kind of e-book which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

John Richey:

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understand. The article writer was did a lot of research when write the book, hence the information that they share to you is absolutely accurate. You also will get the e-book of Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature (Literature Now) from the publisher to make you much more enjoy free time.

Henry Carlino:

A lot of people always spent their own free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them family or their friend. Are you aware? Many a lot of people spent they free time just watching TV, or even playing video games all day long. In order to try to find a new activity this is look different you can read the book. It is really fun for yourself. If you enjoy the book you read you can spent the whole day to reading a guide. The book Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature (Literature Now) it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. We were holding enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space to bring this book you can buy the particular e-book. You can m0ore quickly to read this book from your smart phone. The price is not too costly but this book possesses high quality.

William Keller:

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