

Harri Veivo, Petra James, and Dorota Walczak-Delanois, editors. *Beat Literature in a Divided Europe*. Brill, 2019, 320 pages.

Bringing together twelve essays by a host of European scholars, *Beat Literature in a Divided Europe*, edited by Harri Veivo, Petra James and Dorota Walczak-Delanois, offers the newest contribution to the transnational turn in understanding the Beats and marks another attempt of international Beat academics to, perhaps even literally, open up new routes for Beat studies. The trailblazing efforts to map Beat sensibility as a global network of shared aesthetic choices and correspondences can be traced back to *The Transnational Beat Generation* (2012) edited by Nancy M. Grace and *The Routledge Handbook of International Beat Literature* (2018) edited by A. Robert Lee. Veivo, James, and Walczak-Delanois' collection joins both of the aforementioned to seal the fact that the days of confining Beat to, be it, Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Burroughs—"the usual suspects," to use Lee's parlance (1)—or second-tier American Beat writers such as Holmes, Huncke, or Solomon, are gone for good. To refer once more to Lee's book and Kerouac's words serving an epigraph to its introductory chapter, while the major Beat figures will undoubtedly remain the focus of scholarly interest, "[t]here appears to be a Beat Generation all over the world" (1) which finally needs to be given long overdue recognition.

Whereas Lee's volume first and foremost wished to identify a bulk of writers from around the globe whose oeuvres resonate with Beat sensibilities and who could be welcomed to the Beat canon, *Beat Literature in a Divided Europe* narrows down the scope of its focus to the Old Continent while simultaneously expanding the objectives to mapping translation, reception (also by retracing American writers' in-person European forays) and appropriation of Beat literature and the cultural impact surrounding it from the 1950s to the most recent present. The chapters discussing twelve countries, by order—Iceland, Finland, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Greece, Portugal, Poland, Spain, Hungary, Austria, Norway and Belgium, are not grouped in sections; instead, the editors prefer to see them as "a rhizomatic constellation" (6) at work, a network reflecting the fluidity of the movement thrown against the backdrop of "a Europe... divided by many frontiers" (1). Nevertheless, what recurs as a constant point of reference and the chief demarcation line shaping historical contexts is the Iron Curtain (6), which, as pointed by the editors, reverberates in the ways of disseminating Beat in a modern-day Europe (8).

As most of the chapters evince, Beat is now perceived as a force responsible for inducing the modernization of national literary scenes, especially those of the Nordic countries. These, as observed by Anna Westerståhl Stenport and reiterated by Harri Veivo in his overview of Beat in Finland, were for years locked between "ideologies of margin and centre, import and export, ... nation and cosmopolitanism" (45). Similarly, Beat was interchangeable with "modernist" and "avant-garde" in Greece, where Ginsberg's and Lamantia's poems, among those by other Beats, went side by side with the works of surrealists in literary magazines such as *To allo stin techni* and *Pali* (109). In their corresponding chapters on Portugal and Poland, Nuno Miguel Neves and Dorota Walczak-Delanois further point to the fact that Beat often constituted merely a part of a wholesale literary influx from the United States. With

regard to the former country, the first anthology of Beat writing included poems by Ginsberg, Corso and Ferlinghetti, but also Barbara Guest, Frank O'Hara and John Ashbery (140); as for the latter, the space shared by the Beats and other hallmarks of twentieth-century American literature in a highly influential journal *Literatura na świecie* "formed the basis for the reception of... Western literature in general" (162).

In the most cases Beat was warmly welcomed by the literary milieus of receiving cultures just as when it could offer, respectively in Communist Czechoslovakia and Poland, "a revolt against the alienating features of everyday life" (64) and some invigorating intensity and mobility coming with hitchhiking in "a situation of uncertainty and insecurity" (161) as noted by Petra James and Dorota Walczak-Delanois. Obviously, wherever censorship was an issue, Beat literature that leaked through it was praised and trusted for its countercultural potential to shake the socio-political landscapes of authoritarian regimes, the pre-1974 Greece being an example alongside the countries of the Eastern bloc. In Chapter 5 Maria Nikolopoulou demonstrates that Ginsberg's and Burroughs' political activity following their recognition as international countercultural icons in the 1960s lent to a political reading of their texts by wider Greek audiences, which in turn foreshadowed social and political changes arriving with the fall of the military dictatorship in 1974 (101, 116). However, the reception of the Beats in Europe also happened to be less favorable. József Havasréti claims that in Hungary Beat would eventually lose its impetus and magnetism after the fall of communism (204). Pondering the ultraconservative post-war realities of Austria, Thomas Antonic brings up the popular image of the figure of "a beatnik" as a serious threat to law and order. Correspondingly, German and Austrian literary critics of that time, here epitomized by Magnus Enzensberger and Gerhard Fritsch, emerge as a bastion of the bourgeois tastes and ignorance as when bereaving Kerouac of any talent and rebuking his works as a "terrible mixture of hectic, overheated adolescence and hard-boiled nihilism" (237). As discussed by Franca Bellarsi and Gregory Watson in the closing essay, it was also Belgium that sat in complex relation with Beat aesthetics. Illuminating the complexities of Beats' reception in the Lowlands, the scholars argue that the arrival of Beat in both Flanders and Wallonia may be likened to "unexploded bombshells" (275), untimely and failed injections of subversion in a place where it appeared to be no longer anticipated. After all, could the Flemish/Dutch-speaking part of the land, a "home to some of avant-garde crucibles" (275), Bellarsi and Watson ask, be electrified by its later-day derivative or could Beat match the radicalism of Flemish *Kulturkampf*? Having been keenly attuned to Paris for years, Belgian Francophones would not be either taken by storm by the Beat diction, the scholars continue to eventually conclude by characterizing Beats' overall impact on the literatures of the Lowlands as the indeterminable (non-)subversion.

A phenomenon which spreads throughout the entire collection and rhymes well with a strand of publications devoted to the Beats in the last couple of years (the instances being Simon Warner's *Text, Drugs, and Rock'n'Roll* (2013) and Casey Rae's *William S. Burroughs and the Cult of Rock'n'Roll* (2019)) comes with the significance of rock and punk as long-lasting forces amplifying Beat subversiveness in Europe and being, one might argue, as complementary to Beat sensibilities as jazz music. It is attested by the underground scene of the Finnish Turku, it is clear from how

closely associated to the Beats a Spanish countercultural rock music magazine *Star* was, and it is evident from the works of an Estonian writer Mati Unt and the Estonian punk. Looking further, Ginsberg's growing interest in performing poetry with rock musicians finds its counterpart in Leonidas Christakis, a Greek writer who became rock musician, as well as László Földes, an underground singer, with whom the American poet gave concerts and had a studio session in Hungary (217). Also, no different than the American Beat, the European Beat/Beat in Europe would not have flourished and expanded without local networks and alternative channels of communication. The entire collection, thus, may well be read as a tribute to institutions (the Vienna Poetry School, echoing Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics), clubs and studios (Club 7, Zum blauen Apfel and Skippergata in Oslo; the early-1960s happenings in Greek cafés) and alternative periodicals (the before mentioned Greek *To allo stin techni* and *Pali*, the Portuguese *Almanaque*), all of which played a substantial part in familiarizing audiences with Beat voice.

The book succeeds in accomplishing its objective to keep up the trend in transnational Beat studies and is recommended to anyone interested in retracing the evolution of Beat reception and dissemination across the European continent. The twelve chapters reveal the book's overall resourcefulness in learning more about the immense body of texts, such as first translations, reprints, literary tributes and a bulk of scholarly work, which earned Beat some proper recognition in the discussed countries. Occasionally, the book appears to expand Beat studies when and where no one would expect just as by mentioning Ginsberg's appearance in a Hungarian 1981 feature film *Kopaszkutya* ("bald-head dog") (dir. G. Szomjas), a detail most likely unrecorded in any publication devoted to Beat presence on screen thus far. Perhaps the biggest value of *Beat Literature in a Divided Europe* lies in demonstrating to the reader that Beat aesthetics and Beat legacy may be and should be looked from a great deal of angles, translation studies and global geopolitics being but a few, so that Beat studies continue to be on the go.

Work Cited

A. Robert Lee, editor. *The Routledge Handbook of International Beat Literature*. Routledge, 2018.

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Denijal Jegić. *Trans/Intifada: The Politics and Poetics of Intersectional Resistance*. Universitätsverlag Winter, 2019, 329 pages.

Denijal Jegić's *Trans/Intifada: The Politics and Poetics of Intersectional Resistance* offers a useful overview of the Israel-Palestine conflict between 1947 and the present along with an evaluation of the literary movements that the violence inspired. While the discussion is heavily weighted toward exegesis of the conflict's roots and lasting cultural effects, and only about a third of the book is devoted to literary analysis, the author makes a convincing argument overall about the activist energy that Palestinian and African-American writers share in the twenty-first century.