



**51-0114** P119 2012-24414 CIP  
Wible, Scott. **Shaping language policy in the U.S.: the role of composition studies.** Southern Illinois, 2013. 232p bibl index afp ISBN 9780809331345 pbk, \$40.00; ISBN 9780809331352 e-book, \$40.00

In 1974, the Conference on College Composition and Communication issued a statement, "Students' Right to Their Own Language," affirming the validity of students' "dialect of their nurture." More than a decade later, the conference added "National Language Policy." Wible (Univ. of Maryland) offers a thoroughly researched commentary on how these statements have impacted academic pedagogy and debates involving national security language policy and the English-only movement. While some may overlook the importance of these official statements, Wible demonstrates the relevance of their impact on composition studies today and provides a solid analysis of the reach of the policies. The author explores the US Defense Department's 2005 white paper, "A Call to Action for National Foreign Language Capabilities," which identified language policy as a national defense concern. This section offers an important examination of the ethical implications of linking language policy with the nation's defense. Wible's clearly written examination of these issues serves as a significant contribution to the history of rhetoric and composition studies and gives practitioners in the field insight into how academic research impacts national political debates. **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Upper-division undergraduates, researchers, faculty, and writing professionals/practitioners.—*J. E. Frost, University of Texas at Brownsville*

## African & Middle Eastern

**51-0115** PL248 2012-43694 CIP  
Blasing, Mutlu Konuk. **Nâzım Hikmet: the life and times of Turkey's world poet.** Persea, 2013. 294p index afp ISBN 0892554177, \$27.95; ISBN 9780892554171, \$27.95

Nâzım Hikmet (1902-63) was the towering poet of 20th-century Turkey. In spite of his fame and influence, his life and personality are difficult for a biographer to separate from the legends—many self-created—that grew up around this charismatic figure. While any biography is an interpretation of its subject's life, with Hikmet the biographer must be steeped in the Turkish language, sensitive to the subtleties of a dynamic, experimental poetry, and willing to risk constructing a vividly lived but underdocumented life. Blasing (Brown Univ.), herself Turkish and coauthor-translator of Hikmet's epic poetry in *Human Landscapes from My Country* (CH, Nov'02, 40-1368), has succeeded admirably. Her picture of Hikmet is plausible and believable. Born into an old, educated, elite family, Hikmet early developed a powerful social conscience expressed in poetic language and forms that he had to invent. Under the influence of Russian formalism, he discarded the old Ottoman forms and poetic vocabulary and wrote in a style that he wanted the common person to understand. Thought to be a Communist, he spent 13 years imprisoned in Turkey and 18 years exiled in Moscow, where he is buried. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. ★★★ For all Middle East and comparative literature collections serving undergraduate students through faculty.—*W. L. Hanaway, emeritus, University of Pennsylvania*

**51-0116** HQ1170 MARC  
Gray, Doris H. **Beyond feminism and Islamism: gender and equality in North Africa.** I. B. Tauris, 2013. 239p bibl index (International library of African studies, 41) ISBN 9781780761817, \$96.00

Gray (Florida State Univ.), author of *Muslim Women on the Move* (CH, Nov'08, 46-1784), provides a comprehensive overview of current discourses on women's rights in Morocco through analysis and interviews. In chapter 1 she explains how debates over women's rights invariably intersect with larger questions of national and religious identity. She offers an interview with Muslim feminist Fatima Mernissi and a fascinating account of a conversation that took place among unrelated passengers on a five-and-a-half-hour train ride. "Feminism and Its Discontents" provides an equally pointed critique of Western feminism and women-led Islamist organizations in Morocco. Chapter 3 depicts a "third way" beyond Islamism and feminism as an "alternative paradigm" that "de-secularizes" gender equality without engaging the West. This middle ground calls for a reinterpretation of Islam in the light of its reformist spirit rather than its historically specific laws. Gray situates gender at the center of the recent developments in the Middle East and ponders the future of Morocco. Overall, by dwelling on the case of Morocco, the author counters pedestrian analyses that often overlook the specificity of women's conditions in Muslim-majority countries. **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Suitable for undergraduates and general readers.—*S. Goma, Salve Regina University*

**51-0117** PJ5054 2012-25573 MARC  
Szobel, Ilana. **A poetics of trauma: the work of Dahlia Ravikovitch.** Brandeis, 2013. 177p bibl index afp ISBN 9781611683547, \$85.00; ISBN 9781611683554 pbk, \$35.00; ISBN 9781611683561 e-book, \$34.99

The subject of this illuminating study by Szobel (Brandeis Univ.) is the influential Israeli poet and peace activist Dahlia Ravikovitch, winner of Israel's most distinguished literary awards and member of the "Generation of the State," a group of writers who came of age in the period following the establishment of the modern state of Israel. Szobel reads both poetry and short fiction in relation to Ravikovitch's affinity for her predecessors and her deviation from the stylistic norms of her generation. Strongly influenced by gender, psychoanalysis, and trauma theories of Michael Foucault, Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, and Shoshanna Felman, Szobel analyzes the writer's exploration of personal and national trauma and disaster. This first book-length study in English admirably introduces not only the poet's work—now translated into 23 languages—but also the Israeli scholarship on Ravikovitch to a non-Hebrew readership. In her theoretical analysis of the poetics of trauma and the politics of victimhood, Szobel focuses on the female character's permanent victimhood in four aspects of identity formation— orphanhood, estrangement, madness, and national identity. In so doing, she creates a deviant form of subjectivity in a major departure from the Zionist expectation of healing from trauma and progression to recovery and revival. **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.—*S. L. Kremer, emerita, Kansas State University*

## Asian & Oceanian

**51-0118** PR9080 2012-29539 CIP  
Ratti, Manav. **The postsecular imagination: postcolonialism, religion, and literature.** Routledge, 2013. 240p bibl index (Routledge research in postcolonial literatures, 45) ISBN 9780415480970, \$125.00; ISBN 9780203071793 e-book, contact publisher for price

Ratti (Salisbury Univ.) examines the limits of religion and secularism (hence "postsecularism") by analyzing the literature of South Asia (India, Sri





Lanka, Bangladesh) produced in the global or transnational context of rapid exchange. Works examined are by Michael Ondaatje, Salman Rushdie, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Amitav Gosh, and Allan Sealy. The author argues that the relation between religion and secularism is unbridgeable, and shows how questioning the politics of nationalism and the orthodoxies of religion have allowed these writers to compromise and produce affirmative values (friendship, love, hybridity, “newness”) within a secular structure in pursuit of “semioethical” aims. For some, “diasporic” considerations are relevant, while for others the foreign location lends meaning. Some writers posit community as a metaphor or introduce the gender dimension in the aestheticization of the religious for the sake of humanitarian pursuits. Others examine the relationships between religion, politics, and the nation-state. The originality of Ratti’s book resides in dealing with literary works as temporal products in which secular tenets have an impact on belief systems, while still recognizing the relevance of the latter. It shares much in common with Saba Mahmood’s *Politics of Piety* (2005), J.-A. Mbembe’s *On the Postcolony* (2001), and Talal Asad’s *Formations of the Secular* (2003).

**Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.—*K. M. Kapanga, University of Richmond*

**51-0119** PL768 2012-36924 CIP  
**Wondrous brutal fictions: eight Buddhist tales from the early Japanese puppet theater**, tr. and introd. by R. Keller Kimbrough. Columbia, 2013. 273p bibl afp ISBN 9780231146586, \$55.00; ISBN 9780231518338 e-book, contact publisher for price

Kidnappings, tortures, and gruesome murders: the eight stories in this collection—many translated for the first time—are disturbing and at times poignant. Several stories conform to the category of *sekkyō*, or “Buddhist lessons.” Others are derived from *ko-jōruri* (“old *jōruri*”), referring to the Japanese puppet plays that were performed prior to the era of Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1725). The protagonists in these tales are often young children born in response to their parents’ fervent prayers, yet they are “sold, cursed, beaten, abandoned, branded”; it is difficult to reconcile such brutality with Buddhist teachings. The stories play to the fundamental human fear of bodily harm. At the same time, however, by featuring the most vulnerable members of society who persevere against all odds, the stories also celebrate the wondrous capacity of the human spirit to endure. The brief introduction by translator Kimbrough (Univ. of Colorado, Boulder) offers important contextualization, as do numerous illustrations throughout the text. The translations are brisk, colloquial, and easily accessible. This compilation complements other studies of Japanese literature and arts, including Susan Matisoff’s *Legend of Semimaru* (1978); *Engendering Faith* (CH, Nov’03, 41-1493), edited by Barbara Ruch; and *Flowing Traces* (1992), edited by James Sanford, William LaFleur, and Masatoshi Nagatomi. **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Lower-division undergraduates through faculty.—*R. L. Copeland, Washington University*

## Classical

**51-0120** DG297 2012-28547 CIP  
Adams, Geoff W. **Marcus Aurelius in the *Historia Augusta* and beyond**. Lexington Books, 2013. 333p bibl index afp ISBN 9780739176382, \$80.00; ISBN 9780739176399 e-book, \$79.99

Adams (Univ. of Tasmania, Australia) provides a welcome précis of his biographical-literary methods that reveal the intensely aretalogical aspect

(narrating the mythical or miraculous deeds of a hero or god) in the *Vita Marci Antonini Philosophi*, set within the larger context of the historically and textually problematic *Historia Augusta*. The author acknowledges the earlier contributions of Joseph Schwendemann, André Chastagnol, Ronald Syme, and Robin Birley, and claims to publish the first in-depth commentary on the *Vita Marci*. He validates his claims through an insightful thematic analysis that focuses on the biographer’s motivations, the probity of the *Vita* as a historical source, and the romantic memorialization of Marcus Aurelius as the ideal *princeps*. Adams presents a trenchantly detailed literary dissection of the *Vita* using a distinctive approach (complete with graphs) that focuses on the biographical elevation of thematic progression over historical fact. By contextualizing the *Vita Marci*, Adams demonstrates the consistent partiality toward the “character” of Marcus Aurelius evidenced within the entire corpus of the *Historia Augusta*. This is a highly specialized literary study demonstrating (and demanding) a virtuosic command of scholarship. It cuts across a broad spectrum of scholarly issues, and should appeal to advanced students of Roman imperial history and biography. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. ★★★ Upper-division undergraduates and above.—*J. S. Louzonis, St. Francis College, Brooklyn, NY*

**51-0121** PA3545 2012-46382 CIP  
Smethurst, Mae J. **Dramatic action in Greek tragedy and Noh: reading with and beyond Aristotle**. Lexington Books, 2013. 115p bibl index afp ISBN 9780739172421, \$55.00; ISBN 9780739172438 e-book, \$54.99

Historically, Greek tragedy and Japanese noh have nothing to do with each other, having developed in different eras and geographical regions. Yet both theatrical traditions tell stories of human joy and suffering through characters and action, and they evoke emotional response in audiences past and present. Noh plays are most familiar as *mugen* or “spirit noh,” in which a wandering soul recounts an event in his or her life that is the cause of longing or torment. There are also *genzai* or “realistic noh,” which deal with living people and present action. Some of the best-loved plays in the repertoire are *genzai noh*: *Funa Benkei*, *Sumidagawa*, and *Ataka*. Smethurst (Univ. of Pittsburgh), author of *The Artistry of Aeschylus and Zeami* (CH, Oct’89, 27-0776) uses Aristotle’s views on tragedy to analyze the plot structure in a group of lesser-known *genzai noh* texts, comparing them to examples of tragedies by Sophocles and Euripides. She examines the writers’ use of action in these noh plays and their incorporation of third-person speech at the plot climax, features that correspond to Aristotle’s principle that a tragedy can have only three actors. Smethurst’s study of noh texts is uniquely illuminating for scholars of tragedy. **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Upper-division undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty.—*C. Lanki, University of the Fraser Valley*

## English & American

**51-0122** PN1009 2012-25276 CIP  
Abate, Michelle Ann. **Bloody murder: the homicide tradition in children’s literature**. Johns Hopkins, 2013. 266p bibl index afp ISBN 9781421408408, \$55.00; ISBN 9781421408415 e-book, contact publisher for price

Abate (Hollins Univ.) introduces her book with a brief historical overview of the American fascination with murder, which has ranged from Cotton Mather’s execution sermons and early American captivity