

a foundational ambiguity in Kafka's life and literary production. The negative dialectic of the theater as performance allowed Kafka to confront his innermost feelings as a writer, and the channel of fantasy provided the basis for his perception of reality. Scholarly apparatus includes an impressive bibliography, an index of personal names, a bilingual index of Kafka's works, and 30 pages of photographs. The volume also includes a translator's note and Alt's preface to this translation. Throughout, German references are carefully rendered in English. **Summing Up:** ★★ Highly recommended. Lower-division undergraduates through faculty.—*J. M. Jeep, Miami University*

**56-3506** PT2617 MARC  
Decker, Gunnar. **Hesse: the wanderer and his shadow**, tr. by Peter Lewis. Harvard, 2018. 791p index ISBN 9780674737884 cloth, \$39.95

With this translation into English, Decker's 2012 biography of Hermann Hesse (1877–1962), the 1946 Nobel laureate and recipient of the Goethe Prize, is now the definitive English-language account of Hesse's life. Every author's work is determined to some extent by life experiences. Hesse's oeuvre manifests this truth to a high degree. Decker exploits this phenomenon by providing intimate details of Hesse's life and looking at how they explain the author's unique place in 20th-century literature. In doing so Decker reveals Hesse's faults and his eccentricities: his disdain of women (especially his three wives), his neutral positions on important political issues, his misunderstood antiwar stance, his extreme honesty in relationships with friends and enemies, his kindness to perfect strangers, and his Manichean struggle (going back to his childhood) with pietistic parents who neither understood nor tolerated their gifted and rebellious son and so drove him into depression, a mental institution, and suicide attempts. His troubled upbringing affected his sexuality late into his life. Not even years of psychoanalysis solved his problems. Only his compulsive writing saved him from his demons and enabled him to attain a ripe old age. Decker makes clear that Hesse's restless soul was the basis of his books, which spoke to many people around the world. **Summing Up:** ★★★★★ Essential. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty; general readers.—*R. C. Conard, emeritus, University of Dayton*

**56-3507** PT638 CIP  
Lande, Joel B. **Persistence of folly: on the origins of German dramatic literature**. Cornell, 2018. 354p bibl index ISBN 9781501727108 cloth, \$95.00; ISBN 9781501727115 pbk, \$24.95

In *Persistence of Folly*, Lande (Princeton) provides a well-researched study of the fool in German literature from the time of the English comedians to the great Faust dramas and Heinrich von Kleist's *Broken Jug*. Lande traces the fortunes of the Hanswurst character through good times and bad—the latter especially under the attacks of Enlightenment critics such as Gottsched and “die Neuber.” Lande's primary thesis, articulated in the introduction, is that the fool “provided the centerpiece of a commercially driven performance culture that placed greater emphasis on sustained entertainment than on coherence of plot.” The author contends that the fool's function became considerably more subtle in the case of Goethe's *Faust I* and *II*, indeed that neither the Faust plays nor *Broken Jug* can be properly understood without considering their debt to the figure of the fool. In his postlude, Lande analyzes Jean Paul's brilliant assertion, in *Introduction to Aesthetics* (1804), that the stage fool is the “chorus of comedy.” The fool's lines, as sarcastic as they may be, place human grandiosity in perspective; the role of the fool thus lies at the heart of the plays discussed. This is a valuable resource on a significant topic. **Summing Up:** ★★ Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.—*J. Hardin, emeritus, University of South Carolina*

## Romance

CC 56-3508 PQ241 CIP  
Beasley, Faith Evelyn. **Versailles meets the Taj Mahal: François Bernier, Marguerite de La Sablière, and enlightening conversations in seventeenth-century France**. Toronto, 2018. 349p bibl index ISBN 9781487502843 cloth, \$85.00; ISBN 9781487516123 ebook, \$85.00

This compelling, thought-provoking study makes a revolutionary contribution to the study of France's *grand siècle* by presenting a revisionist history of France's relationship with India during the 1600s—the height of the Mughal empire in India and of monarchical absolutism in France. The European understanding of Franco-Indian relations has historically been informed by 19th-century Orientalist attitudes or by the British experience of India during the 18th and 19th centuries. Now Beasley (French and women's and gender studies, Dartmouth) reveals that early-modern French perceptions of India were not only different from what is typically believed, but also that the misconstruing of these perceptions results from a flawed historical methodology that fails to consider the sociohistorical contexts in which the majority of French texts that described India were produced. The study offers a new understanding not only of the travel writings of one of the most respected cultural tourists of the century (François Bernier), but also of texts by some of the period's most important and canonical authors, including De Sévigné, Lafayette, La Fontaine, and Fontenelle—all of whom became acquainted with Bernier and his writings at Marguerite de La Sablière's Parisian salon during the early 1670s. **Summing Up:** ★★ Recommended. Lower-division undergraduates through faculty; general readers.—*A. Stedman, University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

56-3509 PQ9019 CIP  
Newcomb, Robert Patrick. **Iberianism and crisis: Spain and Portugal at the turn of the twentieth century**. Toronto, 2018. 246p bibl index (Toronto Iberic, 33) ISBN 9781487502966 cloth, \$80.00; ISBN 9781487516338 ebook, \$80.00

This book addresses the broad question of Iberianism—a view, developed in the late-19th century in light of the crises affecting Portugal and Spain, of the Iberian Peninsula as a collective entity or whole—making an argument for its study as a topic, both in terms of regions and identities. Newcomb (Univ. of California, Davis) explores the question of a collective identity for Castile, Galicia, the Basque Country, and Catalonia as peninsular peoples since the Roman-era Hispania and during the period of unification of Portugal and Spain (1580–1640) under the Filipes of the House of Habsburg. The author devotes chapters to intellectual essays of major writers and intellectuals of the turn of the 20th century, discussing, in Portugal, Antero de Quental, Oliveira Martins, and Miguel Torga, along with Galician Salvador de Madariaga, Basque-born Miguel de Unamuno, and Catalan Joan Maragall. The theme of crisis relates to the humiliation of Portugal at the hands of Britain and of Spain by the US, in the general climate of European decadence. Newcomb argues for the importance of a dialogue, among the constituents of the peninsula, that will give Iberianism meaning. **Summing Up:** ★★ Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates; general readers.—*K. D. Jackson, Yale University*

56-3510 PQ4294 CIP  
**Reconsidering Boccaccio: medieval contexts and global intertexts**, ed. by Olivia Holmes and Dana E. Stewart. Toronto, 2018. 439p index ISBN 9781487501785 cloth, \$95.00; ISBN 9781487513948 ebook, \$95.00

Holmes and Stewart (both, Binghamton Univ.) write that the purpose

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.