

BOOK REVIEW

Insurgent imaginations: world literature and the periphery, by Auritro Majumder, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2021, 226 pp., \$80 (hbk), ISBN: 9781108477574

“No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!”
- P. B. Shelley, “Prometheus Unbound”¹

Prometheus, according to the Grecian legend, disobeyed God to bring fire to people. This legend was also interpreted as an act of defiance that inspired revolutionary imaginations for ages. Accordingly, Prometheus, the revolutionary, stands supreme, undisputed. However, Shelley in retelling the same legend described Prometheus as someone who lived in-and-beyond the revolution, and suffered immeasurable pain, ‘no change, no pause, no hope!’ Hence, Shelley importantly attributed human contents to Prometheus, while he highlighted the element of ‘suffering’ within the rebellious image of Prometheus. Prometheus emerged as a tragic hero, as one who ‘endure’ the ‘pain ever, for ever!’. This literary interpretation significantly widens the understanding of a rebel as a tragic hero, as someone who underwent various processes and aspirations to reach that apodictic height. As a matter of fact, this ingenuity is not specific or limited to Shelley or Prometheus. Many literary works have adopted and reframed myths to tease out something that remains hidden, therefore *unimagined*. What stands out in such literary interpretations is the way they resignify the contour of insurgent imaginations and, consequently, the politics that pertains to it. Prometheus the tragic hero, and Prometheus the rebel are biologically one, yet different in kind. Politics is a composite of these varied dimensions of an exemplary act of resistance that manages to strike a balance between ideology and the life that lived to enact that ideology.

In positioning the issue of ‘insurgent imaginations’ at the centre of discussion, and by tracing these imaginations in diverse types of texts (memoir, drama, essay, cinema, short story, vernacular and Anglophone novels and lectures), and the aspirations and vigorous engagements of communities that intrude in those texts, Auritro Majumder, in *Insurgent Imaginations: World Literature and the Periphery*, has undoubtedly accomplished a rare feat. The idea of periphery and the ambit of world literature have both undergone significant revisions and recalibration in recent scholarships. In both taking cue, and further extending the ambit, Majumder reconceptualises periphery as that dynamic space where contestations to capital and banal forms of modernity are rife. He, therefore, explores how ‘World Literature’ can importantly provide salient literary perspectives to go deep into the thousand imaginations that perpetuate and sustain insurgent imaginaries in our ‘era of profound political disorientation’². The book reminds that there existed a whole world of activism and contestation in different cultures outside of Europe, and they formed various solidaristic