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## Frontier Orientalism in Central and East European literatures

CHARLES SABATOS – RÓBERT GÁFRIK

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The starting point of this issue of *WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES* was a research project by its co-editor Charles Sabatos, conducted as a visiting scholar at the Institute of World Literature in Bratislava in spring 2016, and supported by the National Scholarship Programme of the Slovak Academic Information Agency. It also relates more broadly to the recent work of the Institute, in particular that of this issue's other co-editor Róbert Gáfrik, Dobrota Pucherová, and other colleagues in applying influential literary theories such as postcolonialism to the Central European context.

Just as Central and Eastern Europe was until recently overlooked in the field of postcolonial studies, it has also been marginalized in analyses inspired by Edward Said's *Orientalism*. In his anthropological research on the Austrian context, Andre Gingrich has proposed the concept of "frontier Orientalism" for countries that have not themselves colonized, but have been in contact with the Oriental world by means of Ottoman invasions. He defines it as "a relatively coherent set of metaphors and myths that reside in folk and public culture" (1996, 119).<sup>1</sup> While his work (first published more than twenty years ago) has great potential for the rest of the former Habsburg realm and other borderlands between Europe and the "East", it has received little attention among literary scholars. The main purpose of this issue is to develop this discussion, opening up the field of Orientalist criticism to European cultures that have themselves been "Orientalized" by the major powers.

The contributions in this issue address a range of national literatures along the frontiers of Central and Eastern Europe, from Czech and Latvian to Bosnian and Georgian. They discuss Gingrich's concept from various perspectives and test its applicability in a variety of contexts. Some contributions acknowledge its usefulness, but at the same time demonstrate that it does not exhaust all possible forms of experience with the "Oriental Other" captured in the literature of the region.

This editors hope that this initial selection will inspire future work on this topic, not only within individual national literatures but comparatively across the region and between different regions as well.

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<sup>1</sup> Gingrich, Andre. 1996. "Frontier Myths of Orientalism: The Muslim World in Public and Popular Cultures of Central Europe." In *Mediterranean Ethnological Summer School*, ed. by Bojan Baskar – Borut Brumen, 99–127. Piran: Institut za multikulturene raziskave.

## The nation's "timeless mission": Frontier Orientalism in Central European historical fiction

CHARLES SABATOS

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The cultural identity of Central Europe has been shaped by the experience of being along the frontier between East and West, particularly the threat of invasion or occupation from the Ottoman Empire. After the definitive withdrawal of the Ottomans from the region at the end of the 18th century, this encounter continued to shape the national literatures in the genre of historical fiction. One of the best-known studies of the historical novel is by Georg Lukács, who sees it as a symptom of the decline of bourgeois society:

The appeal to national independence and national character is necessarily connected with a re-awakening of national history, with memories of the past, of past greatness, of moments of national dishonour, whether this results in a progressive or reactionary ideology. Thus in this mass experience of history the national element is linked on the one hand with problems of social transformation; and on the other, more and more people become aware of the connection between national and world history (1962, 25).

Despite his Hungarian background, Lukács hardly mentions Central European texts, yet Hungarian literature has a considerable tradition of historical fiction going back to the 1830s (Hajdu 2009). Writing in the 1980s, when Europe was still physically divided by the "Iron Curtain", Csaba Kiss relates the "intermediate and frontier character" of the region to "the widespread tradition among the peoples of the region that Europe's defensive bastion, the *antemurale*, stretched precisely through their lands [...] the sense of mission has been integrated into the national traditions articulated through literature. It can be found equally in the historical novels of the Pole Sienkiewicz, the Hungarian Gárdonyi or the Rumanian Sadoveanu" (1989, 129). While this "mission" of defending Europe gave these nations a sense of purpose, Kiss suggests that it also contributed to a sense of "uncertainty" in relation to modernity.

In contrast to Western imperialist Orientalism (Said 1978), the image of the Orient in Central Europe was not a justification for colonialism, but a means of preserving cultural identity. Drawing on the case of Austria (an imperial power, of course, but not one with colonies outside Europe), the anthropologist Andre Gingrich has proposed the concept of "frontier Orientalism" as "a relatively coherent set of metaphors and myths that reside in folk and public culture." The representation of the Oriental Muslim within Austrian art and folklore "places the home country and its population along an adjacent territorial and military borderline which is imbued

with a timeless mission.” However, Gingrich identifies contrasting images: the Turk is the “Bad Muslim” who attacked the homeland, while the Bosnian is the “Good Muslim” who helped to defend it: “Overcoming the Bad Muslim is a precondition to the glorious achievement not only of modernity but of identity, while relying on a controlled Good Muslim in the struggle against other threats is necessary to maintain it: this is the metanarrative of frontier orientalism” (1996, 119). As Andrew Wheatcroft has pointed out, “Frontier Orientalism was not the rigid and immovable structure which Said described as typical of British and French imperialism. It was much more adaptable” (2008, 259). Gingrich first presented his concept in Slovenia, and it was scholars there who began to extend it to Central European literature. Bojan Baskar has explained that references to the “Turkish war” are “inscribed in the landscape in Central Europe” and “provide a shared field of metaphorical reminders of the past, available to everyone as elements of local identity” (2010, 107–108). These elements were an attempt to strengthen the fragile multi-nationalism of the Austro-Hungarian Empire through shared hatred of a common enemy. Yet through its use in the genre of historical fiction, the Turkish image actually strengthened individual national identities and weakened Habsburg dominance.

Pinar Sadar has described the Turks in Slovenian historical novels, such as Josip Jurčič’s *Jurij Kozjak* (1864), as an anonymous menace lacking individual characteristics:

Despite their historical setting on the grounds of the Turkish wars, the main storyline of the Turkish story usually excludes direct connections to the Turkish protagonists [...] The Turks are liberated of any subjectivity and consequently presented in the form of an anonymous animalistic mass, incapable of performing any emotional act. Their highly objectified representation does not introduce them as a social group with its own culture but simply underpins their status of menace that is – in the fashion of natural disasters – destroying “the homeland” (113–114).

The historical menace posed by this “Other” is used to strengthen identification with a national identity. Etienne E. Charrière has identified “three main axes” of the reception of historical fiction among minority groups (especially Greek and Armenian) in the late Ottoman Empire:

First, novelists in narrow literary fields operated a drastic nationalization of the historical novel by turning it into a powerful vehicle for the consolidation of a greater sense of national community [...] Second, they transformed the [British and French] paradigm [...] which envisioned history as *difference* and historical progress as rupture – by emphasizing, on the contrary *sameness and continuity*. Third, with its special interest in novels depicting recent events, these same novelists liberated the genre from a conception of the past as necessarily distant (2016, 24–25).

Charrière concludes that these differences from the Western paradigm (as analyzed by Lukács) are due largely to the small nations’ “ongoing process of historical change [...] When history is still a promise and not yet an accomplishment, the limits between present and past become blurred and history is experienced through a different paradigm from the one at play in communities enjoying greater social and political stability” (34–35). This model also applies to the literatures of the Habsburg-Ot-

toman borderlands, particularly those of the countries now known as the Visegrád group (Poland, Hungary, and the Czech and Slovak Republics).

One source for Central European historical novelists was the genre of narratives by authors who had survived captivity in the Ottoman Empire, which emphasized the continuity of national experience by “blurring the limits between present and past” (Sabatos 2015; Charrière 2016). In the Slovak writer Janko Kalinčiak’s novella *Pút lásky* (The Pilgrimage of Love, 1850), the Turkish Aga Osman captures the maiden Žofia and her suitor Janko Černok. René Bílik has seen this story as hiding “the overlapping of the individual romantic feeling with the ‘task of the times’ (meaning here the task of destroying the foreign intruder) and the desire for personal revenge coming from it. Osman’s love for Žofia is an attempt to overcome this limitation as an expression of the human in the traditionally inhuman element of Slovak history – in the Turk-brute” (2008, 78). The contrast between the Central European and Turkish characters is complicated by the description of Aga Osman, which is surprisingly positive:

Osman was the youthful, high-spirited, courageous son of the Pasha Kapudan [Admiral], prepared since early youth for high deeds, for glory. And in his heart shone the stories of the old people, beautiful pictures of the Koran [...] Even so there was not a more handsome youth in the whole area. His face was not fully marked by the eastern features, whose hardness was mixed with youthful uncertainty, but also with delicacy (1975, 143–144).

Despite his courage and good looks, Aga Osman first kidnaps Žofia, who intends to marry Janko Černok. In the opening scene the men chase each other on horseback and then fight a duel: “The two young men in the first strength of their manhood, both of them with power and boldness [...] came together and struck at each other for a beloved maiden, before her eyes” (136). Žofia, first seen in Osman’s arms, is reclaimed by Černok, but on their wedding day, Osman reappears. This time he kidnaps Černok and takes him to Belgrade (closer to the center of Ottoman power).

Kalinčiak’s frontier Orientalism is further complicated by the addition of a female Balkan Muslim character, whose lack of self-control is contrasted with Osman’s ultimate self-sacrifice. Žofia disguises herself as a male troubadour and goes to Belgrade, pleading with the vizier Achmet’s daughter Elmira to free Černok. This improbable scene of a young Muslim woman meeting alone with a foreign male visitor leads to an example of mistaken gender when Elmira falls in love with the young singer. As she professes her impossible love, her impetuous Oriental nature is emphasized by the use of the word “intensity” (*prudkost* in the original, which can also mean “boldness” or “ferocity”) twice in the same sentence:

Elmira looked at the young singer, her eyes met his glance. In the intensity of the Eastern temperament, she joined the singer, grasped his hand, pressed it to her heart [...] as if the mysterious desire and the sadness of her mind were reflected in her, she cried out in intensity [...] “Although you are a slave, a servant, you do not need to sigh for eternity, for not even the sad night longs so much for her lover, the pale moon, as Elmira longs for you, and Elmira is the heart and soul of Achmet” (163–164).

Disappointed to discover Žofia’s true identity, Elmira hands her over to Aga Osman. However, when Žofia pleads for her freedom, Aga Osman releases both her

and Černok despite his own despair, telling her: “You will pity Osman, for all longing, all faith, all hope has left his heart” (170). Yet this self-sacrifice is in vain; on Černok’s return to his homeland from captivity (still dressed in Ottoman clothing), he is mistaken for Osman and killed, and Žofia dies from grief. At the end of the story, Žofia’s father and Aga Osman visit the grave of the lovers, and the final sentence reveals the narrator’s sympathy for the heroic antagonist: “You will feel sorry for the perished, passionate lovers; I feel sorry for Osman” (177). Thus the Turk is not a uniformly cruel stereotype, but a distinction is drawn based on gender, between the almost chivalrous Aga Osman and the impetuous and vengeful Elmira.

The Central European historical novelist *par excellence* was the Nobel laureate Henryk Sienkiewicz, best known for his Roman epic *Quo Vadis* (1896, Eng. trans. 1897) but also the author of a famous trilogy first published in the 1880s. Both Sienkiewicz’s novels and their later film adaptations, as Elżbieta Ostrowska has noted, use a distinctly gendered form of Orientalism to strengthen Polish national identity:

In these texts, Otherness is crucially embodied in the figures of men representing the east [...] the images of the Other, as represented by the figures of Cossacks and Tatars, construct a vernacular fantasy of the Orient that problematizes the Saidian binary model [...] In Sienkiewicz’s narratives the orientalist discourse reveals self-doubt and uncertainty concerning the hegemonic variant of Polish (masculine) identity (2011, 507).

The final book of the trilogy, *Pan Wołodyjowski* (Colonel Wolodyjowski, 1888, Eng. translations *Pan Michael*, 1893, and *Fire in the Steppe*, 1992) is set against the backdrop of Poland’s struggles with the Ottoman Empire in today’s Ukraine. The exotic counterpart to the novel’s Polish protagonist Michal Wolodyjowski is the Tatar Asja (Azya in the English translation), the son of the powerful Tugai Bey, who had been captured by the Poles as a child but later freed. After Asja falls in love with the novel’s heroine (Wolodyjowski’s eventual wife) Basia, she manages to fight off his attempted rape and returns to the Polish camp. However, he takes his vengeance on the innocent Zosia Boski, who becomes his sexual slave and whom he sells to a merchant from Istanbul to live in a harem. These four characters (Wolodyjowski, Basia, Asja and Zosia) represent the gendered aspect of frontier Orientalism as described by Andre Gingrich:

The mytho-logic of “frontier orientalism” hence functions with the central mythological arrangement of being threatened or besieged on a nearby, contested, and fluctuating border through which an almost equally matched, dangerous, and therefore “evil” Oriental invades and existentially threatens “us” as well as our women (2015, 62–63).

Early in the novel, a middle-aged former captive named Pan Mushalski recounts his experiences in the Crimea and Istanbul:

There are no other ranks with them but lords and slaves, and there is nothing more grievous than Pagan captivity. God knows whether it is true, but I heard in the galleys that the waters in Tsargrad, such as the Bosphorus, and the Golden Horn too, which enters the heart of the city, have come from tears shed by captives. Not a few of mine were shed there (1893, 189).

Nonetheless, Poland's position on the frontiers of the Ottoman Empire gives it the important role of Europe's defensive bastion, as Mushalski proudly asserts: "The Turks themselves say that were it not for Lehistan, – thus they name our mother, – they would have been lords of the earth long ago. 'Behind the shoulders of the Pole,' say they, 'the rest of the world live in injustice; for the Pole,' say they, 'lies like a dog in front of the cross, and bites our hands'" (189). In Sienkiewicz's time, of course, a free Poland had ceased to exist for over a century, yet the *kresy* (Eastern Borderlands) were considered a key part of a future Polish state. Rather surprisingly, his imagined Eastern frontier was inspired by his travels along an entirely different frontier:

the magnificent descriptions of the wild 17th century borderlands of southeastern Poland are closely patterned on the American West [...] The writer had never visited those long-lost Wild Lands and Ukrainian Steppes that he recreates so brilliantly [...] But he saw the American plains and the western prairies, heard all the tales told around the campfires, admired the Indians, and literally fell in love with the untrammelled land and its vibrant people (Maciuszko 1991, 56).

The ease with which one frontier could be transposed on another shows the mythical power of frontier Orientalism in the Polish context, where the Tatars and the Turks (as well as the Russians) could be seen as "barbarians" that needed to be subdued by a more civilized culture, in a Central European parallel to the American national myth of "manifest destiny".

After Basia escapes from his attack, the Tatar leader Asja thinks obsessively of her body in terms that parallel the conquest of foreign territory:

But he loved that woman beyond measure and thought; he wanted her in his tent, to look at her, to beat her, to kiss her. If it were in his choice to be Padishah and rule half the world, or to take her in his arms, feel with his heart the warmth of her blood, the breath of her face, her lips with his lips, he would prefer her to Tsargrad, to the Bosphorus, to the title of Khalif (395).

After taking the meek Zosia as an unwanted substitute, Asja mercilessly abuses her, finally disposing of her when the threat of a new battle makes it inconvenient to keep captives:

Those of the soldiers who had no place to which they might send captives, and from love did not wish to sell them to strangers, preferred to kill them. Merchants of the caravan-serai bought others by the thousand, to sell them afterward in the markets of Stambul and all the places of nearer Asia. A great fair, as it were, lasted for three days. Azya offered Zosia for sale without hesitation; an old Stambul merchant, a rich person, bought her for his son [...] Her new owner loved her, and after a few months he raised her to the dignity of wife. Her mother did not part from her. Many people, among them many women, even after a long time of captivity, returned to their country. [...] Zosia never saw her native land, nor the faces of those who were dear to her. She lived till her death in a harem (398–399).

While the relative kindness of the Ottomans in distant Istanbul is contrasted with the brutal behavior of the Tatars on the imperial borders, Zosia Boski is already "dead" to her compatriots. As made clear in a letter from a Polish nobleman who has learned of her fate, she is deprived of any possibility of full reintegration into Polish



society (especially marriage and motherhood) after her innocence has been violated by the Oriental male. The inability to protect Zosia symbolizes the limits of Poland's ability to defend its frontiers from Eastern invaders, thus foreshadowing the century and a half of Russian (as well as Prussian and Austrian) domination.

Géza Gárdonyi's *Egri csillagok* (The Stars of Eger, 1901, Eng. trans. *The Eclipse of the Crescent Moon*, 2005), fictionalizes the 1552 siege of Eger, in which Hungarian forces led by István Dobó resisted an Ottoman attack. The novel, whose protagonist is the historical figure of Gergely Bornemissza, remains one of the most popular works of Hungarian literature. Gárdonyi described Istanbul on the basis of his own travel to Turkey, even reproducing a song he had heard and transcribed. As the translator George Cushing has noted: "Gárdonyi's greatest achievement is to weave history with fiction so convincingly that generations of readers have come to regard his story as factual, as indeed much of it is" (Gárdonyi 2005, xv). Taking place over a period of twenty years, the narrative is divided into five parts, and each of them features an episode of Ottoman captivity. Part One begins in 1533, when Gergely and his friend Éva Cecey (a fictional character) are captured as young children by a one-eyed Turk named Jumurdzsák, who plans to sell them as slaves. They manage to escape, Gergely (who has also inadvertently stolen Jumurdzsák's lucky talisman) becomes a hero, and he is adopted by the aristocrat Bálint Török. After the Hungarians capture Jumurdzsák, he reveals that his mother was Hungarian; he had been seized as a small boy and became a renegade. Part Two, set in 1541, depicts the fall of Buda, when Török is taken captive by the Sultan. Gergely, now a young man, watches the Ottoman forces marching into Hungary to occupy Buda, but he is caught and briefly held in captivity for the second time. In Part Three, Gergely and Éva travel to Istanbul, in an unsuccessful attempt to free Török. Part Four and Five move ahead to 1552, when the Ottomans attack Eger. Now married to Éva, Gergely joins the fight, leaving her at home with their little son, who is kidnapped by Jumurdzsák. The citadel of Eger withstands the Turkish forces, giving the Hungarians a temporary but symbolic victory, and Gergely and Éva's son is freed in exchange for a young Turkish captive, reuniting the central family unit as well.

At the beginning of the novel, Jumurdzsák tries to tempt young Gergely out of hiding by offering him figs, in an allusion to Eve and the serpent. As Ágnes Györke suggests: "The snake intruding into a fragile Paradise becomes the metaphor of Turkish invasion [...] The snakelike Other, after shattering the Paradise of the children, becomes transformed into the Other threatening the Hungarian nation" (2005, 132–134). Just as they hold back the Ottomans at the walls of Eger, the Hungarians must also withstand the temptation to become renegades to their faith. *The Stars of Eger* reveals the ambiguous role of Ottoman culture for Hungarians: as part of their national past, but at the same time, distant enough to be fictionalized with exotic stereotypes. As Ildikó Beller-Hann has stated, 19th-century Hungarian Orientalism "served as a background against which a heroic past could be created that would strengthen the ideology behind Hungarian nationalism, but it also served as a displaced metaphor for the desire to gain some degree of independence from Austria" (1995, 226). In Part Two, Gergely dreams of a meeting between Bálint Török and



Miklós Zrínyi, who would become a national hero for both the Hungarians and Croats for his fight against the Turks at the siege of Sziget in 1566:

[Zrínyi:] “A sacred oath, gentlemen, that we’ll devote all the thoughts of our life to the resurrection of our country. That we’ll not sleep on soft beds as long as the Turk can call a single foot of the soil of Hungary his own!” [...]

[Török:] “Are twenty-four thousand Hungarians to die again just for the Austrians to lord it over us? Devil take them! A hundred times rather the honest pagan than the deceitful Austrian puffed up with lies!” (Gárdonyi 2005, 115)

The resentment of Hungarians toward the Austrians at the beginning of the twentieth century is echoed in the speech of his characters from 350 years earlier. Zrínyi’s brief appearance also offers an intertextual reference to an earlier Hungarian literary classic, *Szigeti veszedelem* (The Peril of Sziget, 1651) by Zrínyi’s great-grandson, also named Miklós Zrínyi.

As the Turks approach Eger, the commander István Dobó exhorts his troops to stand against them, despite their overwhelming numbers: “I know the Turkish army [... It] is not a mass of soldiers but an assortment of riff-raff [...] however few the Hungarians are in number, they can confuse and conquer the Turks if alongside their bravery they take intelligence with them as a shield.” His captain Pető continues with the reminder that two other fortresses, Temesvár and Szolnok, have recently fallen to the Turks:

They fell because Temesvár was defended by Spanish mercenaries, Szolnok by Spaniards, Czechs, and Germans. And now I’ll tell you what I believe in. In the fact that Eger is not defended by Spaniards, Czechs, or Germans. Here [...] everyone is Hungarian, and most of them are from Eger. Lions defending their own den! I trust in Hungarian blood! (335–336)

In this view, the mix of nationalities weakens empires rather than strengthening them, and one can only trust one’s own people. This message is echoed during the siege itself, when the attackers call out to the defending Hungarians in a variety of languages:

Until now only cries of “Allah!” and mocking comments had been heard from the Turkish camp, but this time there were shouts on all sides in Hungarian: “Give yourselves up! If you don’t, you’ll come to a horrible end!”

It was the Turkish troops who knew Hungarian shouting from the enemy camp. But they also shouted in Slovak, German, Spanish and Italian. The defenders, however, made no reply in either Hungarian, Slovak, German, Spanish or Italian (443–444).

Despite his use of multilingual elements (including Turkish), Gárdonyi does not look favorably on multiculturalism, reflecting Hungary’s uneasy status between the Habsburg monarchy and the increasingly vocal minorities (including the Slovaks) in the 19th century. While the identification of the Turks with Islam overshadowed attempts at a more sympathetic approach, it was increasingly clear that the true enemy of national freedom was Habsburg rule.

After the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, when the establishment of Czechoslovakia brought the Czechs and Slovaks together in a single state, Czech historical

fiction invoked the Ottoman invasions as part of the effort to strengthen the national identity of the multinational republic. Jaroslav Durych's *Bloudění* (Wandering, 1929, Eng. trans. *The Descent of the Idol*, 1936), which portrays the period following the Czech defeat at the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, uses historical enemies to create a heroic tradition. However, the socialist-era critic Blahoslav Dokoupil claimed that Durych's "generally overrated" novel had "opposed the whole existing development of our historical prose with its progressive tradition" (1987, 47). In particular, the conservative Durych emphasizes the role of the Catholic Church in defending the Czech nation; according to Dokoupil, his allegorical use of historical conflict "captures the dawn of the future triumph of the Catholic Church on the horizon of the Thirty Years' War" (48).

A typical image of the Ottoman invaders can be seen in Durych's description of a siege in Moravia: "From the towers one could see the burning villages. News came [...] that thousands of women and children had been carried away into Turkish slavery. But that was not the worst" (116). The battlefield scene portrays "pagan hordes" with their fearsome beards and turbans:

They stood their ground and then the Turks arrived [...] and the Sirdar himself sat on his charger, stiffening his feet in their lace-lined sandals against the broad gilt stirrups, and his turban scared the crows in the mist [...] Then the Turks gave a yell and renewed shouting arose on every side [...] The [Austrian] musketeers stood firm [...] The cowardly heathen yelling called up Death and Famine from the grey, plague-infested distances [...] All the heathens from Turkey and Transylvania glistened with dog fat from their teeth and their moustaches down to their boots (119–122).

The references to "cowardly heathen" evoke the Baroque-era fear and hatred of the Turk, who represents Death, bringing famine and plague. At the same time, the description of the Sirdar's "lace-lined sandals" is exotic and vaguely effeminate.

One of Durych's protagonists, the lieutenant Kajetán, is caught on a reconnaissance mission and becomes a captive of the Ottoman-allied Transylvanian forces: "They made a stop somewhere and set him down. He saw a lot of horses, and then a horse's head and behind it a huge bearded face, as monstrous as if the Sultan of the heathen himself, who devours live snakes and Christian virgins, had crawled out of his den" (1936, 126). By evoking the Turkish Sultan as the "monstrous" enemy of Europe, Durych is not only recreating the past, he is mythologizing it. After a month in captivity, Kajetán "thought of his former officers who, even in agonies of pain, were strong, like beasts of prey; it seemed to him that captivity makes men cowardly" (133). He eventually escapes and returns to Bohemia, displaying the ability of the Czechs to triumph over their adversaries, even demonic ones. However, Durych's glorification of the Catholicization of Bohemia, which was closely tied to almost three centuries of Habsburg domination, was rejected by contemporary critics such as F. X. Šalda as a false direction for historical fiction, trapped in its closed vision of the past (Dokoupil 1987, 49).

In the new conditions of the Czechoslovak Republic, both Czech and Slovak writers were free of the overwhelming burden of preserving national identity and were able to develop a higher aesthetic standard even in popular genres like histor-

ical fiction. The use of historical themes had been less common in Slovak literature during the period of the national revivals, as Vladimír Forst has noted: “The Slovak national revival could not rely upon the reality of a historical Slovak state as the Czech national revival had done” (1968, 502). Yet while historical themes declined in popularity among Czech writers after 1918, historical fiction became newly important in Slovak literature. While conditions were much better for Slovak writers in Czechoslovakia than they had been under Hungarian rule, the national question had not been resolved for them, as it had apparently been for the Czechs, but had taken on a different form.

One of the factors shaping the use of historical themes in the interwar period was the important issue of attracting a Slovak readership. As Ivan Sulík has explained: “If a Slovak writer wanted to keep the approval of a wide readership, he had to choose a path of consensus building on the tradition established by older types of popular literature. Thus prose writers made use of the common reader’s natural fondness for historical tales from the Hungarian past” (1978, 356). During the wartime Slovak State (1939–1945) and under the Communist regime (beginning in 1948), a historical setting also provided a form of escapism for both authors and readers. In his analysis of Slovak historical prose, René Bilík has identified “ambivalence” in the development of this genre between “glorifying-mythical” and “skeptical-ironic” lines, and the simultaneous adherence in texts from the 1940s and early 1950s to both of these viewpoints:

This shows above all the specificity of the socio-political situation in which the Slovak literature finds itself, and in which the undoubtedly aesthetic theme of the historical past obtains the function of **allegorical** narrative, at the same time also preserving its receptive independence from non-literary circumstances (the possibility of reading these texts without literary-historical support) (2008, 146, emphasis in original).

Jozef Horák’s novel *Sebechlebskí hudci* (The Sebechleby Musicians, 1946) turns the theme of Ottoman captivity into a rather lighthearted adventure, although it was written during the traumatic period of World War II, and enjoyed immediate popularity, being reprinted several times in the following decades. Ján Poliak’s afterword to the second edition (1954) provides an explicit political interpretation for the reader of the early socialist period: “The feudal lords [...] truly did little to defend the empire. On the battlefield, the ones who bled the most were the subordinate people, who did not want to exchange one cruel lord for an even crueler one” (Horák 1980, 265). The past serves the present by evoking mythical enemies to strengthen the nation against its enemies: the former bourgeois elite and the capitalist foreign powers.

Horák’s *Sebechleby Musicians* begins in 1594, as the Turks are threatening present-day Slovakia: “They took and looted, and if someone didn’t like it, the Turkish sword convinced them [...] bloody traces were left behind: murdered people, burning houses, weeping, lamenting, tears” (8). The musicians Peter and Jakub had been captured by the Turks as children. Jakub is sent to guard the powerful Lord Dóci’s wife Lady Apolónia on a journey, but the group is attacked by Turks, and Apolónia is captured along with her maid Katka. Jakub and Peter ask Lord Dóci’s permission to search for the women, and they request the help of “Baťa” (Uncle) Klimo, an older

man who had traveled in the Ottoman lands. As they approach the Danube, Peter asks him: “You weren’t afraid of executioners, and an executioner is worse than a Turk. Right?” Klimo replies: “How can an executioner be worse than a Turk? Is there any creature on earth worse than a Turk?” (94) The two main Turkish characters in the novel, however, are more comical than fearsome. Ismail, a military leader, is known as “Half-Whiskered” (Polfúzatý) because part of his mustache has been cut off, while Hussein Pasha of Buda, Lady Apolónia’s captor, is described as “so ringed with fat that he could hardly move” (158). Although he is briefly held captive by “Half-Whiskered”, Klimo easily convinces him that he can find a miracle cure for his missing facial hair, and is released. The three Slovaks then escape down the Danube and meet Hussein Pasha, who is preparing to leave for Istanbul and takes the musicians on board his boat as entertainment. Despite his ill temper, the pasha develops a liking for Klimo and allows him to stay in his palace, where he is eventually able to lead Lady Apolónia and Katka back to freedom. While the comical aspect of this adventure displays what Bilík calls the “skeptical-ironic” line of historical fiction, the triumph of the Slovak travelers over their more powerful enemies shows the “glorifying-mythical” approach, allegorizing the Slovak nation’s escape from the “captivity” of a more ruthless enemy: Nazi Germany.

Historical fiction has always been an ideal source for cinema, and the novels of Gárdonyi, Sienkiewicz, and Horák were all successfully adapted to film in the 1960s and 1970s. Zoltán Várkonyi’s *Stars of Eger* (1968) was a big-budget epic by Hungarian standards, with extensive battle scenes depicting the siege. A year later, the Polish director Jerzy Hoffman released his film based on Sienkiewicz’s *Colonel Wolodyjowski* (1969); ultimately he directed all three films from the trilogy in reverse chronological order, with the other parts following in 1974 and 1999. Horák’s *Sebechleby Musicians* is best known today for Jozef Zachar’s 1975 film adaptation, whose Istanbul scenes feature the exotic sights of snake charmers and veiled women. During the Communist period, the invasions of Central Europe again served as a “displaced metaphor”, and historical themes were used as a way of defining national identity against political repression.

From the growth of the national revival movements to the Nazi and Communist regimes, Central Europe’s “timeless mission” of defending Europe’s frontiers against the barbaric East evolved into the metaphorical longing for independence from foreign powers. However, as Andre Gingrich explains: “The symbols and registers of frontier orientalism may serve important – and virulent – local, regional, and global purposes [...] Regionally, these symbols, narratives and repertoires play a role in wider contests about migration and foreign relations” (1996, 123–124). While the post-communist period has opened Central Europe to multiculturalism and globalization, this statement is even more relevant twenty years after the essay’s first publication. The current migration crisis, in which Central European politicians have drawn upon the fear of Muslims to manipulate both their own citizens and the West, illustrates how the experience with the Ottoman Empire, kept alive partly through the genre of historical fiction, has a continuing impact on concepts of national and European identity.

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## The nation's "timeless mission": Frontier Orientalism in Central European historical fiction

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Frontier Orientalism. Historical fiction. Central European identity. Turks in literature. Imagology.

Andre Gingrich's concept of frontier Orientalism focuses on the former Habsburg Empire, which has been overlooked by Orientalist and postcolonial studies. Through a comparison of Slovak, Polish, Hungarian, and Czech novelists, including Janko Kalinčiak, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Géza Gárdonyi, Jaroslav Durych, and Jozef Horák, this study shows how the genre of historical fiction evoked what Gingrich calls Central Europe's "timeless mission" of defending the frontiers of the West from Eastern barbarians, as a metaphor for the repression of minority identities.

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## “Our Turks”, or “real Turks”? Czech perceptions of the Slavic Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina \*

JITKA MALEČKOVÁ

Experience has taught us that even a Turčín [Turk] has good qualities, not to mention the fact that our indigenous Mohammedans make up one Serbian nation with us.  
(Josef Holeček, *Bosna a Hercegovina za okupace*, 1901, 43)

Josef Holeček, a journalist and writer known for his affection for the Southern Slavs, opened his book titled *Bosna a Hercegovina za okupace* (Bosnia and Herzegovina under Occupation) with a chapter describing how he met Omer – an “honest Turk”. The coachman working for Herzegovinian Muslim elites did not make a positive first impression: he looked defiant and spouted a stream of Serbian words. During their conversation, his appearance and voice gradually softened, and the author soon understood that the rough exterior hid a good and healthy core (1901, 7, 14–16). Still, as we later learn, something differentiated Omer from his Christian brothers: when provoked, he looked like “a true Turkish fanatic” (44).

Holeček’s depiction of Omer illustrates the continual fluctuation that characterized the Czechs’ views of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Between the 1870s, when Bosnia and Herzegovina came to the attention of the Czech public, and the World War, these views underwent various changes. So did the Czech opinions of the “true”, i.e. Ottoman, Turks: when Holeček wrote about the Southern Slavs’ struggles with the Ottoman Empire in 1876, he depicted their Turkish enemies as cruel and treacherous, almost beyond villainy, mentioning “an evil person or even a Turk” (1876, 27). Twenty-five years later, he admitted that even the (Ottoman) Turks had some positive qualities and many of their weaknesses resulted from the impact of the West (1901, 47). However, although the events of the 1870s affected Czechs’ perceptions of both the Ottoman Turks and the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the complexity of the Czechs’ relationship to the Slavic Muslims cannot be seen as a simple linear development; rather, this article argues, their views can at any time be best defined as ambivalent.

In post-colonial studies, ambivalence designates “the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized”

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(Ashcroft – Griffiths – Tiffin 2007, 10–11). Although the concept is mostly used for the colonized population's relationship to the colonizers, oscillating between, or incorporating both, rejection of and complicity with colonialism, it also refers to the colonial discourse with its patronizing attitude towards the colonized. The latter understanding of ambivalence, describing an approach which is simultaneously (cl) aiming to elevate the “indigenous people” and to capitalize on them, can be extended to other contexts of power, beyond the strictly colonial relationship.

Since Central and South East European historical experience substantially differed from Western imperial projects, it is usually not studied in the framework of colonialism, imperialism and Orientalism. Leaving aside older critiques of Czech capitalist expansion (Nečas 1987), mainstream Czech historiography does not pay attention to Czech colonial ambitions. “Orientalism” is mostly mentioned in value-free descriptions of 19th-century Czech art (Štembera 2008). Notable exceptions include studies of Czech travels to Egypt (Storchová 2005) or the impact of Orientalism on Czech attitudes towards the Balkans (Šístek 2011).

The absence of a “Czech” colonial empire and the resulting reluctance to view the Czech past as connected with colonialism underline the need to examine the Czech relationship to Muslim “Others” within the context of societies that lacked overseas colonies. Andre Gingrich's concept of “frontier Orientalism”, which refers to “nearby intruders at ‘our’ border”, who “are dangerous, almost evenly matched rivals, but not exotic subalterns, servants, and slaves”, rather than to “distant subjugated overseas colonies” seems like a useful lens through which to approach the Czech case (2015, 62). According to Gingrich, Austrian popular culture distinguished the “bad Muslim” (Ottoman Turk) from the “good Muslim” (in Bosnia-Herzegovina) who helped to defend the Austrian homeland: the former, violent and aggressive before 1683, was later portrayed as defeated and humiliated, while the latter could be used against the new (Slavic) enemies before and during World War I (1996, 106–109).

This article examines Czech views of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as compared to the prevailing opinions about the Ottoman Turks at that time. Although they were sometimes distinguished by the unambiguous labels “Ottomans/Ottoman Turks” (*Osmané/osmanští Turci*) and “Turkified” (*poturčenci*), both groups were often called “Turks” (*Turci* or *Turčini*) or “Muslims” (*moslemíni, mohamedáni*), and by names which became clear only from the context. Looking at both groups together in terms of Gingrich's contrast between “good” and “bad” Muslims can shed light on Czech perceptions of the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina who were both Muslims and Slavs. This study focuses primarily on travel accounts and other non-fiction works published in Czech between the 1870s and 1918 and written from personal experience, and thus accepted as truly portraying the Muslim population. A brief summary of the Czechs' opinions on the Turks in the second half of the 19th century in the first part of the article provides a background against which the distinct features of the Czech views of the Slavic Muslims are outlined in the second part of the contribution. The core of the article, its third part, is devoted to images of Muslim women who, according to Gingrich, hardly figured in the “frontier” version of Orientalism.

## 19TH-CENTURY STEREOTYPES OF “THE TURK”

Czech views of the Turks in the late 19th century drew on existing pre-conceptions, based largely on the stereotypes of “the Turk” as the arch-enemy of Christendom, which have survived from early modern times. Although the Czech lands never fell under Ottoman rule, “the Turkish threat” had been present in early modern Czech history even before 1526, when the Czech lands became a part of the Habsburg Empire. The actual battles did not occur on Czech territory with the accompanying effects on the civilian population, as was the case in neighboring Austrian or Slovak areas, but the Czechs participated in the wars with the Ottoman Empire and paid taxes to support them. As a result, “the Turk” was a relevant “Other” for early modern Czechs and has become the subject not only of numerous pamphlets and learned treatises, but also part of the folk tradition (Rataj 2002; Lisy-Wagner 2013). Given the less direct experience with fighting, however, Czech folk culture had retained only weak memories of “the Turkish threat”; folk ballads with Turkish themes, for instance, were not particularly dramatic and often had an optimistic, defiant or humorous side (Sirovátka 1968, 102–108).

The Turks became an immediate concern again in the 1870s, when the Czechs passionately followed the news about the uprisings in the Ottoman Balkans, their suppression, and the ensuing Russo-Turkish war. A number of pamphlets were published, reviving the stereotype of “the terrible Turk”: the Turks were described as vengeful, treacherous and cruel monsters, torturing Slavs and lusting for (especially Slavic) women. Pictures of extreme violence, with the Turks impaling enemies’ bodies on sticks, cutting their heads and limbs, and blood spouting to the sky, were common in both fiction and non-fiction works of the late 19th century. In this period, relevant for the construction of Orientalist stereotypes, the Czech views of the Turks were closely connected with nationalism: the resurrection of anti-Turkish rhetoric corresponded to an upsurge of Slavic solidarity and Pan-Slavism. With the increasing emphasis on Slavic kinship, the fate of the Slavs – Bulgarians, Serbians, and Montenegrins – who lived under Ottoman rule gained in importance for the Czechs. As a result, the image of “the Turk” ceased to be a mere historical reminiscence of the “Turkish threat” of the distant past or a proxy of a generalized enemy image, but became relevant for national (Pan-Slavic) awareness. This fits one of the features of frontier Orientalism, which “can attain a central role for the nationalisms it feeds” (Gingrich 2010, 78).

At the same time, the number of Czech men (women did not publish travelogues on the Ottoman metropolis) who visited the Ottoman Empire started to increase in the second half of the 19th century. They traveled mainly as tourists and in their accounts, they referred to the same works that had shaped their travel impressions; these ranged from early modern Czech travel accounts, especially the 16th-century *Přihody Václava Vratislava z Mitrovic* (*The Adventures of Baron Wenceslas Wratislaw of Mitrowitz*) to famous Western travelogues (including Byron), contemporary exotic novels, such as those of Pierre Loti, to various versions of the *Thousand and One Nights*, popular among travelers to the Middle East everywhere in Europe. Despite similar inspiration, when compared to their French and British counterparts, the

Czechs seemed to be less interested in politics, despotism and slavery, and focused mainly on the character of the Turks.

The Czech travel accounts presented rather diverse images of the Turks. Reproducing older stereotypes, they depicted the Turks as bloodthirsty, violent and vengeful, and occasionally as lustful. For some, the Turks were Asian barbarians or fanatics (Wagner 1889, 189; Guth 1896, 128; Svátek 1909, 24–25). Nonetheless, late 19th- and early 20th-century travelers to Istanbul showed that the Turks' (former) strength and violence were not their primary worries any more: their major criticism and complaints concerned the constant requests for *baksheesh* and bribes. Reflecting more modern attitudes, they portrayed the Turks as lazy, indifferent and fatalist, lacking education and civilization, but also as exotic and intriguing. Religion was seen as a source of the Turks' difference and interpreted in contradictory ways: on the one hand, it was responsible for the fatalism and fanaticism of the Turks; on the other hand, it inspired their charity, kindness towards animals and sincere religious devotion. The travelers further praised Turkish hospitality, some appreciated the shopkeepers' unobtrusiveness (Štolba 1918, 101; Klaus 1910, 223–224) or emphasized that the Turks accepted refugees; their willingness to do so, as well as their tolerance, could serve as examples to many "civilized nations" (Wagner 1889, 193–194). Only rarely did the positive evaluation of the Empire and its inhabitants set the tone of the whole travel account. As one traveler wrote, the social life of the Turks is much friendlier, more intimate and more sincere than that of the Czechs. They do not have social classes, and aristocracy by birth is almost unknown to them. Hypocrisy, deceit and falsehood are not so common as in our society; in contrast, we find justice, charity and hospitality more often in the Turkish character than among the Czechs. Compared to the Czechs, the Turks are also more content. "Isn't a pleasant harmless carelessness with a cup of coffee better than drinking spirits in our pubs?" he wondered (Klaus 1910, 197–198, 223).

Although such strong praise was exceptional, "the Turk" as depicted by the Czech travelers was neither a fearful enemy, nor a completely negative figure. The Czech travelogues lacked some of the concerns such as inter-racial mixing (Heffernan 2011, 158–162) that were essential for British travel narratives on the Ottoman Empire, but they created similarly heterogeneous images of the Turks, affected perhaps more by current Western imagery than by the Czechs' past involvement in "the Turkish wars".

### THE TURKIFIED SLAVIC (BR)OTHERS

After the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Ottoman Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878 (Okey 2007; Ruthner – Reynolds – Reber – Detrez 2015), the Czechs were able to benefit from the Austro-Hungarian imperial enterprise and some did so. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Czechs founded factories and construction firms in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Czech capital participated in financing local businesses, and branches of Czech financial institutions were established in Sarajevo (Nečas 1987). The Czechs served as clerks in the Austro-Hungarian administration of the occupied lands and Bosnia-Herzegovina provided work for many Czech teachers, doctors, architects, officers and skilled and unskilled workers.

The increasing interest in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the occupation is manifested in the two major Czech encyclopedias of the second half of the 19th century: František Ladislav Rieger's *Slovník naučný* (1860–1874) and Jan Otto's *Ottův slovník* (1888–1909). Rieger devoted six pages to Bosnia (822–827); while Otto's entry on Bosnia (with Herzegovina), written by six authors, had 16 pages (428–444). The latter developed the information provided by the former, including that related to the local “Mohammedans”; they considered themselves descendants of the Serbs, either of the old Bosnian nobility who had converted to Islam in order to keep their estates, or of town-based craftsmen and traders; they called themselves Turks (*Turčini*), but had not forgotten their origins and national language. In fact, the begs were supposed to have preserved the purest Serbian language, even though they soiled it by mixing Turkish words in it (Rieger 1860, 824; *Ottův slovník* 1891, 432). *Ottův slovník* added further details on the Muslims: although the Bosnian Mohammedans were affected by fatalism and fanaticism, their Slavic origin was evident from the fact that polygamy did not spread among them. Until the occupation, they had been the worst enemies of their Christian brothers as reflected in local idioms, according to which it was a sin to kill a dog or an ox, but to kill a Christian was a merit, and one could do what he pleased with an Orthodox, provided one washed one's hands afterward (1891, 432–433). These idioms, together with other information, were repeated in later travelogues (Zavadil 1911, 28).

In the late 1870s and early 1880s, the relationship to the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina was affected also by the Czechs' participation in the occupation and suppression of the armed resistance of the local (mainly Muslim) population. The resulting negative views of the Muslims were reflected both in the memoirs of the Czech participants in the campaigns and in folk culture. Accounts of the Czechs who took part in the conquest of Bosnia-Herzegovina revived the stereotype of the “terrible Turk”: in an anonymous account from 1883, the local Muslims were described as barbarians and beasts, who tormented captives, forced them to kiss their feet and cut off the heads of dead enemies (*Povstání v Bosně* 1883, 74–80). A decade later, Edmund Chaura compared the local Muslims to cannibals: “we stood in full armour against the abominably cannibal enemy and I do not exaggerate, the Zulus, Bagirmis, Nyam Nyams, Bechuans, Hottentots and similar South African tribes have behaved with more chivalry towards European travelers than Bosnian Turks towards us” (1893, 37–38). And yet, most of these people had Slavic blood in their veins, “poisoned in a Turkish way”, he sighed (103). Another participant of the campaign, Ignát Hořica, in an account published long after his death, depicted a much more complex image of the Muslims. In his book, Muslims occasionally cut off the heads of their enemies, but they are brave and defend their country against invaders; both sides of the conflict appear equally violent. Even when he wrote about a “Turkish fanatic” who is executed for murder, the author showed that this act was a reaction to murders committed by the Austro-Hungarian army. Hořica believed the war to be absurd: “How many men of the beautiful and healthy Slavic tribe were annihilated in a short time! It was also a war of brothers against brothers, and [look] how it was conducted!” (1909, 47). Although such an opinion was not common among the participants of the campaigns of the late 1870s and early 1880s, Hořica's work shows that Czech views

of the Slavic Muslims did not develop linearly, from negative to positive images, but sometimes combined the two.

Once the opposition against the occupation was suppressed, Austrian elites started to perceive Bosnian Muslims as potential allies against the Slavs. For the Czechs, in contrast, the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina became a force that should be persuaded to unite with their Slavic brothers. Obviously, the Czechs made an effort to differentiate the Slavic Muslims from the Ottoman Turks. They emphasized that the Muslims and Christians of Bosnia-Herzegovina spoke the same Slavic language and had preserved many habits and customs from their common Christian past: sincere hospitality, faithfulness in friendship and brotherhood of choice (*pobratimství*); even if they called themselves Turks, the Muslims often did not know Turkish and they felt real patriotic love for their country (Třeštík 1897, 21–22; Toužimský 1882, 119–123; Daneš 1909, 92). Others noted that the Muslims and Christians of Bosnia-Herzegovina had common interests and legal consciousness, which “betrayed” the Muslims’ Slavic origins (*Dvacet let práce kulturní* 1899, 15).

The Czechs who visited Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1890s and 1900s mentioned the animosity and even cruelty which the Muslim Slavs had shown towards Christians in the past (Třeštík 1897, 20; Zavadil 1911, 28). In this context, the main characteristic ascribed to the Muslims was “fanaticism”: their deep, even fanatic devotion to Islam was astonishing, although many of them had little idea about Mohammad’s teachings (Třeštík 1897, 21–22), and their religious fanaticism made them cruel enemies. Interestingly, according to some travelers, the same fanaticism also gave them moral support against corruption coming from “civilized” Europe (Daneš 1909, 92). As Holeček put it, as long as “the strong bases of the pure Mohammedan family life remain on the whole unshaken and as long as the society is based on undisturbed family life it is not lost” (1901, 63). Family habits were for the Czechs the most significant and telling aspects of the Muslims’ Slavness: Muslims shared with their Christian compatriots a patriarchal mentality, they were monogamous, did not use the right of the Hanefite rite to four wives, rarely divorced and their family life was orderly, showing exemplary companionship and mutual respect among its members (Třeštík 1897, 22; Toužimský 1882, 123). Holeček went so far as to claim that, “in truth, one does not find among the Western Christians either so much conjugal love or so much family love as among the Mohammedans” (46).

These views display the ambivalence in the Czechs’ perceptions of the Slavic Muslims: as Slavs they were seen as relatives, yet, as Muslims, they traditionally belonged to the (Turkish) enemies of the Slavs. The “Turkish heritage” also made them more backward than their Christian (br)others, to use the concept coined by Edin Hajdar-pasic for the Muslims of Bosnia, who had the potential of being “both brothers and Others” (2015, 16).

## WOMEN IN THE ORIENT

One of the main differences between classical and frontier Orientalism, according to Gingrich, is the place of women: in contrast to the male erotic fantasies about Muslim women typical of the former, the latter pays no attention to women, apart from



“our” women threatened by the “bad Muslim” (2015, 63). From this perspective, the Czechs apparently belonged to the sphere of classical Orientalism: they were not only intrigued, but often fascinated by Turkish women. Travelers to the Ottoman Empire without exception dealt with this subject because “the Turkish woman, about whom we hear and read so much in Europe, is certainly something particularly attractive to every foreigner in the land of the crescent” (Svátek 1909, 51). Two approaches mingled in the descriptions of Turkish women: emphasis on women’s subordinated position and oppression (Hálek 1925, 192–196; Svátek 1909, 7) and attraction for mysterious women as sexual objects. Both were connected in the notion of the harem, which could be described both as a prison (Kaminský 1909, 94–95; Guth 1896, 137) and as a realm of sexual phantasies (Svátek 1909, 166, 242; Klaus 1910, 229).

Most travelers agreed that Turkish/Muslim women were beautiful, at least when young, as “princesses from a fairy tale” (Štolba 1918, 121), with beautiful ivory-like faces, soft lips and bright eyes full of longing (Svátek 1909, 49). The more modern or coquettish ones wore only very light veils, which allowed the travelers to admire their exotic beauty (Jiřík 1913, 34; Svátek 1909, 56; Raušar 1903, 130); after 1908, it was even possible to see women on promenades without veils (Klaus 1910, 229–230). In the harem, women lived like slaves, completely segregated from the world and dependent on men; consequently, they were uneducated (only rich families had female governesses for their daughters), they could not choose their husbands, were considered men’s property, had to obey their male relatives, first fathers and then spouses, and spent their lives in idleness, merely taking care of their appearance. When travelers reflected on relations in Muslim families, they portrayed them as lacking love, and provided details on marriage as a contract, wedding, divorce and heritage laws, although some noted Muslim women’s comparable independence regarding their own property (Svátek 1909, 53–54).

When Svátek mentioned that “we hear and read so much [about the Turkish woman] in Europe”, it was not mere rhetoric (1909, 51). Czech perceptions of Turkish women’s lives were undoubtedly shaped by Western Orientalist authors such as the popular Pierre Loti. The author of one travelogue, Jiří Guth, translated Loti’s *Les Désenchantées* (*The Disenchanted*, 1906) into Czech under the title *Harémy kouzla zbavené* (Harems deprived of magic), but travelers mentioned Loti’s other novels as well (Svátek 1909, 106–109). Czech travelogues represented a masculine view of Oriental eroticism and the depictions of Turkish women show little originality: women symbolized the Oriental, the exotic and the different (Lewis 2004). Yet, the Czechs did not simply take over Western views. For instance, in contrast to British travelogues (Goldsworthy 2006, 30), Czech travelers did not identify the Ottoman Orient with femininity and the West with masculinity. Perhaps the character of the Czech encounters with the “Turks”, which were even in modern times prevailingly perceived as Ottoman aggression, together with the memory of the Ottoman army’s strength, revived as the Czechs followed the uprisings in the Balkans and the Russian-Turkish war in the 1870s, prevented attributing effeminacy to the Ottoman Empire and its men.

Compared to the attention paid to women by visitors of Istanbul, in travelogues to Bosnia-Herzegovina Muslim women figured less prominently. Slavic women as

a whole were occasionally depicted as victims of (Ottoman) Turkish lust, at times as fighters, but most often as wives or mothers. Muslim women also appeared mainly in the context of the family, which, the travelers noted, was patriarchal; women's role was limited to the family, but the conjugal relations were distinguished by mutual respect (Holeček 1901, 49–50; Třeštík 1897, 22). According to *Ottův slovník*, Muslim women in Bosnia-Herzegovina had more freedom than Ottoman Turkish women: in Bosnia, even elite women wore only light veils allowing their features to be seen, and in Herzegovina, they did not put on veils at all (1891, 433).

Occasionally, however, Czech travelers alluded to the same imagery, which was used for the description of Ottoman Turkish women, and the travelogues often included similar pictures of women in Oriental clothes. This Orientalizing perspective on Slavic women was widespread among the participants of a trip to the Southern Slavic lands, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, organized by the Czech Tourists' Club in 1897. One of the accounts of the trip described local Muslim women in the same way as others have depicted women of Istanbul: they were lazy and vain, led an idle life in segregation and were so stupid that one could not have a conversation with them (Velcl 1897, 95). Another account of the same trip mentioned that the tourists wanted to see a harem and the female participants were allowed to satisfy their curiosity thanks to a Czech female physician in Mostar, Bohuslava Kecková, who enabled them to enter several local harems (Buchar 1897, 57, 71).

The Orientalist imagery characterized the work of a prolific writer and journalist Bohumil Havlasa. Havlasa participated in the fighting in Bosnia in 1875 and wrote newspaper articles, stories and novels about his real and imagined experiences before he died as a volunteer in the Russo-Turkish war in 1877. One of his novels, *Péri*, takes place during the 1875 insurgence in Bosnia-Herzegovina, when the hero-narrator, a Czech supporter of the Christian insurgents, is captured by the “bloodthirsty demons”, the Mohammedans of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The author uses multiple ethnic designations for the Muslims, including Mohammedans, Muslims, Ottomans, Turks and *Turčins*, “trueborn Turks” and “Mohammedan Southern Slavs”. He depicts both sides of the conflict as equally violent: a Muslim village is destroyed by the Christian insurgents while a Christian village is annihilated by the “Turks” (1901, 96). The story is reminiscent of a medieval romance: the narrator is imprisoned in the house of the local notable Ibrahim, whose nephew Ahmed is portrayed as handsome and proud (15). Although Ahmed saves the Christian prisoners from the fanatical crowd, the narrator runs away with Zékie, nicknamed *Péri* (“Fairy” in Turkish), boasting: “I have captured the gem of the enemies” (73). Trying to explain to himself his attraction for Zékie, he wonders about “Ottomanism, a character from the harem world. Orient, Orient! Whether rightly so? Whether this explanation was sufficient? I do not know” (104). When Zékie helps to save the Christian prisoners, Ahmed is furious: he swears that he will not try to prove that even a “Mohammedan” can behave in a “European” way anymore, but will just seek revenge (145). In the end, most of the “Turks”, including Zékie, are killed or captured, but the author-narrator saves the life of Ahmed, showing the complicated relationship between a Christian Czech and a Muslim Bosnian.

When considering the impact of Orientalist stereotypes on Czechs' perceptions of Slavic Muslims, the views of women are of particular interest. While Gingrich does not take into account women as producers of Orientalist discourse, women's role in the classical colonial project was undeniable. A lot of attention has been devoted particularly to British women traveling to the Orient, marginalized by the mainstream male imperial discourse, yet often supporting the imperial and ethnocentric ideology (Yeğenoğlu 1998). In the Czech case, the Austro-Hungarian imperial project concerned women who were employed by the government in Bosnia-Herzegovina alongside men. The first Czech female physicians hired by the Habsburg government to look after (particularly Muslim) women in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Anna Bayerová and Bohuslava Kecková, on the whole, supported the Empire's mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, even if Bayerová was at times at odds with her superiors. Bayerová found both Muslim men and women more "Oriental" than their Christian counterparts. She praised the location of the Muslims' houses, but mockingly described their tasteless decoration and their owners' lack of interest in useful gardening, or their love for onion and garlic (1893, 1–2). She complained that she had to devote a lot of time to her "Mohammedan" female patients not only in strictly medical matters, but also in order to improve their eating habits and "cultivate them" physiologically (Nečas 1992, 35). Concurrently, in a way reminiscent of the colonizers' patronizing attitude towards the colonized, though under different circumstances, Bayerová clearly felt responsible for her Muslim patients. This was also the case of her colleague Kecková, who was somewhat less critical of the Muslims; she made an effort to teach several young women to read, write and count, and came to the conclusion that local Muslim women were not less talented and diligent than Christian ones, but were held back by the impact of Islam and their husbands (1895, 14).

Other Czech women only got superficial impressions of the local population on their visits to Bosnia-Herzegovina: Máša Absolonová, who traveled from Sarajevo to Montenegro in 1912, depicted even Orthodox Christians she met in the mountains of Bosnia-Herzegovina as backward, attributing their situation to the lack of education under Ottoman rule (1912, 305–306). While crossing an area inhabited mainly by Muslims (*moslemíni*), she met crowds of "indigenous" people going to the market. She saw Christian men ride in saddles, while women trudged on foot along their horses. Further, she came across "a whole cavalcade of Turks, headed by a veiled Turkish woman bejeweled by gaudery and trumpery, gold and beads, proudly seated straddled in a Turkish saddle ..." (305). Absolonová's somewhat condescending views display the positioning of a Czech woman vis-à-vis the local people of Bosnia-Herzegovina, both Christian and Muslim, while simultaneously differentiating between the two groups.

A similarly exotic image appeared in the travelogue of Růžena Svobodová, a respected woman writer who traveled through Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1911. Svobodová was intrigued by the Muslims whom she alternatively called Turks, Mohammedans and Serbian Mohammedans; she was impressed by their piety and showed great respect towards their religious habits. Yet, when describing her visit to a Muslim family in Mostar, she could not avoid using stereotypical images of the Muslim

women, their excessive fondness of jewelry, lack of education and superstitiousness, as well as references to the harem and Oriental tales: “Do you know The Thousand and One Nights, I ask. No, she doesn’t and she has never heard about them. I explain to her what kind of book it is and think to myself: ‘Well, you yourself are a Djamile or Safir or even Shehrezade’” (1911, 82). Thus, while Svobodová was clearly fond of Slavic Muslim women she met, their appeal seems to have resulted at least in part from their perceived “Orientalness”.

## CONCLUSION

Although the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires were neighbors, the actual frontier and the experience with the Turkish wars were more distant for the Czechs than for other Central and South East Europeans. It is therefore hardly surprising that the Czechs’ relationship towards the Ottoman Turks and the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina does not neatly fit the concept of frontier Orientalism. Given the 19th-century Czech society’s aspiration to be integrated in (Western) European culture and its less direct concern for the Ottoman Empire, the Czechs’ views of the Turks were influenced by the Western Orientalist discourse.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, in contrast, the Czech position was closer to the Austrian civilizing mission and their frontier Orientalism: it lacked racial aspects and concerned close Muslims living in nearby occupied territories, though the similarity was complicated by the fact that the local population was Slavic, like the Czechs themselves. Czech perceptions of Slavic Muslims were ambivalent, as reflected also in the unsettled terminology used to denote the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their views oscillated between identifying the Muslims with the Ottoman Turks, and viewing them as Slavic (br)others. Although a shift can be followed between the works resulting from the military campaigns of the late 1870s and early 1880s on the one hand and later travelogues on the other, the attitudes did not develop in one direction and continued to oscillate well into the 20th century: the Muslim Slavs were fighters like the Turks and devoted to their families like other Slavs. The ambivalence concerned also Muslim women, who were portrayed as different from (Ottoman) Turkish women – as members of the family rather than sexual beings – but, concurrently, were often seen through Orientalist lenses. Such views were expressed by both men and women. Thus, despite the different conditions, Czech women participated in the construction of the stereotypes of Muslims in a way comparable to women representing colonial empires.

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## "Our Turks", or "real Turks"? Czech perceptions of the Slavic Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Frontier Orientalism. Czech Orientalism. Slavic Muslims. Ottoman Turks. Muslim women.

The article examines Czech views of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and compares them to their opinions on the Ottoman Turks. It asks to what extent Czech perceptions of these two groups correspond to the distinction between "good" and "bad" Muslims suggested by Andre Gingrich in his concept of "frontier Orientalism". Special attention is devoted to images of Muslim women who, according to Gingrich, hardly figured in the frontier version of Orientalism. Czech experiences with the Ottoman Empire differed from those of other Central and South East Europeans, and Czechs' views of the Ottoman Turks were influenced by Western Orientalist discourse. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, in contrast, the Czechs' position was closer to the Austrians' civilizing mission and their frontier Orientalism, but it was complicated by the fact that the local population was Slavic, like the Czechs themselves. Thus, Czech perceptions of the Slavic Muslims were ambivalent and oscillated between identifying the Muslims with the Ottoman Turks, and viewing them as Slavic brothers. The ambivalence concerned also Muslim women, who were portrayed as different from (Ottoman) Turkish women, but at the same time often seen through Orientalist lenses.

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## Orientalist discourse in Ivo Andrić's "Bosnian Chronicle" \*

JELENA ARSENIJEVIĆ MITRIĆ

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The chronotope of Ivo Andrić's novel *Travnička hronika* (1945, *Bosnian Chronicle*, Eng. trans. 1963/1992), the city of Travnik at the beginning of the 19th century, shows us a miniature image of the entire Bosnia, of those turbulent times and life on the frontiers of great empires. Bosnia is represented as a place of fusion and clash of cultures, civilizations, religions (Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Catholicism), and nations that were diverse and often hostile, forced to coexist in constant fear of each other. At the beginning of the novel, Andrić represents Travnik as a city on the frontier, the city in a fissure, "a half-open book" (1992, 5) which through the novel turns into a symbol of mutual illegibility of the characters. Each one of them remains in a way shut into their own ideas of the other one standing against them, so it becomes clear that this novel writes out the discourse of difference through the image of the city lying in a crevice, between the steep hills which both collapse and meet at a sharp angle.

In this paper, we shall analyze the examples of Orientalist discourse which Andrić incorporated into the novel through the characters that represent the European deputies (Austro-Hungarian and French) in Travnik and through their often stereotypical attitudes towards the country to which they were sent to office. Edward Said expresses the idea of a European (Western) discourse which forms an illusory and in many aspects phantasmagorical image of societies and cultures outside Europe. This is an imposition of a constructed identity, usually schematized and full of stereotypes, which is supported with the attitude of the colonizer's superiority that manages to justify and rationalize the hegemonic role of the West. Considering the inadequate representations of the West, he points out that the Orient, as the object of research for historians, linguists, writers, archaeologists, and politicians, is actually a "European invention" and not an objectively existing reality. For centuries the European culture gained its strength and built its own identity as an image that contrasts the Orient (2003, 1–28).

Andre Gingrich partly starts from Said's concept of Orientalism in an attempt to revise it, develop it and consider it in the context of Central and Southeastern Europe.

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He points out that Said's concept of Orientalism primarily refers to the French and English colonial presence in distant territories (as well as the postcolonial politics of the USA), but it does not take into consideration the Habsburg, Russian, and Spanish treatments and representations of the Orient (1996, 118).<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Gingrich concludes that "there is not just one form of orientalism, but there are several" (2010, 78). Unlike the classical form of Orientalism, frontier Orientalism does not necessarily imply the experience of a remote, subjugated colony overseas, but it rather refers to nearby intruders on "our" frontier which do not necessarily have to be exotic, subaltern subjects, servants or slaves (Gingrich 2015, 62).

Gingrich elaborates on the term of frontier Orientalism in several works. This term is always connected to our image or representation of the Other as something that is different but not geographically remote. Instead, it usually represents a dangerous threat that is constantly lurking from the frontier areas. Therefore, frontier Orientalism always constructs and maintains the binary opposition which points to the existence of "us" and "others" – "the Orientals", which (if we consider the frontier of Central Europe) are always represented by the Turks or Muslims in general. However, Gingrich points out that the other side of the described opposition fluctuates and that the Islamic Oriental Other can be transformed if need be, so that it can also represent the Jewish or Slavic (Serbian or Russian) Oriental Other. Frontier Orientalism represents a specific form of Orientalist discourse which dominated the peripheral areas of Europe that were exposed to the longer experiences and interactions with the Muslim societies by the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the early modern era (2015, 61–63).

In the analysis of certain aspects of Andrić's novel we shall focus on the Orientalist discourse advocated by the Western representatives, relying also on Gingrich's variant of frontier Orientalism, in particular because this is a narrower term (compared to Said's term of colonial Orientalism) which is primarily related to the frontier areas of Central and Southeastern Europe. Just like the entire Bosnia as an Ottoman province and future Austro-Hungarian border colony, Travnik is also represented in the novel as the liminal, in itself insecure, heterogeneous area within Europe. Apart from the fact that Gingrich's term is more appropriate and accurate in the geographical, spatial sense, it is additionally convenient because the stereotypical impressions and belittling attitudes of the Western representatives often refer equally to all subjected inhabitants of Travnik, the Bosnians, regardless of their religion and cultural identity. The geographic position itself of a frontier area as an interest zone of various empires makes them suitable for negative stereotyping by the Western representatives. We also notice that the mechanism of stereotyping, traditionally reserved for the Ottomans, is often transferred to the Bosnians as a whole. Gingrich's term of frontier Orientalism highlights the other side of the opposition as fluid, as it does not have to be linked exclusively to the Islamic Oriental Other, but it can also refer to the Jews or Slavs (61), the subjected population of Travnik as a whole, as is the case with Andrić's novel.

By describing the state of affairs in Travnik, Andrić actually points to the position of the entire Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was at the time under the rule of the Ottoman Empire and gravely threatened by French and Austro-Hungarian interests.

Beginning in the 17th century, Travnik was the residence of the Bosnian vizier, and in 1806 France opened its consulate there. A year later, the Austro-Hungarian Empire did the same in order to prepare the ground for the later occupation and annexation of the mentioned territory and the creation of a specific border colony.<sup>2</sup> By narrating about the so-called consular times, Andrić leads us into a world of deep conflicts and irreconcilable differences. As Zoran Milutinović notices:

For page after page, *Bosnian Chronicle* describes people's attempts to understand one another, and their failure to do so. [...] There is no privileged image of Bosnia in *Bosnian Chronicle*, there are only different voices which try to impose and justify their images. The very dynamics of creating and exchanging images, the dynamics of people's attempts to understand each other and of their inability to step out of their own perspectives is the true theme of *Bosnian Chronicle* (2008, 446).

We get the impression that, despite the vast gallery of the most diverse characters, the real protagonist of the novel is the city of Travnik itself, as the geographical and political center of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the place of interest, which links the representatives of the three great powers (Ottoman Empire, France, and Austria).

What is initially imposed in the novel is the situation in which the image of Travnik is presented to us in a mediated form, as we learn about the city, its inhabitants, everyday life, and customs from the point of view of the newcomers (French and Austrian diplomats, the Levantine D'Avenat, the vizier). What they all have in common is the troubling feeling of being abroad in an inaccessible and cruel area, the basin of Travnik, which they perceive as a dungeon, a sort of much-needed limbo, a place where they will get toughened for future undertakings. Therefore, Jean Daville sees his position of general consul as a punishment, a conviction to service in a godforsaken land, and a sort of exile from Europe into an isolated Ottoman border province. We get the impression that the European diplomats Daville and von Mitterer think and talk about the Ottoman Empire and its representatives in Bosnia with sympathy, which they do not show towards the citizens of Travnik, as they perceive and describe them as barbarians – “wild people, uncouth rabble” (19). This is supported by Daville's description of the local orchestra that he has hired for a celebration organized in honor of Napoleon's birthday: “He immediately saw before his eyes the Travnik musicians, three ragged gypsies, two drummers and the third with the pipe whose ‘music’ grated on the ears of the European condemned to live here during Ramadan and Bairam” (30).

What is particularly interesting is that the attitudes of the Ottoman representatives do not offer a view that opposes the vision of the European governors. Instead, we notice the identical belittling relationship towards the Travnik Muslims, or “Turks”,<sup>3</sup> in the descriptions provided by the vizier Husref Mehmed Pasha:

In the course of the conversation, the Vizier made a point of stressing the savagery of this country, the crudity and backwardness of the people. The land was wild, the people impossible. What could be expected of women and children, creatures whom God had not endowed with reason, in a country where even the men were violent and uncouth? Nothing this people did or said had any significance, nor could it affect the affairs of serious, cultivated man (25).

For the representatives of Europe in the novel, Travnik, although geographically part of the Old Continent, still remains a place on the frontier, somewhere in between, neither sufficiently European nor completely Oriental.<sup>4</sup> The local respectable Muslims also talk about Travnik and Bosnia as a border area that is exposed to constant attacks of foreign imperial powers:

They had long been troubled by the knowledge that the Imperial defences along the frontiers had collapsed and that Bosnia was becoming an ungarded country, trampled over not only by Ottomans but by infidels from the four corners of the earth, a country where even the rayah was beginning to raise its head more insolently than ever before. And now some faithless consuls and spies were supposed to be thrusting their way in, freely proclaiming their authority and the power of their emperors at every step. So, little by little, an end would come to the good order and “blessed silence” of Turkish Bosnia, which for some time now had in any case become increasingly difficult to protect and preserve. Divine Will had ordained that the Turks should rule as far as the Sava River and the Austrians from the Sava on. But everything Christian was working against that clear Divine Order, shaking the frontier fence and undermining it by day and night, both openly and in secret (11).

Clemens Ruthner points out that Bosnia and Herzegovina has for long been perceived as a periphery of Europe, ever since it was initially known as the rebellious frontier of the Ottoman Empire, then as a territory occupied by Austria-Hungary (1878–1918) and finally as part of Yugoslavia. In those periods, this region was treated as the economic and cultural margin of various political centers (Istanbul, Vienna/Budapest, Belgrade/Zagreb), and it also takes the specific symbolical position of “the European Other” within Western hegemonic discourse (2008, 1). With regards to this, Enver Kazaz concludes the following:

It is particularly because of its marginality that BiH is presented in Andrić’s novels as the topos of a permeable borderline, a border place of the encounter of the One and the Other, both the identity and the alterity, but also as the topos of their differences. Border, periphery, and difference create Andrić’s BiH as a symbolic bridge between two centres, but also as a topos at which each of these centres, both the Orient and the Occident, meets its periphery (2006, 270).

It is interesting to note that Andrić also accentuates several times in his novel that the Bosnian (local) Muslims were perceived as outcasts, converts who are equally despised by the representatives of Istanbul and the European deputies. This indicates their double marginalization and liminal position. For example, the beys of Travnik are represented as completely independent, largely alienated from the Istanbul authorities, as they often did not execute the commands of vizier Husref Mehmed Pasha, who declared himself a supporter of the reforms by Sultan Selim III and who openly favored France. Paradoxically, the vizier himself was also a convert and foreigner, not just in Travnik but also in Ottoman Empire, the country whose interests he represented. The narrator reminds us that Husref Mehmed Pasha, also known as the Limping Pasha, was a Georgian brought as a slave to Istanbul when he was a child, who became a vizier in Egypt at the age of thirty-one thanks to his cunning, abilities, and talent. After the great uprising of the Mamelukes, the vizier is first transferred to

Thessaloniki and then to Travnik. He perceives his stay in Bosnia as a kind of exile and punishment, especially because the winters, which the natives are used to, are particularly harsh and in every aspect torturous to everyone else: "It was different for the foreigners whom fate had cast into the narrow valley which, at this time of year, was gloomy, damp and draughty as a prison corridor" (109). The Mamelukes yearn for their homeland, and the vizier remembers Egypt and dreams of the distant sea. They wonder in unison how they wronged God and fate to deserve to end up here:

"A dog's land!" said the Secretary. "It's enough to make bears weep!" complained the Vizier's countryman and armorer Younuz Bey. "Now I see that we've been sent here to perish", maintained Ibrahim Hodja, a personal friend of the Vizier's, screwing his yellow face up into long creases as though he really were preparing to die (110).

During the visits to the Konak and conversations with the vizier, the French consul Jean Daville recognizes his own unenviable position in Mehmed Pasha's exile. He ascribes the anxiety, confusion, lack of will, and the rushes of pessimism overcoming him to the environment in which he resides – "Oriental poison" (56). It is prominent that for the entire course of the novel he blames the lethal impact of the Orient for everything negative in him. In his spare time, he writes an epic on Alexander the Great as a sort of his own "disguised intellectual diary" (69) in which he vents his feelings and in which the imaginary Bosnia, "a barren land with a harsh climate and savage inhabitants" (69) has its own place hidden under the name Tauris. Daville's Alexander romance, as a specific narrative phantasmagoria, stores his frustrations, caused by the Bosnian area and the people which he loathed. As the protagonist, through his battle against Asia, Alexander reflected "all the revulsion Daville felt for the Asiatic spirit and the East as a whole" (69).

The situation in Travnik is additionally complicated by the arrival of a new threat, the Austrian general consul. The local Muslims resent Istanbul because of the "foreign invasion" (81), the French consulate anxiously await their opponent, and the Orthodox locals are hoping for a Russian consulate as well. Joseph von Mitterer, frontier guard officer from the periphery of the Empire who has proved himself in war against the Ottomans and the Serbian rebels, to a certain extent shares with the French consul the mutual fate of a man condemned to live in an environment "which first exhausts a Westerner, then makes him chronically irritable, a burden to himself and others, and finally, with the years, completely alters and breaks him, burying him in dull indifference long before his death" (89). Mrs. von Mitterer expresses her own dissatisfaction with Travnik and its inhabitants, possibly in the most tumultuous fashion in the entire novel. She builds a tall wall around the house, "a new Schönbrunn" (95), in order to protect herself from the "dirt of this oriental land" (96). This grows into an obsessive fear of dirt, rust, mud, and mould which she notices everywhere around her. She perceives staying here as a curse and a transfer from "one half-Turkish provincial town into a real Turkish graveyard [...] into Asia" (94), as she puts it. Therefore, she persistently asks her husband, whom she declares to be "more heartless than any Turk" (131), to save her and take her away from this "filthy, wretched country" (98) and "terrible wilderness" (128). Her notion of Bosnia is comprised in a metaphor of a retarded ailing beggar and his repulsive feet:

For just one moment her field of vision was filled with trampled clay and the huge, filthy, bare feet of a disabled labourer, aged before his time. She glimpsed them for just one moment, but for a long time afterwards she could not rid herself of the sight of those inhuman feet, square, shapeless, gnarled, unspeakably deformed by long trudging and a hard life, cracked like the bark of a pine tree, yellow and black; enormous, crooked peasant's feet which could scarcely bear their own weight and shuffled, limping awkwardly, as they took perhaps their last steps. Hundreds of suns and thousands of springs could not help those feet, thought Anna Maria in that instant. No care, food or medicine could put them right or alter them. Whatever was born and bloomed on the earth, those feet could only be yellower, more monstrous and more horrible (97).

Similar to her representation of the irreparable state of the beggar is Daville's conviction that it is impossible for the entire place to change, to "recover" – in other words, to adjust itself to his norms and become like France. Although Des Fossés is the most inclined to Bosnia out of all foreigners, the manner in which he pronounced the name of the city is represented by the narrator as follows: "He repeated this word to himself, half aloud, like the name of some mysterious disease, like a magic formula it is hard to remember and easy to forget" (127). In this description we also recognize the metaphor of disease as the incurability of a "backward" society, which as such belongs to the corpus of frontier Orientalism. However, unlike Daville, the young consul is willing to get to know the country – he tours the city, meets people, notes his impressions about dispositions, makes an effort to fit into the new environment and feel the town's pulse. He stays in the houses of the Jews, meets religious representatives (Friar Janković and Abbot Pahomije), examines old settlements and graveyards, and his curiosity and interest results in his writing a book on Bosnia. Although the local commander in Split warns him on the eve of his transfer to Travnik that he was headed to an "infernal country" (74), he is not discouraged. His case shows that it is possible to break the strong barriers of prejudices and stereotypes which the foreigners adopt so easily and grudgingly give up on. Renate Hansen-Kokoruš also notices that Des Fossé "plays one of the more important roles in the process of understanding the country and its inhabitants on one hand and in the cultural criticism of the West on the other" (2009, 91).

In the novel, Andrić juxtaposes the two representatives of France, Daville and Des Fossés. While the first one is reserved, serious, occupied with prejudices about the natives which he calls "wild Scythians" (79), and describes Travnik as a "muddy desert, inhabited by two kinds of wretch: tortures and tortured" (113), Des Fossés endeavors to prove that this area can by no means be a desert, as he points to the spiritual and cultural heritage, traces of Neolithic settlements, bizarre customs, diverse interesting personalities, the remains of the epochs which replaced each other. In their mutual discussions, Daville advocates the familiar imperialist-colonial discourse on the need to civilize the "backward" nations, lamenting on the utopian vision in which the entire Europe becomes like the "harmonious" and "perfect" France.

Here it is important to point out that Daville's and Des Fossés' attitudes are not just a figment of the author's fiction, but they are supported by historical models. The prototype of the character of Daville was Pierre David, consul in Travnik and Napoleon's representative in Bosnia from 1807 to 1814. It is known that in 1924 Andrić



read a book written by historian Mihailo Gavrilović which contains the reports of the abovementioned consul. The same year, magazine *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* publishes excerpts from David's diary, so it is assumed that Andrić had access to this source. As a diplomat in European cities, he later had the opportunity to consult the original reports of the Travnik consuls (Gorup 2001, 218). In Vienna, Andrić examined the notes of Austrian consuls Paul von Mitterer and Jakob von Paulich. On the relationship of Pierre David towards Bosnia, Mihailo Gavrilović states the following, based on the meticulous analysis of his reports: "We should note, which is obvious from this collection, that David deeply despised Bosnians and that he perceived his life among them as imprisonment" (1904, XVI). The character of Des Fossés partly corresponds to the French diplomat and geographer Amédée Chaumette des Fossés who, just like Andrić's hero, left a travel account on Bosnia from 1822 as his legacy (*Voyages en Bosnie dans les années 1807–1808*). More thorough data on Andrić's use of historical sources for constructing *Bosnian Chronicle* are put forward in a study by Midhat Šamić, where he particularly stresses Andrić's remaining true to the original documents (1962, 43).<sup>5</sup> As Milutinović explains: "Through their writings, these foreigners produced images of Bosnia which contemporary French and Austrian readers then used to build up their knowledge of Bosnia and make judgements about this isolated and little known part of Europe. [...] They represent what we might name the European view of Bosnia of the time" (2008, 445).

Andrić utilizes the abovementioned attitudes by Daville to point to the types of ethnocentrism and universalism which are theoretically criticized by Tzvetan Todorov starting from the analysis of examples of ethnocentrism in the history of French thought, with the emphasis on philosophical currents of the 17th and 18th centuries. Todorov discusses the Universalist ideology of colonialization, which we can find among the authors belonging to the philosophy of the Age of Enlightenment, such as Condorcet or De Gérando, who believe that progress is seen through a gradual liberation from prejudices, and their nation has went the farthest on that path. Condorcet is convinced that there is a civilizational ladder at whose top are the so-called most enlightened nations, those that have completely eliminated prejudices – the French and Anglo-Americans. The French theoretician recognizes the same rhetoric in De Gérando, who also highlights the idea of various degrees of being civilized by making a division into higher and lower races based on their degree of development, and the criteria for ranking them are rationality and level of socialization. Such attitudes of certain European intellectuals encouraged and justified the practice of colonialism as a project in which the so-called backwater nations were to be subjected to "the accelerated progress of enlightenment" (1993, 253–254). Dealing with cultural identities in *Bosnian Chronicle*, Krešimir Nemec concludes that the foreign Western consuls "perceive themselves as superior: as the bearers of civilization and progress in barbarian and narrow-minded surroundings. Everything they see is measured by the value criteria and samples of their own culture and social customs, and they notice a *specific difference* everywhere which makes them feel insecure, distrustful, and afraid" (2004, 86).<sup>6</sup>

During one of the conversations with Des Fossés, Daville highlights underdevel-

opment as one of the features of the barbaric nature of this area, which is characterized by absence of roads:

Unlike all the other nations of the world, this people has some kind of incomprehensible, perverse hatred of roads, which are actually a sign of progress and prosperity. In this wretched country roads aren't maintained and they don't last, it's as though they destroyed themselves somehow. You see, the fact that General Marmont is building a highway through Dalmatia does as more damage in the eyes of the local Turks and the Vizier, than those enterprising, boastful gentlemen in Split can begin to imagine. These people don't like roads anywhere near them. But who could explain that to our people in Split? They brag to all and sundry that they are building roads which will ease the flow of traffic between Bosnia and Dalmatia, but they have no idea how the Turkish mistrust them (65).

Unlike him, Des Fossés will discover the partial reasons behind such state of roads in a conversation with friar Ivan, who reveals the cunning and strategy lying behind this "neglect". Both Muslims and Christians resist the building and maintenance of roads, but with different motives. Christians do so because they believe that lack of roads averts the unwanted visitors, those being the Ottomans, while Muslims believe that developing roads means endangering their predominance as it allows a connection with Christian neighbors. Des Fossés reminds Daville of the imperial policy which their homeland has been implementing at the time: "After all, Monsieur Daville, we French have swallowed half of Europe and we shouldn't be surprised that those countries we haven't yet occupied look with mistrust at the roads our armies construct on their borders" (66). It is quite clear to him that there is no merciful intention hidden behind the mission of road construction, but the interest of the empire which it represents. With regard to this, it is important to mention Aimé Césaire's endeavor to draw a clearer line between colonization and civilization and to reveal the perfidious politics which often represents colonizers as bearers of progress, those who cure diseases, build roads, and improve the standard of living in the so-called developing countries (1996, 34).<sup>7</sup>

As Božidar Jezernik points out, "After the Age of Enlightenment, the Balkans were perceived as at once near (geographically) and far (culturally)" (2004, 25). The Balkans have never represented a geographically neutral term, but it has always implied a certain ideological omen and negative connotation – European Turkey or Turkey in Europe, the East, the Middle Ages, filth, passivity, unreliability, disrespect for women, unscrupulousness, opportunism, lack of civilization, backwardness, laziness, superstition, sluggishness, and so on (22–23). This corpus of metaphors belonging to frontier Orientalism is noted in different variations in almost all foreign representatives in Travnik. Daville, just like the vizier, explains the "backwardness" of the people with their alleged "innate ill-will" (67); for him, they are irreparably "malicious, wild and idle" (64). He met everything that came from the Bosnians with disgust and mistrust, and the same applied to the Oriental music which particularly irritated him, just like it irritated the Austrian consul von Mitterer. Daville was brought to despair by "Bosnian singing" (116). In the first days of his stay in Travnik, he was already awakened by the unbearable "sound of the Bairam drums and pipes" (16), "gipsy music which grated on the ears" (14). Musa the Singer is the symbol and true reflection of the

environment which is dominated by brandy, idleness, coarseness, and vulgarity, as Daville puts it:

I have heard these people singing and I have seen that they put into their songs the same savagery and unhealthy frenzy they put into every other aspect of their material and mental existence. I once read the travel notes of a Frenchman, who had journeyed through these parts more than 100 years ago and heard these people, he wrote that their song was more like the whining of dogs than singing. [...] I have seen them rolling their eyes as they sang, grinding their teeth and beating their fist against the wall, either because they were drunk on brandy or simply driven by an inner need to wail, draw attention to themselves and destroy things. And I have come to the conclusion that none of this has anything to do with the music and singing one hears among other peoples. It is simply a way for them to express their hidden passions and base desires to which, for all their lack of restraint, they could not otherwise give rein – for nature itself would prevent it (122).

Daville will even say that there is far less “spite and insensitivity” in the howling of dogs (122), and the Austrian consul agrees, as he also suffered at the hand of that “wailing and shrieking” (122) which echoed from the gardens, taverns, and streets. Von Mitterer outlined the Oriental, Bosnian music as a reflection of ancient, primeval pain and misery (“Urjammer”), while the French consul claims that those horrendous melodies are still only “the fury of savages who have lost their simplicity” (122). Not only music but also the silence of this area is represented in the novel as ominous and disturbing – “insidious, seductive, eastern silence” (126). Not even Des Fossés is immune to the sounds of Travnik and its surroundings – on one occasion, the melody and song from the Catholic church remind him of the bleating of sheep, “peasant wail” (295), in which he recognizes the same “Urjammer” which von Mitterer discusses regarding Musa’s song. On the other hand, the music produced by Anna Maria’s harp is “the music of the spheres” to Des Fossés (238). Analyzing travel accounts, Bülent Aksoy writes how Europeans perceived the Ottoman/Turkish music starting from the 15th century. Initially, they were mistrustful, as they considered it to be aggressive and inappropriate, while the European melodies were incomparable to the Ottoman ones: “Almost all the observers complained about the ‘noisy’ performance of the mehter, and expressed that Ottoman music, which was in fact the music they heard on the streets, grated on the nerves” (2010, 167). Later on, during the 17th and 18th centuries, Europeans start an intense, serious, and meticulous study of the Ottoman music (168–172). Analyzing the Austrian mythological-historical narrative, Gingrich notes the tendency of neglect, negation or even distortion of the complex interactions between the Turks and Central Europe. Thus the Oriental influence on the local languages, clothing, music, food, furniture, architecture, and flora is either completely ignored or considered a war trophy, which only strengthens the existing “violent opposition between an illusory, coherent ‘us’ and a dangerous or humiliated Turkish ‘them’ on the other side of the frontier” (1996, 111).

The paper uses several key examples from Andrić’s novel to illustrate a variant of frontier Orientalism, within which the Bosnian, local Muslims and the rest of the inhabitants of Travnik (whether they are Orthodox Christians, Catholics or Jews) are doubly Orientalized and marginalized, both by the European representatives

and by the Ottoman authorities. From the point of view of the European representatives, although territorially part of the Old Continent, Travnik is perceived as still not quite European and not European enough, unenlightened and barbaric, ruinously “infected” by the Oriental influences. The negative images constructed by the Western consuls, who are primarily guided by the imperial pretensions towards this area, are a product of endeavors to justify the occupation of this frontier territory by portraying its population as backward, unenlightened, and so in dire need of being elevated to a certain civilizational level. Furthermore, the desire for dominance often contains fear of the different and unknown, as well as deep anxiety due to one’s own identity being threatened, which requires a confirmation at the expense of the Other, who is then represented as inferior and subjugated. The consequence of the entire process is the inability to empathetically approach the other with an open desire to recognize similarities as well as differences and then to establish an authentic communication.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak points out that we are yet to talk and write about the “European envisioning of the Balkans” in the future: “The relationship of postcolonial theory towards the Balkans as a metaphor represents the key task of our world” (2003, 7).
- <sup>2</sup> Aleksandar Palavestra, in his work “Archaeological Excursion into Proximal Colony”, writes about the Austro-Hungarian government in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the end of the 19th century and its specific “long-term project of ‘civilising’ Bosnia and Herzegovina” (2014, 669), in order to “pacify the backwater Turkey, a barbaric province full of bandits and convert it into a civilised European country” (688). He also points out that after the Austro-Hungarian annexation the described area became “the first Austro-Hungarian colony, the only one on the European soil ” (670), referring to the researches and papers by Robert Donia and Clemens Ruthner, who share the same attitude and provide solid arguments in favor of the thesis that after 1908 Bosnia and Herzegovina became an Austro-Hungarian proximate colony, a colony within Europe (internal colony) (Donia 2006; 2008; Ruthner 2002, 2003, 2008). Gingrich also supports the view of the colonial presence of the Austrian monarchy in the area of Bosnia from 1878 to 1918 (1996, 106).
- <sup>3</sup> In the novel, Andrić uses the term “Turks” to refer to one’s religious denomination, not to ethnicity. Therefore, the Muslim inhabitants of Bosnia are not Turks, but ethnic Slavs of Muslim faith. The same goes for the term “Serbs”. Andrić’s Serbs in the novel are the members of the Orthodox Church, rather than an ethnic group.
- <sup>4</sup> The aspects of space in the novel are elaborated on by Renate Hansen-Kokoruš in the paper “Space and Perspective in *Bosnian Chronicle* by Ivo Andrić” (2009, 77–91).
- <sup>5</sup> Andrić testifies several times about the painstaking gathering of the material in conversations with his contemporaries (Dimitrijević 1991, 30–32; Jandrić 1977, 309).
- <sup>6</sup> Enver Kazaz deals with the imperial ideology in the novel *Bosnian Chronicle* in his paper “The third world and its wisdom of exclusion” (2006, 267–283).
- <sup>7</sup> The mentioned problem is also discussed in the present author’s study *Terra Amata vs. Terra Nullius* within the chapter “The critics of the concept of colonialization as civilization by Aimé Césaire and Edward Said” (Arsenijević Mitrić 2016, 31–73).

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## Orientalist Discourse in Ivo Andrić's "Bosnian Chronicle"

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Frontier Orientalism. Ivo Andrić. Orientalist discourse. Bosnia and Herzegovina. Balkans in literature.

Ivo Andrić's *Bosnian Chronicle* represents Travnik as a city on the frontier, the city in a fissure, "a half-open book" which through the novel turns into a symbol of mutual illegibility of the characters. Each one of them remains in a way shut into their own ideas of the other one standing against them, so it becomes clear that this novel writes out the discourse of difference. In this paper, we shall analyze the examples of Orientalist discourse which Andrić incorporated into the novel through the characters that represent the European deputies (Austro-Hungarian and French) in Travnik and through their often stereotypical attitudes towards the country to which they were sent to office.

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## Balkan identity between the Orient and Europe in Milorad Pavić's "Dictionary of the Khazars"

MATEJ KARÁSEK

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The traveler has a passport that is considered western in the East and eastern in the West. Her passport therefore causes suspicion in both East and West; it casts two shadows; to the right it is masculine and to the left feminine.  
(Milorad Pavić, *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 1988)

### INTRODUCTION

The Serbian novelist and literary historian Milorad Pavić is undoubtedly the most famous representative of Yugoslav postmodern literature. His best-known works include *Hazarski rečnik* (*Dictionary of the Khazars*, 1984, Eng. trans. 1988), *Predeo slikan čajem* (*Landscape Painted with Tea*, 1988, Eng. trans. 1990), *Unutrašnja strana vetra* (*The Inner Side of the Wind*, 1991, Eng. trans. 1993), and *Poslednja ljubav u Carigradu* (*Last Love in Constantinople*, 1994, Eng. trans. 1998). Pavić's topographical scope is centered in the Balkan Peninsula within the broader framework of Central and Eastern Europe, including such cities as Venice, Vienna, Prague, and Istanbul. Most of Pavić's characters are born or directly inhabit the Balkan countries, and some of them literally live at the edge of different spaces and times. Inhabitants of other areas are also present in Pavić's novels, but they are mostly only visitors, travelers, or somehow interconnected with the plot situated in the Balkan area or the surrounding places. By analyzing specific motifs of Pavić's conception of this region, we can reach a closer understanding of his approach towards the Balkans as a historical, cultural and (meta)geographical area. His narrative strategy was to adapt the discourse about the Balkans as the liminal and frontier space. It can be seen as a meeting point of two discursive modifications of Edward Said's Orientalism: Maria Todorova's Balkanism, which has been applied to Southeastern Europe, and Andre Gingrich's frontier Orientalism, which was based on the conditions of Central Europe. For Pavić's work, which represents the borderline between these two European subregions, I will suggest the term of "frontier internalism" as a complementary category that could help to illuminate this liminal space which had remained more or less blank.

## THE THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF BALKANISM AND FRONTIER ORIENTALISM

Said's seminal *Orientalism* (1978) has inspired many scholars to develop derivative terms more accurate for their specific problems, including Maria Todorova's Balkanism. But the term "Balkan" is somehow more ambiguous than the Orient, because it cannot be clearly defined in terms of East and West. Even if we consider historical and political polarities (Rome – Constantinople; Catholicism – Orthodoxy; capitalism – socialism) the demarcation line is unclear. For many Balkan nations and their representatives in the intelligentsia, the idea of a bridge or crossroad of civilization contacts became the pattern of their self-perception. Discursively the Balkan often appears as a somehow liminal space situated between both metageographical giants of East and West, which sometimes connects and sometimes divides them. As Todorova suggests:

The metaphor is evidently premised on the endorsement of an East-West dichotomy, an essentialized opposition, an accepted fundamental difference between Orient and Occident: "The Balkan peninsula is a region of transition between Asia and Europe – between 'East' and 'West' – with their incompatible political, religious and social ideals" (2009, 59).

Todorova herself claims that Balkanism is parallel rather than analogical to Orientalism, arguing that Balkanism is an independent discourse because in contrast to the Orient there was no historical colonial presence of any Western superpower in the Balkans. Hence, we cannot apply the theoretical contribution of postcolonial and subaltern studies for the specific Balkan circumstances. Similarly, Balkanism lacks its own scientific field which would be in the service of a colonial power and would product the discursive knowledge about the area as did the Oriental studies in Western colonies (44). The Western European discourse about the Balkan as the space defined as a field of cultural, political and historical confrontation of two opposite meta-geographical categories was also adopted by the Balkan inhabitants themselves. However in this sense the Balkans are not unique and such an approach is common also for countries of Central Europe (58).

Like Todorova's Balkanism, Andre Gingrich's concept of frontier Orientalism was a product of postcolonial theory, but its diffusion within Central European studies has been more limited than Todorova's within Balkan studies. According to Gingrich, it differs from Said's conception in specific ways:

First Said's concept of "orientalism" deals primarily with British and French colonial (and with postcolonial US foreign) relations. [...] Second, Said's concept does include the academic orientalism which I have left unconsidered in this text for several reasons. In central Europe, early academic orientalism of the 18th and early 19th centuries certainly did inform leading political opinions and strategies. It thereby interacted with public and folk culture which has been my focus here. [...] in that sense early academic orientalism merely provided additional elite contributions to images of the "Oriental" already current in folk and public culture before the rise of nationalism (1996, 118–119).

Gingrich defines frontier Orientalism as a "relatively coherent set of metaphors and myths that reside in public and folk culture. It places the home country and its population along an adjacent territorial and military borderline which is imbued

with a timeless mission" (119). Within Central and Southern Europe, Gingrich distinguishes the historical presence of three types of Orientalism. The first one is so-called "enlightened" Orientalism, which appeared in European, particularly German, music or literature. The second was "classical" Orientalism, locally consumed in its English, French or Italian versions. Both of these types were intended for the elites who were constructing and at the same time "consuming" this discourse. Frontier Orientalism represents a distinct branch characterized by important constructive role of elements from both elite and folk culture (121). Gingrich adds that this sort of Orientalism is not present in all parts of Europe (only in those parts which had direct borders with "Orientals") nor in North America (120).

Milorad Pavić's approach to the Balkans as a boundary between the Orient and Europe is connected to both Todorova's Balkanism and Gingrich's frontier Orientalism. However, I would propose the term "frontier internalism" as a more effective instrument to describe Pavić's narrative method. In order to explain the term, it is necessary to mention complementary concepts associated with the postcolonial discussion about the Balkans. The literary theoretician Vesna Goldsworthy (1998) claims that the West colonizes the Balkan area in the sense of an "imagined colonization" or "imperialism of imagination". According to her, the West draws from the Balkans the resources for its imagination, literature, art, pop-culture and entertainment industry. The Balkans is a constructed scene where exotic adventures full of bloody and horrifying performances take place. Although Pavić was not an author belonging to either the horror or adventure genre, he filled his "Balkan scene" with exotic figures, environments and situations. In many aspects Pavić had "borrowed" the Balkan scene stereotypically designed by the Western imagination to situate his own stories. The process of such adaptation of Western discourse of Balkanism could be explained with the help of the Bulgarian historian Alexander Kiossev who introduced the concept of "self-colonizing cultures". According to Kiossev (1993) these cultures copy the Western cultural patterns even if they are not directly subjected to colonial oppression. The trauma of colonization of the mind is caused by the location "in a liminal space, neither developed nor underdeveloped, neither learned nor wholly ignorant, in the process of becoming mature Europeans" (Kuus quoted in Obad 2008, 19). In this sense Balkan people are perceived as "incomplete Europeans" (Čolović 2008, 5).

Accordingly, the Western discourse about the Balkans as the liminal frontier was (in the sense of Kiossev's "self-colonisation") internalized by the Balkan inhabitants themselves and became a significant pillar of their identity. As Todorova asserts: "For many Balkan nations and their representatives from the intelligentsia, the idea of a bridge or crossroad of civilization contacts became the pattern of their self-perception" (58). Consequently, this internalized pattern became the constitutive part of the ways that Balkan cultural elites and representatives refer to their countries and outwardly present Balkan cultural specifics to the rest of the world. This presentation is based on a specific self-exoticizing narrative manner founded on the emphasis of an adapted attitude towards the Balkans which is considered as a suitable stage for exotic scenes.

In short, by the term “frontier internalism” I understand two mutually complementary meanings. Firstly, the term refers to the fact that the Balkanism and the Western discourse about the Balkans as a liminal area became *internalized* by Balkan inhabitants themselves and consequently it refers to a specific narrative that they developed from their special (meta)geographical position. Pavić is the exemplary representative of this kind of literal narration, which could possibly make the insufficiently discovered and liminal world *within* the frontier more visible.

### THE POSTMODERN (META)GEOGRAPHY OF DREAMS

Pavić's point of view regarding the position of the Balkans vis-à-vis the frontier is ambivalent. The lives and mutual relationships of Pavić's characters are not limited by their relationship to the political and historical frontiers. However, the plots of his novels are contextualized to the concrete historical circumstances, which often remain only a backdrop that does not necessarily affect the interactions and relations between figures. While the conditions of the story are historical and political, the behavior of the characters is largely situational. As we can see in the *Dictionary of the Khazars*, the *modus operandi* of his figures is parallel to rather than dependent on the historical reality. Pavić's conception of the relationship between historical circumstances and actors settled in the frontier area, corresponds to the historical reality in a surprisingly authentic way. Pavić does not follow the approach which Gingrich calls “the one-dimensional tale of bloodshed and war” (1996, 110). The actions of Pavić's heroes are not a matter of political, ethnical or religious identity, but a matter of situational advantage. They act in similar manner as the peasants and city dwellers mentioned by Gingrich, who did not hesitate to flee from the Habsburg monarchy to areas controlled by Ottomans in order to avoid the burden imposed by their own Austrian rulers (Prickler quoted in Gingrich 1996, 110).

Pavić's most successful novel internationally, *Dictionary of the Khazars*, is not primarily set along the Danube or even within the Balkans. Its main topic is the religious conversion of the extinct nation of the Khazars in the 8th or 9th century, and it is divided into three books which represent fictional Christian, Muslim and Jewish sources about this conversion. Each “source” represents a different narrative about the circumstances of conversion in order to convince the readers that Khazars accepted the Christian, Muslim or Jewish religion respectively. The structure of novel lacks any chronology and actors enter the plot from various historical times. Amongst them there are also 20th century scientists (with the background of all three Abrahamic religions) who unsuccessfully try to discover to which religion Khazars actually converted. Vital collaboration and communication between representatives of various cultural backgrounds appears as the fundamental element in Pavić's search for Balkan identity. Pavić's conception apparently does not fit to the popular one-dimensional tale set of myths summarily called as *antemurale christianitatis* myths. This term (literally “bulwark of Christianity”) designates the belief that the historical role of a certain nation was to guard the Christianity against Muslim aggressors. This discourse became the constitutive part of national identity of some (not only) Balkan nations (Čolović 2008, 13). Pavić did not perceive the Balkan as a space behind the

frontier, but as the frontier itself. The kingdom of the Khazars, standing on the cross-road and sphere of interest of three great civilizations (Christian, Muslim and Jewish) is an allegory for the Yugoslavia or the Balkans.

The Danube plays the crucial role as the meta-geographic Balkan frontier. According to the generally recognized thesis of the Serbian geographer Jovan Cvijić (1865–1927), the Balkan Peninsula is located south-east of the Danube and south of the Sava River (Jezernik 1998, 14). Despite the fact that the Danube as a borderline should reduce the polysemic potential of the Balkans and ensure the strict geographic neutrality of the term, in the collective representations the Danube remains the point of division of two qualitatively opposite metageographic dichotomies. The symbolical position of Danube is well illustrated by the 19th century British traveler John Fraser, who noticed in his traveling diary a following memory about the crossing of Danube towards the Balkans: “It was like running from life to the arms of death. I just could not stop thinking about Charon and the river Styx” (Hodgson 1991, 15). The Danube has a significant position also in Pavić’s prose, but this role, like Pavić’s understanding of the Balkans, is ambiguous. The Danube is “one of four heavenly rivers – symbolizing the allegorical level in the Bible” (1998, 85) and at the same time it is (similarly to the Balkans) a liminal space which connects actors from historical cultural areas (especially the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires) and could be at the same time the borderline and the point of struggle between different civilizations.

In *Dictionary of the Khazars*, the banks of the Danube represent the scene of the battle between the Ottomans and Habsburgs. At this place the multireligious trio of “dream hunters” (the Christian Avram Branković, the Muslim Jusuf Masudi and the Jewish Samuel Cohen) finish their mundane pilgrimage. The denying of chronology, dreaming-like (dis)continuity of time, and interchangeability of time and space are very remarkable parts of Pavić’s narrative strategy. As a member of the Branković family “which distinguish[ed] themselves in military battle on the border of two centuries and two states – the Hungarian and the Turkish,” Avram Branković typically adapts his actions according to a particular situation: “It has been said ever since that the Brankoviches of Erdély count in Tzintzar, lie in Walachian, are silent in Greek, sing hymns in Russian, are cleverest in Turkish, and speak their mother tongue – Serbian – only when they intend to kill” (1988, 25). Branković serves as a commander in Austrian-Turkish wars and is also hired as a diplomat, working for the English envoy in Constantinople. During the Turkish attack on the Austrian position, Branković is killed by the Jew Cohen, who is fighting in the Ottoman army. When Branković dies, he is also accompanied by his servant, the Anatolian Muslim Jusuf Masudi. The concept of the *Dictionary of the Khazars*, where particular stories are narrated in three different ways (Christian, Muslim and Jewish sources on the Khazar question), is an analogy to the discrepancies between the vivid everyday life microhistories and historical “one-dimensional” tale narrative, formulated by general public discourse.

## FRONTIER, LIMINALITY AND THE FOLK TRADITION MOTIFS

The motifs of Balkan folklore and the oral tradition are very frequent in Pavić's prose. Pavić borrows the magical matter from the traditional folk imagination, superstitions and magic practices, and the application of magical motifs has multiple effects. Firstly, by integrating magical powers and supernatural beings like devils, witches, ghosts, *Moras* or vampires, Pavić draws the specific atmosphere of the places where his stories are situated. Consequently, by integrating the liminal beings that stand between two worlds (e. g. those of life and death) Pavić also accents the liminality and ambiguity of the Balkan area and its inhabitants. Moreover, even a whole country or ethnic group could be portrayed as the community standing on the threshold between the ordinary and the numinous as is the case with Branković in the *Dictionary of the Khazars*: "he fought in Walachia, where, Satan claimed, every man is born a poet, lives like a thief, and dies a vampire" (125). Later in the book Pavić writes: "Namely, it was said that she had been Mora as a girl, became a witch when she married, and after her death would be a vampire for three years. Not everybody believed this third part, because it was held that vampires were most often Turks, less often Greeks, and never Jews" (269). Pavić's literary vision is a unique synthesis of his own imagination with matter from traditional sources, as in the case of the story from the Hungarian-Romanian border region:

One night in Gyüla, Father came across an enormous snowman seated on the hole of the latrine. He struck him with the lantern, killed him, and went to dinner. Dinner was cabbage soup with boar meat. He tasted the soup and, all of a sudden – plop! – his head fell into the bowl. He kissed his own image sticking out of the bowl and drowned in the cabbage soup. Right there before our very eyes, before we realized what was happening. To this day I recall that while he was drowning in the soup he acted as though he were embracing a woman, put his arms around the wooden bowl as if he were holding not a boar but the head of another being. In short, we buried him as if we were wrenching him from someone's powerful embrace... And we threw his boot into the Muresul so that he would not become a vampire (51).

However, Pavić does not only borrow from folklore but, in particular occasions, "pretends" that he offers the folk material and somehow creates a literal "pseudo-folklore". Pavić refers to folk music (e. g. folk story song about the relationship between Lady Ephrosinia Luccari and Count Dracula or gusle songs about Avram Branković) or to folk legends about ascetic hermits (e. g. the entry "Stylite") and saints (85, 101).

Mythological and folk fairytale patterns are also evident in the way how the place determines the destiny of the hero. In Slavic fairytales the spatial change causes the change of the hero's destiny (Bocánová 2017, 266–267). As Sanja Bošković claims on the account of the Slavic folklore elements in Pavić's work, the change of location of certain object causes a change in its destiny and that will influence the sacred structure of the universe. The consequential anxiety is reflected in our dreams (2002–2003, 353). Sensual irrationality and at the same time the mystical wisdom combined with a certain kind of "holy madness" become a typical feature of Pavić's characters. His figures are psychologically ambiguous and contrary, but not in the sense of the



binary opposite trickster archetype that includes positive-negative dichotomy in the same character. Perhaps all his figures appear as people who are able to pronounce deep and profound existential wisdom and subsequently act or speak in a purely foolish, entirely absurd and comic way. In this sense Pavić's characters are reminiscent of the legendary smart-foolish and dignified-comic Turkish Sufi Nasreddin Hodja. Nasreddin Hodja is a popular figure in folktales and literature especially in the Middle East, Central Asia, India and the Balkans, but we can also spot the presence of the Nasreddin Hodja narrative tradition in wider geographical scope (see Sabatos 2016). Despite the fact that there is no evidence of Pavić's direct inspiration by Nasreddin's character, I assume that Nasreddin Hodja is a proper archetype that could define the common fundamentals of Pavić's figures. Nasreddin Hodja crosses the frontier that divides socially conformist behavior from exotic eccentricity and, at the same time, as a folklore and literary motif, crosses the frontiers of the Orient, Balkans and Europe, like the characters in Pavić's stories.

### THE POLEMIC ON BALKAN QUESTION AND PAVIĆ'S QUEST FOR IDENTITY

In one of the most influential Western interpretations of Pavić's work, Andrew Wachtel has read the *Dictionary of the Khazars* as Pavić's postmodern project of the philosophical demolition of Yugoslavia. Wachtel argues that the *Dictionary* is an ultimate challenge to the legacy of Ivo Andrić's *The Bridge on the Drina* (1945). While Andrić implied the hope that microhistories, nationalist micronarratives and differences can be bridged, history can be demystified, and it is possible to find a common truth, that would satisfy and unite all fractions, Pavić's *Dictionary* is anti-Yugoslav and denies any possibility to build a unifying truth (638). According to Wachtel, Pavić suggests that there is no chance to bridge three mutually incompatible narratives and thus he contributed philosophically to the break-down of Yugoslavia. Referring to the Yugoslav writer Danilo Kiš, Wachtel claims that the relativism is corollary to nationalism and thus Pavić's relativistic postmodern perspective is in fact nationalist (635).

When journalists asked Pavić to explain the *Dictionary of the Khazars*, he pointed to the universality of his novel and claimed that it was about "how the nation looks when it stands between great ideologies but does not belong to any of them" (638). In response to this, Andrew Wachtel states:

In the context of the time, most Yugoslav readers would probably have felt that the 'nation' to which Pavić was referring was Yugoslavia, not Serbia. Following this line of reasoning, they would have seen the book as an attempt to revisit one of the central post-1948 Yugoslav obsessions: the possibility of finding the unique place for itself as a land between, but not part of, East and West (refigured in the post-war period as the capitalist countries of NATO and the Soviet Union and its Warsaw pact allies) (638).

Some of Wachtel's viewpoints have been criticized by Tatjana Aleksić, who argues that Wachtel wrongly understands the postmodernism as the continuation of Modernist tradition. She also cites Yugoslavian writers who were postmodernists but not nationalists (2009, 87 and 100). Wachtel's interpretation of the *Dictionary* as a book

which advocates the fragmentation of Yugoslavia is not fully convincing, because in all three versions of the narrative about the Khazars' conversion, Pavić's figures do not mutually interact in an exclusionary manner. If the *Dictionary* is a literary representation of postmodern relativism and perspectivism, then why does Pavić not privilege one perspective above another? Exclusionary tendencies are hinted at in the particular narratives that are constructed according to the religious affiliation of those who interpreted the "sources" to Khazar question. These interpretations of "sources" remain politically motivated construction of nationalist "one-dimensional" national building myth. From this angle it is possible to read the *Dictionary* quite contrary to Wachtel: not as nationalist apologetic but as a critique of nationalism. While the political aspect of Pavić's work cannot be denied, the powers that aim at the fragmentation (or so called "Balkanization") of Yugoslavia seem to be external rather than internal in Pavić's understanding.

Yugoslavia (as by extension, the Balkans) is defined in Pavić's conception as a multicultural and liminal entity which is discursively constructed and as a space where the political ambitions of the surrounding superpowers from the West and East encounter each other. Even if we can accept postmodernism as the continuation of modernity and consequently accept that Pavić represented a certain kind of postmodern nationalism, his tendencies projected onto the *Dictionary* do not appear in the form of "traditional" ethnically based nationalism (as the product of so called modernity). In Pavić's conception the quasi-nationalistic tensions do not primarily appear between particular nations but rather between great and small formations of nations or civilizations. The hostility within the formations of small nations seems to be the result of outwardly implemented new cultural, economical or political paradigms as we could analogically see in the story of the Khazars who were fragmented due to new religions which were substituted for the original religion of this small nation. The Khazar society was not divided till the time of proselytizing missions of three contesting religions:

Take this as a powerful and ultimate warning, my lord, as the greatest words of wisdom! Have nothing to do with things that involve the three worlds of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism here on earth, so that we may have nothing to do with their underworlds. For those who hate one another are not the problem in this world. They always resemble one another. Enemies are always the same, or become so with time, for they could not be enemies otherwise. It is those who actually differ among themselves who pose the greatest danger. They long to meet one another, because their differences do not bother them. And they are the worst. We and our enemies will combine forces to fight those who allow us to differ from them and do not let this difference disturb their sleep; we will destroy them in one fell swoop from three sides... (52)

From this point of view, we could understand the new religion in the *Dictionary of the Khazars* as an allegory for nationalism, which replaced the previous era of Khazar unity without emphasizing differences within their empire.

Pavić, as a scholar well-grounded in history, was undoubtedly aware of the fact that nationalism was brought to the Balkans as a strategic tool for weakening the Ottoman Empire. The Great Powers provided massive financial and political support

for the national emancipation of Balkan nations (Karakasidou 2002, 577) and every superpower had its favorite amongst the Balkan nations beginning in the first third of the 19th century (Todorova 2009, 137). Many academics claim external influences as the primary source of nationalism, and Westernization as the cause of Balkanization (see Jezernik 2007, Buchowski 2006). Pavić's blaming of the West for the nationalism and consequent Balkanization of Yugoslavia is evident in one of the final scenes of the *Dictionary*, when a four-year-old Belgian boy shoots and kills Dr. Muawia at the moment when he is going to show his Jewish colleague Dr. Schultz the historical documents which could definitely reveal the truth about the Khazar conversion. If the Khazars are really a metaphoric representation of Yugoslavia, then due to the fatal intervention of a young Westerner, all fractions were left in the nationalist dreaming about their own relativist version of historical micronarratives, without any possibility of uncovering a mutually compatible and unifying truth.

However, Pavić does not represent a clearly "agnostic" position: the ultimate truth that moderates the differences and connects various narratives (and where the dreams of every human being meet) exists and is symbolized through the body of Adam Cadmon. We can reduce the meaning of the *Dictionary* to a merely political manifest only when we ignore the frequency and richness of the symbols from several religious and mystic traditions (that often principally jump over the boundaries of established collective religious categories). The message of the *Dictionary* has also a theological level: the truth exists, yet it is not immanent but transcendental. As we could see in the stories of "dream hunters" who were collecting human dreams to put together the picture of Adam Cadmon's body, or in the stories of the scientists representing three great civilizations and collecting facts to discover the full truth about the history of Khazar question, one can discover this ultimate truth only through death. The inclusion and unification of various elements into the coherent picture could result in the sacred quality of object also at the mundane level. This approach was applied not only to Yugoslavia, but to the entire Balkans. The dialogue of traditions and intercultural collaboration seems to be essential for Pavić's perception of the region's cultural and historical heritage, and determinative for his quest of Balkan identity.

## CONCLUSION

It is difficult to interpret Milorad Pavić's work through a single theoretical approach. In my interpretation of his work, Pavić considers the Balkans as a liminal frontier area and deals with the stereotypes that are connected to them by intentionally emphasizing the Otherness and exoticism ascribes to the Balkan peoples. In Pavić's stories the wars against the Turks play only the role of the historical condition without additional attitudes towards the Ottomans or reproductions of Serbian nationalist myths. Although Pavić used motifs from folk culture, they are not derived from antagonism against the Turks (even though Serbian folk material is rich in this sense). Pavić does not reproduce the "frontier Orientalism" narrative, either from the perspective of developing the folk/public discourse or as the representative of an elite culture. The gap (or frontier) between those who Orientalize and those who are

Orientalized is not as narrow as it seems, and the complementary term of “frontier internalism” can be applied to this area.

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## Balkan identity between the Orient and Europe in Milorad Pavić's "Dictionary of the Khazars"

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Frontier Orientalism. Balkanism. Milorad Pavić. Orientalism. Balkan identity.

This article analyzes the cultural, historical and religious contexts of Milorad Pavić's post-modern novel *Dictionary of the Khazars*. Its aim is to analyze the role of Oriental, Balkan and European literary and folkloric motifs as the means of Pavić's original narrative strategy. Another goal is to discuss whether Pavić's employment of these motifs could be framed in terms of Gingrich's concept of frontier Orientalism, or should be conceptualized by other categories. Pavić's approaches toward the Balkan's common identity seems to be more likely based on the idea of a crossroad than the idea of "no man's land" of liminal frontier area. The author discusses the accuracy of applying already existing theoretical concepts to Pavić's works and tries to propose conceptual instruments that would enable to see the work of this postmodern writer in a more accurate manner.

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## From frontier Orientalism to transnational communities: Images of the Tatars in modern Romanian literature \*

ANDREI TERIAN

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In a series of studies published over the last two decades, Andre Gingrich proposes a shift in perspective that is at once significant and beneficial to the understanding of Orientalism and to postcolonial studies in general (see, in particular, Gingrich 1996, 2010, 2015). In this context, it is worth mentioning that, to Edward Said, undoubtedly the most important theorist of “classical” Orientalism, this phenomenon (a) appears as a mainly “academic” construct (Said 1979, 2), (b) it refers exclusively to “the idea of overseas rule” (Said 1994, xxiii), and (c) it implies, paradoxically, the integration of the Orient into the Occidental discourse and system of political domination precisely by highlighting the alterity, i.e. the inferiority of the former. Gingrich’s “frontier Orientalism”, on the other hand, is a “systematic set of metaphorical figures and mythological explanations” (1998, 118) which (a) represents, first and foremost, an expression of the popular-collective mindset, whose scholarly value he does not rule out, (b) it applies to cross-ethnic interaction areas where the presence of Orientals – Muslims in particular – is a common reality, and (c) it rests upon a bipolar axiological mechanism in which the inclusion (as “Good Muslim”) and exclusion (as “Bad Muslim”) of Orientals operate in a complementary, albeit divergent, manner.

It is evident that the long term relevance of such an approach, the intrinsic utility of which is undeniable, would also concern the possibility of integrating within the area of postcolonial studies, as well as analyzing against a consistent conceptual framework, a series of regions such as Russia/the Soviet Union, Austria-Hungary or the Balkans, which the majority of the studies carried out in this field tend to overlook (for a critique of these limitations and for alternative perspectives, see Terian 2012 and Pucherová – Gáfrik 2015). However, in addition to its broad scope, the efficiency of such an endeavor would also rest upon the accuracy of its research tools. It is for this reason that, I believe, Gingrich’s two main typologies (of the European and of the Oriental) deserve closer inspection.

In his first study on “frontier Orientalism”, the Austrian anthropologist puts forwards a division of the countries of today’s Europe into four areas according to their former colonial policies toward the Muslim world. The first category covers the states

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that, due to their overseas colonies, constitute the primary concern of “classical” post-colonial studies, namely, in Said’s framework: Britain, France, the Netherlands and to some extent, Italy. As “countries with limited colonial power in more adjacent regions of Muslim periphery” (Gingrich 1996, 101), Spain, Austria, Hungary and to some degree, Russia fall into the second category. The third category includes the majority of European states, from Portugal, Belgium and Germany to the Nordic countries, the Baltic states and Poland, which have never had colonies or dominions, at least not in the Muslim world. The fourth class brings together “the countries of south-eastern Europe that for several centuries have had a significant Muslim population, either a resident majority or an old local minority” (101). This includes, in addition to Turkey, every state of the Balkan Peninsula – Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania and the southern countries of former Yugoslavia—where the Muslim community is “one among the many outcomes from an inverse colonial past” (101).

This map calls, no doubt, for further nuancing. It is far-fetched, I reckon, to claim that Portugal, for instance, with its colonies in Indonesia, India and Southeast Africa, has never held any influence in the Islamic world. I also think that Russia may easily qualify for the first category, given its colonial policy toward Crimea, the Caucasus and Central Asia (and this without mentioning the support granted to the Arab nationalist movements by the Soviet Union during the Cold War). However, despite such nuances, the map proposed by Gingrich remains, by and large, quite accurate. Yet, its main fault lies not with the classification of the countries, but with his categories, which project retrospectively present-time criteria (current country borders) onto a much more complex past. For this reason, I find profoundly debatable Gingrich’s claim that Southeast European countries, which fall into the fourth category, have “had” a significant Muslim population, since their borders, broadly traced at the end of the 19th century and after World War I, are, to some extent, the outcome of political compromise rather than historical and demographic inquiry. For example, the fact that in the Balkans three wars aimed at redefining the borders were fought in less than two years (1912–1914) – the First Balkan War (1912–1913), which brought the Balkan countries face to face with Turkey, the Second Balkan War (1913), in which the Balkan countries turned their guns on each other, and World War I (1914–1918), which involved the entire world – shows that, time and time again, the countries in this region displayed an understanding of their “natural” territorial right far removed from their actual borders. On various occasions, for instance, when Northern Dobruja became a part of Romania (1878) and Bulgaria assimilated Northern Thrace (1913), the Balkan states annexed territories that accommodated large Muslim communities.

The second set of instruments Gingrich proposes with a view to understanding frontier Orientalism includes the ethical and axiological opposition between “Bad Muslim” (perceived as an aggressor and enemy) and “Good Muslim” (submissive and cooperating). These two categories illustrate the dual image of the Muslim in modern Austrian society and culture: “the ‘Turk’ is a metaphor for the Bad Muslim, the ‘Bosnian’ stands for the Good Muslim” (107). What should be noted here is not so much the identification of the Oriental with the Muslim, nor the ascription of

axiological values to certain ethnic groups – in both cases, Gingrich points to the possibility of using other contents to fill these categories – but rather the rationale behind them. Hence, in contexts other than the centuries-old Habsburg-Ottoman wars, judging an ethnic minority in terms of “good” or “bad” was, to some extent, a matter of whether the latter had its interests represented before a multinational or colonial power by a nation-state. A minority enjoying no support from a nation-state is, in principle, loyal to its host country. Before striving for independence, it declares its autonomy and it is for this reason that ethnic groups are sometimes talked out of their aspirations for independence and into a federation (as it did happen to the Bosnians in Tito’s Yugoslavia). Without logistic, economic and/or political support from a nation-state, a minority is but a marginal threat to the colonial empire or the multinational state. Conversely, when an ethnic group has its interests represented by a nation-state (as well), this double allegiance – to both the nation state and the host state – can cause a rift in its identity. Through their interactions with the “real” Motherland, ethnic minorities sometimes skip the autonomy phase, proclaiming their independence or claiming the transfer of territories to the nation-state with which they identify. Moreover, the nation-state in question, with its economic power, army, propaganda apparatus and diplomatic network, can either pressure the multinational state into granting additional rights to “its” minority or even declare war on its potential oppressor. These scenarios are thus just as many grounds for the collective conscience of a certain nation to deem minorities that lack support from another nation-state worthy of more favorable representation and the ethnic groups endorsed by such a state, worthy of a less favorable one. In this respect, we must not forget that while the Turks had their own country, which turned into an imperial power in modern times, the Bosnians established their own nation-state only later (1990s), eighty years after they no longer shared a common border with Austria.

I think the previous clarifications may be essential to understanding the manner in which frontier Orientalism operates in other areas of Eastern Europe than the one examined by Gingrich. To this end, I will analyze the image of the Tatars as reflected in modern Romanian literature, from the advent of the Romanian “national revival” (c. 1830) to the onset of the communist regime (1948). Consequently, I believe that two basic geopolitical premises must be taken into account: the absence of any significant territorial dispute between the Romanians and the Tatars in modern times and the fact that, during that period, Southeast European Tatars took no initiative to establish their own nation-state.

## AN OVERVIEW OF ROMANIAN-TATAR RELATIONS

For the Romanians, their historical relations with the Turks played a crucial role in the shaping of their national identity. For more than five centuries (from 1369 to 1914), the Romanian princes and kings fought the Ottoman Empire on numerous occasions with varying degrees of success and for nearly four centuries, two of the historical Romanian regions (Wallachia and Moldova) found themselves under the more or less overtly asserted authority of the “Sublime Porte”. The Romanian political and cultural imaginary harnessed this geopolitical proximity, using it as a source of

inspiration for many heroic metanarratives and for an adage, frequently quoted by the modern local elites: “While we were fighting the Turks, they [the Westerners] were building their cathedrals.” As Lucian Boia puts it: “through this heroic argument, the delay in the development of the Romanian provinces is put down to attrition and the West is reminded of its debt to the Romanians” (2013, 63).

On the other hand, Romanian-Tatar relations were equally complex and discontinuous. Between 1241 and 1359, the current Romanian territory was repeatedly raided by the Tatar hordes, yet these attacks triggered no major population movements. A well-known Tatar legend nevertheless recounts that, in 1261, a Muslim group did settle in Dobruja (Williams 2001, 203), against the backdrop of the political rivalry between Byzantium and the Second Bulgarian Tsardom. At the beginning of the next century, in the waning days of the Byzantine Empire, Dobruja had become an autonomous despotate, existing as such until 1388, when the Wallachian voivode Mircea the Elder took notice of its strategic importance and seized control over the region before the Turks had a chance to do it first (Gemil 2009, 93–94). Yet, the Romanian rule over Dobruja would last for less than thirty years, until 1417, when the province was conquered by the Ottoman sultan Murad I (139). For the Turks, Dobruja was of vital strategic importance since it provided direct access to Poland, Lithuania and Crimea by land. By the end of the 15th century, the true geopolitical potential of the province was to be confirmed when the Crimean Tatars declared themselves vassals of sultan Mehmed II (1475) and the Ottomans conquered Budjak, i. e., Southern Bessarabia (1484), thereby creating a bridge between Istanbul and Crimea. In the coming centuries, the Turks would further secure this gateway, encouraging the settling of the Nogai Tatars both in Budjak and in Dobruja. By doing so, the Ottomans not only ensured the ethnic and religious homogeneity of their “Crimean bridge” but also extended their outposts, gaining firmer control over the Romanian principalities. Between the 15th and the 18th centuries, the Tatars conducted repeated punitive raids against the three Romanian countries, leaving a strong impression on both the collective memory and the chronicles of the time, where the image of the barbarian, savage Tatar had already begun to take shape (Fodor 2013).

The year 1783 saw the advent of a new chapter in the Romanian-Tatar relations: by annexing the Crimean Khanate, Russia put an end to the last Tatar form of state organization and thus to their raids against the Romanian territories. This moment marked the beginning of a series of Tatar immigration waves to Dobruja (Karpát 1985, 65), the most important of which occurred in 1783, 1812 (when the Treaty of Bucharest was signed, whereby Turkey and Moldova ceded Bessarabia – Budjak included – to Russia) and 1856 (when, during the Crimean War, Russia launched yet another persecution campaign against the Muslims). Yet, since these waves of Tatar immigrants did not settle in the then Romanian provinces, their inhabitants showed no significant reaction to them. It should be noted, even though we cannot further explore this hypothesis in the present article, that the images of the Turks and Tatars in Romanian literature are the opposite of those reflected in Russian literature. While the former portrays the Turks as a constant threat and the Tatars as figures of an increasingly picturesque nature, the latter paints a much more complex portrait of

the Turks, while the Tatars are seen mainly as constant aggressors who “embody the dark Asian element of the Russian heritage” (Ungurianu 2007, 44).

However, the real turning point was to come in 1878, when, soon after the end of the Russo-Turkish war, at the Congress of Berlin, Romania was not only officially recognized as an independent state, but was also ceded control over northern Dobruja as a form of war reparation, while the southern part of this region was given to Bulgaria. Although the Romanian elite was quick to fabricate a series of legitimizing meta-narratives on which to ground the “historical” right of its country to Dobruja, the truth is that, at the time when the Treaty of Berlin was signed (see Karpat 2002, 226), most of the 225,753 inhabitants of the province were Muslims (126,924 – of which the Tatar community, with its 71,146 members, was the largest ethnic group, and 48,784 Turks). The Romanians ranked only third in the number of members (46,504, amounting to 21% of the population), closely followed by the Bulgarians (30,237), which prompted the two Balkan countries to frequently dispute their control over the region. It is for this reason that, for Romania and Bulgaria alike, Dobruja was, as the British politician William Gladstone aptly puts it, “a gift ungraciously given and reluctantly received” (Iordachi 2002, 172). However, in the decades to come, the Tatar community was to prove a minority peaceful toward the young Romanian kingdom, so much so that, in their honor, King Carol I commissioned the erection of a “Great Mosque” in Constanța, the largest city in northern Dobruja, which he inaugurated in 1913 and which would henceforth bear his name (Williams 2001, 278).

## ORIENTALIZATION OF THE TATARS IN MODERN ROMANIAN LITERATURE

In this specific geopolitical context, three major factors contributed to (re)imagining the Tatar figure in the Romanian literature of the 19th century. One of these is the privileged role literature played in shaping the identity of emerging nations (Thiesse 2001, 133–158) by creating an Other meant to reflect and enhance their ethnic profile. To this purpose, the Tatars, in a manner similar to the Turks, served as a convenient pretext for the writers of that time to highlight not only the heroism of the Romanian people, but also their alleged civilizing mission. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that, despite the progressive intervention of the major European powers (especially Russia) in the Balkans, Moldova, Wallachia and later the United Principalities remained under Ottoman rule until 1878, which accounts for the Romanian writers’ constant concern not to offend Turkish sensitivities and the vilification of the Tatars. Last but not least, it is evident that the frequency of Tatar portrayals in the Romantic literature of the mid-19th century is influenced by the local history of each region. In Transylvanian literature, for instance, the Tatars are virtually non-existent; the literary works produced in Wallachia feature Tatars now and then, on a par with the Turks, while, for the Moldovan historical literature, the Tatar served as a main antagonist.

These characteristics are especially evident in the works of Vasile Alecsandri (1821–1890), probably the most iconic writer of the time of the Romanian “national revival”. A polymath born in Moldova, Alecsandri tried his hand at all genres, produc-

ing, among others, some of the first Romanian literary works devoted to the Tatars. A three octave poem, "Tătarul" (The Tatar, 1843), allegedly an "old song" collected by Alecsandri, cautions the medieval Tatar against invading Romanian territory (this and the following translations are those of the present author): "Oh Tatar, hold your horse,/ Oh Tatar, tighten its bridle,/ Oh Tatar, leave the shore,/ To cross the river try no more,/ Yes, on the holy cross I swear!/ Others like your horse and you,/ Across the river I once threw,/ Oh Tatar, Oh Tatar!" (1966/1, 55) Yet, the aggressor dismisses the warning, which leads to his demise at the end of the poem, when he falls prey to the ravens. It should be noted that, in this as in most Romanian literary works authored by Romantic writers, the Tatar is denied the right to express himself, his psychological profile being reduced to a stereotype: cruelty, aggressiveness or greed. Yet, in another poem, written and published three decades later, "Dan, căpitan de plai" (Captain Dan, 1875), the image of the Oriental is far more complex. Although the Tatar's portrayal remains that of a ruthless invader, he nonetheless acknowledges the courage and wisdom of the Romanian, embodied by a fictitious 15th-century Moldovan captain. In fact, his esteem of the enemy runs so deep that it verges upon camaraderie or even blind faith, as Khan Giray allows Dan, his prisoner, to return to his homeland and kiss the ground one last time before his execution (1966/2, 71–82). Nonetheless, this hardly points to an attempt by Alecsandri to understand alterity: regardless of how many virtues the Tatars have, in his works they serve either as contrasting elements or some sort of convex mirrors, meant only to reflect the merits of the Romanians.

In Alecsandri's series of *Legends*, in which the above-mentioned poem was included, the role of the Other is played not only by the Tatars, but also by different other nations – the Poles, the Magyars and, in a few cases only, the Turks, which the author approaches with tactical precaution in his pre-Independence War works. On the other hand, in *Bătăliile românilor. Fapte istorice* (Battles of the Romanians. Historical Facts, 1859) and *Legende istorice* (Historical Legends, 1865), written by Alecsandri's Wallachian counterpart, Dimitrie Bolintineanu (1819–1872), the Tatars and the Turks, whose roles and profiles are largely interchangeable, serve as the leading antagonists. Yet, a certain distinction is made between the two communities: while the Turks are frequently individualized (onomastically, too, by the names of certain Sultans or Pashas), they can articulate larger discourses and, in some cases, they are also characterized indirectly, through references to elements of the Muslim culture and civilization, the Tatars are, by and large, portrayed collectively, less vocal and devoid of any psychological and civilizational depth. Since they bring an end to any civilization they interact with, they are often associated with apocalyptic images: "The Khan and the Tatars march into the land/ Leaving behind mourning and graves!" ("Coroba" – Bolintineanu 1981, 703). After all, Bolintineanu is probably the Romanian poet that contributes the most to the medieval European stereotypes concerning the Tatars and the Central Asian peoples in general, which were portrayed as savagely fierce hordes (Balakaeva 2007, 124). Such a behavior, to the poet, calls for an equally violent response on the part of the Romanians. In "Preda Buzescu", for example, the Romanian hero strikes the Khan's nephew with a club (Bolintineanu 1981,

112), while in “Fecioara de la Prut” (Maiden on the Prut), the young woman revenges her partner’s and father’s deaths by beheading the Khan (686).

Yet, despite being relegated to such simplistic and naive stereotypes, the Tatars were, in the context of 19th-century Romanian literature, a key element in the shaping of national identity. The works of prose fiction produced during this time especially attest to this, since they allow for greater subtlety of character and insight into their motivation, as is evident in the historical novellas of Gheorghe Asachi (1788–1869). In “Dragoș” (1852), for instance, Tatars account for the foundation (*descălecat*) of the medieval Moldovan state, which, according to Romanian chronicles, came into being when a Transylvanian chieftain went bison hunting with his men and thus came to assume rulership of the new-found territory (which also explains the image of the bison on the coat of arms of Moldova). Unsatisfied with this legend, Asachi attempts to offer “a make-believe explanation” for the establishment of Moldova (1992, 5). Specifically, he advances the idea that the hunting party was actually a confrontation between Dragoș and a Tatar emir who had kidnapped his soon-to-be daughter-in-law, the fair Branda. As for the legend of the bisons, the author attributes it to the emir’s physical appearance, whom Dragoș kills with a spear towards the end of the story:

Haroboe, the Tatar chieftain, with his monstrous face and intimidating stature, was a heathen who stood, in his prime, taller than all other Kalmuks. On his broad, swarthy face, two knit brows arched over a pair of round eyes, and between them a flat nose with wide nostrils, bordered on both sides by a mustache which, with his beard and hair, reminded of a lion’s mane. On his helmet, taken from a famous German knight he had killed in a one on one fight and which, upon his triumph, he had sworn to wear for as long as he lived, two horn-like wings rose in a knightly fashion. His features, together with the helmet, gave the impression of a bison the likes of which roamed the mountains of Dacia. It was for his savageness that he came to be likened to this beast, and referred to as the Tatar *bison* (10–11).

Although Haroboe is the main antagonist of the novella, his portrayal focuses solely on his physical stoutness, while his psychological profile refers to nothing more than his swaying between rage and shrewdness. Asachi does not devote himself to exploring other aspects of the Tatar culture and civilization, which, in the author’s view, share many similarities with the average European people and whose citadel is of Dacian origin. More interesting, from this point of view, is another of Asachi’s historical novellas, “Valea Albă” (The White Valley, 1855), the title of which points to the theater of a major battle Moldovan voivode Stephen the Great fought against the army of Sultan Mehmet II. Particularly striking about it is the fact that, except for a brief account of this confrontation with the Ottomans, the greatest part of the novella is devoted to the Tatars, although they took no actual part in the war. This approach stands as additional proof to the precaution measures taken by the Moldovan writers in recalling these interactions with the Ottomans – and Asachi, who for same time served as the head of the Moldovan censorship bureau, was no exception in this respect. Of particular importance to our subject matter is that, in this context, the Tatars are no longer a metonymy for the Turks and that the author establishes an



ambivalent understanding of their ethno-psychological profile. The main plot of the novella, the romantic one, follows the love story between the Moldovan Ramadan and Fatme, daughter of the Crimean Khan Meñli I Giray and of a Romanian odalisque; the two lovers flee from Crimea, at that time under attack by the Ottoman troops, and take refuge in Moldova where the princess converts to her mother's faith and the young man enters the service of Stephen the Great. Besides this plot, the main Tatar characters of the novella are portrayed in antithesis to each other. The imam who attempts to kidnap Domnica – the Christian name of Fatme – stands out only for the “haughtiness of his blind fanaticism” (99), while Khan Meñli I Giray is at the same time a loving and tolerant father (virtues which become especially evident in the context of his daughter's conversion), as well as a wise and peace-loving ruler, “the greatest of the Crimean Khans”, who “shares with Mithridates the honor of bestowing upon this country glorious historical memories” (75). Asachi is therefore to be remembered not only for painting the first favorable portrait of the Tatar in Romanian literature, but also for advancing the idea that one's ethnic or religious identity does not dictate their personality.

However, it would be wrong to assume that this novella marked the beginning of a campaign aimed at rehabilitating Tatars in the Romanian collective imaginary. On the contrary and paradoxically, probably the most eloquent evidence to the persistence of negative stereotypes about the Tatars in mid-19th century Romanian society comes in the form of a literary work where none of the characters are Tatar. It is the case of “Domnul Vucea” (Mister Vucea, 1888), a novella by Barbu Delavrancea (1858–1918), in which the author evokes the atmosphere of the early 1860s Romanian primary schools. In fact, the novella is but a series of variations on the theme of an appellation (“Ha, the Tatar!”), which, to the main character – a tyrannical teacher –, is the epitome of ethnic and moral inferiority. “Tatars” are, to Mister Vucea, not only his lazy, naughty students, whom he humiliates rather than educates, but also common criminals or even his dog, Pripășel, which is constantly in heat. It is hardly surprising that the teacher thinks the way he does, since he expects his pupils to give the following answer to his question regarding the number of minorities that live in Romania: “*More than one, yet the most numerous and the most intelligent are the four and a half million Romanians, since the Romanians outsmart all others: Turks, Muscovites, Germans, Tatars, priests and Gypsies*” (Delavrancea 1982, 227). Nonetheless, by presenting these nationalist views through a highly negative character, the narrator implicitly satirizes rather than endorses them.

## TOWARDS TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNITIES

Despite their different attitude towards the Tatars, the Romanian literary works of the 19th century seem to have one thing in common: the absence of background elements, caused by precarious knowledge of the culture and civilization of the Tatars. In fact, such ignorance regarding the Orient characterizes, with few exceptions, the largest part of the Romanian culture up to the 20th century. According to one of the first Romanian specialists in Oriental studies, “we are here at the gates of the Orient but we are not acquainted with the Orient and its inhabitants” (Popescu-Ciocănel

1909, 25). It is true that this situation – and, with it, the attitude towards Tatars – started changing gradually towards the end of the 19th century when, in step with the growing interest in Oriental studies of the Romanian elites (see Ciurtin 1998, 213–449), there is an obvious development of critical methods in historiography; this would later lead to a gradual deconstruction of medieval myths about the Tatars and to a closer scrutiny of the circumstances of their interactions with the Romanians over the centuries. Still, perhaps more important than these transformations of the academic field was the fact that Northern Dobruja became part of Romania, which led to the Tatars changing their status from quasi-legendary figures to a common presence in the Romanian society. Besides, their fully cooperating attitudes towards the new administrative regime gradually led to a diminishing of negative stereotypes and, later, even to a reversal of such stereotypes. For example, the “national poet” Mihai Eminescu (1850–1889) had a significant position in the matter, since, despite his xenophobic reactions against other ethnic minorities, he defended the Tatars as early as 1878, in response to certain speculations according to which the Romanian state was supposed to support and govern a savage population:

[T]he peoples of Dobruja are not savage. [...] [T]he Tatars are, for the most part, migrants from the Kuban steppes, that is from Russia, and are farmers, who have produced significant amounts of grain for export since the time of their settlement, which proves their dedication to regular farming work well above and beyond their daily needs. People who work for export and become both producers and consumers as part of the entire economy of Europe cannot be called savage (Eminescu 1989, 87).

A change of paradigm is seen in literature as well, even though, in the context of the shift of the Tatars from myth to reality, Romanian writers showed a significantly lower interest in this ethnic community at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. However, the Tatars became prominent literary figures again, once the historical Romanian novel (re)emerged, with its canonical expression in the works of Mihail Sadoveanu (1880–1961). In this respect, it is worth noting that, despite the nationalist ideology that is, to some extent, inherent to the genre in which he wrote, Sadoveanu, as opposed to his predecessors, practiced a certain type of ethnocultural ecumenism. This is particularly visible in his novels *Neamul Șoimăreștilor* (The Șoimărești Clan, 1915) and *Frații Jderi* (The Jder Brothers, 3 vols., 1935–1942), where the Tatars are substantially represented. For instance, in *Neamul Șoimăreștilor*, the author portrays the political instability that marked the beginning of the 17th century, when, for several decades, the succession to the Moldovan throne had been disputed by rival factions that depended for support on the neighboring countries and on foreign mercenaries. Yet, despite the obvious patriotic undertones of the novel, Sadoveanu's attitude is not in any way xenophobic, on the contrary, given that one of the most well-rounded characters of that novel is the Tatar Bey Cantemir, the chieftain of the Budjak Nogais. Saved by the protagonist Tudor Șoimaru during the opening battle of the novel, Cantemir becomes the Moldovan captain's sworn brother, whom he would later join in most of his heroic and political adventures.

Apart from his courage and loyalty (of which there is no lack in Asachi's novels), the Bey displays a psychological and cultural depth that had never been seen before

in the Romanian portrayals of the Tatars. For example, upon his victory over the Movilă clan, Cantemir takes as slaves as many members of the former ruling family as he can, yet not with a view to collecting the bounty hanging over their heads, but as a means of preventing their execution at the hand of the new voivode (Sadoveanu 2011a, 41). Moreover, the Tatar Bey is the one who warns Șoimaru that the boyar girl for whom he fell is “as fickle as an April’s day” (108). Yet, perhaps even more striking than Cantemir’s psychological depth is his openness towards other cultures and religions. Educated by a Polish teacher and dressed in the French fashion, he avoids judging people by their religion: “The same God that created me is the same God that created any other man who is virtuous in his dress and conduct. [...] [T]he laws of Muhammad, of ‘Îsă [Jesus] and of Moses were given by the same God” (49). Although he does not share the Moldovans’ affection for their homeland, he expresses his disagreement in a poetic and philosophical manner: “A man must be like the bird in the sky, and his eyes must not fixate for too long on a rock [...]” (51). Moreover, he finds the vastness of the world so fascinating that he is tempted to leave for “the New World found by the Spaniards” (192). However, what truly bonds Cantemir to Șoimaru, apart from their duties and friendship, is the feeling of belonging to small(er) nations, at the mercy of the neighboring empires: “This is what wars are like [...] especially in Moldova. Here, even storms swarm across the sky relentlessly; they rush upwards, bringing with them dust and sand, only to return from the mountains and pour down in torrents” (200). It is for this reason that Sadoveanu himself sympathizes with the character: Cantemir suggests allegiance to a transnational community, namely to an “international of small nations” (Casanova 2004, 247–253) where solidarity between the Romanian and Tatar peoples is based on structural similarities.

Although none of its Tatar characters lives up to Cantemir’s level of complexity, *Frații Jderi* is nevertheless of great importance in the context through the variety of the situations in which the Tatars find themselves. As opposed to the previously mentioned novel, the plot of *Frații Jderi* takes place towards the end of the 15th century, during the rule of Stephen the Great, when the social and religious differences between the Tatars and the Moldovans were especially visible. In fact, one of the most important events in the first volume of the novel focuses on the Volga Tatars’ invasion of Moldova, which lead to a direct confrontation between the two peoples. Even though Sadoveanu portrays the Tatars as a group of ruthless aggressors, the combined forces of two literary techniques greatly contribute to the softening of their image. On the one hand, before describing the invasion, the narrator sketches an ethnographic profile of the Tatars, carefully distinguishing between the “Steppe Tatars” and those of a Crimean origin, who “were well-versed in the ways of the world, lived in houses and had rose gardens above the level of the Black Sea” (2011b/1, 245). Moreover, some of the atrocities committed by the Volga Tatars are recounted indirectly, which may suggest that they were exaggerated or even altered by the popular imagination:

Rumor had it that many people from Poland or Moldova had gone to release their brothers, children or wives from slavery; rumor also circulated that many worthy men fled to the desert, hiding behind reeds and clumps of bushes during the day and, at night, chasing

the Holy Ghost, who had left behind a trail of bright smoke and stars by the name of The Road of the Slaves [i. e., the Milky Way] (245–246).

Aside from these collective portraits, the novel proposes numerous other portrayals of the Tatars that attest to their peaceful cohabitation with the Romanians. Undoubtedly, the most eloquent of them is that of Gheorghe Botezatu, a “true Tatar” who had converted to Christianity when very young and who would become “the most trusted friend” of the Jder family. Loyal and quiet, yet intelligent and practical, Gheorghe is a lesser version of Cantemir, loosely associated with the image of the “Good (ex-)Muslim”. This, however, does not automatically mean that, to Sadoveanu, loyalty and religious conversion were prerequisites for a favorable portrayal of the Tatars; on the contrary, the narrative innovation that *Frații Jderi* proposes lies in its representation of the parables of the ethnic and religious relations between the two peoples as seemingly insignificant, picturesque anecdotes. This is, for instance, the case of the story of Mănăila the miller (2011b/3, 166–171), taken as a slave by the Tatars at an early age and transported to Crimea. There, the prisoner teaches the Tatars how to prepare *urdă* (sweet whey cheese, which the locals would later call *mănăilă* in his honor) and regains his freedom, but not before the Tatars show him how to hammer down thirty glasses of wine, one after another. What this story shows is that, even at such a small scale, Sadoveanu advances (perhaps more convincingly than in other contexts where the ideological undertones are more evident) the idea of a transnational community devoid of any relevant form of cultural difference.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis carried out above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. As is evident from the above examples, the Tatars are not a strong presence in Romanian literature, mainly as a result of their fluctuating and discontinuous relations with the Romanians. Yet, from a strictly literary point of view, it would not be too far-fetched to assume that these very fluctuations provided an opportunity for Romanian writers who could, in turn, more easily ascribe to them certain roles and significances: from archetypal enemy and irreconcilable Other, to mythical catalyst of the foundation of the medieval state, mirrored reflection of the “national character”, and last but not least, peoples sharing a similar ethnic fate.

2. Apart from these variations in the portrayal of Tatars, this study also reveals that, between the middle of the 19th century and the middle of the 20th century, the images of the Tatars in the Romanian literature showed an evolution from the status of “Bad Muslim” to that of “Good Muslim”. In other words, the tendency on the part of Romanian writers to Orientalize the Tatars as malefic Others waned and the modern authors started to see them rather as potential members of a transnational community.

3. On a larger scale, the above-mentioned evolution suggests that the moral values (good vs. bad) assigned to an ethnic group are anything but fixed in the context of a nation’s literature, let alone in national literatures sharing the same geopolitical area. Far from contradicting the concept of “frontier Orientalism”, such findings reinforce its comparative potential, which could be explored not only “horizontally”

(by analyzing the representation of different ethnic groups within a single national literature), but also “vertically” (by analyzing the comparative portrayal of the same ethnic group in different national literatures).

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## From frontier Orientalism to transnational communities: Images of the Tatars in modern Romanian literature

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Frontier Orientalism. Tatars – literary images. Romanian literature. Transnational communities. Ethnic minorities.

This article is both an analysis of the image of Tatars in modern Romanian literature (c. 1830–1948) and a theoretical reflection on the manner in which, in some Central and Eastern European literatures, such as the Romanian one, “frontier Orientalism” (Andre Gingrich) contributed to the creation of transnational communities. Thus, although the Tatars are not very frequently depicted in Romanian literature, they have acquired a pivotal function here. In contrast to the image of Oriental Muslims in the Western area of Central and Eastern Europe, which tends to polarize along the ethical axis of good vs. evil (e. g., the Bosnian vs. the Turks), Tatars have an ambiguous function in modern Romanian literature, caused both by their Orientalization as a Muslim Other and by the discovery of various ethnic similarities with the Romanians, generated by their common status of “small(er) nations”.

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## Early encounters with the world of Islam in Latvian literary culture

IEVA KALNAČA – BENEDIKTS KALNAČS

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### INTRODUCTION

In the discussions about different Orientalism(s), Latvia occupies a rather peripheral place. Neither it nor its short-lived predecessor states or political unities have been involved in the processes of colonization, apart from a brief episode of possession of the Caribbean island of Tobago, and Gambia in West Africa, under the flag of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia (Kurzemes un Zemgales hercogiste) in the 17th century (Andersons 1970). This experience, and in particular the story of the overseas colony in Tobago, has been preserved in collective memory and at times also used to boost self-awareness of the Latvian nation. Despite this, there are no substantial traces of colonial conquests determining the identity construction of contemporary society.

On the other hand, for the greater part of its history the Baltic littoral has been subjected to the political dominance of different imperial powers. From the late 18th century and up to the establishment of a nation-state in 1918, the present-day territory of Latvia was divided among several provinces of the Russian empire, while intellectual and social life was to a considerable extent still determined by the Baltic German upper-class, the descendants of those people who had settled in the area from the late 12th century onward. The quick rise of ethnic Latvian literacy during the 18th and 19th centuries echoed Western intellectual trends but was also impregnated by the Russian imperial ideology. The historical conditions therefore played a substantial role in the perception of Oriental “Others”.

The aim of this paper is to trace different representations of the encounters with the world of Islam in Latvian literary culture of the 19th and early 20th century. This was a time period when Latvian national identity gradually obtained its modern-day contours, including a substantial enlargement of knowledge, of themselves and of the others, the latter to a growing extent being acquired via first-hand experience. The perception of other ethnicities and cultures was, however, filtered through the prism of either Western or Russian “imperial eyes” (Pratt 2008). Other nations, and especially those with different religious beliefs and practices, were either encountered with an incredulity characteristic to Western attitudes toward the Orient, or with the inevitability of direct confrontation in the cases of military conflicts involving the Russian empire and its political antagonists. At the same time, such encounters,

especially those that occurred on the borders and in geographically peripheral areas of Russia, often led to unexpected revelations bringing about an understanding of the fate shared with other, relatively distant societies. Through these encounters, new and unexpected “contact zones” emerged. This refers to the experiences acquired during the 19th century warfare between the Russian and the Ottoman empires. Another substantial segment of the encounters with the world of Islam was provided by gradually growing numbers of travel notes and reports, especially from the trips to the south of Europe, the Maghreb, and the Near East. The migration of ethnic Latvian peasants to distant parts of Russia in the second half of the 19th century in search of new lands, and later the refugee race to the Caucasus before and during the First World War, also contributed to the representation of Oriental “Others”.



Georg Wilhelm Timm. *Album with sketches (Algerian)*, 1845, pencil and sepia on paper, 23 x 31,3 cm, VMM Z/Ā-2954/4

Our paper investigates the representation of these different encounters with the Orient in late 19th- and early 20th-century Latvian literature, travel writing and art, also taking into account examples provided by Baltic German media. We demonstrate that these experiences not only played a substantial role in establishing first-hand contacts with relatively distant cultures but also contributed to the identity formation of the Latvian nation. We first provide theoretical reflections of the topic that position the Orientalist representations discussed here within broader contexts of Orientalism, as introduced by Edward Said, and point to the differences between the classical Orientalism and “frontier Orientalism” of close and immediate contacts, as proposed by Andre Gingrich. In the following, we focus on different images and stereotypes characteristic of early Orientalist representations in Latvian literary culture.

## FRONTIER ORIENTALISM AND OTHER FORMS OF ENCOUNTERS WITH THE WORLD OF ISLAM

In his discussion of various facets of Orientalism, Andre Gingrich makes a valuable distinction between different forms of encounters between the Christian and the Muslim worlds. He points out that there are classic colonial empires with most of their controlled territories, including those of predominantly Muslim population, being located overseas. Then there are colonial powers who have acquired adjacent territories of the Muslim periphery. The third group is made up by those European countries who never had any noteworthy influence in the Muslim world. They either had colonial possessions elsewhere, or are countries with almost no colonial past, themselves being subjects of other (non-Muslim) powers. Finally, to the fourth group of European countries belong those with a substantial Muslim population, predominantly as the outcome of an inverse colonial past in the south of Europe (1998, 100–101). Gingrich develops his ideas further, making a distinction between the classical colonialism overseas and of what he terms “frontier Orientalism” that “functions first with the image of a contested, nearby border, and constructs secondly an eternal ‘we’ that is in direct, close confrontation with the ‘Oriental’.” Thirdly, the standard representation of this Oriental is the Turk and, more broadly, the Muslim” (2015, 61). While the Habsburg Monarchy is taken as the principal example of this kind of frontier Orientalism, Gingrich finds historical parallels in at least two other examples, Russia with regard to the Caucasus and Central Asia and Spain vis-à-vis Northwest Africa (63).

Within this model, there is also a corresponding place for the Baltic littoral that from the 18th century was an integral part of the Russian empire, and thus inevitably reflected a number of ideological positions promoted by the imperial center. It therefore should not come as a surprise that the Latvian reception of the world of Islam in the 19th century was to a great extent affected by Russian models (Tlostanova 2000). However, at the same time some characteristic stereotypes of the perception of “the Other” were abandoned or transformed, especially due to the gradually acquired first-hand knowledge of the world of Islam.

Western Orientalism also left its mark in the descriptions of geographically more distant lands that became available for visits with the improved financial means of the travelers and the change of the political situation. This process mirrored a broader 19th-century interest in Oriental lifestyles rising across the European continent. An important aspect is revealed by the different degrees of involvement with foreign experience characteristic to these representations. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said distinguishes among three different approaches that have determined the perception of the Orient through the eyes of Europeans. First, it is a detached (“scientific”) perspective that takes as its starting point the already established archive of Orientalist knowledge and patterns of representation. Second, there are authors who through their first-hand observations want to keep a certain level of eccentricity and style of individual consciousness. And, finally, there are representations provided by those writers, “for whom a real or metaphorical trip to the Orient is the fulfillment of some deeply felt and urgent project” (2003, 157–158).

We can trace similar patterns in the examples discussed in this paper where we propose a subdivision of different kinds of Orientalism in Latvian literary culture. They include representations of potentially “bad” Muslims, perceived as a real or imagined threat to the community; travel notes and personal impressions in the vein of classical Orientalism but with a considerably greater degree of involvement if compared to the above case; and, finally, subjective portrayals of domesticated or “good” Orientals who embody a number of admirable features as they share their lives with the Christian community within the Russian empire. The first case deals predominantly with the Turks, who are involved in warfare with the Russian imperial forces; the second features both imagined and first-hand experience of exotic lands with the presence of Muslim culture, legends, tales and historical monuments (encountered, for example, on the visits to Spain and the Maghreb); the third is predominantly focused on the Caucasus, a peripheral region of the empire previously less familiar through direct encounters but already brought into the focus of attention of Latvian readers by Russian romanticists and other travelers.



Jāzeps Grosvalds. *Three Women (Baghdad Street)*, 1918, tempera on paper, 27,5 x 22,7 cm, VMM-Z8666

## FRONTIERS AND CONFRONTATIONS

When defining the imagery of frontier Orientalism that involves an emphasis on confrontations and contested borders, Andre Gingrich notes that the threat that “our” community (in his case, the Habsburg Monarchy) faces, relies on a stereotyped image of the Oriental “Other”. He goes on to elaborate on this in the context of 17th century history:

The subject of the “Turkish Wars” is a central element of the obligatory school curriculum in Austria, and it is much more than that: village chronicles in all of eastern and southern Austria record the wars, popular songs and idioms allude to them, town names and public monuments refer to them, the entire map of Vienna is replete with more or less obviously mythologized symbols of the public memory of them. The entirety of the chronicles, legends, school textbooks, songs, monuments, museum artifacts, imprecations, and idioms constitute the mythological structure of “frontier orientalism” (2015, 62).

For the Latvian population, most of the memories of the clashes between the Russian and the Ottoman military are of a considerably later origin. However, the 19th-century warfare resounded loudly throughout Russia, and news from the front provided a source of information that enlarged the scope of previously acquired knowledge of the world.

Even before the rise of Latvian press in the second quarter of the 19th century, information about the imperial frontiers of Russia was shared on an informal basis. One of the reasons that fed this interest was the growing involvement of ethnic Latvians in the Russian military. In most cases it was involuntary. The Russian empire started to recruit soldiers from the Baltic provinces in the 1790s, and this process lasted till 1874, when the practice was abandoned and an obligatory military service established. In Latvian folksongs, collected in the 19th century, one of the meanings of the word ‘Russians’ (*krievi*) is linked to the recruits serving in the imperial forces who might be of different nationalities (Rozenbergs 2005, 126). These songs reflect on the events that occasionally led soldiers far away from their native places. In the 19th century there was already a wide network of opportunities as to how this experience was dealt with that included informal talks in market places and taverns, in addition to the official information about the advances of the Russian military announced during church services.

The level of awareness was to a great extent increased by press reports, especially after the first Latvian-language newspaper, *Latviešu Avīzes* (Latvian Newspaper), started to appear in Jelgava (Mitau), the capital of the Baltic province of Courland (Kurzeme), in 1822. Before that time, ethnic Latvians had to rely on information provided by the Baltic German press, and the accessibility of newspapers was also limited due to their relatively high prices as well as a language barrier even if there already was a considerable number of Latvians, especially those working in towns and in the Baltic German manors, who were among the potential readers (Johansons 2011, 81). The Baltic German press gradually started to flourish in the 18th century, after recovering from the devastating impact of the Great Northern War that ended in 1721. Information about life in Riga, the largest city of the Baltic littoral, was provided by the German language newspaper, *Rigische Anzeigen*. Due to its focus on local matters,



a new initiative, approved by legal authorities, set as its goal the publication of a newspaper that would concentrate on international politics. This task was brought to life by the *Rigische politische Zeitung*, a newspaper established in 1777 and published till 1797, when it was renamed as *Rigische Zeitung* and continued its run under that name till 1913 (Blumbergs 2008, 73). It reflected on the French Revolution, including the publication of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, approved in 1789, and wrote about a number of other topical international issues. The knowledge about foreign lands, however, still remained the privilege of the upper class.

This situation was challenged by the appearance of the first Latvian language newspapers, *Latviešu Avīzes* and *Tas Latviešu Draugs* (The Friend of Latvians, 1832–1846). This was an important step in spreading political and geographical knowledge among Latvians. The first newspaper in Latvian to a considerable extent relied on earlier patterns. The first editor of *Latviešu Avīzes*, K. F. Watson (1777–1826), was a son of the editor of the most important German language newspaper in the capital of Courland, *Mitauische Zeitung*. Parts of the German literati continued to express doubts, whether information about distant lands in vernacular was appropriate or whether it might provide an unwelcome challenge and a potential threat to the privileges of the upper class in terms of information access. As late as 1864, the pastor Rudolph Schultz (1807–1866) intended to create a newspaper for Latvians in German that would provide information on world politics for the local population. His undertaking, *Volksblatt für Stadt und Land der baltischen Provinzen*, however, appeared to be relatively short-lived and, due to the lack of readership, only existed for two years (1864–1865), as there was already a sufficient amount of information available in Latvian. Another (and earlier) testimony of the battle of information was provided by the decision of the legal authorities to ban the Estonian-language newspaper, *Tartomaa rahva Näddali-Leht* (Tartu Weekly for Peasants), in 1806, on the grounds that it contained sensitive information about the Napoleonic wars otherwise exclusively available to readers of German (Zelče 2009, 102).

*Latviešu Avīzes* and *Tas Latviešu Draugs* were important early sources of information about foreign lands and people, and became especially attractive during the periods of warfare between the Russian and the Ottoman empires. The published information was still mostly borrowed from the local German press and thus substantially delayed. In addition, most of the news appeared filtered through the ideology of the Russian empire as well as that of the German upper class. This combination contributed to Orientalizing representations of the military opponents that were constantly recycled during the periods of conflict in 1828 and 1829, the Crimean war in 1855 and 1856, and, at a later stage of warfare, in 1877 and 1878.

In the late 1820s, *Latviešu Avīzes* did not yet publish news in the present-day sense but rather relied on the reports of the Russian administration as to the political developments (Zelče 2009, 132). This led to the creation of an archetypical “Other” on the battlefield, the embodiment of this principal enemy being a stereotyped Turk, an image that was preserved in Latvian popular imagination throughout the 19th century (133). In the article “No turkiem un viņu būšanas” (About the Turks), published on June 6, 1829, the author states (all translations from Latvian are by the authors of the paper):



There is hardly anybody among our readers who wouldn't have heard about the Turks; but we seldom know how exactly they are, and what should we expect of them. Some consider them to be pagans, some think that they are monsters who eat other people, and still others imagine them as being especially strong, like giants from the tales. But everybody is afraid of the Turks (2).

When describing important monuments of great men in history, *Latviešu Avīzes* mentions those constructed to honor well-known Russian generals who successfully resisted the Turks. Such monuments have been built in St. Petersburg and other places, and "in Riga there are also great decorated pillars" ("No Jelgavas" 1825, 1).

The image of the Turk as a threatening "Other" was instrumentalized in the descriptions of various parts of the world where they were again juxtaposed to Christian communities. Thus, while writing about Jerusalem, a city that in the 19th century was under Ottoman rule, a contributor to *Latviešu Avīzes* states that there is a growing number of pilgrims interested in visiting holy places but "the Turks demand a payment from every Christian who wants to enter these places and squeeze out a lot of money" ("No Jeruzalemes pilsāta" 1823, 26).

Only gradually was this type of stereotyping challenged by first-hand reports of people who encountered foreigners in real life, complicating the established binary oppositions and providing a more nuanced insight into the everyday life of Muslims.

It was noticeable that during periods of warfare the number of copies of early Latvian language newspapers was constantly on the rise. In the 1850s, there was an attempt to use the complicated political situation in order to establish another newspaper, *Mājas Viesis* (Home Visitor). The permission was granted with a considerable delay, and the first issue in 1856 opened with a celebration of peace. *Mājas Viesis* continued to inform its readers about distant lands, gradually bringing in more personal reflections instead of repeating news already published elsewhere.

First-hand information about the frontier areas of the Russian empire was in particular based on the experience in the imperial military. The participation in imperial troops in the second half of the 19th century in most cases meant a serious and unwelcome change in life. It lasted for 25 years, and the youngest sons of Latvian peasant families were recruited against their will. As a result of this process, in the latter half of the 19th century, when these soldiers started to return home, they had different kinds of experiences, often returning as war invalids. Their stories about distant lands and strange events provided a source of attraction for local peasants who possessed relatively little knowledge about the world beyond their farms and were linked to restricted daily routines. Many of these narratives, at first circulating in an oral form, later entered Latvian literature, predominantly through the childhood memoirs of prominent Latvian authors of the late 19th and early 20th century. In the manner these stories were told, certain parallels between life in distant places and that of Latvian peasants also came to the fore. Above all, this opened up one of the channels to notice and evaluate similarities and differences stretching beyond the immediate local environment, and to do so on the basis of direct experience in various contact zones that became an integral part of the identity-building process.

An interesting case is provided by the poet Andrejs Pumpurs (1841–1902) and his travelogue *No Daugavas līdz Donavai* (From Daugava to Danube, 1896). Pumpurs is claimed to be one of the Latvian national poets of the second half of the 19th century, who, with a passion typical of the time period, constantly praised his land and people in his texts. His major achievement is the epic poem *Lāčplēsis* (Bearslayer) that was published in 1888 and soon acquired the status of a national epic (Rudzītis 1988, 13).

Pumpurs's travel notes, written and published in 1896, reveal a different facet of his activities. These notes are based on the experience of the author, who, as a volunteer in the Russian military services, is going to Serbia to fight in the war between the Serbs and the Turks in the 1870s. His travel covers the period between August 6, 1876, and February 10, 1877, and describes experiences in, among other locations, Moscow, Kishinev, Iasi, and Belgrade. Perhaps the most striking episode occurs after the ceasefire is being announced. Pumpurs is then unexpectedly confronted with the request to join Montenegrin forces and, in an almost parallel move, the Turkish military, both proposals based on more or less similar financial conditions. The latter proposal is even followed by an attempt to kidnap him, unexpectedly inspired by one of his fellow Russian volunteers. One of the reasons why Pumpurs is addressed is due to the fact that he is not a Russian national. In the conversation with a Turkish dealer, however, Pumpurs announces that he feels himself to be a citizen of Russia, and therefore cannot simply switch sides in this war. Contacts with various nationalities, nevertheless, form a substantial part of his everyday experience during these travels, even more so because Pumpurs never enters a real battlefield. Later on, he remained in the military services of the tsarist state and served as an officer in the Russian army even while writing his national poem. Personal reflections provided by Pumpurs's travelogue indicate the possibility of overcoming a routinely Orientalist discourse based on binary oppositions.

The above observations indicate that the majority of 19th-century encounters with the Turks as Oriental "Others" was either linked to the service of ethnic Latvians in the Russian military, or occurred only indirectly through the news published in the German and Latvian language press. Under such conditions, it was almost inevitable that this reception predominantly focused on differences, and was based on stereotypes shaped by the Russian imperial ideology. However, especially toward late 19th century, direct experience gradually started to play a more substantial role in the perception of similarities and differences with other ethnicities.

A growing presence of personal observations was also noticeable in the representations of the south of Europe and the Near East that appeared in both Baltic German and Latvian language documentations in the 19th and early 20th century.

## EXPANDING FRONTIERS

The rise of economic prosperity and cultural demands in the Baltic littoral gradually provided the educated upper and middle class with an access to intellectual trends topical elsewhere in Europe. Those who had the possibility to study at foreign universities often considered travel as a substantial part of their education. This development partially overlapped with the rise of interest in Oriental cultures.

During the 19th century there was an emerging and developing trend of Orientalism all over Europe. In a wider sense this included the passion of the members of Western society – artists, writers, scholars, diplomats, etc. – for Oriental cultures and an intention to get acquainted with, to study, to describe and to depict these cultures. This interest contributed to the specific needs of certain professions as well as to the growing awareness of cultural specificity of other territories that were often discussed in a form of travel notes, diaries etc. Travelers from the Baltic littoral also contributed to this trend, bringing home a considerable amount of knowledge about the traditions and everyday practices of different cultures including first-hand experience of such territories as Spain, the Maghreb, Turkey, and the Near East, substantially influenced by Islam. These reflections gradually became more present on the pages of German as well as Latvian-language newspapers.

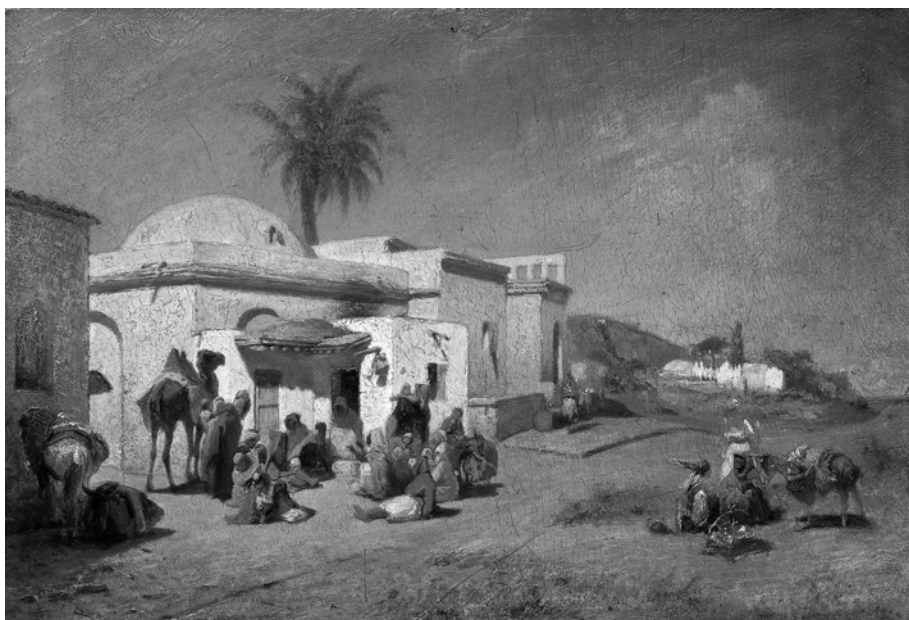
The possibilities of travel were also rising due to the political changes in the world. Algeria was from 1830 ruled by France, and Spain extended its influence in Morocco from the 1860s onward. This meant that a number of territories containing important monuments of Islamic art were more easily accessible to European travelers. The willingness to acquire new impressions was closely linked to the appropriation of the imagery of Romanticism that had already paid great attention to seemingly primitive and exotic locations as opposed to the growing industrialization of Europe.

The territories of Spain and the Maghreb were among the most beloved as they were relatively near and accessible. Many European artists toured these countries and left their testimonies in different forms leading to the rise of Orientalist representations in academic painting and graphic art. Other scholars and travelers expressed their admiration in written form, publishing exciting and informative descriptions of their experience.

The curiosity about the Orient also found its echo in Latvia. The surviving testimonies open up a space for fascinating and manifold investigations as the authors paid special attention to architectural monuments and everyday traditions of the local people.

In the Baltic littoral, one of the initiators of the interest in Oriental countries was the Baltic German painter Georg Wilhelm Timm (1820–1895), who traveled to Algeria as early as 1845. He carried out his trip together with the French painter and Orientalist Émile Jean-Horace Vernet (1789–1863), who had been to Algeria several times before and thus was an excellent companion for Timm. Vernet's style of travel has been described as follows: "His journeys – many to Algeria, and to Morocco, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Turkey and the Crimea – were not always made in great style. Indeed, he took any means of transport available, boat, wagon, sledge, horse, camel, mule, camping in tents or even in the open air" (Thornton 1994, 174).

In Algeria and afterward, Timm made a large number of watercolors, drawings and oil paintings depicting architecture, decorative facades, nature and landscapes, traditional lifestyle, native people, etc. He did not leave any written memories, but there are numerous descriptions of the Maghreb published in 19th-century Baltic German and Latvian press. They provide a fascinating perception of the Islamic architecture and culture as well as of local society. These textual representations together



Georg Wilhelm Timm. *Oriental Street (Algeria)*, 1845–1846, oil on wood, 20,5 x 46,3 cm, VMM GL-3548 / ĀMM GL-1686

with the published images created an idea about North Africa, at that time an almost unknown and undiscovered territory with completely different traditions and ways of life. The readers of these stories got acquainted with mosques, cupolas, story-tellers, donkeys, turbans, etc. It is interesting to discuss some of these representations in order to provide an idea of how the Maghreb was interpreted in the 19th century, and what general understanding of the region was formed at that time.

Several drawings by Timm reflect on the tradition of story-telling that becomes much clearer when discussed in the context of the testimonies left by other travelers. An article, published in *Tas Latviešu Draugs* in 1845, states that the Arabs

highly appreciate sharing stories of the deeds of their fathers and forefathers. Every financially situated person has its own story-teller. All friends gather around a tent, or sit on the flat roof of a house, and listen to such stories every night, even if the story goes on for so long as sixty or one hundred nights. They tell their stories very clearly and quickly, and give an impression as if it were a European reading from a book (D. E. 1845).

Travelers often provide detailed descriptions of everyday practices of the local inhabitants:

Local people often share lodgings with their livestock. Camels are from very early on taught and trained to work hard and to bring heavy burdens. They are demanded to walk a lot and given little food. There was a man who one day left Mogador early in the morning and headed to another town about 20 miles away. He just wanted to bring a couple of fresh oranges to his fiancée, and was back home by late night, covering about 40 miles within a day (D. E. 1845).

Travel notes published in 1849 in *Rigische Zeitung* describe Algiers, the capital of Algeria, paying attention not only to the historical but also to the modern face of the city:



Georg Wilhelm Timm. *Two Scenes from Algerian Street*, 1846, watercolor and gouache on paper, 21,5 x 15 cm, VMM Z/Ā-1528

I made a couple of pleasant walks in the city and became even more satisfied with my travel impressions. From Place Royal there begin the two largest streets that divide Algiers from north to south – Bab-el-Oued and Bab-Azoun. The look from Place Royal goes toward the sea, and to the small port of Algiers that is beautiful and lively. There is an active social life going on throughout the day. It is worth to spend some time there for everyone who enjoys passersby in a fashionably colorful dress. The lower part of the town is contemporary and European in appearance with a strong French influence. The streets, almost all of which have arcades, are rather narrow, but the Arabs, whose traditional lodgings often face each other in the upper parts, seem to be satisfied with their width (Aus 1849).

Other Eastern territories are also mentioned in the press. Alongside this publicity, there are frequent public lectures which reflect on travel experiences. In 1869, *Mājas Viesis* advertised a series of lectures by a pilgrim who would held a talk on Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Bethany, and Jordan on October 19, and on Nazareth, Mount Tabor, and Damascus on October 26, in the house of the New Guild in Riga (Par 1869). There were also reports by the schoolteacher at the Riga Dome, Hackmann, who visited Alexandria, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Cairo, and other Oriental cities (1857a; 1857b).

Newspaper publications were often supplemented by illustrations. In 1895, the newly established *Mājas Viesa Mēnešraksts* (Home Visitor's Monthly) printed an engraving depicting Cairo from a typically Orientalist perspective. A crowded street with houses on both sides opens up a view toward the mosque of Al-Azhar with one of its luxurious minarets. This engraving was attached to the article devoted to the



travel of the Russian czar Nicholas II (1868–1918) to the Near East. With regard to Egypt, the article stresses that “there is seldom a part of the world that is capable of capturing our attention more than this corner of the earth so full of the magic of tales and stories, a bright star in the darkness of old times” (Vinters 1895, 179). This publication touches upon the local traditions and lifestyles of the Egyptians, their cultural and art heritage, including detailed descriptions of important architectural objects, such as, for example, the Mosque of Amr (1895, 182).

In 1899, we also find the publication of memories of the devoted Russian Orientalist, and a travel companion to Nicholas II, Esper Ukhtomsky (1861–1921), in the Latvian press. It includes several illustrations, also featuring one of the most important Islamic buildings of Cairo, the 14th-century Mosque-Madrassa of Sultan Hassan (Uhtomskis 1899, 47).

A principal turn in the description of the Orient was in the late 19th century marked by the rising number of reports by ethnically Latvian authors. This was due to the growing interest in Oriental countries and the relative prosperity of the Latvian middle class.

One of those travelers was the economist, financier and theologian Kārlis Balodis (1864–1931). In 1895, he published an article on Turkey, with one of the illustrations showing a panoramic view of Constantinople across the Bosphorus. High above the



Freijs in Bedouin Dress. Image from *Zeme, kur Jēzus staigāja*. Rīga: J. A. Freijs, 1895



city there are the characteristic round cupolas of mosques and stretched out minarets. Balodis (1895, 131) writes:

Constantinople is located in a very beautiful place where the strait of Bosphorus meets the Sea of Marmara. Constantinople and its surroundings are demarcated by hills and mountains that are covered by nice gardens and beautiful trees, where there are summer houses of the Turks and noble palaces, among which the residence of the sultan stands out in its luxury. The special beauty of the prosperous Turkish houses becomes visible in the garden of the house and indoors, where one finds impressive stone-decorated yards, beautiful fountains, and richly ornamented rooms with expensive carpets.

Oriental themes were widely represented in the publications of the Latvian Baptist priest, author and publisher Jānis Aleksandrs Freijs (1863–1950) in which he focused on the depiction of Biblical lands (Treija 2008). In several of his books, printed in 1895, the author refers to his experiences in Egypt, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, thus bringing together diverse traditions and cultures. These publications were widely read and discussed in the contemporary press. The monthly *Austrums* (The East) wrote on one of these books that it contained 476 pages and included a great number of illustrations, drawings and photographs (J. E. 1895, 748). The visual material (predominantly taken from foreign sources without specifying them) is very diverse, including a photograph of the author in a Bedouin dress riding a horse, panoramic views of several cities with mosques and minarets, important architectural sites (for example, mosques from Jerusalem, Constantinople, Damascus, etc.) as well as daily-life scenes in towns and in the countryside. The second edition of *Zeme, kur Jēzus staigāja* (The Land where Jesus walked) was published in 1910 and contained additional photographs and engravings (Freijs 1910).

A paradigmatic example of a modern and cultivated Latvian traveler might have been set by the painter Jāzepts Grosvalds (1891–1920). His father, Frīdrihs Grosvalds, studied law at the Universities of Tartu and St. Petersburg, and later became a successful solicitor and a rich proprietor. He was one of the leading figures of the Latvian



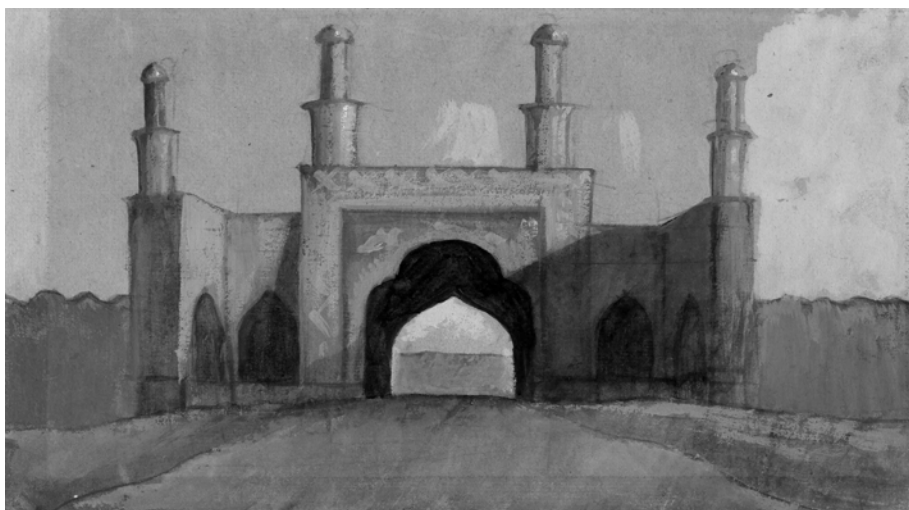
Jāzepts Grosvalds. *In the East*, 1904–1909, Indian ink on paper, 18,1 x 13,3 cm, VMM JGM–411

national movement in the second half of the 19th century and also made a political career. The education he could provide his five children with was comparable to high European standards. Jāzeps Grosvalds, apart from his academic studies in painting, was an ardent reader, displayed an interest in music, and spoke several languages, including a bit of Persian acquired during his later travels.

Grosvalds's earliest drawing on Oriental themes was made between 1904 and 1909. It was called *Austrumos* (In the East), and depicted three men in characteristic Eastern dress at the moment of rest. There is also a string musical instrument, a vase, and a small dish of snacks. Even if Grosvalds hadn't yet seen Eastern lands at this point, he was able to capture the atmosphere of an Oriental scene based on his knowledge and imagination. The first travel where the painter got directly acquainted with important examples of Islamic art was to Spain in 1913. Being already well-prepared, Grosvalds's

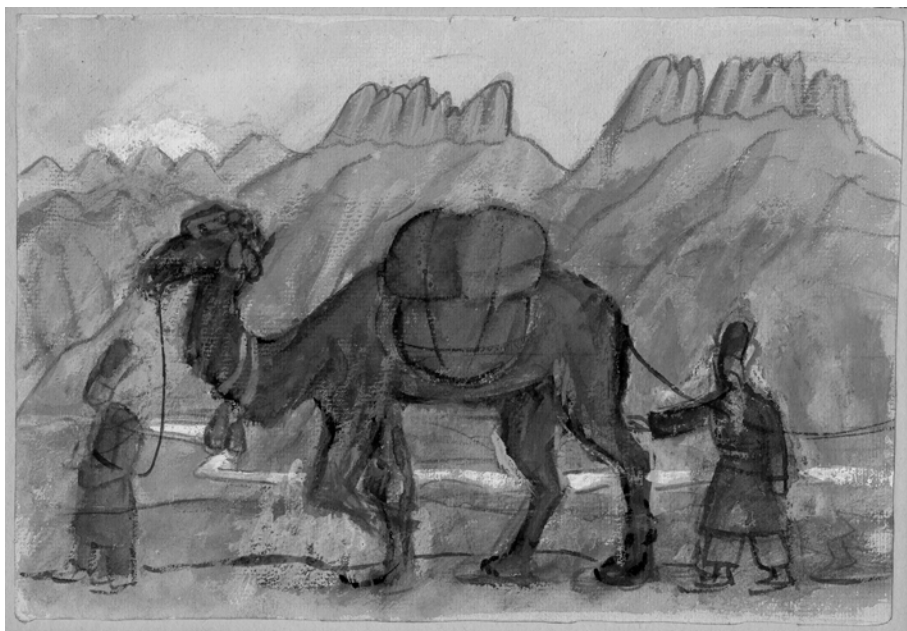
encounter with a culture having Oriental and Arabic elements, and with distinctive southern landscapes, where harsh deserts are combined with tropical vibrancy, strengthened his neoromantic inclinations, fully realized later, during his journey to Persia. [...] Jāzeps saw Spain (its people, landscapes, cities, and gardens) in colours and through the prism of his Oriental enthusiasm, mixed with reminiscences of art history and literature (Kļaviņš 2006, 322).

During his travels, here and later, Grosvalds constantly kept a diary where he carefully documented different impressions, people, traditions, and architectural monuments. The impact of the Oriental art and scenery was later strengthened during his stay in Persia, Egypt, and Turkey. Grosvalds not only made a number of paintings and drawings but also worked on a literary documentation of his experiences, *Tableaux Persans*, published posthumously in both the original French and in Latvian translation (Grosvalds 1978). The text was completed almost immediately after the return from his travel.



Jāzeps Grosvalds. *Blue Gate in Qazvin*, 1918, tempera on paper, 16 x 23 cm, VMM Z-8664

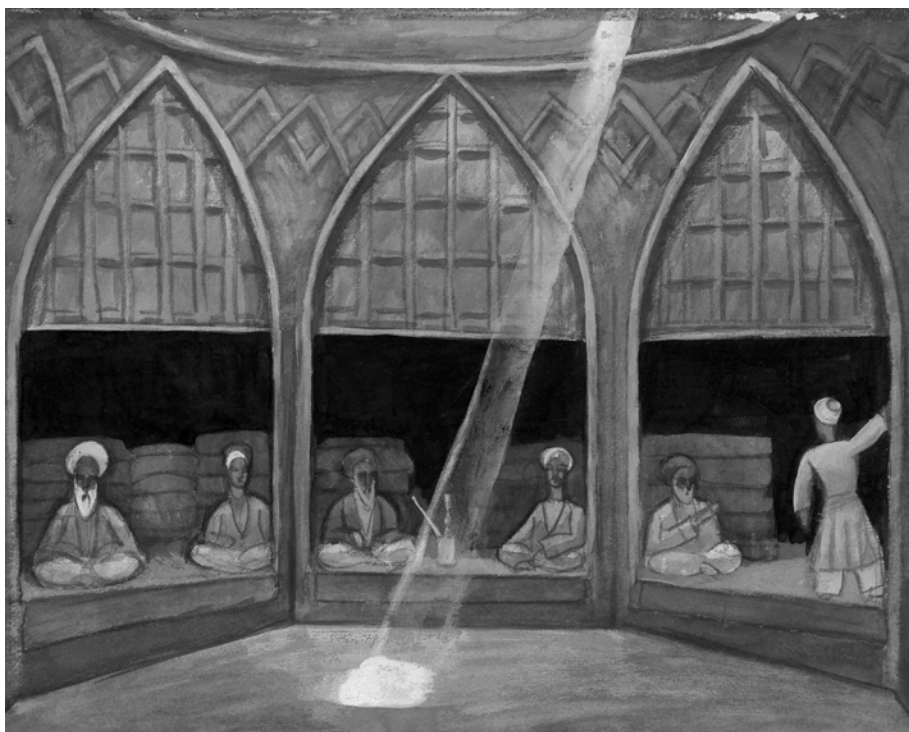
The circumstances of Grosvalds's trip to the Near East were rather complicated. He was mobilized into the Russian military during the Great War but together with other officers happened to be in London in the fall of 1917. In an uncertain situation caused by the turbulences of the revolution in Russia, he subscribed to an operation in Mesopotamia as a member of a special section of the British military. Following a rather complicated tour via Egypt, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean, Grosvalds reached Persia by early March 1918. He devoted as much time as possible to the observations of local life, and made different kinds of paintings and drawings.



Jāzeps Grosvalds. *Camel*, 1918, tempera on paper, 16 x 23,3 cm, VMM Z-8655

Despite encountering a lot of people whose life was greatly affected by the war, and to whom he also paid serious attention, Grosvalds was fascinated by his discovery of the world he had dreamed of while reading the tales of *The Thousand and One Nights* and other sources that stimulated his interest in the Near East. Grosvalds's drawings and paintings cover various facets of his experience in Persia, including ethno- and topographic observations, sceneries enlivened by palm woods and “boats of Sindbad”, scenes from everyday life on the streets, tea houses (*chai kanes*), and the Rembrandtesque twilight of the Orient (Kļaviņš 2006, 343–345). The painter often supplements his drawings with inscriptions in the Persian language, being fascinated by the visual beauty of written letters.

In his *Tableaux Persans*, Grosvalds does not pay much attention to the chronology of his travels but rather focuses on personal observations that in their literary form match those documented in his art. Especially extensive are the sections devoted to those regions of Iran predominantly inhabited by the Kurds. These were among the most exotic areas encountered during his travels. Here is how he describes the Kurds in Chahroban: “The livestock on the slopes of the hills is looked after by shepherds,



Jāzepe Grosvalds. *Bazaar in Qazvin*, 1918, tempera on paper, 16 x 23 cm, VMM Z-4395

sons of these mountains, whose great height is made especially impressive by their strange hats. Their brownish and savage faces have certain aristocratic features, and, after meeting the Semitic Arabs, these people look much more European” (Grosvalds 1978, 7).

In all of Grosvalds’s descriptions, there appears a noticeable tension in confrontation with the strange and unfamiliar local people, who, on a closer look, start to appear charming and friendly despite various tricks constantly applied in their communication with a foreigner (12). He also refers to the Kurds as “robbers by profession”, and even compares them to “large black devils” that are heavily armed (18). Such remarks should perhaps not be taken at their face value, as it is important to keep in mind that Grosvalds undertakes his trip as a member of the British imperial troops. Still, he never loses his considerable compassion, that testifies to an individual perception of specific individuals met on his way as well as an understanding of the difficult circumstances in which local people live (8–9):

Women on the streets, all dressed in black, hide their pale faces with ebony eyes and eyelids under the chadras, while men gather in tea houses (*chai kanes*), dirty huts with low roofs that have scenes of lions hunting deer, a favorite motif of Persian painters, on their walls. Noisy and hungry crowds fill up local “restaurants”, small huts blackened by smoke where there are copper boilers on the fire with dubious food being prepared. These people are ready to eat anything that might be available. Children, whose brown skin is pulled up on their weak bones, look after everything that we might leave on the road, in the hope to diminish their hunger at least to a certain extent.





Jāzeps Grosvalds. *Kurds on the Roof*, 1918, watercolor on paper, 23,3 x 16 cm, VMM Z-8654

These personal encounters with the Near East help him to move beyond stereotypes and generalizations, and add a new facet to the representations of the world of Islam in Latvian literary culture. It is certainly important to notice that, while traveling in the Near East, Grosvalds could draw on an important archive of knowledge that was available for a young and aspiring early 20th-century Latvian intellectual. Alongside information achieved through the Baltic German and Latvian press, another important channel of knowledge was provided by the translations from Oriental languages. Among many other sources, the interest in Oriental texts was due to a considerable extent to the massive impact of Goethe's concept of *Weltliteratur*, primarily inspired by foreign cultures, which stimulated translations into Latvian. With regard to Oriental themes, it is especially important to mention the tales of *The Thousand and One Nights* that in the 19th century already had an established tradition of translations into major European languages (Naddaff 2014, 488–491). Grosvalds

refers to these tales as important for his inspiration; and, at the beginning of the 20th century, several of these tales were translated into Latvian. In 1912 and 1914, there appeared two small volumes in a translation by Linards Laicens (1883–1937), and, between 1923 and 1929, four volumes in translations of Laicens and Roberts Kroders (1892–1956) were published. The attractiveness of this later edition was considerably increased by its colorful illustrations, the work of Aleksandrs Apsītis (1880–1943; for the first three volumes) and Niklāvs Strunke (1894–1966). By the first quarter of the 20th century the Latvian public was not only relatively well-informed about various lands dominated by the culture of Islam but also had an opportunity to read translations and follow personal reflections of the Orient.

The experience of the Baltic German and Latvian travelers to the Maghreb, Persia, Egypt, and other territories in the Near East was shaped by patterns that were close



Niklāvs Strunke. Illustration for *The Thousand and One Nights*. Image from *The Thousand and One Nights*, IV. Rīga: Leta, 1929



to classical Western Orientalism. These trips were accomplished by members of the educated upper class who undertook their travels for the purposes of study and leisure. The acquired impressions contributed to the expression of personal experience and allowed for a documentation of first-hand observations. At the same time, certain prejudices about the Orient remained in place, and the “Othering” of local population was discursively present. To some extent, an overlap with the Russian imperial imagery is also noticeable, for example, when the reception was shaped by the context of military expeditions as was partially the case with Jāzeps Grosvalds’s travels.

### FRONTIERS AS CONTACT ZONES

Besides those described above, there were other routes leading Latvians to various encounters with other ethnicities in different “contact zones”. In the course of the 19th century, larger groups of Latvian peasants made attempts to move into internal Russia in a search for a more fertile land. This was a difficult undertaking, plagued by constant setbacks. Many did not find appropriate conditions to earn their living, even when, as in the case promoted by Krišjānis Valdemārs (1825–1891), one of the leaders of the national movement, the initiative came from ardent supporters of economic prosperity of the Latvian people. Another major wave of emigration occurred before and during the Great War when one of the most characteristic refugee routes led to the Caucasus.

Occasionally, there had been earlier visits from the Baltic littoral to this distant region of the Russian empire. Thus the painter Georg Wilhelm Timm traveled not only to Algeria but, in the late 1840s and early 1850s, participated in Russian military operations in the Caucasus as a battalion painter. He also documented cultural monuments and places of interest, and among his paintings there was one depicting a Tatar cemetery near the Caspian Sea. Jāzeps Grosvalds, in the aftermath of his stay in the Near East, also received orders to move to the Caucasus, where he spent some months in late 1918 and early 1919 (Kļaviņš 2006, 342). The largest Latvian émigré community to the Caucasus before and during the Great War was concentrated in the city of Baku and its surroundings in Azerbaijan, a place marked by relative prosperity due to its production of oil. Living there meant new encounters with different ethnic groups, both Christians and Muslims, giving new insights into the habits of these people.

In her book, *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism*, Ewa M. Thompson (2000, 53) convincingly argues that the discourse of the Caucasus in the imperial imagination was first shaped by 19th-century Russian romanticists:

Literary representations of Caucasus natives contained in these writings entered the canon of Russian literature, contributed to Russian self-perception, and influenced attitudes toward the Caucasus dwellers. The Romanticizing of colonialism in the works of Pushkin and Lermontov had its parallels in Orientalist literature of Western Europe.

These early encounters coincided with the historical period when the Russian Empire was promoting its political interests in the area, and, after the war with Persia that lasted from 1804 to 1813, secured its colonial presence in the Caucasus. The attitudes expressed by various kinds of imperial discourses are comparable to the

rhetoric that accompanied later confrontations with the Turks, and thus established a certain pattern of “Othering”.

However, by the late 19th and early 20th century, when more Latvian settlers established themselves in the Caucasus, the political tensions had temporarily calmed down. Especially at the beginning of the Great War a certain consensus of a shared fate spread among different nationalities of the Russian empire, as is also made visible by the texts of Latvian authors. Instead of critical remarks with regard to the political struggles of various ethnic groups of the area, which were recycled in a superficial form by the 19th-century Latvian press, thus resounding the ideology of the imperial center (Zelče 2009, 280), newly acquired first-hand observations were much more careful and sympathetic. This was also due to the fact that these personal impressions were made especially vivid in literary works of some of the most fascinating Latvian writers of the time.

Among the first Latvians to settle in the Caucasus was the writer Ernests Birznieks-Upītis (1871–1960). As a private tutor, who accompanied the family of his principal, he made the move already in 1893. He first spent some years near the border with Persia, later worked in Dagestan (1895–1898), stayed in Balahan till 1914, and afterward lived near the city of Baku until his return to Latvia in 1921.

Birznieks-Upītis's careful observations of people in the Caucasus started to appear in the early 20th century (from 1903), and he was interested in the topic almost until the end of his life (one of the last stories being published as late as in 1948). The majority of the texts based on the scenes encountered in the Caucasus were published in his story collections *Kaukāza kalnos* (In the Mountains of the Caucasus, 1924) and *Kaukāza stāsti* (Stories from the Caucasus, 1927). They cover almost every aspect of the life of the author, starting from his arrival and first months spent in the region that are vividly portrayed in the story *Manas pirmās Lieldienas svešumā* (My first Easter in Distant Lands). It includes the description of a milieu with Orthodox churches, where Easter is celebrated, and Muslim minarets peacefully existing side by side, while children from families of different religious backgrounds are peacefully playing together (Birznieks Upītis 1927b, 15). As these stories reveal, Birznieks-Upītis was a passionate observer of local industrial facilities but especially fond of natural phenomena which he always carefully linked to the portrayal of local people. Thus, for example, his story *Aizā* (In the Gorge) details a touching visit of a family member to his native village. After being acquainted with daily routines as well as with the heart-felt relation of all the family members to their son, we are then led to the experience of sudden and devastating floods that completely destroy the village and bring death to almost all of the characters who had been introduced to the readers a moment before (1927a, 96–104). The focus of Upītis's narrative is always on human beings, regardless of how different people who inhabit this area might seem to a stranger or what the differences among various ethnicities of the Caucasus are.

Birznieks-Upītis not only wrote stories and memoirs but also helped a number of his compatriots to settle in the region during the peak of emigration which coincided with the Great War, when battles were being fought on the territory of Latvia. Among these compatriots was the writer Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš (1877–1962) who lived

in the Caucasus from 1915 to 1918. His first impressions, titled *Vēstules no Kaukāza* (Letters from the Caucasus), appeared in a serialized form in the newspaper *Baltija* (The Baltics) from May 1916 onward. Jaunsudrabiņš later collected his stories in the volume *Kaukāzs* (The Caucasus, 1920), while the events of his first novel, *Nāves deja* (The Dance of Death, 1924), also unfold in Baku.

The description of the initial encounters with the local people and their customs displays a great deal of curiosity and amazement on the part of the writer. But as soon as he gets more familiar with his new milieu, he highly appreciates the friendly attitudes of the people around him: “Thus I have to say that, despite even not being able to converse, we were met with a lot of sympathy and friendship in this distant land” (Jaunsudrabiņš 1981a, 79). One of their first hosts in Baku likes to spend time in the rooms of the writer’s family, simply observing their activities, or even falling asleep from time to time. Jaunsudrabiņš is especially moved when “on Christmas day our host arrived early in the morning, and there was a big orange laying in his palm for our daughter. He was indeed very kind to us” (77).

Jaunsudrabiņš left a number of colorful descriptions of local inhabitants, sometimes drawn in a humorous tone. Many of his observations testify that he encountered people with a completely different mentality who behaved in such a manner that he himself would never do. As he experiences a noisy crowd during the performance of an operetta, he notes that on any other occasion he would have felt an irresistible desire to leave immediately. However, in this particular case he was so interested in the observation of local people that he carefully followed the loud conversations of those who had not met each other for some time and now tried to communicate even during the performance despite their places being located quite far apart from each other (82–83).

The tone set by Jaunsudrabiņš is most reliably explained by the sense of a shared fate with the people he encounters. They are all part of the Russian Empire, and their fate is influenced by war, as his own living is. In all their difference, they appear to be friendly “Others”, who inhabit a kind of a borderland between the familiar and the strange. In this case it is legitimate to speak of the representations of the majority of local people as “good” Muslims who might be different (as Gingrich describes in the case of Austria) but as citizens of the same country they do not raise feelings of danger.

On a number of occasions, the writer still recognizes that he feels more comfortable among people with whom he shares his religious faith. Upon meeting a woman from Moscow who is together with her six year old daughter, they immediately decide to help each other to find lodgings and keep contacts at least during the first weeks of their stay (100). At the same time, however, there is a growing compassion with regard to the local population and an understanding of the hardships of their lives. The author is surprised by the level of mutual understanding that can be reached without being able to speak each other’s language, or even, as with many Muslims, to communicate in Russian (163).

In his novel, *Nāves deja*, this kind of compassion amounts to an almost apocalyptic vision of the devastating impact of war and famine on the people of the Caucasus.

Even if the narrative focuses on a Latvian émigré, Vilis Vītols, it provides a great deal of information about different ethnic groups in the Caucasus who, despite their potential mutual disagreements, are equally affected by the turbulent state of affairs. Among the most sympathetic characters in the novel is a local man whom the protagonist encounters on the very first evening upon his arrival. When Vilis Vītols tells the man that he does not have any means to buy food or secure an overnight stay, he is taken to the house of the stranger, given a meal and offered a room (1981b, 163). This kind of impression is very characteristic of the way how the Latvian refugees learn to know the good-heartedness of the inhabitants of the Caucasus.

The portrayal of the Caucasus, as encountered by Latvian writers during the first quarter of the 20th century, does not contain elaborate descriptions of historical monuments. The focus is rather on daily life in the streets of towns and in the countryside, on industrial facilities and on characteristic rural landscapes. The feeling of a shared fate provides these observations with a great deal of sympathy and first-hand experience which testifies to a friendly co-existence of different ethnicities in the region. A certain amount of exoticism is still preserved in these stories that helps to appreciate the persistence of traditions characteristic to the ways of life of the inhabitants of the Caucasus.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of texts and images we encounter in Latvian literary culture during the 19th and early 20th century, an archive made up of stories, travel notes, memoirs, and visual representations, reveals different varieties of the representation of Oriental “Others”. To some extent these representations correspond to well-known patterns and stereotypes of the traditional Orientalist imagery but they also display specific features.

It is important to take into account that there have been two major patterns that shaped the representations of early encounters with the world of Islam in Latvian literary culture. First, there was the Russian imperial imagery that, due to the lasting military conflicts in the 19th century and constant political interests in the borderlands, had a special focus on the “Othering” of the military opponents of the empire. Thus especially the Turks were portrayed as a paradigmatic example of the Oriental “Other”, a tradition that has also had a long-lasting imprint in the collective memory of the Latvian society, especially widely circulated through the stories of those peasants who had been recruited as soldiers into the Russian troops.

Another trend that was close to classical Western Orientalism was represented by the experience of the upper class travelers to the Maghreb, Persia, Egypt, and other places in the Near East. Stimulated by the interest in exotic lands that was widespread in 19th-century Europe, these people documented their first-hand experience of different locations, people, and historical monuments. Discursively, this experience was shaped by Orientalist attitudes even if these might remain deeply unconscious. However, travel notes and visual impressions reveal the curiosity of the observers and also amount in detail. With the growing number of travelers of ethnic Latvian origin, traditional Orientalist perspectives are relativized and subjected to more intimate observations shared with the compatriots back home.

The third approach is characterized by early 20th-century images of the life in the Caucasus that display a rising level of compassion and feeling of a shared fate with the local inhabitants, even if elements of exoticism also remain in place. The images of domesticated Muslims, characteristic to the experience in the Caucasus during the Great War, are based on an appreciation of the multi-ethnic structure of the Russian empire that allows for close and mutually trustful encounters between Christians and Muslims.

Our investigation has helped to determine different models applicable to the early representations of the encounters with the world of Islam in Latvian (and Baltic German) literary culture. However, valuable as this classification is, it is not less important to keep in mind that in reality there are no clear-cut borders between different types of representations. Thus we notice that the “Othering” of the Turks as archetypical “Others” was not only characteristic to the Russian imperial discourse but its origins are to be looked for in Western Europe, and especially in the narratives circulating in the lands of the Habsburg Monarchy as discussed by Andre Gingrich. Similarly, the impressions revealed by a number of 19th-century Western travelers were in a somewhat comparable manner also integrated into literary texts of Russian romanticists. In this context it is interesting to note that in the life stories of Georg Wilhelm Timm and Jāzeps Grosvalds, the experience of individual travel, a characteristic feature of Western Orientalism, co-existed with the encounters with the world of Islam as a part of military operations that on other occasions had also tended to determine more explicit processes of “Othering”. Thus there is a constant overlap of different models of representation.

The specific features of the representation of the world of Islam in Latvian literary culture are also determined by the fact that the Muslim communities have historically never presented a real threat to the ethnic Latvian society. Direct encounters in rather distant border zones point toward a certain exoticism of perception but, by getting closer on specific occasions, strangers also raise a considerable curiosity that often amounts to sympathy. Historically it has always remained more stimulating than threatening for Latvians to look for the possibilities of acquiring first-hand knowledge of the world of Islam.

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The aim of this paper is to trace different representations of the encounters with the world of Islam in Latvian literary culture of the 19th and early 20th century. The Latvian case is contextualized within trends in 19th-century Orientalist representations shaped by the Western European and Russian imperial imagination. Other nations, and especially those with different religious beliefs and practices, have characteristically been perceived either with an incredulity characteristic to Western attitudes toward the Orient, or with the inevitability of direct confrontation and “Othering” in the cases of military conflicts involving the imperial forces of Russian empire and their political antagonists. At the same time, personal encounters that occurred in geographically peripheral areas of Russia as well as beyond the state borders, often led to unexpected revelations, bringing about an understanding of the fate shared with other, relatively distant societies and cultures. In our paper we demonstrate that these experiences played a substantial role not only in establishing first-hand contacts with other cultures but also contributed to the identity formation of the Latvian nation. We first provide theoretical reflections of the topic that position the discussed representations within broader contexts of Orientalism, as introduced by Edward Said, and point to the differences between the classical Orientalism and “frontier Orientalism” of close and immediate contacts, as proposed by Andre Gingrich. In the following, we focus on different images and stereotypes characteristic to the Orientalist representations in Latvian literary culture and propose a subdivision of different kinds of Orientalism. They include representations of potentially “bad” Muslims, perceived as a real or imaginary threat; travel notes and personal impressions in the vein of classical Orientalism but with a considerably greater degree of involvement if compared to the above case; and, finally, subjective portrayals of domesticated or “good” Orientals who embody a number of admirable features as they share their lives with the Christian community within the Russian empire. The first case deals predominantly with the Turks, who are involved in warfare with the Russian imperial forces; the second features both imagined and first-hand experience of exotic lands with a substantial presence of Muslim culture, legends, tales and historical monuments; the third is focused on the life in the Caucasus before and during the Great War.

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## Frontier Orientalism and the stereotype formation process in Georgian literature

MZIA JAMAGIDZE

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### INTRODUCTION

Georgia, located in the Caucasus at the crossroads of Western and Eastern civilizations, has historically been a multicultural country, where the traces of contacts among different cultures coexist with indigenous cultural features. Historically, the country passed through the dominance of various neighboring super-states, including the Muslim Persian and Ottoman Empires. But in the early 19th century, after appealing to Orthodox Christian Russia for military partnership against its Muslim neighbors, the Georgian nation was eventually colonized by the Russian Empire. While dominant political powers constantly tried to spread their cultural influences, Georgian identity and social consciousness has historically been formed in the context of political and cultural resistance against colonizing forces. At each stage of these historical transformations, Georgian society faced issues related to its cultural identity issues and to the country's position between Orient and Occident. Both these historical processes and the unambiguous choice made by the modern Georgian state to claim a part of the European political and cultural heritage make it evident that Georgia belongs to a Western type of cultural identity and sees itself as belonging to the European space.

Georgian representations of the nation's historical relations with the Islamic space largely mirror the corresponding Western narratives analyzed by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (2003, 60–61):

Yet where Islam was concerned, European fear, if not always respect, was in order. After Mohammed's death in 632, the military and later the cultural and religious hegemony of Islam grew enormously. [...] And to this extraordinary assault Europe could respond with very little except fear and a kind of awe not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma. Until the end of the 17th century the "Ottoman peril" lurked alongside Europe to represent for the whole of Christian civilization a constant danger, and in time European civilization incorporated that peril and its lore, its great events, figures, virtues, and vices, as something woven into the fabric of life.

In defining his concept of "frontier Orientalism", Andre Gingrich places the Caucasus region in the same category as other countries outside of Northwestern Europe which had significant interactions with the Islamic world:

Unlike the first group, its countries had not been classical colonial rulers of important Muslim territories overseas. But unlike the third group, it did not entirely lack colonial interaction with the Muslim world. [...] however, the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires exercised a more or less durable rule over marginal Muslim lands in their vicinity: Spain in northwest Africa, Russia in central Asia and the Caucasus and Austria and Austro-Hungary in Bosnia (1998, 100–101).

According to Alexandre Etkind, “the Russian Empire was distinguished by its liminal location between West and East” (2011, 29). As Susan Layton argues, in the Romantic era, characterized by a strong drive toward eastbound travel, Russian travelers in search of an exotic experience clearly found it much more satisfying to Orientalize Georgia rather than to note its similarities with Orthodox Russia or its antagonism to Islam (2005, 195). Taking into account the difficult historical experience of Georgia and, in particular, its successive domination by imperial states of both Muslim and Christian culture, the goal of the present paper is to explore the context and scope of the representation of Muslims in Georgian literature. Based on an analysis of several Georgian literary texts, this paper examines whether the ways in which they represented Muslims fall within the theoretical framework set by Said’s *Orientalism*, as well as by Gingrich’s notion of “frontier Orientalism”. In parallel, the similarities and differences between Georgian perceptions of the Russian invaders and those of the Eastern Muslim rulers are surveyed.

## RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AS A CULTURAL FRONTIER

According to Edward Said’s definition of Orientalism, three factors have contributed to turning even the simplest representation of the Arabs and Islam into a highly politicized matter: anti-Arab and anti-Islamic prejudice in the West, the Arab struggle against Zionism, and its effects upon their perception by American Jews, as well as by liberal circles and the general population, and the almost total absence of any cultural position making it possible for people in the West either to identify with or to dispassionately discuss the Muslim world (2003, 27–28). In contrast to Said, who discussed Orientalism as an established practice in Western academic culture at large, Andre Gingrich uses the notion of “frontier Orientalism” to define the stereotypical images of Muslims, used in cultural materials pertaining to the realms of folklore, pop culture and social life. Frontier Orientalism can be seen “as a complement to or a variant of orientalism in general” (1998, 118). In his article “Frontier Myths of Orientalism”, Gingrich, like Said, defines political interest as the driving force of frontier Orientalism and, focusing on the case of Austria, discusses its two-fold relationship with the Muslim world: “[T]he issues of domestic and foreign relation with the Muslim World have strong contemporaneous implications but it should be recognized that these current interests are to some degree the result of historical processes as well” (100). By analyzing the experience of Austria, Gingrich concludes that attitudes toward the Islamic world changed throughout history depending on the political context prevalent at any given time. Specifically, as Gingrich explains in his 2015 article “The Nearby Frontier: Structural Analyses of Myths of Orientalism”, perceptions of Islamic culture are directly connected to existing political realities: when

Muslims were fighting for the Austrian state, they were considered “good” Muslims, while those who were not taking part in the process or were fighting on the opposite side were referred to as “bad” Muslims (63).

Historically, Georgians associated their state’s mission and function within global contexts to the Christian faith. In concrete terms, the country represented a certain watershed between the Eastern Islamic and the Western Christian spaces. This vision was formulated already in the early medieval centuries in Georgian hagiographic texts: in the *Abo Tbilelis Tsameba* (Martyrdom of St. Abo Tbileli, 786–790), Iovane Sabanisidze defines Georgia’s role as that of preserving the faith on the periphery of the Christian world (2010, 89). Because Georgians belonged to Christian culture, they had close political and cultural contacts with Byzantium, a civilization whose achievements they even aimed to surpass. In his *Zveli Kartuli Literaturis Istoria* (History of Old Georgian Literature, 1923), Korneli Kekelidze, the scholar who systematized the study of medieval Georgian literature, sees medieval Georgians as an ambitious nation that placed an emphasis on its own religious and cultural mission (1981, 40). Against this background, the self-identification of Georgia’s statehood was premised on the existence of a strict demarcation between the Islamic space and this nation of Orthodox culture. Due to historic circumstances and to the constant threat of attacks and domination by neighboring Muslim super-states, this Islamic space, as well as its culture and society, were perceived by Georgians as hostile and dangerous, while the names of the rulers of neighboring Islamic states such as Tamerlane (1336–1405) or Shāh Abbās I of Persia (1571–1629) are still remembered as those of the most brutal conquerors of Georgia.

Georgian hagiographic texts place a particular emphasis on the nature of Christianity, which they saw as the only true religion. However, it is worth mentioning that Muslim civilizations also played a certain role in Georgian culture. In mid-medieval times, when the country was politically strong, these two fundamentally different Christian and Muslim cultures co-existed without clashing within the Georgian space. For example, according to Muslim historians, King David the Builder learned Islam from the original sources, went to mosques and invited a Muslim Sheikh and an Islamic judge together with Orthodox members in one of the commissions working on Christian affairs (Kekelidze 1981, 39). In the 15th century, after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans, Georgia’s connections with the Western world were cut off, and it became strongly influenced by the Ottoman Empire and Iran. Because of this loss of political power, the idea of the nation’s mission to be the protector of Christianity as a frontier country was suppressed in the Georgian consciousness. While the unified Georgian kingdom disintegrated into a number of smaller kingdoms and principalities, society realized that physical survival and the preservation of the Christian faith were at stake. The political domination by the Ottoman Empire or Iran often implied the conversion of Georgian kings and other political leaders to Islam, while the aristocracy and commoners could preserve their faith. An ethnic Georgian who converted to Islam was no longer regarded as a Georgian, but was described as “Tatarized”, as it was for instance the case with Rostom (1565–1658), king of Kartli between 1633 and 1658, who was raised in Iran and converted to Islam.

As a result of various periods of domination by Islamic states and of some changes in the political borders of the Georgian state, the native Christian population came to reside within the boundaries of Muslim polities. In 1614–1617, two hundred thousand Georgians were deported to Iran by Shāh Abbās I and forced to convert to Islam, but they still maintained the Georgian language and the historical memory of being ethnically Georgian (Bartaia 2009, 126–127). Later on, the Western and Southern regions of Georgia (Lazeti, Adjara, Samtskhe, and Tao-Klarjeti) found themselves within the territorial borders of the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, the population of these regions had to convert to Islam. Part of the population of the historical Hereti region of Georgia, on the territory of today's Azerbaijan, preserved Christianity, while part of it adopted Islam (Nozadze 2010). As for the population of the territories which remained under Georgian rule, because of the Islamic political domination it had to repeatedly re-identify itself as Georgian and Christian, even within the boundaries of its own state. On the other hand, it had to seek ways to guarantee its self-preservation while subjected to forced co-existence with the Islamic Empires, by implicitly maintaining their Georgian consciousness and performing Christian rituals. When the Russian Empire appeared as a new political player in the Caucasus region in the 18th century, it began its relations with Georgia with the status of an ally. The declared goal of the Empire in its relations with Georgia was to protect it as a neighbor of common religious faith from the aggression of the Islamic Empires. Georgian society, exhausted by continuous wars against its Muslim neighbors, welcomed Russia as a savior. In this period, the positive acceptance of Russian Empire can be seen in David Guramishvili's epic poem *Davitiani* (1787). However, beginning in 1801 when Russia broke the terms of the Treaty, annexed Georgia and turned it into a colony of its empire, the notion of Georgia as a co-religionist country completely disappeared from the official Russian narrative. Instead, it started to become Orientalized, and represented as a semi-Muslim, semi-wild, and exotic area.

Although political relations between Georgia and the Islamic world, along with the cultural influence of the latter upon the former, belong to the past and have been overshadowed by subsequent Russian rule over the country in the 19th and 20th centuries, the stereotypes developed in that period still prevail in the Georgian social and cultural space. One of the reasons that can account for this phenomenon is that, during the 20th century, this collective memory of the period of Muslim rule over Georgia was revived in a number of historical novels such as Levan Gotua's *Gmirta Varami* (1958–1962) or Revaz Japaridze's *Mdzime Jvari* (1973–1976), as well as in films like Mikheil Chiaureli's *Giorgi Saakadze* (1943–1946). With regard to the ways in which Georgian social consciousness has related to these different Muslim groups, I argue that it has been over-determined by an existential fear, sparking from centuries of difficult cohabitation under conditions of colonial and imperial rule. In this article, the ways in which Georgian literature has represented Muslim populations, in particular those groups that were deprived of political power and did not participate in colonizing processes, will be compared to the image of Muslims associated with colonial or imperial powers.

## PERCEPTIONS OF MUSLIMS IN GEORGIAN LITERATURE

While Georgia's cultural and political contacts with Muslim nations were very limited during the Soviet period and were only re-established in post-Soviet times in a very different form from earlier ones, largely of good neighborly relations, some Georgian texts of the contemporary period still reflect stereotypes from the past, while other works have attempted to go beyond them and rethink the literary representation of Muslims. According to these characteristics, we can distinguish two different types of representations of Georgian Muslims in Georgian literature: the non-assimilated Georgian Muslims, who converted to Islam as a result of Muslim rule and live among the rest of the ethnic Georgian population on the territory of modern-day Georgia, and the assimilated Georgian Muslims, most of whom live on territories in today's Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Iran that historically formed part of Georgia. This second category includes the Meskhetian groups that were forcefully exiled during the Soviet period. As for the representations of non-Georgian Muslims, we can distinguish those related to the dominant ethnic group of former imperial rulers (Persians and Turks) from Muslims belonging to smaller ethnic groups from the Caucasus region and living on territories annexed by the Russian Empire and now within the boundaries of the Russian Federation (Chechens, Ingushians, Dagh-estanians, Circassians, and others).

For the Georgians, Muslim rule endangered national identity. According to Homi Bhabha, colonial discourses are mainly based on a set of race- and gender-based differentiations and are characterized by what he calls a "strategic articulation of 'coordinates of knowledge' – racial and sexual" while "their inscription in the play of colonial power as modes of differentiation, defence, fixation, hierarchization, is a way of specifying" (2004, 105). From a Georgian perspective, religious affiliation was a clear and dominant marker that shape discourses and stereotypical images with regards to Muslims. Therefore, the safeguarding of religious identity became the fundamental pillar of Georgian statehood and constituted the basis for the formation of national consciousness. Despite this, being a neighbor to Islamic states had some influence on the culture of Georgia. The best expression of the synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures is the 12th-century poem by Shota Rustaveli, *Vepkhistkaosani* (The Knight in the Panther's Skin), whose plot develops in Eastern countries (India, Arabia) and which also includes Muslim characters.

Although Georgian society had relationships with Muslim polities for centuries that often resulted in the Islamization of part of the population in certain border regions of Georgia, one can hardly find a text in modern Georgian literature whose main character is a Muslim or a Georgian convert to Islam. I argue that this factor clearly indicates that the existential fear coming from long-term Muslim rule is still strong in the socio-political and cultural consciousness of Georgians. In everyday life, Georgians often mention with a sense of national pride the Fereydanians, a group of ethnic Georgians living on the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the assimilated Georgians living in the Republic of Turkey, and the Ingilo people living in the historically Georgian region of Hereti on the territory of today's Azerbaijan. For all the positive associations that these groups possess in Georgian imagination, there



exists no important work of fiction in Georgian literature that represents the lives of characters belonging to these types of environments, or that gives insights into the formation of their attitude. In addition to the abovementioned existential defiance of Muslims on the part of the general Georgian population, such an absence could also be a result, on the part of Georgian authors, of the necessary caution with which political realities, such as the geographic proximity of Muslim states on the one hand, and the politically-charged issue of Muslim ethnic minorities in Georgia on the other hand, have been dealt with in the Georgian context.

Muslim groups with no historical ties to Muslim imperial powers, primarily indigenous groups from the North Caucasus, have been more frequently represented in Georgian literature. Characters of this type are particularly present in the work of the 19th-century poet and writer Vazha-Pshavela (pen-name of Luka Razikashvili, 1861–1915). In his epic poems *Stumar-Maspindzeli* (The Host and the Guest, 1993) and *Aluda Ketelauroi* (1992) Muslim characters are described as the representatives of a hostile ethnic group constantly at war with Georgians, while negative attributes such as “infidel” or “unbeliever” are used to describe them. However, it is worth mentioning that even deadly enemies are appraised according to their personal character traits and virtues. The bravery, intrepidity and dignity of enemy combatants are therefore an object of respect and sympathy in the work of Vazha-Pshavela. For instance, in *Aluda Ketelauroi*, a dying Kist (a Chechen subgroup in the North Caucasus) gives his gun to his Georgian murderer, because he appreciates his bravery and fearlessness and declares: “Let it be yours from now on, you unbeliever, so that it doesn’t fall into hands of somebody else” (1992, 279). The behavior of the Kist changes the consciousness of the Georgian character, taking him to a higher stage of ethical values. Evidently under a politically free environment Georgian culture is not in hierarchical and dominating relation to the Islamic culture, but on the contrary, the latter makes a positive contribution to the development of the former. A scene in *The Host and the Guest* is also interesting in this regard. Another Kist character, Jokola, realizes that his Georgian guest is actually an enemy but nevertheless tries to protect him from the aggression of his own community, defending his position as follows: “He is my guest this day, though he owes me a sea of blood, I cannot betray him [...]” (1993, 57). Obviously, notwithstanding the permanent hostility between Muslims and Christians in the Georgian context, such literary texts present their relationships as determined not by state, ideological or religious interests, but by general human principles. Personal virtue, dignity and kindness are therefore portrayed as more determining than ethnic or religious origin.

### RUSSIAN RULE AND SUBSTITUTION OF THE COLONIZER’S IMAGE

Until the 18th century, Georgians had mostly interacted with and needed protection from Muslim rulers. Russian rule made the experience of “doubleness” in the Georgian consciousness even more ambivalent. While existing stereotypes of Muslims remained strong, Georgian society had to self-identify again from a cultural point of view and needed to form a certain relationship with an entirely different colonizer, the Russian Empire. In the 18th century, the Georgians believed that the

political and military partnership with the Russian Empire did not imply the threat of colonization, and Russia was not the object of any negative stereotypes in Georgian literature. However, developments in the early 19th century showed that, although Russia was a Christian empire and had much in common with Georgia from the standpoint of cultural identity, its colonial and imperialist policies were equally dangerous to Georgian culture and identity as the policies of the former Muslim rulers. As Schimmelpenninck van der Oye (2010, 4) has suggested,

the imperialist policy of Russia aimed at creating a new so called “Eurasian” ideology and narrative as the counterparts of the Western values. Asia was one place where Russians could be the Europeans’ equals. [...] for all Russians when saw the East as an arena for atavistic imperialist conquests for the sake of conquest. Many of his compatriots have had a less straightforward view of the East. And even if most Russians considered themselves to be European, this did not necessarily translate into an antipathy for Asia.

Therefore it was in Russia’s political interests to Orientalize the Caucasus rather than protect it from Islamic Empires, in order to create its own “East” and demonstrate its mission and power.

At this stage of historical development, a sense of national identity started to manifest itself in more ambivalent ways in Georgian literature. Georgian society had no understanding of whether a historical enemy such as the Ottoman Empire should be regarded as a friendly state and as a potential ally in the struggle against Russian encroachments in the Caucasus. For instance, during the 1804 Mtiuleti rebellion against the Russian Empire, Georgian noblemen went as far as contacting the Ottoman Empire and got a promise of support (Bendianishvili et al. 2012, 156). The strategy of the noblemen was to generate an open conflict between the two empires, a strategy on whose adequacy we can hardly make a proper judgment today since the rebellion ultimately failed. It is supposedly around that time that a stereotypical phrase spread in Georgian society according to which “the Tatar is more trustworthy and will not betray us”. It emphasizes the fact that the Russian Empire, which came with the declared goal of giving protection to its co-religionist neighbor, in fact hid its real agenda to the Georgian people. The word “Tatar” itself has negative connotations in Georgian and denotes the Muslim community in general, comprising all the Muslim nations, including Turks, Persians, Azeris and other Caucasian Muslims. From the beginning of the 19th century onward, the Russian gradually replaced the Muslim as the historical enemy in Georgian consciousness, as well as in literary and cultural representations. Despite the fact that Russia’s support was crucial for Georgia to reaffirm its rule over a number of Islamicized border regions (such as Adjara and Samtkhe), Georgian society’s perception of these events remained ambivalent, because, while it indeed led to the return within the boundaries of Georgia of previously lost historical territories, it also was a direct result of expansionist policies of the Russian Empire.

The question of the integration of Georgian Muslims within the predominantly Georgian state was also a challenge for the national community. As mentioned above, Georgian literature largely avoided reflecting this question. However, in 19th-century Georgian journalism, one can find the opinions of a writer and public figure such as

Ilia Chavchavadze, which played a determining role in shaping the ideas of the sovereignty of the Georgian nation. Chavchavadze regarded not religion, but rather the idea of a common history as a fundamental factor:

In our view neither common language nor common religion and national origin can keep people so closely together, as common history can. [...] That is why we are not afraid of the fact that our brothers living in the Ottoman part of Georgia are Muslims today. I wish the happy day came soon when they joined us, we became brothers with each other again, and proved again, that the Georgians do not go against human conscience and they fraternally accept brothers separated long ago (1957, 462–465).

In the second half of the 19th century, more unequivocal evaluations of Russia as a colonizing power appeared. Very few literary texts of the period represent Russians as positive and educated figures who take an active part in the social life of Georgia together with native Georgians. Instead, the dominant images are stereotypical ones, in particular when it comes to Russian officials. In Chavchavadze's *Mgzavris Tserilebi* (Letters of a Traveler, 1987), a Russian officer stationed at the Larsi border post is portrayed as thinking that the level of education of a nation is determined only by the number of its generals. Elsewhere, the narrator provides a comparison of the Russian Empire with its counterparts in Western Europe from the point of view of their cultural achievements. Looking at the Russian postal carriage, a French character makes an ironic comment on Russia's supposed belatedness, as evidenced by that mode of transportation. The Frenchman of the story feels pity for the Georgian author: "I pity you to be forced to addle your brain and shake up your stomach on a thing like that. What's to be done? If the whole of Russia travels in this manner why should I complain?" (Chavchavadze 1987, 8). At the same time, the story also emphasizes what Chavchavadze sees as the historical fate of Georgians, in particular the fact that Western civilization is bound to enter Georgia via Russia, itself a "belated" country.

## MUSLIM AND RUSSIAN RULERS IN GEORGIAN LITERATURE DURING THE SOVIET PERIOD

Russian imperial rule gave way to Soviet rule in 1921 and in the scholarly literature on the period, there have been debates on whether the Soviet Union can be considered as a colonial power in the traditional sense of the term. Scholars such as David Chioni Moore, Violeta Kalertas, Vitali Chernetsky, Alexander Etkind and others working in Eastern European and Soviet studies have come to the conclusion that the Soviet Union undoubtedly was a colonizing power and was imbued with an imperial ideology. Therefore, according to this approach, the former Soviet nations can be regarded as post-colonial societies. Alexander Etkind points out that, at first, the Soviet Union was a source of inspiration for the followers of Marxism, "but [when] the Soviet Union shaped itself into a major imperialist power, that competed with the other global powers the free minded Marxist-leaning intellectuals found themselves deprived of their mental tool" (2011, 41). The process of substitution of the images of Muslim rulers with those of Russian colonizers is well expressed in the novella *Lambalo da Kasha* (Lambalo and Kasha, 1970) by Mikheil Javakhishvili. The plot describes the Russian-Turkish war on the territory of today's Azerbaijan and is based

on a story told by a Georgian doctor sent to Urmia by the Russian Empire. The narrative focuses on the relationship between representatives of a formerly hostile state (Iran) and Georgian characters, at a time when both are subjected to Russian colonization. The possibility for Persians and Georgians to unite against a common enemy becomes apparent when the Georgian doctor meets the new Russian-appointed Iranian governor of Urmia on a ship. The governor is glad that Russia sent the Georgian doctor to their region, a sentiment shared by the doctor since the Georgians considered Persians as a friendly nation ("Kardash-Ioldash"). In that particular case, the common experience of colonization/subjection and the hatred towards their common Russian oppressor creates grounds for friendly and warm relationships between the local Persians, the Urmian Azeris and the Georgians, despite the fact that they had historically been subjected to Persian rule. In the novella, characters often speak the language of their supposed historical enemies: the Georgian doctor speaks Azeri with the locals, and the main Urmian character of the story, Mashad Hasan, appears to speak Georgian, a language he has learned while living in Tbilisi and Borchalo.

This gesture of recognizing each other's culture, nationality and history, in itself excludes any kind of hierarchical or subordinate relationship between the characters. As the Georgian states: "I do not understand even now by whom, when and where these invisible strings were set up, why the exhausted Persians and Turks expected to get help from a handful of Georgians. Who had been squeezed out by them? We were unable to do that. I thought I felt a mysterious link that existed among the oppressed" (Javakhishvili 1970, 355). In parallel, the attitude of Russian characters in the text is in stark contrast with that of the Persians and Azeris: for example, Bishop Pavle, sent as a missionary to Urmia, seems to entirely ignore Georgia's history as a Christian nation. In his view, Georgia is instead a part of the Muslim world, as shown by his reaction of sympathy when he learns the Georgian doctor's nationality: "Being Georgian is not a big trouble, the Georgians are also humans and there are good Christians among Georgians too" (326). In contrast with the Persian and Azeri characters (Lambalo, Mashdi, Izadi) that are presented positively in the text, the representatives of the Russian imperial government (Bishop Pavle, General Chernobuzov and Qasha Lazare, an Assyrian cleric who supports Russian interests in Urmia) are definitely negatively stereotyped in the story.

Another literary text reflecting the hard consequences of the Russian/Soviet imperial policies and the life of the Muslims affected by them is the short story "Mamluki" (2011) by contemporary Georgian writer Aka Morchiladze. The main subject is the story of Islam Sultanov, the Khan of Kirbal, an autonomous region in one of the Central Asian republics. Sultanov's father is killed by the Communists and he is exiled to Georgia together with his mother where he falls prey to Soviet terror for a second time and is exiled again, this time to Siberia in 1937. The plot focuses on the period when the middle-aged Sultanov returns from exile and settles in one of the provincial cities of Georgia. His story is told by a Georgian character and therefore represents a general Georgian reflection of the lives, identity and culture of the Muslims in the Soviet and post-Soviet reality. In the Georgian space, Sultanov is perceived as a desperate man who lives isolated from his direct environment. In the words of the

narrator, Georgians “did not trust him a lot. First, he was considered a Tatar, as all Muslims are called in our country, and second, he was supposed to have a dangerous biography” (Morchiladze 2011, 12). However, this stereotyped perception is alleviated by Sultanov’s friendship with the Georgian Beso which eventually leads to his recognition by the broader community. The absolute invisibility of Islam Sultanov’s personality is an indicator of his identity as a colonized subject, as he is a representative of Islamic culture colonized by the Soviet-Russian imperialist policies:

His dignity was not such that puffed up men have. On the contrary, I have not often seen such a modest and unassuming person. He never showed off. Called Tatar behind his back, he had lived in our town for so many years and nobody knew who he was and how much he could (53).

Thus Sultanov is originally perceived as non-existent by Georgian society and he does not himself express any willingness to become more integrated either. But unavoidable daily interactions make humiliating stereotypes give way to more positive assessments of Sultanov on the part of the Georgians. As the narrator recalls, from that time his former nickname of “Tatar” was replaced by his actual name and he was even affectionately called “Sultan”.

It is obvious from the text that the Muslim community and its culture constitute a peripheral marginalized area in dominant Georgian narratives. The perception that has been formed for many centuries in Georgian consciousness that “Tatar” is an enemy is still an active stereotype in post-Soviet Georgia, largely as a result of the lack of communication between the cultures involved. The story by Aka Morchiladze discussed above is additionally interesting because it shows the gradual breaking down of the stereotypes related to colonial discourse. In the story it is illustrated by the process of the Georgian character’s consciousness and attitude formation, which is strongly influenced by the Muslim character, Islam Sultanov. In the words of the narrator: “Islam Sultanov told me everything, such things that made me think more and more, as I had had no idea of them before. I realized that this world was completely different. Maybe many people also felt it, but no one wanted to observe it then, because if one observes, you should do something” (32–33). The narrator also notes: “when I was with Islam Sultanov, I realized how weak I was and I tried to be stronger” (108). The main character is guided by the priorities of Islam Sultanov, he follows his advice to study English, get married, begin to work as a driver and finally goes to his country in Central Asia, to fight for the defense of those ideals and goals that had been communicated to him by Sultanov.

## CONCLUSION

The relationship of a society with foreign cultures is determined by ever-evolving historical and political processes. The influence of politics on culture is especially obvious under conditions of colonization, when the dominant political power creates the colonial discourse and affects the colonized people. Consequently ambivalent stereotypes of colonizers are formed in colonized societies. A clear illustration of this phenomenon is the way in which Georgian literature has represented the cultures of Georgia’s successive foreign rulers, first Muslim and then Russian. Namely, in parallel

with the major shift from Muslim to Russian rule, the negative stereotypes related to Muslims were replaced by similar ones targeting the Russians.

An analysis of Georgian literary texts enables us to conclude that in Georgian literature, relationships with the Muslim space have been determined by an existential fear that emerged as a result of historical experience. That is mainly expressed in the scarcity or relative absence of Georgian-Muslim or specifically Muslim themes in Georgian literature. In parallel, a study of Soviet-era and contemporary Georgian literature points to the fact that frontier-Orientalist perceptions and discourses on the Muslim community are gradually weakening, but have found a new strength when it comes to parallel representations of Russians. This outcome enables us to think of the political interests of the Georgian state as a particularly strong power that has shaped cultural stereotypes in Georgian literature and culture at large.

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Frontier Orientalism. Georgian literature. Colonialism. Stereotypes. Caucasian identities.

Georgian identity and social consciousness have been formed in the context of political and cultural resistance to the Muslim world. Taking into account this difficult historical experience, the goal of the present paper is to analyze to what extent the characters of the Oriental Muslim community are reflected by the Georgian literary texts. It discusses whether their perception in literary texts is constrained by the frontier Orientalist stereotypes and the comparison between the perceptions of the Russian colonizer and the Eastern Muslim colonizer is given. The paper discusses these issues based on Edward Said's concept of Orientalism and Andre Gingrich's concept of frontier Orientalism. It shows that in Georgian literature, the relationship with the Muslim space is determined by the existential fear that has emerged as a result of historical experience. However, in the modern and contemporary period, there is an evidence that such a frontier-Orientalist feeling towards the Muslim community is gradually weakening, but it is strengthening towards the Russian space.

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**CHARLES D. SABATOS: Mit ve Tarih Arasında: Orta Avrupa Edebiyat Tarihinde Türk İmgesi**

Istanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2014. 256 pp. ISBN 978-605-4921-22-5

Since the publication of Said's *Orientalism* (1978), the image of the Oriental Other in Western culture and its role in shaping the self-perception of Europe/the West have attracted a lot of attention from scholars. The Ottomans, who at the height of their power pushed the borders of their empire to the gates of Vienna, belonged (as "the terrible Turk", "God's scourge" or "infidel barbarians") to the fixed inventory of images of the fearful Other in opposition to which the European Self could be constructed and reasserted. Most of the scholarly production devoted to the imagology of the Turks has focused on dominant cultures of Western Europe, in some instances on the "Orientalization" of the Balkans and the reception of the Ottoman heritage there. Tomáš Ratajš *České země ve stínu půlměsíce: Obraz Turka v raně novověké literatuře českých zemí* (The Czech Lands in the Shadow of the Crescent: The Image of the Turk in Early Modern Literature, 2012), an analysis of early modern printed material on Turks (*turcica*), and Laura Lisy-Wagner's *Islam, Christianity, and the Making of Czech Identity, 1453–1683* (2013), which examines the construction of Czech identity through discourses about the Turk in roughly the same period, belong to the few detailed studies that extended the focus to Central Europe. Charles Sabatos' *Mit ve Tarih Arasında: Orta Avrupa Edebiyat Tarihinde Türk İmgesi* (Between Myth and History: The Image of the Turks in the History of Central European Literature) is the latest contribution to this discussion. It is more extensive in the chronological coverage (16th to 21st century) and geographical scope (bringing together Czech, Slovak and Hungarian literatures), and it is anchored rather in literary studies than in historiography, which adds new important perspectives to the debate.

The Central European nations present an interesting case as countries being both on the margins of Europe and at the same time belonging, in their self-concept, culturally, politically and geographically to the core of the Old Continent. What binds the Central European nations is, as Maria Todorova observed, rather a certain idea being put forward by Central European intellectuals, which claims that Central Europe had been much more shaped by its ties to the West and its participation in the historical processes of the West than by its links to the (implicitly backward) East (Russia, the Balkans, and/or the Ottomans).

Hitting at this specific position of Central European nations and their multiple identifications, Charles Sabatos sets as his goal to analyze the "dynamic between the historical and mythical aspects of the Ottoman legacy in Central Europe" (16). There is, as the author acknowledges, quite a difference in the "Turkish experience" of these nations, ranging from the historical legacy in Hungary (ruled by the Ottomans for 150 years) to the semi-mythical legacy in Slovakia (only "touched" by the Ottoman expansion) and the mythical legacy in the Czech lands, never directly occupied by the Ottomans. On the other hand, their semi-peripheral position between Western and Eastern Europe endows them with enough commonalities to consider them together; they represent a case in which "relationships with a non-Western and Muslim but hegemonic and imperialist 'Other' played an important role in the shaping of these politically weak yet European-identified cultures" (13).

Without losing a sense of the greater pattern, Sabatos follows meticulously the development in Czech, Slovak and Hungarian lit-

eratures of the “the historical Turk” of the 16th to the 18th centuries, into the “metaphorical Turk” of the 19th century, “the mythical Turk” of the early 20th century and, finally, the “metafictional Turk” of the last four decades. Even in the early phase, one can detect in the image of the Turks a fascinating mixture of real events – like the battle of Szigetvár (1566), the conquest of Nové Zámky (1663), and Ottoman raids into Austrian-ruled territory – and the lived experience of captivity or long sojourns in the Ottoman empire (as in the case of authors like Kelemen Mikes or Václav Vratislav z Mitrovic) with mythical sources and borrowed discourses of Western Orientalist texts. The Turks had been increasingly becoming a part of what Stephen Greenblatt has called “Renaissance self-fashioning”: “the Turks portrayed in historical songs, captivity narratives, and other genres often did not reflect a factual representation of the conflict between these two cultures, but served as a means for ‘self-fashioning’ in which Czechs, Slovaks, and Hungarians could assert Christian, European, and later national identities” (81).

This reservoir of images, accumulated over three centuries, transformed in the 19th century with the growing national aspirations of Central Europeans into a powerful metaphor of the Turk, a ready-made and familiar, almost automatically reproduced substitute symbol of oppression and foreign rule without necessarily referring even distantly to the contemporary, militarily weakened and rapidly modernizing Ottoman state. This was the natural consequence of going back to folk sources and looking for a heroic past to illustrate the small nations’ Davidian struggle against a Goliath and of the effort to strengthen modern national identity in using the Turk as “a metaphorical antithesis of the Enlightenment spirit” (80). In this concept, the Turk served rather as a metaphorical surrogate for the real enemy of national ambitions – Austria, or, in the Slovak case, both Austria and Hungary.

More focus is placed in the book on Czech and Slovak literatures, which the author is an expert on, less on Hungarian literature,

where the author relies mostly on secondary sources and available translations. Whereas the first two chapters consider all three national cultures together to look at early modern representations of the Turks in Central Europe in historical chronicles, folklore, songs and travelogues, the last two chapters concentrate solely on Czech and Slovak literatures. Looking into the works of authors like Jaroslav Hašek, German Prague literati like Franz Werfel or Egon Erwin Kisch and Slovak novelists like Ludovít Janota and Jozef Nižňanský, Sabatos convincingly demonstrates how the Turk turned into a mythical figure, where humor and fear existed side by side, and how the authors used historical reality to produce a mythical concept of an alien enemy who was menacing only figuratively and retrospectively. This mythical Turk was an extension of the 19th century metaphorical Turk. Nevertheless, “in modern Czechoslovakia this concept was ‘drained’ of historic reality and ‘naturalized’ as an element of the struggle for national identity” (131).

The 20th and 21st centuries are represented in the book by post-1968 Czech and Slovak literatures. Using the concept of historiographical metafiction developed by Linda Hutcheon, Sabatos untangles the intertextual use of the images of the Turk and the ironic self-distancing in many novels, often accompanied by self-reflexivity upon the legacy of this image. However, despite this playfulness, the “Turk” still had a political function, too, referring to the “foreign invasion” (like the Soviet occupation), with a particular significance of this topic in Slovak literature as a way of expressing the desire to preserve national identity: “[...] the Turks represented a stable ‘Other’ upon which East Central European writers could explore issues of national identity. In the genre of the historical novel, Ján Balko uses the Turk as a way to glorify the Slovak national past, while Vladimír Neff parodies the idea of heroism in the Czech context, which was cynical about any form of national glory after 1968. A more self-consciously postmodern approach emerges in such Slovak and Hungarian writers as Lajos

Grendel, Pavel Vilikovský, Pavel Hruží, and Peter Macsovszky" (233–234).

The author has collected an impressive array of textual material dealing with the image of the Turk in Central European literatures. One can only regret that the Polish case was not included into the inquiry, so that all of the Visegrád Group countries, the self-proclaimed "essence" of Central Europe, would be covered. Admittedly, this would exceed the scope of the book, yet bringing Polish literature into the picture would certainly be very productive in considering the Central European real or imagined Turkish legacy. Although Sabatos refers to a number of theoretical concepts (H. White's metahistory, E. Said's Orientalism, S. Greenblatt's self-fashioning, A. Gingrich's frontier Orien-

talism, R. Barthes' mythologies or L. Hutcheon's historical metafiction), he does not try to develop his own theory of Orientalism or alterity but rather adds fresh insights into the research on the historical development of images of non-European Others. The book is a very readable and comprehensive survey about what has been written about the Turks in Czech, Slovak and Hungarian literatures. Despite the richness of material, the text is well organized, balanced and all parts coherently interconnected, an evidence to the fact that the text is a result of years of research. One could only wish that the study would be soon published in English or one of the Central European languages.

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**MARIANNA D. BIRNBAUM – MARCELL SEBŐK (eds.): Practices of Coexistence.**

**Constructions of the Other in Early Modern Perspectives**

Budapest – New York: Central European University Press, 2017. 240 pp.

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This recent edited volume, the product of a graduate course on Renaissance Orientalism jointly taught at Central European University by cultural historians Marianna D. Birnbaum and Marcell Sebők, brings together the scholarship of a number of early-career scholars in the humanities and social sciences whose work investigates contacts across geographic and cultural boundaries during the early modern period. Although the collected essays all retain the original focus of the course and deal with the mechanisms involved in the formation and consolidation of various sets of images of the Other that sparked from increased transnational contacts during the period, one of the objectives of the volume consists in highlighting some of the ways in which the very concept of Renaissance needs to be problematized in this context, as the editors underline in their compelling introduction.

Rather than questioning the notion in terms of historical periodization, the con-

tributions assembled here seek to unsettle entrenched conceptions of the period by offering what the editors call an "off-centered" approach to the Renaissance, one that places a particular emphasis on liminal areas in the broader Central and Eastern European region, and sheds light on their complex political and cultural entanglements with the so-called Orient, much in line with recent developments in the field of early modern studies explicitly referenced in the introduction. This focus on what can be defined, from the perspective of traditional Renaissance studies, as peripheral or marginal spaces collectively allows the contributing authors to highlight, in a variety of ways, the relevance and crucial necessity of an increased attention to what the editors identify as "realms of coexistence", i.e. spaces in which transnational contacts with the Other(s) were not limited to passive encounters but, on the contrary, took the form of an active engagement, of a set of cultural practices.

In parallel, by refraining from including the term “Orientalism” in the volume’s title, its editors seek to maintain a cautious distance from the scholarship that has attempted to retrospectively project such a notion onto pre-modern periods left for the most part outside of the purview of Edward Said’s seminal study, thereby taking advantage of a certain tension within the Saidian framework, which famously set as Orientalism’s *terminus post quem* the onset of British rule over India and Bonaparte’s invasion of Egypt, yet seemed at the same time to inscribe the cultural processes it described into a much broader *longue durée*. Closer in that regard to Marie-Louise Pratt’s notion of “contact zones”, which it explicitly references, the general theoretical framework that the editors lay out for the volume allows for contributions that emphasize not only Western representations of the Orient, but rather the reciprocity and simultaneity of image-making processes across geographical and cultural divides not necessarily limited to a schematic East-West dichotomy.

An example of this stimulating approach that highlights the ways in which “Othering” can take place even in cases characterized by extreme geographic proximity and strong cultural similarity, Lovro Kunčević’s article on the reciprocal representations that emerged from the extended political and cultural contacts between the Republics of Venice and Ragusa during the early modern period shows how, in the broader context of continuing warfare between Western Christendom and the Ottoman Empire, negative stereotyping affected diplomatic relations between neighboring polities caught into a relation of growing distrust. Although more traditionally focused on non-Muslim perceptions of an Oriental Other, Teodora Artimon’s article on the representations of Ottomans in the principality of Moldavia at the turn of the 16th century is particularly notable in that it sheds light, through a comprehensive analysis of textual, material and visual sources, on a marginal region seldom included in surveys of Renaissance Orientalism.

Of particular interest to scholars of world and comparative literature, two articles deal with the image of the Ottoman Other in early modern literary texts from Western and Central Europe, highlighting the ways in which the literary realm became one of the sites where new understandings of the notion of alterity took shape during the early modern period. Interestingly, both of these articles are focused on non-Ottoman representations of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent and his court, a recurring motif throughout the volume, as acknowledged by the editors in their introduction. In an article that is perhaps, among the different contributions to the volume, the most directly critical of a diachronic use of Said’s notion of Orientalism, Seda Erkoç’s very apt analysis of two early modern English plays devoted to the execution, in 1553, of Suleyman’s son and heir Sehzade Mustafa explores the impact of political and dynastic developments internal to the Ottoman Empire upon the elaboration of a new set of representations of the Ottoman Other in the Western European imagination. In a similarly effective way, Agnes Drosztmér surveys the representations of Suleyman in Hungarian poetry of the late 16th century, situating these literary forms of “Othering” in the political context of a time marked not only by direction confrontation on the battlefield between Hungarians and Ottomans, but also by a complex set of cultural developments set forth by the gradual transition from Latin to the vernacular and from manuscript to print culture. In that respect, her contribution follows recent developments in Central European literary studies (most notably the work of Charles Sabatos, also reviewed in this issue – *World Literature Studies* 1/2018) that have shed new light on the multilayered presence of Turks in the cultural imagination of the region from the early modern period to the present.

Although none of the contributions in the volume explicitly mention André Gingrich’s concept of “frontier Orientalism”, they collectively constitute a timely addition to the existing body of scholarship – of which Gin-

grich's approach is an important part – that has sought to problematize entrenched categories in the study of transnational political and cultural contacts between East and West, and to propose new models to better under-

stand the complex processes of image-making that sparked from political coexistence in the early modern period.

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**ROSIE WARREN (ed.): The Debate on Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital**

London – New York: Verso Books, 2016. 304 pp. ISBN 978-1-7847-8695-3

Upon its debut, Vivek Chibber's *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (2013) (hence *PTSC*) stirred considerable debate among scholars across disciplinary lines of both postcolonial- and Subaltern-affiliated schools of thought. Claiming to have dismantled the fundamental epistemic, ontological and conceptual foundations of Subaltern Studies, Chibber's estimation of the aforementioned scholarship was adamantly hailed and ostensibly criticized alike. Three years later, the collection of responses currently under review had hoped to showcase a meaningful and comprehensive defense of the field by scholars of the Indian Subaltern School – including Partha Chatterjee who had, in *PTSC*, alongside Ranajit Guha and Dipesh Chakrabarty, been brandished by Chibber as *the* bannerman of postcolonial synecdoche.

At this point, anyone who is even vaguely familiar with the range of postcolonial scholarship is likely to raise an eyebrow. Sure enough, indictments of the title of *PTSC* being deceptive have, accordingly, been leveled against Chibber (who had, prior to *PTSC*, been an outsider to the field himself) – as George Steinmetz aptly comments in the chapter “On the Articulation of Marxist and Non-Marxist Theory in Colonial Historiography”: “A more accurate title for this book would be something like *The Subaltern School of History and the Specter of Capital*” (140). Contrary to what one might anticipate from a critique of a school deploying a mostly post-structuralist framework, Chibber's target was not the postmod-

ern perspective so strongly associated with recent Subaltern thought. Instead, he sought to show that the postcolonial project had been doomed from its very inception – that is, at the dawn of the institutionalization of multiculturalism and postcolonial studies in Western academia. By conflating the institutionalization of postcolonial thought with its inception, Chibber had completely omitted key postcolonial theorists such as Franz Fanon, Chinua Achebe, Aimé Césaire or Valentin-Yves Mudimbe. Nonetheless, objections to some tenets of thought shared by postcolonial theory and Subaltern studies as raised by Chibber have managed to contextualize and touch upon current debates in postcolonial historiography, Marxist theory, sociology of history, cultural studies and even, if somewhat more vaguely, comparative literature and postcolonial literary theory.

It is outside of the scope of a mere review to unlace the intricacies of the arguments advanced on either side of the exchange. Hopefully, prospective readers will be tempted to go and estimate for themselves the possible implications of the volume under review for literary theory and literary criticism after the postcolonial turn as presented in this at times poignant and very relevant *Debate*.

Broadly speaking, the respondents can be divided into three groups: the dissenters, those conceding with reservations and (to a lesser extent) those in complete alignment. Following the introduction and then an interview with Vivek Chibber himself, the book's



structure yields itself into three sections: “Debates”, “Review Symposiums” and “Commentaries”. The first and most substantial one contains three essays written in response to *PTSC* by Partha Chatterjee, Gayatri Spivak and literary theorist Bruce Robbins – including a retort by Vivek Chibber to each. The somewhat more fragmented “Review Symposium” contains six essays on *PTSC* and one conclusive response by Chibber himself. In spite of the remarkable efforts of the editor, the objections to Chibber’s critique do tend to repeat themselves somewhat. The third section is a tripartite of closing commentaries by literary comparatist Timothy Brennan, political scientist Stein Sundtøl Eriksen and historian Viren Murthy. Contrary to *PTSC*, which arguably did not live up to its promises (or at least not fully), the *Debate* offers a marked diversity of enriching and incisive perspectives.

Questioning the received orthodoxies of Marxism in Subaltern historiography, Chibber had suggested that “the biggest problem with postcolonial theory is that it seeks to undermine the very areas of Marxist theory that ought to be retained” (99). For instance, in the chapter “Back to Basics? The Recurrence of the Same in Vivek Chibber’s *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*”, historian of East Asia Bruce Cumings comments on Chibber’s critique of Gramsci’s use of the concept of cultural hegemony in reference to Ranajit Guha’s *Dominance Without Hegemony* (1997). Cumings concedes that indeed, Guha’s understanding of Gramscian hegemony as something we consent to is to have misread *Prison Notebooks* (1929–1935) – a truly “formidable kind of power” is when we comply without having to be “told, let alone coerced” (133). Antonio Gramsci had, of course, coined the very term *subaltern* and had distinguished it as a class distinct from the proletariat. The premises of this distinction and what follows is consequently taken up by Spivak, Chatterjee and others. To touch on but a handful of other collisions, noteworthy is also Spivak’s assessment of Chibber’s accusation of the concept of subaltern con-

sciousness “essentializing the Other”, Chatterjee’s response to his own alleged misunderstanding of the historical contingencies of European and Indian history (especially the role of the bourgeoisie, capital and modernity therein) or critical evaluations of the empirical premises of Guha’s concepts of History 1 and History 2 – the volume presents a vexing historiographical debate.

Think what one may of *PTSC*, it has been remarkable insofar as to have provided “the most sustained critique as yet of the [Subaltern] school of historiography” and by extension, also a handful of the basic premises of postcolonial thinking (204). Given *PTSC*’s sophisticated line of interrogation, it is unfortunate that, by inadvertently oversimplifying the postcolonial theoretical framework and focusing solely on the Subaltern historiography, Chibber’s critique misses the target he had set for himself. This *Debate* also gives the reader a glimpse of the complexity and difficulty of scholarly exchange. More often than not, interlocutors evince a snarky, cantankerous tone. This sometimes reduces what ought to have been a carefully crafted and complex engagement with the material under discussion to a mere exchange of the authors’ own ideological positioning.

The *Debate* does not deal with the genesis of postcolonial or Subaltern perspectives in comparative literature, philology, English literature or literary theory at length nor at times even explicitly. It will, however, without a doubt enrich and deepen one’s understanding of the current stakes of postcolonial scholarship and familiarize the reader in greater depth with the historical legacy, intellectual premises and contemporary currency of some of the key tenets of Subaltern and hence partially also postcolonial thought.

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In the early 2000s, two major researchers commented on the Hungarian avant-garde. According to a study by András Kappanyos, “Avantgárd és kanonizáció” (The avant-garde and canonization) published in BUKSZ in 2002, “in avant-garde texts there is no consensual, quasi-objective evaluation system as in ‘conventional’ texts. It is not so easy to say what is ‘good’. And that is why it is pending; therefore the canonization of the Hungarian avant-garde has not yet been completed”; Pál Derék’s status report from his study “A történeti magyar avantgárd irodalom (1915–1930) és az ún. magyar neoavantgárd irodalom (1960–1975) kutatásának újabb fejleményei” (New developments in the research of historical Hungarian avant-garde literature /1915–1930/ and so-called Hungarian Neo-Avant-garde Literature /1960–1975/) published in the 6th issue of Lk.k-t. in 2001 states: “Research into neo-avant-garde literature has not even got as far as that of the avant-garde’s. There is even greater theoretical uncertainty here than in the case of historical Hungarian avant-garde literature.”

Indeed, research of the avant-garde in Hungarian literary history was not an obvious endeavour for a long time. Not taking the avant-garde seriously, domestic philology studied Hungarian classical modernity or late modernity, which was parallel to the avant-garde, showing it to be eludible. On the other hand, it did not realize that literature had been in an intermediate expansion since avant-garde (identifying literature merely as text). Moreover, it features a diversity of side-by-side tendencies and approaches; that is to say, even within a paradigm the -isms are not always reducible to a common denominator. Consequently, research into the avant-garde was the private affair of some interpretive communities small in number. Attention was limited to Lajos Kassák’s oeuvre; other artists hardly

featured on the horizon of interest. A systematic exploration of the relevant material has only recently begun.

Among the isolated research, we must first point to Pál Derék’s activity. In addition to several monographs dealing with the historical avant-garde (e. g. *A vasbetontorony költői*, 1992 – Poets of the Ferroconcrete Tower), he compiled a publication called *A magyar avantgárd irodalom (1915–1930) olvasókönyve* (A Reader of Hungarian Avant-garde Literature /1915–1930/) published in 1998, which is indispensable for research and education. The collection, endowed with commentaries, is of great merit in giving an insight into the complexity and multicentre tradition of the Hungarian avant-garde. At the same time and afterwards, the Kassák reading also called forth significant publications (e. g. *Újraolvasó – Tanulmányok Kassák Lajosról*, 2000; *A Kassák-kód*, 2008 – Re-reading: Studies on Lajos Kassák; The Kassák Code), among which we should mention here a book by Emőke G. Komoróczy, *A szellemi nevelés fórumai* (The Forums of Intellectual Education) published in 2005, which gives insight into the sociocultural concept of education of the Kassák circle, using a significant amount of historical and comprehensive art material.

The dynamization of the research into the avant-garde can be dated to the turn of the millennium, and its starting point lies in the increased theoretical interest in media-centred arts. To this day, one of its most important forums is the “Aktuális avantgárd” (Actual Avant-garde) series, which was launched in 2002 with the identically titled book by András Bohár that deals with the activity of the periodical *Magyar Műhely* published in Paris. Over the past few years, 12 volumes have been published in the series, including Emőke G. Komoróczy’s 2015 monograph, „Ezer

*arccal, ezer alakban*”: *Formák és távlatok Petőcz András költészetében* (With a Thousand Faces, In a Thousand Shapes: Forms and Perspectives in András Petőcz’s Poetry), which analyses the experimental artworks of the contemporary artist in the neo-avant-garde context. Here we have to point out that the aforementioned series well illustrates that contemporary intermedia art creates a favourable environment for the reception of the avant-garde, since it makes clear that besides perceiving the complex interlock of image and word, attention can also be increasingly focused on the model-type relation between text and performance.

*Avantgárd kontinuitás a XX. században* (Avant-garde Continuity in the 20th Century), the comprehensive and monumental book by Emőke G. Komoróczy dealing with the Magyar Műhely circle in Paris, came to this context in 2016. The concept is primarily distinguished from András Bohár’s above-mentioned enterprise that deals with a similar subject by operating a more powerful selection; that is, it does not discuss all the authors of the periodical indiscriminately. However, those discussed are subject to a more thorough analysis; it also designates centrepiece points within the life-work that is determined by the use of the medium. This shift shows that in the last two decades the theoretical, historical and interpretative space of speaking about the avant-garde, actual avant-garde and continuity of the avant-garde have been differentiated. Let us briefly look at the main aspects of the five chapters of the monograph.

The first chapter of the book deals with the historical role of Magyar Műhely in Paris and its function as a forum for Hungarian experimental literature from the foundation of the magazine (1962) throughout the mid-90s. It also delineates the profile of the magazine in detail, explaining the structural effects influencing the concept, and further demonstrates how Magyar Műhely became the basis of a domestic new avant-garde by taking up variants of visual poetry, thus preserving the continuity of the avant-garde.

In accordance with this, the second chapter is about the oeuvre of the editorial triad of the periodical, proving that Alpár Bujdosó, Pál Nagy and Tibor Papp contributed to this continuity not only as editors but also as innovative artists. In the case of Tibor Papp, it is becoming more and more obvious that, from the point of view of the processes in question and beyond, we are dealing with one of the most important oeuvres of the second half of the 20th century.

The third part of the monograph provides an overview of the variants of domestic new avant-garde poetry belonging to the circle of attraction of Magyar Műhely. Selection dominates here the most; the chosen artistic models, however, can be considered as truly representative. Besides the experimental poetry of András Petőcz, sound creations of Endre Szkárósi, visual works of Mária Hegedűs and underground-inspired pieces of Ákos Székely, the chapter discusses the ironic-absurd mode of speech of Imre Péntek, and the texts and performances mobilizing sacred elements of Péter Mikola Németh. Although the aforementioned oeuvres stand on different levels of avantgarde canonization, their joint discussion amply illustrates the structure and inspirational openness of Magyar Műhely, taking in a wide variety of art forms.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the Central European basis of the periodical. The conceptual art of Bálint Szombathy, the poetry of Katalin Ladik and Emőke Lipcsey, and respectively the multimedia activity of József R. Juhász is discussed here in detail. Regarding Bálint Szombathy and József R. Juhász, there have already been published monographs in the “Aktuális avantgárd” series; Emőke G. Komoróczy’s analyses are also convincing in their context, enriching approaches with new aspects. In the case of Szombathy and Juhász R., the author perfectly highlights the fact that the complexity in their works is not to be comprehended as a sort of automatic clustering, but it originates in the dimensions of media differences and overlapping media.

Both artists – partly due to the Transart Communication festivals – are well-known figures in the international art network.

The fifth chapter deals with the E/x/kszanzió-festivals, and then, linked to these, reveals two significant oeuvres: Erzsébet Kelemen's visual works and András Bohár's experimental initiatives are analysed; while referring to Bohár's inevitable theoretical activity – with a nice gesture – it simultane-

ously returns to the theoretical questions of the approach to the avant-garde. From this point of view, Emőke G. Komoróczy's monograph is a competent expression as well as a fair and exemplary manifestation of the scholarly discourse on the continuity of the avant-garde in comparison to previous studies.

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**RADOSLAV PASSIA – GABRIELA MAGOVÁ (eds.): Deväť životov. Rozhovory o preklade a literárnom živote**

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Býva zvykom, že recenzie sa píšu na nové, resp. najnovšie knihy, zatiaľ čo tie staré, ktoré sa nestihli recenzovať, ostávajú na území tabu. Nie je to ideálna prax, hoci iste má mnohé výhody i prednosti – upozorňuje na bezprostredné a nové trendy, presadzujúce sa myšlienky, a novoobjavených autorov i autorky, čo môže byť veľmi užitočné. Ak sa aj potom zistí, že nestáli za pozornosť, nikto ich recenziu už neodbúra, ostáva ako ohlas natrvalo v kontexte. Je to prístup, ktorý zdôrazňuje predovšetkým novosť. Nie je to ani aktuálnosť, ani alterita, ani prínosnosť, len novosť. A tento prístup sa rozvíja v európskej, ale aj angloamerickej literárnej kritike najmenej jedno storočie.

Sú však knihy, pri ktorých sa treba tomuto postupu vyhnúť. I za cenu, že sa recenzie znásobia alebo sa budú týkať vecí, ktoré už všetci poznajú. Medzi podobné knihy patrí zborník *Deväť životov. Rozhovory o preklade a literárnom živote*, ktorý obsahuje rozhovory s prekladateľmi a prekladateľkami o ich prekladoch a prekladaní. Tieto rozhovory už boli uverejnené v časopise *Romboid* a pre potreby knižného vydania boli rozšírené, faktograficky spresnené a miestami štylisticky upravené, resp. autorizované. Z deviatich rozhovorov po štyroch urobili Gabriela Magová a Radoslav Passia, jeden Jozef Kot. Týmto spôsobom sa nám v knižke ukázalo deväť osobností slo-

venskej kultúry, deväť prekladateľov a znalcov cudzích literatúr, čiže deväť hlasov, ktoré zaznievali v slovenskom kultúrnom, vzdelaneckom, ale i politickom prostredí od 70. rokov prakticky do súčasnosti. Tých deväť osobností predstavuje Michaela Jurovská, Ján Vilikovský, Karol Wlachovský, Jozef Kot, Jarmila Samcová, Viera Hegerová, Ladislav Šimon, Juraj Andričik a Emil Charous, prekladateľ slovenskej literatúry do češtiny. Možno sme mohli ušetriť pár riadkov a neuvádzať všetky mená, ale tento zoznam, v každom prípade neúplný vzhľadom na realitu, už samotný načrtáva obrovský a vnútorne štruktúrovaný priestor venovaný inonárodným literatúram na Slovensku. Jednotlivé prekladateľky a prekladatelia pôsobia v oblasti romanistiky, germanistiky, anglistiky, rusistiky, ale aj hungaristiky, no spomínajú sa i ďalšie cudzie literatúry. To všetko je znásobené osobnostne, individuálnou pečatou každého z nich, inštitucionálne, pretože zastupujú rôzne inštitúcie, a geograficky, lebo ich činnosť sa rozprestiera prakticky po celom Slovensku. Ak k tomu pridáme časovú súradnicu, t. j. ak si uvedomíme, že viacerí z predstavených prekladateľiek a prekladateľov sa narodili ešte pred druhou svetovou vojnou a vo svojich vyjadreniach opisujú svet na Slovensku aj v 50. rokoch, tak máme pred sebou celú druhú polovicu 20. storočia a pol storočia diania v slovenskej kultúre.

To však ešte stále nie je všetko. Táto kniha v prvom rade vytvára obraz o mnohorakosti slovenského kultúrneho života. Je to prirodzené, človek s prekladateľskou profesiou musí zasahovať do všetkého, je ako dievča pre všetko: vyučovanie na stredných i na vysokých školách, organizácia kultúrneho života, finančné otázky prekladateľstva a vydavateľstiev, redaktorstvo, editorstvo, občas politické lavírovanie, a napokon, ak vyjde čas, aj prekladanie. Všimnime si, že ani jedna zo spomenutých osobností nebola jednostranná. Nielenže všetky pracovali s rôznymi jazykmi, ale absolvovali kariéry, v ktorých nechýbali ani verejné funkcie – minister, veľvyslanec, kultúrny radca, atašé, riaditelia kultúrnych inštitúcií, spolkov a zväzov. V knihe sa tak dozvieme históriu kultúrneho, sociálneho a politického diania, veľkého i drobného, celých desaťročí za sebou. A keďže rozhovory predstavujú toto dianie z rôznych hľadísk, máme pred sebou deväť zrkadiel rovnakého času, reflektujúcich nielen odlišné životné osudy, kariéry a záujmy, ale aj sociálne podmienky rodiny, Slovenska, regiónu, politické rozhodnutia a ich dôsledky a pod. Je to mimoriadne členitý obraz doby za socializmu i po ňom. R. Passia v úvode i M. Kusá na obálke avizujú, že ide o *oral history*, čiže vyrozprávané dejiny, tu konkrétne najmä socializmu (ale aj po ňom). Je to však ešte zložitejšie. Nejde len o výpoveď istého človeka. Tým, že sa v knihe stretli ľudia profesionálne blízki a súčasne odlišní osobnostne i záujmami, vzniká fascinujúci obraz prelínajúcich sa príbehov a mnohorakosti života. Vcelku to pôsobí ako pestrofarebná skladačka, na ktorej sa zhruba črtajú obrysy dejín celého Slovenska. Táto veľká mapa má rozmery od Bratislavy cez Banskú Bystricu, Prešov, Bežovce až po Budapešť. K. Wlachovský do nej pridal časový a geografický rozmer slovenskej kultúry v Uhorsku, bilingválnosť viacerých slovenských a maďarských spisovateľov, zatiaľ čo J. Andričík obohatil mapu o východné Slovensko a Podkarpatskú Rus. Nie je to však iba rekonštrukcia doby a vlastných osudov, ale takmer znovuutváranie vlastného obrazu. Jej objektivnosť nemusí byť úplná, napokon

ani nie je možná, v každom prípade však pri čítaní cítime hĺbkovú zážitkovosť, ktorá pôsobí veľmi emotívne a podmaňuje si nás. Tým, že je kniha emocionálne nabitá, dá sa čítať ako text umeleckej literatúry, ale súčasne aj ako politické dejiny alebo dejiny civilizácie, pretože z nej vystupujú prvky a črty, ktoré jasne charakterizujú dané obdobie. Vzniká tak obraz slovenského vzdelávania, škôl, kultúrnych a politických praktík, ktoré sú väčšinou známe, ale tu pôsobia silnejšie, pretože sú zosobnené postavami, čo poznáme. Pôsobí to tak podmanivo, že odrazu akoby sme prežívali vlastný život, stretávali sa so svojimi známymi a kamarátmi tak, ako sa stretávajú postavy knihy (lebo to sú postavy) medzi sebou.

To je však len jedna stránka výpovedí. Druhou je zistenie, ako hladko politické vetry menili stav slovenskej spoločnosti, podoby a náplň jej inštitúcií, rušili, zakladali a reorientovali ich akoby bez odporu. Opytované osobnosti sa síce venujú aj problematike cenzúry a opisujú kontrolné mechanizmy navrhovania diel na preklad, schvaľovanie návrhov v rôznych komisiách až po príkazy, ktoré mali moc vyhodiť nielen vybraný text či výraz, ale skartovať celé vydanie knihy, no v ich výpovediach sa stráca osobná tragika, o ktorej vieme. Akoby čas (či žáner?) zahladil ostré hrany a pálčivé stránky osudov niektorých ľudí. Je tu však prítomný aj tento aspekt, spory a konformita, ničenie úsilia ľudí a mrhanie prostriedkami často na popud náhodných a malicherných poznámok ľudí, o ktorých si orgány komunistickej strany mysleli, že sú dôležití. Vylučovanie prekladateľov spomínajú viaceré respondentky a respondenti: Hegerová uvádza ich delenie na evidovaných a registrovaných aj náhradné riešenia vo forme figurantov, zatiaľ čo Viličkovský pripomína prijímanie prekladateľov odznovu, po roku 1968, politické previerky zneužívané na odstránenie niektorých osôb, nasledovné skúšky z jazyka, ktoré u veľkých prekladateľov pôsobili až absurdne. Ale zmieňuje sa aj o istom druhu odmeňovania (Budmerice, Stará Lesná), prípadne o veľmi užitočných štipendiách a finančnej výpomoci od LITA a pod.



Možno si položiť otázku, kto bude týmto rozprávaniam rozumieť. Je to už štandardná otázka a štandardná odpoveď na ňu znie: nikto. Vyjadrenia prekladateľiek a prekladateľov, postáv jednotlivých portrétov zborníka, sú pritom pomerne explicitné, vo viacerých prípadoch sa prekrývajú alebo opakujú. Pravdepodobne sú však explicitné len pre toho, kto pozná dobový kontext, pre iných nie. Popri všetkom, čo sa už o období socializmu napísalo, sa stále žiada hlbšia, a najmä konkrétnejšia diskusia o mechanizmoch a podobách uplatňovania moci po roku 1948 a 1968. Táto knižka rozhovorov typu *oral history* akoby nás upozorňovala, že aj v historických prácach by nebolo zle vrátiť sa k metóde dejín malého človeka, tzv. malej histórii, a rozobrať dianie z perspektívy každodenného života, vrátane rozhodovania o štúdiu, účasti v Socialistickom zväze mládeže či učiteľských rozhodnutí, čo povedať žiakom po Stalinovom úmrtí, ako aj politických vtipov a skrývaných alebo neskrývaných názorov na politikov. Táto cesta by mohla viesť k lepšiemu poznaniu doby a k plnšiemu odkazu do budúcnosti, keď už obdobie, ktoré títo ľudia prežili, úplne zanikne medzi ostatnými.

*Deväť životov* je kniha otvorených vhládov do rôznych kútov doby. Týka sa síce prekladu, ale preklad je aj politický akt. Na viacerých miestach knihy sa naráža na problém, prečo sa budúci prekladatelia rozhodli ísť študovať cudzie jazyky v 50. rokoch, keď nebolo možné ani cestovať do cudziny. Je to vcelku jasné – už vtedy, a najmä vtedy prinášal pojem cudzie jazyky a cudzie literatúry závan odlišnosti. Inštinktívne cítili, že to je iný obzor, okno, ktorým vidieť rozdielnosť a ktorým prichádzajú poznanie a neznáme vnemy. Politikum bolo imanentnou súčasťou diania, takže ľudia žili ideologicky motivovaný život, aj ak sa priamo politicky neangažovali. Ich rozhodnutia boli motivované i politicky, pretože ich donútili žiť v modeli života, ktorý bol postavený ideologicky. Situácia v spoločnosti určovala aj možnosti reakcie, ľudia mohli reagovať len potiaľ, pokiaľ si to dokázali predstaviť. Síce každý bol svojím

dielom za tento stav zodpovedný, ale o spôsobe reakcie na niečo, čo si človek nedokázal ani predstaviť, nevedeli rozhodnúť. V každom modeli, aj silne ideologicky determinovanom, sa však dajú zaujímať rôzne stanoviská a hľadať iné cesty. Štúdium cudzích jazykov a literatúry rozhodne tou cestou vnútornej deliberácie bolo.

Občas sa môže zdať, že písania o preklade je priveľa, ale nie je to tak. Recenzovaná zbierka rozhovorov dokazuje, že ho stále nie je dosť na to, aby sa zachytil reálny život a reálne pôsobenie prekladu v spoločnosti, kultúre, civilizácii, politike a v menšom aj v živote čitateľa, prekladateľa a odborných inštitúcií. Okrem toho v podhubí slovenského prekladania naďalej pretrvávajú otázky, ktoré boli položené už pri zrode myslenia o preklade na Slovensku. Sú to otázky týkajúce sa potreby teórie prekladu pre praktické prekladanie či týkajúce sa kvality prekladu: preklad dobrý alebo zlý, preklad verný alebo falošný. Postupom času si ich prekladateľská obec ozrejmuje a svedčí o tom aj tento zborník všeobecne zdieľaným názorom, že cieľom teórie prekladu nie je učiť prekladať, ale reflektovať význam prekladu, jeho funkcie a rôzne formy v kultúre národa. To sa týka aj dejín prekladu pri hodnotení, čo ešte do fondu slovenskej literatúry patrí a čo už nie, lebo je to „cudzie“, alebo ktorý jazyk možno považovať za súčasť dejín slovenského jazyka a ktorý nie (latinčina, čeština, maďarčina). Teória prekladu sa môže zamýšľať aj nad funkciou vydavateľstiev, pretože tie preklad profilujú a šíria. Patrí sem napríklad konkurencia medzi vydavateľstvami Slovenský spisovateľ a Tatran, ich jazykové úzy a presadzovanie vybraných výrazov nielen z lingvistických, ale aj ideologických alebo nacionalistických dôvodov.

Časopis *Revue svetovej literatúry* a rozhovor s dlhoročnou šéfredaktorkou J. Samcovou ďalej otvoril významnú úlohu inštitúcie časopisov. Samcová pútavo priblížila atmosféru života v redakcii, vykreslila ho ako obrovský kolotoč, ktorý svojím spôsobom fungoval tajne, navzdory všetkým, čo nechceli pomôcť, úchytkom, niečo tu, niečo



tam, za pomoci všetkých okolo, takmer pokútne. Aj táto skúsenosť ukázala, že hoci časopisy bojujú o prežitie, v minulosti či dnes, stále majú dôležité poslanie. Širia cudzie literatúry do menších prostredí, medzi študentov a študentky, a mnohých inšpiratívne vtahujú do činnosti. To je však len sociálna funkcia. Časopis je významný najmä preto, lebo časopisecký preklad je možno ešte dôležitejší ako knižný, otvára cesty, môže si dovoliť oveľa viac novosti, občas aj škandál, zatiaľ čo knižný preklad musí priniesť niečo osvedčené. Ide teda o jednu z najdôležitejších inštitúcií v preklade. Iniciuje preklady, vychováva mladé čitateľské a prekladateľské generácie, dáva možnosť získať skúsenosti a uplatniť sa proti oficiálnym trendom v každom čase, prináša informácie o rôznorodosti a odlišnosti, a uplatňuje sa dnes i zajtra, či sa jeho čas bude volať socializmus, alebo stratégia najvyššieho zisku, alebo elektronické informačné siete.

Ak sa teraz vrátime k otázke vzťahu teórie prekladu a prekladania, musíme skonštatovať, že takmer všetci prekladatelia (Vilikovský, Wlachovský, Šimon, Andričík a ďalší) sa vo svojich rozhovoroch vyjadrili podobne: spor medzi teóriou a praxou prekladania je falošný. Cieľom prekladovej teórie je skúmať, ako preklad pracuje a čo je alebo má byť prekladová kritika. Vyučovanie prekladu na univerzitách tiež vždy existovalo. Občas malo slávnu históriu, inokedy nebolo ani najmenej explicitné, ale vyplývalo z použitých príkladov. Ako vieme, aj vyučovanie morfológie cudzieho jazyka vlastne spočíva v porovnávaní a uvádzaní príkladov. V podstate každý prekladateľ má svoju teóriu prekladu. Plynie zo skúsenosti, ale aj z cieľov prekladu – napríklad doplniť v národnej literatúre chýbajúce postupy, metrá či žánre. Premýšľanie o vlastnom preklade, ktoré zdôrazňuje Vilikovský, nachádzame v tvorbe každého z prezentovaných prekladateľov a prekladateľiek. Aj keď zväčša svoju teóriu neformulujú, držia sa jej, riadia sa ňou. Zaujímavým momentom je aj Vilikovského rozpomínanie sa na

jar roku 1968, keď sa v Bratislave uskutočnilo zasadanie prípravného výboru medzinárodnej prekladateľskej organizácie FIT (Fédération internationale des traducteurs), ktoré malo pripraviť svetový kongres FIT v Prahe roku 1969. Samozrejme, že kongres sa neuskutočnil, ale kontakty medzi slovenskou a svetovou teóriou prekladu ostali. Aj to je vysvetlenie, prečo sa A. Popovič začlenil medzi významné osobnosti svetovej translatológie.

V knihe ako celku sa prelínajú rôzne filológie. Jednotlivé prekladateľské osobnosti píšú o tej svojej a poukazujú na isté míľniky či rozhodovanie i vlastné okolnosti, publikácia je preto veľmi rôznorodá, súčasne ju však charakterizuje celistvosť nazerania. Niektoré odborné pohľady nám môžu byť vzdialenejšie, iné bližšie ako napríklad v mojom prípade dejiny romanistiky v podaní M. Jurovskej. Napokon, prekladanie diel z rôznych literatúr malo množstvo spoločných črt, medzi ktorými bolo povedomie o spoločenskej situácii a spoločnej situácii všetkých slovenských prekladateľiek a prekladateľov. To sa týka aj univerzitného vyučovania a obrazu jazykových disciplín v spoločnosti. Výsledný obraz však prekvapuje výrazným splynutím aspektov umenia, vzdelanosti, sociálnej situácie, spoločnosti a politiky i ceny, ktorú bolo treba priniesť za možnosť prekladať. A skončiť možno vskutku mnohovýznamovo, tak, ako to urobil J. Andričík, keď spomenul výrok Josého Saramaga: „Národnú literatúru tvoria spisovatelia, ale svetovú literatúru tvoria prekladatelia.“

LIBUŠA VAJDOVÁ

Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV, Slovenská republika

Autorky vo svojej monografii, venovanej mystickej skúsenosti a skúmanej optikou literárnej vedy, zachytávajú istý aktuálny trend duchovného pulzovania: na jednej strane vnímame silný prúd sekularizácie, ktorý je neprehliadnuteľný a predovšetkým v (historicky) kresťanskej Európe vyvoláva mnohé otázky; na strane druhej zvýšený záujem, ba priam *renesancia duchovnosti* (7), ako ju dnes evidujeme, naznačuje, že súčasný človek je už nasýtený, či skôr presýtený všetkým, čo si len prial, a zisťuje, že je prázdny, pominuteľný a bez perspektívy. Tento stav je impulzom, že sa vydáva na cestu hľadania vyššej formy naplnenia.

Autorky sa, pochopiteľne, vyhýbajú hodnoteniu rôznorodých duchovných prúdov mystickej skúsenosti a približujú ju ako fenomén, čo človeka presahuje a vyskytuje sa vo forme, ktorá jednotlivé duchovné prejavy vo svojej neuchopiteľnosti vlastne spája. Takýto prístup môžeme chápať aj ako implicitné obrusovanie hrán medzi jednotlivými náboženskými prúdmi, resp. konfesiami. Sústreďujú sa na tzv. *malé metafor*y (18), ktoré v literárnosémantickom ponímaní nekladú ako opozitum k tzv. *veľkým metaforám*, ale primárne ich využívajú na vyjadrenie privátnej až intímnej skúsenosti s Bohom. Interpretáciu postavili na obrazoch obsiahnutých v autorských poetikách Františka z Assisi (1181/2 – 1226), Jacoponeho da Todi (1230/1236 – 1306), Kataríny Sienskej (1347 – 1380), Juliany z Norwichu (cca 1342 – 1416), Terézie od Ježiša (1515 – 1582) a Jána z Kríža (1542 – 1591). Na prvý pohľad ide o texty širokej proveniencie, čo do pôvodu a časového rozptylu (kultúrno-historický kontext) i žánrového zaraďovania. Do logického celku ich však spájajú autobiografické črty, na základe ktorých autorky prenikajú k inšpiratívnym momentom duchovno-tvorivého napätia mystičiek a mystikov.

Pohľad na mystický zážitok ako na „znak-puto medzi mystikou a poéziou, resp. medzi mystikom a básnikom“ (22) je rozširujúcim prvkom vo vnímaní mystiky ako takej. Neobmedzuje sa len na oblasť teológie či spirituality, ale „čistým okom“ pozoruje širšie kontúry tohto fenoménu. Avšak Hatzfeldovo konštatovanie, že „jeden [mystik] i druhý [básnik] po slepiacky hľadajú to, čo nemôžu urobiť sami zo seba“ (23), dáva tejto myšlienke vyšší význam: naznačuje jednotu prirodzenosti a transcendentna, sveta zmyslami vnímateľného a duchovného, ľudského a božského. Zmienení jednotiaci a súčasne komplementárny pohľad vytvára novátorskú – vo vzťahu k dnes prevažujúcemu bipolárnemu pohľadu na svet – jednotu reality, v ktorej žijeme. Vzácné je korektné vyjadrovanie sa autoriek o mysticizme bez čo i len náznaku, že by do tohto fenoménu implementovali módné trendy, či dokonca ho posúvali do významov, čo sú mu celkom cudzie. Tak sa im podarilo predstaviť mystické osobnosti bez tendenčného okliešťovania ich duchovného prežívania a zároveň poukázať na jeho dosah, ktorý presahuje obvyklé, tzn. verbalizovateľné spirituálne zážitky.

Zasadenie mystickej literatúry a v nej opísaných zážitkov do širšieho kontextu, o ktoré sa autorky monografie pokúsili, prináša aj ďalšie prekvapujúce rezultáty. Mystický zážitok ako nenaplánovateľný „komunikačný kanál“ spájajúci Boha s človekom sa tu vníma ako niečo, čo vyžaduje takmer božskú svätosť človeka obdareného takouto výnimočnou skúsenosťou – akoby bol vytrhnutý zo svojej pozemskej reality a už sa nemohol do nej vrátiť (doslova, akoby bol na čas zbavený svojho človečenstva). Mystické zážitky však vytvárajú predpoklad na taký druh vnútornej slobody, ktorá umožňuje byť aj vo vzťahu k Bohu samými sebou a rozvinúť svoje autentické jadro (pozri David Peroutka, Vnitřní sloboda podle Terezie z Avily, in *Duchovná*

*cesta a jej podoby v literatúre*, ed. Magda Kučerková, 2015, 253 – 260). Ešte ďalej ide mystická skúsenosť Juliany z Norwichu, jadro jej spirituality tvorí „nezný a láskavý obraz Boha, ktorý je pre ňu otcom, bratom, priateľom a celkom osobito aj matkou“ (24). Na vrchole tohto uvažovania stojí láska znázornená obrazom „výmeny srdca“ (Katarína Sienská), ktorý je vlastne odpoveďou na dychtivé hľadanie človeka všetkých čias – milovať a byť milovaný láskou „čistou, zbavenou strachu a zištnosti“ (25).

Spoločnou interpretačnou platformou skúmania diel kresťanských mystičiek a mystikov sa pre autorky stal pojem *vnútorný obraz*. Imaginatívne mystické videnia sú predmetom skúmania rôznych disciplín. No keďže sú vo svojej podstate zakaždým „iného druhu“ (29), nemožno ich definovať jednoducho a úplne. A tak sa *imagen* ako pojem Františka Mika, *obrazové videnie* Reginalda Dacika, *fantazijné vízie* Josefa Sudbracka aj *obrazné videnie* Evelyn Underhill stávajú v *Poetike nevyjadriteľného* rôznymi kamienkami tej istej mozaiky: na malom priestore každý z nich zo svojho uhla pohľadu poodhľadá podstatu „výmeny srdca“, „zranenia srdca“ či mystickej skúsenosti stigmatizácie a „mystickej svadby“ (30 – 31). Všetky tieto obrazy majú analogický charakter, preto je logické, že autorky ich nedekodovali doslovne či priamočiaro. Naopak, zasadili ich do „symbolicko-konotatívnej paradigmy kresťanstva“ (31).

Podstatná časť monografie, konkrétne podkapitola *Na hranici nevysloviteľného diania*, sa usiluje pomenovať nepomenovateľné, resp. „ono neviem čo“, „čoho identitu autor nedokáže označiť menom“ (39). Snaha

o interpretáciu myšlienok, citov, cesty duše, o ktorých sám mystik tvrdí, že je nemožné ich vyjadriť spôsobom, akým sa v skutočnosti stali (39), navodzuje určitú mieru skepsy. Úsilie ozrejmiť transcendentnú skúsenosť ľudskými prostriedkami zase v sebe nesie riziko nepochopenia, či dokonca zosmiešnenia sa, ale nepodstúpiť ho by znamenalo dobrovoľne zotrvať v známom, ohraničenom a vyčerpateľnom svete vlastného bytia/odbornej disciplíny.

Býva zvyčajným postupom, že zvolený názov knihy by mal ešte pred jej prečítaním odkazovať na obsahové ťažisko. V prípade tejto publikácie sa však názov knihy jasne ozrejmi až po jej prečítaní a ešte viac po jej premyslení. Vydať sa na hranicu zmyslami vnímateľného, rozumom nepochopiteľného, nečakaného až absurdného môže zvädzať k snahe chcieť pochopiť aspoň čo-to z bohatstva mystických zážitkov a intelektuálne z toho ťažiť. No konceptuálne ťažisko *Poetiky nevyjadriteľného* je inde. Konkrétne interpretácia mystických zážitkov berie na seba úlohu bodového reflektora – nasmerúva ľudskú túžbu po niečom „vyššom“ na tie sféry, ktoré sa nám vymykajú, a práve preto nás priťahujú k „magnetu vesmíru“ (65). V zhode s mystikou v jej najhlbšej podstate autorky nevysvetľujú všetky možné kontextové súvislosti a významové spojenia, len robia „hmatateľnou“ odvekú líniu nedosiahnuteľného. Ako kardinálne sa v tomto pohybe javí tušenie nevyčerpatelnosti, ktoré je vlastne synonymom božstva ako takého. Literárny jazyk má silu naň poukázať.

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## **JURAJ DVORSKÝ: Od naratívnej gramatiky k interdisciplinarite naratívu**

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Monografická práca predstavuje isté, povedzme, predbežné završenie dlhodobých systematických naratologických skúmaní Juraja Dvorského. Autor sa v nej zároveň spovedá zo skúseností s prácou s nástrojmi

naratológie, do veľkej miery zovšeobecňuje teoretické a metodologické aspekty naratologických štúdií a – čo je hádam najzávažnejšie – kriticky prehodnocuje poznávacie možnosti naratológie v kontexte jej histo-

rického vývinu. Robí to v súvislostiach špecifických otázok literárnej vedy, ale súčasne odkazuje aj na oblasti, kde naratológia opúšťa svoj pôvodný literárnovedný kontext. Reaguje tým na problematiku odklonu naratológie od výskumov výlučne prozaických textov a na jej následné uplatnenie vo výskume iných druhov, iných médií, ale aj iných disciplín (zjavne podľa predlohy Very a Ansgara Nünningovcov a ich príručky *Erzähltheorie transgenerisch, intermedial, interdisziplinär*, 2002). Na takto rozčlenenej ploche sa sústreďuje na jednotlivé kľúčové pojmy naratológie a konštruje pomerne ucelený obraz o jej vývine, pričom zohľadňuje rôzne tradície, hlavne však anglosaskú, francúzsku, nemeckú a slovenskú. Autor nenásilne a presvedčivo predkladá čitateľskej verejnosti celé teoretické a koncepcné inštrumentárium jednotlivých odnoží naratológie a jej spríbuznených odborov, neodhliada ale ani od nevyjasnených otázok a častých protirečení. Tieto otvorené a aktuálne stále diskutované problémy však lektúru nezaťažujú, skôr ju oživujú, podávajú autentické svedectvo o konštruktívnej realite disciplíny. Samozrejme, prieniky naratológie a príbuzných disciplín ako kognitívna psychológia alebo antropológia sa dajú uchopiť iba okrajovo a iba za cenu vysokého stupňa generalizácie a redukcie. To, že to autor aj skutočne robí, neznižuje hodnotu príslušných kapitol, naopak, takýto postup sa dobre hodí do celkovo dôsledne premyslenej a vyzretej koncepcie monografie.

Už len fakt, že naratológia vo svojich rôznych podobách vyprodukovala celý arzenál pojmov, je dôvodom na hlbšie zamyslenie sa nad tým, o čom vlastne hovoríme, keď sa zmieňujeme o rozprávaní, sujete, fabule, príbehu, dejí, udalosti, rozprávačovi, postavách a pod. Autor je v tomto smere disciplinovaný a precízny, každý pojem sa snaží zachytiť v jeho odbornom kontexte, prípadné typológie vysvetľuje s patričnou dávkou nadhľadu a znalosti klasifikačných kritérií, ktoré opäť zasadzuje do príslušných modelov, resp. metateórií. V prípade, kde hrozí, že by sa explanácie mohli stratiť pod zápla-

vou odkazov a citátov, vyberá to, čo v danom diskurze rezonovalo najväčšmi. Môžeme konštatovať, že čitateľská verejnosť je tak konfrontovaná s kanonizovanými prácami, so zvučnými menami naratológov, hlavne štrukturalistov.

Na predloženej monografii je sympatická aj skutočnosť, že J. Dvorský iba neprerozpráva to, čo už tak alebo onak nutne nájdeme v citovaných prácach, ale ponúka nám aj početné ukážky skúmaných fenoménov na literárnom materiáli. Okrem pojmov postava a rozprávač je v monografii veľmi kvalitne rozpracovaný fenomén perspektívy, čo treba vyzdvihnúť už len preto, že tento pojem je v súčasnom naratologickom diskurze stále kontroverzný a stav absentujúceho konsenzu akútny. Autor hneď v úvode upozorňuje na celú paletu konkurujúcich si pojmov konceptualizujúcich fenomén perspektívy a možnú príčinu vidí v tom, že sa pojem perspektíva používa v rôznych disciplínach (optika, geometria, matematika a pod.). Samostatnú kapitolu venuje pojmu fokalizácia, ktorý sa niekedy používa ako synonymum perspektívy, a uvažuje o ich vzájomnom vzťahu, resp. o ich „koexistencii ako dvoch rozličných pojmov“ (69).

Rovnako omniprezentná v naratologickom diskurze je aj problematika času na rozdiel od relatívne poddimenzovaného fenoménu priestoru. Autor monografie odkazuje na všeobecne známu diferenciáciu času rozprávania a času príbehu. Pridanou hodnotou kapitoly pojednávajúcej o čase je skutočnosť, že ide po stopách jednotlivých pojmov. Cituje okrem iného Günthera Müllera, ktorý ako prvý rozlišuje *Erzählzeit* (čas rozprávania) a *erzählte Zeit* (čas príbehu). Dvorský s odvolaním sa na nemeckého literárneho vedca vysvetľuje čas rozprávania ako „čas, ktorý potrebuje rozprávač na vyrozprávanie vlastného príbehu“, pričom „[j]eho miera je obvykle určená počtom strán“ (76). Ako sa ukazuje, táto kategória nie je ani tak kategóriou času ako skôr vecou priestoru a ani jej pojmové určenie, t. j. že ide o čas, ktorý potrebuje rozprávač na vyrozprávanie svojho príbehu, nebude presné, nakoľko vzápätí sa dozvedáme, že ide skôr o rozsah

textu a počet strán – a môžeme logicky dodať „ktoré čitateľ za istý čas dokáže prečítať“. Ide teda o relatívny čas (v zmysle „strán za hodinu“), ktorý ale v žiadnom prípade nie je viazaný na kategóriu rozprávača, ako to definuje Müller. Asi aj preto Gérard Genette v tomto prípade hovorí o pseudočasovosti (pozri *Die Erzählung*, 1998, 213). Otázka preto znie, aký má vôbec význam súvisť vzťahovanie týchto dvoch kategórií v prípade tlačných prozaických textov? Túto otázku uspokojivo nezodpovedal ani Eberhard Lämmert, keď uviedol koncepty *Zeitdehnung* a *Zeitraffung*. Dvorský odkazuje na variabilné vzťahy medzi kategóriami času rozprávania a času príbehu, odvoláva sa aj na Genetta, nevjadruje sa však k hlbšiemu zmyslu uvažovania o vzťahu týchto kategórií, resp. o relevantnosti kategórie času rozprávania. Viac priestoru potom venuje diachrónej naratológii (Monika Fludernik).

Na rozdiel od výskumu časovej štruktúry narácie sa výskumu priestorových štruktúr v naratológii celkovo venuje iba relatívne malá pozornosť napriek diagnostikovanému obratu k priestoru (*spatial turn*). Aj keď autor považuje stav predmetného bádania za rudimentárny, podarilo sa mu naskicovať celkom slušný a diferencovaný obraz o ňom. V podstate tu postupuje od predstavovania čiastkových výskumov a generalizuje za pomoci univerzálne akceptovaných prác Karin Dennerlein alebo Ansgara Nünninga. Zaujímavé sú aj postrehy o referencialite priestoru textu a geopriestoru (literárna geografia). Samozrejme ide iba o načrtnutie problematiky.

Veľký intelektuálny priestor venuje Dvorský presahom naratológie do oblastí bádania mimo literárnej vedy. Tieto presahy sú zmysluplné vždy vtedy, ak sú systémové. Mohlo by sa hovoriť aj o systémových transformáciách, pri ktorých sa však objavujú problémy. Tie autor monografie exemplárne pertraktuje na príklade naratológie drámy, presnejšie na ploche vzťahu narativity a performativity či na fenoméne narativity v lyrike.

K spomínaným presahom naratológie patrí aj intermediálny výskum rozprávania. Dvorský predkladá intermediálnu teóriu

rozprávania na pozadí rozboru pojmu intermediality, resp. konkurencie pojmov intertextualita a intermedialita. Kriticky odkazuje na mnohé iritujúce paušálne prístupy, ale neúnavne vyzdvihuje aj zmysel a objavnosť intermediálnych výskumov narácie, napríklad v prípade piktorálneho rozprávania v maliarstve.

Záverečnú časť knihy (a nünningovskej triády) tvorí kapitola o interdisciplinárnom výskume rozprávania. Aj tu autor začína prezieravo a s pojmom interdisciplinarita pracuje výsostne koncepčne. A keďže ide o problematiku, ktorá plní celé regály odbornej literatúry, výskum rozprávania približuje v historiografickom diskurze, konkrétne školy Annales. Na príklade vedeckej práce *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Návrat Martina Guerra, 1983) odкрýva metódy jej autorky americkej historičky Natalie Zemon Davis a otvára priestor aj pre rekapituláciu kritických námietok voči predmetným postupom (napr. nemeckého historika Michaela Maurera). Dospieva k názoru, že kategória spoľahlivého rozprávača sa v prípade historiografického rozprávania nedá zmysluplne uplatniť a namiesto spoľahlivosti či nespoľahlivosti sa prikláňa ku kategórii pravdivosti/nepravdivosti na pozadí konceptu overiteľnosti/neoveriteľnosti. Monografia spĺňa najvyššie nároky, ktoré sa kladú na odbornú literatúru príručkového charakteru.

ROMAN MIKULÁŠ

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