

Svetová literatúra
z pohľadu „malých“
literatúr

World Literature from
the Perspective
of “Small” Literatures

RÓBERT GÁFRIK
MILOŠ ZELENKA
(eds.)

MILOŠ ZELENKA

The concept of world literature in Czech and Slovak comparative literary studies

WOOK-DONG KIM

Against Sinocentrism: Internal orientalism in world literature

SONALI GANGULY – LIPIKA DAS

The Biswa Sahitya Granthamala (World literature book series) as a reaction to English linguistic domination in Odisha

PAULS DAIJA – BENEDIKTS KALNAČS

“Provincializing” world literature: The role of translations in shaping 19th-century Latvian culture

RADU VANCU

The post-national Celan: The imperfect triangulation from (abandoned) Romanian poetry to world literature and back

CHARLES SABATOS

Prague beyond Kafka: Rethinking minor literature through the work of Jiří Langer

WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES

Šéfredaktorka / Editor-in-Chief

JANA CVIKOVÁ

Redakcia / Editorial Staff

EVA KENDERESSY

NATÁLIA TYŠŠ RONDZIKOVÁ

Redakčná rada / Editorial Board

MÁRIA BÁTOROVÁ

KATARÍNA BEDNÁROVÁ

ADAM BŽOCH

RÓBERT GÁFRIK

JUDIT GÖRÖZDI

MÁRIA KUSÁ

ROMAN MIKULÁŠ

SOŇA PAŠTEKOVÁ

DOBROTA PUCHEROVÁ

LIBUŠA VAJDOVÁ

(Institute of World Literature, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava)

MARIÁN ANDRIČÍK (Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice)

MAGDOLNA BALOGH (Institute for Literary Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest)

MARCEL CORNIS-POPE (Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond)

XAVIER GALMICHE (Sorbonne University, Paris)

ZDENĚK HRBATA (Institute of Czech Literature, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague)

MAGDA KUČERKOVÁ (Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra)

ANTON POKRIVČÁK (Trnava University in Trnava)

IVO POSPÍŠIL (Masaryk University, Brno)

CLARA ROYER (Sorbonne University, Paris)

CHARLES SABATOS (Yeditepe University, Istanbul)

MONICA SPIRIDON (University of Bucharest)

MILOŠ ZELENKA (University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice)

BODO ZELINSKY (University of Cologne)

Adresa redakcie / Editorial Office

Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV, v. v. i.

Dúbravská cesta 9

841 04 Bratislava

Tel. (00421 -2) 54431995

E-mail usvlwlit@savba.sk

- Svetová literatúra z pohľadu „malých“ literatúr / World Literature from the Perspective of "Small" Literatures
RÓBERT GÁFRIK Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV, v. v. i.
MILOŠ ZELENKA Ústav stredoeurópskych jazykov a kultúr, Fakulta stredoeurópskych štúdií, Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre

- Číslo je výstupom výskumného programu špičkového tímu Stredoeurópske medziliterárne vzťahy.

World Literature Studies – Časopis pre výskum svetovej literatúry vydáva štyri razy ročne Ústav svetovej literatúry Slovenskej akadémie vied, v. v. i. ■ Uverejňuje recenzované, doposiaľ nepublikované vedecké štúdie a recenzie z oblasti všeobecnej a porovnávacej literárnej vedy a translológie. ■ V rokoch 1992 – 2008 časopis vychádzal pod názvom Slovak Review of World Literature Research. ■ Príspevky sa uverejňujú v slovenčine, češtine, angličtine, nemčine, príp. francúzštine s anglickými resumé. ■ Viac o časopise, výzvy na posielanie príspevkov a pokyny k príspevkom, ako aj plnotextové verzie skončených ročníkov na www.wls.sav.sk.

World Literature Studies is a scholarly journal published quarterly by Institute of World Literature, Slovak Academy of Sciences. ■ It publishes original, peer-reviewed scholarly articles and book reviews in the areas of general and comparative literature studies and translation studies.

■ It was formerly known (1992–2008) as Slovak Review of World Literature Research. ■ The journal's languages are Slovak, Czech, English, German and French. Abstracts appear in English. ■ More information, calls for papers, submission guidelines and full texts of past volumes can be found at www.wls.sav.sk.

Časopis je zaradený do databáz / The journal is indexed in

- Art & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI)
- Central and Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL)
- Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (CEJSH)
- Current Contents / Arts & Humanities (CC/A&H)
- EBSCO
- European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH PLUS)
- Scopus

World Literature Studies (Časopis pre výskum svetovej literatúry), ročník 14, 2022, číslo 2

ISSN 13370-9275 = E-ISSN 1337-9690

Vydáva Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV, v. v. i. / Published by the Institute of World Literature SAS

IČO / ID: 17 050 278

Evidenčné číslo / Registration number: EV 373/08

Číslo vyšlo v júni 2022 / The issue was published in June 2022

Návrh grafickej úpravy / Graphic design: Eva Kovačevičová-Fudala
Zalomenie a príprava do tlače / Layout: Eva Andrejčáková

Copyright © Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV, v. v. i., autorky a autori textov a prekladov. Pri opätovnom publikovaní prosíme uviesť údaje o prvej publikácii príspevku a informovať redakciu. / Institute of World Literature SAS, authors of texts and translations. Authors can reproduce their texts on the condition of full acknowledgement of the original publication and information about this provided to the editors.

Distribúcia / Subscriptions: Slovak Academic Press, s. r. o.
Bazová 2, 821 08 Bratislava, sap@sappress.sk

OBSAH / CONTENTS**EDITORIÁL / EDITORIAL**

RÓBERT GÁFRÍK – MILOŠ ZELENKA

World literature from the perspective of “small” literatures ■ 2

ŠTÚDIE / ARTICLES

MILOŠ ZELENKA

The concept of world literature in Czech and Slovak comparative literary studies ■ 5

WOOK-DONG KIM

Against Sinocentrism: Internal orientalism in world literature ■ 31

SONALI GANGULY – LIPIKA DAS

The Biswa Sahitya Granthamala (World literature book series) as a reaction to English linguistic domination in Odisha ■ 48

PAULS DAIJA – BENEDIKTS KALNAČS

“Provincializing” world literature: The role of translations in shaping 19th-century Latvian culture ■ 59

RADU VANCU

The post-national Celan: The imperfect triangulation from (abandoned) Romanian poetry to world literature and back ■ 72

CHARLES SABATOS

Prague beyond Kafka: Rethinking minor literature through the work of Jiří Langer ■ 85

RECENZIE / BOOK REVIEWS

Arie van der Ent (ed.): Vermoorde dichters almanak: Onvrijwillig gestorven 1919–1944 [Murdered poets' almanac: Involuntary death 1919–1944] (Adam Bžoch) ■ 103

Carola Heinrich: Was bleibt? Zur Inszenierung von Gedächtnis und Identität im postsowjetischen Kuba und Rumänien [What remains? On the staging of memory and identity in post-Soviet Cuba and Romania] (Roman Mikuláš) ■ 105

Peter Zajac (ed.): Poetika festivity [The poetics of festivity] (Zornitza Kazalarska) ■ 109

Jana Kuzmíková: Kognitívna literárna veda. Teória, experimenty, analýzy [Cognitive literary studies: Theory, experiments, analyses] (Peter Getlík) ■ 112

Jitka Zehnalová: Aspekty literárního překladu. Mediační úloha překladatele [Aspects of literary translation. The mediating role of the translator] (Marie Krappmann) ■ 115

World literature from the perspective of “small” literatures

RÓBERT GÁFRIK – MILOŠ ZELENKA

The notion of world literature has become a subject of intense debate in the global community of literary scholars thanks to the contributions of theorists such as David Damrosch and Franco Moretti. In addition, several other terms such as “world republic of letters”, “literatures of the world”, and “worldliness” have emerged in the past two decades. However, despite their semantic differences, they conceive of the phenomenon in question as a canon or a system which texts enter through the “large” literatures written in hegemonic languages such as English. This suggests that world literature should be understood as a correlate of political and economic power rather than a purely literary phenomenon. Seen from this perspective, texts from smaller literatures (in general, those written in less-commonly spoken languages) have to fulfill something extra in order to achieve the status of world literature. Their journey to the desired destination – which is complex and often takes place over a longer time – is determined by literary and extra-literary factors, such as translation, genre, an appealing theme, cultural and historical tradition, advertising and media, distribution and reading practices. The scholars who research “small” literatures (especially outside Anglophone academia) often criticize the idea of inequality, which is inherent in this model of world literature, as an epistemological framework and argue against the codification of the binary oppositions of “center” vs. “periphery”, and “development” vs. “underdevelopment”. For them, the epistemological point of departure takes on an ethical dimension.

The present thematic issue of WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES is a continuation of the previous activities of the Czecho-Slovak Association of Comparative Literature on the occasion of the AILC/ICLA triennial congresses. In 2013, at the time of the XX Congress in Paris, Miloš Zelenka and Róbert Gáfrik edited the previous issue *Comparative Literary Studies as Cultural Criticism* (No. 2). Its articles attempted to contribute to the debate on the subject and method of comparative literature understood as an umbrella discipline, which tries to save the deconstruction of its distinctive identity with the stress on “comparison” as a specific way of reading. At the XXI AILC/ICLA Congress in Vienna in 2016, Czech and Slovak scholars or-

This thematic issue is published with the financial contribution of the top research team Central European Interliterary Relations, supported as “excellent scientific research in the field of humanities” by the Government of the Slovak Republic.

ganized a group session called “Old and New Concepts of Comparative Literature in the Globalized World”. The aim of the meeting was to explore the pluralistic world of theory and methodology of contemporary comparative literature as well as the migration of its concepts in time and space, while pointing out the specifics of local or regional traditions of comparative thinking. On the occasion of the XXII Congress in Macau in 2019, Anton Pokrivčák and Miloš Zelenka edited another thematic issue of *WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES*, titled *Images of Remote Countries in the Literature of Central and Eastern Europe* (No. 2).

The current collection of articles again aims to explore a topic related to the main theme of the AILC/ICLA Congress, “Re-Imagining Literatures of the World: Global and Local, Mainstreams and Margins”, which will take place for the 23rd time at the end of July 2022 in Tbilisi. The editors have chosen methodological studies and analytical interpretations that reflect on the relation of “small” literatures to world literature with the emphasis on local traditions of thinking about this phenomenon. They believe that the phenomenon designated as world literature cannot be viewed from a single cultural and theoretical perspective. Therefore, even in this small collection of articles they have tried to maintain a broad geographical scope.

The first two articles concentrate on general issues concerning the notion of world literature. In the introductory study, Miloš Zelenka expounds on the Czech and Slovak conceptualizations of world literature. In contrast to the currently popular idea of “worlding” literatures, he suggests approaching the notion of world literature from the ontological and the epistemological perspective. As an ontological concept, he sees world literature as a historically evolving form of existence of literary works and their relations. It is based on the morphological determination of world literature as an aggregate of forms and structures of supralocal and supratemporal significance. As an epistemological concept, world literature acts as a specific aspect of literary communication, as a mode of reading. Wook-Dong Kim’s paper criticizes ethnocentric concepts of world literature in general and Sinocentrism in particular. He opposes the recent attempts to reduce literary cultures of East Asian countries, especially those of Korea and Japan, to the Sinocentric viewpoint.

The next two articles focus on the function and significance of world literature for national literatures. Sonali Ganguly and Lipika Das use the example of Odia language and literature to present world literature as a tool for liberation from linguistic and cultural domination. In so doing, they see world literature as a vehicle of universality that manifests itself in various avatars. They show how the book series devoted to world literature, *Biswa Sahitya Granthamala*, is an important contribution to the revival of Odia literary culture in post-independence India. On the other hand, on the basis of 19th-century Latvian culture, Pauls Daija and Benedikts Kalnačs question the idea that world literature is automatically adding value to the receiving culture. They describe how works of European literature were “provincialized” in the complex process of their reception alongside other texts of lower literary quality.

The last two studies of the thematic block are devoted to the works of individual authors in relation to world literature. Using the example of Paul Celan – here inter-

preted also as a Romanian poet – Radu Vancu corrects David Damrosch's conceptualization of world literature based on the dichotomy of source and host culture, and argues for the concept of cultural triangulation. Charles Sabatos discusses Franz Kafka's contemporary Jiří Langer and plays Henri Gobard's tetralinguistic model of language against Deleuze and Guattari's theory of minor literature. He rejects the image of the Prague writers as deterritorialized and, in contrast, shows how the Czech metropolis shaped their identity through multilingualism.

The articles make not only a literary-historical contribution but also a theoretical one to the current discussions on the nature, functions and forms of world literature by rethinking some epistemological and ethical issues. They build on the awareness that the world and its literatures are becoming increasingly globalized and for that reason scholars are motivated to search for universality in individual cultures. However, at the same time, they are mindful of the opposite movement which manifests itself as linguistic, national or ethnic particularism. The editors maintain that both these aspects complementarily become the defining elements of world literature.

Doc. Mgr. Róbert Gáfrik, PhD.
Institute of World Literature
Slovak Academy of Sciences
Dúbravská cesta 9
841 04 Bratislava
Slovak Republic
robert.gafrik@savba.sk
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6448-9026>

Prof. PhDr. Miloš Zelenka, DrSc.
Institute of Central European Languages and Cultures
Faculty of Central European Studies
Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
Dražovská 4
949 74 Nitra
Slovak Republic
mzelenka@ukf.sk
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4049-3263>

The concept of world literature in Czech and Slovak comparative literary studies

MILOŠ ZELENKA

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2022.14.2.1>

This article draws attention to the lesser-known traditions of world literature research. It follows the line of thought connected with so-called “small” literatures, which aspire to “worldliness” only indirectly and with difficulties because they cannot take advantage of the global economic pressure and hegemony of English. Despite the terminological and semantic differences in their exposition of this phenomenon, current theorists (Emily Apter, Pascale Casanova, David Damrosch, Wai Chee Dimock, Theo D’haen, Marko Juvan, Franco Moretti, etc.) have reestablished the concept of world literature as an international research problem with English as the universal means of communication. These conceptions are based on the socio-economic question “what is the world?” rather than the structuralist question “what is literature?” (Gáfrik 2020a, 116). Damrosch’s monograph *What is World Literature?* (2003) epitomized the American vision of worldliness as a virtual interliterary network of texts translated into English, which is the elliptical refraction of national literatures (281–282). Scholars in Central Europe believe that the methodological discourse cannot be reduced to only one line of study, but that it is performed in different languages and various power relations (Pokrivčák and Zelenka 2019, 112). Since the early 20th century, these scholars have disputed the concept of world literature as a normative poetics based on selected themes, genres, and their heterogeneous discourses, as a standardized canon, or as the masterpieces of the so-called large or developed literatures. Enforcing this idea would allegedly condone the inequality as a kind of epistemological framework codifying the binary opposition of “developed” and “underdeveloped”, or “center” and “periphery”. In particular, the Czecho-Slovak structuralist tradition (Frank Wollman, René Wellek, Dionýz Ďurišin, etc.) has rejected national literature as a natural foundation of world literature and defended the autochthonous values of Slavic literatures within this system. The roots of this “defensive” theory were planted in the Central European intellectual atmosphere as a crossroad of diverse streams of thought and were connected with the structural concept of the Prague Linguistic Circle (Zelenka 2012, 134–135). It was also influenced by the multilingual tradition of the former Habsburg Empire and the phenomenon of migration which implied the aspects of polyglossia and heterotopia as a breeding

ground for scholars of comparative literature (Tihanov 2004, 64). Therefore, the first part of the study aims to describe the differences between the world literature concepts embraced by “large” and “small” literatures; in the second part, it will focus on the Czech and Slovak contributions to this highest category in literary studies.

THE CONCEPTS OF WORLD LITERATURE EMBRACED BY “LARGE” AND “SMALL” LITERATURES

First, it is necessary to remark that few literary notions are as popular as the phenomenon of world literature. It is also true that the vast extent of scholarship on this topic hinders even a basic orientation in the field. Nonetheless, no one can deny that world literature has achieved theoretical hegemony, not only in comparative literary studies (Kola 2014, 47). After all, a field of knowledge or specialization can boost its actual value if modified by the magical attribute “world” as, for example, world economy, world art, world politics, etc. The field thus assumes a quality of a virtual “supersign”, where “the signifier” totally transforms “the signified”. The field or research subject immediately acquires the status of elite and undoubtful value, which concentrates the epistemes of power and primarily metaphorically codifies the state of definite knowledge or the attainment of climax. Such a semiotic transformation is ideally conveyed by the notion of world literature. This notion attracts sustained scholarly interest despite its complicated nature, in which the unlimited circulation of literary texts is projected alongside the fact that this notion has been a direct correlate of political and economic aspects rather than purely literary ones. The combination of such broad notions as “literature” and “world” creates an infinite multitude of associations which lead to controversies and ambiguous implications, because there is no agreement on what is represented by these general terms. In this respect, the question arises about the real character of our “world”. Is it a unified world honoring equal values in all of its parts, or is it a united though unequal world, implicitly suggesting that it consists of a multitude of heterogeneous systems? First of all, it is a question of language, which in the communicative act always assumes a culturally hegemonic character, discernible in translations and its political connotations. Metaphorically, this situation is conveyed by the well-known witticism that national literature is written by authors, whereas world literature is created by translators. The traditional question about translation as a final category to constitute the phenomenon of world literature can be complemented by the importance of competence in reading world languages which is more common in Europe than, for instance, in the USA. The dissimilarity of conditions in which the intertextual and intercultural transfer occurs thus provides different frameworks for the perception and propagation of world literature. The issue becomes further complicated because world literature does not avail itself of an “original” language and because English historically usurped the function of the common “national” tongue as a tool of universal world communication, not excluding forms of artistic exchange. Similarly, we can ask whether world literature, no matter if understood as a heterogeneous, internally structured construct or a virtual philosophical vision, possesses an indispensable feature: is it the historical developmental value or the more mutable aesthetic dimension, the authorial myth

“superimposed” on their works, or a generally acknowledged idea extracted from the author’s text and existing in its own hermetically closed world?

Karel Čapek (1890–1938), who enriched the world lexicon by coining the word “robot” in his drama *R.U.R.* (1921), identified himself as a representative of the “small” Czech literature. In his 1936 essay “Jak se dělá světová literatura” (How world literature is made), he reflected on the question of “what worldliness is and how it is achieved, in brief, how literature is made world literature” (10). Čapek concludes that “small” national literatures cannot acquire worldliness by “catching up with” or “imitating” the “large” literatures; it is better for them to seek a balance between the particularism of the national and the universalism of the worldly. As a matter of fact, the contemporary world is more globalized and thus interconnected in its “national” parts. Such rapprochement logically results in a search for the universal within the particular manifestations of individual national cultures. Overall, Čapek recognizes four types of worldliness: the first type constitutes texts that celebrated worldwide success with the readers, but whose smoothness and trendiness brought them short-lived critical appraisal.¹ Such texts do not have a “local” character, but they construe pre-fabricated, timeless and universal themes in agreement with the universally accepted aesthetic norm. Čapek links this kind of worldliness with a reception-comprehensible horizon, with fashionable popularization, and, in particular, mass trivialization. The second type is the opposite: books that failed to be immediately popular with a wide readership because of their “unconventionality” and “undefined” beauty, but whose aesthetic and intellectual values increase with the distance of time. The third type represents the sense of “historical topicality” as socially engaged texts expressing general progressive ideas. The fourth type, which Čapek rates as the most significant and most widespread concept of worldliness, can paradoxically be achieved only through “purely and fully national” texts (9). It is only in this fourth type that freely circulating texts can become a durable and universal property, a shared cultural heritage based on the narratives of people and their destinies: “nobody has ever managed to conceive a more worldly and more universal thing” (10).

In this sense, by ingeniously interconnecting theoretical discourse with his own “worldly” writing, Čapek followed the tradition of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, whose use of the notion of world literature in 1827 (although he may not have been the first to entertain it), brought him renown. Although not offering an explicit elucidation of the term, his usage suggests an awareness of interliterary connections, i.e. the ties between individual authors and works. Goethe considered world literature a form of literary communication between the living and dead authors of various nations, a spiritual exchange aspiring to social inducement, and embraced the vision of a future-postulated “dream”, where *Gemeingut* denotes literature as ideal common property shared by all humankind. His propositions imply that we are entering the era of world literature while the concept of national literature is losing its significance, and this binary antagonism has become the source of endless subsequent debates (Strich 1946, 19–20). Since Goethe popularized the notion of world literature, it has been a regular occurrence in the seminal works of literary scholars. Since the early 20th century, it has systematically appeared in theoretical reflections that fall under

the following four meanings: (1) a sum of all national literatures, be it literature that has a “world” character or any literature that can assume “worldly” quality under certain conditions; (2) a selection, compendium, or “cultural pantheon” of literary texts whose “canonical” quality is axiologically and aesthetically related to a preconceived “sample” of texts (which are regarded as classics thanks to their reputation); (3) “the world’s literature”, e.g. in the sense of an intertextual and transcultural network, or “a grid” of ideas, poetics, genres, discourses, and other heterogeneous contexts mediating a nonviolent dialogue of cultures; and finally (4) a reading method resulting from a particular manner of interpretation and hermeneutic perception of art.

It is evident that in practice, the first two concepts, more often than not, were complementary and overlapping. They came into existence between the early 20th century and the interwar period when world literature was understood as an aesthetically and historically important corpus of texts, a set of masterpieces conveying generally accepted ideals of humanity that represent the best products of Euro-American civilization. The first conception was based on the fact that the textual corpus comprised canonical works recognized in individual national literatures as representative. This was the concept of the literature formulated, for example, by René Étiemble in his monograph *Essais de littérature (vraiment) générale* (Essays on [truly] general literature, 1974), which provides a historical recapitulation of the term. In his presentation at the IV Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée/International Comparative Literature Association (AILC/ICLA) Congress in Haag, he interpreted world literature as a synonym for the entire literary output, free from ethnolinguistic and political-religious discrimination previously ensuing from Eurocentrism (1966, 5–16). Étiemble may have intended to highlight the importance of non-European literatures, but in practical literary criticism world literature blended with unnoticeable labyrinths of an unlimited sum of texts whose “worldliness” could not be understood without previous selection. He addressed this threat by saying that every reader creates their own “individualized” world literature because readers choose texts from world literature according to their dispositions (9). Still, it can be objected that not everything written is worth reading or exploring, regardless of the progressive and aesthetic character of these texts.

The other conception was typified by the distribution and subjective reception of these texts: their “world” status was confirmed through competitions, prestigious prizes (e.g. the Nobel Prize for Literature), anthologies, institutional support, and literary histories that present “influential” texts from “large” literatures, but no texts “influenced” by “small” literatures. These concepts of world literature were surveyed by the theoretician Max Wehrli who pointed out, with reference to Fernand Baldensperger and Werner P. Friedrich’s *Bibliography of Comparative Literature* (1950), that a new comparative field, i.e. research into world literature, was in the making. It could be delimited in three ways: (1) as an ancillary field of national literary history; (2) as an international encyclopedic compendium of national literary histories; and (3) as an international field enjoying a higher and ideal status that is just slowly gaining ground (Wehrli 1965, 199). World literature itself is apprehended as “a dynamic his-

torical entity” (199–200), a unity of living literary traditions, not static poetics. In any case, its syntheses should be approached with skepticism because present genre realizations oscillate between the narrative creativity of an ambitious individual and an all-registering compilatory chronicle shielded by the editorial team tied with research directives. If these syntheses do appear, “they should admittedly be deemed necessary, though necessarily limited and methodologically little productive as well” (201). Similarly, György M. Vajda, the Hungarian scholar representing “small” Central European comparative literary studies, observes that writing the world history of literature becomes an autonomous referential “genre” whose function is to deal with the most universal “connections, details and typological correspondences” (1986, 336) and which is realized as (1) the history of ideas; (2) the history of forms, or perhaps of those genres that transcend the scope of national literature; and (3) the history of artistic and literary movements, i.e. the history of poetics combining stylistic and ideological aspects. For Vajda, the posthumous “life” of the text after its creation remains a relevant condition for the inclusion of the text in the “genre” as a sum of generally respected poetics and their means of expression so that the text permanently enters a system that can be instructively described as “world literary infrastructure”. At the same time, the text must join the network of intertextual relations or cultural post-textual adaptations.

The Polish literary theoretician Przemysław Czapliński uses the term “work-pre-tender” (*dzieło-pretendent*) to convey the text’s readiness to become world literature (2014, 14). In order to achieve it, the work indispensably requires that it be also successful in educational practice, i.e. to frequently occur in textbooks (14; Damrosch 2009, 10). Czapliński highlights the interesting fact that it was not until the latter half of the 20th century that works of non-American or non-European origin began to appear in anthologies of world literature which have slowly started changing the accepted canon (15). With the descent of the Iron Curtain marking Europe’s implicit political division, world literature assumed a kind of “ideological canon”. The hard core of the West was formed by the works of Euro-American origin. At the same time, in the socialist countries, world literature was conceived as the entire global literary production, except for national literature, with the dominance of Russian (or rather Soviet) literature and the literary output of the “socialist bloc”. In retrospect, this highlights the fact that the circulation of world literature in its numerous geopolitical, ethnolinguistic, or socio-cultural variations followed different courses of expansion in the West and the East, and, in addition, that there is no obligatory or prescriptive form of world literature as such. It was not solely under the conditions of the divided world that the proportion of national literature to world literature considerably varied, as, paradoxically, for example, in Central and East Europe, where the boundaries continually blurred even after 1989, when the political and geographical disintegration of these “postcolonial” regions gave up the traditional concept of national and, by extension, of world literature. What really matters is that the complicated process of the general renewal of ideologically non-bipolar Europe has not produced a functional definition of the adequate “language” of new unity. Such phenomena as global migration, new colonial trends, disintegration or unification of unstable state forma-

tions have made the notion of national literature relative, including its semantic content, which merged with both the language and its geographical locality. Any national literature thus can present itself as “world literature in a nutshell”, since it represents a multilingual and multinational conglomerate. In contrast, the common language (e.g. its extension to the territory comprising several political unities) integrated diverse poetics and cultural traditions into the same national literature.

The above-mentioned changes imply a gradual transition to the third and the fourth concepts admitting the existence of a great number of literatures spread worldwide. These are not identical to world literature understood as a particular corpus of selected texts or as a virtual symbol of cultural heritage derived from “large” national literatures. Late in the 20th century, therefore, there appeared the notion of “literature of the world of nations” as a primordial equivalent of the term world literature conceptualized as a structurally comparable “grid” or “network”. What remains to be addressed is the synecdochical construction of a term defined in this way, the question of how numerous literatures in the world give birth to world literature, or whether the “global” or “local-national” criteria should be preferred. While browsing representative and widely-spread anthologies of world literature, one finds that these compendia “grant admission” predominantly to works embracing Euro-American culture and written in the so-called world languages. Global criteria make possible the selection and hierarchization of almost unlimited literary material, while the work-pretenders marked with the “genius loci” tag on their way to “the elite saloon” have to get through the selection process of an English translation, and analogical global economic and mass media pressure of marketing and commercial support. From this it follows that even “literature of the world of nations” merely relativizes the “inequality” of values, and because of its usurpatory nature, it fails to constitute genuine world literature. It represents rather a selective world literature sifted through the convenient and advantageous optics of national literatures, which is the awareness of the fixed point enabling us to enter the insecure territory of higher historical abstraction. Any arbitrary literary fact can be classified according to multiple chronological, thematic, genre and other criteria on the flexible synchronic and diachronic axis and compared with an analogical or antithetical phenomenon. This naturally gives rise to the question whether world literature can be grasped without national literature, or in economic terms, if there can exist foreign trade without a domestic market. That is to say, world literature frequently means literature circulating beyond its original territory.

This approach to “the literature of the world” determines its subject neither by its aesthetic value nor through its “humanity” sharing the common cultural heritage, but by its aptitude to become negotiable “merchandise”, a product crossing the border of the commercial free trade. Therefore, literary texts are economic products based on circulating themes, genres, and ideas, irrespective of their “quality”. Literature is, above all, an ideological instrument which implements communication to create a market for the texts to move according to predefined rules. Literary circulation is thus subordinate to economic laws, to global production that is a synonym of “worldliness”. “Inequality” recedes into the background, hidden under the catego-

ry of “international success”, symbolizing aspiration for the status of “worldliness”. In her famous work *La République mondiale des Lettres* (1999; *The World Republic of Letters*, 2004), Pascale Casanova claims that world literature must be perceived within de-ideologized spatial and relational frames rather than in predefined national categories and units. World literature is not a compilation of texts produced in the world, nor is it an artificial canon; it is a movable “network” or a “field” generated by the substance of the common functioning of the European market; and by the dominance of geographical space where the worldliness and universality of literature materialized as a specific example of “the micro-world literature” (18). This is ideally conveyed in French and by Paris as the capital of the literary world. It is this cultural center that becomes the entrance gate, a sort of “filter” of success on the international stage which individual authors enter through an important factor of their texts being translated into several “major” languages. Looking back to Goethe’s *Weltliteratur*, Casanova highlights the power of economic factors: the “world republic of letters” is based on the virtual “interliterary” network without frontiers and barriers, which should not be confused with the concept of universal literature crossing national, political, and linguistic boundaries (11). This notion was admittedly created by world cultures fostered by nations like the Germans, the English, and the French to disguise their cultural dominance. If we want to define the degree of “worldliness” in a particular text, it is necessary to analyze this phenomenon by means of “national contextualization”, i.e. by asking whether such a text, invariably written in a national language, promotes universal values (Auerbach 1992, 83–84).

Similarly, Franco Moretti suggests “distant reading”, that is, understanding world literature not through a detailed study of single texts but through the aggregation and analysis of “big data”, revealing timeless structures of literary phenomena and processes (2000, 56). The purpose of such an analysis should be to identify systemic political relations inscribed in the “signifying” literary form; this is, in fact, a power dissection because literary forms are the analyses of social relations. Moretti proposes to construe a new way of defining and researching world literature (58), which is inspired by Darwin’s evolutionary theory (expressing the heterogeneity, variability, and complexity of forms in historical development) and by economic models of analytical systems, namely Immanuel Wallerstein’s world-systems theory (Kola 2012, 114). Wallerstein presents the functioning of capitalism as a single monolithic but “uneven” system embracing the value antithesis of the center and periphery (Kola 2014, 43), for the economic models of analytical systems represent the fact that the unity of world literature was historically constituted as a specific model of economic globalization only in the capitalist era when the transitions between the center and periphery were removed (Wallerstein 2001, 8). Despite this, concerning the plurality of methods and vagueness of the subject, Moretti considers the study of world literature a problem that cannot be solved exclusively within the potential of literary studies (2000, 66–67).

The fourth concept, currently the most universal and most influential, though methodologically the least rigorous, identifies world literature with the manner of reading, accentuating a fictional world generated behind our real world. World lit-

erature thus comprises all literary works that have transcended their original national culture, whether in translation or the original. There is nothing like one world literature, for every local culture creates its own world literature (Damrosch 2003, 280–281). On the other hand, in Damrosch's concept, "worldliness" as a result of specific interpretation is, to some extent, an established reception practice formed by reading classics, which refers to hermeneutic roots. If Damrosch epitomizes the typical American vision of close reading, the title of his 2003 book *What Is World Literature?* seems like an explicit intertextual reference to Ďurišin's identically named *Čo je svetová literatúra?* (What is world literature?, 1992), although the Slovak scholar is neither mentioned nor quoted in the former text. In the contemporary theoretical context, the elimination of Central European comparative research as "a peripheral element" is not unusual. It is a typical destiny of "small" languages and literatures to constitute themselves "at the edge", far (though not spiritually distant) from ideological centers (Thomsen 2008, 19–20). To explain this process of the semiotic waning of cultural memory, the Slovak comparatist Libuša Vajdová refers to the specific feature of reception openness of "liminal cultures", which "frequently understand the qualities of foreign literatures and cultures much more instinctually than central cultures whose outlook is hindered by the concentration on their own center, their own centrality" (2020, 74). The idea that worldliness is not a fixed quality of literary works but that it results from the new manner of reading, from historical interpretation of poetry, has hardly been "discovered" by comparative literary studies. As early as the first half of the 20th century, Benedetto Croce referred to Ernst Merian-Genast's study "Voltaire und die Entwicklung der Idee der Weltliteratur" (Voltaire and the development of the idea of world literature, 1927) when he formulated three different concepts of world literature (Croce 1997, 74): (1) cosmopolitan (national literature with a unifying brand, which exceeds its limits as a sort of "universal language" of communication); (2) canonical (the normative understanding of a literary whole as a collection of works granted universal value regardless of historical determination); and (3) organic (the natural conception of world literature as a universal phenomenon formed as a total poetical output of humankind). According to Croce, it is only the last definition that grasps the quality and substance of world literature, for it presumes the existence of universal cultural "taste", which facilitates our complete understanding and emotional experience of the works written by diverse nations, along with providing conditions for producing new texts (75).

As we are approaching the present age, in particular the theoretical achievements of the last two decades, we can, in the postmodernist spirit, observe a mingling of individual conceptions, a removal of fixed methodological boundaries and philosophical starting points. Therefore, a classification of world literature from the perspective of research orientation, where it can be determined in ontological and epistemological meanings, seems to be more productive. In the first meaning, world literature is a historically developing form of existence of literary works and their relations. This concept is grounded in the morphological approach to world literature as a summary of forms and structures beyond spatial and temporal delimitation. In the epistemological meaning, world literature instead assumes the form of research orientation

and functions as a specific aspect of the approach to literary communication identifying certain ideas. If we return to the first meaning, in an ontological understanding, world literature designates a strictly defined set of artistic creations which have been a real entity comprising literatures of the whole world since antiquity, following the origin of universalistic ideas, despite the fact that world literature conceived as such still lacked a modern global character. In the second epistemological meaning, world literature philosophically presents the value equivalent of general ideas of universalism parallel to the supreme form of existence of literary relations. In the content of world literature, there is thus an expressively anthropological implication: the history of world literature is a history of the search for the purpose of human history. This typological differentiation of world literature reflects its inner structural character and natural heterogeneity expressed through two semantic planes: as a notion and a concept. Whereas the notion exists as a universally recognized and verbally expressed idea of the phenomenon, the concept is an intentional, pragmatic construct, i.e. a set of principles to model the structure of world literature, as, for example, in the material form of book publication. The notion concentrates in itself the “philosophy of the phenomenon”; the concept, by contrast, its technology. World literature, whose epistemological orientation is based on the tradition of philosophical hermeneutics, abandons the status of a fixed category, offering instead a historically changeable vision of “worldliness” as a process of gradual constitution of topological field where the awareness of multiculturalism, the relation between the intercultural and the interregional is fostered as mutual meeting, as communication and transfer of values and ideas. World literature generated by the moment of reception openness and communicational intermingling of individual texts translates into the aspect of worldliness as a multi-level, gradual and complicated process of the formation of an axiologically equivalent “interliterary network”. “Worldliness” originates as a result of subjective interpretive activity, but it is also a common capacity of a literary act to accept the reception stimulus positively and permanently. The concrete representation of the “worldliness” of any artefact manifests itself when, for example, it is found out how different and geographically remote regions between which analogical communicational meeting grounds are sought have been affected by a particular text culturally and poetologically. For instance, Armando Gnisci illustrates this process by literary production in the Mediterranean as a polycentric model of world literature, where transfer, exchange and translation of literary values take place continuously (1999, 40). According to Earl Miner, the “worldliness” of literature is also a movement postulating the phenomenon of interculturality, which translates literatures of the world to a common denominator (1990, 11). On the other hand, the notion of worldliness can even acquire the negative connotation of “trendiness” if it explicitly denotes the fact that a particular text, “detached” from its context and historical period, becomes a universally comprehensible literary product which in the era of mass-media communication spreads all over the world and is mechanically consumed regardless of its aesthetic value.

The results of the last AILC/ICLA Congress, held in Macao in 2019 under the title “Literature of the World and the Future of Comparative Literature”, have obviously

confirmed that the search for diverse models and forms of world literature is ongoing. World literature should not be a priori rejected if its status and the ensuing interpretation do not correlate with a specific discourse. Therefore, there is not only the call for new theories of prefiguration and circulation of comparative concepts in time and space, but they are determined by local or regional traditions (Pokrivčák and Zelenka 2019, 112). A retreat from the American concept of world literature perceived as a specific manner of reading constituted in our mind through circulation and reception of literary texts communicated in the form of English translations cannot be deemed definite because in present thinking, the English language dominates as a starting point and target of the texts aspiring to “worldliness”. Emily Apter notes that contemporary world literature is perceived as a label and symbol of unparalleled literary achievements rooted in translation (2006, 10; 2013, 325–326). According to David Damrosch, world literature comprises works that have reached beyond the culture of their origin, no matter whether in translation or in the original language. Thanks to their natural circulation, the most privileged are texts written in English or another “world” language, regardless of their aesthetic quality (2003, 297). In this context Dorothy M. Figueira ironically speaks about a new incarnation of the old Pentagon construction of area studies, where: “Under the guise of democratizing and moving away from Comparative literature’s supposed ‘elitism’, World Literature theorists claim to engage the world in a serious fashion, but only if that world speaks English or is translated into this idiom” (2015, 11; 2019, 71).

Despite this pointed claim, the Congress also admitted other concepts of world literature representing a compromise between the American approach and the perspectives of “small” literatures. This attitude was symptomatically voiced by Marko Juvan. In his monograph *Worlding a Peripheral Literature* (2019), he focuses on the process that helps a work of peripheral literature attain worldliness by completing the complicated passage from the particular to the universal. Juvan disapproves of identifying world literature with what could be called global literature because the original concept of world literature implies historicity and a specific wideness of space and time. In Romanticism and post-Romanticism, national poets (such as France Prešern in the Slovenian case) were “cultural saints” in the domestic setting, but they could represent their literatures at the international level only to the extent to which they possessed the authority of “otherness” within the emerging world literature. Juvan points out that for a literary work to become a world entity, it must originate in a large country and be written in a world language (2019, 62). This is naturally connected with economic power, the book market, the utilization of intellectual work, etc. His assumption is grounded in the fact that world literature, whether as a network or a canon, constitutes a hierarchical system in which freely circulating texts enter through the mediation of “large” literatures, most frequently through literature in English. Canonized works, which are results of cultural, philosophical and economic transfers as well as other factors, often employ the motives of Parnassus, Helicon, or Olympus, as places occupied by “gods” and national “saints”, whereby the national celebrities are internationalized and “worlded” (40). Apart from the thematic and motivic plan, language as a place of the aestheticization of national images

is important for the formation of national-secular image of literature. The seminal role is played by the reflection on worlding, and Juvan shows that the emphasis is given here not to the extra-literary delimitation of world literature but to the capacity of literature itself to create the world. It can be added that some literary theoreticians prefer the term “literature of the world”, which seems to be less elitist, less intensively implying certain homogeneity and the notion of a standardized canon of great works (Saussy 2006, 36). Haun Saussy accentuates the aspect of “otherness” and refuses to approach world literature only from a cultural and theoretical perspective (38). Another Americanist, Jeffrey R. Di Leo, formulates the concept of “worlded literature” in the sense of literature marked or affected by the world, i.e. literature interconnected through global networks, translations, migration, etc. (2018, 81–82). World literature thus sublimates into “global” or “globalized” literature, into a new type of political dominance and cultural variety, where the Goethean perspective of “great works of all countries and times” (Corbineau-Hoffmannová 2008, 30) formulates a new type of canon. Juvan realizes that the structure of the world literary system understood as history and process is based on the value opposition between the dominant “center” and the subordinate “periphery”, where Central and South-east European literatures were influenced by hegemonic centers of (colonial) political power in the West (2019, 240). This premise leads Juvan to conclude that their integration into the world literary area was legitimized by criteria derived from the Western canon (250). Although the real power of this hegemony is impossible to ignore, the capacity to read and write in English affects our thinking as well as evaluation.

Juvan’s reflections on world literature also introduce the empirical question of how the ideal history of national literature should look against the world background, or how the history of world literature should logically take into account the functions and development of individual national entities and regions. From this perspective it is evident that world literary history, fluctuating between “the narrative” and “the canon”, should assume the form of hypertextually open literary archives, a sort of palimpsest literary “map”, which will be consciously trans-cultural and hybrid. At the same time, it would preserve the “textualization of the context” and “contextualization of the text”, i.e. an adequate balance between “extrinsic” and “intrinsic” moments on the horizons of cultural and textual lines. Therefore, world literary history should not create a fictive reality generated by words and meanings, but it should rather function as a lively “synergic” and dynamically pulsating organism able to self-regulate the processes of its evolution. Juvan’s concept of world literature uses the Slovenian example to highlight the conditions that must be observed by the texts belonging to “peripheral” literatures to acquire worldliness. It is a transformed way of imitation, analogy, and removal of impediments so that these “national” texts, from the perspective of the vernacular culture, can canonize their “otherness” through translation. This, however, is perceived by “large” literatures as a universally acknowledged value. Although we may not totally approve of Juvan’s idea of world literature, primarily with the emphasis on the power of economic factors and with the linguistic dominance of English, we can appreciate the suggestion that a generally acceptable consensus in the form of the epistemological and termi-

nological groundwork delimited by the set of concrete principles and notions can be achieved. By this the concept makes a seminal theoretical contribution to contemporary discussions on the forms, the nature, and the functions of world literature, permanently oscillating between “the national” and “the universal”.

CZECH AND SLOVAK CONCEPTS OF WORLD LITERATURE IN THE INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE

When Zoran Konstantinović in his monograph *Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft: Bestandsaufnahme und Ausblicke* ([1988] 1994, 9) framed the concepts of world literature represented by individual national schools, his primary consideration was to mention beside French, American, and Russian traditions, specifically Czecho-Slovak comparative literary studies, in particular the works of Dionýz Ďurišin (1929–1997). Konstantinović praised his Slovak colleague for developing ontological aspects of the interliterary process as a comparatist application of the structural method since, in Ďurišin’s systematics, interliterariness does not aim at determining aesthetic or individual qualities of a particular artefact, instead, “aesthetics matters there so much as can be attributed to beauty, i.e. an aesthetic function, norm and value, structure or a developmental line” (Koprda 2003, 70). As early as 1982, the Dutch scholar Pierre Swiggers pointed out that Ďurišin can be considered the first to offer “systematic typology of literary relations” (1982, 183) through the positivist transformation of the “impactological” comparative literature into receptively oriented comparative studies, situating a particular text in the semiotic field of “culture” rather than in the sphere of “literariness”. This appraisal was sustained by Earl Miner, who accentuated the impactful concept of reception underlining the maturity of the receiving subject. Ďurišin thus had his share in the complete disintegration of traditional comparative literary studies through decomposing it into “classical” comparative studies, pursuing contactology and typology in the relations between national literatures, and in a new discipline whose subject and methods would focus on the area of interliterary principles (Miner 1988, 109). At the same time, in his later *Comparative Poetics* (1990) Miner warned of the hidden strain of this method: Every culture has a “dominant” poetics resulting from the nature of the prevailing genres. Western, “Aristotelian”, literature is based on drama and so its tradition proceeds to mimesis. Eastern literary thought, by contrast, has respect for lyrics and its nature makes it “affective-expressive”. Ďurišin’s emphasis on “literariness” and “interliterariness” thus remains a “Eurocentric” attitude despite being critical of it (Gáfrík 2009, 30). A similar opinion on Ďurišin’s contribution to modern comparative literature was voiced by the American comparatist Ulrich Weisstein who said that the thematic differentiation between the research of the “genetic relations” and the research of “typological affinities” remains the essential methodological instruction distinguishing between national-literary and comparative approaches whose orientation towards the “uninfluenced analogies” anticipates the later research on interliterariness (1981, 48–51). According to Weisstein, the first stage of modern comparative studies was completed by Paul Van Tieghem’s book *La littérature comparée* (1931), and the second stage by Ďurišin’s monograph *Problémy literárnej komparistiky* (Problems of compara-

tive literature, 1967). In the same way, Claudio Guillén positions the Slovak scholar as an initiatory figure in the research establishing interliterariness not as a lexically conceptual and semantically invariable category but as “a desire that has been here for many years and which wants to live on further” (2008, 14). The historical dimension of Ďurišín’s monograph *Čo je svetová literatúra?* (What is world literature?, 1992), clearly absent from the contemporary concepts of world literature, was appreciated by René Wellek, in a letter to the present author in July 1993:

I did receive the book of Ďurišín, which, on the whole, I agree with wholeheartedly. I would only feel that Ďurišín is too optimistic when he believes that the comparative view can be extended in practice to Oriental and finally to any kind of literature. I agree with him in theory, but assure him that in American conditions, asking for an excellent knowledge of French and German is a realizable ideal, while Oriental languages could be asked of recent immigrants and certainly natives of that country. (Wellek and Zelenka, letter, 1993)

These particular appraisals notwithstanding, in the community of West European and American comparatists following the AILC/ICLA agenda since the late 1960s, Ďurišín’s opinions have not had as substantial an impact as might be expected, which can be substantiated by the hegemony of the more extensive conception of comparative literary studies represented by Henry H.H. Remak who attached paramount importance to comparing literature with other literatures as well as to comparing literature with other expressive spheres of humanities (1971, 3). Moreover, this concept did not demarcate individual categories so strictly, bringing comparative studies closer to the theory of culture. Ďurišín himself was a solitary researcher who did not seek recognition for his ideas from the AILC/ICLA and from the 1980s, having renounced traditional comparative literature and its terminology, failed to participate in its congresses. The skeptical opinion reflecting his frustration over the theoretical liberalism of the congresses and their methodological extent is vented through his 1980 report saying that the AILC/ICLA organizational policy is lacking a system that would “direct the congress activities to prevent potential impulsiveness and randomization of the research” (1980, 181). The Slovak comparatist and Sinologist Marián Gálik provided eyewitness testimony about a personal encounter between Ďurišín and Remak at the AILC/ICLA Congress held in Innsbruck in August 1979 (which left the latter speechless). Over breakfast, Remak asked Ďurišín about his current research, and the latter offered the surprising response that until that point, he had only been developing “traditional” comparative studies, and that he planned to formulate a new theoretical system of interliterariness independent from the West European and American tradition (Gálik 2002, 61). No doubt, Ďurišín’s reluctance to join the Western comparative thinking was aggravated by the fact that, following the 1989 disintegration of bipolar Europe, a number of Central European and East European comparatists were labeled as “Marxists”. In Ďurišín’s case, it was already Ulrich Weisstein who did so and pointed out that the Slovak comparatist escalated the disparity between specifically traditional (national literary) and modern (interliterary) comparative literature (1981, 49). Similarly, in his monograph *Komparatistik* (1992), the Austrian comparatist Peter V. Zima saw Ďurišín as an epigone of the So-

viet School represented by Viktor M. Zhirmunsky, who transferred the study of interliterariness from historical poetics to abstract structural schemes (1992, 42–49).

Despite the critical response that Slovak comparative literature received, it evidently reached its climax in Ďurišin. Since the scholar's death in 1997, with the change of the late 20th-century paradigm of values, universal theories of world literature based on methodological unity have lost their efficiency and have been replaced by concepts interpreting semantic tension between “the national” and “the international” references to the economic strength of globalization processes (Juvan 2019, 36). Róbert Gáfrik speaks about the consensus in the comparatist community, admiring like Wellek, the systematic approach in Ďurišin's conception, yet warning of its unattainability and practical unfeasibility (2020b, 147). With the exception of César Domínguez (2012) and Armando Gnisci (1997, 184; 2000, 17), who employed Ďurišin's theory of interliterariness in the substantiation of the poetics of European decolonization, Ďurišin's ideas are not a prominent occurrence in the discourse refusing to include in its notions all literatures in the world. In this regard, they share the opinion of the Czech comparatist Ivo Pospíšil, who underscores the fact that Ďurišin's mode of abstraction recedes from the minutious examination of traditional poetics; in other words, the manifestations of interliterariness are not installed in deep structures of textual composition (2012, 9).

In the late 20th century, Czech and Slovak comparative studies went through a crisis resulting from the loss of methodological contacts with the world, which produced a gap in the structural literary history in favor of social and cultural studies (Zelenka 2015, 17). Hence many Czech and Slovak literary historians considered Ďurišin's project of world literature an unattainable category of literary process and parted ways. Nevertheless, we can give a general overview of the principal traditions of Czech and Slovak comparative literature, whose imaginary “completion” culminates in Ďurišin's theory. According to César Domínguez, it signals disciplinary discontent over the lack of adequate methods to explore the complexity and multitude of heterogeneous literary relations molding world literature (2012, 106). We assume that the main significance of Ďurišin's theory consists in developing the term “interliterariness”, which can be understood as a natural condition of world literature. Although today in modern comparatistic reflections, this expression is substituted by the term “transculturality” as more instrumental in expressing our crossing the limits of different spaces and times, Ďurišin was one of the many to witness the radical turn in the humanities. It implies the methodological turn from the temporal perception of phenomena to the spatial vision as a principle which reduces narratological and teleological models deriving their substance from ideological and national stereotypes (Terian 2013, 77).

Czech contribution to thinking about world literature

At the turn of the 20th century, the study of world literature became attractive to a strong generation of literary historians denoted in historiography as “Czech School of Comparative Literature” (Wollman 1989, 35–43). This community, methodologically fluctuating between positivism and philological cultural history, in-

cluded the folklorist Jiří Polívka (1853–1933), the Slavist Jan Máchal (1855–1939), the Balkanist Matija Murko (1861–1952), and the Romanist Václav Tille (1867–1937). After 1918, they drew on the works of French (Gaston Paris, Fernand Baldensperger, Paul Hazard, etc.) and Russian (Alexandr N. Pypin, Alexandr N. Veselovsky, Nikolai S. Tikhonravov, etc., respectively) scholars and developed the comparative concept of Slavic literature as an integral part of world literature, with bilateral East and West literary relations in the foreground. In Bohemia, their emphasis on research into oral tradition resulted in the foundation of a new branch of comparative study – the folkloric thematology – that helped them prove the aesthetic and value “equality” in the literary circulation of folklore genres, especially in folk tales and fairy tales. Although Polívka never theoretically defined world literature, on the whole, he considered it an axiologically balanced sum of national literatures, a fictive dialogue of circulating motives and themes between the West and the East, “a concert” played by Slavic literatures from Central and Eastern Europe along with Western literatures.²

Since the late 19th century, two developmental lines may have been identified in Czech comparative thought, which, with considerable simplification, run parallel to each other rather than engaging in fruitful polemics. Our attention will focus on the first line associated with Slavic studies and conceiving comparative literature as an integral branch of literary history objectified in the relations within the supranational context and centered around historical poetics. There was a general agreement that modern comparative literary studies, regardless of the specificity of their methodology, represent an autonomous discipline with a distinctive range of research problems which focus on literary relationships or compare works from various national literatures. Their morphological orientation remained open to various theoretical inspirations, drawing on formalism and structural aesthetics. Their conception defined world literature as a schematized morphological structure, into which not the whole national literatures were mechanically allowed admittance but supralocal and supratemporal genres and forms. Institutionally, its methodological orientation was grounded in the Brno comparatist school represented by Frank Wollman, perhaps the most distinguished Czech comparatist, and his followers Josef Hrabák, Jiří Krystýnek, Danuše Kšicová, Ivan Dorovský, Ivo Pospíšil, etc. This school has proceeded from genetic (contactual) comparative literary studies to typology and the application of stimuli from philosophy and cultural studies (phenomenology, imagology, intercultural comparative studies, postcolonial studies, East-West studies, area studies, etc.). Still, they invariably linked the comparative method with literary orientation and, in particular, with the genealogical approach.

The hermeneutic starting points of the other line, the “Prague group”, which drew on the tradition of non-Slavic, Romance philology, kept them connected with empirical literary activities and practical literary criticism. Their scholarly pursuits, spanning from the first professor of comparative literature at the Charles University, Jaroslav Vrchlický (1853–1912), the literary critic F.X. Šalda (1867–1937), and the Romance comparatist Václav Černý (1905–1987), to the present generation, were unified by their endeavor to offer an absolutely precise interpretation of an individual artefact and its binary polarity. In the opinion of Václav Černý, the most

prominent representative of this line of thinking, the comparative research is based on an intuitive approach which defies established categories and the institutionalized field. For them, world literature loses its metatheoretical status and becomes instead an interpretational activity, a general intellectual reflection that, through a subjective dialogue, tries to cope with the knowledge of the world's multiculturalism. It should be admitted that Černý nominally followed the French comparatist school, namely Fernand Baldensperger, Paul Hazard, and Paul Van Tieghem, whom he considered "the greatest world comparatists of the time" (1994, 257). However, their methodology and their notion of general literature did not have any discernible impact on Černý's works. It was more dependent on Bergsonian personalism and on the search for accidental interliterary connections, as manifested in his French text *Essai sur le titanisme dans la poésie romantique occidentale entre 1815 et 1850* (1935).

The second generation of the first line, formed in the interwar period (the Slavist Jiří Horák, the Germanist Otokar Fischer, the Polonist Marian Szykowski, etc.), and its leading personalities such as René Wellek and Frank Wollman, synthesized the knowledge of the earlier cultural-historical school and the structural-functional perspective of the Prague Linguistic Circle. Wellek's methodological integrity was reflected in his celebrated *Theory of Literature* (1948, together with Austin Warren) and through his monumental project *A History of Modern Criticism 1750–1950, Vols. I–VIII* (1955–1992), which epitomized the literary-historical combination of Prague structuralism, German neo-idealism (Wilhelm Dilthey) and the Husserlian-Ingardenian phenomenology. In the late 1930s, the young Wellek was obviously under the influence of Van Tieghem's terminological differentiation between "littérature générale" and "littérature comparée", though he later criticized it as a legacy of the positivist "impactology". According to Wellek, Van Tieghem attempted to re-interpret the selective concept of world literature based on the value antithesis of binary oppositions (small and large literatures, advanced and underdeveloped, "transmitting" and "receiving", etc.). The geographical and subject definition in Van Tieghem's conception represented a kind of typological initial stage of the notion of world literature, defying identification with the idea of a mechanical collection of national literatures. In his study, "The Theory of Literary History" (1936), Wellek defined world literature as a developmental (historical) structure consisting of a multitude of circulating forms and genres and aspiring to become the highest aim of literary historical research. This structure exists only in the reception act: it assumes the shape of an aesthetic object, not concretized within collective awareness but solely through individuals. No individual does implement this aesthetic object absolutely. This reveals Wellek's distinctive structuralist and semiotic feeling, derived from his conception of a particular work as the basic aesthetic object set at the beginning of an imaginary developmental line. The aesthetic object is potentially tied with the substantial material artefact, yet it cannot be identified with it from the perspective of aesthetic perception.

In the interwar period, Van Tieghem's concept perhaps most strongly affected Frank Wollman, who was attracted by the international character of "littérature générale", by its geographical delimitation and precisely defined methodological targets. These

substituted the abstract ideal of world literature and, at the same time, transcended the history of national literatures by grasping their area or regional context. Wollman realized that Van Tieghem's recurring "impact" introduced the aesthetics of value difference but at the same time posited the reception character of the interliterary process. The proposition that the essential prerequisite for the development of literary history need not be just influences and contacts but also structural analogies, i.e. "similarities without impact", generated responses from the small Central and South-east European literatures, which offered them an opportunity for theoretical justification of their existence. In his seminal work *Slovesnost Slovanů* (Slavic literatures, 1928), his only attempt at a structurally-conceived literary history, Wollman intended to produce a modern history of the Slavic literatures in their mutual relations and contexts, in formal and aesthetic analogies which would document Slavic literatures as a certain type of general literature, as a specific internally differentiated structure.

Wollman drew on new tendencies in literary research that attempted to objectify their methods and restrict the subject of their study through anti-positivism. He also disputed the theses of German Slavists (Julius Pfitzner, Konrad Bittner, etc.), who underestimated the independence of Slavic literatures and regarded them as underdeveloped in comparison to the Latin-German West. In a fiercely polemical monograph, *K metodologii srovnávací slovesnosti slovanské* (On the methodology of comparative Slavic literature, 1936), the Czech scholar voiced his opinion as to whether Slavic literatures comprise an autonomous unit within world literature or whether they are isolated without any common marks of creativity. When repelling the "biological-genetic" concept of world literature in the sense of a living organism with the circulation of diversely important units, i.e. national literatures distinguished by importance and function, Wollman argued that national literature is the natural foundation of world literature. That is to say, its starting point "are not the organisms of national literatures, but individual forms in their structural relations" (10), i.e. self-propelled structures in a diachronic frame. The inclusion of a particular text in the system of world literature is, on the one hand, demonstrated "by its competence in the development of literary structures" (10); on the other hand, its inclusion is justified by universal "civilizational endeavor" of mankind as a whole. This is the only way to originate developmental lines of great ideas and great authors revealing "the feeling of unity of all people [...] and the connection of their literary manifestations. Yet the humanitarianism, worldliness, unity in novelty themselves [...] are only in the process of making through an endless chain of structures under certain historical and social conditions" (188). The dynamic concept of structure involved exploring analogies in literary forms regardless of their mediation by contact, influence or effect. Thus, this constituted the foundations of "comparative structuralism" consisting in the comparison of forms and syntax of literary works.³

The principle of structural aesthetics in comparative literature and research on world literature was vindicated by Wellek and Wollman. In the Prague Linguistic Circle, they both represented structuralists with an appreciation for literary history, connecting the notion of structure with diachrony. The leading exponent of Czech structuralism, Jan Mukařovský, paradoxically considered the comparative method as

positivist folkloric thematology, and, therefore, favored the category of national literature as a closed immanent system. It was not until the late 1960s that he accepted comparative literature as an independent discipline with its own subject of research, including the study of world literature, as he gave it a certain validity in his study *K dnešnímu stavu a výkladům srovnávací vědy literární* (On the present condition and expositions of comparative literary research, 1967). Frank Wollman's methodological line was continued by his son, the Slavist and comparatist Slavomír Wollman (1925–2012), who connected the research on world literature with the conception of a system. According to him, this connection does not ensue from a mechanical application of system analysis borrowed from cybernetics or the exact theory of information, but it is established by the natural existence of literary phenomena and processes in morphologically recognizable wholes that differ from a non-structured succession of works and criteria. For Wollman, the starting point for this conception, in which “the aging” terms of the traditional comparative literature are enlivened by new functionality, became the monistic concept of history, namely the notion of the unity of literary development including folkloric formations. In this regard, he claims that “comparative studies respect national literature as a historical fact and seeks world literature as a scientific postulate” (1989, 111). World literature is presented here as the “literature of the whole world”, as a selective formation defined through its functionality and the distinctive feature of the aesthetic value where the criterion of attribution is eliminated if it implies the “superiority” and “inferiority” of some literary wholes. From these ideas follows that in the spirit of Van Tieghem's tradition of “littérature générale”, Wollman rejects the concept of world literature as a mechanical aggregate of works or a selective pantheon of classics. On the contrary, he, for the most part, conceives world literature genetically, as a historically changeable and functional entity, or a manifold shape resulting from particular works, “which, having exceeded the local and national frame through international correlations, enter the world awareness through supranational subsystems, motivated by language and ethnic vicinity, by cultural symbiosis [...]” (Mikušáková 1992, 10). This conception – similar to that of Ďurišin – responds to the postmodernist crisis of European rationalism, which questions the potentiality of objective understanding. But a question remains: can world literature be connected solely with a system or an aggregate of regularities? Does its natural heterogeneity not incline to chaos and certain unintentionality?

The concept of world literature in Slovak comparative literary studies

Even though Slovak comparative literary studies sprouted in the 20th century from Czech roots and the shared Czecho-Slovak context, it departed from this inspiration through the deliberate search for new starting points seeking connections with modern theoretical trends, which was conducive to transgressing the existent concept of comparative research linked with traditional “contactology” and positivist factography. It was mainly the literary historian Pavol Bujnák (1882–1933), who in his comparative method applied contactual approaches based on the tradition of Czech positivism. His habilitation thesis *Ján Arány v slovenskej literatúre* (Ján

Arány in Slovak literature, 1924), defended at Charles University, represents an outstanding thesis in the field of “littérature comparée”, and it is considered the first comparatist monograph completed by a Slovak author. The further development of modern Slovak comparative literary studies is personified by Mikuláš Bakoš (1914–1972), whose works, already in the interwar period, drew on literary phenomenology (Roman Ingarden), technological schools (Russian formalism), and later, on Viennese neo-positivism. In his posthumously published collection of papers *Literárna história a historická poetika* (Literary history and historical poetics, 1973), Bakoš criticized positivist biographism and psychologism in literary research. He defined comparative literary studies as a constituent part of literary history, tackling the issues of periodization and typology of literary development, which primarily respects immanent principles. In the second half of the 20th century, Slovak comparative studies, which managed to retain a sense of structural-morphological aspects, developed a specific relationship to communicative and hermeneutic models creatively applied in a number of disciplines and thematic areas (František Miko – comparative stylistics, Viliam Turčány – comparative versology, Jozef Hvišč – comparative genology). This line was concluded with the methodology of the Nitra School, where comparative research followed the axis of genology – semiotics – theory of communication and translation studies. Among others, it was Anton Popovič (1933–1984) who achieved world renown for his theory of artistic translation and reflections on aesthetic meta-communication, anticipating, for example, Julia Kristeva’s later theory of intertextuality. Popovič’s monograph *Teória umeleckého prekladu* (The theory of artistic translation, 1975) offers a semantic and terminological approach to the expression theory of text, which was appreciated as an interdisciplinary enhancement of primary and secondary literary communication.

Another branch was constituted by the innovative endeavor of Dionýz Ďurišin, who completed the split with classical comparative literary studies and, following the 1970s, drew inspiration from modern semiotics, hermeneutics, mathematical methods and reception theory. Developing new terminology and systematics then won over the existing comparative literary studies since it introduced “new comparatistics”: the theory of interliterariness and the interdisciplinary study of world literature drawing on political science, ethnology, cultural geography, and Slavic area studies. It is not generally known that Ďurišin’s concept emerged under the auspices of Frank Wollman, who started his professional career in the interwar period at Comenius University in Bratislava, where he delivered lectures until 1941. Wollman’s morphological conception of world literature as a collection of forms and structures of supralocal and supratemporal significance was grounded in the application of Van Tieghem’s term “littérature générale”, denoting the empirically evident entirety found in a specific cultural-historical area. Later on, the structural substance of world literature also appears in Ďurišin’s concept, eliminating national literature as a starting point for the category of interliterariness. He has it that world literature can exist only in the form of developmental (historical) structure that can be anticipated in every literary process phenomenon and constituted by the receiving subject. Ďurišin’s semiotical transformation of historical structure at the level of communica-

tion to a code, as suggested in his early work *Problémy literárnej komparatistiky*, signifies an original development of Czecho-Slovak structuralism in the 1960s, the time of general criticism of the structure, i.e. of Jakobson's concept of binarism and his proposition about the double articulation of language. Ďurišin's initiative can thus be connected at the national level with Felix Vodička's pioneering *Struktura vývoje* (The structure of development, 1969) as well as with Frank Wollman's late studies, and at the international level with the works of Juri M. Lotman, Umberto Eco, A.J. Greimas, Claude Bremond, Jacques Derrida, etc. (Koprda 2003, 83).

Wollman's multilateral comparisons aiming at an understanding and more precise identification of inter-Slavic literariness became one of the inspirational sources of Ďurišin's theory of interliterary community and interliterary centrism, including the delimitation of world literature. Both authors derive these categories from extra-literary phenomena. Wollman's Slavic interliterary community and centrism are delimited by ethnic similitude intensified by anthropo-geographical determinants: "Close vicinity, mutual contacts, similar living conditions, the same relations with the neighbors" (1936, 10). Similarly, Ďurišin's interliterary process is conditioned by literary, ethnic, linguistic, geographical, and administrative criteria, including varying degrees of differentiation among individual cultures. Wollman's integrating and differentiating dominants, which develop in historical sequence as Slavisms in the sense of structural paradigm in the syntagm and which reflect the process of differentiations within integration – he speaks about the feeling of Slavic sense of belonging (139) – analogically correspond with Ďurišin's integrating and differentiating function of the community. Without reservation, interliterariness based on structural-typological connections endeavors to integrate diverse literary phenomena into world literature. However, Wollman's concept of interliterariness is more inclined to genetic (contactual) relations considered to be equivalent to structural typology. For Wollman, any writing is above all "material existence", especially through its formal starting point (200). In Ďurišin's conception, centrism represents a type community originating from long-lasting vicinity as a specific form of coexistence, whereas the community itself results from unity, similarities, and formal analogies. Centrisms as geographical supranational units in most cases originate in the form of a specific "entanglement" from an unrelated neighborhood. These are not entities determined by the similitude of mentality, economic, or social relations, for they result from geographical proximity. Their coherence proceeds from a strongly accentuated syntactic function and weakened semantic "narrativeness", which is why there can synchronously and syncretically be a plurality of "unrelated" traditions and poetics in centrisms.

Centrism as natural forms of existence and functioning of world literature are rooted in Jaus's reception aesthetics based on the accommodating strategy of the recipient, and on the horizons of his expectations. While in centrisms, individual literatures are geographical and metonymical "neighbors" because it is their choice, which can even be discontinuous, interliterary communication in communities is metaphorically motivated. Ďurišin's division of large interliterary processes into interliterary communities and interliterary centrisms at the same time stands as a dis-

similarity between metaphorical intraculturality and metonymic interculturality. Such difference creates two contrasting, complementary models of world literature. One is derived from interliterary communities and reduces world literature to monocultural unity; the other, resting on the theory of centrism, thanks to the reception aspect, postulates world literature as an imaginary polycentric set preserving the individuality of separate parts, where the exchange of literary values is performed as a dialogue in which the culture's recipients are deliberately open to otherness so as to understand themselves.

Following the postulates of Frank Wollman who proposed a triadic concept of world literature (1959, 11), Ďurišín developed this project at three levels: (1) a sum of national literatures in the whole world; (2) a selection of the best values produced in national literatures; and (3) a formation comprising mutually determined relations and contexts which function in the interliterary process. In his last monographs *Čo je svetová literatúra?* (1992) and *Teória medziliterárneho procesu I* (Theory of interliterary process, 1995), Ďurišín summarized three potential definitions of world literature and research on world literature: (1) additive, mechanical, classifying, which in traditional comparative literary studies produced historiographical syntheses of bigger literary units; (2) an axiological, selective, literary-critical conception grounded in the platform of general or universal literature, a utilitarian approach respecting didactic and reading needs; and (3) a literary-historical concept as an intersection overlapping the preceding two categories determined by mutual complementarity of literary phenomena resulting from specific research on interliterary process. In agreement with Wollman, Ďurišín considers the third definition the main object of comparative studies, but he re-thinks the structure and functionality of this concept. He concludes that world literature is the ultimate interliterary phenomenon functioning on the synchronic and diachronic axes of literary development. World literature as an ever-functioning system corresponds to a specific affinitive model – a conceptual superstructure as a system of thought. The relation between world literature as such and the theoretical reflection of this literary phenomenon is consequently differentiated and changeable. The degree of its “worldliness” is dependent on the “additional incorporation” of finished works into the literary system.

CONCLUSION

Czech and Slovak comparative literary studies, whose most distinguished representatives were the immediate followers of Frank Wollman as well as the collaborators of Dionýz Ďurišín, managed to respond to contemporary methodological movement, i.e. the retreat from formalist-structuralist theories for the sake of socio-political and cultural studies while keeping philological contact with the concrete text. In doing so, it took a balanced position in the dispute over whether to define comparative literature ontologically or epistemologically, i.e. rather institutionally, in the sense of an established university field defined by subject and research methods, or to freely conceive comparative literature as “comparing”, as a type of intellectual reflection, communicatively interconnecting individual spheres of knowledge as a conscious mediator. Czech and Slovak comparatists contributed primarily to elaborating the theory

of interliterariness, which Ďurišín, following Wollman, transferred from a structural basis to semiotics as the methodology of culture and reception theory intertextuality. The theory of interliterariness, which explains the individual quality of phenomena through its developmental laws, thus becomes a methodological instruction that interprets interliterariness as a process of never-ending denoting and replacing some cultural units and codes by others, rather than others being a means for intertextual generation of closed researches. Thus, world literature is not a fixed category but rather “a process” changing into “worldliness”. Ďurišín formulates the idea that any literary texts or literary phenomena “essentially depend on the structural laws of denoting – transformation – communication” (Koprda 2003, 223). The notion of “worldliness” becomes analogical to notions denoting such literary phenomena as “interliterariness”, designating “transformational laws at a higher level than national literature” (223). The substantial contribution of Ďurišín’s postulates is its emphasis on two suppositions. The first is the theory of interliterariness based on material from Slavic literatures, which is rooted in interwar Central European structuralism and in its attempt to de-ideologize the study of literature through comparison of forms and genre structures. The second is the criticism of globalization, whose trends affect not only Western civilization but also the newly-formed Slavic states, which are paradoxically alienated from one another, for example, by effacing their cultural, linguistic, or other identities. Ďurišín’s systematic criticism of the traditional unit of national literature as a starting point of thinking about literature and of the coherent whole defined by a dominant language and strictly delimited boundaries can be inspirational in the study of various Central and East European literatures, that are linguistically, geographically and administratively interwoven and typified by a complicated Slavic and non-Slavic ratio. At present, Ďurišín’s world literature can be understood as a developmental concept suggesting movement from the particular to the universal. Far from being an aggregation of all works or a static enumeration of these works, it is a lively process consisting of mutually conditioned phenomena, relations, and contexts, in which Ďurišín anticipated the recently popular concept of world literature as “literature of the world”, for example, in the sense of intertextual or transcultural “network” or “grid” of ideas, poetics, genres, discourses, and other heterogeneous contexts. At the same time, he raised the issue of research approaches to this phenomenon. As mentioned in the introduction, present discussions on world literature (Apter, Casanova, Damrosch, etc.) accentuating globalization and space, only rarely consider Ďurišín’s theory of interliterariness. Despite this, they agree with him that the call for new concepts and prefigurations can theoretically be pursued through notions which are polysemous but operate with their local connotations within a specific epistemological framework. Beyond any doubt, as a representative of Central and East European comparative literary studies, Ďurišín is positioned at the beginning of this debate. From this tradition, it follows that despite the postmodern skepticism, the research of world literature is justified and that it does not have only a single type and mode of study at its disposal. On the contrary, it is conducted in various languages and power relations.

NOTES

- ¹ Ironically, David Damrosch speaks of global “national” literature as texts which use a comprehensible style and a widespread language (2003, 25).
- ² Polívka in this respect says that “diverse literary elements should combine in great literature and assimilate into it – different flowing rivers merge into the sea which retains its character while growing through the influx of other sentences” (1883, 480).
- ³ In the Slavic community, which saw the first attempts at more modern definition of comparative study (and consequently world literature) as early as the late 1920s, these activities inspired, beside Wollman, the Croatian Ivo Hergešić (*Poredbena ili komparativna književnost*, 1932) and the Slovenian Anton Ocvirk (*Teorije primerjalne literarne zgodovine*, 1936), who positively responded to Van Tieghem’s appeal for literary historical syntheses of a new type as a prerequisite for all-European history of literature in the Central and East European region. Unlike Wollman, these two South Slavic scholars intended to substantiate the autochthony of their national literatures within world literature rather than something like Slavic general literature as a specific structure; that is why their texts preferably tended to remain in the sphere of binary comparative literature.

REFERENCES

- Apter, Emily. 2006. *The Translation Zone. A New Comparative Literature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Apter, Emily. 2013. *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*. London and New York, NY: Verso Books.
- Auerbach, Erich. 1992. *Philologie der Weltliteratur: Sechs Versuche über Stil und Wirklichkeitswahrnehmung*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.
- Bakoš, Mikuláš. 1973. *Literárna história a historická poetika*. Bratislava: Slovenský spisovateľ.
- Bujnák, Pavel. 1925. *Ján Arany v slovenskej literatúre*. Prague: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy.
- Casanova, Pascale. 1999. *La République mondiale des Lettres*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Croce, Benedetto. 1997. “La letteratura comparata.” In *Manuale storico di letteratura comparata*, ed. by Armando Gnisci and Franca Sinopoli, 73–78. Rome: Meltemi.
- Corbineau-Hoffmannová, Angelika. 2008. *Úvod do komparistiky*. Trans. by Veronika Jičínská. Prague: Akropolis.
- Czapliński, Przemysław. 2014. “Literatura światowa i jej figury.” *Teksty drugie* 15, 4: 13–40.
- Čapek, Karel. 1936. “Jak se dělá světová literatura.” *Přítomnost* 13, 1: 9–10.
- Černý, Václav. 1935. *Essai sur le titanisme dans la poésie romantique occidentale entre 1815 et 1850*. Prague: Orbis.
- Černý, Václav. 1994. *Paměti I. 1921 – 1938*. Brno: Atlantis.
- Damrosch, David. 2003. *What is World Literature?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Damrosch, David. 2009. *How to Read World Literature*. Malden, MA, and Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.
- D’haen, Theo. 2012. *The Routledge Concise History of World Literature*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.
- Di Leo, Jeffrey R. (ed.) 2018. *American Literature as World Literature*. New York, NY, and London: Bloomsbury.
- Dimock, Wai Chee. 2007. “Introduction: Planet and America, Set and Subset.” In *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature*, ed. by Lawrence Buell and Wai Chee Dimock, 1–16. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691188256-001>.
- Domínguez, César. 2012. “Dionýz Ďurišin and a Systemic Approach to World Literature.” In *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*, ed. by Theo D’Haen, David Damrosch, and Djelal Kadir, 99–107. London and New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ďurišin, Dionýz. 1967. *Problémy literárnej komparistiky*. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied.

- Đurišin, Dionýz. 1980. "Nad IX. kongresom AILC v Innsbrucku." *Slavica Slovaca* 15, 2: 181–184.
- Đurišin, Dionýz. 1992. *Čo je svetová literatúra?* Bratislava: Obzor.
- Đurišin, Dionýz. 1995. *Teória medziliterárneho procesu I*. Bratislava: Veda, vydavateľstvo SAV.
- Étiemble, René. 1966. *The Crisis in Comparative Literature*. Trans. by Herbert Weisinger and Georges Joyaux. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.
- Figueira, Dorothy M. 2015. "What Do We Do When the Other Speaks Her Own Language: Returning to the Ethics of Comparativism?" *Rocznik Komparatystyczny* 6: 9–23. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.18276/rk.2015.6-01>.
- Figueira, Dorothy M. 2019. "Prehodnotenie etiky porovnávania." Trans. by Róbert Gáfrik. *World Literature Studies* 11, 1: 70–80.
- Gáfrik, Róbert. 2009. "The Notion of World Literature and the Definition of Literature in Western and Indian Literary Studies." *World Literature Studies* 1, 1: 28–42.
- Gáfrik, Róbert. 2020a. "Trampoty so svetovou literatúrou." *World Literature Studies* 12, 2: 115–123.
- Gáfrik, Róbert. 2020b. "Hľadanie nových metód a tém v súčasnej slovenskej komparatistike." In *Komplexnosť tvorivosti: Zborník príspevkov k jubileu Márie Bátorovej*, ed. by Renáta Bojničanová and Tamara Šimončíková-Heribanová, 145–154. Bratislava: Veda, vydavateľstvo SAV and Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV.
- Gáliik, Marián. 2002. "Na margo recepcie Đurišinovej teórie v zahraničí mimo strednej a východnej Európy." In *Dobrodružstvo bádania: O živote a diele Dionýza Đurišina*, ed. by Ján Koška, 53–63. Bratislava: Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV.
- Gnisci, Armando. 1997. "In memoria di Dionýz Đurišin." *I Quaderni di Gaia: Almanacco di Letteratura comparata* 8, 11: 184–185.
- Gnisci, Armando. 1999. "Pensare il mediterraneo: Da un punto di vista letterario." In *Centrisme interlittéraire de littératures de l'Europe centrale*, ed. by Ivo Pospíšil and Miloš Zelenka, 37–45. Brno: Filozofická Fakulta MU.
- Gnisci, Armando. 2000. "Premesa in memoria di Dionýz Đurišin." In *Il Mediterraneo: Una rete interletteraria – La Méditerranée: Un réseau interlittéraire – Stredomorie: Medziliterárna sieť*, ed. by Dionýz Đurišin and Armando Gnisci, 17–19. Rome: Meltemi.
- Guillén, Claudio. 2008. *Mezi jednotou a růzností: Úvod do srovnávací literární vědy*. Trans. by Anna Housková, Alexandra Berendová, and Mariana Housková. Prague: Triáda.
- Hergešič, Ivo. 1932. *Poredbena ili komparativna književnost*. Zagreb: Pramacica.
- Juvan, Marko. 2019. *Worlding a Peripheral Literature*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-32-9405-9>.
- Kola, Adam F. 2012. "Współczesne reinterpretacje Weltliteratur: World Literature w poszukiwaniu teorii systemowo(-) światowej." *Tekstualia* 31, 4: 111–127.
- Kola, Adam F. 2014. "Między komparatystyką literacką a literaturą światową." *Teksty drugie* 4: 41–63.
- Konstantinović, Zoran. [1988] 1994. *Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft. Bestandsaufnahme und Ausblicke*. Bern, Frankfurt am Main, New York, NY, and Paris: Peter Lang Verlag.
- Koprda, Pavol. 2003. *Medziliterárny proces IV. Slavica*. Nitra: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Konštantína Filozofa.
- Longxi, Zhang. 2015. *From Comparism to World Literature*. New York, NY: SUNY Press.
- Merian-Genast, Ernst. 1927. "Voltaire und die Entwicklung der Idee der Weltliteratur." *Romanische Forschungen* 15, 1: 1–226.
- Mikušťáková, Anna. 1992. "Vstupujeme do nového baroka. Hovoríme s literárnym teoretikom Slavomírom Wollmanom." *Literárny týždenník* 5, 26: 10–11.
- Miner, Earl. 1988. "Possible Canons of Literary Transmittals and Appropriation." *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 37: 109–112.
- Miner, Earl. 1990. *Comparative Poetics: An Intercultural Essays on Theories of Literature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Moretti, Franco. 2000. "Conjectures on World Literature." *New Left Review* 1: 54–68.
- Moretti, Franco. 2013. *Distant Reading*. London and New York, NY: Verso.
- Mukařovský, Jan. 1967. "K dnešnímu stavu a výkladům srovnávací vědy literární." *Impuls* 2, 10: 724–726.
- Ocvirk, Anton. 1936. *Teorije primerjalne literarne zgodovine*. Ljubljana: Znanstveno društvo v Ljubljani.

- Pokrivčák, Anton, and Miloš Zelenka. 2019. "World Literature and the Future of Comparative Literature from the Point of View of the XXII Congress of the AILC/ICLA." *World Literature Studies* 11, 4: 111–120.
- Polívka, Jiří. 1883. "Zapadne vlianie v novej ruskej literature." *Slovanský sborník* 2, 1: 479–489.
- Popovič, Anton. 1975. *Teória umeleckého prekladu: Aspekty textu a literárnej metakomunikácie*. Bratislava: Tatran.
- Pospíšil, Ivo. 2012. "Problém kompaktního výkladu: Světová literatura pro slavisty/srovnávací studium slovanských literatur a česká komparatistická tradice." In *Filologie, areál a praxe: Inovativnost v současných filologických oborech*, ed. by Libor Pavera and Ivo Pospíšil, 8–22. Prague: Verbum.
- Remak, Henry H.H. 1971. "Comparative Literature: Its Definition and Function." In *Comparative Literature: Methods and Perspective*, ed. by Newton Phelps Stallknecht and Horst Frenz, 3–19. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Saussy, Haun, ed. 2006. *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalisation*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Strich, Fritz. 1946. *Goethe und die Weltliteratur*. Bern: Francke.
- Swiggers, Pierre. 1982. "A New Paradigm for Comparative Literature." *Poetics Today* 3, 1: 181–184. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/1772213>.
- Terian, Andrei. 2013. "Constructing Transnational Identities: The Spatial Turn Contemporary Literary Historiography." *Primerjalna književnost* 36, 2: 75–84.
- Thomsen, Mads Rosendahl. 2008. *Mapping World Literature: International Canonization and Transnational Literatures*. London and New York, NY: Continuum.
- Tihanov, Galin. 2004. "Why Did Modern Literary Theory Originate in Central and Eastern Europe? (And Why Is It Now Dead?)." *Common Knowledge* 10, 1: 61–81.
- Vajda, György M. 1986. "Principiální metodologické otázky dějin světové literatury." In *Teorie literatury v zrcadle maďarské literární vědy*, ed. and trans. by Petr Rákos, 329–340. Prague: Odeon.
- Vajdová, Libuša. 2020. "Priestorové myslenie a interliterárny proces." *World Literature Studies* 12, 4: 59–80.
- Van Tieghem, Paul. 1931. *La littérature comparée*. Paris: Armand Collin.
- Vodička, Felix. 1969. *Struktura vývoje*. Prague: Odeon.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. 2001. *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Wehrli, Max. 1965. *Základy modernej teórie literatúry*. Trans. by Vincent Šabík. Bratislava: Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry.
- Weisstein, Ulrich. 1981. *Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft. Erster Bericht: 1968 – 1977*. Bern, Frankfurt am Main, New York, NY, and Paris: Peter Lang Verlag.
- Wellek, René. 1936. "The Theory of Literary History." *Travaux de Cercle Linguistique de Prague* 6: 173–191.
- Wellek, René. 1955–1992. *A History of Modern Criticism 1750–1950. Vols. I–VIII*. New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press.
- Wellek, René, and Austin Warren. 1949. *Theory of Literature*. New York: Harcourt.
- Wellek, René, and Miloš Zelenka. 1993. Letter. 20th July.
- Wollman, Frank. 1928. *Slovesnost Slovanů*. Prague: Vesmír.
- Wollman, Frank. 1935. "Věda o slovesnosti: Její vývoj a poměr k sousedním vědám." *Slovo a slovesnost* 1, 4: 193–202.
- Wollman, Frank. 1936. *K metodologii srovnávací slovesnosti slovanské*. Brno: A. M. Píša.
- Wollman, Frank. 1959. "Srovnávací metoda v literární vědě." In *Z dějin československo-slovanských vztahov. Slovenské štúdie II*, ed. by Jozef Hrozičnik, 9–28. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied.
- Wollman, Slavomír. 1989. *Česká škola literární komparistiky (Tradice, problémy, přínos)*. Prague: Univerzita Karlova.
- Zelenka, Miloš. 2003. "Hermeneutische und dekonstruktivistische Auffassung der Weltliteratur – ein Ausweg aus der Krise?" In *Koncepcie svetovej literatúry v epoche globalizácie/Concepts of World Literature in the Age of Globalisation*, ed. by Ján Koška and Pavol Koprda, 155–167. Bratislava: Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV.

- Zelenka, Miloš. 2012. "L'Europe centrale dans le contexte de la géographie littéraire et symbolique." *Recherchers & Travaux* 80: 121–140. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/recherchestravaux.523>.
- Zelenka, Miloš. 2015. "Česká a slovenská literární komparatistika 20. století – stav a perspektivy." *Slavica litteraria* 18, 1: 7–18.
- Zima, Peter, V. 1992. *Komparatistik. Einführung in die vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft*. Tübingen: Francke.

The concept of world literature in Czech and Slovak comparative literary studies

World literature. Systematics of world literature. Comparative literature. National and world literature. Czech and Slovak comparative literary studies. "Small" and "large" world literatures.

This article aims to systemize the trends in world literature research, highlighting the differences between the concepts of this phenomenon as embraced by "small" and "large" literatures. It also takes account of the Czech and Slovak line of thinking which questions the concept of world literature as normative poetics or the standardized canon of masterpieces and their various discourses. The historical experience of Czech and Slovak comparative literary studies defending the independent values of Slavic literatures suggests that there cannot be any arbitrary research on world literature. With some exceptions and regardless of their terminologically and semantically different interpretations of this specialism, contemporary theoretical concepts (as embraced by Emily Apter, Pascale Casanova, David Damrosch, Marko Juvan, Franco Moretti, etc.) re-establish recognizing world literature as an international research issue or a subject employing English as a universal means of communication. Imposing such a notion would allegedly condone inequality as a kind of epistemological framework to codify the binary opposition of "developed" and "underdeveloped" or "the center" and "periphery". It was mainly the Czecho-Slovak structuralist tradition (represented by Frank Wollman, René Wellek, Dionýz Ďurišin, etc.) that rejected national literature as a natural starting point of world literature. Anchored in the Central European intellectual milieu at the crossing of various aesthetic movements, these "defensive" theories were linked with the structural concept of the Prague Linguistic Circle, letting alone the multilingual tradition of the former Habsburg Empire and the phenomenon of migration which implied the aspect of polyglossia and heterotopia as a breeding ground for comparative scholars.

Prof. PhDr. Miloš Zelenka, DrSc.
Institute of Central European Languages and Cultures
Faculty of Central European Studies
Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
Dražovská 4
949 74 Nitra
Slovak Republic
mzelenka@ukf.sk
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4049-3263>

Against Sinocentrism: Internal orientalism in world literature

WOOK-DONG KIM

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2022.14.2.2>

With the advent of the new millennium, world literature (often in uppercase, not lowercase) has occupied a dominant position as a new paradigm in the academic humanities in general and literary studies in particular. In seeking to explore literature in a global perspective far beyond narrowly defined national boundaries, it has been warmly welcomed as a new literary discourse, highly commendable and even heroic. Voracious, world literature tends to displace and even absorb older literary disciplines, such as comparative literature and postcolonial studies. As David Damrosch cogently argues in the introduction to *World Literature in Theory*, “[t]he cultural and political realignments of the past two decades have opened the field of world literature to an unprecedented, even vertiginous variety of authors and countries” (2014, 1). This fresh vista of world literature undoubtedly provides new opportunities for literatures and oratures, which have long been neglected and thus failed to attract worldwide attention, notably East Asia such as China, Korea, and Japan. On the other hand, world literature often raises serious questions, one of which is concerned with the center and periphery problem: To what extent is it free from ethnocentrism?

Despite strenuous efforts to shake off the bondage of provincialism and nationalism, world literature is still haunted by the ghosts of Eurocentrism and, for that matter, of Western-centrism. It is no wonder then that there have been critiques of this issue. In “Rethinking the World in World Literature: East Asia and Literary Contact Nebulae”, Karen Laura Thornber argues strongly for a less Eurocentric and more global focus in world literary studies. A specialist in the literatures and cultures of East Asia in a global context, Thornber situates one of the great ironies of comparative literature in the fact that it has solidified its Eurocentrism in many respects “even as it moved from focusing nearly exclusively on European literatures to including literatures from other world regions” (2014, 460). Thornber further claims that current debates on world literature, which might be considered, in a sense, the rebellious child of comparative literature, have frequently marginalized literatures in non-Western languages and literatures as “local” or “peripheral”. There is no denying the fact that more often than not, Western literatures still remain the touchstone against which other “minor” literatures are tested and evaluated.

Unquestionably, one of the most pressing, as well as challenging, issues facing scholars of world literature today is how they can solve the perennial problem of Eurocentrism and Western-centrism. The suggestion offered by Thornber seems to be the only possible solution to the problem. She states with some reservation, “[a]lthough not a panacea, analyzing *intra- and inter-regional interactions* among non-Western literatures is one way to help world literature shed its lingering Eurocentrism and move closer to region-neutrality” (461; emphases added). True, this critical analysis of inter-regional, as well as intra-regional, interactions among non-Western texts will certainly contribute to mitigating the heavy burden of Eurocentrism. Even so, the difficulty of overcoming the age-long burden can be expected in her use of the term “literary contact nebulae” to refer to more complex, shifting, and varied interactions than “contact zones”. The transcultural term “contact zone”, as Thornber explains, was first coined by Mary Louise Pratt to describe “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly symmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (2008, 7). This term has been taken up by other scholars, notably Susanne Reichl in her discussion of black British literature.

ZHANG LONGXI AND CONTEMPORARY SINOCENTRISM

Given this, it is a moot point whether such interactions among non-Western literatures would have succeeded in any meaningful way. As what Thornber calls “nebulae” implies, these interactions among East Asian countries such as China, Korea, and Japan turn out to be as fuzzy and ambiguous as those among Anglophone literatures in particular and Western literature in general – perhaps even more so. At least as far as East Asian countries are concerned, it is open to skepticism that any significant intra-regional, or even inter-regional, relationships or interactions among their texts become fruitful after all. It should be noted, however, that several Korean scholars in the 17th century were proud to call themselves *xiao zhonghua*, literally meaning “little China” – but with a wider ideological conception of the political and cultural realm of China in the Sinosphere.

The article “Relevance of *Weltliteratur*” (2013) by Professor Zhang Longxi, chair of comparative literature and translation at the City University of Hong Kong, provides an excellent illustration of how the existing discourse on world literature is dominated by Sinocentric views (or, for that matter, any nationalistically-centered ones) of the canon, the definition of literature, the expectations of content and form, and so on. Zhang’s article clearly reveals how difficult it is to achieve what Thornber hoped for in her agenda for intra- and inter-regional cultural interactions, particularly in East Asian countries, whose relationships have been extremely complex largely due to historical, cultural, and geopolitical issues.

Zhang Longxi calls for “a truly global understanding of *Weltliteratur* as well as its relevance for our world today” (2013, 241). Much like Thornber, Zhang is critical of comparative literature for being highly Eurocentric. As seen in the title of his article, Zhang builds his critical argument on the foundations of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s idea of *Weltliteratur*. In 1827, the aging Goethe famously stated to his young assistant and close associate, Johann Peter Eckermann, “[p]oetry is the uni-

versal possession of mankind. [...] National literature is now rather a meaningless term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach” (1984, 133), thus initiating the term “world literature”. Goethe’s ambitious, high-minded vision of *Weltliteratur* as universal and cosmopolitan, as Zhang sees it, has often failed primarily because its avatar, comparative literature, and particularly the French version of *littérature comparée*, was characteristic of being “national, even nationalistic” (2013, 243). In short, despite all good intentions, comparative literature has not lived up to the German writer’s expectations, a lofty ideal still not fulfilled. This is largely true, Zhang argues, for world literature as well: “Even in the new idea of world literature with a genuine desire to go beyond Eurocentrism, some of the current discussions are still under the shadow of Eurocentric pretensions” (244).

In this connection, Zhang criticizes two theorists in particular: the Italian Franco Moretti and the French Pascale Casanova. Drawing on both Darwinian evolutionary theory (as well as Fredric Jameson’s literary law of evolution) and on the world system theory of Immanuel Wallerstein, Moretti explores the global circulation and reinvention of the novel in terms of the concept of “one, but unequal”. In “Conjectures on World Literature”, Moretti proposes the concept of “distant reading”, which offers a convenient solution to the formidable problem of the sheer amount of textual material in world literature. Given that “distance” is not a physical concept but rather “a condition of knowledge”, Moretti defines distant reading as the kind of reading that “allows you to focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes – or genres and systems” (2013, 48–49). Moretti further argues that the development of the novel in the world’s different literatures follows a pattern of moving from European centers of metropolitan literature to non-European peripheries – “not as an autonomous development but as a compromise between a Western formal influence (usually French or English) and local materials” (50).

Zhang asserts that the center–periphery model, useful as it is to a certain degree in its own context, “if applied mechanically, would obscure the complex relationship between the novel as an imported Western form and the local context with its indigenous narrative tradition, which cannot be considered as just passive ‘local materials’ to be shaped into the new form of a modern novel” (2013, 245). To support his argument, Zhang cites certain renowned Chinese classic novels, such as *San Guo* (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*), *Shui Hu Zhuan* (*Water Margin*, also variously translated as *Outlaws of the Marsh*, *Tale of the Marshes*, *All Men Are Brothers*, *Men of the Marshes*, or *Marshes of Mount Liang*), and *Hong lu meng* (*Dream of the Red Chamber*). Although the modern Western novel has had a significant influence on the development of modern Chinese novels, Zhang argues, the classical as well as indigenous vernacular novels provide a fertile soil for the modern novel as a representative literary genre to strike roots. It is worthy of note, however, that in pre-1900 Chinese literary thinking, novels were mere popular entertainment and not to be compared with poetry, historiography, and essays. Furthermore, the novels Zhang lists above stretch over about 500 years and represent very different styles and techniques.

On the other hand, in seeing world literature as a space of cultural contestation, marked by inequalities between Western countries and non-Western counterparts, Casanova is not significantly different from Moretti. Zhang, who follows in the footsteps of Alexander Beecroft and Aamir Mufti, is far more critical of Casanova than of Moretti. Uncomfortable with Casanova's Paris-centered model, Beecroft claims flatly that it "cannot account for the full range of literary production across all cultures and times" (2014, 188). Mufti also criticizes Casanova for missing "this initial charting of non-Western traditions of writing on the emerging map of the literary world" (315). In Zhang's opinion, Casanova's view of world literature in *La République mondiale des Lettres* (1999), despite her assertion that her discussion is based on "a careful analysis", is not entirely free from Gallocentrism (and perhaps Eurocentrism as well). Zhang joins Beecroft and Mufti in criticizing it and argues, "[i]n Casanova's presentation, world literary history started in Renaissance Europe and gradually moved to other parts of the world along with the expansion of European power in the 19th century, followed by 20th-century decolonization in Africa and Asia" (2013, 244). Zhang further goes on to argue that Casanova "lays a particular emphasis on Paris as the capital of the 'world republic of letters', and she presumes that her Paris-centered literary space was based on historical facts" (244). What bothers Zhang most about Casanova's argument is her annoyingly stubborn insistence that Paris is "the capital of the world republic of letters", rather than the capital of world fashion, as commonly thought:

One may wonder what Casanova would say about Greek and Roman literature, or literature in Biblical antiquity? One may also wonder whether she is aware of the existence of other powerful centers of cultural and literary activities outside Europe, such as the Persian and Ottoman Empires, or *imperial China which functioned as a center in the East Asian region* long before the European Renaissance? One would assume that such basic and large-scale historical facts were taught even in French *lycées*, but how could "careful historical analysis" have missed all that and become so blind to much of the world outside France? (244–245; emphases added)

At first glance, Zhang's argument seems to be quite irrefutable because the theory of Casanova (and Moretti as well, for that matter), useful as it is in its own context, clearly begs too many questions. Meticulous scrutiny of the quotation above also reveals that Zhang himself turns out to be not as different from Casanova as it might appear. Most noticeable is the italicized phrase in the above quote, which should be given careful attention. In all likelihood, Zhang was inspired by what Goethe stated in his conversations with Eckermann regarding China. In response to the question as to whether the Chinese novel or romance (Peter Perring Thom's English translation of *Huanjianji* with the title of *Chinese Courtship*) that his master had just read is one of their best, Goethe immediately replied, "[b]y no means; the Chinese have thousands of them, and had when our forefathers were still living in the woods" (1984, 133).

What bothers Koreans most (and the Japanese as well) in Zhang Longxi's article, "Relevance of *Weltliteratur*", is the second sentence of the passage quoted above. Wondering if Casanova knows about "other *powerful centers* of cultural and literary

activities outside Europe”, Zhang refers specifically to “imperial China which functioned as a *center* in the East Asian region” (emphases added). As a Korean scholar who has specialized in East Asian literature as well as in world literature, I am little upset by this condescending attitude toward Korean and Japanese literature and thus compelled to ask: Did imperial China really function as a literary *center* in the East Asian region – just as Paris and France at large did in the European region, as Casanova wants us to believe? The answer to the question is categorically in the negative. It appears that Zhang here confuses a political sphere with a cultural one. China traditionally played the vital role of Big Brother (not in George Orwellian, but Confucian terms) in diplomatic relationships with East Asian neighboring countries, including Korea and Japan in the Qing dynasty and before.

My own objections to Zhang Longxi’s argument are not merely applicable to some minor phrasings but also to his implicit Sinocentric stance with regard to world literature. Zhang’s argument is, by and large, emblematic of a larger current of Sinocentrism in China, which is related in one way or another to Chinese imperialism. As Shu-mei Shih cogently argues, the history of Chinese imperialism has been largely hidden from view mainly due to two obsessions: “the fetishization of Western empires over other empires and the prevailing discourse of Chinese victimhood” (2011, 709). By the end of the 19th century, China exhibited Sinocentric, as well as imperialistic, tendencies in dealing with the Joseon dynasty, similar to the way the Western imperialists have dealt with China. The Korean port city of Jemulpo (Inchon) provides a good illustration of how Chinese merchants enjoyed extraterritoriality and the benefits of unequal treaties resembling those that Western powers enjoyed in Chinese cities such as Shanghai. As the architect of China’s foreign policy, Li Hongzhang played a prominent role in Chinese diplomacy in Korea. The Chinese leaders have characterized their past as a benevolent Confucian empire, acting to civilize their neighbors, notably Korea. A similar thing could be true for modern Chinese leaders who claim that China has never been imperialistic and that no neighboring countries have anything to fear as regards China’s peaceful rise. However, China’s influence rested primarily on political and cultural powers during important periods of the pre-modern era. The influence was not only political but also cultural. Emanuel Pastreich makes this point quite clear:

Literary Chinese was the primary model for literature on the Korean peninsula. It remained the dominant paradigm for writing until the 20th century because a viable indigenous script for representing the Korean language, *hangul*, did not emerge until the 15th century and did not find acceptance as a medium for intellectual discourse until the late 19th century. [...] There are records indicating that, as early as 372, Koguryo established a national Confucian academy, so no doubt there was considerable literary production in all three kingdoms, granted little has survived the intervening wars and other crises. (2001, 1067)

True, Chinese cultural primacy in Korea was an undeniable fact. The Four Books (*sishu*) and Five Classics (*wujing*), which collectively create the foundation of Confucianism, served as a central model for Korean rulers and the literati. Not to mention these classic Confucian texts, Tang poetry and vernacular novels (such as *Romance*

of the *Three Kingdoms* and *Water Margin*) were popular among both the literati and the reading public. However, Pastreich's claim that classic Chinese remained the dominant paradigm for writings on the Korean peninsula until the 20th century is a little exaggerated. With the creation of *hangul*, indigenous literature emerged. Even before the invention of the Korean script, orality and performance were significant features of vernacular poetry in traditional Korea. Composed as early as the 10th century, the *hyangga* were sung during the Unified Silla and early Goryeo periods of Korean history. The vernacular songs of Goryeo, commonly called *Goryeo gasa*, were performed and transmitted orally until the 16th century when the poems were finally recorded in *hangul*.

In addition, Emanuel Pastreich also maintains that China continued to serve as a model of modernization for Korea throughout the early 20th century. In an attempt to prove his argument, he cites a novel form, commonly known as *sinsoseol* (new novel), developed at the turn of the century. Pastreich further argues that the new novel movement was “*directly* inspired by the writings both theoretical and literary, of Liang Ch’i-chao and other reform writers of the late Ch’ing dynasty” (1077; emphasis added). The influences of Liang on Korean writers, notably Sin Chae-ho and Pak Eun-sik, are hardly to be dismissed. But the writers of *sinsoseol* were not so indebted to Chinese writers as their Japanese counterparts. One should keep in mind that after participating in the Hundred Days of Reform, the cultural and political reform movement that occurred in 1898 during the late Qing dynasty, Liang spent 14 years in exile in Japan, where he continued to advocate for political and cultural reform in China and helped found a number of journals and political organizations. Triggered by student protests in Beijing in 1919, the May Fourth Movement, a Chinese anti-imperialist, cultural, and political movement, was in a sense influenced by the March First movement in Korea.

That China exercised strong political and cultural power does not necessarily mean that it is culturally superior to its neighbors. As seen in Latin American literature, there is a gap between political institutions and literary or cultural expressions. Historically speaking, certainly from Tang to Ming times, and to some extent in Qing (1644–1911) as well, China was both a political and a cultural center. This is evidenced by the historical fact that some Koreans competed for the Chinese civil service examinations and their poems were published in Chinese anthologies. It can be safely assumed that there were no rival centers in any significant sense at the time, although China itself was often divided or ruled by “outsiders”. Even so, I find Zhang’s view of imperial China as having “functioned as a center in the East Asian region long before the European Renaissance” rather hard to accept. China assumed, in one way or another, the role as a *center* in East Asia, including Korea and Japan, when it comes to the literary and cultural world. And yet it is not a good idea to deny Chinese influences on its neighboring countries. To parody what Zhang says about Casanova, one may wonder what he would say about Korean literature or Japanese literature? One may also wonder whether he is aware of the existence of other powerful centers of cultural and literary activities outside imperial China? This attitude may be an obstruction to the true spirit of world literature, which strives for better cultural hybridity.

In this connection, Martin Puchner is quite right in his observation that “for world literature, it is not necessarily an advantage to come from a large nation; there is a provincialism of the center as well as a provincialism associated with the periphery” (2013, 33). As Puchner sees it, some representative writers of world literature, such as Henrik Ibsen, Milan Kundera, and Orhan Pamuk, are by and large from the provincial or peripheral origins. The Nobel Prize for literature in 2006 was awarded to Pamuk, “who in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures” (www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2006/summary/). His work has been widely translated into more than 60 languages, the Kannada language included. Ibsen, Kundera, and Pamuk are all characteristic of what Puchner terms “provincial cosmopolitan”. Although Korea and Japan, compared to China, might be provincial or peripheral, their cultural activities were quite remarkable.

HISTORY OF CHINESE SINOCENTRISM

Zhang Longxi’s critical stance in his “Relevance of *Weltliteratur*” is inextricably related to Sinocentrism, the ideology that China is the cultural, political, or economic center of the world in general and East Asia in particular. It comes as a great surprise that Zhang, one of the leading scholars in East–West cross-cultural studies, still seems to believe in this rather old-fashioned Sinocentrism, a hierarchical ideology or system that prevailed in East Asia until the weakening of the Qing dynasty and the encroachment of European and Japanese imperialists in the second half of the 19th century. At the center of this ideology stood China, ruled by the *Shenzhou* (Celestial Empire), which regarded itself as the only civilization in the world. Neighboring countries, such as Korea and Japan (and Vietnam as well), were considered vassals of China. The relations between the Chinese Empire and these nations were interpreted as tributary relationships under which these countries offered tributes to the emperor of China and received titles and privileges in return.

Historical accounts of such tributes, however, have been considerably distorted or at least exaggerated. For instance, the Han dynasty is known to have offered tributes to the Huns (Xiongnu tribes). On the other hand, according to the *Goryeosa jeolyo* (A condensed history of the Goryeo dynasty), compiled by Kim Jong-seo, Goryeo was offered the tributes from the Jurchen, which established the Jin dynasty in Manchuria and conquered the Northern Song in 1127, gaining control of most of North China. This fact is further attested by *Sejong silrok* (Veritable records of King Sejong), in which King Sejong was quoted as saying, “[d]o not give too much Korean paper to the Jurchen” when told by a retainer that they demanded too much of it in return for the tributes. Isolated from mainland China, Japan decisively cut off its vassal relationship with China during the Asuka period because it regarded itself as an equal and individual culture. In the past, the tribute was a form of trade rather than a sign of submission, allegiance, or respect. Most historians believe that in East Asia, as in most areas of the world, the tributes were some form of barter and trade.

An extreme form of ethnocentrism, this Sinocentrism is closely related to another ideology known in China as the “Hua–Yi distinction”, the ideology viewing China

as the most advanced civilization in the world (not to mention East Asia), and external ethnic groups or foreign nations as being uncivilized to various degrees. The age-old distinction between *Hua* and *Yi*, also known as the Sino-barbarian dichotomy, is an ancient Chinese concept that differentiated a culturally defined “China” (called *Hua* or *Huaxia*) from cultural or ethnic outsiders (called *Yi*). Conventionally translated as “barbarian”, the English translations of *Yi* include “foreigners”, “ordinary others”, “wild tribes”, and “uncivilized tribes”. Located east of China, Korea and Japan were pejoratively called *Dongyi*, literally meaning “barbarians living in the eastern districts”. Most obviously, this Hua–Yi distinction claimed Chinese superiority and at the same time implied that outsiders could become *Hua* by adopting Chinese values and customs.

If Casanova’s Gallocentrism and Eurocentrism are detrimental to the development of world literature, so is Zhang’s Sinocentrism. As a matter of fact, any form of ethnocentrism should be rejected for the healthy development of the “World Republic of Letters”, to use Casanova’s ingenuous term. Most probably, Zhang came to the recognition that he went too far in regarding China as the center of the East Asian literary world. This critical position runs counter to his critique of Casanova’s Gallocentrism, weakening his argument for *shijie de wenxue*, the Chinese term for world literature. It is very interesting to note that in “The Changing Concept of World Literature”, the article he wrote as the epilogue to *World Literature in Theory*, edited by David Damrosch, Zhang changes his view a little. Taking issue again with Casanova’s idea of the “world republic of letters” and her view of Paris as the center of the literary world in particular, Zhang states:

Such an account of the history of world literature is unabashedly Eurocentric and modernist, closely mapping onto the European expansion in the colonialist era and the subsequent decolonization in the mid-20th century, but completely oblivious to the Hellenic and Roman world and ignorant of the formation of literary constellations outside Europe, such as the Persian and the Ottoman empires, of the East Asian region *with the Chinese written language and culture playing a pivotal role in pre-modern times*. (2014, 518; emphases added)

In the passage quoted above, the former phrase (“imperial China which functioned as a center in the East Asian region”) is deftly replaced by the italicized expression of the last sentence. Now Zhang asserts that Chinese written language and culture performed a crucial role in the East Asian region, most probably Korea and Japan in particular. It should also be noted that Zhang qualifies the statement with the phrase “pre-modern times”. Since the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Japan, not China, played the leading role in East Asia. By the early 20th century, the goals of the Restoration were largely accomplished. With its victory in two wars over China in 1894–1895 and Russia in 1904–1905, Japan appeared for the first time on the international scene as a major world power.

When he makes this statement on the Chinese written language, Zhang Longxi certainly has in mind what has been rather vaguely termed “Sinosphere” or the “East Asian cultural sphere” – the term commonly used to refer to the East Asian countries and regions historically influenced by Chinese language and culture. The core regions

of the East Asian cultural sphere include Greater China, Korea, Japan, Singapore, and Vietnam. Located adjacent to China, Korea in particular has historically been culturally as well as linguistically influenced by China in one way or another.

Despite the importance of its native language, major national literatures have built their literary canons on non-autochthonous languages, as exemplified in American and Canadian, Latin American or Taiwanese national literature: English, Spanish and Mandarin-Chinese. Be that as it may, Korea has a long history of its own unique language, which has belonged to the Koreanic language family for several thousand years. Even so, unfortunately, it has had its writing system only since the mid-15th century, when *hangul*, the Korean script, was invented by King Sejong and his scholar retainers in the early Joseon dynasty. Under these circumstances, early literary activity was often executed in Chinese characters. Korean scholars-cum-literati wrote poems in the traditional manner of classical Chinese at least by the 4th century CE.

It should be noted, however, that Koreans, much like the Japanese and other East Asians, transformed the Chinese characters to suit their own linguistic purpose. By the 7th century, a system called *idu* had been devised that allowed Koreans to represent the Korean phonology through the Chinese characters called *hanja*. The *idu* system was used from the early Three Kingdoms to the Joseon dynasty periods. A more extended system of transcription, called *hyangchal* (vernacular letters), followed shortly thereafter, in which entire sentences in Korean could be written in classical Chinese. The *hyangchal* is best known as the writing method that Koreans used to compose *hyangga* (vernacular songs). In still another system, *gugyeol*, abridged versions of Chinese characters were used to denote grammatical elements and were inserted into texts during transcription. Extant literary works clearly indicate that before the 20th century, much of Korean literature was written in classical Chinese rather than in Korean, even after the invention of *hangul*. In general, then, literature written in Korea falls into three categories: (1) works written in the early transcription systems, (2) those written in *hangul*, and (3) those written in classical Chinese.

A considerable body of writings by Koreans (and Japanese as well) was thus written in the classic Chinese language. It would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that classical Chinese (that is, the written Chinese language from the Han dynasty to the end of the Qing dynasty) had been the *lingua franca* across Eastern Asia for more than 1500 years. It explains, at least in part, why Zhang Longxi claims that in the East Asian region, the Chinese written language and culture performed a primary role in pre-modern times. It does not necessarily mean, however, that Korean writings written in classical Chinese, *hanmunhak*, are Chinese literature. The *hanmunhak* should be regarded not as Chinese literature per se but as Korean literature proper. With several notable exceptions (say, Yi Gwang-su, unarguably one of the pioneers of modern Korean literature, and Kim Tae-jun, the literary scholar who specialized in Chinese literature, and Yim Hwa, the poet and literary critic), numerous scholars and writers have included the writings written in classical Chinese by Koreans in Korean literature proper. In this connection, Kim Tae-jun deserves more attention. In *Joseonhanmunhaksa* (A history of Korean literature in classical Chinese), he rather preemptorily claims that “those writings should be acknowledged

as Korean literature proper only if they were written in the Korean language, *hangul*, to express thoughts and emotions native to the country” (1931, 3–4). In his narrow definition of Korean literature, those writings written in classical Chinese were totally excluded from Korean literature. Kim labels Korean writing written in classical Chinese as a “variant of Chinese literature”. Undoubtedly, his powerful nationalistic view is strongly reminiscent of Johann Gottfried Herder.

As early as 1934, on the other hand, the Korean linguist Hong Gi-mun takes quite the opposite view to Kim Tae-jun and claims that literary works written in classical Chinese should also be regarded as Korean literature. More historically as well as nationalistically oriented, Hong divides Joseon literature (rather than Korean literature) into two categories: in a narrow sense, Joseon literature can be defined according to its language; in a broad sense, it can be defined according to its nationality. Hong claims that Korean *hanmunhak* can be classified as Joseon literature in the broad sense, as distinct from that in the narrow sense. Hong further recognizes Korean literature written in classical Chinese as *yangban munhak*, literature written by a privileged class whose social status was largely determined by birth and Confucian education. As Hong aptly states, “[l]iterature written in classical Chinese in Korea is none other than the literature of *yangban* in Korea. There is no denying the fact that literature in classical Chinese is part of Korean *national* literature unless one removes the age of *yangban* from Korean history” (1997, 360–361; emphasis added). Hong goes as far as to categorize the *hanmunhak* not only as Korean literature but also as Korean national literature.

Hong’s argument was later supported by another scholar Yi Ga-won, who, in *Han-gukhanmunhaksa* (A history of Korean literature in classical Chinese, 1960), argues that Korean literature written in classical Chinese differs significantly from Chinese literature proper in that the former has developed as a special way of expressing Korean ideology and emotion. The favorable position held by both Hong Gi-mun and Yi Ga-won was further bolstered by several men of letters such as Park Yeong-hui and Yi Byeong-gi, who played a very active role in developing Korean literature. Due to the absence of written characters, the indebtedness of Korean (and Japanese) writers to the classical Chinese language was unavoidable. I have the opinion that *hanmunhak* should be considered Korean literature. In Korea, Chinese characters have not only been pronounced differently from China but also have had significantly different meanings in some cases. Japan went further than Korea; in the 8th and 9th centuries, Japan developed its own phonetic script, *kana*, to write Japanese. The writings in *kana* have been regarded as Japanese literature. Furthermore, the Japanese have never regarded *kanji* (the Japanese equivalent of Korean *hanja*) as somehow foreign, obviously evidenced by the fact that they usually annotate the readings with hiragana and not katakana, as they do for truly “foreign” words.

On the one hand, Koreans have been acutely conscious of the presence of China, but on the other, they have attempted to break loose from its various influences. Strongly independent and self-reliant, Korea has attempted to reject Chinese domination, both politically and culturally. This can be demonstrated by an old historical document that provides valuable and specific information about Korea’s cultural as well as literary independence from China. As early as the 10th century, the founder

of the Goryeo dynasty, also known as Taejo Wang Geon, left behind for his successors the testament commonly known as *Hunyo sipjo* (Ten injunctions). Considering Wang Geon's vision of the Goryeo dynasty, the fourth injunction gives evidence of his opinion of cultural borrowing:

In the past we have always had a deep attachment to the ways of China and all of our institutions have been modeled upon those of Tang. But our country occupies a different geographical location and our people's character is different from that of the Chinese. Hence, there is no reason to strain ourselves unreasonably to copy the Chinese way. Khitan [Mongolia] is a nation of savage beasts, and its language and customs are also different. Its dress and institutions should never be copied. ("Excerpts from the *Koryosa*")

This passage clearly shows that the founder of the Goryeo dynasty saw China as a model worthy of respect and borrowing. And yet it never fails to state that Goryeo did not want to copy China exactly but instead wanted to develop its own culture. Culturally pluralist, the Goryeo dynasty was strongly characterized by an outlook that recognized greater and equal empires in China and Manchuria, while positing Goryeo as the center of a separate and bounded world ruled by the Goryeo emperor.

Furthermore, Korea's avid affection for, as well as great pride in, its own literature is exemplified by the fact that by the 13th century, it had invented *metal* movable types. Although the world's first porcelain movable types were invented in the 11th century in China during the Northern Song dynasty, the world's oldest metal movable types were invented in Korea during the Goryeo dynasty for the first time in human history. These movable types were extensively used by Korean government printers to print books. The first books known to have been printed and published in metallic type set include the fifty-volume *Sangjeong gogeu yemun* (Exemplar books of etiquettes old and new), compiled by Choe Yun-ui and the two-volume *Jikji simche yojeol* (Anthology of great Buddhist priests' Zen teachings), compiled by the Buddhist monk Gyeonggan. Even though the former has not survived, the second volume of the latter survived. After more than a half century, around 1450, Johannes Gutenberg introduced the metal movable-type printing press in Europe, along with innovations in casting the type based on a matrix and hand mold.

As early as the mid-1920s, young Korean intellectuals began discussing the idea of *segye munhak* (world literature), which is comparable to what Rabindranath Tagore called *vishwa sahitya* in 1907, and a little later, the Chinese version of it was termed *shijie de wenxue*. Independent of the New Culture Movement of 1915–1921 in China, Korean students studying foreign literature at Waseda and Hosei Universities in Tokyo, Japan, founded the Society for the Study of Foreign Literature and published its magazine, *Haeoemunhak* (Foreign literature). In the 1920s and 1930s, the word "foreign" had the meaning "overseas". It is interesting to note that the subtitle of the magazine, "Cpammata Eswtika," must have been taken from the Greek words, Γράμματα Ἑσωτικά (Grámmata Esotiká), presumably referring to esoteric writings, but mis-transcribed as Roman letters. This is clearly an interesting gesture of internationalism on the part of the members of the Society. The founding members included Kim Jin-seop (German literature), Zong In-sob (English literature), Yi Ha-yun (French literature and English literature), and Yi Seon-geun (Russian literature).

In the inaugural message for the first volume of the magazine, the editor first used the Korean term *segye munhak*. He proclaims in an eloquent tone, “[t]he reason for us to study foreign literature is not just for its own sake; rather, it is first of all for the establishment of Korean literature and secondly, for mutually expanding the scope of the world literature” (1927, 1). The founding of the Society for the Study of Foreign Literature, along with the publication of the magazine as its organ, created a new epoch in the history of modern Korean literature. The members of the Society not only took a keen interest in world literature; but they also first introduced the method of direct translation, the type of translation procedure in which a target text is produced directly from the original source text rather than via another intermediated translation in another language, usually from Japanese or Chinese translations (Kim 2020).

IRRELEVANCE OF THE CENTER-PERIPHERIES CONCEPT

China’s Northeast Project, short for Research Project on the History and Current State of the Northeast Borderland, is one recent manifestation of Sinocentrism. Launched in 2002 by the Chinese Academy of Social Science and financially supported by the Chinese government, it was a five-year research project on the history and current situation of the frontiers of Northeast China. The main reasons for China’s promotion of the Project include its interest in preventing any possible political or social impact that may arise as a consequence of future changes expected in the Korean Peninsula, thereby stabilizing the northeastern region and coping with shifts in the international order surrounding Northeast Asia. Besides, the Project may be considered China’s attempt to impose cultural hegemony by putting forth the “unified multi-ethnic state” theory to undermine the history and culture of surrounding nations in general and Korea in particular. Based on economic growth, China tried to create a new image of the past in order to establish historical origins and thus unify its people and territories. From its beginning, however, some Korean scholars have entertained grave doubts as to the Project. The Project has been criticized by Yoon Hwytak for applying rather anachronistically the contemporary vision of China as a “unified multi-ethnic state” to ancient ethnic groups (2004).

Exclusive rather than inclusive, Korea has for a long time developed its own unique literature both in quantity and quality, significantly different in form and style from its Chinese or Japanese counterparts. The origins of Korean literature (commonly designated as *hanguk munhak*) can be traced back to an early art form that combined dance, music, and literature. Originating in festival activities, this art form served various functions: (1) the political function of unifying society, (2) the religious function of supplicating a supernatural power to avert calamity on earth, and (3) the economic function of inspiring agricultural productivity. As an agrarian society, Korea was known for agricultural work songs. In addition, the early forms of myth, legend, and narrative poetry also had their basis in the abundant harvests of earlier periods. Korean literature thus presents an extraordinary variety of forms and styles, which cannot be explained merely in terms of the natural evolution of the language. Some of these were patently influenced by the importance of Chinese vocabulary

and syntax, but others developed in response to the internal requirements of major traditional poetic forms: *hyangga* (native songs); *Goryeo gayo* or *sogyo* (folk songs in the Goryeo dynasty), *byeolgok* (special songs), or *jangga* (long poems), *sijo* (current melodies), and *gasa* (verse narratives) among many other genres.

Something similar can be said about Japanese literature (commonly called *nihon bungaku*), which has often been considered as ranking as one of the major literatures of the world, comparable in age, richness, and volume to some representative Western literatures, although its course of development has been quite dissimilar. The extant works represent a literary tradition extending from the 7th century CE to the present. Japanese literature is characterized by some unique literary genres not so highly esteemed in Western or even other East Asian countries: that is, very brief poems like *haiku* or *waka*, diaries or letters, travelogues, and personalized accounts of life, such as *Makura no soshi* (The pillow book) written by Sei Shonagon during her time as a court lady to an Empress Consort during the Heian period. Written in the early 11th century by Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*) has been widely acclaimed as a masterpiece of classic Japanese literature in the Western world as well. Generally considered to be the world's first novel, the book has been referred to as one of the works categorized as world literature by David Damrosch and Franco Moretti, among others. Damrosch claims that "*The Tale of Genji* can profitably be read, as I have suggested, along with Proust's *Swann's Way*" (2003, 299). With economic prosperity, an amazing burst of creative activity has occurred since the early 20th century. Modern Japanese literature increasingly received more worldwide attention, as seen in the authors, such as Kawabata Yasunari, Oe Kenzaburo, and Murakami Haruki – to name only a few.

Seen from this perspective, Zhang Longxi's discussion of China as the literary and cultural center of East Asia provides a striking example of what has been termed "internal Orientalism", a discursive practice first building upon Edward Said's work and later developed by anthropologists in the mid-1990s. In Zhang's scheme, Korea and Japan are unfortunately treated as an internal spatial "Other" in East Asia, marginalized by a privileged China, and at the same time playing the role of internal othering; simply put, China is the center of literary and cultural activities while Korea and Japan are merely peripheral. Given what Zhang calls "basic and large-scale historical facts" with regard to Casanova's theory, however, nothing could be further from the truth. For some periods, it is easy to work out center/periphery relations; for other periods, these are rather unstable. Thus, it seems more appropriate to maintain that in East Asia, there are *neither* centers *nor* peripheries but only the middle twilight zones between the dominant centers and the subjugated peripheries. From the start, in fact, a Wallersteinian central-peripheral approach alone cannot properly account for the diversity and dynamics of the world literary space.

THE ROLE OF KOREAN LITERATURE

As is often the case with most literatures worldwide, Korean literature and orature have undergone periods of intensive influence by various neighboring and migratory cultures: Chinese civilization, Buddhism in its Chinese form, the Mongol world, and

the Manchu conquest empire, the Japanese empire, Soviet and American influences, and globalization, among others. Accordingly, it might be as injurious to world literature as Sinocentrism to argue for a pure origin of Korean literature. Even so, contemporary Korean literature has developed in a manner that is relatively free from Chinese influences and as a consequence of its wider ongoing literary exchanges. Inordinate stress on Sinocentrism and/or Sinophone centrality has tended to gloss over the possibility of Korean literature written in classical Chinese being categorically dismissed as non-Korean literature. Seen from this perspective, Korean literature has a wider spectrum, from oratures, through *hanmunhak*, to the writings in vernacular Korean.

If world literature can be understood as national literature read and appreciated beyond its linguistic boundaries, translation is no doubt a prerequisite for transmission. Translation provides insight into how new ideas, new styles, and new meanings in the world are shared between cultures and nations. This is why David Damrosch succinctly asserts that “[w]orld literature is writing that gains in translation” (2003, 281, 288; original emphases). His remark reminds one of what Robert Frost has been quoted by Louis Untermeyer as saying, “[p]oetry is what is lost in translation. It is also lost in interpretation” (1964, 18). Damrosch makes this point clearer:

The balance of credit and loss remains a distinguishing mark of national literature versus world literature: literature stays within its national or regional tradition when it usually loses in translation, whereas works become world literature when they gain on balance in translation, stylistic losses offset by an expansion in depth as they increase their range, as is the case with such widely disparate works as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and *Dictionary of the Khazars*. It follows from this that the study of world literature should embrace translation far more actively than it has usually done to date. (2003, 289)

What Damrosch call the “balance of gain and loss” in translation had taken place in Korean literature when it was translated into other languages, mostly into English. Since the opening of the country at the turn of the 20th century, translations of Korean literature have been done chiefly by American and Canadian missionaries and diplomats. Horace N. Allen’s translation of Korean folk tales in 1889 was followed by James S. Gale, who translated classic Korean novels, such as *The Cloud Dream of the Nine*, a 17th-century novel by Kim Man-jung, and *Choon Yang*, presumably the most well-known Korean classic novel, often translated as *The Fragrance of Spring* (as initiated by Edward J. Urquhart in 1929). Marshall R. Pihl’s translation, with a lengthy introduction and annotations, of *The Tale of Sim Chong: A Korean Oral Narrative* is far more scholarly. Recently, Ann Sung-hi Lee’s translation of *Mujong (The Heartless)* provides another good illustration of academic translation.

What matters here is the extent to which Korean classics, ancient and modern, contribute to world literature. Most translations of Korean classics are intended for an academic audience rather than the world literature reader whom Damrosch has in mind. It may seem understandable given that world literature, as commonly used today, was non-existent, yet a slow but marked change can be discerned in translations of Korean literary works since the turn of the 21st century. Contemporary Korean authors have been widely translated into English and other Western European languages such as French and German.

In this connection, two promising Korean authors, Shin Kyung-sook and Han Kang, deserve special attention in terms of world literature. Beginning with a German translation *Ein einsames Zimmer* (A lone room, 1995) in 2001, translations of Shin's novels have been published in the United States and elsewhere. They include *The Place Where the Harmonium Once Was* (ASIA Publishers, 2012), *Please Look after Mom* (Vintage, 2011), *The Girl Who Wrote Loneliness* (Pegasus Books, 2015), and *The Court Dancer* (Pegasus Books, 2019), among others. Shin won the 2011 Man Asian Literary Prize for *Please Look after Mom*, being not only the first Korean author, but also the first woman to receive that award.

Seven years younger than Shin Kyung-sook, Han Kang made her literary debut as a poet and then became a short story writer and novelist. Translations of Han's books include *Convalescence* (TASIA Publishers, 2013), *The Vegetarian* (Portobello Books, 2015), *Human Acts* (Portobello Books, 2016), and *The White Book* (Portobello Books, 2017). *The Vegetarian* became the first Korean-language novel to win the 2016 Man Booker International Prize, which was awarded to both its author, Han Kang, and its translator, Deborah Smith. *Atti umani* (*Human Acts*) won the 2017 Malaparte Prize in Italy. She was awarded the San Clemente Prize for *The Vegetarian* in Spain in 2019. In addition, Han was selected as the fifth writer for the Future Library project in Norway in 2019. It should be mentioned in passing that the quality of the translation of *The Vegetarian* has been criticized; some translation scholars have pointed out that the English version of the prized novel has a significant number of awkward translations and mistranslations (Kim 2019, 133–173).

Encouraged by the works of Shin Kyung-sook and Han Kang, some of the best contemporary Korean novels in English translation have come out. The last decade or so of this century has witnessed drastic changes in the selection of what works should be translated. This stress on contemporary works differs significantly from the first part of the 20th century when translators attempted to bring Korean classics to the fore. It does not seem difficult to make of this a rather great discrepancy. In a free-market economy, the law of supply and demand, rather than academia, regulates this process of translating Korean literature.

CONCLUSION

The phrase “think globally, act locally” has been used (or somewhat abused) in various contexts, including education, business, and environment. The phrase can also be applicable to world literature, which obtains its nourishment from globalization. World literature is part of a complex process of globalization embodied in the domain of literature. Zhang Longxi is quite right when he states:

It is in our time, when literary scholars everywhere have a much *greater* sense of the global connectedness of nations and peoples, a much *greater* need to open one's eyes beyond the tunnel vision of one's own group or community, and a much *greater* readiness to embrace alterity beyond one's linguistic and cultural comfort zones, that Goethe's concept of *Weltliteratur* may have found a *better* condition than ever before to make a real impact on the ways we think globally about literature, culture, and tradition, and ultimately about the world in which we live. (2014, 515; emphases added)

Most noteworthy in the passage above is that Zhang makes profuse use of the comparative adjectives – “greater” three times and “better” once. The implication is that world literature is not a *fait accompli* but still in the process of developing and still with many possibilities. To help it develop so that it will be more effective as a new literary paradigm, one should improve what Revathi Krishnaswamy calls “world literary knowledges”. She proposes this new category (“knowledges” in the plural) as a new component of global literary studies in order “to open up the canon of literary theory and criticism to alternative ways of conceptualizing and analyzing literary production” (2010, 408). To push her argument a little further, I argue for “world literature literacy” to refer to the ability to read world literature in a more proper way, the ability “to embrace alterity beyond one’s linguistic and cultural comfort zones”, as Zhang maintains.

In the current phase of rapid globalization, we are living through what Pascale Casanova aptly terms the “World Republic of Letters” or what I call the “Commonwealth of Letters”. At the present moment, however, the Republic or the Commonwealth seems to be incomplete, still under construction. Unfortunately, even some influential scholars arguing for world literature, for all their good intentions, still remain willingly or unwillingly Eurocentric (as exemplified in Pascale Casanova or Franco Moretti) or Sinocentric (as exemplified in Zhang Longxi). Eurocentric or Sinocentric, any form of ethnocentrism is in fact injurious, or even fatal, to the salutary development of world literature.

In thinking of new ways to explore the relations of world literature, mutual understanding of, as well as mutual respect for, other literatures and cultures are prerequisite. One of the valuable lessons we learn from world literature is, among other things, a reconfiguration of the relations between cultural centers and the periphery, between the national and the local, and between metropolis and province. Without such reconfiguration, which is reminiscent of Goethe’s idea of *Weltliteratur*, the arrival of world literature will be delayed, perhaps for quite a long time.

REFERENCES

- Anonymous. 1927. “Changgan Gwondusa” [Inaugural message]. *Haeoemunhak* [Foreign literature] 1.
- Beecroft, Alexander. 2014. “World Literature without a Hyphen: Towards a Typology of Literary Systems.” In *World Literature in Theory*, ed. by David Damrosch, 80–191. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Casanova, Pascale. 1999. *La République mondiale des Lettres*. Paris: Seuil.
- Damrosch, David. 2003. *What Is World Literature?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Damrosch, David. 2014. “Introduction: World Literature in Theory and Practice.” In *World Literature in Theory*, ed. by David Damrosch, 1–12. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- “Excerpt from the Koryosa: The Ten Injunctions of Wang Kon.” Trans. by Hahm Pyong-Choon. Accessed on June 4, 2022. http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/korea/ten_injunctions.pdf?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=581.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. 1984. *Conversations with Johann Peter Eckermann (1823–1832)*. Trans. by John Oxenford. New York, NY: North Point Press.
- Hong, Gi-mun. 1934. “Joseonmungagui yangui” [Two meanings of Korean literature]. *Chosun Ilbo* October 28–November 6.
- Kim, Tae-jun. 1931. *Joseonhanmunhaksa* [A history of Korean literature in classical Chinese]. Seoul: Society of Korean Language and Literature.

- Kim, Wook-Dong. 2019. *Translations in Korea: Theory and Practice*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kim, Wook-Dong. 2020. *Oegungmunhagyeonguhoewa haeoemunhak* [The Society for the Study of Foreign Literature and the Foreign literature]. Seoul: Somyeong Publications.
- Krishnaswamy, Revathi. 2010. "Toward World Literary Knowledges: Theory in the Age of Globalization." *Comparative Literature* 62, 4: 399–419. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1215/00104124-2010-024>.
- Moretti, Franco. 2013. *Distant Reading*. London and New York, NY: Verso.
- Mufti, Aamir R. 2014. "Orientalism and the Institution of World Literature." In *World Literature in Theory*, ed. by David Damrosch, 313–344. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Pastreich, Emanuel. 2001. "The Reception of Chinese Literature in Korea." In *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature*, ed. by Victor H. Mair, 1067–1078. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. 2008. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Puchner, Martin. 2013. "Goethe, Marx, Ibsen, and the Creation of a World Literature." *Ibsen Studies* 13, 1: 28–46. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15021866.2013.782627>.
- Shih, Shu-mei. 2011. "The Concept of Sinophone." *PMLA* 126, 3: 709–718. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2011.126.3.709>.
- Thorner, Karen Laura. 2014. "Rethinking the World in World Literature: East Asia and Literary Contact Nebulae." In *World Literature in Theory*, ed. by David Damrosch, 460–479. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Untermeyer, Louis. 1964. *Robert Frost: A Backward Look*. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress.
- Yi, Ga-won. 1960. *Hangukhanmunhaksa* [A history of Korean literature in classical Chinese]. Seoul: Boseongsa.
- Yoon, Hwytak. 2004. "China's Northeast Project: Defensive or Offensive Strategy?" *East Asian Review* 16, 4: 99–121.
- Zhang, Longxi. 2013. "The Relevance of *Weltliteratur*." *Poetica* 45, 3–4: 241–247. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30965/25890530-0450304002>.
- Zhang, Longxi. 2014. "Epilogue: The Changing Concept of World Literature." In *World Literature in Theory*, ed. by David Damrosch, 513–523. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Against Sinocentrism: Internal orientalism in world literature

World literature. Sinocentrism. Ethnocentrism. Korean literature. Internal orientalism.

Much discussion of world literature, as seen in the theories of Franco Moretti and Pascale Casanova, is still not entirely able to rid itself of Eurocentric and Western-centric biases. More recently, Zhang Longxi, a leading Chinese cross-cultural scholar, despite his good intentions, displays Sinocentric limitations by claiming that imperial China "functioned as a center in the East Asian region". Based on the assumption that Zhang's argument is emblematic of a larger current of Sinocentrism in China, this article argues that East Asian countries, most notably Korea and Japan, developed their own literatures and cultures, although they have been influenced by Chinese culture. This article calls for a more globally-oriented paradigm and asserts that any form of ethnocentrism, Eurocentric or Sinocentric, is injurious, or even fatal, to the salutary development of world literature.

Wook-Dong Kim
 Professor emeritus of the Humanities at Sogang University
 South Korea
 wdykim@gmail.com

The Biswa Sahitya Granthamala (World literature book series) as a reaction to English linguistic domination in Odisha

SONALI GANGULY – LIPIKA DAS

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2022.14.2.3>

The current concept of world literature as a borderless product of the global market has emerged since the 18th century. The world literary market mostly relies on the circulation of texts in English as a globally accepted lingua franca. The language regulates the production and circulation of world literature. English, being at the center, acts as a magnetic force attracting all peripheral literatures toward the center with the promise of international recognition (Puchner 2013, 32). National literature is expected to give up its language boundaries and become one with English in order to be a part of world literature. This monopoly of language in the world literary market is not regarded as a forceful imposition, but rather the consequence of power and necessity. For instance, in a multilingual nation such as India, where translation serves as a means of preserving the pluralistic cultural heritage, English has earned the designation of “a link language” as the internal literary exchange mostly relies on English translation.

Rabindranath Tagore famously rendered the term “world literature” into Bengali as *biswa sahitya*. This applies the qualifier *biswa* (meaning “worldwide” or “universal”) to the mass of literature (*sahitya*) from around the world. The phrase represents literature that is *biswatmaka*, i.e. “universal in disposition, an immense gathering or intertexture of works and discourses whose self-identity or ‘shaping soul’ is universality” (Dharwadker 2012, 477). One of the most coherent ways to define world literature is to consider it as a canon of texts that travel beyond their culture of origin in new *avatars* (incarnations), which are the consequence of the metamorphosis that literature undergoes through translation. The Biswa Sahitya Granthamala (World literature book series) in Odia (the language spoken in Odisha), is such an *avatar* which established a space for world literature in an Indian regional language.

Odia (formerly spelled Oriya) is the official language of Odisha (previously Orissa), an Indian state located on the country’s eastern coast and formed as a result of a language-based identity movement. The present state of Odisha is bordered by the Hindi speaking Bihar in the north and Madhya Pradesh in the west, the Telugu-speaking Andhra Pradesh in the south, and Bengali-speaking West Bengal in the northeast. According to the census of 2011, Odia is the native language of around 37.5 million people and thus ranks 37th out of the more than 7,000 world languages.

As Odisha stepped out of the provincial periphery and responded to increasing globalization in post-independence India, the eagerness to explore and comprehend the world beyond its borders resulted in the dramatic rise of interest in world literature, the “window of the world”. The Odia intelligentsia understood the necessity of translations of world literature into the local language to bridge the gap between the local and the global. In this context, the award-winning Indian publisher Granthamandir played a pivotal role by introducing a unique world literature book series titled *Biswa Sahitya Granthamala* (BSG) in 1969–1970. This literary endeavor took a remarkable attempt to make world culture and literature accessible to the non-English-speaking populace of Odisha. The willing submission to English with the hope to increase international exposure in the post-independence period resulted in a new wave of cultural colonialism. In this context, we argue, translations of world literature into Odia served as a liberating force. Granthamandir’s BSG can therefore be understood as a crucial step that raised a strong resistance against the cultural dominance of English.

This article will try to answer the following questions: was this situation in Odisha prompted by the growing trend of English-language translations in the context of global literary circulation? What other factors contributed to this situation? How did Odisha culture respond to this crisis? What countermeasures were taken against English literary hegemony? To provide answers, it first discusses the socio-political situation in Odisha that served as a backdrop for the 19th-century literary endeavors to establish Odia as a language, including the role of endotropic translation (i.e. from one Indian language into another Indian language). Subsequently, it outlines the evolution of the literary consciousness in Odisha and the emergence of the concept of world literature in Odia. In this context, it also focuses on the persisting colonialism which restricted the free literary exchange and confined it to exotropic translation (i.e. from an Indian language into English). From this perspective, the final section evaluates the contribution of Granthamandir’s BSG in creating a space for Odia translations of world literature.

THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN PRECOLONIAL AND COLONIAL ODISHA

Odia has a rich literary past, earning it the distinction of being India’s sixth classical language.¹ The oldest specimen of written language in Odisha are stone inscriptions on rocks (the Ashokan Edicts of the 3rd century BCE) and on cave walls (the Hathigumpha cave of king Kharavela in the Udaygiri and Dhauli hills near Bhubaneswar from approximately the 1st century BCE). However, they are not yet written in a language which can be called Odia. The earliest written literary sources in Odia are the *charyapadas*, which were composed between the 7th and 9th century. This Buddhist mystical poetry recorded the spiritual realizations of poets such as Luippa and Kanhuppa (Pattanaik 2000, 72). Their compositions represent the origin of Odia poetry. In northeast India, the *charyapadas*’ impact lasted from the 10th to the 14th century. Historians refer to this period, during which Odia emerged as a distinct language, as the Old Odia period. The remarkable Odia compositions of this period

include the historical record of the Gajapati kings and of the Puri temple called *Madala Panji* (11th century) and the tantric text *Sishuveda* (13th century). Odia poetry achieved new heights of prominence in the hands of Sarala Das (15th century), who composed Odia retellings of the Sanskrit epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. The early prose work *Rudra Sudhanidhi* of Abadhuta Narayana Swami (16th century) also deserves a mention.

The 19th-century renaissance in Odia literature heralded the birth of modern Odisha. The literary endeavors undertaken during the colonial era demonstrate strong resistance to the rising expansionism of the Bengali and Hindi languages (Mohanty 2002). Inspired by the growing nationalistic tendencies and the interest in literature in Odia, the publishing houses in Odisha accelerated the production of Odia books. Literature published in the late 19th and early 20th centuries strengthened the Odia language movement and ultimately succeeded in legitimizing the Odia language. This non-violent socio-linguistic upheaval led to the territorial unification in 1936 and the later formation of the state of Orissa in the post-independence period. The legitimization of the Odia language undoubtedly contributed to the loosening of the grip of linguistic domination of Bengali and Hindi. However, the formation of the British province and the legitimization of the Odia language were not followed by complete language emancipation. With the growing influence of English in all spheres of life in the decades subsequent to India's independence, Odia language and literature were sidetracked again. The educated populace gravitated towards English translations even of Odia literature itself, and the publishing industry followed suit.

In the socio-political matrix of 19th-century Odisha, the proximity of power, language and literary production is apparent in the relationship of the Odia language with other hegemonic languages. The significant impact of linguistic dominance in Odisha was evident during colonial subjugation in the form of Bengali and Hindi expansionism. The administrative and economic stability of the colonial provinces that governed the Odia-speaking territories aided in expanding these languages. Odia speakers were dispersed among the presidencies of Bengal, Bihar, Madras, and the Central Provinces, assigning Odia the status of a linguistic minority (Malik and Mohanty 2017, 38–40). In this period, Odisha witnessed linguistic discrimination, social and cultural subjugation, and the threat of detaching the Odia language from academia and administration based on arguments such as lack of books available in Odia for primary education and the need for the fragmented territory to adopt the language of opportunity for educational and administrative purposes. Meanwhile, further havoc was created by such events as the publication of Kantichandra Bhattacharya's book *Udiya Swatantra Bhasha Noye* (Odia is not an independent language, 1870), in which Odia was claimed to be a variant of Bengali (Acharya 2004, 83–84), Rajendralal Mitra's proposal to replace Odia with Bengali as the official language, and Umacharan Halidar's suggestion to adopt the Bengali script for Odia (Patnaik 2002, 3). Later, one planned solution for the administrative problems in the four presidencies was to displace the Odia language altogether. David Crystal best asserted this political intervention of the government to establish linguistic imperialism

in the colonies. In his words: “It may take a militarily powerful nation to establish a language, but it takes an economically powerful one to maintain and expand it” (1997, 10).

However, the linguistic dominance of Bengali and Hindi in Odisha was not the result of only military and economic power. It was the lack of literary strength of the Odia language that elevated these languages to the dominant status. The Odia language movement was an attempt to culturally unite the Odia-speaking territories in order to achieve political unification (Acharya 2016; Barik 2006; Panda 2017). It resulted in numerous subsequent literary achievements that legitimized the Odia language and united the territory.

LITERARY ENDEAVOR IN LATE 19TH- AND EARLY 20TH-CENTURY ODISHA

Cultural and linguistic disparities were apparent in Odisha, a colonial territory that was politically fragmented, linguistically suppressed, and socially and culturally underdeveloped. The identity crisis of Odia as a language took a significant turn when the language was on the verge of extinction. The consciousness of language colonization brought about the interest of Odia intellectuals in restoring territorial integrity. The sole objective of the literary production during this time was to strengthen the language movement. The emergence of the printing press assisted the massive publication of literary content, both for academic and non-academic purposes, and implicitly resulted in the development of Odia literature. By printing journals, newspapers, textbooks and literature, the printing press was instrumental in promoting a positive language consciousness (Choudhury 2013). The period also witnessed a rise of the middle-class reading public and aroused a nationalistic temperament that protested against the language monopoly in Odisha.

The inclination of Odia authors toward the West was stimulated by the quest for new literary models and techniques. Through the incorporation of Western influences in the writing of such leading figures as Fakir Mohan Senapati (1843–1918), Madhusudhan Rao (1853–1912), Gangadhar Meher (1862–1924), Radhanath Ray (1848–1908), and Gouri Shankar Ray (1838–1917), the language reached its apex in terms of style, culture and literature. Translators also responded to the expanding avenues of late 19th-century translation by creating Odia versions of Indian and Western masterpieces. The final decades of the 19th century thus witnessed a steady increase in the number of texts translated into Odia. Western literature was made accessible through translation that encouraged further adaptations. These adaptations aimed to instill pride in the Odia culture and undermine the colonial rule. Numerous masterpieces from Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi and English were translated at this time. Translation served as a tool for strengthening Odia language and literature (Pattanaik 2000, 76). However, it should be noted in this regard that translation into Odia is not a modern phenomenon, since Odia literature has been associated with translation from the 15th century onward. Pre-modern Odia literature was enriched through translation which facilitated the exchange of ideas, culture, knowledge, and learning of the scriptures. Until the 18th century, Odia translations aimed at democratization of knowledge and making ancient literary texts available to every section of society.

The literary production, both in Odia as well as endotropic translation, strengthened the identity of the language. However, the political unification of the state and the language legitimization achieved after a long struggle did not last long, as the rise of English into a hypercentral language altered the literary landscape.

LANGUAGE HEGEMONY AND WORLD LITERATURE IN ODISHA

It is a dismal fact that an Indian literary work needs to be translated into the former colonial language, English, in order to be received in the neighboring Indian states. Odia literature has been no exception and has followed this trend. It has aspired to be translated into English to gain a wider readership. The best-known example from Odia literature of English translation serving as the gateway to acceptance in world literature is Fakir Mohan Senapati's masterpiece *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* (1902; *Six Acres and a Third*), which has had several English translations that have encouraged wide reception and critical interpretation by Western scholars. The subordination to the English translation in order to reach a wider readership highlights the English language's monopoly and the lost essence of world literature which originally did not promote monolingualism. For example, it is pitiful that nowadays Gopinath Mohanty's masterful novel *Paraja* (1945) is more readily available to both local and international readers in English than in the original language.

In pre-modern times, Odia literature struggled for legitimate identity under the pressure of an elite language, Sanskrit, and it subsequently succumbed to the supremacy of Bengali. In post-colonial Odisha, English supplanted Bengali and Hindi, although the language imperialism was not overtly visible. When English took over the administration, higher education, publishing, media and communication, and established itself as a symbol of social advancement, endotropic translation, which earlier defined Odia literature, suffered a precipitous decline due to the lack of motivation and commitment. Instead, the effort to create English translations of Odia literary masterpieces took a big step forward.

Odisha passed through a tipping point when readers started preferring English texts rather than reading literature in the Odia language (both original works and translations). The Odia publishing industry, which relied on readers' interest for book sales, adopted the trend of prioritizing English books. Exotropic translation gained momentum in order to reach the elite western audience abroad and the westernized readers at home. In some instances, these exotropic translations distorted the original picture of Odia literature; Pattnaik referred to this scenario as a "full circle turn" (2000, 84). The widespread appeal of English translations for readers, publishers, and writers is symptomatic of a remarkable shift in linguistic dominance from Bengali to English.

The professor and prominent translator Jatindra Kumar Nayak has witnessed the decline of endotropic translation and the increase of exotropic translation in Odisha. He believes that the desire of writers to have their works translated into English is a phenomenon which started in the late 20th century. Nayak stated in an interview: "There appears to be an air of suspicion that a work has not realised its purpose, has not completed its voyage, until it is available in English translation"

(Pattnaik 2000, 82). The alienation of modern Odia writers from their readers fuels this need to find readers in other language communities, resulting in a new form of colonization. Therefore, Shakuntala Balliyarsingh, a Sahitya Akademi award-winning translator, characterized the act of translation into Odia as a resistance to language monopoly in a face-to-face interview. She said that translating western works for Odia readers is the most effective strategy to resist the literary market's language monopoly.²

At the time when the Odia intelligentsia noticed a second wave of a hegemonic grip over Odia language, the response toward the growing interest in world literature came to the rescue. In the 1960s, an important role was played by Prafulla Chandra Das, a renowned Odia translator and the proprietor of Prafulla Press based in Cuttack (Prasad 2014). He translated the works of several Nobel laureates and announced the beginning of a new era in the history of Odia literary translation (Mohanty 1971, 69). Under his initiative, such works as T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*, Grazia Deledda's *La madre (The Mother)*, Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *The Old Man and the Sea*, and Bertrand Russell's *The Satan in the Suburbs* were made available to Odia-language readers (Sahu 1962, 28). Despite the remarkable contribution that Prafulla Chandra Das made to translation in Odia, he was accused of being the enemy of Odia creative writing. Writers and publishers reasoned that introducing a new western literary flavor would alter readers' literary preferences and drive them away from original Odia literature (Pattnaik 2000, 78–79). This opposition and the subsequent financial loss of the enterprise did not allow the translated books to remain in print for long, but they served as a turning point in the Odia engagement with world literature. The sheer volume of his work and the ideational underpinning of his press set Das apart from other translation activities. The effort was significant in energizing the Odia intelligentsia and preparing the reading public for a more intense reception of world literature. Even though the books did not find a huge response in the market at the time, the literary initiative heralded the birth of a new literary awareness in Odisha, one that challenged the language monopoly and aimed to create a place for world literature.

THE BISWA SAHITYA GRANTHAMALA

The renowned Indian publisher Granthamandir, based in the city of Cuttack, made the next important step ahead to change the “colonial perspective” with the series known as Biswa Sahitya Granthamala (BSG). Granthamandir recognized the new crisis engulfing Odia language and literature and introduced a world literature book series in Odia translation, thus unmediated by English. The title acted as a marketing strategy to reach more potential readers and counteract the hegemonic role of English, carrying forward the task initiated by the Odia intelligentsia during the colonial phase. The series was the dream project of three literati: Sridhar Mahapatra, the founder of Granthamandir, his son Abhiram Mahapatra, and the eminent author and translator Sridhar Das. Introduced in 1969–1970, it broached a new approach to world literature and represented a novel venture to enrich Odia children's literature (Mahapatra 2012, 501). Its objective – as mentioned in the series blurb – reads as follows:

Biswa Sahitya Granthamala aspires to present a vast canon of texts from across the globe that accomplishes two significant objectives. The first is concerned with the aesthetic pleasure of the readers, and the second is associated with enhancing their love for literature, nurturing positive reading habits, and sensitizing them regarding world literature.³

This literary endeavor embodied the publisher's vision to promote world literature and instill a positive reading habit in children. The objective of the BSG was made clear by the current director of Granthamandir, Manoj Mahapatra (the son of Abhiram Mahapatra) in a 2018 interview. He said that in addition to the primary concern for moral elevation and character building, attention is also given to the child's ability to visualize and understand the global culture.⁴ Apart from this primary goal, the BSG implicitly contested linguistic hegemony, since the development of autonomous national literature is generally acknowledged to be an effective way to combat linguistic hegemony (Sapiro [2010] 2014, 213).

The BSG introduced authors such as Charles Dickens, William Shakespeare, Kalidasa, Arthur Conan Doyle, Joseph Conrad, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Henry Rider Haggard and many more to young readers in palm-sized books that made the act of reading enjoyable. The social realism in Jane Austen, the rural-colonial context in Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the imaginary world of fantasy in Hans Christian Andersen, the morally developed characters in Charles Dickens, the adventure and detective stories of Jules Verne and Arthur Conan Doyle, the science fiction of H.G. Wells contribute to the cultural, moral, literal, and ethical nourishment of a child (Ganguly 2018a, 417). The vivid insight into the distinct world culture and the literature full of excitement, mystery, morale and knowledge of the world has in this way been introduced to the non-English speaking readers in abridged translation in the native language.⁵

In this context, the question arises as to why Granthamandir considered young readers as the target consumers of the series and why the series was framed as *children's* literature despite its title's resolute commitment to *world* literature. One possible reason could be the fact that at that time the Macmillan Company introduced a series of western literary works in abridged English versions under the title "Children's Classics" in the Indian market. The exciting plots with captivating characters and stories full of imagination and thrills found a wide reception. It was indicative of another threat to the language that could lead to the identity crisis of Odia literature. The Odia intelligentsia had already witnessed the western translation practice in India, which had been meant to strengthen the presence of the English language in the colonial territory, and partially collaborated in this endeavor. English translations of ancient Indian scriptures, which supported the supremacy of the colonial language, thus set a standard for future translation practice. Granthamandir recognized this problem and addressed it by introducing the same enticing stories in Odia.

The publication of the BSG can be interpreted not only as a decisive step in bringing the literature of the world to local readers in their native language, but also as an illustration of the fact that the reception of world literature can thrive without the direct presence of English. However, the series could not completely do without

the former colonial language, since the translations of the world's classics were done via the medium of English. This testifies to the prominence of English translations in the Index Translationum database (Sapiro 2014, 210). Gisèle Sapiro examined the flow of translation and found that English occupied the “hyper-central” position and served as source language of half of the world's translations in the 1980s. Despite this paradox, the series proved the viability of the Odia language. The BSG strengthened the movement of resistance against the English language monopoly in the production and circulation of world literature by challenging the center-dominated model and by introducing literature of the world in a vernacular language.

An analysis of the series reveals that the BSG included a variety of genres and authors from various literary periods.⁶ It comprised 187 titles and 230 volumes with approximately 800 stories by 34 authors from 30 different countries. About two-fifths of the series were works originally written in English. The series also included works from Spanish, Arab, Indonesian, Polish, American, Russian, Italian, Chinese, Japanese and Danish literatures, among others. Translating the foreign literary works from various world cultures into Odia was a challenge that proved the maturity of the Odia language. The BSG created a canon of world literature in Odia translation that resisted the apprehended linguistic suppression due to the English language dominance in the publishing industry and the book market.

The success of the series can be estimated from their wide circulation and reception. Since the 1970s, the series has been reprinted several times in order to meet the demand of the reading public. This astoundingly successful initiative by Granthamandir has earned gratitude from parents, applause from educators, and appreciation from young readers. This demonstrates the reception of the text not only among young readers, but also among adults. The records of annual sale reports show the popularity of the series. Manoj Mahapatra confirmed that approximately a hundred sets are sold annually. The series has gone through 20 editions to date and has earned Granthamandir the recognition of the Distinguished Publisher Award by the Federation of Indian Publishers, New Delhi, in 1993. The reprinting of thousands of copies in each edition attests to its popularity. Several literary associations also congratulated Abhiram Mahapatra and Sridhar Das for this venture. Sridhar Das posthumously received the Sarala Award and Abhiram Mahapatra was honored in 1999 at the All Indian Odia Lecturer Conference (Ganguly 2018b, 112). International organizations such as UNICEF and CARE led the initiative of circulating more than 500 sets of the series in the remote districts of Odisha.

CONCLUSION

The present article is not intended to elaborate on the conflict between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, but it rather investigates the continuing colonization in Odisha after India's independence. It points out the hegemony of the English language in the field of literature, which leads to monolingualism and the world becoming the “universe of English”. The Biswa Sahitya Granthamala was conducive to the liberation of literature in Odisha from language colonialism by disseminating world literature without recourse to English.

By promoting world literature in Odia, the BSG helped restoring the dignity of the regional language in India. The series was an attempt to break away from the continuing dominance of the previous colonial center. World literature has managed to circulate and survive in a local language without the intervention of English as the gatekeeper. The BSG strengthened the concept of linguistic diversity by translating world classics and the modern masterpieces into Odia. It demonstrated that the essence of world literature is not in promoting monolingualism, which limits its access to a specific set of people proficient in the English language. The true essence of world literature is brought into play when it is liberated from this linguistic monopoly and perceived in its diverse *avatars*. The BSG brought together the literature of the world within the frame of *biswa sahitya* and has contributed to the perception of world literature as an advocate for “universality” (*biswatmakata*). Thus, it has been a compelling attempt to bridge the local and the global.

NOTES

- ¹ Six Indian languages enjoy the status of classical languages: Tamil (declared in 2004), Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013), and Odia (2014).
- ² In a face-to-face interview with Shakuntala Balliyarsingh at Bhubaneswar in October 2019, she shared her experience as a translator of more than 20 books that earned her the Odisha Sahitya Akademi Award.
- ³ The translation of the blurb originally written in Odia is ours.
- ⁴ During our personal interview with Manoj Mahapatra on February 10, 2018, we gathered a large amount of relevant information about the BSG.
- ⁵ Novels and plays were published in an abridged form, short stories and fables in full translations. Besides the BSG, many full translations of the works are available in the book market. As we are concerned with the BSG in this article, the details of these translations are not included.
- ⁶ We collected the available books of the series from Granthamandir and then created a database that contained the complete record of all published books, their publication dates, origin, authors, and translators.

REFERENCES

- Acharya, Pritish. 2004. “The Linguistic Movement in the 19th Century Orissa.” *Orissa Historical Research Journal* 47, 1: 83–89.
- Acharya, Snigdha. 2016. “Linguistic Movement of Odisha: A Brief History of Historiography.” *Odisha Review* 72, 9: 27–33.
- Barik, Pabitra Mohan. 2006. “A Movement for Restoration of Oriya Language.” *Odisha Review* 62, 4: 5–6.
- Choudhury, Janmejay. 2013. “Growth of Printing Presses and Periodicals: A Mouthpiece of National Consciousness.” *Odisha Review* 69, 1: 77–79.
- Crystal, David. 1997. *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dharwadker, Vinay. 2012. “Constructions of World Literature in Colonial and Postcolonial India.” In *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*, ed. by Theo D’haen, David Damrosch and Djelal Kadir, 476–486. London and New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ganguly, Sonali. 2018a. “World Literature without English: Biswa Sahitya Granthamala, a Case of the Making of Children’s Literature.” *Language in India* 18, 2: 406–419.

- Ganguly, Sonali. 2018b. "The Making of World Literature in Odia: A Study of Biswa Sahitya Granthamala." *Indian Journal of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies* 4, 1: 108–142.
- Malik, Ramesh C., and Panchanan Mohanty. 2017. "History of Translations (1803–1936): A Bottom-up Approach." In *History of Translation in India*, ed. by Tariq Khan, 33–92. Mysuru: National Translation Mission, Central Institute of Indian Languages.
- Mohanty, Laxminarayan. [1971] 2018. "Odia Anuvaad Sahitya" [Odia translation literature]. In *Sanjoga Shilpa ra Sutradhaar: Odia Anuvaad Adhyayana ra Kramaparinama* [Architect's craft of communication: a chronological history of the Odia translation studies], ed. by Panchanan Mohanty and Ramesh Chandra Malik, 68–72. Cuttack: Friends.
- Mohanty, Panchanan. 2002. "British Language Policy in 19th Century India and the Oriya Language Movement." *Language Policy* 1: 53–73. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1014500828789>.
- Mahapatra, Sridhar. [1986] 2012. *Odia Prakashana O Prasarana ra Ethihasa* [History of Oriya publication and propagation]. 2nd edition. Cuttack: Granthamandir.
- Panda, Aditya Kumar. 2017. "Translation in Odia: A Historical Overview." In *History of Translation in India*, ed. by Tariq Khan, 257–279. Mysuru: National Translation Mission, Central Institute of Indian Languages.
- Patnaik, Binay Kumar. 2002. "Oriya Language Movement and Oriya Linguistics." *International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics* 31, 2: 1–16.
- Prasad, Mahendra. 2014. "Enriched through Translation." *The Telegraph Online* April 7. Accessed on December 10, 2019. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/odisha/enriched-through-translation/cid/196633>.
- Pattanaik, Diptiranjan. 2000. "The Power of Translation: A Survey of Translation in Orissa." In *Changing the Terms: Translating in the Postcolonial Era*, ed. by Sherry Simon and Paul St-Pierre, 71–86. Ottawa: Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa Press.
- Puchner, Martin. 2013. "Goethe, Marx, Ibsen and the Creation of a World Literature." *Ibsen Studies* 13:1, 28–46. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15021866.2013.782627>.
- Sahu, Abhinnaachandra. [1962] 2018. "Anuvaad O Amara Anuvaadaka" [Translation and our translators]. In *Sanjoga Shilpa ra Sutradhaar: Odia Anuvaad Adhyayana ra Kramaparinama* [Architect's craft of communication: a chronological history of the Odia translation studies], ed. by Panchanan Mohanty and Ramesh Chandra Malik, 23–30. Cuttack: Friends.
- Sapiro, Gisèle. [2010] 2014. "Globalization and Cultural Diversity in the Book Market: The Case of Literary Translations in the US and in France." In *World Literature in Theory*, ed. by David Damrosch, 209–230. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

The Biswa Sahitya Granthamala (World literature book series) as a reaction to English linguistic domination in Odisha

World literature. Linguistic hegemony. Translation. World market. Odia literature. Neo-colonialism.

This article seeks to examine the remarkable literary venture of Odia culture that took a crucial step in creating space for world literature. Amid the plurality of conceptualizations of world literature as a commercial entity, a mode of circulation, an intellectual problem, a medium of international literary exchange, a dynamic system, and an emerging discipline, it sees world literature as a tool for liberating the Indian region of Odisha from linguistic and cultural domination. The colonial controversy over the language policy and the constant struggle of the Odia-speaking territories prepared the grounds for the language movement which resulted in the formation of a language-based British province in 1936. The article explores the question whether the establishment of Odisha led to linguistic liberation or a paradigm shift from cultural dominance of Bengali and Hindi during the colonial era to the hegemony of English in the post-independence period. We argue that after India's independence the Odia language and literature fell victim to neo-colonialism as a result of the adoption of the English language as the medium of internationalization. Additionally, we examine how world literature supported the liberation of the regional language and its literature from neo-colonialism by evaluating the contribution of the world literature book series titled Biswa Sahitya Granthamala, which was released in Odia by the publishing house Granthamandir in 1969–1970.

Sonali Ganguly, MA
IIIT Bhubaneswar
Gothapatna, PO: Malipada
Bhubaneswar – 751003
India
c617001@iiit-bh.ac.in
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1493-9556>

Lipika Das, Ph.D.
IIIT Bhubaneswar
Gothapatna, PO: Malipada
Bhubaneswar – 751003
India
lipika@iiit-bh.ac.in
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3048-9647>

“Provincializing” world literature: The role of translations in shaping 19th-century Latvian culture

PAULS DAIJA – BENEDIKTS KALNAČS

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2022.14.2.4>

The concept of world literature is traditionally applied to the process in which literary texts cross national borders through translation, being and becoming available in major languages, thus gaining recognition on a larger scale as a desired added value (Damrosch 2009, 497). For so-called small literatures, translations into major languages become one of the principal markers in their attempts to “catch up” with other cultures while concomitantly trying to overcome their supposed marginality and “belated modernity” (Jusdanis 1991), caused by their belonging to areas that might be labelled as “semi-peripheral” (Wallerstein 2004) on the world literary map.

The aim of this article is to argue that the idea of world literature might be substantially extended by delving into the process of how literary texts of so-called large cultures are modified and provided with new meanings through their translation and reception. In our approach, we draw on Dipesh Chakrabarty’s concept of “provincializing Europe”, which for him means to discuss “how universalistic thought was always and already modified by particular histories” (2008, xiv). Most importantly, in the process of the domestication of foreign texts, smaller cultures create specific and dynamic literary systems which, enriched by their own contribution, best respond to the preferences and needs of a particular society. By focusing on the 19th-century Latvian public sphere, we examine what additional facets major literary achievements can acquire by their transfer into other cultures, and, specifically, what impact they have on the development of Latvian letters. In a yet another important turn, we argue the importance of popular culture in shaping the horizon of expectations of the reading public, thereby leading to unexpected outcomes with important consequences for literature. The dominant trends of the long 19th century are productive for such an investigation as they reveal very complex paths toward the discovery of a new literary potential by an emerging culture. Eventually this not only contributes to the “world republic of letters”, but also shapes it through the process of cultural transfer, providing both prestigious and lesser-known texts of source cultures with additional meanings.

Research for this paper has been carried out within the project “A New History of Latvian Literature: The Long Nineteenth Century” (No. lzp-2020/2-0020) financed by the Latvian Council of Science.

In order to trace these issues, we explore different patterns of how literary translations into the Latvian language worked throughout the 19th century. The main body of the paper is organized into three parts. Initially we focus on the early decades of the 19th century, tracing the transformations in the traditional role played by Baltic German intellectuals and *literati*, who had been the first interpreters of foreign texts for Latvian audiences. Especially important at that time were discussions on the role the local population and Latvian language can achieve in a society that are accompanied by an introduction of new types of literary texts. In the next step, we take a closer look at the rising agency of ethnic Latvians while following the translation trends of the mid-19th century that include the spread of popular literature linked to the so-called reading revolution. This period also reveals tensions in the literary field caused by the appearance of yet another type of actors, the first generation of university educated ethnic Latvians, who for economic and intellectual competition argue with the Baltic Germans. In a parallel move, this process stimulates attempts to translate major European literary achievements. In the third part, the historical understanding is concluded by a discussion of the situation during the *fin de siècle*, when Latvian culture experiences a booming development, stimulated by social mobility, economic transformations, the rise of periodicals, widespread discussions on literary matters, and a significant improvement in terms of the quantity and quality of translations. In the final theoretical considerations, we summarize the above trends in order to discover a more general pattern of 19th-century cultural dynamics and make the case for the importance of small literatures in stimulating the diversity of world literature, not only through their own direct contributions, but also in ways that provide new contexts for the reception of a variety of translated texts (Glesener and Kohns 2022, 30). Following in the footsteps of Edward Said's concept of "traveling theories" (1983, 226–247), we propose to describe this process in terms of "traveling literatures" that as a consequence broaden the traditional idea of world literature through provincializing it. Our aim in the conclusion is also to provide a tentative pattern of literary systems characteristic of small cultures.

THE ROLE OF BALTIC GERMANS IN SHAPING EARLY 19TH-CENTURY LATVIAN LITERARY CULTURE

In the wake of the liberal reforms carried out by Tsar Alexander I in the first quarter of the 19th century, serfdom was abandoned in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire with a predominantly Latvian-speaking population, in 1817 in Courland and in 1819 in Livland (which also included a considerable proportion of Estonians). These developments further stimulated a discussion on the role of Latvians in the community, still forcefully segregated into different classes, an issue already voiced in the aftermath of the French Revolution of 1789 by representatives of the radical wing of the Enlightenment in the Baltic provinces, such as Garlieb Merkel (1769–1850) and others (Taterka 1998). Taking into account that Baltic Germans represented the socially dominant class, it is not at all surprising that the first debates on the Latvians took place under the auspices of the *Literärisch-Praktische Bürgerverbindung zu Riga* (Riga Literary-Practical Citizens' Association) that was

founded in 1802 after the prototype of the Hamburg Patriotic Society (Hollander 1927, 2). In 1815, the Courland Society for Literature and Art was founded with the intention of creating a local forum for the discussion of current scientific and social problems. The Society also discussed what kind of future prospects should be put forward for the free Latvians and Estonians (Stradiņš 2009, 372). The activities mentioned signal the rising interest in the Latvian population and an effort to predict ways in which a future integration of Society in the provinces might take place. It became increasingly obvious that these developments had to include activities promoting the use of the Latvian language, which had become one of the aspirations of the newly-created institutions. In contrast to an earlier stage of the development of Latvian secular literature linked to private initiatives, the beginning of the 19th century was clearly marked by the coordinated efforts of Baltic German societies that took an active role in publishing and distributing Latvian books, calendars, and periodicals.

In 1817, the Courland Society for Literature and Art “in a widely-attended meeting came to the conclusion that knowledge should be presented to Latvians in the coating of religion, that the supplements to calendars should be supplied by pastors, that a newspaper should be published in Latvian with the purpose of educating the people” (Apinis 1977, 111).¹ In 1819 the Society organized a discussion on the Germanisation of Latvians which acquired the appellation of “the Jelgava Debates” (Biennemann 1905, 61–71; Šķiņķe 1996, 85–90). This marked the beginning of a transition to an intense exchange of opinions about the future of the Latvians. The discussion had been sparked by the notes accompanying Karl Gottlob Sonntag’s theses about taking notice of the Latvian people and elevating them. In 1817 these had been complemented by the secretary of the Society, Magnus Georg von Paucker, writing that there are two ways

of making Latvians happy. Either you have to climb right down to them, talk to them in their own language to win their trust – then you have to pass over to them that whole mass of knowledge that we have accumulated over the centuries, or else we have to try to turn them into Germans, our brothers, by building schools where they can learn German. Won’t we ourselves benefit from that – seeing that their political chains will soon fall? The political victory of our predecessors should be concluded with a moral victory and we should give the Latvians the benefits that they have been deprived of for so long. (As quoted in Šķiņķe 1996, 85)

In the context of this variety of opinions, it is important to notice a considerable diversification of the literary production of Baltic Germans in the following decade with regard to newly attempted translations into the Latvian language. An especially fascinating case is provided by the pastor Karl Hugenberger, who compiled an anthology of his poetry translations under the title *Derrigs laika kaweklis* (Useful pastime I–II, 1826–1827). This anthology was significant as an attempt at the emancipation of Latvian literary culture and its liberation from moral didacticism. Among the translations accomplished by Hugenberger, there were renderings of poetry by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller, challenging the limits of understanding of what was suitable for Latvian readers and just as importantly, the terms

of the proposed conversation. To grasp the full meaning of this move, it is important to contrast Hugenberg's efforts with two Latvian translations of Schiller's *An die Freude* (1786), already accomplished during the 1800s by Karl Gotthard Elverfeld and Alexander Johann Stender. Both Elverfeld and Stender still explicitly used Schiller's complex poem to extract a moral lesson for the Latvian peasants (Grudule 2006, 24–26). Hugenberg, in his turn, attempted primarily to demonstrate the potential of the Latvian language as an important precondition of its development. At the same time, he was also interested in the appreciation of the aesthetic value of literature. Hugenberg's anthology can still be primarily seen in dialogue with his Baltic German compatriots; however, from a historical perspective his effort marked a new step toward the reception of world literature.

Despite the fact that Hugenberg's poetic achievements were not fully appreciated at the time, and his translations did not acquire lasting popularity among wider circles of the reading public, which might also be due to the limits of the underdeveloped Latvian language at the period, this was an extremely important step in substantially widening the spectrum of literary texts available in Latvian and, in addition, it served as a role model for the young generation of authors who became active in the 1850s. Finding himself at the crossroads between the institutional undertakings of Baltic German societies and individual activities, Hugenberg's efforts, on the one hand, can be interpreted within the context of the literary praxis of the late popular Enlightenment in the Baltics, while, on the other, they testify to the growing possibilities of provincializing world literature; the poems of Goethe and Schiller in his translations acquire a different functionality if compared to the source culture. These early efforts in shaping a complex literary system in the Latvian language by going beyond religious and practical texts and paying greater attention to the aesthetic qualities of literature were undertaken by those Baltic Germans, who not only were contemporaries of Goethe, but, like Hugenberg, had the opportunity of meeting the great poet and promoter of "world literature".

MID-19TH CENTURY TRANSLATIONS INTO LATVIAN AND THE FIRST TENSIONS BETWEEN POPULAR LITERATURE AND ELITE CULTURE

Alongside significant new trends that have to be mainly attributed to economic history, Latvian cultural developments in the mid-19th century were closely linked to the changes in reading and writing practices. The transformations in reading habits can be compared to the processes that characterize German-speaking countries from the last quarter of the 18th century on, and have been designated as the "reading revolution" (Engelsing 1978), characterized by a move from the tradition of intensive reading of a limited number of texts to that of extensive reading. In the Latvian case a substantial democratization of reading as well as the growing importance of secular texts were especially important, as was the impact of popular literature.

In the mid-19th century, the perception of reading among the Latvians changed significantly; following an initial period when reading became the daily habit of a relatively small group of people, the so-called *Vielleser*, or avid readers, the number

of people, who at least to a certain degree developed an interest in literature, grew rapidly and exponentially. This process was influenced by the practice of reading aloud at Latvian homes with people simultaneously being involved in some household practices. Most importantly, reading as a part of religious experience or as a utilitarian pastime gave way to a new concept of reading, consisting to a considerable extent of entertainment and pleasure that also explains the impact of popular stories in the still predominantly rural Latvian society.

An interesting and characteristic case is provided by a localized story, *Genovefa*, by Ansis Leitāns published in 1845 that acquired widespread popularity in a Latvian version. This example demonstrates the role of avid readers and their translation choices; it also reveals unexpected facets of the impact of popular literature. Based on Medieval Latin narrative, later transferred to other cultural milieus in the 17th century, the tale of Genovefa became part of the so-called Blue Library intended for French popular audiences. Leitāns's use of an early 19th-century German source, a book by Christoph Schmid, a German Catholic priest, published in 1810, was affected by the 18th-century interest in "Robinsonade" motifs, inspired by Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). Somewhat earlier, in 1824, Defoe's novel had been adapted into Latvian by the pastor Christoph Reinhold Girgensohn, using a German source text, *Robinson der Jüngere* (1779), by Joachim Heinrich Campe that added a didactic aspect of ethical evaluation. Schmid's story intertwined a strong emphasis on the moral aspects, sentimental affection and twisted plot, and due to this combination, it became so popular that it has been described as one of the first Latvian bestsellers (Limane 1985, 144). While the aesthetic ambitions of mid-19th-century popular fiction were rather modest, its role in creating a modern reading public was crucial, and there was a rapid expansion of readers after the publication of *Genovefa* (Johansons 1953, 65).

For our purposes in this paper, it is especially important to notice the echo made by acquaintance with this text in memories of the next generation of Latvian authors. For example, one of the two authors of the first Latvian novel, *Mērnīeku laiki* (The times of the surveyors, 1879), Matīss Kaudzīte, after a vivid description of the impact made by Leitāns's book, refers to it as a role model for literary experience: "Now and again a new or different book would arrive at home, similar to *Genovefa*, which we all then read, one after the other, with great enthusiasm for the 'true' events taking place in the stories" (1924, 67). While working on their own novel later, the brothers Matīss and Reinis Kaudzītes tried to incorporate characteristic devices of popular literature, such as a complex and intriguing plot, into their literary effort, thus also blurring the borders between popular and elite culture (Klaustiņš 1926). Importantly enough, *Genovefa* was being read in accordance with religious reading habits: just like sermons and the Bible, it was read out loud. Their experience of listening to such performative events in its turn motivated Latvian authors of the second half of the 19th century to make widespread use of various rhetorical devices referring to popular literature but already employed for different purposes.

The above observations illustrate that, while the social and educational basis of the Latvian population in the middle of the 19th century remained relatively lim-

ited, through the process of reception and interpretation of certain highly popular stories, their role in Latvian society was different from that acquired in the source culture. These texts stimulated the process of self-evaluation in the wider circles of readership throughout the 19th century. Therefore, the passive role traditionally ascribed to popular forms of art was often revised in the name of social progress and, somewhat later, national mobilization. The attempts of the first generation of Latvian authors active in the 1840s and early 1850s, while mostly following Baltic German literary practices established during the period of the popular Enlightenment, reveal conscious attempts of transferring knowledge to their readership by using the tools at their disposal, and gradually even showing some interest in translating elite works of world literature (Apinis and Silabriede 1987). At the same time, despite the elitist rejection of popular literature, the latter remained a rich depository of beloved and recognizable imagery, which could be recycled and enriched with new meanings.

The steady expansion of popular literature occurred simultaneously with the extension of an educated middle class that rose with the attempts of young and university-trained Latvian intellectuals at creating elite culture, a tendency that in the 19th century became noticeable in the whole of East Central Europe and was linked to the rise of a nationalist agenda (Leerssen 2018, 183–214). In the Latvian context this task was undertaken by representatives of the so-called movement of New Latvians, who made an explicit effort to move away from the dominant tradition of Baltic German writing in the Latvian language. It is significant to scrutinize their aims in order to answer the important question in the processes of cultural transfer, namely, “which individuals (scholars, publishers, sovereigns, etc.) or institutions (academies, publishing houses, universities, etc.) decided that certain texts should be made accessible in their own language, and what were the underlying interests (academic, educational, political, commercial, etc.)?” (Stockhorst 2010, 23). The strategic orientation of New Latvians toward separation of elite and popular culture, and preference for the former, might be seen as a strong ideological message of the newly educated group ready to speak in the name of the social as well as cultural aspirations of their nation. As Ivars Ijabs puts it,

they started to develop their own anti-German nationalism, which, on the one hand, often imitated German models, but on the other – challenged the supposed universalism of German culture. These attempts to build a German-type high culture on the basis of an “inferior”, colonized culture provoked loud complaints about hybridity and harmfulness, voiced by Baltic Germans, who increasingly asserted their colonizer identity and cultural superiority. (2014, 90)

The most characteristic example in this process was provided by a collection of world poetry, *Dziesmiņas, latviešu valodai pārtulkotas* (Little songs translated for the Latvian language, 1856) by Juris Alunāns, notable as a turning point in the development of Latvian national literature as well as for its stormy reception. In the introduction to the book, Alunāns himself formulated his task as follows: “By translating these little songs, [...] I wanted to show how powerful and pleasant the Latvian language is” (1981, 7). Featuring translations of some of Goethe’s (and in a later expanded edition also Schiller’s) poems alongside authors of the *Vormärz* period in Germa-

ny, this publication became a kind of political manifesto as the nurturing of literature in the Latvian language was considered not only an aesthetic problem, but also a political one. Therefore this small volume, distributed at the time in about 500 copies, became a significant milestone and an object of severe criticism from the conservative wing of Baltic Germans. This exacerbated reaction also signalled an important transformation of the addressee of this publication as Alunāns did not rely on the former elite but rather was speaking to the educated part of his own compatriots. It was this change in the direction of literary communication and the functionality of literary texts that was most important in the broader context of ideological and economic aspirations of the New Latvians.

Following in the footsteps of Alunāns, the literary experience and taste of the Latvian public gradually developed, and by the 1890s had already changed significantly with the educated elites seeking new reference points in their cultural activities. At the same time, however, the blend of idealism and melodramatic imagination, characteristic of popular literature, maintained its appeal to a wide range of the reading public and was accordingly made use of by numerous important writers.

THE EXPANSION OF TRANSLATIONS DURING THE FIN DE SIÈCLE

The translator of *Genovefa*, Ansis Leitāns, was the first ethnic Latvian to become a newspaper editor when *Mājas Viesis* (Home guest) began publication in 1856. At the time, it was only the third newspaper published in Latvian, but during the second half of the 19th century the numbers were steadily on the rise. A significant turning point was the publication of the first literary periodicals that started in the 1880s. They not only stimulated the creation of new texts, but also served as avenues for literary discussions on the topical issues of the late 19th century.

Among the most widely discussed topics there was once again that of the future prospects of Latvian literature. Stimulated by the interest in folklore gathering, initially envisaged by Baltic Germans and later taken over by the Riga Latvian Society, established in 1868, one of the current trends had become that of employing patterns of folk poetry in literature. This move can partially be explained as an effort to establish a narrative of national history, with epic poetry being considered to be one of the main preconditions for the qualifications of Latvians as a culture-nation. Especially instrumental in this process was Jēkabs Lautenbahs, a Latvian language teacher at the University of Tartu (now Estonia), who provided specific examples related to folk poetry in his poem *Zalkša līgava* (Zalktis's bride, 1880) and, eventually, in the attempt at a large-scale epic in his *Niedrīšu Vidvuds* (Vidvuds of Niedrīši, 1891). Lautenbahs was even more vocal in polemical treatises directed against his opponents. The most characteristic in this regard was his dispute with the young Latvian teacher soon to become one of the leading literary historians, Teodors Zeiferts. Their exchange of opinions in 1888, subsequently familiar as a discussion on "the poet and his time", was explicitly about the contemporariness of the folklore use, and, even more so, about the necessity for a poet to follow literary trends of his own period more closely. Heading in this direction, Zeiferts involved, and somewhat later significantly developed, ideas first expressed by such major European critics as Hippolyte

Taine and Georg Brandes. Entering the 1890s, Latvian literary circles were fully aware of the necessity to intervene in the debates regarding relevant social and aesthetic issues. The study of literatures in major European languages and translation of their most important achievements, both in the sense of “classics” and of “masterpieces” (Damrosch 2003, 15) became a precondition for being able to develop the quality of literary production.

It is fascinating to trace the growing number of translations from European literatures as well as the contexts in which these efforts were published. Once again, following the pattern already introduced by the first translations of Goethe and Schiller in the early 19th century, there was the practice of several translations of one and the same text of major literary quality being provided (Volkova 2008, 426–427). However, matching the significant transformations in the literary field as well as the growing demands of readers, these parallel translations, accomplished by the principal literary figures of the time, including Rūdolfs Blaumanis, Rainis, Aspazija, and Jānis Poruks, signal the growing complexity of literary communication. On the one hand, they are to be seen as a mutual intellectual challenge stimulating the new generation of Latvian writers, while on the other, their renderings of world literature try to reach much broader public circles than envisaged by Hugenberg, or expected by Alunāns. The Latvian readers of the late 19th century were keen to appreciate the aesthetic quality of German authors, while at the same time evaluating the potential relevance of their ideas in contemporary society.

Another remarkable feature in this period is the multicultural nature of Latvian literature. All the major literary figures mentioned above were fluent in German, the language in which they exchanged letters and wrote some of their early texts. The most characteristic case was possibly that of Blaumanis, who started his literary career writing in German and later kept the practice of translating his principal works from one language into another, thus enlarging the scope of the potential readership even though the German language versions of his texts only reached international audiences much later (2017). Nevertheless, Blaumanis’s literary output manifestly testifies to the multicultural environment of Riga as the largest city in the Baltic provinces and points to the diverse readership the authors were eager to address.

A major step toward appropriating elite literature for the Latvian readers was made with the publication in 1897 of the widely discussed translation of Goethe’s *Faust* by Rainis and Aspazija. The corresponding debates refer back to the problems raised earlier while posing a question as to whether the Latvians are ready to understand such complex works of art. In the context of the time, these discussions obviously pointed to the necessity of the reception of world literature as a contribution not only to the intellectual capacity, but also to the aesthetic refinement of Latvian society. Rainis himself later made good use of the knowledge that he acquired by translating the poetry and dramas of Goethe, Schiller, and other major authors in creating texts that follow established literary models, while at the same time challenging the expectations of his readers, often portraying the protagonists of his plays against the backdrop of world-scale conflicts. Characteristic in this regard is the biblical plot of his tragedy *Jāzeps un viņa brāļi* (Joseph and his brothers, 1919) almost immedi-

ately translated into German and published in 1921, and thus possibly even noticed by Thomas Mann while he was envisaging his world-famous novel (Füllmann 2021, 45–46).

Whereas the discussions with regard to the translation of *Faust* still predominantly circled around either linguistic aspects or the social relevance of the content, this obviously did not seem sufficient to the next generation of Latvian authors, who in the first decade of the 20th century consciously moved toward modernist experiments. Besides the French and Scandinavian authors most often praised by this generation, one major figure linking different generations was Friedrich Nietzsche, who was already familiar in the 1890s, but whose works were made more widely available through the 1908 Latvian translation of *Also sprach Zarathustra* (*Thus spoke Zarathustra*, 1883–1885). Its translator Vilis Plūdons was also a modernist poet, schoolteacher, and author of textbooks, and thus an exemplary case of the polyliterariness and polyfunctionality of authors representing a small literature (Glesener 2021, 60). The diversity of approaches was at the same time still mirrored by the continued and innovative application of the patterns of popular literature in fin-de-siècle Latvian literary culture.

CONCLUSION: LITERARY SYSTEMS OF SMALL CULTURES AND THEIR POTENTIAL IN SHAPING THE NOTION OF WORLD LITERATURE

The above aspects allow us to argue that 19th-century Latvian literature, following the terms elaborated in a related context by Marco Juvan, endeavor on the one hand to place world literature in the emerging national literary system, while they try on the other to incorporate domestic literature within already elaborated literary models (2012, 28). This also corresponds to the ideas of Dionýz Ďurišin who argues that “the interliterary process starts with national literatures and proceeds from them to world literature in a series of intermediate stages” (Domínguez, Saussy, and Villanueva 2015, 32). A retrospective evaluation of the research material dealt with in the present article allows us to distinguish several important aspects which impact Latvian literary culture in the process of its systemic formation.

First, we notice that cultural transfer into the Latvian language is initiated by ethnically unrelated Baltic German intellectuals, who in their pedagogical aims and aesthetic aspirations make use of the established models of German culture, while in this process they also adapt and expand well-established trends of the popular Enlightenment in order to reach 19th-century Latvian audiences.

Secondly, an important new facet is introduced by the translations of popular literature accomplished by the first ethnic authors, a trend that is stimulated by the changing habits of reading among the Latvians and helps to foster them further. While the reception contexts of popular literature are closely linked to everyday practices, characteristic of a particular milieu, their growing familiarity provides seemingly peripheral texts with considerable added value important for the further elaboration of an inclusive literary system. In a related development, original literary texts that mix the strategies of entertainment and serious purposes start to appear, thus signalling potential differentiation of the functionality of literature.

Thirdly, the aspirations to create a Latvian elite culture are gradually modelled on examples of world literature that include translations of literary classics, to be later joined by contemporary “masterpieces”. The publications of these texts often raise anxious debates in society, first of a political nature with Baltic Germans recognizing the danger to their patronizing attitude toward the Latvians, “not quite” prepared for “that whole mass of knowledge”, and later with regard to the social impact and aesthetic quality of translations. What is indisputable, however, is that canonical texts of world literature help Latvian writers to widen their own horizon of thought, while concomitantly adapting world literature for its reception and further elaboration within a specifically shaped literary system. Innovative aesthetic challenges that display a desire to follow potentially “universal” rules of art thus also become context-specific. Correspondingly, our analysis echoes related observations summarized by Stephanie Stockhorst: “In translation, texts do not just change their language, but first and foremost their cultural frame of reference. Thus significant transformations inevitably occur in the course of their de- and re-contextualisation” (2010, 23).

In addition, two aspects not further elaborated here should also be taken into account while outlining the newly emerging literary system: the importance of mutual translations among small languages advances significantly around the turn of the 20th century; and important achievements of Latvian culture, such as the attempts of Latvian writers in the German language, also provide locally manifest versions of transgressing the language borders that acquire the capacity to be transferred to other contexts, thus bringing into motion a reverse reception process.

It is through these latter cases that world literature, first being placed and elaborated into the literary system of the Baltic provinces, returns to the “world”. However, what is especially important to recognize here is the fact that cultural transfer is working in much more complex ways than texts simply moving from large literatures to smaller ones, and, in relatively rare cases, moving in the other direction. Provincializing world literature principally involves the diversity of reception working in various directions, complex “traveling literatures”, with every text that crosses language borders making itself present in various, often underrated and not sufficiently explored new contexts that eventually add innovative facets to both local and global literary developments. In this process each culture, however small it may be, creates its own literary system through which it also becomes an active agent in changing the content of the concept of world literature.

NOTES

¹ Translations from Latvian language sources here and elsewhere by Terēze Svilane.

REFERENCES

- Alunāns, Juris. [1856] 1981. *Dziesmiņas, latviešu valodai pārtulkotas* [Little songs translated for the Latvian language]. Vol. I. Riga: Liesma.
- Apīnis, Aleksejs. 1977. *Latviešu grāmatniecība: no pirmsākumiem līdz 19. gadsimta beigām* [Latvian book publishing: from the beginnings till the end of 19th century]. Riga: Liesma.
- Apīnis, Aleksejs, and I. Silabriede. 1987. "Cittautu dzīves tēlojums tulkotajos stāstos" [Representation of life in foreign countries in translated stories]. In *Bibliotēku zinātnes aspekti. Grāmata latviešu sabiedrībā. 1856–1870* [Aspects of library science. Book in Latvian society. 1856–1870], ed. by Ināra Klekere, 38–52. Riga: Avots.
- [Bienenmann, Friedrich]. 1905. "Sieben Vorträge über Germanisierung der Letten: Eine Reminiszenz vom J. 1819." *Baltische Monatsschrift* 1: 61–71.
- Blaumanis, Rūdolfs. 2017. *Frost im Frühling. Die deutschsprachigen Erzählungen*. Ed. by Benedikts Kalnačs and Rolf Füllmann. Bielefeld: Aisthesis.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. [2000] 2008. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Colonial Difference*. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Damrosch, David. 2003. *What is World Literature?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Damrosch, David. 2009. "Frames of World Literature." In *Grenzen der Literatur: Zu Begriff und Phänomen des Literarischen*, ed. by Simone Winko, Fotis Jannidis, and Gerhard Lauer, 496–515. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Domínguez, César, Haun Saussy, and Darío Villanueva, eds. 2015. *Introducing Comparative Literature: New Trends and Applications*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.
- Engelsing, Rolf. 1978. *Zur Sozialgeschichte deutscher Mittel- und Unterschichten*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Füllmann, Rolf. 2021. *Thomas Mann*. Baden-Baden: Tectum.
- Glesener, Jeanne E. 2021. "Prolegomena to a Comparative History of Small and Minority Literatures." In *Dominanz und Innovation: Epistemologische und künstlerische Konzepte kleiner europäischer und nicht-westlicher Kulturen*, ed. by Diana Hitzke, 49–74. Bielefeld: Transcript.
- Glesener, Jeanne E., and Oliver Kohns. 2022. "Weltliteratur und kleine Literaturen: Zur Einleitung." In *Weltliteratur und kleine Literaturen*, ed. by Jeanne E. Glesener and Oliver Kohns, 7–30. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann.
- Grudule, Māra. 2006. "'Liksmība no Dieva dota...' Fr. Šillera odas 'Priekam' tulkojumi (1804–2004)" [Translations of Friedrich Schiller's *An die Freude* (1804–2004)]. In *Aktuālas problēmas literatūras zinātnē 11* [Current issues in research of literature and culture 11], ed. by Edgars Lāms, 23–35. Liepāja: LiePA.
- Hollander, Bernhard. 1927. *Geschichte der Literarisch-praktischen Bürgerverbindung in Riga: 1802–1927*. Riga: E. Plates.
- Ijabs, Ivars. 2014. "Another Baltic Postcolonialism: Young Latvians, Baltic Germans, and the Emergence of Latvian National Movement." *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 42, 1: 88–107. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2013.823391>.
- Johansons, Andrejs. 1953. *Latviešu literatūra* [Latvian literature]. Stockholm: Trīs Zvaigznes.
- Jusdanis, Gregory. 1991. *Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture: Inventing National Literature*. Minneapolis, MN, and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press.
- Juvan, Marko. 2012. "World Literature in Carniola: Transfer of Romantic Cosmopolitanism and the Making of National Literature." *Interlitteraria* 17: 27–49. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12697/IL.2012.17.04>.
- Kaudzīte, Matīss. 1924. *Atmiņas no "tautiskā laikmeta" un viņa lielākiem aizgājušiem darbiniekiem* [Memories of the period of national romanticism and its most important activists]. Cēsis/Riga: O. Jēpe.
- Klaustiņš, Roberts. 1926. *Mērnieku laiki kā sadzīves romāns* [The times of the surveyors as a novel of everyday life]. Riga: RLB Derīgu grāmatu nodaļa.
- Leerssen, Joep. [2006] 2018. *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

- Limane, Lilija. 1985. "Robinsoniāde un stāsts par Genovevu latviešu grāmatniecībā" [Robinsonade and the story of Genoveva in Latvian]. In *Grāmatas un grāmatnieki* [Books and book lovers], ed. by Eduards Arājs, 138–145. Riga: Zinātne.
- Said, Edward W. 1983. "Traveling theory." In *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Edward W. Said, 226–247. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Stockhorst, Stephanie. 2010. "Introduction: Cultural Transfer through Translation: A Current Perspective in Enlightenment Studies." In *Cultural Transfer through Translation: The Circulation of Enlightened Thought in Europe by Means of Translation*, ed. by Stephanie Stockhorst, 7–26. Amsterdam and New York, NY: Rodopi. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789042029514_002.
- Stradiņš, Jānis. 2009. *Zinātnes un augstskolu sākotne Latvijā* [The beginnings of science and higher education in Latvia]. Riga: Latvijas Vēstures institūta apgāds.
- Šķiņķe, Iveta. 1996. "Kurzemes Literatūras un mākslas biedrība un latviešu valodas attīstības jautājumi 19. gadsimta 1. pusē" [The Courland Society for Literature and Art and the development of the Latvian language in the first half of 19th century]. *Latvijas Arhīvi* 3, 4: 85–90.
- Taterka, Thomas. 1998. "Nachwort." In *Die Letten*, Garlieb Merkel, 292–302. Wedemark: H. v. Hirschheydt.
- Volkova, Līvija. 2008. *Blaumaņa zelts* [Blaumanis's gold]. Riga: Karogs.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. 2004. *World Systems Theory: An Introduction*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

"Provincializing" world literature: The role of translations in shaping 19th-century Latvian culture

World literature. Translations. Cultural transfer. Baltic German literary activities. Reading revolution. Latvian culture. Popular culture. Elite literature. Literary system of small literatures.

The concept of world literature is traditionally applied to the process in which literary texts cross national borders in the process of translation, thus getting a desired added value to be recognized on a larger scale. While fully admitting the importance of translations from small literatures to the languages of more widespread communication, our aim in this article is to demonstrate that broad circulation of translated texts in smaller languages create fascinating patterns due to their specific interpretation in local contexts that expand reception perspectives and change the terms of interpretation of world literature. The complexity of these moves is traceable through the process in which translations of popular culture are integrated into 19th-century Latvian literary activities alongside recognized classics, explicitly setting an aim of fostering the creation of a national canon. On the other hand, elite works of European literature are "provincialized" in the process of domesticating them alongside other texts of lower literary quality. The translations from both elite and popular culture thus contribute to the rise of Latvian letters, expanding the limits of the potentially influential corpus of texts that can cross the borders of one national literature. With the use of specific examples, we follow the interplay of popular and elite translations that gradually transform 19th-century Latvian literature and create a comprehensive literary system representative of a small culture.

Dr. philol. Pauls Daija
National Library of Latvia
Mūkusalas Street 3
LV-1423 Riga
Latvia
pauls.daija@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3349-859X>

Prof. Dr. habil. philol. Benedikts Kalnačs
Department of Literature
Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art
University of Latvia
Mūkusalas Street 3
LV-1423 Riga
Latvia
benedikts.kalnacs@lulfmi.lv
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6435-325X>

The post-national Celan: The imperfect triangulation from (abandoned) Romanian poetry to world literature and back

RADU VANCU

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2022.14.2.5>

Paul Celan produced a scanty corpus of Romanian poetry: eight poems (one of which is fragmentary) and eight prose poems. Their literary quality is nevertheless so remarkable that one of the most influential anthologies of the Romanian literary avant-garde bears the subtitle “From Urmuz to Paul Celan” (Mincu 2006). According to Andrei Corbea, the foremost Romanian specialist in Celan’s work, none of the poet’s Bucharest writer friends between 1945–1947 “counted out” his “possible destiny [...] in Romanian literature” (2020, 73).¹ One of these friends, Petre Solomon, who published Celan’s early Romanian poems in 1987, states that “it is more than certain that there existed other Romanian poems besides the ones that I have preserved myself” (2008, 142). Corbea also plausibly argues that at least some of the poems published by Celan in his Bucharest years are self-translations from German originals (2020, 72–79), therefore enriching the Romanian section of his work. Both Corbea and Solomon think that Celan’s Romanian literary output, which Corbea calls his “Romanian horizon” (162), should include his remarkable translations from German (four parables by Kafka) and from Russian (Lermontov’s *A Hero of Our Time* and Chekhov’s *Peasants*) into Romanian.

Thus, Celan’s 16 still extant Romanian poems, as well as his translations of Kafka, Lermontov, and Chekhov, *do not* constitute a sufficient literary corpus to allow us to speak consistently of a “Romanian Celan”. But what they *do* constitute is sufficient proof that there has existed the *possibility* of an accomplished Romanian poet named Celan, and they subsequently legitimate the examination of Celan’s “Romanian traces”, as Corbea names them (157–176). However, this is not in the sense in which Mac Linscott Ricketts (1988) has written about the “Romanian roots” of Mircea Eliade. Both Eliade and Emil Cioran produced a few thousand pages in Romanian, which justify the claim for a “Romanian Eliade” or a “Romanian Cioran”, preceding their integration into world literature. From this point of view, Celan’s case is more similar to that of Tristan Tzara: their small number of poems and texts written in Romanian do not make a reasonable claim for a “Romanian Celan” or a “Romanian Tzara”, prior to their acceptance into world literature as German or French writers. But these “Ro-



This project has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (grant agreement No. 101001710).

manian traces” do justify the examination of their relation with the culture in which, at some point in their lives, they thought that they might have a literary destiny. Topics such as the motivation(s) of their biographical and cultural beliefs, their elective affinities toward Romanian literary precursors or contemporaries, the nature and the poetics of the Romanian literature they left behind, the dialogue of this “small” literature with the “large” literatures they became part of, and their use of these elements in their new literatures, deserve examination and comparison with the writing they produced after their integration into world literature.

One strange and painful episode in the last decade of Celan’s life is his feud with his translator and friend Michael Hamburger (himself a remarkable poet), due to Celan’s completely erroneous belief that Hamburger was the author of an anonymous review in the *Times Literary Supplement* which discussed the “hermeticism” of Celan’s poetry. This misunderstanding, which involves Celan’s perception both of his poetry and of himself as a Romanian Jew writing in German, is useful for a better understanding not only of Celan’s perception of himself, but also of the manner in which his poetic treatment of his biographical background allowed him to integrate this experience in a semi-peripheral literature into a larger core literature. As David Damrosch asserts, in a context which will be discussed in more detail below (2003, 281), world literature is rather a mode of circulation than a set canon of texts. In this regard, Celan does not enter world literature when he starts writing in German and the circulation of his texts exceeds the framework of Romanian culture. This occurs when his German poetry starts traveling beyond its German context – either by translation (for example, in English by Michael Hamburger, or in French by André du Bouchet, Jean Daive, and Jean-Pierre Burgart) or through literary criticism in languages other than German (for example, in French by Jacques Derrida or in English by George Steiner). We shall see that Celan perfectly understood that and he used his own Eastern European biography as a catalyst of his poetry, intuiting that his traumatic and paradoxical relation with the German culture and language can fuel his writing in such a manner that his own biography may become suggestive for readers from cultures other than German or Romanian. His trauma was not his alone. It could become significant to other peoples and cultures, and it could help his literature enter a mode of circulation transcending its original context. In the same time, Celan did not want his poetry to be perceived as too openly biographical, fearing that the limits of his biography could be transformed into limitations of his poetry. It was the central paradox at the heart of his writing: on the one hand, as Celan repeatedly insisted, his poems have a biographical correlative, they always originate in “the breath of the mortal who crosses the poem” (2005a, 143) and always represent “a turn to breath” (2005b, 162), so that the poems are themselves biographical facts. This is why Celan, even though he disliked grandiloquence, feels entitled to utter the phrase, without fear of ridicule: “Je suis la poésie!” (Bollack 1993, 11). On the other hand, he refused any straightforward biographical identification in his poems, and – as we shall subsequently see – he refused to publish during his lifetime one of his most impressive poems, “Wolfsbohne”, precisely because he considered that the biographical cor-

relation was too obvious. He even went to such lengths as almost entirely breaking off relations with his translator and friend Michael Hamburger when he considered that the biographical substratum of his poetry was misunderstood.

As Hamburger states, “‘Wolfsbohne’ is one of several poems excised by Paul Celan from his collection *Die Niemandrose* of 1963” (2013a, 395). Celan himself highly valued the poem; after writing its first version in 1959, he kept rewriting it and preserved these revisions in a separate file. Yet he decided not to publish it right before sending *Niemandrose* into print, and the poem was not published during his lifetime. Nevertheless, Celan did not destroy or abandon the poem. On the contrary, he was still working on it in 1965, when he took care to add some supplementary lines. When Hamburger came upon the poem after Celan’s death, he was immediately struck by its intensity and was granted the permission to translate it into English by Celan’s son, Eric, and by the German publisher Suhrkamp. Hamburger’s assumption (which I consider correct) is that Celan refused to publish the poem because its biographical origin was too explicit. As Hamburger writes, “‘Wolfsbohne’ must have proved unpublishable for and by Celan because, more starkly than any other poem of his maturity, it exposed the wound of his parents’ death in internment camps” (396). The tensest lines are those in which Celan is horrified by the idea that, after having arrived in Germany, he might have shaken the hand of his mother’s assassin: “Mutter, / Mutter, wessen / Hand hab ich gedrückt, / da ich mit deinen / Worten ging nach / Deutschland?” (In Hamburger’s translation: “Mother, / Mother, whose / hand did I clasp / when with your / words I went to / Germany?”).

Hamburger could not have known it, but this line is an exact reiteration of an emotional passage from a letter sent on 3 November 1946 from Bucharest by the 26-year-old Celan to the Swiss writer, critic, and editor Max Rychner (the publisher of Robert Walser and the pen friend of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Thomas Mann, Gottfried Benn, Ernst Robert Curtius, etc.):

I want to tell you how difficult it is to write poems in German as a Jew. When my poems appear, they will probably also come to Germany and – let me say the horrible thing – the hand that opens my book may have squeezed the hand of the one who murdered my mother. [...] And it could be even worse... But my destiny is this: to have to write German poems. And if poetry is my destiny – [...] – then I am happy. (2019a, 27)

The lines in “Wolfsbohne”, written in 1959, obviously rephrase the same fear expressed in this 1946 letter to Rychner, a convoluted psychic constellation which connects in one strong image his survivor’s guilt and his belief in his own poetic destiny. Tellingly enough, the place of the German language is not figured here in the mouth or in the brain, as it happens in everyday metaphorization, but in the hand which can both write poetry and commit murder. (A study on the hand as *locus* of the language in Celan’s poetry remains to be done.) Therefore poetry, which according to Celan is what remains after destruction, could be contaminated again by the destructive force.

In the years when Celan was writing “Wolfsbohne”, an ongoing trial of the German language was taking place. The most famous line of argumentation was, of course, that of Adorno, who built probably the most influential and authoritative case against poetry (mainly, but not only German) in the postwar cultural industry. In contrast

to his famous dictum (written in 1949 and first published in 1951), “Nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch” (It is barbaric to write a poem after Auschwitz; 1977, 30), his *Negative Dialektik* (1966; *Negative Dialectics*, 2001) reaches an acceptance of poetry’s moral right to exist: “Perennial suffering has as much right to express itself as the martyr has to scream; this is why it may have been wrong to say that poetry could not be written after Auschwitz” ([1970] 2001, 355). Adorno was of course not alone in his denunciation of the German language’s complicity with Nazism; other influential thinkers joined him during those years in his endeavor. George Steiner was an early admirer of Celan, whom he considered in *After Babel* “almost certainly the major European poet of the period after 1945” ([1975] 1992, 191). In his 1960 essay *The Hollow Miracle. Notes on the German Language*, Steiner denounced the German language as

not innocent of the horrors of Nazism. It is not merely that a Hitler, a Goebbels, and a Himmler happened to speak German. Nazism found in the language precisely what it needed to give voice to its savagery. Hitler heard inside his native tongue the latent hysteria, the confusion, the quality of hypnotic trance. (1960, 37)

Steiner further thinks that if one chooses to “use a language to conceive, organize, and justify Belsen; use it to make out specifications for gas ovens; use it to dehumanize man during twelve years of calculated bestiality”, then “something of the lies and sadism will settle in the marrow of the language” (38). The consequence of this infection of the German language is the fatal diminution of German literature: “Compare the best of current journalism with an average number of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of pre-Hitler days; it is at times difficult to believe that both are written in German” (41).

Radical as they may seem now, such ethical reactions as Adorno’s or Steiner’s were deemed necessary in the immediate postwar decades, and they dominated the public sphere in Germany. Celan was directly interested in this discussion, as was expected due to his production of poetry originating in the Holocaust trauma. We do not have any record of his reaction to the Steiner article, but we know he followed Adorno’s positions with increased attention and even took notes commenting on them when he prepared some of his own public positions (most famously in the *Meridian* speech at the reception of the Büchner prize, in which he quotes Adorno), as Marlies Janz has already carefully shown (1976) and as the *Tübinger Ausgabe* has also repeatedly documented in more recent years. Celan was interested in meeting Adorno in person, and in July 1959 Peter Szondi arranged a meeting in the Engadine. Although he made the trip to the Swiss Alps, Celan left a few days before Adorno’s arrival, and they only met in person for the first time in May 1960, in the Rhine-Main region (a detailed account of their failed meeting may be found in Felstiner 1995, 139–145). In the meantime, Celan sent Adorno a letter containing the “Gespräch im Gebirg”, a short story about a failed “encounter in the mountains”. The subliminal message of the story was clear enough: Celan took Adorno’s view about the ethical impossibility of poetry after Auschwitz quite personally. Even though they eventually developed an amiable mutual attitude, this remained a litigious point in Celan’s attitude towards Adorno.

“Wolfsbohne” was written in its first version in 1959, the year of Celan’s and Adorno’s failed first meeting. The double fear of contamination, that the poet’s hand may involuntarily touch the hand of his mother’s assassin, and that his poetry may fall into the hands of the murderers, is easier to understand when put into the context of the Adorno-Steiner discussion. What is more difficult to understand is Celan’s refusal to publish the poem (according to Hamburger, Celan must also have known that it was one of his masterpieces). Hamburger values in “Wolfsbohne” nothing less than

the exceptional importance for me of a poem that validates Celan’s insistence on whatever is the opposite of hermeticism. [...] More clearly than any other poem by Celan, earlier or later, “Wolfsbohne” renders the tug between life and death that was the price he had to pay for being a survivor. (2013a, 397)

He deeply regrets Celan’s decision to excise the poem from the final version of *Die Niemandsrose*, showing his conviction that its publication would have made obvious for everyone the true anti-hermetic nature of Celan’s poetry:

If, on the other hand, he had been able to include the 1959 version in his book, every responsive and responsible critic would have to think twice before describing Celan as a “hermetic” poet – as Celan believed I had called him in an anonymous review of the book published in the *TLS*, despite my repeated assurances that I was not the author of that review. This misunderstanding troubled our relations, explicitly for a time, subliminally right up to the time of Celan’s death by suicide. Into my copy of *Die Niemandsrose* he wrote “ganz und gar nicht hermetisch” – “absolutely not hermetic”. (396–397)

We now know that Hamburger was indeed not the author of that anonymous *TLS* review which hurt Celan so deeply. Its real author, as Hamburger managed to find out and disclose only in 1997 (2013b, 405–22) was S.S. Praver, at that time lecturer at the University of Birmingham and regular contributor to the *TLS*. Unfortunately, Celan could not be convinced otherwise, and his bitterness against Hamburger “induced him to positively forbid [him] to translate his [Celan’s] poems in the last years of his life” (411). As Hamburger opines, “the vehemence of his response to this unattributed review was due to his being called a ‘hermetic poet’ [...] the term ‘hermetic’ was inadmissible only for those who knew Celan personally or had inferred from his text that its application to his work threatened his existential core” (411).

This is indeed the crux of the matter, explaining Celan’s constantly angry reaction against being labeled “hermetic”. No matter how well-intended the usage of the term may have been, he refused to be considered a hermetic poet in the lineage of Mallarmé and Valéry, because he was aware that, unlike that of the hermetic poets, his poetry did not aim at becoming a pure sonorous idea, isolated from the emotional human experience. Even though the complicated surface of his poem could sometimes give the impression of encrypted hermeticism, Celan insisted that each of his poems originates in “the breath of the mortal who crosses the poem”; or, as Jean Bollack says, “whatever he was speaking about, Celan also spoke about Auschwitz” (2000, 32). To call him “hermetic” meant to deny the trauma behind the poem; in a radical sense, it meant to destroy whatever human remnants still

survived within the poem. Unlike the hermetic poets, Celan understood poetry as individuation, as a construction of personal identity *via* poetry, as *Lebensschrift* and *bio-graphia*. Marko Pajević has convincingly shown this in a study reading Celan's poem as *Lebensschrift* (2000, 214–224). The poem must be acutely alive, there must be in it the acute feeling of day-to-day life, the *Akut des Heutigen* theorized by Celan in his *Meridian* speech. With its lack of interest in everyday life, with its rejection of the human emotionality and its cult of the de-humanized idea, hermetic poetry was the rigorous opposite of what Celan expected from poetry. Hence his acute and angry reaction against it.

To put it more directly: to label Celan as a hermetic poet meant for him to ignore his personal and historic trauma as a Jewish poet surviving the Holocaust and choosing to write his poems in German, the language both of his mother and of his mother's assassins. He always reacted towards that as to an insensitive unawareness of the traumatic biography in which his poetry originated. For him, as Andrei Corbea observes, "the smuggled goods of his biography prove unavoidable and, even more so, indispensable" (2020, 35). Even though this line of interpretation has become the dominant one since the 1970s, it is important to see that some of the most prestigious of Celan's contemporaries differed from it, such as Hans-Georg Gadamer, who was decisively against the biographical interpretation, claiming that "all is there in the text" (1973, 138). It is also meaningful to see that Celan chose to assign the realization of the critical edition of his works to Beda Allemann, whose explicit option in his previous comments on Celan's poetry had been to ignore all the historical and contextual information referring to the Holocaust.

This ambivalent reaction towards his own biography is most specific to Celan: he does not allow having his poetry detached from it (neither in its conception, nor in its interpretation), but he also does not allow having it too openly discussed. He writes "Wolfsbohne", rephrasing the obsessive image of the murderer's hand touching the poet's hand, but he cannot publish the poem exactly because of that image. He writes his poetry insisting that it is filled with the breath of the mortal who creates it, but he assigns the task of the critical edition to the very person who chose to ignore that breath. It is, as he knows (and as he states in the 1946 Rychner letter), the paradox of a Jew writing poetry in German, the language both of his beloved mother and of her assassins. Celan identified profoundly with Heinrich Heine, in whom he saw a fellow Jewish poet sharing a similar experience, and, as Nelly Sachs recounts, in moments when he felt humiliated by some of his contemporaries, he went to visit Heine's tomb in the Montmartre cemetery in a sort of purification ritual. He also read attentively Adorno's 1956 text about Heine, "Die Wunde Heine", and made numerous annotations on his private copy. Among others, he underlined a passage where Adorno notices Heine's "lack of resistance to the fluency of the usual [German] language". Celan's solution was obviously quite the opposite. His German shows an amazing capacity of opposition to the fluency of usual German. His poetry seems to resist its own language and it does so with the same paradoxical intensity with which it camouflages the biographical event, without which it cannot exist.

Celan's innermost experience of the German language is marked by the traumatic experience of a Romanian Jew surviving the Holocaust. He has to write poetry in his mother's language (at the same time the language of his mother's assassins), but in his few Romanian writings from his early years, he was not confronted with this tragic paradox. Even though his mother could speak Romanian, those who have planned and ordered her execution did not (although we should not overlook that a significant number of the guards in Nazi camps were themselves Eastern Europeans). The executioner (or at least the chief executioner) and the victim do not inhabit the same linguistic space of the poem. He had to completely abandon his writing in Romanian (scanty as it was) in order to build this paradox, without which his major poetry could not exist and which was also the cause of its (and his) destruction. Celan's biography could be transformed into major poetry only when written in this language which was simultaneously the language of the victim and of the assassin. This decisive change happened not because he has abandoned a "small" culture for a "large" one; after all, Romanian language has managed to produce major poets both before and after Celan. But it was only in German that this tragic paradox mentioned before was possible.

As David Damrosch observes, when "traveling abroad, though, a text does indeed change, both in its frame of reference and usually in language as well" (2003, 292). The "travel abroad" mentioned here is obviously the translation of the text. As we know from Petre Solomon's own testimony, the Romanian version of "Todestango" (as "Todesfuge" was first titled), published on 2 May 1947 in *Contemporanul*, was translated by Solomon and Celan together under the title "Tangoul morții" (2008, 63). Corbea thinks it was a self-translation by Celan, with a possible revision made by Solomon (2020, 76). It is interesting to compare this early Romanian version with the final German one, which is definitely more intense and more powerful, and to see that it is indeed "writing that gains in translation", as Damrosch famously defines world literature (2003, 281). Applied to Celan's particular case, Damrosch was right to say that "in an excellent translation, the result is not the loss of an unmediated original vision but instead a *heightening* of the naturally creative interaction of reader and text. In this respect a poem or novel can be seen to achieve its lasting effect precisely by virtue of its adaptability to our private experience" (292). In the final German version, Celan's private experience of the Holocaust reached a heightened intensity and "achieved its lasting effect" because "the natural interaction of reader and text" had a new context: the poem is a witness of the destroyed uttered in the language of their destroyers. It was a radical change of the frame of reference as well as the most radical translation imaginable. The poem (and Celan's poetry) has found its only language where its tragic paradox was possible.

From this moment on (May 1947, half a year after the letter to Rychner), Celan's poetry started to become world literature precisely because it was "writing that gains in translation". There are other poems from the same period written by Celan both in German and in Romanian, such as for example "Trei poeme" (Three poems), brought to the literary magazine *Agora* by Lia Fingerhut, also considered by Ion Caraion to be self-translations (2020, 75). Celan's negotiation with trauma (both per-

sonal and historic) had already begun. He was obviously melding various sources in his successive versions of “Todestango”, as proven by its similarities to his Czernowitz friend Immanuel Weissglas’s “Er” (1944), where Death also appears as a German master. As Weissglas writes, “Spielt sanft vom Tod, er ist ein deutscher Meister” [“He sings sweetly about death, he is a German master”], “Wir heben Gräber in die Luft” [“We raise graves in the air”], and “Er spielt im Haus mit Schlangen, dräut und dichtet, / In Deutschland dämmert es wie Gretchens Haar” [“He plays in the house with the snakes, he drafts and composes, / In Germany there grows a twilight like Gretchen’s hair”]. Whether or not Celan knew Weissglas’s poem, it is not possible to verify if it was written before or after Celan’s inexplicably similar one (Stiehler 1972, 11–40), but striking details have been identified by John Felstiner. Firstly, in the Janowska concentration camp near Lvov, the Jews selected for extermination were compelled to listen an Argentinian death tango before their execution; and secondly, in 1944 the Soviet writer Konstantin Simonov (whose play *The Russian Question* Celan was to translate in 1947) published a brochure about the concentration camp in Majdanek (which Celan may have therefore known), describing in detail how the prisoners were marching to their execution while tens of loudspeakers were playing foxtrot and tango (Felstiner 1985, 44–55). We see in this negotiation with both the personal and the collective trauma a symptom of Celan’s initiated individuation as a German poet, entering the “large” context of German culture and of his traumatic guilt-ridden past with the effect of radical intensification of his writing, which thus “gains in translation”.

Returning to David Damrosch’s criteria for the definition of world literature, we must observe that there are three – but not with a cumulative logic. Each of them describes a fundamental trait, which also means that any literary work satisfying any of the three characteristics is a piece of world literature: “1. *World literature is an elliptical refraction of national literatures.* / 2. *World literature is writing that gains in translation.* / 3. *World literature is not a set canon of texts but a mode of reading: a form of detached engagements with worlds beyond our own place and time*” (2003, 281; italics in the original). We have seen before that Celan’s early poetry published in Bucharest satisfies the second criterion, as his movement from the German original to the Romanian self-translation and then to the final German version functions as a radical translation which intensifies the text. We can verify now that it also satisfies the first: it is “an elliptical refraction” between German literature and Romanian literature, with Celan’s biography elliptically stretching between them, a refraction which “can help to clarify the vital, yet also indirect, relation between the two” (282). Any German poem of Celan, simultaneously fueled and burdened by fragments of a Romanian Jew’s biography, becomes a permanent “locus of negotiation” between the Romanian source culture and the German receiving one. As Damrosch shows,

[e]ven a single work of world literature is the locus of a negotiation between two different cultures. The receiving culture can use the foreign material in all sorts of ways: as a positive model for the future development of its own tradition; as a negative case of a primitive, or decadent, strand that must be avoided or rooted out at home; or, more neutrally,

as an image of radical otherness against which the home tradition can be defined more clearly. World literature is thus always as much about the host culture's values and needs as it is about a work's source culture; hence it is a double refraction, one that can be described through the figure of the ellipse, with the source and host cultures providing the two foci that generate the elliptical space within which a work lives as world literature, connected to both cultures, circumscribed by neither alone. (2003, 283)

Damrosch distinguishes therefore three possibilities of a text's integration into the receiving culture: positive (a "model for future development"), negative (illustrating a "primitive, or decadent, strand which has to be avoided or rooted out at home"), and neutral (a "radical otherness" which allows the receiving culture a better self-definition). Among other qualities, Celan's case has the merit of proving that these possibilities are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, the tragic paradox at the core of Celan's poetry generates a strange situation in which it illustrates simultaneously all of the three possibilities. As the contemporary state of German poetry has proven, Celan's poetry was indeed a "model for [its] future development"; at the same time, as it catalyzed a dialogue of German memory with its Nazi past, it illustrated a "primitive, or decadent, strand which has to be avoided or rooted out at home"; and it also constituted a "radical otherness" which allowed German culture a better self-definition. Far from proving Damrosch's distinction wrong, the complicated situation of Celan's poetry in relation with the receiving German culture proves in fact that Damrosch is absolutely right when asserting that "world literature is thus always as much about the host culture's values and needs as it is about a work's source culture". German culture, profoundly troubled by its recent Nazi past, with a language contaminated by the totalitarian virus (as shown in Adorno and Steiner's critiques), was painfully striving towards its own restoration. Celan's poetry has the remarkable merit of simultaneously suiting all these types of possibilities, be they "positive", "negative", or "neutral". In other words, "connected to both cultures", German and Romanian, "and circumscribed by neither alone" (as Damrosch states in the previous quotation), Celan's literature is indeed a "locus of negotiation" between them, transmitting information from one to the other, modifying both the source culture and the receiving one to the point where they become indistinct from each other: Celan is just as much a Romanian Jewish (aspiring) poet integrated in a German culture, which he consistently changes, as he is a German poet with Jewish origins returning into a formerly abandoned Romanian culture, which he consistently enriches and modifies. The reception of George State's excellent first complete translation of Celan's poetry into Romanian (2015, 2019b), as well as Andrei Corbea's remarkable translations and critical studies of Celan, are among the best testimonies of this catalytic return.

Moreover, according to Damrosch's most recent book on world literature:

The one-to-one identification of nation and language was almost always a fiction, and it is becoming more and more tenuous today, even in the case of many small countries with a national language rarely spoken beyond their borders. A full view of contemporary Israeli literature should include writing in Arabic, Russian, and Yiddish as well as Hebrew, and Romanian literature includes the work of the Nobel Prize winners Eugène Ionesco in French and Herta Müller in German as well as Andrei Codrescu and Norman Manea in America, writing in English and Romanian, respectively. (2020, 175–176)

Damrosch here unintentionally grants Ionesco a Nobel Prize, which the French-Romanian writer never received. But the Harvard critic is perfectly right in his assertion: the cases of the bilingual/multilingual writers he lists, to which Celan could and should be added, clearly show that world literature as a mode of circulation between languages makes superfluous the strict division of national literatures within the borders of single languages. Celan is a post-national poet, with all the simultaneous pluralities postulated by Damrosch's conjecture. Thus, he is simultaneously the Celan of a "small" culture writing poems in two languages during his Bucharest period, examining the possibility of becoming a Romanian writer before leaving for France, the Celan of the "large" German culture who identified in the German language the ideal "locus of negotiation" of his personal trauma, and the Celan who returns by means of translations and of critical studies into Romanian culture. The post-national Celan is not a single poet but rather a network comprising all his possibilities of development in any language, intersecting possible (but abandoned) and accomplished versions of himself, writing in two languages (even though in highly imbalanced proportions), absorbing and distributing information (biographical and cultural) from and to each of them.

Finally, the case of the post-national Celan helps us clarify the insufficiency of Damrosch's definition of world literature from 2003, according to which "[w]orld literature is an elliptical refraction of national literatures" which needs a "host culture" and a "source culture" (2003, 281–283). If by these two cultures (source and host) he understands two national literatures, his definition is proven perfectible by such cases as Celan's or Tzara's – generally speaking, by this category of writers who have at one point switched to writing in another language and entered world literature without having elaborated a consistent body of work in the national literature of the "source culture". In such cases, the "host culture" (German for Celan, French for Tzara) functions as a secondary "source culture" for their future translations in other languages and their insertion into another national cultures and literatures. While the primary "source culture", containing their amputated literary destiny in what could have been their first national literature, displays something similar with the phantom limb syndrome: even though their destiny has been severed at an early point due to their personal decision, its unrealized possibility continues to generate a sort of anxiety of influence on their realized body of work.

In the cases of all exiled or displaced writers who have chosen to change their literary language and subsequently entered world literature *via* another literary tradition, there is not only a "source culture" and a "host culture", as David Damrosch posits, but there exists a triangulation of cultures, involving a triadic relation between the primary source culture, the secondary source culture, and the other national literatures wherein their work enters by translation. While studying Romanian travelogues to China under communism, Andrei Terian has reached a similar conclusion: in comparative cultural studies and in world literature studies, binarisms are still dominant in studies of world literature. Their most successful theoretical tools, Terian convincingly shows (2019, 16), have a binary mechanism: David Damrosch's "elliptical reading" (2003), Pascale Casanova's "pacified" and "combative

literatures” (2011), Franco Moretti’s oppositional “core” and “peripheries” (2013). Terian sees in this binarism a proof that the respective theories “continue to firmly rely on the colonizer–colonized dichotomy”. In comparative cultural studies and in world literature studies, he deems more useful a cognitive model functioning as a triadic mechanism, which he labels as “cultural triangulation”, defining it as follows:

cultural triangulation postulates that all (inter)cultural processes are ideologically filtered and imply the existence of an intermediary C between A and B, which takes various roles, mainly of camouflaging / altering / compensating / overturning certain power relations that are by no means perceptible or inescapable. (2019, 19)

This triad involves “three ‘peaks’ corresponding to just as many members from different ‘national’ cultures”; these “peaks” are a *Scope* (“standing for the ‘lookout’ culture and its perspective”), a *Scope* (“the culture open to contemplating and reading by the Other, which functions as a basis for comparison with culture A”), and a *Scale* (“or the ‘Hidden Third’, the culture operating as an implicit yardstick for the evaluation of both A and B”). Terian applies this ternary mechanism in the analysis of three postwar Romanian travelogues to China. His results are so remarkable that his proposition seems to be one of the main theoretical openings in recent comparative cultural and literary studies. “Cultural triangulation” as a cognitive model and its derived analytical vocabulary have an inner dynamic which replicates more accurately the inner relational dynamic within the network(s) of world literature – be it only for the reason that the relational sophistication of a network can be better topologically reflected by the inner sophistication of the triangle than by the too simplistic figure of a line drawn between two foci.

Such as Terian describes it and makes use of it, “cultural triangulation” is designed as a mechanism of comparison (between three or more “national” cultures). However, its functionality is extendable to much more than comparison – in such cases as Celan’s, for example, the triangulation helps to explain literary processes having to do not with cultural comparison, but with text production as well as with its distribution. When used for comparison, triangulation is a psychological process. It is no less psychological when applied to the production of literature – in this case, cultural triangulation takes Harold Bloom’s mechanisms of “anxiety of influence” one step further, adding (at least) one more actor to their previous binary description. If used for describing a mechanism of distribution of literary objects within and throughout the world literature network, triangulation stops being psychological. It turns into a technical ternary mechanism examining literature’s modes of circulation in a way which explains better than Damrosch’s binary theory itself how world literature is “a literature that gains in translation”. Natural space limitations of such an article do not allow for further elaboration in these respects. For now, Celan’s case study alone has proven that cultural triangulation can function not only as a mechanism of comparison, as Terian has designed it, but also as an analytical mechanism for matters regarding production and distribution. Terian may have underestimated the functional extension of the theoretical ternary mechanism he has proposed.

What is peculiarly interesting in cases such as Celan's or Tzara's is that the triangulation may happen even when the primary source culture is underdeveloped or even abandoned: it functions as an imperfect triangulation with two present foci and an absent (abandoned, amputated) one. In the case of the post-national Celan, this imperfect triangulation is a troubling *mise en abyme* of his tragic biographical amputation.

NOTES

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the present author.

REFERENCES

- Adorno, Theodor W. [1951] 1977. *Gesammelte Schriften 10/1. Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft I. Prismen, Ohne Leitbild*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Adorno, Theodor W. [1970] 2001. *Negative Dialectics*. Trans. by Dennis Redmond. *Academia.edu*. Accessed January 30, 2022. https://www.academia.edu/39707967/Negative_Dialectics.
- Bollack, Jean, ed. 1972. *Celan-Studien*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Bollack, Jean. 1993. *Herzstein. Über ein unveröffentlichtes Gedicht von Paul Celan*. München: Carl Hanser Verlag.
- Bollack, Jean. 2000. *Sens contre sens: comment lit-on? Entretiens avec Patrick Llored*. Venissieux: Passe du vent.
- Casanova, Pascale. 2011. "Combative Literatures." *New Left Review* 72: 123–134.
- Celan, Paul. 2005a. "Microlithen sinds, Steinchen." *Die Prosa aus dem Nachlass*. Ed. by Barbara Wiedemann and Bertrand Badiou. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Celan, Paul. 2005b. *Selections*. Ed. by Pierre Joris. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Celan, Paul. 2013. *Poems of Paul Celan*. Trans. by Michael Hamburger. 3rd ed. London: Anvil Press Poetry.
- Celan, Paul. 2015. *Opera poetică I*. Trans. by George State. Iași: Polirom.
- Celan, Paul. 2019a. "etwas ganz und gar Persönliches." *Briefe 1934–1970*. Ed. and comm. by Barbara Wiedemann. Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Celan, Paul. 2019b. *Opera poetică II*. Trans. by George State. Iași: Polirom.
- Corbea, Andrei. 2020. "nu vrea / cicatrice." *Studii despre Paul Celan la împlinirea a 100 de ani de la nașterea poetului*. Iași: Polirom.
- Damrosch, David. 2003. *What Is World Literature?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Damrosch, David. 2020. *Comparing the Literatures: Literary Studies in a Global Age*. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Felstiner, John. 1984. "The Biography of a Poem." *New Republic* April: 27–31.
- Felstiner, John. 1985. "Paul Celan: The Strain of Jewishness." *Commentary* April: 44–55.
- Felstiner, John. 1995. *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew*. New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1973. *Wer bin Ich und wer bist Du? Ein Kommentar zu Paul Celans Gedichtfolge "Atemkristall"*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Hamburger, Michael. 2013a. "Translator's Note on 'Wolfsbohne.'" In *Poems of Paul Celan*, 3rd ed., trans. by Michael Hamburger, 395–397. London: Anvil Press Poetry.
- Hamburger, Michael. 2013b. "On Translating Celan." In *Poems of Paul Celan*, 3rd ed., trans. by Michael Hamburger, 405–422. London: Anvil Press Poetry.
- Janz, Marlies. 1976. *Vom Engagement absoluter Poesie: Zur Lyrik und Ästhetik Paul Celans*. Frankfurt: Syndikat Verlag.

- Mincu, Marin. 2006. *Avangarda literară românească: De la Urmuz la Paul Celan*. Constanța: Pontica.
- Moretti, Franco. 2013. *Distant Reading*. London and New York, NY: Verso.
- Pajević, Marko. 2000. "Paul Celans Ich kenne dich: Das Gedicht als 'Lebensschrift'." In *Paul Celan: Biographie und Interpretation / Biographie et interprétation*, ed. by Andrei Corbea-Hoișie, 214–224. Konstanz, Paris, and Iași: Hartung-Gorre, Éditions Suger, and Polirom.
- Ricketts, Mac Linscott. 1988. *Mircea Eliade: The Romanian Roots, 1907–1945*. 2 vol. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs.
- Solomon, Petre. 2008. *Paul Celan: Dimensiunea românească*. București: Art.
- Steiner, George. 1960. "The Hollow Miracle: Notes on the German Language." *The Reporter* 18 February: 36–41.
- Steiner, George. [1975] 1992. *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. Oxford and New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Stiehler, Heinrich. 1972. "Die Zeit der Todesfuge. Zu den Anfängen Paul Celans." *Akzente* 19, 1: 11–40.
- Terian, Andrei. 2019. "Cultural Triangulation in Romanian Travelogues to China under Communism." *World Literature Studies* 11, 2: 16–30.

The post-national Celan: The imperfect triangulation from (abandoned) Romanian poetry to world literature and back

World literature. Post-national literatures. Paul Celan. David Damrosch. Bifocal perspective. Elliptical refraction. Cultural triangulation.

This article focuses on the (dis)continuities between the German-language work of Paul Celan (integrated into a "large" literature where he becomes "Europe's foremost poet after World War II", in George Steiner's opinion) and the scanty corpus of Romanian literature written by Celan in his Bucharest period, read in the post-national perspective. In his book *Comparing the Literatures: Literary Studies in a Global Age* (2020), David Damrosch states that a unified Romanian literature should integrate literature written in several languages, disregarding the obsolete criterion of the national language. While agreeing with this proposition, the article remarks that Damrosch's other theoretical proposition, that of the bifocal viewpoint, with the two foci represented by the literature of origin and that of insertion, proves ineffective in Celan's case. The author proposes the use of "cultural triangulation", Andrei Terian's concept, for a better understanding of Celan as a post-national poet. In this model, Celan proves to be not a single poet but rather a network comprising all his possibilities of development in any language, intersecting possible (but abandoned) and accomplished versions of himself, writing in two languages (even not proportionately so), and absorbing and distributing biographical and cultural information from and to each of them.

Assoc. Prof. Radu Vancu, Ph.D.
 Department of Romance Studies
 Faculty of Letters and Arts
 Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu
 5–7 Victoriei Blvd.
 550024 Sibiu
 Romania
 rvancu@gmail.com
 ORCID: <https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0000-0002-8798-0683>

Prague beyond Kafka: Rethinking minor literature through the work of Jiří Langer

CHARLES SABATOS

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2022.14.2.6>

Although the clash of national identities in Franz Kafka's native Prague has become an indispensable element in the ever-growing of research on his work, the author himself touched on this issue only in passing, notably in his "character sketch of the literature of small peoples" (*Schema zur Charakteristik kleiner Literaturen*) from a 1911 diary entry (1948, 148). The abstractness of these remarks has allowed scholars to interpret them with only vague reference to their original context, a situation which Meno Spann referred to as early as in the 1950s as "the minor Kafka problem": "The Kafka without contours, existing outside time, or worse, in the wrong cultural space and at the wrong historical time, is a phantom which can take on any shape in which a literary necromancer wishes to conjure him up" (1957, 163). The most influential of these "necromancers" are doubtless Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who redefine the term "minor" in *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure* (1975; *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 1986), with Kafka's reflections as the starting point (or justification) for their own argument about language and "minor literature". With the French translation of Franz Wagenbach's biography of Kafka as their main source for the Prague historical context, they conclude: "The impossibility of writing other than in German is for the Prague Jews the feeling of an irreducible distance from their primitive Czech territoriality." They assert that Kafka was caught between the "four languages" of Jewish Prague (German, Czech, Yiddish, and Hebrew), "deterritorialized" from his native German (1986, 16–17). Despite its considerable influence, this study has been increasingly criticized by more recent scholars like David Damrosch, who refers to this argument as a "misreading" of Kafka: "If we now see a Prague Jew where an earlier generation saw an international modernist, are we getting closer to the essence of the writer and his work, or simply projecting our current interests into both?" (2003, 198).

Other than Kafka, the writer most closely connected with Prague is Jaroslav Hašek, whose fictional antihero Josef Švejk has become a symbol of Czech culture around the world. Although the two novelists lived in Prague at the same time, there is no definitive proof that they ever met, but the philosopher Karel Kosík's essay "Hašek and Kafka" ([1963] 1983) creates a vivid image of parallel existence by juxtaposing two famous fictional scenes from their work. While Hašek's Švejk is escorted by two

guards down the hill from Hradčany across the Charles Bridge, Kafka's Josef K. is also led by two guards across the bridge and up the hill to his execution. Kosík notes that Švejk crosses Prague in the morning, Josef K. in the evening, so that although joined by location, they are separated by time: "Both groups pass through the same places, but meeting each other is impossible" ([1963] 1983, 117). While this essay was an important part of the 1960s critical movement that reclaimed Kafka's work for Marxist criticism, allowing it to be discussed in Czechoslovakia, it also reinforces the image of Kafka's alienation and separation from Czech culture that later appears in Deleuze and Guattari's "deterritorialization".

Nonetheless, Hillel J. Kieval has emphasized the "competing claims to self-definition" in which Kafka's "German" identity was complicated by his "personal ties to the many 'non-Germans' who populated Prague's cityscape", including Czech-speaking Jews like the brothers František and Jiří Langer (2000, 219). Although distantly related to Kafka's friend Max Brod, the Langers were raised in Czech culture, but took strikingly different paths in their writing: František Langer was a playwright who was close friends with Jaroslav Hašek and other leading figures of Czech literature and society, while his younger brother Jiří was an expert in Jewish mysticism who had studied with a famous rabbi in the Galician town of Belz and later (through Brod) met Kafka and instructed him in Hebrew and the Hasidic legends. Angelo Maria Ripellino has grouped Jiří Langer with Brod and Kafka as exemplary cases of alienation in their native Prague: "However far they moved from the city on the Vltava, they felt an uprootedness, a sense of not belonging" (1995, 24). Yet Jiří Langer differed from both Kafka and Brod by writing simultaneously (under different names) in German, Czech, and Hebrew, attempting to integrate the competing concepts of Central European Jewish identity (German assimilation, Czech nationalism, and Zionism) into a complex and contradictory yet somehow cohesive vision.

Langer wrote a psychoanalytic interpretation of Jewish mysticism, *Die Erotik der Kabbala* (The eroticism of the Cabbala, 1923, which he published in German under the name Georg), as well as the poetry collection *Piyyutim ve-Shirei Yedidot* (Liturgical and love poetry, 1929, for which he used his Hebrew name Mordechai Georgo). However, he used his native Czech for his collection of Hasidic folklore, *Devět bran* (1937; *Nine Gates*, 1961), which Gershom Scholem has described as "one of the most valuable descriptions of Hasidic life and the Hasidic way of thinking from within" (Langer 1959, 9–10). Just before Langer's death in wartime Palestine, Brod arranged for the publication his collected poetry in Hebrew, *Me'at tsori* (A bit of balm, 1943). Over the past decade, this poetry has become available in Czech (Langer 2013) and in English (Langer 2014) but most importantly, it has been contextualized by Shaun Jacob Halper's groundbreaking research on the gay themes of Langer's German and Hebrew writings (2011, 2013). Presenting these texts as revolutionary for modern Jewish homosexual identity, Halper has argued that "the institution of Hasidism gave meaning and shape to how Langer experienced the inner life of his sexual self – one might even say to his sexual subjectivity – even if Langer did not have the language to express it as such" (2011, 209–210). What is striking is that Langer explored this "sexual subjectivity" not in German or Czech, but in Hebrew, not yet fully revived

at that time as a national language. Thus the following analysis aims to “reterritorialize” Langer’s work within three distinct contexts: the theoretical discourse of minor literature (inspired by Deleuze and Guattari), the multicultural milieu of interwar Prague, and the less-familiar context of Czech gay writers.

KAFKA’S SELF-REPRESENTATION AND SEARCH FOR “DEEPER MEANING”

The concept of minor literature has been criticized for preserving the distinction between small and large literatures even as it claims to offer a liberating approach for marginalized writers. In *La République mondiale des Lettres* (1999; *The World Republic of Letters*, 2004), Pascal Casanova examines the power relations between literatures, stating that Deleuze and Guattari “impose a modern opinion upon a writer from the past who did not share it”, and referring to their theory as “further proof that anachronism is a form of literary ethnocentrism used by the centers to apply their own aesthetic and political categories to texts” (2004, 204). More recently, Dirk Weissman has traced their “misreading” to the replacement of “klein” with “mineur” in the French translation of Kafka’s diary by Marthe Robert: “This singular choice of translation, coming from a particular interpretation of the writer’s literary and linguistic situation, has exerted a strong influence until the present day.” By basing their interpretation of Kafka on Robert’s French versions, Deleuze and Guattari “perpetuated, indeed amplified the choice of these translations” (2013, 77–78).

However, in *Milles plateaux* (1980; *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1987), Deleuze and Guattari offer a more nuanced “tetralinguistic” model of language, based on Henri Gobard’s *L’alienation linguistique* (1977), for which Deleuze wrote the introduction. Rather than the binary major and minor, they propose four functions of language based on location: “vernacular is here; vehicular language is everywhere; referential language is over there; mythic language is beyond” (1986, 23). For Kafka’s Prague, the “vernacular” Czech is the everyday language of the majority, the “vehicular” German has an official function, and the “mythic” Hebrew is limited to religious use, although rather than designating Yiddish as “referential”, they refer to it more vaguely as “a nomadic movement of deterritorialization that reworks German language” (25). This model is also more appropriate for Jiří Langer, one of the relatively few writers fully fluent in all four languages.

Another frequently encountered issue with minor literature is the way that the term is shifted to “minority” writing, as in the case of Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd’s *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse* (1990). Hannan Hever’s article from this collection (originally published as a thematic issue of *Cultural Critique*) describes Israeli Hebrew culture as a “unique sort of majority culture, which pretends to be a minority culture and thereby absolves itself of its real responsibilities and commitments as the master culture.” Hever defines Deleuze and Guattari’s minor literature as “evaluating ‘the degrees of territoriality, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization’ practiced in Hebrew (the mythic language informing the genesis of Zionism) and other languages in a similar position” (1987, 72–73). Citing the Palestinian author Anton Shammas’s article “The Guilt of the Babushka” (1986)

to problematize his relationship to “minority” identities, Hever notes that “he writes in Hebrew, the language of the dominant Jewish culture, which is itself a minority within the dominantly Arab Middle East. This peculiar position, which Shammas likens to the image of a Russian babushka doll, gives him a unique perspective on Israeli public discourse from the inside and the outside at once” (1987, 49). Scott Spector has in turn taken Shammas’s image of the nesting babushka doll (known in Russian as *matryoshka*) from Hever, and applied it back to the Prague context in his study of Kafka’s Zionist contemporary Hugo Bergmann:

The issue of identity [for Prague Jews] is at the centre of a crisis of self which is at the same time a political crisis. Even the discussion of their literary products as representations of “minority culture” is made problematic by the layers of identity which the Arab Israeli Anton Shammas, in a different context, has symbolized with the image of a babushka doll. (1999a, 91)

This quintessentially Slavic image is also appropriate for Czech literature, whose role shifted within Kafka’s and Jiří Langer’s lifetime from that of a vocal, self-defensive minority under Habsburg rule to the majority culture of the Czechoslovak Republic, which also included numerous Germans, Hungarians, Slovaks, and other minorities.

In *Prague Territories*, his study of Kafka’s German-speaking friends and contemporaries such as Max Brod and Egon Erwin Kisch, Scott Spector points out that although “the historical circumstances in which Kafka found himself allowed for a uniquely nuanced and complex web of territorial relations to be articulated [...] Deleuze and Guattari dismiss the production of the rest of the Prague writers who benefited from the same rare contextual and linguistic condition” (1999b, 29). Anne Jamison uses minor literature as the starting point for her study of Kafka’s relationship to Czech and Czechoslovak culture, but states that by making “the theoretically expedient but historically and linguistically outlandish move of substituting Kafka’s views on Czech and Yiddish for his views on his own relationship to German literature”, Deleuze and Guattari have “substantially undermined any broadly held understanding of Kafka’s relationship to Czech, which has always been the most marginalized, least researched aspect of Kafka’s thoroughly researched life” (2018, 29).

Marek Nekula has provided the most comprehensive overview of Kafka’s relationship to each of the languages he spoke. He connects Kafka’s story “Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse People” (1924) with his shift in interest from Yiddish to Hebrew: “singing – like Hebrew in the discourse of the day – does indeed represent more than a new quality of language and [...] of Judaism itself, which sees in Hebrew a renewal of its age old ‘being’ and collective self-awareness” (2016, 70). More generally he states that “Kafka connected Hebrew with health, freedom, and life, and that he ‘yearned’ for Palestine”, yet “Hebrew was a foreign language to him in every sense of the word” (85). Nekula also discusses Kafka’s relationship with both of the Langer brothers, noting that the “retrospective claim by [Jiří] Langer that Kafka was able to communicate with him in Hebrew fluently does not [...] seem credible in view of the circumstances” (81), but while Kafka’s frequent references to Langer in his diary begin in 1915 and end in 1921, “Langer’s poem [written between 1924 and 1929] suggests that their friendship lasted until Kafka’s death” (177).

Although Jiří Langer is frequently mentioned in connection with Kafka, it is mostly in passing as his Hebrew teacher, with an occasional comment on Langer's "eccentricity" in adopting Hasidic customs in Prague, usually without any reference to Langer as a significant figure in Czech literature in his own right. The editor of the *Jewish Observer*, Yaakov Jacobs, observed in 1969 that "Kafka has become universally recognized as the one figure in world literature who has most influenced the writing, and therefore the thought, of our time", adding that Langer "came – as did Kafka, from an almost assimilated Jewish family [...] Langer tried to retrace his Jewish roots, studying Torah in his early adulthood. But Langer, unlike Kafka, apparently succeeded in finding his way back" (11).

Max Brod describes Langer in his memoir *Der Prager Kreis* (The Prague circle, 1966) as "a ghetto character that might have slipped out from the pages of [Gustav] Meyrink's *Golem* into real life", who told Brod "straightforwardly and unceremoniously that he had only come to see the man 'who wrote such a swinish book'" (157). As Scott Spector has explained, the novel which so irritated Langer, Brod's *Ein tschechisches Dienstmädchen* (A Czech maidservant, 1909), is "an extraordinarily articulate example of the entanglement of discourses of gender and nationality in Prague." Its title character, whom the narrator refers to several times as "primitive", "is mysterious and irresistible, capricious and deceitful; she is simple and tied to physical, material needs" (1999b, 174–175). Despite this unpromising start, the two men became friends and after meeting Kafka through Brod, Langer eventually taught Hebrew to both of them. In the earliest reference to Langer in his diaries, Kafka describes attending one of Brod's lectures on "religion and nation" and concludes: "The group of eastern Jews beside the stove. G. in a caftan, the matter-of-fact Jewish life. My confusion" (1948, 119). "G." (i.e. "Georg" Langer) appears between the foreign Jews, who are huddled together, and the solitary, "confused" westernized Jew, as a model for a balanced modern Jewish identity.

In September 1915, Langer took Brod and Kafka to visit a "wonder rabbi" who was staying in Prague due to the war; an encounter which Kafka describes in his diary in conflicting images of dirt, purity, roughness, and gentleness: "A nature as strongly paternal as possible makes a rabbi. All rabbis look like savages, Langer said" (1948, 128–129). Ritchie Robertson depicts this occasion like a scene from Kafka's *Der Prozess* (The Trial, 1925): "Kafka, Brod and Langer, like Josef K. on his visit to Titorelli, had to make their way through swarms of children on the pavement and the stairs and along a badly lit corridor to the room where the Rabbi and his circle were praying." Nonetheless, Robertson suggests that "Kafka looked to such figures for a more endurable paternal authority than he himself had experienced" (1985, 178).

Another of Kafka's encounters with Hasidic culture was when Langer took him to meet his spiritual mentor, the rabbi of Belz, who had come to the spa town of Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad) for treatment. In a letter to Brod, Kafka describes the visit with a deep ambivalence that contrasts with Langer's uncritical acceptance of its absurdity. He and Langer wander around in the rain, looking for the medicinal springs: "On the way we meet up with two other Jews who attracted my attention earlier. They walk along like a pair of lovers, looking affectionately at one another and smiling, one with his hand thrust into his low-slung back pocket, the other looking

more citified. [...] Firmly locked arm in arm” (1977, 120–121). This pair, an odd juxtaposition with the quest for the famous rabbi, seems to evoke the famous pairs in Kafka’s fiction, like the two policemen who arrive at Josef K.’s bedroom at the beginning of *The Trial*, which Deleuze and Guattari refer to as “a homosexuality of doubles, of brothers or of bureaucrats” (1984, 68). Yet reflecting Langer’s marginalized position (at least until recent years) in Kafka’s biography, Guy Davenport’s short story “The Chair” (1984), a fictionalization of this meeting in Marienbad, portrays Kafka wandering through the town alone and omits Langer entirely (1997, 159–164).

When they finally reach the rabbi, Kafka grows increasingly frustrated with his slow pace and constant distractions, which “reduce all thinking on the part of his escort” to a childish level. He concludes that “Langer tries to find or thinks he finds a deeper meaning in all this; I think that the deeper meaning is that there is none and in my opinion this is quite enough” (1977, 122). In *Nine Gates*, Langer describes this period as one in which “Prague is part of the Chassidic Empire”, allowing unique intimacy with the rabbi, who is usually “separated from us by his secretaries and servants, as God is separated from our souls by myriads of spheres and worlds. But here among the forest trees we can all approach him” (1961, 20). Writing in Czech, he conveys a sense of the “deeper meaning” of the Hasidic perspective, adding a touch of irony to his own genuine faith. In Michal Kosák’s comparison of these two accounts: “Kafka [...] cannot see [the rabbi as] anything other than a half-blind, neglected old man marveling at everything, while Langer is able to constantly find the saintly in him and catch a glimpse of other worlds” (2002, 39).

Kafka’s diaries also include his own renditions of Hasidic tales he had been told by Langer, as in his entry for October 6, 1915:

A Zaddik is to be obeyed more than God. The Baal Shem once commanded a favorite disciple to have himself baptized. [...] The Baal Shem himself cast the disciple into the midst of evil; it was not the disciple’s own fault that he took this step, but because he was commanded to do so, and there seemed nothing more the Evil One could do. (1948, 139)

In contrast, Langer’s *Nine Gates* projects a sense of almost childlike faith in the Hasidic tenets with a scarcely perceptible nod to modernity, as when explaining the distinction between the title “Rebe”, referring to Hasidic saints, and the shorter form “Reb”: “there are some saints whose greatness neither of the two titles can approach. In consequence we give them both titles together: ‘Rebe’ and ‘Reb’. [...] It is rather a curious custom – as though in ordinary life we were to address a doctor as ‘professor doctor’, only ‘Rebe Reb’ is much more saintly and magnificent” (1961, 115).

By November 1917, when Kafka wrote an irritable letter to Brod refusing to help Langer find a job (“Langer is strong; why doesn’t he hire himself out to some Jewish tenant farmer?”) their friendship had apparently waned (1948, 165–166). Yet in another letter to Brod the following spring, his final reference to Langer ends on a more positive note (although suggesting that their direct contact had ceased): “Your news from Langer – please thank him warmly – made me very glad” (236). According to Cecil Bloom, Langer may have inspired a minor character in Kafka’s *Das Schloss* (*The Castle*, 1926): “the secretary Erlanger (Herr Langer) who [wears] a black coat not dissimilar to chassidic dress” (1996, 36).

Langer's final memories of his famous friend appear in the short article "Mashehu al Kafka" (Something about Kafka, 1941) published in the Hebrew newspaper *Hegeh*. In it he includes an anecdote about speaking Hebrew with Kafka on a streetcar in Prague, where their fellow Czech passengers "were surprised that it was possible to converse in Hebrew, even about airplanes. [...] How Kafka's face lit up then from happiness and pride!" (2014, 89). He concludes with an almost uncanny event that occurred at Max Brod's apartment in Prague (it is not clear from the context whether Langer was present, or is retelling it from hearsay). A well-known writer was visiting Brod, who offered to show him Kafka's manuscripts. At the moment he was about to take them out of the folder, the power went out in the neighborhood and the guest had to leave without seeing anything. This coincidentally foreshadows the later destiny of these papers, which Brod took with him when he escaped from the Nazis to Tel Aviv, and planned to donate to the National Library of Israel, only to leave them with his former secretary, who infamously kept them hidden from the world for decades until her death. It was only after an arduous lawsuit that the writings were finally properly preserved and displayed to the world; among the most notable discoveries were some of Kafka's previously unseen notes in Hebrew (Fraňková 2021).

"SOMETHING DIFFERENT" IN INTERWAR CZECH LITERATURE

After *Nine Gates* was published in German in 1959 and English in 1961, it became widely accepted as a valuable portrait of the vanished world of East European Jewish culture. It has even been compared favorably to Martin Buber's earlier translations of Hasidic tales into German, as for example in Karl Erich Grozinger's claim that even though "Langer comes much closer to Hasidic reality in his retelling of the tales than do the philosophically and romantically tinged renditions of Martin Buber or Elie Wiesel, he still could not completely resist certain rationalisations and attempts at polishing" (1994, 16). It is also worth noting that one of the most renowned Yiddish-language authors, Isaac Bashevis Singer, called *Nine Gates* "a book to be read more for an impression and a mood than for a systematic study of Hasidism" (1961, 260). Readers of the book in other languages might overlook the fact that it was originally written in Czech, but it has close ties to the vibrant literary scene of interwar Prague.

Those links are most clearly shown in František's Langer's essay "My Brother Jiří", which was included as the foreword to the English translation of *Nine Gates* and also added to the second Czech edition in 1965. As Avigdor Dagan notes, "[t]his personal memoir is the only published literary evidence of an inner change in František Langer's attitude toward Judaism. Apparently, he had been shocked back to his Jewish heritage by the Holocaust and by the death of both his brothers" (1988–1989, 27–28). Through these recollections, František Langer places *Nine Gates* within the context of modern Czech literature, explaining that its stories "were written for the ordinary reader, especially the [non-Jewish] Czech reader [...] to tell him something different about the Jews from that which Nazi anti-Semitism was endeavouring to smuggle across the Czechoslovak frontiers" (1961, xxiv). This essay also appeared in Langer's autobiography *Byli a bylo* (They were and it was, 1963), which also includes chapters

on Jaroslav Hašek as well as Karel and Josef Čapek. Although this autobiography has never fully been translated into English, the chapter on Jaroslav Hašek also includes valuable material on his life before *Švejk*, and much as his chapter on Jiří was added to *Nine Gates*, Langer's description of the prewar "Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law" has been included in an English translation of Hašek's writings (Hašek 1981).

By juxtaposing Jiří with such world-famous figures as Hašek and Čapek, František reaffirms his family's affiliation with Czech culture, but despite his affectionate tone, he cannot fully account for the divergent and eccentric path his younger brother chose to follow. He describes Jiří's first trip to Belz in 1913 as a journey "from the living reality of the twentieth century into the mystical and ecstatic atmosphere of the Middle Ages" (1961, vii). Jiří's youthful fascination with the Czech poet Otakar Březina led to his deep interest in Jewish mysticism, which František, a medical student at the time, regarded in analytical terms: "I could only suppose that his was a case of belated adolescent psychopathy, which I hoped was a mere passing phenomenon" (xiv). After Jiří Langer first returned to Prague from Belz, he retained the dress and customs he had adopted among the Hasidim, refusing for example to touch or look directly at women, even in his own family. František claims that his transformation "seemed to us at the time to resemble the situation in Kafka's novel *Die Verwandlung* [*The Metamorphosis*] in which the son of the house is suddenly changed into an enormous cockroach [...] while the family strive in vain to find some place for him in their affections" (xvii). (Since Kafka's work was still not widely known in Czechoslovakia when Langer's essay was first written in the late 1950s, this allusion may have been intended more for the prospective foreign readers of *Nine Gates*).

With the outbreak of World War I, Jiří Langer was summoned to military service, but even there, he refused to break with his Hasidic rituals, such as waking up early for prayers. Eventually, he was court-martialed for his refusal to bear arms on the Sabbath. He accepted his imprisonment passively but did not cooperate with his questioners (it is hard to avoid seeing a touch of Hašek's *Švejk* in his behavior here). Fortunately, as František Langer recounts, he happened to be on leave and as a military doctor he intervened to provide the authorities with medical background on his brother, who was discharged on mental grounds. In *Nine Gates*, however, Jiří credits this rescue to a miracle by the rabbi of Belz. As František Langer observes, "[w]hen I told him of my part in his deliverance he declared that the miracle might have consisted in the fact of my having succeeded in getting leave from the front – which might of course have been true" (xix).

When František returned to Prague after the war, he was surprised to see that Jiří was now reading Sigmund Freud, whose thought was then still little-known in Czechoslovakia:

For me his teaching was in the nature of an utterly fantastic hypothesis, whereas my brother accepted Freud's discoveries as axioms with scientific validity. He began to use Freudian methods in analysing the essential meaning of the practices observed in Jewish ritual and in Jewish cults, applying them to his search for the subconscious sources of Jewish mysticism and the actual origin of the religious idea. It was a most remarkable spectacle

to see him studying, a scientific work of the great psycho-analyst open in one hand and at his other hand an open folio of the Talmud, or more often some mystical work such as the *Zohar*. (1961, xx–xxi)

This cultural fusion continued in the foreword to *Eroticism of the Cabbala*, published in 1923, in which Langer quotes from Otokar Březina's poem "Modlitba za nepřátele" (Prayer for our enemies) and describes it as "Cabbalistic" (1989, 14).

The main text of *Nine Gates* begins with Jiří Langer's own introduction, "A Youth from Prague Among the Chassidism", in which gives his first-person account of his arrival in Belz. He describes his embarrassment at being unable to understand Yiddish, "that bizarre mixture of medieval German and Hebrew, Polish and Russian" (1961, 5). On his first evening there, exoticism gives way to a sense of familiarity: "The spacious Belz synagogue has meanwhile filled with people. [...] In a way the interior reminds me of the Old-New Synagogue in Prague" (6). Even in a distant land, surrounded by speakers of Yiddish, Langer is reminded of the oldest and holiest of Prague's Jewish landmarks. In this description, we can see the relationship between language and territory as he negotiates between his foreignness and a sense of belonging as a Czech of Jewish origin.

In the third chapter, Langer presents the language question from the Hasidic point of view, through the perspective of the holy Reb Naftali, who compares Russian, Hungarian, and German to Yiddish: "Russian is the personification of *retsiche*, or violence, Hungarian of *niyef*, or sensuality, while German personifies the worst quality of all, namely unbelief — *apikorses*. [...] German resembles our Yiddish, but only in the same way that a monkey resembles a man" (1961, 77). By focusing on the irrationality of these languages, Langer subtly undermines the assumption that they are as more "logical" than Yiddish, and also contrasts the linguistic richness of Reb Naftali's community with its material poverty. Even if they only have potatoes, they "have something different every day"; he then gives a different name for potatoes (*kartoflyes*, *zemakes*, etc.) for each day of the week. Sarai Brachman Shoup points out that although Reb Naftali comments on various languages, he does not mention Czech, the language of the original text (2001, 165). The shift in perspective from the first chapter, where Langer sees Yiddish as incomprehensibly strange, to the third, where he judges the dominant languages of Central and Eastern Europe using Yiddish as the referential language, parallels his own development as a Hasidic scholar.

In his introduction, Langer compares the controversy over the original of the crucial Cabbalistic text, the *Zohar*, to a famous Czech controversy: "The book appears in Spain at the end of the thirteenth century, when it purported to be an ancient work of Palestinian origin. The dispute over this question – which has a certain analogy in the controversy over the Králové Dvůr [sic] and Zelená Hora manuscripts in Czechoslovakia – is not yet at an end" (1961, 25). Here Langer refers to the "Queen's Court" and "Green Mountain" manuscripts, "discovered" by archivist Václav Hanka in 1817 and considered long-lost epics for decades before they were definitively revealed as forgeries in 1886 (the anachronistic "Czechoslovakia", which did not yet exist at the time of this scandal in Bohemia, was added for clarification by the English translator Stephen Jolly). In a later instance, Langer alludes to a renowned Czech poet

as a complement to his account. In his account of two ascetic brothers, he describes an occasion in which a group of drunken musicians forces one of the brothers, Rebe Reb Sussya, to dance for them until he falls unconscious. They put him back in bed, but due to a misunderstanding, he is forced to dance once again in his brother's place:

He danced and danced until he again fell to the floor, and the musicians realized that this time their Jew would not regain consciousness so easily.

However, here below, earth's fate
May toss and twist and rage,
The Sussyas' fate was e'er the trait
Of our hard pilgrimage.

This is how some great poet described it – Vrchlický by name. (119)

At this point in the text, the translator Jolly has added his own footnote: "There is a pleasant touch of deliberate understatement here, for Vrchlický, one of Bohemia's greatest poets, is a well-known name, for every Czech. The lines quoted here are in the nature of a jingle." As if giving a knowing wink to the Czech reader through such references, Langer preserves his narrative balance between naive credulity and ironic distance.

In his final chapter "The Ninth Gate", Langer includes one of his most extended references to Prague, using the theme of the journey to symbolize the process of self-discovery. In this story (versions of which also appear in Martin Buber's and Elie Wiesel's collections of Hasidic tales) a "devout scholar" named Reb Eisik Yekls is told by a "mysterious voice" to go to Prague and look under the Charles Bridge for a hidden treasure:

But when after his long and arduous pilgrimage he stood on a hill, covered with green trees, and saw in front of him a glorious castle on a high mountain and under the castle a town spread out on both banks of a wide river, and when he glimpsed a mighty bridge, built throughout of stone, Eisik's heart thumped with joy. [...] But the bridge was guarded by soldiers. [...] He was seized and led before the commander. When questioned Reb Eisik Yekls held nothing back. [...] He was not asked his name nor where he came from. "You fool," exclaimed the officer with a sneer [...] "If I were to believe in dreams, I should have to go all the way to Cracow. I had a dream that there is some wonderful treasure there hidden near the fireplace in a room occupied by a Jew. [...] His name was *Eisik Yekls*... Do you think I'd want to drag my weary body all the way to Cracow to go scratching for treasure near the fireplace of some confounded Jew? Dreams are lies and deception." [...] When the gendarmes released him Reb Eisik gave thanks to the Lord. [...] Eisik returned home without delay and found the treasure near his fireplace. (250)

Langer likely would have seen this "journey to the West", from Poland to Prague, as reflecting his own journey to Belz in reverse. The "joy" evoked by the famous cityscape of Prague shows Langer's deep attachment to his birthplace, similar to his allusion to Prague's Old-New synagogue in the introduction, and the idea of finding treasure at home suggests that the true discovery of a journey takes place upon one's return to the familiar.

In 1937, the same year that *Nine Gates* appeared, the Communist writer Ivan Olbracht (incidentally one of the first critics to see Švejk as a representative figure

for the Czech nation) published a collection of three stories under the title *Golet v údolí* (*Valley of Exile*, 1964). Set in the remote region of Transcarpathian Ruthenia (then in Czechoslovakia, now in Ukraine), this book includes the novella “O smutných očích Hany Karadžičové” (“The Sorrowful Eyes of Hannah Karadjich”), which was later adapted as the Czech film *Hanele* (1999). When its title character Hana (also known as Hanele) decides to leave home, one of the other villagers (as if in warning her about the outside world) tells her the tale of “a Jew in Cracow” who was told by the angel of dreams to travel to Prague:

He found Prague and the Vltava and the stone bridge [...]; suddenly two soldiers caught hold of him from behind. “Look, a stinking Jew! Spying for the enemy, are you? Just you wait!” [...] In the end there was nothing for it but to tell the whole story of his dream. The officer laughed. [...] “Last night I dreamed that I was in the house of a certain Jew [in Cracow], I even remember what he was called,” and he gave the prisoner’s name, “and I even remember what his house looked like,” and he described the prisoner’s own home, “and I dreamed I found a treasure in his stove.” He felt so happy about it that he let the Jew go. He thanked his benefactor and set off back home to Cracow. At home he had barely taken the first brick out of the stove wall and there was the treasure of gold. (1999, 79)

Like Kafka in his diaries, Olbracht recounts the same material as Langer, but with greater skepticism; one striking difference is that Olbracht’s unnamed traveler thanks the officer who interrogates him, while Langer’s Reb Eisik gives thanks only to God. Hana herself goes to the Czech city of Ostrava, where she falls in love with the secular Jew Ivo Karadžič. She takes him to visit her village, but her fiancé refuses to follow the traditional rituals, and as a result, she is cast out of the community forever. Unlike Langer, who took Jewish tradition back to Prague, Olbracht’s protagonist tries to bring “progress” to a traditional society, with disastrous results.

The sixth chapter of *Nine Gates* illustrates Langer’s most direct attempt to “reterritorialize” Jewish identity in the Czech lands. “The names of some Czech and Moravian towns”, he explains, “are known to Jewish children in Eastern Europe as places where distinguished Rabbis once worked in centuries long past.” By showing how significant the Czech lands have been for Jewish culture, he implies that Jewish culture, should be important, in turn, for the Czech reader. He also places the homeland of Hasidic tradition within “Slavic” territory: “At no time did the mystic wave of Chassidism sweep beyond the borders of the Slav countries of Eastern Europe to the west” (1961, 141–142). One of the few exceptions was Mikulov in southern Moravia, whose position near the Czech/Austrian border (on the boundary of Slavic and Germanic cultures) is striking in this context. The arrival of a Polish rabbi, Rebe Reb Schmelke, in Mikulov leads to conflict:

The people of Mikulov had caught the scent of western enlightenment and were not inclined to be friendly disposed towards the mystical strivings of a Chassidic Rabbi from the East. His relationship with the people was clouded by one habit of his in particular. Unlike the other Rabbis, he would not speak Yiddish, still less German. As a rule, he used only pure Hebrew, and at that time the educated people of Mikulov were almost entirely ignorant of the language of the prophets. (145)

In this passage, the conflict between the “educated people of Mikulov” (i.e. assimilated Jews) and the Hebrew-speaking rabbi parallels Langer’s own “mystical strivings” as a Hasidic writer in Prague. Nonetheless, he suggests that Czech territory is historically hospitable to Hasidic culture, showing that his own self-identification as both Czech and Jewish is not as questionable as it may seem. This issue of identity was not only a personal statement but a highly political one, as Nazi aggression was already threatening Czechoslovakia. Indeed, only a year later, despite their vastly different attitudes toward their Jewish background, both Langer brothers were forced to flee Prague.

During World War II, when Jiří was in Palestine and František in England, they corresponded about a potential translation of *Nine Gates*, although by this time it had been banned in Prague by the Nazis and much of its first edition was destroyed. In his final letter to Jiří, František was already preoccupied with the idea of an English version: “If the first part is translated into English, I think that a publisher could be found for the book here or in America, if not now [...] then certainly after the war” (Langer 1995, 194). However, this letter only reached Max Brod a few weeks after Jiří’s death in 1943. František Langer’s heartfelt reply to Brod after learning of Jiří’s death is a touching testament of his deep affection for his brother, yet even in his grief he had the presence of mind to add the reminder: “Please help to preserve his literary estate so that nothing is lost. He wrote to me that he wanted to continue *Nine Gates* and that he had a little book prepared of Hebrew lyric poetry. If it is possible to print something to his memory in Palestine (Hebrew texts), it would be a beautiful tribute” (1995, 217–218). By this time, the faithful Brod had already arranged the publication of *A Bit of Balm*, the proofs of which Jiří was able to see before his death. It was almost two decades later, thanks to František’s extensive efforts and despite his own personal difficulties under the Communist regime, that his brother’s greatest work would reach world readers.

THE LOVE POETRY OF A “BACHELOR HASID”

Both Freud and Kafka had deeply-rooted (and widely-studied) problems with their own identity as German-speaking Jews, in a culture where Jewishness was traditionally associated with femininity. Daniel Boyarin has shown with particular clarity how the “ambivalence underlying wishes for Jewish assimilation, like other performances of colonial mimicry, is deeply embedded in issues of both gender and sexuality” (1997, 226). Freud was aware, Boyarin notes, that “at least for the *Ostjude* [the unassimilated Eastern Jews] being Jewish is a source of secret joy”, but he believed that the “form wherein the old Jews were happy no longer offers us any shelter” (257). Jiří Langer was able to find not only shelter, but eventually what Boyarin (punning on *jouissance*) describes as “jewissance”, in his experience with the Hasidim. As Sander Gilman has suggested, “Langer undertook much the same program as did Buber, to create for Czech a language of the Jew, the mirror image of the Yiddish-intoned German that Buber fantasized he was creating for German” (1990, 281). Yet while Langer was able to translate his religious identity across cultural borders by writing *Nine Gates* in Czech, it was a different case with his sexual identity, which he expressed through his Hebrew poetry in a language that was inaccessible even to his brother.

Until recently, studies of Langer mentioned sexuality only obliquely, treating Langer as a “solitary bachelor” as in Peter Mailloux’s biography of Kafka: “Langer was intelligent and cultivated [...] and shared Kafka’s preference for solitude, all of which contributed to their friendship” (1989, 363). This question is treated similarly in Czech scholarship, for example by Tomáš Pekný: “[Langer] tried a number of times to break through the circle of his solitude. [...] Why he did not succeed, we can only guess” (Langer 1996, 310–311). As Herman Carmel points out, “[i]t is interesting to note how many times the word *galmud*, ‘lonely,’ ‘solitary’ or ‘forlorn,’ occurs in [Langer’s] Hebrew poetry”, and cites a eulogy by Dov Sadan, who had been friends with Jiří Langer in Palestine: “Our lonely friend! The chapter of your life is closed, but the riddle of your life remains. [...] What was your solution?” Sadan’s only answer is to cite Langer’s own self-description as “*HaBachur heHasid miPrag* (The bachelor Hasid from Prague)” (Carmel 1992–1993, 123).

A few scholars have seen František Langer’s nostalgic foreword to *Nine Gates* as obscuring the radical nature of his younger brother’s intercultural vision. Michal Kosák sees the text as lying “like a heavy stone on the fate of Jiří Langer” (2002, 41), while Shaun Jacob Halper calls it “our most comprehensive source for Jiří’s biographical details, but his testimony is tendentious and scholars should examine it with more critical care than they have” (2011, 202). Arguably, František’s account has set the tone for later commentators to “normalize” Jiří’s behavior, such as Herman Carmel’s observation that “Jiří was what today would be described as a ‘regular fellow’” (1992–1993, 98). However, František’s own observations are more nuanced than this. For example, he contrasts Jiří’s initial insistence on following the strict Hasidic tenets about contact with women with his later concessions to modern social norms: “He not only shook hands with women but acquired a reputation for being very courteous, especially to old ladies” (1961, xxiii). Arnold Mandel’s rather anecdotal account makes a minor but significant alteration, stating that in Jiří’s later lifestyle, he had changed into “quite a gentleman, especially with pretty women” [*en homme tres galant, surtout avec les jolies femmes*] (1974, 92). This shift from “old ladies” to “pretty women”, while perhaps accidental, portrays Jiří Langer as not only a “regular fellow” but practically a “ladies’ man”, something that František Langer does not indicate. In fact, Halper suggests that František’s mention of Jiří’s aversion to female contact “was [his] coded reference to Langer’s homosexuality. The proof for such a claim comes from Langer’s own hand in *Die Erotik der Kabbala*, where Langer directly linked the homoerotics of Hasidism to their refusal to look or speak with women” (2013, 77). Interestingly, in another possible “coded reference” from his autobiography, František Langer observes that Jaroslav Hašek had a similar physical ambivalence toward women, and never made physical advances toward them even in the rowdy atmosphere of pubs (1963, 63). Langer apparently found this issue so relevant that in a 1954 letter to the linguist František Daneš, he questioned the authenticity of a sexual episode in *Švejk* and wondered if it had been added to the text by someone else, since it was so atypical of Hašek’s humor (Daneš 2004, 169).

Ann Oppenheimer’s dissertation on Kafka’s Jewish identity includes a short biographical appendix on Jiří Langer, which is probably the first reference in English to

Langer's homosexuality (1977, 300). It also has an English translation by Miriam Dror of Langer's poem dedicated to Kafka, and quotes Dov Sadan as stating that "Kafka deeply admired Langer as the only member of the Prague Jewish circle whose mastery of Hebrew allowed him to use the language as an artistic medium, and that Langer represented in this respect a linguistic and artistic ambition of Kafka's own" (302). Both Dror and Sadan referred to Langer's sexual orientation in their own writings in Hebrew (Halper 2013, 26). In his profile of the Langer brothers (whom he knew personally) in the US-based journal *Cross Currents*, Avigdor Dagan (known as Viktor Fischl in Czech) focuses on *Nine Gates*, but as one of the few Czech writers to understand Hebrew, he mentions *A Bit of Balm*, remarking almost in passing that some of the poems "disclose his homosexual leaning" (1991, 188). In recent years, this aspect of Langer's work has become more widely known, as in Avner Holzman's encyclopedia entry stating that Langer "wrote some of the most daring homoerotic poetry ever published in Hebrew, at a time when merely discussing such matters was considered shameful" (2008, 990). Martin C. Putna's study of homosexuality in Czech literature places Langer among the gay writers who chose the "path of stylization", emphasizing Langer's "choice of an alternative literary language". This choice is either to find a foreign-language readership, or find a freedom of expression that "he would not dare in his native Czech language". As Putna also notes, Langer's "most personal and erotic work, [his] lyrical poetry, is written in Hebrew, "the language that is for an observant Jew the most sacred and for his Czech surroundings the most impenetrable", while *Nine Gates* is "essentially free of homoerotic themes" (2011, 137).

The "sacred" language of Langer's Hebrew was finally "penetrated" for English readers with the appearance of Shaun Jacob Halper's analysis of Langer's "homosexual-Jewish identity" in an article (2011) focused on *Die Erotik der Kabbala*, followed by his full dissertation (2013) which includes close readings of Langer's poetry. In the article, he describes Langer's early work as "a moving and powerful record of how an interwar homosexual Jew – without community or inherited identity – fashioned his own homosexual Jewish identity that did not conform to the available sexological or masculinist models of homosexuality" (2011, 228). In his dissertation, Halper states, "[w]hether Langer 'discovered' his homosexuality before, during, or after his time living with the Hasidim will probably never be fully determined. That he experienced, or reimagined his experience, in the Hasidic world as homoerotic is undeniable" (2013, 35). His later chapters explore "the slippery ambiguities and canny codes" that characterize Langer's first book of poetry, beginning with the title *Piyyutim ve-Shirei Yedidot* (Liturgical and love poetry): "by combining *shirei yedidot* with *piyyutim*, a term which generally refers exclusively to liturgical Hebrew poetry, [...] he seemed to promise that the "love poetry" to follow were allegorical prayers as well." An additional level of ambiguity is added by the word *yedidot*, which when "read without vowels, it can easily be confused with *yedidut* [friendship]. To an untrained eye or to the willfully blind, Langer may have appeared to have referred to friendship (or perhaps to have made a mistake)." Using such linguistic strategies, he "playfully straddled the lines between same-sex friendship and same-sex erotic love, and between God and the male erotic love

object” (2013, 127). In his close readings of individual poems, Halper points out numerous examples in which an almost shockingly erotic meaning can be replaced by an innocuously spiritual one: “Because the Jewish mystical tradition portrays the mystical encounter between poet and God as erotically charged (and even homoerotic), the poet’s sexual-sounding metaphors are aesthetically and morally unproblematic” (2013, 162).

While Langer’s Czech translator Denisa Goldmannová sees his verse as expressing *filia* (friendship) rather than erotic feelings (Langer 2013, 120–121), his English translator Elana Wolff concurs with Halper by describing them as “poems of profound loneliness and longing, and [...] undisguised, unrequited homoromantic love”, even speculating: “Could it have been that Franz Kafka was Georg Jiří Mordechai Langer’s great, secret, unrequited love? Maybe. It is tempting to think so, and the mystery of it adds a certain cachet to Langer’s work” (Langer 2014, 15–17). In any case, Langer’s “On the Death of the Poet”, dedicated to Kafka, was one of his few Hebrew poems that he translated himself into Czech:

For today a mystical marriage is celebrated in the bosom of nature,
at the spring from which life and death come forth as one like brothers [...]
Water—fire—air and everything animate—growing—inanimate,
befriend me today, though I was estranged from them until now,
with an expression of unspoken affection, they reach their hands toward me
and caress me beautifully – and you are among them!
And Mother Earth so lovingly beckons to me:
“Rest the shadow of your soul between my breasts,
And lie the dream of your bones in the pillow of my softness!”
– And it is filled with your life.¹

In his review of Wolff’s translation, Kenneth Sherman claims that “Kafka would have winced at” this poem, which he calls “a hodgepodge of rococo imagery”, and concludes that “nothing in the poems, or in the biographies, supports the notion that Langer was romantically taken with Kafka” (2014). Yet as overwrought as it may appear to 21st-century readers, Langer’s Hebrew poetry illustrates that crossing languages is not only about making connections, but about asserting difference, and finding a balance between assimilation and resistance.

CONCLUSION

Although scholars of world literature like Damrosch and Casanova have critiqued Deleuze and Guattari’s minor literature for projecting their own claims and interests onto Kafka’s work, they leave the predominance of “major” language (and for that matter, major writers) in literary studies largely intact. Yet reading the seemingly marginal Czech- and Hebrew-speaking Jiří Langer alongside Kafka’s work calls into question the presumably inevitable “deterritorialization” of Prague-Jewish writers: Langer retold Yiddish folklore in his native “vernacular” Czech and composed poetry in the “mythic” Hebrew, all cultural options from which Kafka had felt cut off as a speaker of the “vehicular” German language. As Halper has convincingly argued, by fleeing to a pre-modern environment of gender separation, Jiří

Langer was able to free himself from social pressures, and his devotion to religious study helped him to sublimate his same-sex desires into a sense of identification with a spiritual community. It is through Jiří Langer's prose and poetry, more clearly than in the work of better-known German and Czech writers like Kafka and Hašek, that we can see the multiple languages of Jewish Prague as a unifying rather than divisive force.

NOTES

- ¹ This previously unpublished excerpt was translated by the present author from Langer's own Czech version (reprinted in Tvrdík 2000), with the help of Anton Shammass and Doron Lamm from the Hebrew version. The full poem, translated from the Hebrew, can be found in Oppenheimer 1977 (303–304), Halper 2013 (220) and Langer 2014 (58).

REFERENCES

- Bloom, Cecil. 1996. "Kafka's Chasid." *Midstream* 42, 1: 34–38.
- Boyarin, Daniel. 1997. *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Brod, Max. 1966. *Der Prager Kreis*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
- Carmel, Herman. 1992–1993. "Mordechai Jiří Langer: Cabbalist, Writer and Poet." *Review of the Society for the History of Czechoslovak Jews* 5: 93–126.
- Dagan, Avigdor. 1988–1989. "The Jewish Identity of František Langer." *Review of the Society for the History of Czechoslovak Jews* 2: 27.
- Dagan, Avigdor. 1991. "The Czech-German-Jewish Symbiosis of Prague: The Langer Brothers." *Cross Currents: A Yearbook of Central European Culture* 10: 180–193.
- Damrosch, David. 2003. *What is World Literature?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Daneš, František. 2004. "František Langer o jazyce Haškova Švejka i o jazyce svém." *Naše řeč* 87, 4: 169–171.
- Davenport, Guy. 1997. *Twelve Stories*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1975. *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure*. Paris: Éditions de minuit.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1986. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Trans. by Dana Polan. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Fraňková, Ruth. 2021. "Franz Kafka's Never-before-Seen Manuscripts and Drawings Go Online." *Radio Prague International* May 28. Accessed May 15, 2022. english.radio.cz/franz-kafkas-never-seen-manuscripts-and-drawings-go-online-8718806.
- Gilman, Sander. 1990. *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Gobard, Henri. 1977. *L'alienation linguistique*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Grozinger, Karl Erich. 1994. *Kafka and Kabbalah*. Trans. by Susan Hecker Ray. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Halper, Shaun Jacob. 2011. "Coming Out of the Hasidic Closet: Jiří Mordechai Langer (1894–1923) and the Fashioning of Homosexual-Jewish Identity." *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 101, 2: 189–231. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1353/jqr.2011.0009>.
- Halper, Shaun Jacob. 2013. *Mordechai Langer (1894–1943) and the Birth of the Modern Jewish Homosexual*. Berkeley, CA: University of California dissertation.

- Hašek, Jaroslav. 1981. *The Red Commissar (Švejk and Other Stories)*. Trans. by Cecil Parrott. London: Dial.
- Hever, Hannan. 1987. "Hebrew in an Israeli Arab Hand: Six Miniatures on Anton Shamma's Arabesques." *Cultural Critique* 7: 47–76.
- Holtzman, Avner. 2008. "Langer, Jiří." Trans. by David Fachler. In *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, vol. 1*, ed. by Gershon David Hundert, 990. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Jacobs, Yaakov. 1969. "The Metamorphosis of Jiri Langer. From Assimilated Czech Jewish Intellectual to Belzer Chassid." *Jewish Observer* 5, 10: 11–15.
- Jamison, Anne. 2018. *Kafka's Other Prague: Writings from the Czechoslovak Republic*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Kafka, Franz. 1948. *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1910–1923*. Trans. by Joseph Kresh and Martin Greenberg. New York, NY: Schocken.
- Kafka, Franz. 1977. *Letters to Friends, Family and Editors*. Trans. by Richard and Clara Winston. New York, NY: Schocken.
- Kieval, Hillel J. 2000. *Languages of Community: The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520214101.001.0001>.
- Kosák, Michal. 2002. "Jiří Langer – outsiderova cesta za jinými světy." In *Českožidovští spisovatelé v literatuře 20. století*, ed. by Leo Pavlát, 38–42. Prague: Židovské museum.
- Kosik, Karel. [1963] 1983. "Hašek and Kafka: 1883–1922/23." *Cross Currents: A Yearbook of Central European Culture* 2: 127.
- Langer, František. 1963. *Byli a bylo*. Prague: Československý spisovatel.
- Langer, Georg. 1959. *Neun Tore*. Trans. by Friedrich Theiberger. Munich: O. W. Barth.
- Langer, Georg. 1989. *Die Erotik der Kabbala*. Munich: Diederichs.
- Langer, Georg Mordechai. 2014. *Poems and Songs of Love*. Trans. by Elana and Menachem Wolff. Toronto: Guernica.
- Langer, Jiří. 1961. *Nine Gates to the Chassidic Mysteries*. Trans. by Stephen Jolly. New York, NY: David McKay.
- Langer, Jiří. 1995. *Studie, recenze, články, dopisy*. Prague: Sefer.
- Langer, Jiří. 1996. *Devět bran*. Prague: Sefer.
- Langer, Jiří M. 2013. *Hebrejské básně*. Trans. by Denisa G. Goldmannová. Prague: P3K.
- Langer, Mordechai Georgo. 1942. *Me'at tsori*. Tel Aviv: Hotsa'at Davar.
- Langer, Mordechai Georgo. 1984. *Me'at tsori: asupat ketavav*. Ed. by Miriam Dror. Jerusalem: Agudat ha-sofrim ha-ivrim bi-medinat Yiśrael ve-Eked.
- Mailloux, Peter. 1989. *A Hesitation Before Birth: The Life of Franz Kafka*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press.
- Mandel, Arnold. 1974. "Jiří Langer ou le retour aux sources." In *La vie quotidienne des Juifs hassidiques, du XVIII^e siècle à nos jours*, Arnold Mandel, 68–97. Paris: Hachette.
- Mendes-Flohr, Paul. 1991. *Divided Passions: Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.
- Nekula, Marek. 2016. *Franz Kafka and His Prague Contexts: Studies in Language and Literature*. Prague: Karolinum.
- Olbracht, Ivan. 1999. *The Sorrowful Eyes of Hannah Karajichthe*. Trans. by Iris Urwin Lewitová. Budapest: Central European University Press.
- Oppenheimer, Ann. 1977. *Franz Kafka's Relation to Judaism*. Oxford: Oxford University Dissertation.
- Putna, Martin C. 2011. *Homosexualita v dějinách české kultury*. Prague: Academia.
- Ripellino, Angelo Maria. 1995. *Magic Prague*. Trans. by David Newton Marinelli. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Robertson, Ritchie. 1985. *Kafka: Judaism, Politics, and Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Shamma, Anton. 1986. "Ashmat Ha-Babushka." *Politika* 5–6: 44–45.
- Sherman, Kenneth. 2014. "Kafka's Gay, Hasidic Hebrew Teacher." *Tablet* November 6. Accessed May 15, 2022. <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/arts-letters/articles/kafka-langer>.
- Shoup, Sarai Brachman. 2001. "A Modern Zaddik: Jiří Langer as Architect of a New Jewish Identity." *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 4, 1: 158–175.

- Singer, Isaac Bashevis. 1961. "Nine Gates (review)." *Commentary* 32, 3: 259–260.
- Spann, Meno. 1957. "The Minor Kafka Problem." *Germanic Review* 32, 3: 163–177.
- Spector, Scott. 1999a. "Another Zionism: Hugo Bergmann's Circumscription of Spiritual Territory." *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, 1: 87–108.
- Spector, Scott. 1999b. *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin-de-Siècle*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Tvrđík, Milan. 2000. "Frank Kafka und Jiří Langer: Zur Problematik des Verhältnisses Kafkas zur tschechischen Kultur." In *Moderne in der deutschen und der tschechischen Literatur*, ed. by Klaus Schenk, 189–199. Tübingen: Francke.
- Weissmann, Dirk. 2013. "De Kafka à la théorie postcoloniale: L'invention de la littérature 'mineure.'" In *Traduire, transmettre ou trahir? Réflexions sur la traduction en sciences humaines*, ed. by Stephanie Schwerter and Jennifer L. Dick, 73–85. Paris: Éditions de la maison des sciences de l'homme.
- Zinger, Miriam. 1969. "Kafka's Hebrew Teacher." *Orot* 6: 83–89.

Prague beyond Kafka: Rethinking minor literature through the work of Jiří Langer

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Franz Kafka. Jiří Langer. Minor literature.
Czech literature. Hebrew literature. LGBT literature.

Taking Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's theory of minor literature as a starting point, this article moves from their opposition of "major/minor" literatures to their "tetralinguistic" model of vernacular, vehicular, referential, and mythic language. It presents the work of the polyglot poet and Hasidic scholar Jiří Langer to offer a multifaceted view of three distinct contexts: the theoretical discourse of minor literature, the literary milieu of interwar Prague, and the history of gay Czech and Jewish writing. Langer appears in Franz Kafka's diaries and letters over a period of several years as a source of information on Jewish culture, as well as a personal contact to prominent rabbis from the east. Two decades later, Langer produced his own remarkable work in Czech, *Devět bran* (*Nine Gates*, 1937), a popular-scholarly study of Hasidic traditions based on his experience in the Galician town of Belz. Much of what is known today about Jiří Langer's unconventional life comes from the memoirs of his brother František, published as a foreword for the English translation of the book. However, it was only in recent years that Langer's Hebrew poetry has also become available to English-speaking readers, revealing his linguistic strategies that draw on mystical traditions in the attempt to form a modern synthesis of Jewish homosexual identity. Jiří Langer's literary activity shows Prague as a site of self-definition through multilingualism, rather than the more familiar image of Kafka's "deterritorialization".

Prof. Charles Sabatos, Ph.D.
Yeditepe University
Department of English Literature
Faculty of Arts and Sciences, no. 811
26 Ağustos Yerleşimi
34755 Kayışdağı
Istanbul
Turkey
charles.sabatos@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4166-9320>

ARIE VAN DER ENT (ed.): Vermoorde dichters almanak: Onvrijwillig gestorven 1919–1944 [Murdered poets' almanac: Involuntary death 1919–1944]

Rotterdam: Woord in blik, 2022. 143 s. ISBN 978-94913-89-32-0

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2022.14.2.7>

Multilingválne prostredie Európy a jazykové kompetencie veľkej časti súčasnej európskej čitateľskej verejnosti umožňujú cez tretie jazyky a naprieč kultúrami evidovať aj literatúry menej známych jazykových oblastí. Tak to bolo v 19. storočí – a zostalo to tak do veľkej miery dodnes. V prípade knihy *Vermoorde dichters almanak* (Almanach zavraždených básnikov), výberu z tvorby dvadsiatich troch ukrajinských básnikov a jednej poetky, ktorí odišli v rokoch 1919 – 1944 nedobrovoľne zo sveta, ide o antológiu v nizozemskom jazyku, ktorú sa z viacerých dôvodov oplatí zaznamenať aj mimo Nizozemska a flámskej časti Belgicka. Jej zostavovateľom je rotterdamský slavista a prekladateľ ruskej klasiky i súčasnej ukrajinskej beletrie, poézie a angažovanej politickej literatúry Arie van der Ent, ktorý žije v ukrajinskej obci Hermanivka.

Súbor básní a krátkych sprievodných biografí zavraždených básnikov pripravoval editor už dlhšie na základe antológie ukrajinskej poézie, ktorá vyšla v Kyjeve roku 2016, a mohutného exilového výberu Jurija Lavričenka *Rozstrilane vidrodženňa: Antolohija 1917–1933: Poezija – proza – drama – esej* (Popravené obrodzenie: Antológia 1917 – 1933: poézia – próza – dráma – eseje, Paríž 1959), vydal ho však začiatkom marca 2022, teda bezprostredne po začatí ruskej vojenskej invázie na Ukrajinu. Jeho „almanach“ takto vyšiel v ústrety dobe, keď sa v Európe nečakane objavila urgentná potreba bližšie spoznávať ukrajinskú kultúru a literatúru. S touto potrebou sa spontánne oživil aj žáner antológie, o ktorý stratili na prelome tisícročia záujem mnohé vydavateľstvá a s nimi aj sprostredkovatelia jednotlivých literárnych kultúr. Od konca februára 2022 však azda už niet

európskeho literárneho časopisu, ktorého redakcia by si nepovažovala za povinnosť informovať o „neznámej“ ukrajinskej literatúre formou miniantológie. Silnou stránkou takýchto výberov je vyjadrenie solidarity s Ukrajinou prostredníctvom prekladov ukážok z diel viac či menej reprezentatívnych autorov a autoriek (to je, povedzme, prípad nedávnej antológie ukrajinských literárnych textov, ktorú priniesol časopis *Romboid*), ich slabšou stránkou môže byť tematická, estetická a problémová difúznosť, prípadne obmedzené sprostredkovanie historických, kultúrnych, politických, spoločenských a humánných súvislostí.

Van der Entov výber je výnimočný tým, že v sebe spojil dva prvky: tragické básnické osudy a vysokú poetickú kvalitu vybraných ukážok z ich tvorby. Takéto spojenie hneď evokuje niekoľko otázok. Po prvé, historickej otázke cieleného vyvražďovania ukrajinských umelcov a inteligencie, a to vo viacerých vlnách: po revolúcii 1917 raz bielymi a raz červenými, neskôr stalinistami a od leta 1941 nacistami. Po druhé, otázku vývinu ukrajinskej kultúry, resp. jeho viacnásobného prerušenia – najskôr násilnou likvidáciou futurizmu, neskôr, koncom 30. rokov 20. storočia, fatálnym ukončením takmer celej literárnej moderny, tzv. popraveného obrodzenia. A v neposlednom rade eschatologickú otázku, smerujúcu k odkazu sľubných, predčasne vyhasnutých talentov pre historickú pamäť i neskorší život kultúrneho spoločenstva. Zvlášť aktuálny význam nadobúdajú tieto otázky na pozadí dnešného dramatického osudu Ukrajiny a jej obyvateľstva.

Vo van der Entovej antológii sú jednou až siedmimi básňami zastúpení títo zavraždení básnici medzivojnového obdobia: Stepan

Ben, Vasyľ Bobynskij, Volodymyr Bulajenko, Jevhen Bunda, Mychajlo Draj-Chmara, Dmytro Falkivskij, Pavlo Fylypovyč, Mike Johansen, Myroslav Kušnir, Andrij Mychajľuk, Oleh Olžyč, Jakiv Savčenko, Mychajlo Semenko, Geo Škurupij, Oleksa Slisarenko, Edvard Stricha, Volodymyr Svidzinskij, Olena Teliha, Vasyľ Čumak, Oleksa Vlyzko, Marko Voronyj, Dmytro Zahul a Mykola Zerov. Zostavovateľ k nim pridal ako kontrapunkt krátky portrét a ukážku z tvorby oslavovaného socialistického básnika Andrija Malyška, ktorý síce umrel až v roku 1970, a to prirodzenou smrťou, no jeho brata Petra (ten nebol literárne činný) popravili v roku 1928 po politickom procese. Ako to formuloval nizozemský znalec slovanských literatúr a prekladateľ slovenskej prózy Abram Muller, každá z mikrobiografií básnikov van der Entovej antológie predstavuje „tragickú perlu“. Na tomto mieste pripomeňme len niektoré neblahé konce: futurista Andrij Michajľuk, ktorého obvinili z nacionalizmu a kontrarevolúcie, bol po monsterprocesse v roku 1937 odsúdený a popravený; avantgardného básnika Vasyľa Čumaka zavraždili v roku 1919 bielogvardejci; Oleksu Vlyzka popravili Sovieti hneď v prvých čistkách po atentáte na Sergeja Kirova v decembri 1934; Mychajla Semenka, charizmatického básnika svojej generácie, súdili za „aktívnu kontrarevolučnú činnosť“ a zastreli v roku 1937, v tom istom čase popravili Mika Johansena a Stepana Bena, protestujúceho proti násilnej kolektivizácii; Mychajlo Draj-Chmara sa dal v roku 1939 ako politický väzeň v kolymskom gulagu zastreliť miesto mladšieho spoluväzňa; Volodymyr Svidzinskij bol v roku 1941 zaživa upálený príslušníkmi NKVD; poetku Oľenu Telihu zavraždili Nemci v roku 1942 v Babom Jare, kde v tom istom čase našlo smrť vyše 33 tisíc civilných obyvateľov; o Jevhenovi Bundovi sa vie len to, že v roku 1927 uverejnil niekoľko avantgardistických básní a neskôr pravdepodobne zahynul násilnou smrťou.

Výber poézie týchto a ďalších autorov neanticipuje neskorší tragický osud básnikov ani spoločenstva, ktorého boli súčasťou. Vybrané básne sa čitateľskej obci predstavujú ako au-

tonómne diela, svedčiace o životaschopnosti často diametrálne odlišných umeleckých názorov ich tvorcov, potvrdzujú ich literárnu zaujímavosť a zrelosť, či už ide o dlhšiu futuristickú báseň „chceme päťročnicu“ Andrija Mychajľuka, expresionistický „Máj“ Vasyľa Čumaka, neoklasicistické básne „Pro domo“ a „Dante“ Mykolu Zerova, symbolistické verše Jakiva Savčenko a Oľeny Telihy, alebo neskorú básnickú modernu, ktorú tu prekladateľ uviedol minimalistickou básňou Pavla Fylypovyča. Tieto i ostatné prebásnenia Arieho van der Enta vypovedajú o prekladateľovom maximalistickom programe, ktorého základom je úsilie o zachovanie všetkých kvalít originálu, vrátane jeho zvukovej stránky, čo možno oceniť najmä pri prebásňovaní avantgardnej (futuristickej) a symbolistickej poézie, ktoré s obľubou pracujú s akustickými a synestetickými efektmi. Škola básnického prekladu, tak ako ju v súčasnej nizozemskej slavistike reprezentuje kongeniálny, v poradí už piaty preklad Puškinovho *Eugena Onegina* (prel. Hans Boland, 2010) alebo *Zangezi* ruského futuristu Velimira Chlebnikova (prel. Aai Prins, 2013), sa vďaka van der Entovmu *Almanachu zavraždených básnikov* obohacuje o ďalší rozmer. Van der Entova publikácia sa ohlasuje ako prvý zväzok Ukrajinskej knižnice vydavateľstva Woord in blik a podľa editorevej záverečnej poznámky by v dohľadnom čase mala nasledovať druhá antológia ukrajinskej poézie, tentoraz povojnovej. Dve básnické ukážky v apendixe almanachu zároveň naznačujú, aké bude editorské nasmerovanie druhého zväzku Ukrajinskej knižnice – jedna báseň pochádza od „grande dame“ ukrajinskej poézie Liny Kostenko (ročník 1930), druhá od disidenta Vasyľa Stusa (1938 – 1985), ktorý predčasne zomrel v sovietskom väzení. To znamená, že plánom je predstaviť kvalitnú povojnovú ukrajinskú poéziu opäť v kontexte dramatického politického diania, ktorého, ako vidíme, nie je Ukrajina ušetrená, žiaľ, ani v 21. storočí.

ADAM BŽOCH

Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV

Slovenská republika

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3943-3669>

CAROLA HEINRICH: Was bleibt? Zur Inszenierung von Gedächtnis und Identität im postsowjetischen Kuba und Rumänien [What remains? On the staging of memory and identity in post-Soviet Cuba and Romania]

Hildesheim – Zürich – New York: Olms, 2020. 209 S. ISBN 978-3-487-15847-1

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2022.14.2.8>

Die besprochene Publikation basiert auf Carola Heinrichs Doktorarbeit, die an der Universität Wien abgeschlossen wurde. Die Autorin beschäftigt sich darin mit der Hegemonie der Sowjetunion in zwei in vielerlei Hinsicht sich stark voneinander abhebenden kulturellen Zusammenhängen. Der Fokus ihrer Aufmerksamkeit richtet sich namentlich auf die Einflussnahme der UdSSR auf die beiden Länder Kuba und Rumänien. Dabei gilt ihr Interesse unter anderem jenen Machtstrukturen, die sich im Rahmen der geopolitischen Dominanz der Sowjetunion im ehemaligen Ostblock ausbilden konnten, und besonderen Entwicklungen in Kuba, das ebenso im sowjetischen Einflussbereich stand. Dabei erkennt sie, nun bezogen auf die Ostblockländer, eine Analogie, die im Verhältnis der Kolonialstaaten zu ihren Kolonien begründet ist. Das motiviert die Autorin „postsowjetisch“ als „postkolonial“ zu konzeptualisieren und vom „postsowjetischen Postkolonialismus“ zu sprechen und gerade jene Unterschiede in der kulturellen Translation in Augenschein zu nehmen, die sich in Kuba und in Rumänien abzeichnen. Um die besonderen kulturellen Entwicklungen in den hegemonialen Abhängigkeitsverhältnissen in den beiden Ländern besser nachvollziehen zu können, bildet die Autorin die jeweiligen geschichtlichen Kontexte und die Eigenarten der Beziehungen des jeweiligen Staates zur UdSSR ausgesprochen konturiert ab.

Methodologisch stützen sich die Untersuchungen auf das Konzept der kulturellen Übersetzung, das theoretisch ausgeweitet wird, und ist sehr stark vom *translational turn* (Doris Bachmann-Medick) bestimmt. Der Begriff der kulturellen Übersetzung geht dabei auf Homi K. Bhabha zurück. Dem bloßen Eindruck nach finden sich

kaum Abhandlungen zur kulturellen Übersetzung, die sich nicht in der einen oder anderen Weise direkt auf Bhabha beziehen würden. Während Übersetzen einen Prozess der Übertragung eines Textes aus einer Sprache in eine andere bedeutet, wird im Konzept der kulturellen Übersetzung von der Sprachlichkeit abstrahiert, womit dieser Begriff nunmehr metaphorisch gebraucht wird. Was im Prozess der kulturellen Übersetzung übertragen wird, sind Erfahrungen, Denk- und Verhaltensmuster, Wertorientierungen, Weltanschauungen, Mythen etc. aus einem kulturellen Kontext in einen anderen. Was bewirkt diese metaphorische Ausweitung des Übersetzungsbegriffs? Wie fruchtbar ist eine solche Extension für kulturwissenschaftliche Forschung? Die Verfasserin bezieht sich hier auf Ausführungen von Doris Bachmann-Medick, welche die kulturelle Übersetzung als eine Aneignung im Geiste emphatischer Affirmation auffasst, was wiederum sehr an Hans G. Gadamer erinnert, der doch das Grundproblem der Hermeneutik im Übersetzungsproblem sah, nämlich in der Frage, ob und wie es gelingt, „einen Sinnzusammenhang aus einer anderen ‚Welt‘ in die eigene zu übertragen“ (*Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie, Band 3*, hrsg. von Joachim Ritter, 1974, 1062). Und es ist auch ganz im Sinne Bhabhas, kulturelle Übersetzung in performativen Repräsentationen realisiert zu sehen. Die Performativität der Übersetzung wird von Bhabha in Anlehnung an Benjamin wie folgt formuliert: „Das Neue an der kulturellen Übersetzung gleicht dem, was Benjamin als die ‚Fremdheit der Sprachen‘ beschreibt – jenem Problem der Repräsentation, das der Repräsentation selbst innewohnt. [...] Mit dem Konzept der ‚Fremdheit‘ kommt Benjamin der Beschreibung

der Performativität der Übersetzung als Inszenierung kultureller Differenz am nächsten. [...] Übersetzung ist die performative Natur kultureller Kommunikation“ (*Die Verortung der Kultur*, 2000, 339, 341).

Der eigentliche Gegenstand der Untersuchung ist demnach die kulturelle Übersetzung in performativen Repräsentationen. Es sind die Darstellungsweisen des Russen bzw. der Russin und dessen/deren Attribuierungen als kulturelles Fremdbild in performativen Werken (Theater, Performance, Film, Hörspiel) seit dem Wegfall der Vormachtstellung der Sowjetunion um das Jahr 1989 und dem endgültigen Zusammenbruch der UdSSR 1991. Die Analysen beziehen sich auf sechs rumänische bzw. moldauische performative Werke und sieben kubanische. In diesen Beispielen wird kein reales Russenbild angestrebt, vielmehr wird „der Russe“ oder „die Russin“ als eine idealtypische Figur entsprechend der historischen Erfahrung mit der sowjetischen Kolonisierung instrumentalisiert. Die Autorin spricht hier von Translationsprozessen und verortet diese auf zwei Ebenen, einer zeitlichen, auf der erinnert wird und dadurch kulturelles Gedächtnis aktualisiert wird, und einer räumlichen, auf der kulturelle Identitäten zustande kommen: „Kollektives Gedächtnis und kollektive Identität entstehen im Zwischenraum, in der Überlapung von Vergangenheit und Gegenwart und im Aufeinandertreffen verschiedener Erinnerungsräume und ihrer Gedächtnisgemeinschaften“ (36). Diese Zwischenräume werden in dieser Arbeit als Räume der Übersetzung aufgefasst. Sie sind in Grenzzonen angesiedelt und diese Zwischenräume seien, so die Autorin, kulturell ausgesprochen ergiebig. Hier kommt Bhabhas Konzept der Hybridität zum Tragen, das die Verfasserin wie folgt definiert: „Hybridität meint die Konstruktion des Selbst im kulturellen Dazwischen, aus der kulturellen Differenz heraus“ (44). Dieses dezentrale Konzept erhebt Widerspruch gegenüber einem ontologisch-essentialistischen Begriff der Identität und der Idee der kulturellen Reinheit. Dabei wird gefragt, wie kulturelles Gedächtnis konstruiert wird und

welchen Beitrag performative Werke durch die Inszenierungen der kulturellen Wahrnehmungsmuster an diesem Prozess der Transformation und Reflexion leisten.

Mit dem Begriff der Hybridität hängt der Begriff des dritten Raums eng zusammen. Bekanntlich spricht sich Bhabha dagegen aus, dass Kulturen als etwas Essenzielles aufgefasst werden. Kultur ist für ihn nicht auf eine bestimmte Substanz eingrenzbar. Der dritte Raum ist ein Ort, an dem kulturelle Welten aufeinandertreffen, die gemeinhin nicht zusammengehören. Dieser Raum entsteht gerade dadurch, dass Unverträgliches zusammenkommt. Im positiven Sinne ist zu beobachten, dass diese Gegensätze einander in Frage stellen und sich in Wirklichkeit dadurch erst ermöglichen. Dieser Aspekt kommt in den analysierten performativen Werken schließlich auch zum Tragen.

Das theoretische Fundament der Analyse bilden, wie ausgeführt, Theorien der Translation im Sinne der kulturellen Übersetzung. Dabei ist festzuhalten, dass Translation hier als ein de- und rekontextualisierender Prozess verstanden wird und dass Gedächtnis- und Identitätskonstruktionen als getrennte Translationsprozesse analysiert werden, was möglicherweise überraschen könnte, sich jedoch im Nachhinein tatsächlich als legitim erweist, vor allem dann, wenn es darum geht, die unterschiedlichen Ausprägungen und Formen der kulturellen Translation sichtbar zu machen.

Der Begriff der Translation wird hier, in Anlehnung an Bhabha und dessen Übertragung des Benjaminschen Konzeptes des grundsätzlichen Übersetztseins jeder Sprache auf Kulturen gebraucht (28), wobei die Autorin auf die entsprechenden Ausführungen Benjamins in dessen Schrift „Über Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen“ verweist. Bei Benjamin ist dieses „Immer-schon-Übersetztsein“ nicht metaphorisch gemeint, wenn er schreibt: „Es ist notwendig, den Begriff der Übersetzung in der tiefsten Schicht der Sprachtheorie zu begründen [...]. Seine volle Bedeutung gewinnt er in der Einsicht, daß jede höhere

Sprache (mit Ausnahme des Wortes Gottes) als Übersetzung aller anderen betrachtet werden kann. Mit dem erwähnten Verhältnis der Sprachen als dem von Medien verschiedener Dichte ist die Übersetzbarkeit der Sprachen ineinander gegeben. Die Übersetzung ist die Überführung der einen Sprache in die andere durch ein Kontinuum von Verwandlungen“ (*Gesammelte Schriften II/I*, hrsg. von Rolf Tiedemann und Hermann Schwepenhäuser, 1991, 151). Wohlge-merkt, Benjamin spricht die ganze Zeit von sprachlicher Übersetzung, so dass der Eindruck entstehen kann, wenn man Bhabhas Übersetzungsbegriff im Blick behält, der sich explizit auf Benjamin beruft, als ob diese zwei Spielarten der Begriffsverwendung, also die wörtliche und die metaphorische, nach Belieben konvertibel wären. So beobachtet z. B. Birgit Wagner in ihrem Aufsatz „Kulturelle Übersetzung. Erkundungen über ein wanderndes Konzept“, dass Bhabha sich die Freiheit nimmt, „zwischen der wortwörtlichen und der metaphorischen Ebene des Übersetzungsbegriffs zu wandern, wie es ihm beliebt – und insofern leistet er einer inflationären und manchmal auch beliebigen Verwendung des Begriffs zumindest Vorschub“ (*Dritte Räume. Homi K. Bhabhas Kulturtheorie. Anwendung. Kritik. Reflexion*, hrsg. von Anna Babka, Julia Malle und Matthias Schmidt, 2012, 39). Dies ist jedoch in der besprochenen Publikation nicht der Fall. Die Verfasserin entscheidet sich bewusst für die uneigentliche Begriffsverwendung. Somit wird Kultur als Übersetzung aufgefasst, wobei allerdings auch Momente der Unübersetzbarkeit nach Auffassung von Bhabha (und naturgemäß wieder in Bezug auf Benjamins Sprachtheorie, doch gar nicht in deren Sinne) aufschlussreich werden können. Unübersetzbarkeit meint, dass im Prozess der Translation Inhalte nicht einfach transferiert und in einen neuen Kontext hineingelegt werden können, sondern dass immer schon Anpassungen vorgenommen werden, wobei stets etwas Neues entsteht, wodurch neue Erkenntnisse und Einsichten möglich werden. Zum Konzept der Unüber-

setzbarkeit gehören allerdings auch Momente der „Übersetzungsverweigerung, oder -widerstände“ (47).

Attribuierungen und Repräsentationen von Fremderfahrungen stellen sich am Ende als Inszenierungen des Eigenen heraus und geben darüber Auskunft, wie kulturelles Gedächtnis und wie Identität des Eigenen konstruiert werden. So stellt die Autorin in Bezug auf Edward Said fest: „Binär strukturierte Selbst- und Fremdbilder haben folglich einen konstruktiven Charakter, der nicht darauf ausgerichtet ist, ‚wahre Aussagen‘ über das Fremde und das Eigene zu machen, sondern eine Wirklichkeit zu konstruieren und über diese Konstrukte wiederum Einfluss auf Kultur und Gesellschaft auszuüben“ (30). Somit wird auch Erinnerung als konstruktiver Prozess der permanenten Übersetzung begriffen und dadurch auch die prinzipielle Konstruktivität des Gedächtnisses angenommen. In diesem Sinne versteht sich das kollektive Gedächtnis als kommunikatives Gedächtnis, ein Gedächtnis, in dem laufend Translation am Werk ist. Der vorliegenden Arbeit werden Gedächtniskonzepte von Aleida und Jan Assmann mit entsprechenden Referenzen auf das Konzept des kollektiven Gedächtnisses von Maurice Halbwachs zugrunde gelegt und der Fokus richtet sich hauptsächlich auf die Spielarten des Sich-Erinnerns als kultureller Übersetzungsprozess, also eine Art „Aneignung der Vergangenheit aus der Gegenwart“ (33), denn, „was eine Gruppe erinnert oder vergisst und auf welche Weise sie es tut, bestimmt ihr Selbstverständnis“ (34).

Die postsowjetischen Inszenierungen, die ein Ende der Vormachtstellung Russlands reflektieren – einen nicht zu überschätzenden Umbruch auf allen Ebenen (politisch, ökonomisch, ideologisch, kulturell) – werden durchwegs als „gegen die Macht aufbegehrende Sprechakte“ (21) aufgefasst und dementsprechend analysiert. Die Analyse richtet sich auf die verschiedenen Erscheinungsformen der Translation, auf die Machart der Inszenierungsformen, auf die Mittel und die Techniken, die dabei zur An-

wendung gebracht werden. Dabei werden die Darstellungsmöglichkeiten in den konkreten Gattungen ausgelotet und bei der Analyse berücksichtigt.

Die Autorin stellt ein verstärktes Aufkommen der sowjetischen Thematik in der künstlerischen Produktion seit den Veränderungen von 1989 bis 1991 fest, also seit dem Ende des kalten Krieges und dem Untergang bzw. der endgültigen Auflösung der UdSSR. Dies dürfte weniger überraschend sein, zumal gerade in Umbruchszeiten Vergangenheitsbewältigung- bzw. Aufarbeitung hochaktuell sind, was zwangsläufig zu Revisionen im Bereich der kulturellen Selbstwahrnehmung, der Eigendefinition und der kollektiven Identität führt. Die Autorin macht durch ihre Analysen in ihren Ausführungen auch darauf aufmerksam, dass in diesem Prozess der transkulturellen Hybridisierung im postsowjetischen Umfeld immer auch das Verdrängte berücksichtigt werden muss (35).

Bei der Aufbereitung der analysierten Werke werden drei Varianten des Sich-Erinnerns an die Sowjetunion als inszenierte Translation erkannt: Es wird zum einen über Mittel der Komik mit der Vergangenheit abgerechnet, der Russe wird als Hegemon verlacht und eine nationale Emanzipation heraufbeschworen, was sich als typisch für die rumänischen Spielarten der Translation herausstellt. Zum anderen finden sich Beispiele für Nostalgie, in denen einer glorreichen Vergangenheit gedacht wird, was wiederum für die kubanische Erinnerungskultur bezeichnend ist. In diesem Fall hat die Beschäftigung mit der gemeinsamen Vergangenheit mit Sowjet-Russland einen anderen Hintergrund als in Rumänien. In Kuba dient sie der Artikulation von Hoffnungen auf eine bessere Zukunft. Statt dass aber die nationale Emanzipation und der erträumte Wohlstand eintreten, kehren die als überwunden geglaubten Machtstrukturen wieder und vereiteln einen hoffnungsvollen Aufbruch. Eine weitere Variante der inszenierten Translation wird dort erkannt, wo es um das Verhältnis von Erinnerung und Macht geht, um Mo-

mente der gezielten Steuerung der Erinnerungs- und Vergessensprozesse (37 ff.). Hier werden weder Mittel der Komik eingesetzt noch Nostalgie erzeugt, sondern auf Dokumentaristik abgehoben.

Die Analyseschritte wurden in dieser Arbeit so gesetzt, dass zuerst verschiedene Varianten des Sich-Erinnerns an die sowjetische Hegemonialmacht ins Blickfeld gerückt werden, um im zweiten Schritt die postsowjetischen Positionierungen in Kuba und Rumänien herauszuarbeiten. Es fällt auf, dass sich Darstellungen des Verhältnisses gegenüber der Macht Russlands in den beiden Ländern durchaus unterscheiden: Während in Rumänien durchgehend negative Feindbilder der russischen Hegemonialmacht und des Russen bzw. der Russin generiert werden, wird in Kuba ein durchwegs positives Bild gezeichnet. Unterschiede ergeben sich auch hinsichtlich des Geschlechts. Während in den rumänischen Werken das Russenbild männlich dominiert ist, finden sich in Werken kubanischer Autor*innen auch Russinnen. Dies hat seinen Grund in den unterschiedlichen historischen und politischen Kontexten der sowjetischen Dominanz.

ROMAN MIKULÁŠ

Institut für Weltliteratur SAW

Slowakische Republik

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0822-2535>

Zborník *Poetika festivity* je výstupom grantového projektu Ústavu slovenskej literatúry SAV v Bratislave a Pedagogickej fakulty Trnavskej univerzity v Trnave „Poetika textu a poetika udalosti v novodobej slovenskej literatúre 18. – 21. storočia“. Jadro projektu vyplýva z konceptuálnych úvah Petra Zajaca o pojme „novej poetiky“, ktorú editor zborníka chápe ako „poetiku textu a poetiku udalosti“, opísanú v štúdií „Prolegomena k novej poetike slovenskej literatúry po roku 1945“ (*Slovenská literatúra* 3/2017, 173). Autorský kolektív publikácie *Poetika festivity* pripisuje zborník jubileu René Bílika. Jeho rozsiahly výskum festivít socialistickej každodennosti v ich širších kultúrnych súvislostiach (aj samotné pojmové vymedzenie festivity ako „sviatku, majúceho vecné jadro, dôvod, impulz, životnú udalosť ako obsah – i jeho slávenie a oslavovanie ako pohyb/dianie a s ním súvisiace nálady, atmosféry či rozpoloženia“; *Poetika textu a poetika udalosti*, René Bílik – Peter Zajac, eds., 2018, 10) tvorí východisko pre väčšinu príspevkov a obsahuje ďalšie impulzy na uchopenie súvislostí medzi poetikou textu a poetikou udalosti a prechodu medzi nimi. Okrem inšpirujúcich téz René Bílika – napríklad o ambivalentnej podobe festivít a ich funkcii pri konštrukcii kultúrnej pamäti a demonštrácii kolektívnej identity – sa autorky a autori zborníka opierajú o práce Johna L. Austina a Jana Assmanna, semioticky orientovaný výskum folkloristov Vjačeslava Ivanova a Piotra Bogatyrjova, o antropologické práce Arnolda van Gennepa, Victora Turnera a Vladimíra Macuru. Sémantická oblasť pojmu festivity sa takto kríži s pojmami rituálu, kultu a karnevalu, liminality a prechodu, kultúrnej pamäti a kolektívnej identity, epifánie a zázraku.

Operatívny potenciál pojmu festivity, ktorým možno registrovať situácie na prahu alebo na pomedzí, akcentuje Peter Zajac

v úvode: „Pod festivitami rozumieme najčastejšie stavy transgresie, prekračovania a situácií, v ktorých je niečoho priveľa. Priveľa radosti, entuziazmu, slávy, šťastia, cti, pocity. Transgresia má však aj excesívne podoby frenetizmu, zúrivosti, ústiacej do ničenia. A má aj svoj opak, regresiu, neprítomnosť alebo chýbanie niečoho, spojené s poetikou piety, trizny, pohrebu, oslavy smrti, karu, fakového sprievodu, vojenského pohrebu, podobu poetiky inštitucionalizovaných kolektívnych udalostí, spartakiád, vojenských parád a prehliadok“ (9). V tomto zmysle zborník nepriamo nadväzuje na výskum performatívnosti, ktorý v divadelnej vede nedávno iniciovala Erika Fischer-Lichte, napríklad prácou *Performativität: Eine Einführung* (2012). Sviatok a sviatočné konanie („festliches Handeln“) Fischer-Lichte skúma hlavne s ohľadom na transformačnú moc ich performatívnosti a zdôrazňuje zážitky liminality a excesu, ktoré podľa nej sprevádzajú všetky žánre kultúrnych performatívov (*cultural performance*, pojem Miltona Singera z konca 50. rokov 20. stor.): sviatky a rituály, majstrovské zápasy, súdne procesy, korunovačné sprievody, divadelné predstavenia, exekúcie atď. S tézou, že sviatok ako špecifický žánr kultúrneho predstavenia umožňuje časové a priestorové transgresie, sa v zborníku vysporadúvajú napríklad Zora Prušková v príspevku „Časopriestor festivít – pôvod, limity a repetície ich poetiky“ a Kristína Pavlovičová v štúdií „Proglas ako festivity“, ktorá píše: „Festivity sa teda odohráva v mimoriadnom čase, bežný chrónos je prerušený kairósom“ (38).

Časový záber príspevkov je široký (tak ako je širokospektrálny aj ich obsah), začínajúc obdobím antiky cez obdobia stredoveku a osvietenstva až po epochu (neskorého) socializmu a súčasnosť. Viac ako polovica zo štrnástich príspevkov vychádza z literár-

novednej perspektívy a skúma poetiku festivít na príklade špecifickej slávnosti – ples a bál (Marcela Mikulová), liturgia, pohreb a rodinný kar (Fedor Matejov) – a jej tematizovania a umeleckého inscenovania v literárnych textoch. V súvislosti s novou „konjunktúrou“ pojmu poetiky, ako o nej píše Armen Avnessian a Jan Niklas Howe v zborníku *Poetik: Historische Narrative und aktuelle Positionen* (2014, 7 – 14), zviazanou hlavne s etablovaním pojmu performatívnosti, sa do oblastí *novej* poetiky dostávajú nielen literárne texty, ale aj kultúrne performatívy, ako napríklad politický súdny proces (René Bílik), antický symposion (Anton Vydra), pôst a potlač (Pavel Matejovič a Katarína Mikulovičová), slávnostné zasadnutia Malohontskej učenej spoločnosti (Tibor Pichler), univerzitné ceremónie (Dalibor Tureček) a iné rituály vedeckého správania (Lubomír Plesník).

Hlavným inovačným zámerom projektu, z ktorého publikácia vychádza, je práve súčasný výskum udalosti festivity (v podobe kultúrneho performatívu) a jej realizácie a transformácie v rámci literárneho textu. Kristína Pavlovičová upozorňuje na text *Proglasu* ako na súčasť festivity a otvára potenciál pre ďalší výskum žánrov (napr. príležitostnej poézie a cirkevnej homiletiky), ktoré sú zviazané s udalosťou istého sviatku a sú „v inkluzívnom vzťahu s festivitou ako sumarizujúcim komunikátom“ (40). Fenoménu žánru, chápaného širšie ako „rečový žáner“ (Michail Bachtin), teda ako každodenný rečový prehovor, sa venuje Adam Bžoch v štúdiu „Slovenské haiku ako oslava poézie“. Práve vo svojej funkcii rečového (a nie len básnického) žánru haiku v súčasnej slovenskej lyrike spĺňa podľa Bžocha funkciu oslavy poézie: „Hoci jeho predmetom býva len v tých najzriedkavejších prípadoch poézia samotná, ludickosť žánru, založená v prvom rade na dodržiavaní jednoduchovej hrovej konvencie, resp. pravidle slabičnosti, naznačuje ako druhá prirodzenosť *sprezzatura* poézie, ktorá na jednej strane ukrýva, na druhej strane predvádza básnickú virtuozitu, pôsobiacu navonok ako jednoduchosť“ (92). Zora Prušková

v príspevku „Časopriestor festivít – pôvod, limity a repetície ich poetiky“ skúma latentnú prítomnosť festivity ako časopriestorovej topografickej vlastnosti umeleckého textu. Daniel Domorák chápe vzťah medzi textom a festivitou ako mediálnu transformáciu udalosti, ktorá sa uskutočňuje nielen na tematickej úrovni jej opisu v texte, ale aj na úrovni „narativizácie slávenia“ (80). Na príklade próz Františka Švantnera „Dáma“, „Sedliak“ a „Kňaz“ hľadá Domorák „momenty slávenia v procese rozprávania“ (83) a navrhuje ich poňatie ako zápasu, vyhrateho boja, heroizácie či zázraku. Jeho úvaha o narativizácii slávenia, ktorá istým momentom textu umožňuje vyvstať ako udalosti a zbaviť sa citátovosti, je inšpirujúcim príspevkom do širšej diskusie o performatívnosti literárneho textu samotného.

Na pomedzie poetiky textu a poetiky udalosti možno zaradiť príspevky Petra Zajaca, Anny Kobylińskiej a Aleksandry Hudymač. V rozsiahlej štúdiu o životnom a literárnom diele Milana Kunderu Zajac sleduje elementy poetiky festivity na pomedzí životných a jazykových „hier“ českého románpisca. Festivity vonkajšej skutočnosti svojho života Kundera „ponechal v textoch ako závoj“ (152). Podobné prelínanie poetiky textu (konkrétne cestovného denníka Martina Kukučina) s poetikou udalosti (prechádzky po meste) skúma aj Hudymač; elementy dvoch poetík sa pritom spájajú do „chválospev[*u*] na chorvátske mesto“ (55) Záhreb. Kobylińska sa v príspevku „K drobnostiam Tatarkovej slávy“ venuje Tatarkovej poetike prejavu vnímanej ako „*spiritus movens* kultúry“ (89). Vychádza pritom najmä z jeho kulturologických úvah a pozoruje istý „performatívny sklz“, ku ktorému smeruje aj spisovateľovo prozaické dielo v posledných dvoch desaťročiach života. Prameň ritualizácie jazyka Tatarkových textov a metatextov autorka hľadá v „orálnej tradícii rozprávania v mode rečnenia, chvály a oslavovania“ (86). Paralelou s rétorikou antického symposionu alebo odkazom na potlač, ceremóniu darovania severoamerických kmeňov, sa Kobylińskiej štúdia zaujímavým spôsobom spája

s príspevkami „Postava nepozvaného hosťa v antických symposionoch“ Antona Vydru a „Pôst a potlač ako invarianty novodobých rituálov“ Pavla Matejoviča a Kataríny Mikulovičovej.

Tematické zauzlenie, ktoré spája takmer všetky príspevky zborníku, predstavuje súvislosť medzi performatívnym a existenciálnym aspektom festivity. Prepletenie festivity s existenciou možno pokladať za významný výsledok spoločnej práce autorov zborníka, napríklad v príspevkoch Pruškovej, Matejova a Plesníka. Existenciálny potenciál festivít súvisiaci s ich afektívnym charakterom zdôrazňuje Bílik v štúdií venovanej politickým súdnym procesom počas socializmu. Afektívne naladenie „textov festivity“ sa zameriava jednak na „naprogramovaný pátos“ toho, kto hovorí, jednak na „programovanú“ emocionálnu odpoveď toho, kto jeho posolstvo potenciálne počúva (11 – 21). Mikulová ukazuje, ako Božena Slančíková-Timrava v novele *Bál* kladie do opozície performativitu bálu (najmä kvôli očakávaniu, ktoré vzbudzuje a ktoré vyplýva z vopred daných konvencií) a krízu identity, pričom spracúva pocit „samoty uprostred davu“ (72). Opierajúc sa o Bílikove existenciálne poňatie slávnosti a slávania, Domorák navrhuje pojem „existenciálnej festivity“ (77) a preskúšava jeho operatívnosť a hranice. Skúma prepletenie festivít s vojnovou skúsenosťou a vyzdvihuje ich schopnosť problematizovať „príslušnosť jedinca k určitému, kolektívnemu poňatiu sveta“ (78) a reflektovať krízy i katastrofy ako produktívne životné momenty.

Ďalším významným výsledkom, ktorý sa z lektúry zborníka kryštalizuje, je spojitost performatívnej a teatrálnnej perspektívy na festivity. Udalosť festivity neznamená len niečo nové v zmysle zmeny, ktorú vnímame ako prerušenie kontinuity historického alebo každodenného času, ale označuje aj niečo teatrálnne, singulárne a výnimočné, zakotvené v prítomnom čase. Rad príspevkov spája performatívny charakter festivít s umeleckými stratégiami mystifikácií, zavádzania a predvádzania. Na príklade literárneho motívu bálu Mikulová poukazuje na karne-

valizáciu spoločenskej slávnosti, deformujúcu a travestujúcu jej pôvodnú sviatočnosť a odkrývajúcu falošnosť a labilitu spoločenských pravidiel a konvencií: „Realita na bále je falošná – je prikrášená, hyperbolizovaná v jej prejavochoch, kamufluje rovnosť, ponúka klamlivé situácie, ktoré po skončení bálu miznú“ (72). Stratu pôvodného funkčného významu rituálov a ich premenu na „prevlek, masku, kostým“ (128), teda na divadelné predstavenie, tematizuje aj Dalibor Tureček na príklade akademických rituálov súčasnosti v príspevku „Svätky vznešené prázdnoty“. Na artifičialnosť a potenciálny (seba)deštruktívny potenciál festivít poukazujú, odvolávajú sa na Bílikove úvahy, aj Matejovič a Mikulovičová: „Invariantná štruktúra rituálu môže nadobúdať ako podobu gesta prijatia a súhlasu, tak aj zavrnutia, vylúčenia a forkluzie, resp. okrem procesu konštrukcie (kreovania daného spoločenstva) v sebe integruje aj (seba)deštruktívny potenciál“ (105). Tak sa napríklad trampské označenie potlach stáva opakom pôvodného rituálu.

Za uzlový bod, v ktorom sa závery temer všetkých autorov zborníka konceptuálne stretávajú, možno pokladať tézu o ambivalentnej podobe festivít. Destabilizujú pôvodné chápanie festivít ako opaku všednosti a popisujú ich pomocou opozičných dvojíc pojmov, ako napríklad posvätné vs. profánne, banálne vs. výnimočné, chaos vs. poriadok, nevyočítateľné vs. naplánované atď. „Každodenné je ‚podložíím‘ sviatočného a sviatočné je ‚len‘ iným pohybom vzťahnutia sa k veciam“ (79), píše Domorák. Aj vo sviatočnej situácii bálu možno vnímať prázdnotu (Mikulová), ale aj naopak – „chválospev“ mesta možno stvárniť prostredníctvom absolútne banálnej aktivity prechádzky (Hudymač). Túto ambivalentnosť festivity, ako potvrdzuje príspevok Antona Vydru na príklade nepozvaného hosťa v antických symposionoch, možno zaviesť späť až do antického Grécka: „Symposiatický svet totiž predpokladá, že súčasťou usporiadania je aj prvok chaosu, ktorý dokáže zmeniť poriadok a narušiť pôvodný pohyb alebo zámer“ (35).

Na záver možno konštatovať, že zborník *Poetika festivity* prispieva do aktuálnej a interdisciplinárne relevantnej diskusie o performativnosti v literatúre a kultúre a vyznačuje sa inšpiratívnym myslením na pomedzí udalosti a textu, na pomedzí existencie a (umeleckej) hry, ako aj na pomedzí dichotomických pojmov, ktorých opozície a hierarchie inovatívne reflektuje. Autorský kolektív rozpracúva teoreticky a metodicky inštrumentárium, ktoré otvára potenciál na ďalší výskum festivít: napríklad na výskum študentských slávností v alternatívnej kultúre, ktorým sa aktuálne venuje výstava „Krá-

lové Majálesü“ (Múzeum Kampa, Praha, 30. 4. – 27. 7. 2022). V neposlednom rade spoločná publikácia *Poetika festivity* poskytuje výbornú východiskovú bázu pre detailnejší a presnejší popis rozmanitých modalít súvislostí medzi festivitou v texte a festivitou v kultúre, medzi textom a udalosťou – od textu festivity cez festivitú v texte (ako súčasť fiktívneho sveta) a text ako súčasť festivity až po festivitú textu samotného (napr. ako „oslavy“ poézie, slova alebo rozumu).

ZORNITZA KAZALARSKA
Humboldtova univerzita v Berlíne
Nemecko

JANA KUZMÍKOVÁ: Kognitívna literárna veda. Teória, experimenty, analýzy
[Cognitive literary studies: Theory, experiments, analyses]

Bratislava: Veda, vydavateľstvo SAV, 2021. 264 s. ISBN 978-80-224-1896-6

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2022.14.2.10>

Pred prítomnosťou poznatkov a postupov exaktných vied v umenovedách sa už dávno nemožno brániť rýdzo epistemologickou bariérou. V literárnej vede ju prekonáva rad etablovaných vedeckých metód prevažne konštruktivistického charakteru. Z hľadiska ambícií výskumných otázok, ktoré práce tohto typu štandardne predstavujú, teda nie je problém, ak sú príliš „tvrdé“, ale ak na avizované empirické prostredie odkazujú stále málo. Najmä s ohľadom na kognitívovednú interdisciplinárnu flotilu, ktorú v súčasnosti vedie vlajková loď v podobe neurovedy, sa totiž zvyšujú nároky na empirickú zodpovednosť podobných prác. Uvedomí si to musela aj Jana Kuzmíková pri príprave vedeckej monografie s názvom *Kognitívna literárna veda: Teória, experimenty, analýzy* (2021), kde sa neuspokojuje s platnosťou intuitívnych hypotéz o charaktere literárnej komunikácie, ale snaží sa ich aj sama empiricky overiť.

Priestor na zacielenie výskumu v tejto podobe aj na slovenské čitateľské publikum získal podložie v dvoch špeciálnych číslach časopisu *World Literature Studies*: prvé z nich zostavila Jana Kuzmíková (3/2011) a druhé

Roman Mikuláš (4/2015). Po kolektívnej monografii *Literatúra v kognitívnych súvislostiach* (Kuzmíková, ed., 2014) a aj širšom (nie však výlučne) konštruktivistickom metodologickom vejári novších literárnovedných smerov, predstavenom v kolektívnom diele *Podoby literárnej vedy: Teórie – Metódy – Smery* (Mikuláš a kol. 2016), zrejme dozrieva v slovenskom literárnovednom prostredí aj potenciál na prijatie samostatného (a aj experimentálneho) projektu autorky. Kuzmíková sa v rámci konštruktivistického programu s tendenciami silných, slabých a neradikálnych (237) prístupov ubera práve neradikálnou vetvou. Podľa autorky sa v nej vyvažujú okrajové tendencie „medzi epistemologickými extrémami realizmu a relativizmu“ (33). V monografii sa zreteľne rozlišujú (59) tri úrovne neradikálneho konštruktivizmu, a to experienciálna, intencionálna a neurobiologická. Na ich pozadí sa makrokompozične organizuje výklad v štyroch oddieloch publikácie.

Teoreticko-metodologická topografia kognitívnej vedy sa v prvej úrovni (Oddiel I) predostiera v takom rozptyle, že popri príznaku novosti kognitívnych vied mu-

síme zároveň hovoriť aj o existencii zrelého výskumného prostredia. Vo svete sa organizuje cez mnohé doposiaľ nepoložené vedecké otázky a rozmanité interdisciplinárne témy. V súčasných kognitívnych vedách sa za dominantnú východiskovú hypotézu, ktorá naprieč radom rôznorodých disciplín naberá na sile, považuje hypotéza vtelesnej mysle (*embodied mind*), pričom sa už žiada reflektovať aj fenomenologické vmyslenie tela (*eminded body*), čo zdôrazňuje napríklad Patricia Pisters v štúdiu „Dexter’s Plastic Brain: Mentalizing and Mirroring in Cinematic Empathy“ (2014, 59). Keďže Kuzmíková realizuje svoje výskumné úsilie primárne na základoch „embodimentu“, terminologicky prehodnocuje časté preberanie pojmov „embodied mind/cognition“ novotvarom *vtelesnosť*. Používanie novotvaru obhajaže preto, že „nejde o stelesnenú (telesne zhmotnenú) ani vtelenú (vo forme tela existujúcu alebo dovnútra tela dodanú) myseľ“ (18). Spätné tak zdôvodňuje aj svoje skoršie využitie tohto novotvaru v texte z roku 2011 „Kognitívne súvislosti literárneho procesu (Krátky prehľad kognitívne orientovanej literárnej vedy)“, publikovanom v časopise *World Literature Studies* (3, 15 – 27).

Tézy kognitívnych vied sa v druhej úrovni výkladu (Oddiel III) vývinovo dostávajú do kontextu najmä vo vzťahu k emóciám pri vnímaní literatúry, a to s rešpektom aj voči starším prácam v oblasti recepcnej estetiky či fenomenológie, ktoré u nás prenikali hlavne do myslenia tzv. nitrianskej školy. Vo všeobecnosti sa Kuzmíková vyjadruje (120) o zmysluplných, ale provizórnych výsledkoch fenomenológie, ktoré treba testovať najmä v neurovede. Veď aj v samotnej kognitívnovednej perspektíve pri skúmaní jazyka došlo vďaka čoraz aktuálnejším poznatkom prírodných vied o fungovaní mysle k takému generačnému skoku – porovnať môžeme práce Noama Chomského *Studies on Semantics in Generative Grammar* (1972) a jeho študenta Georgea Lakoffa *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* ([1987] 1990) –,

že napriek nepopierateľnému prínosu počiatkov kognitívnej perspektívy sú niektoré jej východiská prakticky nezlučiteľné s tým, čo dnes vieme o jazykovej (a teda aj literárnej) komunikácii.

V druhej úrovni výkladu sa prejaví aj analyticko-interpretáčnej (Oddiel IV) úsilie Jany Kuzmíkovej. Miestami sa opatrne predstavuje (181) ako vlastné prečítanie literárneho diela, ktoré autorka vykladá na zovšeobecnenej metaúrovni. Opakovane sa tak pripomína sebareflexívna úroveň kognitívnovedných prístupov, ktoré sa k poznaniu približujú aj metaanalýzou poznávacích procesov a metaforického charakteru (aj vedeckého) uvažovania. Časťým a vhodne použitým nástrojom analýzy textov, pri ktorých sa opakuje dynamika reálneho a nereálneho, je kognitívno-genologická typológia literárnych diel. Autorka vychádza z práce Patricka Colma Hogana *The Mind and Its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion* (2003), ktorý túto typológiu abstrahuje na základe rozličných emočných motivantov. Interpretácie Kuzmíkovej sú nasýtené odkazmi na relevantné empirické štúdie, ktorými podkladá parciálne interpretačné tézy, čo je v súlade s ambíciou monografie odlišiť čitateľskú intuíciu od faktov.

Predstavené interpretácie prinášajú nesporné originálny aj empiricky udržateľný výklad čítania literatúry. Ďalšie rozvíjanie je možné vďaka otvorenosti Hoganovho konceptu, ktorý by si zaslúžil pozornosť obzvlášť vo vetve protoemócie nuda/zvedavosť (261). V Kuzmíkovej výskume by tento aspekt mohol spolupracovať s výkladom verifikovania statusu reality (u Františka Švantnera) alebo hry, humoru a irónie (u Pavla Vilikovského, Stanislava Rakúsa, Janka Jesenského), čo sú časté témy predstavených interpretácií. Kuzmíková v recenzovanej monografii upozorňuje aj na absolútne zásadné empirické potvrdenia umenovedných hypotéz, ako je napríklad spĺvanie protichodných konceptov pri humore, resp. smiechu (169), preto sa ďalší pohyb v tejto oblasti zdá obzvlášť zmysluplný.

Prínos monografie *Kognitívna literárna veda* nie je primárne v potvrdzovaní starších názorov humanitných vied, ale v rozlišovaní medzi aktuálnymi a neaktuálnymi hypotézami empirickým kľúčom. Jeho súčasťou je tak objektívne potvrdzovanie intuície, ako aj zdôraznenie viacerých kontrainuitívnych zistení kognitívnych vied (233). Autorkino úsilie sa tu experimentálne zhmotňuje na tretej úrovni výkladu (Oddiel II). Časť (aj keď nie vždy priznaným) dôvodom na rezervovanosť voči interdisciplinárnosti kognitívnovedného výskumu je aj zdanlivo paradigmatický posun nárokov na humanitných vedcov. Pravda, žiada sa aj osvojovanie si nových schopností, ale Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr. v stati „Why Cognitive Linguists Should Care More about Empirical Methods“ (2007, 55) obavy zo zmeny vnútej humanitnej časti akadémie vníma ako neopodstatnené. Odborníci a odborníčky z oblasti kognitívnej lingvistiky (v tomto prípade literárnej vedy) sa podľa neho nemusia nevyhnutne vyznať aj v experimentálnej psychológii, počítačovej vede a neurovedách (veď kto by potom robil kognitívnu lingvistikú?). Majú však reagovať na aktuálne empirické poznatky a aj v teoretickom uvažovaní stanovovať a rozvíjať empiricky overiteľné hypotézy.

Publikácia Jany Kuzmíkovej teda presahuje ambície individuálnych kognitívne zameraných literárnovedných pokusov, a preto sa, prirodzene, ani autorka nepokúša demonštrovať obratnosť pri všetkých výzvach empirického výskumu, ktorý v zahraničí zvyčajne zabezpečujú väčšie autorské kolektívy. Pri (štatistickom) spracovaní rôznorodých dát oslovuje odborníkov z iných oblastí, čím kladie dôraz na presnosť údajov. Od monografie J. Kuzmíkovej tiež nemožno očakávať stret s experimentálnymi explikáciami, ktoré predstavuje napríklad rozsiahly laboratórny výskum zhrnutý Benjaminom K. Bergenom v diele *Louder Than Words: The New Science of How the Mind Makes Meaning* (2012). Podobné úsilie si podľa autorky opäť „vyžaduje tímové laboratórne projekty, ktoré na Slovensku nejestvujú“

(238). Prezentuje sa teda skôr experimentálna sonda (104) do vzťahu medzi chápaním metafory a kognitívnymi charakteristikami osobnosti. Kuzmíková tu preberá a upravuje predchádzajúcu metódu výskumu chápania a ocenenia metafory (Akira Utsumi: „The Role of Feature Emergence in Metaphor Appreciation“, 2005). V tejto metóde redukuje rozmer estetického ocenenia a sleduje vzťah recepcie metafory na škále analytickosť–intuitívnosť pomocou príslušného psychologického dotazníka (ako ho nachádza v štúdií Rosemary Pacini a Seymoura Epsteina „The Relation of Rational and Experiential Information Processing Styles to Personality, Basic Beliefs, and the Ratio-Bias Phenomenon“, 1999).

Výsledky výskumu, ktoré by mohli naznačovať vplyv osobnosti na chápanie metafory (istá rezervovanosť autorky je adekvátne), sú ako prvé závery akceptovateľné a motivujúce pre ďalšie pokusy o ich overenie. Kuzmíková nás podrobne sprevádza celým výskumom, čo prípadnú replikáciu experimentov značne uľahčuje. Možno by takýmto slovenským pokusom pomohol aj zoznam skúmaných metafor v prílohe, ako ho uvádza Akira Utsumi. Táto skutočnosť však nemôže byť v slovenskej kognitívnej literárnej vede – ktorú Jana Kuzmíková výrazne povzbudila svojou monografiou – reálnou prekážkou pre výskumníčku obec, u ktorej v protoemócií nuda/zvedavosť prevládne práve motivácia za lomkou.

PETER GETLÍK

Univerzita Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach
Slovenská republika

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3820-620X>

Príspevok je výstupom grantového projektu APVV-19-0244 „Metodologické postupy v literárnovednom výskume s presahom do mediálneho prostredia“.

V českém jazykovém prostředí vzniklo v poslední dekádě několik podnětných publikací zaměřujících se na téma překladu a překládání, a to jak z vědeckého, tak z populárně-naučného pohledu. K prvním typu se řadí monografie Jitky Zehnalové *Aspekty literárního překladu: Mediační úloha překladatele*, kterou vydala roku 2020 Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci. Ačkoli je titul knihy formulován poměrně obecně a otevřeně, hlavním záměrem autorky bylo vytvořit komplexní komparativní analýzu vybraných českých překladů románu *The Great Gatsby* Francise Scotta Fitzgeralda a na základě této analýzy zodpovědět obecnější otázky z oblasti teorie překladu. Úvodní, úzce související kapitoly nazvané „Překlad a překladatelský proces“ a „Individuální a společenské aspekty interpretace“ lze směle označit za jakousi poctu Jiřímu Levému, Janu Mukařovskému a celkově Pražské škole. Autorka poukazuje na skutečnost, že moderní směry, jako například poststrukturalismus či dekonstrukce, se v oblasti teorie překladu částečně vrací ke konceptům, o kterých se „v českém prostředí [...] diskutovalo mnohem dříve, než uvedená hnutí vznikla“ (29). Z toho důvodu také autorka často upřednostňuje terminologii vyvinutou v tomto prostředí před novějšími pojmy: Dává tak například přednost Levého pojmu *překladovost* před pojmy jako *neviditelnost* překladu, *zcizující* či *zdomácňující* překlad apod. Zároveň autorka často upozorňuje na opakující se koncepty zastřešené různými pojmy v novodobých dějinách teorie překladu – v podkapitole 4.3 tak například poukazuje na přímé paralely mezi úvahami o jazykovém systému, formulovanými Andrewem Chestermanem (*Memes of Translation: The Spread of Ideas in Translation Theory*, 2016), a staršími studiemi Jana Mukařovského k tomuto tématu. Jistě lze souhlasit

s názorem Zehnalové, že česká (a obecně slovanská) tradice překladu vykazuje odlišnou vývojovou linii, proto se i strategie překladu podstatně liší od západní tradice, formované v uplynulých dekádách postkolonialisticky kritickými koncepty Lawrence Venutiho, Marie Tymoczkové a dalších. V návaznosti na studii Zuzany Jettmarové „Czech and Slovak Translation Theories: The Lesser-Known Tradition“ se proto autorka při své analýze rozhodla při komparaci vycházet spíše z kořenů Pražské školy, jejíž představitelé kladli již od počátků velký důraz na „kombinování funkční analýzy a teoretické reflexe“ (2008, 33) a na „spojování individuálního vnímatele a intersubjektivitu“ (41). Toto teoretické východisko zaměřující se nejen na samotný text, ale rovněž na jeho zakotvení ve společnosti, ovšem oproštěné od explicitní ideologizace literárního uvažování považují za smysluplné.

V úvodu do třetí kapitoly se autorka zaměřuje především na popis českého knižního trhu v rámci „světového systému překladu“ (viz J. Heilbron: „Structure and Dynamics of the World System of Translation“, 2010). I zde již v úvodu vyzdvihuje zásadní vliv konceptů Levého na vývoj moderních sociologicky orientovaných proudů v translologii, především pak na polysystémové teorie Itamara Even-Zohara a Gideonu Touryho (54). V této části a v samotné analýze překladů románu *The Great Gatsby* se Zehnalová opírá v první řadě o studii Johana Heilbrona a Gisèle Sapiro „Outline for a Sociology of Translation: Current Issues and Future Prospects“ (2007), kteří vymezují relevantní oblasti sociologicky zaměřené analýzy překladu. Všechny tři oblasti, tj. mezinárodní knižní trh, politická, ekonomická a kulturní dynamika literárního pole a struktura recepčního prostoru, jsou ve vět-

ší či menší míře při analýze zohledněny. Zehnalová se zaměřuje především na osu centrum–periferie a na vybraných příkladech demonstruje, jaký dopad má pozice české kultury jako „malé“ kultury na knižní trh a na typ překladatelských strategií. V přehledových tabulkách (63, 64) dokládá, že periferní pozice české kultury má za přímý následek importní charakter českého knižního trhu. Následně se zabývá dalším faktorem, který ovlivňuje jak výběr překladové literatury, tak překladatelské postupy, totiž procesem transformace českého knižního trhu od politizace ke komercializaci. Vychází přitom na základě vlastního výzkumu z předpokladu, že politizace v dobách komunistického režimu měla za následek především makrostylistické posuny, zatímco následná komercializace ústí v překladatelské strategie, které vedou k jinému druhu posunů spíše na mikrostylistické rovině. Předtím než tuto tezi ověřuje ve čtvrté kapitole v rozsáhlé analýze překladů románu *The Great Gatsby*, začleňuje autorka do třetí kapitoly předběžný rozbor dvou textů, kterými ilustruje překladatelské posuny v překladu z „velké“ kultury do „malé“. Za tímto účelem srovnává omezený vzorek (1 % celkového rozsahu výchozího textu) překladů románů Johna Grishama *Advokát chudých* (přel. Jan Jirák) a Philipa Rotha *Lidská skvrna* (přel. Jiří Hanuš). Kritéria hodnocení formuluje na ose přijatelnost–adekvátnost/přirozenost–nepřirozenost. Není bohužel zcela zřejmé, na co se vlastně analýza zaměřuje. Jsou srovnávány dva žánrově odlišné texty (oddychová versus umělecká literatura) od dvou různých překladatelů. Autorka tedy na základě srovnání dochází k nepřilíš překvapivému závěru, že Jirákův překlad Grishamova románu je pro čtenářskou veřejnost snadno srozumitelný, a tedy přijatelný na ose Touryho iniciální normy, zatímco Hanušův překlad je reprodukcčně přesný a esteticky působivý (adekvátní). Poněkud banálně pak vyznívá souhrnné konstatování, že „zdrojem rozdílů mezi strategiemi v překladech byl zřejmě rozdíl v charakteru děl, jakož i individualita překladatelů (nemluvě o výběru vzorku“

(75). V podkapitole 3.2 jsou pak na překladech vybraných děl Bohumila Hrabala a jednoho románu Ivana Klímy demonstrována specifika překladu z „malé“ kultury do „velké“. Autorka analyzuje celkem pět textů, čtyři od Hrabala, jeden od Klímy v překladech Jamese Naughtona a Paula Wilsona. I zde se jedná o analýzu malého vzorku, která má pouze poukázat na základní tendence. Z analýzy zaměřující se na různé jazykové jevy autorka vyvozuje, že Naughton upřednostňuje strategii doslovnějšího překladu, zatímco Wilson překládá volněji, cílový text intenzivně přizpůsobuje cílovému čtenáři. „Wilsonovy strategie se v určitých ohledech podobají strategiím, které použil Jan Jirák, ale jsou mnohem razantnější“ (92). V návaznosti na toto konstatování ovšem působí jako protimluv zobecňující závěr formulovaný na následující stránce: „V této podkapitole jsme [...] demonstrovali, že společensky a kulturně podmíněné rozdíly mezi přístupy k překladu mohou být velké a že zásahy do textu, které se neobjevují v překladu do češtiny, se v angloamerické literatuře používají“ (94). Celkově jsou ale v rozborech, byť se jedná o malý vzorek, na dobře vybraných příkladech demonstrovány směrodatné strategie jednotlivých překladatelů, které jsou zdůrazněny zpětnými doslovnými překlady.

Co se týká klíčové čtvrté kapitoly, lze již na tomto místě předeslat, že podrobné srovnání celkem čtyř překladů od různých překladatelů vychází spíše z hermeneuticky pojatého interpretačního postoje k textu, sociologické faktory jsou zohledňovány spíše jako přirozená součást této analýzy. V úvodu čtvrté kapitoly je představen výchozí text, a to jak z pohledu recepce, tak z hlediska naratologického rozboru. I zde se autorka drží klasické terminologie a v oblasti teorie narace upřednostňuje pojmy zařité v českojazyčném kontextu jako *spolehlivý vypravěč*, *nepolehlivý vypravěč* apod. namísto Gérardem Genettem zavedených pojmů jako *heterodiegetický vypravěč*, *homodiegetický vypravěč* atd. Celkově autorka vychází z premisy strukturalistické školy, že naprostým základem literární analýzy je zkoumat, jak formál-

ní struktury románu vytvářejí jeho estetické účinky (101). Z toho pak vyplývá rovněž základní východisko pro srovnávací analýzu literárních překladů. Z tohoto důvodu se Zehnalová zaměřuje intenzivněji pouze na některá pásma sémiotického modelu, který ve volné návaznosti na Levého, Antona Popoviče, Lubomíra Doležela a Miroslava Červenku pro účely analýzy navrhl (srov. 138, obr. 4.1). Stěžejními oblastmi analýzy jsou jednoznačně „text a překrývající se kontexty“, „autorský styl“ a v dílčích analýzách je poměrně intenzivně reflektována oblast „společenský, kulturní a časový kontext“. Zakotvení díla a cílových textů v „literárním hnutí/období“ je oproti tomu tematizováno okrajově, „kontext univerzálních lidských hodnot“ je rozebírán též fragmentárně v souvislosti s dílčími analýzami vybraných jazykových jevů. Toto rozložení těžišť ovšem odpovídá tomu, co autorka v úvodu předesílá.

Na podkapitoly, které shrnují česká knižní vydání románu a základní biografické informace o překladatelích, navazuje srovnávací analýza jednotlivých překladů. Autorka postupuje od rozdílů v posunech podmíněných odlišnou strukturou výchozího a cílového jazyka, přes rozdíly v posunech sémiotického rázu až po analýzu posunů na stylistické rovině. Hranice mezi těmito oblastmi analýzy jsou přitom poměrně prostupné. V podkapitole 4.3 nazvané „Jazykové rozdíly“ jsou shrnuty například strategie jednotlivých překladatelů při převodu slovních hříček, aliterace, polysémních slov, přezdívek a charakterizačních jmen. Velký důraz je v této podkapitole kladen na analýzu posunů na rovině expresivity, které by bylo jistě možné tematizovat rovněž v podkapitole o stylistických posunech. V sémiotické části rozboru autorka analyzuje jak vnitrotextové (podkap. 4.4.2), tak mimotextové kontexty (podkap. 4.4.3). V rámci vnitrotextových kontextů se zaměřuje intenzivně na jazykové prostředky, kterými je dosahováno charakteristiky postav, a zamýšlí se nad tím, jak tyto prostředky odkazují k mimotextovému kontextu. Analyzuje zde posuny způsobené explicitací a implicitací,

například při převodu narážek na literární díla, při překladu oslovení (tykání/vykání), pozdravů, nadávek apod. V krátké podkapitole 4.4.3, která by se dle názvu měla soustředit na propojenost vnitro- a mimotextových kontextů, je na základě překladu závěrečné pasáže románu rozebírána spíše koherence zvolených překladatelských strategií v kontextu celkového narativu. Sémiotický rozbor je zakončen shrnutím recepce překladů románu *The Great Gatsby* v české kultuře mezi lety 1920 a 1960, které není značeno jako samostatná podkapitola. Je otázkou, zda by nebylo vhodnější tuto podkapitulu začlenit na konec monografie, před kap. 4.7 o recepci *Velkého Gatsbyho* současnou českou čtenářskou obcí. Některé z jevů ve stylistické části rozboru již byly popsány v analýze jazykových a sémiotických posunů (např. jazykové uchopení charakteristiky postav). Autorka zde postupuje jednak podle typu jevu (parallelismus, deviace, metafora, personifikace), jednak podle sémantických oblastí (alkohol, motiv vznášení se, popis postav). Velká pozornost je věnována překladům pasáží s leitmotivem barev (především bílé). Otázkou je, zda tyto dílčí analýzy nepatří spíše do oblasti sémiotického rozboru.

Kapitola 4.6 představuje syntézu předchozích dílčích analýz podle kategorií definovaných Jettmarovou (2008). Jedná se o pokus vystihnout základní tendence ve výběru strategií, osobně ovšem považuji za přínosnější detailní dílčí analýzy zdůrazňující konkrétní rozhodnutí jednotlivých překladatelů v daných kontextech.

Závěrečná kapitola 4.7, shrnující současnou čtenářskou recepci *Velkého Gatsbyho*, je z větší části intuitivně rozdělena do skupin podle poměrně různorodých kritérií. Základní osou je rozčlenění na pozitivní a negativní hodnocení, přičemž autorka dále specifikuje, co konkrétně přispívky na internetových stránkách pozitivně/negativně hodnotily. Vzhledem k tomu, že se nejedná o kvantitativní, ale výhradně kvalitativní vyhodnocení, jsou poznatky vyplývající z této poslední kapitoly jen orientační, přesto ale přínosné.

Publikace je dle mého názoru přínosná ve dvou směrech: Na teoretické rovině se pokouší o propojení moderních postkoloniálních konceptů se staršími teoretickými modely v oblasti translatologie. Z argumentace přitom implicitně vyplývá, že se autorka k některým moderním teoriím staví kriticky, což je jistě legitimní. Polemizovat by bylo možné s tím, že často klade rovnítko mezi modely, které sice vykazují zřejmé paralely, nejsou ovšem zcela identické. Na rovině analýzy překladu považují za přínosný pokus o aplikaci různých rovin vlastního sémiotického modelu na popis konkrétních překladatelských řešení. V jednotlivých dílčích analýzách ovšem převažuje klasický textově-
-imanentní přístup.

MARIE KRAPPMANN
Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci
Česká republika

WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES

VOLUME 13

 <p>ÚSTAV SVETOVEJ LITERATÚRY SAV INSTITUTE OF WORLD LITERATURE SAS</p>	<p>WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES 2. 2021</p>
VOL. 13	ČASOPIS PRE VÝSKUM SVETOVEJ LITERATÚRY
<p>Umiestnenie utópie</p> <p>The Location of Utopia</p> <p>PÉTER HAJDU RÓBERT GÁFRIK (eds.)</p>	<p>JOHANNES D. KAMINSKI Leaving Gaia behind: The ethics of space migration in Cixin Liu's and Neal Stephenson's science fiction</p> <p>YIPING WANG – PINGZHU Shanghai and the Chinese utopia in the early 20th century as presented in "The New Story of the Stone"</p> <p>XIANGCHUN MENG – LIRONG ZHANG Chinese utopia: Its evolution, poetic anchorage and modern transformation</p> <p>SEVAL ŞAHİN – DİDEM ARDALI BÜYÜKARMAN The Islamist version of utopia: The politics of redesigning space</p> <p>PÉTER HAJDU Mór Jókai's Asian utopia(s)</p> <p>SÁNDOR HITES National internationalism in late 19th-century utopias by Mór Jókai, Edward Bellamy, and William Morris</p> <p>LIBOR MAREK Three undiscovered utopias in German-language literature from the Czech periphery: Moravian Wallachia and Zlín</p>

Posthuman Topics in Literature and Other Arts / Posthumánne témy (nielen) v literatúre

1/2021 ed. Bogumiła Suwara

Since its emergence as a genre, science fiction has dealt with the concept of human transformation. In various narratives describing the encounter of people with posthumans or aliens, human stereotypes, human nature and the humanistic paradigm itself are exposed to the challenge and critical reflection which posthumanism has introduced and developed within the contemporary humanities. The articles in this issue are focused on identifying transhuman and posthuman themes and motifs in both literary and artistic forms of science fiction (including bioart, film and television series) from a posthumanist perspective.

The Location of Utopia / Umístnenie utópie

2/2021 eds. Péter Hajdu – Róbert Gáfrík

The geographical and temporal orientation of European and non-European utopias seem to differ in many politico-cultural aspects. The articles collected in this issue demonstrate that national and cultural determination can still be perceived, and they confirm the attention paid to the issues of nationalism, colonialism, or religious imperialism in utopia studies. Moreover, some of the authors show that an interplay between the culture of origin and the local/cultural otherness of the imagined elsewhere allows for an imagological approach to utopias.

Historiography and Translation / Historiografia a preklad

3/2021 eds. Katarína Bednárová – Isabelle Poulin – Igor Tyšš

Even though the first major and thorough synthetic works on translation in the European cultural space were published only at the beginning of the 21st century, their conceptions and principal ideas had been developed and discussed much earlier. Translation historiography has since become of the most recurrent topics in translation studies in Europe and throughout the world. This interest is due to the still relevant sociological turn in translation studies and attempts to closely study the work of individual figures of translators. It only follows that such issues call for historical contextualization and explanation. The current issue contributes to this discourse in the form of partial analyses and reports about ways of writing translation history.

Interdiscursive Constructions of Literature / Interdiskurzívne konštruovanie literatúry

4/2021 ed. Roman Mikuláš

This issue deals with questions pertaining to interdiscursive constructions of literature. What happens if knowledge crosses the boundaries of the system in which it originated, how is knowledge concentrated in special expert discourses related to their literary communication, and what forms of literarization can be observed? The integration of scientific knowledge into the literary system and its reflection in the spectrum of literary devices reveals a research perspective based on Foucault's dictum that scientific knowledge will always be brought into contexts that are inaccessible or unacceptable for the given special discourse.



V posledných desaťročiach sa svetová literatúra chápe ako kánon alebo systém, do ktorého texty vstupujú prostredníctvom „veľkých“ literatúr, písaných v hegemónnych jazykoch ako angličtina. Texty z menších literatúr musia spĺňať takpovediac niečo navyše, aby dosiahli status svetovej literatúry. Tento koncept predstavuje svetovú literatúru ako korelát politickej a ekonomickej moci. Aktuálne číslo prináša štúdie reflektujúce vzťah „malých“ literatúr k svetovej literatúre, pričom nastoľujú aj epistemologické a etické otázky.

Over the past few decades, world literature has been conceived of as a canon or a system which texts enter through the “large” literatures written in hegemonic languages such as English. Texts from smaller literatures have to fulfill something extra in order to achieve the status of world literature. This concept presents world literature as a correlate of political and economic power. The current issue presents studies reflecting on the relation of “small” literatures to world literature, while also raising epistemological and ethical questions.