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a literárnohistorické
naratívy v stredo-
východnej Európe

Transculturalism
and narratives
of literary history
in East-Central Europe

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Transculturalism and narratives of literary history in East-Central Europe

MAGDALENA ROGUSKA-NÉMETH – ZOLTÁN NÉMETH

In the field of literary studies over the last few decades, a well-defined theoretical basis has been formed by those tendencies which are related to the interpretation of literary texts along the phenomena of cultural hybridity and nomadism, globalism, heterotopia, extraterritoriality, translocality, translingualism, bi- and multilingualism, deterritorialization, and border crossing. As Wolfgang Welsch points out, due to the effects of globalization, the present cultures can no longer be interpreted as a homogeneous entity; they are connected like a network, existing in a state of hybridity and permeation, which is why they can be called transcultural, as their status goes beyond national cultures. Arianna Dagnino draws attention to the fact that in the wake of migratory flows and the development of digital communication technologies, physical and virtual mobility has become a common trope in contemporary societies, which exist in a state of super-diversity.

We do not think, however, that the above state is only a new phenomenon in a globalized world. This view is reinforced by the fact that the concept of transculturalism was coined in the 1940s by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, as well as by the awareness that the specific transcultural conditions of the East-Central European region had a significant impact on the culture and literature of the peoples living there. Related to this is Anders Pettersson's argument that in addition to traditional literary histories that stop at the borders of national literatures, it is important to write transcultural literary histories. Most recently, independently but concurrently, the Hungarian scholar Beáta Thomka and research groups in Nitra (Slovakia) and the Czech Republic have raised the question of how to write a history of transcultural literature.

This issue of WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES thus contains studies that examine literary and literary historical narratives from the perspective of the phenomena and networks of transculturalism in East-Central Europe. It deals with the challenges faced by transcultural phenomena and analyzes their presence or absence in literary histories of the region. The possibilities of canonization of bilingual authors and transcultural literary works are also important starting points for interpretations in East-Central European literary histories. The relationship between transculturalism and the canon is a similarly important trend in the literary histories of East-Central Europe, with particular regard to the literature of ethnic and national minorities.

The presentation of world literature perspectives, the reinterpretation of the possibilities of homogeneous national literary histories, and the interpretation of the unstable position of transcultural authors are equally significant aspects.

Validating the criteria system of transculturalism offers new approaches in the field of traditional comparative, imagological, intercultural, and areal research. Linked to the realizations of intertextuality, Itamar Zohar's polysystem, and network theory, transcultural interpretations are attracted to ambiguous and unclassifiable literary and linguistic phenomena, raising new perspectives on the 21st-century questions of literary history and the canon. Furthermore, the studies presented in the issue reevaluate the genre of national literary history inherited from the 19th century, in that instead of homogenous national perspectives, they highlight transnational perspective systems. We hope that the issue will contribute to develop the kind of approach that mobilizes more diversified perspectives in the writing of national literary history in East-Central Europe.

Transculturality in literature: A phenomenon as old as it is current

WOLFGANG WELSCH

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TRANSCULTURALITY IN HISTORY

Transculturality is commonly regarded as a new phenomenon. In fact, the term is of recent origin. In the German-speaking world, I first used it a good 30 years ago (Welsch 1992) and in the Spanish-speaking world, Fernando Ortiz coined it in 1940 (*transculturación*).¹ The time span of over 80 years seems to verify that transculturality is a modern phenomenon and was unknown to older times such as antiquity or the Middle Ages. However, this is not correct. The extent of transculturality has increased today, but cultures were de facto transcultural even earlier (Welsch 2017).

For example, the Greek culture has by no means, as one might suggest, sprung purely from itself. Its formation is not even conceivable without Egypt and Middle East, Babylonia and Phoenicia. One can see this alone from the fact that nearly 40 percent of the old Greek words are of Semitic origin, and the Greek sculpture has developed in the most obvious way from Egyptian models. Similarly, Japanese culture cannot be understood without considering its interconnections with Chinese, Korean, Indian, and even Hellenistic and modern European culture. Edward Said was right when he said, “All cultures are hybrid; none is pure; none is identical with a ‘pure’ people; none consists of a homogeneous fabric” (1996, 24).

Today, we can not only reconstruct the historical mixing by means of cultural analysis, but also detect it with scientific certainty in the genome of the different populations. For example, we now know that the genome of Europeans was shaped by immigration (Lazaridis et al. 2014). Only about 45 percent of the European DNA is descended from our African ancestors (the Europeans were initially immigrants from Africa), while another 45 percent is due to immigration from the Middle East, and the remaining 10 percent to an influx of peoples from northern Eurasia. Moreover, these immigrations were associated with highly significant cultural innovations. The influx of peoples from the Near East brought Europe the transition from the hunter-gatherer epoch to agriculture and animal husbandry (“Neolithic Revolution”). In the Near East this transition had already taken place about 11,000 years ago, while it occurred in Europe only about 7,500 years ago, i.e., exactly at the time when the genome of Europeans changed due to mixing with peoples from the Near East.

Also, the second migration-related change of the European genome, which occurred about 4,500 years ago and was caused by the influx of northern Eurasian peoples, was culturally momentous: it led to the spread of the Indo-European language.

TRANSCULTURALITY IN LITERATURE

After these preliminary remarks, let us turn to the field of literature. To what extent is literature not only strongly transcultural today, but already showed transcultural features in the past?

The legend of the Flood is common to Sumerian and Babylonian and also to Greek and Biblical writings, and it can even be found in Indian, Icelandic, Chinese and ancient American stories. What transversality, what transculturality! Or Arabic scholarship in medicine, philosophy, and theology absorbed Greek thought and thus transmitted it to later Europe. What a transcultural transfer. The German Minnesang had cultural achievements of other cultural origin as a model: the southern French Troubadours and the northern French Trouvères – again a remarkable transfer. Montaigne's *Essays* are everywhere full of references to ancient authors (Horace, Plutarch, Cicero, Lucretius, Seneca, Virgil, Plato, Ovid, etc.) – antiquity is co-authoring modernity. Finally, Hegel concluded the sum of his system, the *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*, with a long quote from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* reproduced simply in Greek – he understood himself as *Aristotle redivivus*; antiquity and modernity form a continuous connection.

Let us go into some details. Goethe is considered an emblematic figure of German poetry. But what did “German” mean to him? In 1808, at the time of the national uprising against Napoleon, he was asked by the Bavarian minister Niethammer to help publish a collection of poetry for the purpose of national education. To Niethammer's great surprise, Goethe replied that “no nation” and “least of all perhaps the German [...] had formed itself out of itself”, so that translations were to be considered “an essential part of our literature” (1907a, 420).² According to Goethe, Homer, Sappho or Shakespeare are as much a part of the cultural fund of German as Walther von der Vogelweide or Grimmelshausen. Therefore, Goethe said, one must “expressly refer to the merits of foreign nations, because the book is also intended for children, whom one has to make aware of the merits of foreign nations early enough, especially now” (1907b, 417). This came close to a provocation towards the nationalistic idea of the collection. Goethe had recognized and asserted the internal transculturality of the “German”.

Goethe was the pioneer of transcultural German studies. As is well known, he repeatedly operated transculturally in his own work as well. This applies from his early draft of a *Muhammad Tragedy* via his *Italian Journey* to his late poetic experiments with Indian and Chinese themes and texts. Not to mention his borrowing from his spiritual brother Hafis who is the leading figure of his *West-Eastern Divan*.

Finally, from 1827 on, Goethe advocated the concept of “world literature”. “National literature”, he wrote, “does not want to say much now; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must now work to hasten this epoch” (1904, 198 [January 31, 1827]). The formation of such a world literature has “the feeling of neighborly relations” as its basis. The spirit no longer likes to isolate itself nationally, but wants

“to be included in the free spiritual trade” (186ff.).³ As he stated in March 1832, the poets recognize that their real empire lies beyond all national segregations: “The poet will love his fatherland as person and citizen, but the fatherland of his poetic powers and his poetic activity is the good, noble and beautiful, which is not bound to any particular province or country and which he seizes and forms wherever he finds it” (Eckermann 1984, 439).

Many times, literature has explicitly addressed transcultural conditions. When Michel de Montaigne investigated his identity, he declared: “We are all patchwork, and so shapeless and diverse in composition that each bit, each moment, plays its own game. And there is as much difference between us and ourselves as between us and others” (1992, 244). This is an eminent observation: we carry within ourselves as many differences as we find outwardly – to other persons and other cultures. A sharpness of separation between individuals is just as illusory as a sharpness of separation between one’s own culture and foreign cultures, as Montaigne, this meticulous observer, already stated more than 400 years ago.

With romanticism the inner plurality of the individuals became a permanent topic. Novalis stated that a person is “several persons at the same time” (1983a, 250 [63]), because “pluralism [...] is our innermost being” (1983b, 571 [107]). Henrik Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt* offers a particularly revealing example. As he explores his identity, Peer Gynt discovers in himself a whole variety of persons: a passenger, a gold-digger, an archaeologist, a prophet, a bon vivant, etc. – just as he is outwardly a wanderer between different countries and cultures: between his Norwegian homeland and Morocco, the Sahara and Egypt, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and numerous mythical places. Peer Gynt is a virtually paradigmatic figure of transculturality. He represents the transition from the old ideal of the person as a monad (monolithic) to the new way of being of the nomad, the wanderer between different cultures and worlds. A simple letter rearrangement, and everything is different, the *monad* becomes a *nomad*.

The number of similar proclamations is constantly growing. In Paul Valéry we read, “I believe more than ever that I am several” ([1890] 1952, 18). Similarly, Fernando Pessoa, whose motto was “Be plural like the universe!” wrote: “I am the living stage where different actors perform different plays” ([1982] 1987, 61). Italo Calvino asks, “Who is each of us, then, if not a combination of experiences, information, readings, and fantasies? Each life is an encyclopedia, a library, [...] a sample collection of styles, wherein everything can be remixed and rearranged in every possible way at any time” ([1988] 1991, 165).⁴ For a long time, then, advanced minds have held that personal identity is not monolithic and static, but intrinsically plural and transcultural (Welsch 2020).

The fact that the ethnic as well as cultural genome of persons is determined by a multitude of historical mixings was inimitably expressed by Carl Zuckmayer in *Des Teufels General* (*The Devil’s General*, 1946). There, he has General Harras say to Lieutenant Hartmann:

Just imagine your line of ancestors – since the birth of Christ. There was a Roman commander, a dark type, brown as a ripe olive, who taught Latin to a blond girl. And then a Jewish spice merchant came into the family, he was a serious person, he became a Chris-

tian before he married and founded the Catholic house tradition. – And then came a Greek doctor, or a Celtic legionnaire, a Grisonian lansquenet, a Swedish horseman, a soldier of Napoleon, a deserted Cossack, a Black Forest miner, a wandering miller's boy from Alsace, a fat skipper from Holland, a Magyar, a Pandur, an officer from Vienna, a French actor, a Bohemian musician – they all lived on the Rhine, scuffled, boozed and sang and begot children – and – and Goethe, he came from the same pot, and Beethoven, and Gutenberg, and Matthias Grünewald, and – oh whatever, look it up in the encyclopedia. They were the best, my dear! The best in the world! And why? Because the peoples there intermixed. Intermixed – like the waters from springs and creeks and rivers, so that they trickled together into one great living stream. ([1946] 1976, 149)

So many-colored are the ethnic and cultural factors, which lead to this or that individual – the truth belongs to the mixtures and transfers, not to the supposedly homogeneous character of a “people”.

In the later 20th and 21st century, the number of examples is legion (Dagnino 2015). Particularly prominent are so-called postcolonial writers such as V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie, or Michael Ondaatje, Vikram Seth and Derek Walcott. Rushdie explicitly addressed the situation of transculturality. He warned his Indian writer colleagues of the danger of self-ghettoization:

of all the many elephant traps lying ahead of us, the largest and most dangerous pit-fall would be the adoption of a ghetto mentality. To forget that there is a world beyond the community to which we belong, to confine ourselves within narrowly defined cultural frontiers, would be, I believe, to go voluntarily into that form of internal exile which in South Africa is called the “homeland”. ([1982] 1991, 19)

Rushdie also pointed out numerous transcultural transfers and parallels: “The magical realism of Latin Americans influences Indian-language writers in India today. The rich, folk-tale quality of a novel like *Sandro of Chegem*, by the Muslim Russian Fazil Iskander, finds its parallels in the works – for instance – of the Nigerian, Amos Tutuola, or even of Cervantes” (68). Rushdie argues against “the folly of trying to contain writers inside passports”, to correlate them with the tight corset of “a supposedly homogeneous and unbroken tradition” (67). In the same spirit, Janice Kulyk Keefer, a writer of Canadian-Ukrainian background who understands herself as a “transcultural writer”, says: “One must resist the temptation to treat any one voice from a given community as representative, regardless of the writer’s claim to be so. [...] What many ‘transcultural’ writers show us is that differences within a given community are as important as the difference between a marginalized culture and a dominant one” (1995, 193).

LITERARY STUDIES AND TRANSCULTURALITY

Literary studies, I think, should be particularly aware of the current increase in transculturality. It forms the context of all our cultural activity today, and it has been convincingly articulated by many modern and contemporary writers who feel themselves shaped by these transcultural conditions.

Of course, advocacy of transcultural conditions implies a decision. But this applies to every cultural concept – just as well as to all concepts of self-understanding (like

identity, person, etc.). They never are simply descriptive concepts, but operative concepts. Put another way: Our understanding of culture is an *active factor* in our cultural life. If one tells us (as the old concept of culture did) that culture is to be a homogeneity event, then we may practice the required coercions and exclusions. We seek to satisfy the task we are set – and will be successful in so doing. Whereas, if one tells us that culture ought to incorporate foreign elements and do justice to transcultural components, then we will set about this task, and, as a consequence, corresponding feats of integration will belong to the real structure of our culture. The “reality” of culture is always to a certain extent a consequence too of our conceptions of culture.

One must therefore be aware of the responsibility which one takes on in propagandizing concepts of culture. We should be suggesting concepts which are descriptively adequate and normatively accountable, and which pragmatically lead further. Propagandizing the old, monolithic concept of culture and its subsequent forms has today become irresponsible, as we see in ethnic struggles in the West as well as in the East. Much better chances are found on the side of the concept of transculturality.

I know that it has become somehow untimely to emphasize such educational responsibilities of academic studies – for example, literary studies. Ignoring these tasks, however, will not lead us to avoid them, but just to fulfill them in an inappropriate way.

Furthermore, the discovery and acceptance of the individuals’ transcultural constitution is an important condition for coming to terms with societal transculturality. Hatred directed towards foreigners is in its core (as has been shown particularly from the psychoanalytic side) projected hatred of oneself. One takes exception vicariously to something in a stranger, which one carries within oneself, but does not like to admit, preferring rather to repress it internally and to battle with it externally. Conversely, the recognition of a degree of internal foreignness forms a prerequisite for the acceptance of the external foreign. It is precisely when we no longer deny but rather perceive our inner transculturality, that we will become capable of dealing with outer transculturality.⁵

NOTES

¹ Ortiz developed this concept with a view to the Cuban economy with its traditional cultivation of tobacco and the more recent cultivation of the imported plant sugar cane. Ortiz describes how the different segments of the population (African slaves, Spanish conquistadors, Asian contract workers) came to form new social and cultural forms that emerged from a mutual give and take that transformed all groups involved.

² Unless otherwise stated, all translations from the German are by the present author.

³ “For some time now, there has been talk of a general world literature, and not without reason: for all nations, shaken in the most terrible wars, then brought back to themselves, had to notice that they had become aware of many foreign things, had absorbed them and felt hitherto here and there unknown spiritual needs. From this arose the feeling of neighborly relations, and instead of still being shut in, the spirit gradually came to the desire to be included in the more or less free spiritual trade” (Goethe 1904, 186ff.).

⁴ This internal plurality has become a general insight today. Yuval Noah Harari, for example, states that our personal identity consists of a colorful bouquet of different cultural elements: “Hardly anyone has only one identity. No one is just a Muslim, or just an Italian, or just a capitalist” (2018, 383).

- ⁵ Sigmund Freud had already pointed out an analogy between the inner topology of repression and the outer topology of the relation to strangers: “the repressed is foreign territory to the ego – internal foreign territory – just as reality (if you will forgive the unusual expression) is external foreign territory” (1973, 57 [31st Lecture]). Robert Musil has clearly recognized the mechanism of projection of disinclinations: “Now, ethnic prejudice is usually nothing more than self-hatred, dredged up from the murky depths of one’s own conflicts and projected onto some convenient victim, a traditional practice from time immemorial” (1995, 461). Julia Kristeva picks up on such insights: “In a strange way, the stranger exists within ourselves: he is the hidden face of our identity. [...] If we recognize him within ourselves, we prevent ourselves from abhorring him as such” (1988, 9; cf. Welsch 2021).

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Transculturality in literature: A phenomenon as old as it is current

Transculturality in history. Transculturality in literature. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

Transculturality is a currently prominent phenomenon, but not a completely new one. Cultures have long since been transcultural, it is only the extent of transculturality which has increased recently. Whether Greek culture's connections with Egypt, Babylonia and Phoenicia or Japanese culture's connections with China, Korea, and India, all cultures are hybrid. Likewise, literature has been transcultural for a long time, as can be seen in the works of Montaigne, Goethe, Zuckmayer, and contemporary postcolonial authors. Literary studies should put emphasis on the present transculturality, which provides the frame of all our cultural activities today. Addressing transculturality will help to recognize its chances and to cope with its problems.

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On the concept of world literature

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In this article I will reflect on the current concept of world literature. I will make comments on the contemporary critical and scholarly uses of the expression “world literature”, and also on the question of how to conceive of the concept of world literature and come to terms with it. This means that what I have to say will be of a terminological or methodological nature. No literary-historical discoveries will be offered, nor any literary-critical insights in the narrow sense.

I will begin by introducing some definitions of “world literature” from the last 20 years, mostly in order to illustrate the multiplicity of the use of this expression. Then I will draw attention to the fact that such definitions are sometimes formulated as assertions about what world literature is. I will ask whether or not there can be a truth about what world literature is and what further consequences a straight answer to this question is bound to have. As part of this discussion I will look in some detail at how the concept of world literature is employed in the introduction to the recent two-volume *Cambridge History of World Literature* (Ganguly 2021).

SOME CONTEMPORARY DEFINITIONS OF “WORLD LITERATURE”

The idea of world literature may already have originated, in some form, before the 19th century (see D’haen 2012, 5 and the literature cited there, and more recently Hassan 2021). Still, the well-known remarks by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels about the coming into being of a “Welt-Literatur” or “Weltliteratur” represent the first really prominent points of reference for the history of the expression “world literature” (Eckermann 1837, 325; Engels and Marx 1848, 6). In both cases, the idea was that increased international contacts were about to create a new situation in the literary world, one in which literatures were becoming more intertwined than before. Goethe made himself many thoughts about the consequences of this (see Birus 1995). Marx and Engels just stated, in passing, that the bourgeoisie, by exploiting the world markets, was making everything cosmopolitan, including literature.

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This is not, or not typically, how the concept of world literature is understood today. In the *Idea of World Literature* (Pizer 2006) John Pizer assumes, presumably correctly, that many scholars and most people think of “world literature” as standing for all literature, “even when popular and often scholarly imagination reduces its proportions to manageable dimensions through recourse to such signifiers as ‘great books’ and ‘canonic literature’” (3). “World literature” taken in this sense becomes synonymous with “literature”, the adjective “world” merely emphasizing that all literature is being included, without temporal or cultural restrictions.

Zhang Longxi puts forward a definition along these lines, but restricting world literature to canonical literature, in his article “Canon and World Literature” in the inaugural issue of the *Journal of World Literature* in 2016. He writes: “World literature is not just all the works that happen to circulate beyond their culture of origin, but the collective body of the best canonical works from various literary traditions that circulate to constitute what we call world literature” (119). On the other hand, the Warwick Research Collective understand world literature in the actually more original way as something coming into being in modernity. In their book *Combined and Uneven Development* from 2015 they define “world literature”, in a manner reminiscent of Marx and Engels, as “the literature of the capitalist world system” (15).

In expressions like “English literature” or “French literature”, the term “literature” is typically taken to refer to bodies of literary works (see, for example, Howarth et al. 2022). This also applies to “world literature” in the uses mentioned so far. But Pizer, in his book, also introduces two other concepts of world literature. As already indicated, he uses “world literature” to designate the “literature of the world in its entirety”, “all creative writing produced at all times by all people” (2006, 2, 3). Yet he also introduces the term “Weltliteratur”, letting it refer to “self-aware critical discussions” of “a discrete critical concept”. Pizer then employs a third expression, “World Literature” in capitalized form, to stand for world literature as an academic subject (2006, 3). (It is Weltliteratur and World Literature that form the subject of Pizer’s book.)

Pizer’s “World Literature” exemplifies the fact that the concept of world literature can today also be understood to denote a kind, or a branch, of literary study. In his influential *What Is World Literature?* (2003) David Damrosch describes world literature as being, among other things, a mode of reading: “My claim is that world literature is not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a mode of circulation and of reading, a mode that is as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike” (2003, 5). (Compare the partly different definitions or definition-like formulations 2003, 4, 283; the definition quoted forms part of an argument about what world literature is when “properly understood”, 2003, 5.) Similarly, what is published in the *Journal of World Literature* is literary research, not literary works. The journal announces that it “welcomes submissions that can concurrently imagine any literary tradition, in any language, moving beyond national frames to simultaneously discuss and develop the cosmopolitan threads of a variety of literary traditions”.¹

The tradition of world literature understood as a kind of study of literature was comprehensively described by Theo D’haen in his *Routledge Concise History of World*

Literature (2012). It is my impression that Damrosch very much succeeded in taking the expression “world literature” and filling it with a new meaning through his own writings, through the *Journal of World Literature*, of which he is one of the editors, and through the Institute for World Literature at Harvard, of which he is the director. At this Institute, world literature is “a far-reaching inquiry into the variety of the world’s literary cultures and their distinctive reflections and refractions of the political, economic, and religious forces sweeping the globe”.²

Yet, other institutions may define world literature partly differently. The A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences was behind one of the major modern world histories of literature, *Istorija vseмирnoj literatury v devjati tomach* (The history of world literature in nine volumes), appearing between 1983 and 1994. The research program of the Gorky Institute “includes coordinated studies of Russian and international literary heritage and folklore, and development of the fundamental base for source studies, textology, hermeneutics and comparative studies utilizing interdisciplinary techniques, analytical methods and digital technologies”.³ Without attempting to go deeper, one can say that the general atmosphere of this characterization of world literature studies is no doubt different from the Harvard one, and that the reference to developing a fundamental base signals more attention to theoretical concerns.

In yet another quarter, comparative literature, too, has developed toward comprising a multitude of modern approaches and transcending cultures and eras. According to its current mission statement, the International Comparative Literature Association, or Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée,

promotes literary studies beyond the boundaries of languages and national literary traditions, between cultures and world regions, among disciplines and theoretical orientations, and across genres, historical periods, and media. Its broad view of comparative research extends to the study of sites of difference such as race, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and religion in both texts and the everyday world.⁴

World literature studies and comparative literature are not very different things. As D’haen points out in his history of world literature, “the relationship between world literature and comparative literature has been an intimate yet tangled one from the start” (2012, 15). (D’haen also devotes his entire Chapter 3, “World literature and comparative literature”, to a closer look at this relationship.) Many researchers have figured prominently within both contexts. This is certainly true of Damrosch, D’haen, and Zhang. All in all, many people work on the literatures of the world for different reasons, under different banners, and using different approaches, and it is not easy to know what new transformations these kinds of research will undergo. “World literature”, like so many big concepts, seems to me to work most of all as a kind of sign-post pointing somewhat vaguely toward a certain domain, in this case that of literature without temporal or geographical borders and corresponding literary studies. The situation around the concept of world literature is a bit unclear because some want to give the concept this or that more specific content, and because there are also sign-posts with a different text – like “comparative literature” – indicating more or less the same area.

This ends my brief review of contemporary definitions of “world literature”. I did not seek to provide any systematic overview of the contemporary use of the expression. What I wanted to make clear, before digging deeper, is the rather obvious fact that it is actually being used in a number of different ways. “World literature” can refer to literature, or some part of what we call literature, and it can refer to a special kind of study of literature. If referring to literature, “world literature” always implies a broad international perspective, but the literature in question may be delimited in more than one way – at least: as all literature, or as literature of canonical status, or as the literature that exists under capitalism. World literature as referring to a study of literature is always a study of literature without cultural borders, whether one wishes to define its aims and methods very liberally or more narrowly.

Having said this I will now switch tracks and raise the question of whether or not there is a truth about what world literature really is.

ABOUT HOW WORLD LITERATURE EXISTS

Pizer’s three definitions of “world literature”, “Weltliteratur”, and “World Literature” are all presented as stipulations, and the Warwick Research Collective also seem to introduce a decision of their own about the use of the expression, since they refer to how they “plan to deploy the concept” (2015, 15). But Damrosch, in the formulation I cited, *claims* that world literature is a mode of circulation and reading, and Zhang asserts that world literature *is* the body of the best canonical works from various literary traditions. Superficially at least, their definitions do not sound like declarations of how they themselves are going to use the expression “world literature”, but like statements about what is actually the case, about what world literature really is.

Can there be a truth about what world literature is? In that case there will have to be an entity of some sort, world literature, of which statements about world literature are true or false. Can there be any such entity and, in that case, where and how is it thought to exist, and how is it supposed to be possible for us to know anything about it? Or should we in fact take pronouncements like those of Damrosch and Zhang not as attempts to *capture the features of an already existing entity*, world literature itself, but, like Pizer’s and the Warwick Collective’s, as reports about how they themselves have decided to *demarcate an imagined entity called “world literature”*. I believe it is better to understand statements like Damrosch’s and Zhang’s in the latter way, as creating and characterizing an imagined entity, and I will explain why. This will require an excursion into philosophical territory in the form of some remarks about the relationship between language and the non-linguistic outer world.

This relationship can be conceived of in a number of ways. I will point, very concisely, to two principally different modes of thought. The first of these, which I will call “objectivism” – short, here, for “objectivism about the relationship between language and the world” – is the view that no doubt predominates, both in everyday thought and in academic philosophy. The objectivist conceives of the world such as it is in itself, in its very being, as structured into such things as objects of different categories and aspects of objects. When the world is viewed from this perspective it is not only true, for example, that there are dogs, and that some of them are white.

For the objectivist this is true in the absolute sense that the two statements correctly capture something in the structure of the objectively existing world: there is a division in reality itself between dogs and non-dogs and between what is white and what is not white.

According to the second, less common view, and the one that I share, this is not so. This second view, which I will call the “conventionalist” view, agrees with the objectivist one on some crucially important points. The conventionalist, too, counts with the objective existence of an outer world. For both the objectivist and the conventionalist the world exists entirely independently of what we think or say about it, so that it will be conceivable, for instance, that humankind might disappear and the rest of the world might continue to exist just like before. Also, the conventionalist, too, will regard it as true that there are dogs and that some of them are white. But for the conventionalist this will be true not because the world as it is in itself is divided into dogs and non-dogs and into white and non-white things. The conventionalist will think that humans have invented the idea of a dog and the idea of the color white. When we apply these human concepts to the world such as it is, there will be every reason to call it true that there are dogs and that some of them are white.

Yet, according to the conventionalist, the world such as it is in its very being just is as it is. It is as who divide up the world around us into things belonging to different categories and aspects of things, and we do this in ways that are fruitful for humans. To get this conventionalist idea into focus, think of such entities as longitudes and latitudes. It seems obvious, at least to me, that longitudes and latitudes are human constructions, projected onto the surface of what we call the Earth for practical reasons – and for very good such reasons, I hasten to add: human constructions can often be excellent things. We would be helpless without the concepts we use to come to grips with the phenomena and processes in the real world around us.

There are certainly more ways than the two just described of thinking about the relationship between language and the world, and there can be varieties of objectivism and conventionalism. Let me just mention that it will lie near at hand for the objectivist not to regard just any valid human concept as corresponding to a pre-existing division in reality itself. Objectivists may regard some sorts of entities, like physical objects, as parts of the structure of the universe, but not some other sorts, such as longitudes and latitudes.

It would be possible to bring up, and discuss at length, arguments for and against varieties of objectivism and conventionalism. A certain tradition in linguistics, from Ferdinand de Saussure onward, has maintained that language does not reflect pre-existing divisions in the world but establishes such divisions; the linguist N.J. Enfield recently wrote that “language is not a means for *reflecting* how things are, but rather a means for *portraying* it in certain ways” (2015, 2). Similar views have been expressed within philosophy, and not only by followers of Jacques Derrida: for example, John Searle has referred to our vocabularies and conceptual schemes as “human creations, and to that extent arbitrary” (1995, 151). On the objectivist side, Robert Kirk has dismissed what I call conventionalism as the “cosmic porridge doctrine” (1999, 53), obviously because he finds that the idea turns reality into a porridge-like blur.

Donald Davidson has maintained that the very idea of a conventional scheme is one that does not make sense. According to him, we have to give up the idea of “an uninterpreted reality, something outside all schemes and science” and consequently also the idea of conceptual schemes applied to such an uninterpreted reality (2001, 197). There is much more to be said on both sides and, as one can imagine, an extensive discussion on these matters is ongoing within philosophy and the natural sciences (see Chakravartty 2017).

This is not really the place to go deeper into this ultimately philosophical debate. My own most important reason to side with the conventionalists is that I find untenably anthropomorphic the idea of a world pre-structured into what seems to me to be human categories, answering to human perceptions and thoughts and needs. For this reason I do not believe that there is a truly independently existing entity, however construed, that is world literature. I find it possible that even an objectivist may be inclined to regard not only latitudes and longitudes but also world literature as a human construction, rather than as part of the fundamental furniture of the universe.

Another reason why I do not believe in the mind-independent existence of world literature is this. If one thinks that world literature has genuine, independent existence, it will be reasonable to try to establish facts about what world literature is actually like. This seems to me to raise a big problem. In order to have a good idea about what world literature is really like, you would have to have access to world literature such as it is in itself – otherwise you will not really be in a position to say something about what it is or is not really like. But how can you have access to reality such as it is in itself, beyond human perceptions and thoughts and categories? This is of course a problem facing not only discussions about world literature but all discourse about the world understood along objectivist lines, also, for example, the discourse of theoretical physics, and this is also why there is a debate about how to understand the statements of the natural sciences.

I have said all this in order to explain my skepticism about the mind-independent existence of world literature, but I do not claim to have proven that world literature only exists as something we have, perhaps for very good reasons, conceived into being. What I *have* done is to point to two different ways of understanding talk about world literature: as talk about something that has an independent existence irrespective of what we happen to say or think about it, or as talk about something that we create ourselves by imagining it and that we can freely reimagine.

If one believes that world literature has an independent existence irrespective of what we happen to say or think about it, the logic of reasoning about world literature is easy enough to understand. Statements about world literature will be statements of fact to be checked up, in one way or another, against independently existing realities. However, if one views world literature as an imagined entity, the logic will be different. For me, as a conventionalist about world literature, there is nothing like world literature such as it is in itself, irrespective of how humans think or talk about it. There is the expression “world literature”. If this expression had been used more or less in the same way by everybody, the expression would have projected onto the world a formation that more or less everybody would understand as being world

literature. We could then, indeed, go on to talk about what world literature is actually like – but we should manage to keep in mind that this will be what world literature is actually like as long as we continue to use the expression in the way we do. If world literature is a formation that we have thought up, we can always rethink it, and everything will be different. As things are, one can certainly not say with justification that the expression “world literature” is being used in more or less the same way by everybody. We have already seen that.

Many terms in literary studies are like “world literature” in that they have multiple meanings, meanings which are not, in their turn, crystal clear. The student of literature will arguably have to negotiate the concept of world literature in the same way as so many other notions. When nothing much hinges on the exact interpretation of the term, one can just leave it unexplained. But if the concept of world literature plays a structural role in one’s study or one’s argument, one will have to define the notion, that is, one will have to explain what one will, oneself, mean by “world literature” in the context in question. One will, in effect, have to design a concept of world literature of one’s own, fit for the occasion. I would say that two requirements need to be met when one is performing such an operation. One will have to design a concept that is productive, one which delimits something about which one has something of interest to say – otherwise the concept will be worthless. It should also be natural to call the concept a concept of world literature – otherwise it would be misleading to use the term “world literature” and one had better find some other expression.

I can foresee two quite opposite criticisms of what I have now said about the existence of world literature. Some may find my position too relativistic, and some may find my remarks banal. I will address the two objections in turn.

Some may want to argue that world literature exists, that it is absurd to deny that world literature exists, and that I am attempting to cast doubt on this obvious fact. To clarify my views further: I do not deny that world literature exists any more than I deny that dogs exist. Once we agree about what to mean by “world literature”, just like we more or less agree on what to mean by “dogs”, world literature can be said to have a clear reference. If we decide, for example, to mean by “world literature” literature under the capitalist system, then we can go on to discuss the characteristics of world literature. What I deny – but have not disproved – is that world literature exists in an absolute sense, independently of any human thought or talk about it. But I think I have made it clear that belief in the existence of world literature in that absolute meaning must, just like my own belief, ultimately presuppose metaphysical convictions. It cannot be just common sense.

Other critics of my reasoning may want to say that I have been belaboring the obvious. We were all taught, as undergraduates, that we will have to define our key terms when doing scholarly work. And who, one may ask, believes in an absolute truth about world literature, as if the concept formed part of a Platonic world of ideas? Such criticism may sound plausible, but if one looks at the actual critical discussion of world literature one will find confusion rather than clarity on the points that I have brought up. I will take the *Cambridge History of World Literature* (Ganguly 2021) as an example.

ON THE CONCEPT OF WORLD LITERATURE IN THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF WORLD LITERATURE

The two volumes of the *Cambridge History of World Literature* contain 47 essays, plus a comprehensive “Introduction” by the editor, Debjani Ganguly. The essays are of many different kinds. There are contributions focusing on specific countries or cultures, or on specific thinkers, or on poetics, or on translation, or on the idea of globality, and much more. There is, in short, an impressive variety of approaches to literary phenomena, approaches that, taken together, are not restricted by cultural or temporal borders. However, in this context I will only comment on the use of the concept of world literature in this work, and only on the editorial version of the concept – that is, on how the concept of world literature is employed in Ganguly’s “Introduction” and, anonymously, on the back cover and the half-title page.

Ganguly presents world literature as being at one and the same time a body of artistic production and a kind of academic study. These are the three opening sentences in her introduction:

World literature dwells in our time and in times past. As a treasured heritage of artistic expression in oral, visual, and written forms, it is an indelible part of the story of evolution of human civilization. As a scholarly field, however, world literature has had a rather sporadic presence in the disciplinary landscape of modern universities, surging and receding in accordance with political and sociocultural transformations. (2021, 1)

In my view, this is not a good way of introducing world literature. Ganguly lets world literature be two different things at the same time. If one is to make genuine use of the concept one should settle for some specific meaning of the expression “world literature” and hold on to that meaning. If one attempts to let the expression cover various different things that have been referred to as world literature the concept will just disintegrate.

It is worth noting that Ganguly, or at least the *Cambridge History of World Literature*, also makes contradictory remarks both about world literature as artistic production and world literature as a kind of academic study. On the artistic production side Ganguly writes of world literature as a treasured heritage of artistic expression. But the back cover and the half-title page announce that “*The Cambridge History of World Literature* is founded on the assumption that world literature is not all literatures of the world nor a canonical set of globally successful literary works” (14). If the assumption is that world literature is not all literature, nor the canonical literature of the world, one may ask how world literature can at the same time be presented as our treasured heritage of artistic expression.

Regarding world literature as a kind of academic study, Ganguly’s initial formulations suggest that it has a long tradition, with ups and downs. This may well be said – for example, world histories of literature have been published at least since Karl Rosenkranz’s three-volume *Handbuch einer allgemeinen Geschichte der Poesie* (Handbook of a general history of poetry) in the early 1830s (1832–1833) and up to the four-volume *Literature: A World History* with David Damrosch and Gunilla Lindberg-Wada as general editors (2022). But when Ganguly later describes world literature in its capacity of a kind of literary research, she refers to something dis-

tinctly modern, “an emergent field” situated “at the crossroads of five disciplinary areas and theoretical constellations – comparative literature, English literature, area studies, postcolonial studies, and globalization studies” (2021, 14). World literature as a scholarly field becomes, at one and the same time, something with a considerable tradition and something just about to take shape.

What, then is the *Cambridge History of World Literature* a history of? Not a history of literature or some specific body of literature, like the world histories of literature I have mentioned, nor a history of a kind of academic study, like D’haen’s *Routledge Concise History of World Literature*. In fact, somewhat surprisingly, the *Cambridge History of World Literature* is not the history of anything at all, at least not in any conventional sense of “history”. It appears obvious to me that this is rather a collection of articles in world literary studies, and in world literary studies in the sense of a modern, emergent field. Ganguly offers a list in eleven bullet points of the “conceptual and methodological coordinates” (2021, 17) of this kind of study, and a slightly different list recurs in the very last sentence of her introduction, which reads: “With its focus on excavation, retrieval, travel, translation, exchange, preservation, mediation, comparison, intersection, networks, convergences, and cartographic and planetary shifts, the *Cambridge History of World Literature* offers a model of literary history soberly attuned to our times” (42). A more adequate title for her two volumes might have been *Studies in World Literature*.

In her “Introduction” Ganguly does not bring up the question of what the work is a history of. In practice, she tells us that world literature cannot be defined. At the only point at which the question of what the volumes are a history of seems to arise, she writes of “the dizzyingly heterogeneous range of scholarly articulations of it” (9), that is, of world literature. This is to call up the idea that world literature exists in what I referred to as an absolute sense, as something in objective reality itself, but something possessing a dizzyingly heterogeneous range of scholarly articulations. As I attempted to explain earlier, such an assumption is in fact heavy with metaphysics, but there is no attempt in Ganguly’s “Introduction” to give it a metaphysical motivation. It remains a naked assumption, and one not fully acknowledged.

The idea of world literature as enjoying what I have called absolute existence never really reaches the surface in Ganguly’s “Introduction”, but one can sometimes see it presupposed, like in the formulation just quoted. Another example is a passage in which Ganguly refuses to accept the concept of world literature proposed by the Warwick Collective. She seems to take their definition of world literature as literature under the capitalist system not as a stipulation but as a statement about what world literature truly is and to regard it as factually wrong. Her argument is that the history of world literature spans much more than the last few centuries (36). She cannot say that without presupposing that there is a truth about what world literature is. A conventionalist might, rightly or wrongly, criticize the definition proposed by the Warwick Collective as being unproductive, or – as Ganguly also does – as misusing the expression “world literature”, but not as being factually wrong.

One can already find the implicit idea that there is an absolute truth about what world literature is on the back cover of the *Cambridge History of World Literature*.

When it is said there that the work rests on the assumption that world literature is not all literature, nor canonical literature, the talk of an assumption presupposes the idea of a factual state of affairs about which one can make assumptions in the absence of certain knowledge. In talk in a conventionalist vein publisher and editor would not have made any such *assumption*, but simply *stipulated* that in this work “world literature” is not being used to designate all literature or canonical literature.

In literary studies it is rather common to say that concepts like “literature” or “world literature” are difficult to define, or cannot be defined. (Where “world literature” is concerned I have seen, at least, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen’s remark that the concept of world literature “is notoriously difficult to define”; 2008, 2.) There are two ways of understanding such claims, an objectivist one and a conventionalist one.

For the objectivist about world literature, there is a given formation in mind-independent reality that is world literature. This formation is separated out, so to speak, by objective reality itself, before any human intervention. This formation may be too complex or otherwise ungraspable for its decisive characteristics to be captured in a definition.

For the conventionalist, things look differently. It is not too difficult to give a decent *descriptive* definition of terms like “world literature” – that is, an overview of the different things that they are typically used to mean – as I did here, to some extent, earlier in my article. Nor is it a big problem to *stipulate* a definition: to explain how one intends, oneself, to use the term in a given context. It is certainly true that terms like “world literature” cannot be given an *analytical* definition of the classical type, one specifying their distinguishing characteristics, but for the conventionalist this cannot be because world literature is something too subtle and elusive to be defined. It is rather because an expression like “world literature” can refer to different things, and one has to decide what thing to refer to before one can specify the distinguishing characteristics of that thing. As long as one has no specific meaning of “world literature” in mind, the expression cannot be defined – not because it is something too complex, but because there will be nothing to define: one cannot describe the distinguishing characteristics of nothing in particular. However, if one decides to mean by “world literature”, say, a quite specific kind of academic research, nothing will prevent one from making it precise, by means of a definition, what are the features distinguishing that kind, and only that kind, of research. True, one may fail to find such distinguishing characteristics. But for the conventionalist this will signify – in the absence of other convincing *raisons d’être* – that this version of the concept does not do any useful work and had better be abandoned or reshaped.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have commented on the contemporary critical and scholarly uses of the expression “world literature” and on the question of how to conceive of the concept of world literature and come to terms with it. The emphasis has been on how to conceive of the concept and come to terms with it. I hope that one will not, in the end, think that I have been banging down an open door. Still, one may ask whether terminological and methodological considerations like mine really matter in literary studies.

Among the fine qualities one is likely to look for in literary research, conceptual clarity may not be at the very top of the list. But of course, it matters how we reason and how we use our concepts. I would particularly like to emphasize the importance of the distinction between objectivism and conventionalism that has run like a theme through the latter part of my article. Without making a choice between these, in some form, one will not have a clear idea of what one is talking about when one is speaking of world literature. It is wise to try to see our own presuppositions, and reflect on them, and moderate our ways of thinking and arguing in the light of this. This is so not only where discussions of world literature are concerned, but in this article the concept of world literature was my topic.

NOTES

¹ See <https://brill.com/view/journals/jwl/jwl-overview.xml?language=en>; accessed January 28, 2022.

² See <https://iwl.fas.harvard.edu>; accessed February 1, 2022.

³ See en.imli.ru; accessed February 23, 2022.

⁴ See ailc-icla.org/mission-statement/; accessed February 23, 2022.

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On the concept of world literature

World literature. The Cambridge History of World Literature. Ontology. Definition.

The expression "world literature" is currently being used in several ways: about various culturally and temporally inclusive bodies of literature and about various ways of studying such literature. In the article, special attention is devoted to the editorial concept of world literature in *The Cambridge History of World Literature* (2021), edited by Debjani Ganguly. Formulations about world literature sometimes cast it as a mind-independent entity, sometimes as a scholarly construction. It is argued that the choice between these alternatives is important, since it has significant consequences for the logic of thinking and reasoning about world literature.

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The problems with delimiting the notion of transculturality in literary studies

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Transculturality is hardly a new term – it has been in use for more than 30 years since its introduction to the humanistic discourse by Wolfgang Iser in the 1990s. It intersects with other *trans* approaches present in current literary studies: transnational (to be discussed more later), transdisciplinary, transmedial, or transgender. In the ACLA report from 2017, Jessica Berman stated that critical perspectives she labelled collectively as “trans” have not only “animated” comparative studies in the past decade, but they can also be a chance to “rearticulate comparative literature now” (106–107). Thus, the expectations for transculturality and other perspectives that transcend any given boundaries were and indeed still are very high. However, despite extensive research being conducted in different parts of the world and on a plethora of topics, the notion of transculturality is still far from being clear and stable, and varies from one researcher to another. This unsteadiness of meaning may actually be an important factor in transculturality’s constant popularity – the term can be deployed in diverse contexts, in multiple types of critical approaches, and across different disciplines. But it also raises some issues and requires constant redefinition for each particular usage. My aim here is to indicate issues and doubts that need to be addressed by any scholar wishing to explore transcultural literary history, or to write about literary history from a transcultural perspective. There are four major “critical points”, which I believe need to be considered when using terms “transcultural” and “transculturality”. The first one involves the deployment of those notions to describe both the subject of the analysis (e.g., transcultural writers or literary works) and the method or approach to otherwise non-transcultural phenomena. The second pertains to the question whether transculturality refers only to the modern, globalized world or to cultures of all times and spaces. The third concerns the difference between transculturality and transnationality, a term that gained popularity in the 21st century. And finally, the last one refers to the usage of the term “transcultural” to describe a non-equal relation between two or more cultures, for example “inspirations” drawn from non-Western cultures in orientalist and exoticist literary works.

SUBJECT OR METHOD?

Transculturality can be deployed in two principal manners – as a term describing a subject of study and/or as a method of analysis. Choosing one of these manners will automatically outline a different field of study: one can either study transculturality understood as a cultural phenomenon or be transcultural in the way one juxtaposes various and otherwise non-transcultural cultural facts. The first understanding of transculturality is situated closer to Welsch's original notion, described as a "consequence of the inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures" (1999, 197). One of the best-known examples of this approach is the research conducted by Arianna Dagnino, who uses terms such as "transcultural writers" and "transcultural literature". Dagnino states that certain contemporary writers have developed what she calls a transcultural mindset, and that their works cannot be perceived as a product of a single culture, but rather as a decentered hybrid created from elements drawn from different cultures. Those writers (Dagnino mentions, among others, Michael Ondaatje, Pico Ayer, and Amin Maalouf) "showed us a path towards a transcultural attitude/mode of being" (2012, 2). Among other noteworthy works in this field are *Transcultural Identities in Contemporary Literature* (2013), edited by Irene Gilsenan Nordin, Julie Hansen, and Carmen Zamorano Llena, which uses the term transculturality in two non-contradictory ways: to name a thematic focus of a certain literary works and to describe hybrid identity of authors, *The Transcultural Turn* (2014), edited by Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson, whose aim is to "conceptualize the diverse ways in which memorial practices negotiate relationships between local, national, and international communities in the age of globalization" (19), and *Transcultural English Studies* (2009), edited by Frank Schulze-Engler and Sissy Helf, which examines the transculturality of literary works written in English by authors of non-British heritage.

The other use of the term transcultural focuses more on an approach to literature rather than on the transculturality in Welsch's meaning. This understanding of transculturality aims at comparing and freely juxtaposing texts and cultural artifacts across various cultures and discussing possible literary and cultural parallels, affinities, or mutual inspirations. This critical approach does not require the examined texts to be transcultural themselves – instead it sees them through transcultural lenses as phenomena that can and should be compared. Among examples of such an approach are Jessica Berman's *Modernist Commitments* (2011), which aims at examining modernist political engagement by juxtaposing modernist works from different parts of the world, *Transcultural Poetics and the Concept of the Poet* (2016) by Ranjan Ghosh, who analyzes the very concept of poet within multiple literary traditions (e.g. Anglo-American, Arabic, Chinese, Sanskrit, and Urdu), and to name a Polish example, Beata Śniecikowska's *Haiku po polsku* (Haiku in Polish), a study of parallels between Polish poetry and Japanese haiku, whose aim is to look for "transcultural common spots" (2016, 131).

Such an approach also characterizes both David Damrosch's world literature, which he defines not as a "set canon of texts but a mode of reading" (2003, 297), and Anders Pettersson's transcultural literary history (2006, 2008). Damrosch argues that

to establish a literary field of study one needs only three works, “interestingly juxtaposed and studied with care” but which do not have to be linked by any causal relationship (such as influence) or any kind of mutual dependency: “*Antigone*, *Shakuntala*, and *Twelfth Night* can together open up a world of dramatic possibility” (2003, 299). This idea seems to be situated very close to the program of transcultural literary history, proposed by a group of Scandinavian comparatists led by Anders Pettersson. Their aim, as Pettersson explains, is to “transcend the borders of a single culture in [...] choice of topic” (2006, 1), and to create a literary history “with no pre-determined national or temporal limitations” (2008, 463). Rather than proposing a gargantuan task of creating a history of world’s literature, Pettersson suggests that this new mode of research should focus on individual case studies, thus creating a “world history of literature” (2006, 22). Transcultural literary history has produced several edited volumes, such as *Literary History: Towards a Global Perspective* (edited by Anders Pettersson, Gunilla Lindberg-Wada, Margareta Petersson, and Stefan Helgesson 2006) and *Studying Transcultural Literary History* (edited by Lindberg-Wada 2006) however, despite its noble goals it did not gain much popularity.

An interesting proposal of a transcultural method came from a group of Polish researchers in aesthetics. Their critical approach, transcultural aesthetic studies, aims at going beyond a Eurocentric point of view and opening up towards non-Western cultures. Krystyna Wilkoszewska, the editor of two volumes on transcultural aesthetic studies (*Estetyka transkulturowa* [Transcultural aesthetics], 2004; and *Aesthetics and cultures*, 2013, available in English) has developed a set of guidelines on how to conduct such research, of which the most important is an ethical one: to respect other cultures (2012, 207–211); the other two guidelines are that research into other aesthetics should remain somewhat superficial and that it needs to create a new critical language. Apart from that, transcultural aesthetic studies did not establish any clear field or method of study. Instead, researchers working under its auspices proposed a series of specific analysis on particular topics, narrow in scope, and produced a series of books about aesthetics of non-European cultures.

MODERN PHENOMENA OR A GENERAL FEATURE OF CULTURES?

The next issue is only relevant to transculturality as the subject of study; transculturality as a critical approach to literary studies simply avoids this question. Is transculturality something that describes current cultures or is it inherent to all cultures, in any given time or space? Welsch himself is not entirely clear on the matter. On the one hand, he states that transculturality is an “inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures” and that “cultures today are extremely interconnected and entangled with each other” as a result of “migratory processes, as well as of worldwide material and immaterial communications systems and economic interdependencies and dependencies” (1999, 197). On the other, he explains that “transculturality is in no way completely new historically”, giving the example of European history (199). In a later article on transculturality (sent for a Polish conference on transcultural aesthetics and thus available, as far as I know, only in Polish) Welsch states that cultures were indeed always to some extent transcultural or had

a transcultural disposition (although there are cultures more open towards hybridization than others; Welsch considers Japanese culture as example of a particularly open culture) and that the current globalized and highly interconnected world has only made the issue more visible and enabled hybridization on a bigger scale (2004, 33–34).

Most of the research examining transculturality as a subject, i.e., a feature of literary text or of writers, is being done on contemporary or at least modern examples. This is the case of such prominent examples as Arianna Dagnino's exploration of transcultural writers, Paul Jay's analysis of multiculturalism, transcultural identity, and globalization in contemporary literature (although Jay's book *Global Matters. The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies*, 2010, uses the term transnationality rather than transculturality), or Frank Schulze-Engler's interest in transcultural English-language literature. The latter also proposes to use the notion of transculturality as a replacement for the term postcolonial, which in Schulze-Engler's view, despite its many merits, became a "mega-concept" encompassing all non-Western literary work. Transculturality is better, argues Schulze-Engler, at describing the current decentralized field of global literature, whereas the term "postcolonial" focuses solely on the literature of former colonies, migrants, and diasporas (2007, 20–32).

There are, however, a couple of exceptions to this general inclination towards defining transculturality as a contemporary feature. One of them is research into the transcultural roots of European and American modernism. Rupert Richard Arrowsmith, author of *Modernism and the Museum*, seeks to prove that the "earliest manifestations of Modernism, then, were transcultural to a far greater extent than has previously been acknowledged, and should be seen as the beginnings of a human, rather than a merely regional, cultural milieu" (2011, 40). It is worth noting that researchers in this field of study do not always actually use the term transcultural, though they can certainly be seen as scholars dealing with transculturality. Among examples of such monographs describing the transcultural roots of Western modernisms (apart from Arrowsmith's *Modernism and the Museum*) are *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams* (1995) and *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art: Pound, Moore, Stevens* (2003) by Zhaoming Qian, *Whitmanism, Imagism, and Modernism in China and America* (1998) by Guiyou Huang (all three of them examine the influence of Chinese poetry on Western modernist poets), and *Japan, France, and East-West Aesthetics* (2004) by Jan Walsh Hokenson (which analyzes the transcultural effects on Western literature of inspiration drawn in 19th century from Japanese aesthetics via *ukiyo-e* paintings). A signal of a shift in understanding transculturality resulting in defining it as a quality of culture that may occur in any given time and space can be also found in such publications as *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World* (2013), edited by Albrecht Classen, and *Transcultural Literary Studies: Politics, Theory, and Literary Analysis* (2017), by Bernd Fisher, in which some of the featured articles use the term transculturality to describe, for example, aspects of the European Middle Ages and Romanticism.

TRANSCULTURALITY AND TRANSNATIONALITY OR WHAT EXACTLY IS CULTURE?

The next problem – or rather set of intermingled problems – lies strictly within the term transculturality itself – in the definition of culture, inherent to the notion and problematic at the same time. It seems that even Welsch himself struggled for a time to free himself from the traditional vision of culture as something inherently interrelated with nation. He criticizes Herder's visualization of cultures as closed, homogeneous spheres or islands (1999, 195) and states (in the longer version of his classic article on transculturality) that "we are mistaken when we continue to speak of German, French, Japanese, Indian, etc. cultures as if these were clearly defined and closed entities; what we really have in mind when speaking this way are political or linguistic communities, not actual cultural formations" (2001, 67). But at the same time, he cannot escape using terms such as "Japanese culture", "Indian culture" (75) or to propose statements like this one: "Germans, for example, today have implemented more elements of the French and Italian lifestyle than ever before" (69). By doing so he silently assumes that there are classifiable structures we can call cultures, that they are more or less coherent with the notions of nations, and that we can point out and describe their distinctive features.

The problem of defining the relation between nation and culture plays an important role in establishing the difference – if there indeed is any – between transculturality and transnationality, a term that rapidly gained popularity in the first decade of the 21st century, mostly due to a new type of research that emerged in a perhaps not so obvious place – modernist studies (until that point it was usually the field of comparative studies that had taken upon itself the obligation to widen the scope of research to truly global proportions). In 2008 Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz announced that "there can be no doubt that modernist studies is undergoing a transnational turn" (738). This turn proposes globalizing literary studies in modernism, and the main goals of the research conducted under its auspices limiting Eurocentrism and openness towards non-European or non-Western cultures. In their article, Mao and Walkowitz discuss three new types of research: the first broadens the scope of modernist studies by incorporating literary productions from different parts of the world, the second traces transnational circulation of art, while the third analyzes the relation of modernism and imperialism and colonialism (738–739). In my opinion the unique quality of the transnational turn in modernist studies lies in its non-theoretical character – unlike previous comparatist propositions such as *Weltliteratur* or transcultural literary history, transnational research is an actual practice rather than a program, manifesto or a new theoretical proposal, that consists of a case-by-case body of works by researchers who try to reframe modernism as a global phenomenon as well as to uncover the non-European roots of Western modernism.

The usage of the term transnationality in modernist studies and other works on current global world literature (e.g., Jay 2010) seems to situate its meaning fairly close to that of transculturality. This would mean that both terms can be used interchangeably or even that one of them is redundant. This changes, however, depending

on how and to what extent we are willing to link the notion of culture with the notion of nation. If, as Welsch does, we think of cultures in national terms and use phrases such as “Japanese culture”, “German culture”, “Ukrainian culture”, etc., then transculturality has virtually the same meaning as transnationality – both describe phenomena that cross national-cultural boundaries. This is in fact how Welsch understands his term, as he talks about the transculturality of Europe – he writes at some point that “styles developed across the countries and nations” (1999, 200). In that regard one of the two “trans-” notions seems unnecessary and following the law of parsimony should be scrapped. If, however, we think of cultures in supranational terms, such as “European culture”, “East Asian Culture” or even broader notions of “Eastern culture” or “Western culture”, then transnationality and transculturality name different types of social and aesthetical exchange. With that in mind, we would use the term transculturality to describe relationships between Polish and Arabic literature or Austrian and Japanese art, but we would not apply it to the research on intertextual relationships between Polish and French literary works – such links are transnational because they transcend the national boundaries, but they are not transcultural, because both French and Polish literary works were created within the same framework of European culture. I think that Welsch’s argument of the historical transculturality of Europe mentioned above can be seen not so much as an example of historical transculturality, but rather as proof that different European nations and their works of art actually belong to the same European culture. This, by the way, poses an additional question concerning the way we – researchers based in Central Europe – perceive our field of study. Do we tend to envision it as part of the European tradition or as something separate – thus resulting in using narrower notions of Western Europe, Central Europe, and Eastern Europe?

The nature of the relation between the terms nation and culture may seem like a secondary problem, one that can be dealt with anew in each specific research project, but to me it is an issue of notable significance. In our current times, when we are finally seeing literary studies become less Eurocentric and slowly open up towards non-Western literary works, it is crucial to establish what the “culture” part of transculturality really means to us. For me, it requires transcending not only national but also ethnic and even continental boundaries. Otherwise, we risk falling right back into the abyss of Eurocentrism. If we are willing to define transculturality as having essentially the same meaning as transnationality, then we might recede into the field of study characteristic for the French School of comparative literature and the original 19th-century *Weltliteratur*. It could lead to a potential situation in which credit for being “transcultural” goes to a researcher who is still confined within the narrow field of European/Western culture. This is precisely the concern raised by Pettersson about world literature, which in the scope proposed by some researchers (such as Franco Moretti or Christopher Prendergast) can hardly be seen as global, as it focuses heavily on the perceived key role of the West in the world’s literary field. If we want transculturality to be a notion that can describe the global or planetary dimension of literature, then it is necessary to differentiate the notions of transnationality and transculturality and of nation and culture.

TRANSCULTURALITY AND/OR EXOTICISM

My last concern stems from personal experience. When I was discussing various ways in which Japanese influences presented themselves in Polish literature of early modernism, I tried to explain my understanding of transculturality (which is largely based on Welsch's concept) by using phrases such as a "dynamic, hybrid entity" and "negotiation field between two or more cultures". I noted that only a part of my research was using Welsch's notion, as I don't consider all of the examples of Polish literary *japonisme* to be transcultural. To my confusion, I was asked why I am not referring to Polish "translations" of Japanese poems as transcultural. They do, my interlocutor argued, seem to be a "negotiation field" between two cultures. The problem with those translations is that they can hardly be called translations, because Polish writers adapted Japanese poems to the perceived needs of the European reader by implementing significant changes to the original texts: they added rhymes and rhythm, and used distinctively European and completely inadequate forms, such as the triolet. I would consider the actions of those "translators" a violation of the original texts rather than examples of transculturality¹. But the very idea of using the notion of transculturality in such a context made me realize a potential flaw – and danger – in the way the term can be understood. What form of cultural exchange or transition is precisely transcultural? Can we analyze Western orientalism and exoticism with their constructed image of the Other in terms of transculturality? Are we willing, and if yes, to what extent, to discuss as examples of transcultural hybridization orientalist "borrowing" ("with no intention of returning", as Christopher Reeds points out; 2016, 13) poetic forms, motifs, philosophical ideas, etc., from non-Western cultures? Are 19th-century European Indomania and *japonisme* examples of transculturality or are they merely exotic, orientalist appropriations? What of the inherently unequal relations between privileged and nonprivileged, central and marginal, colonizers and subalterns – can they be examples of a transcultural "negotiation field" and if so, what is the negotiating position of those from whom the West is doing the "borrowing"?

The problem here is twofold. The first is an ethical one: if we discuss orientalism and exoticism solely as instances of transculturality, then we might fail to see how they disseminated a distorted view of non-Western cultures. If I were to discuss Polish translations and paraphrases of Japanese literary works, be it poetry or prose, as examples of transcultural exchange, it would veil the fact that they essentially demolished the original versions and presented to Polish readers a false image of Japanese culture – all in the name of a chauvinistic conviction that European aesthetics and poetics are by definition better than anything the rest of the world has to offer. Transculturality has a powerful demystifying potential, but it can also obscure phenomena that would be better described with different conceptual categories. The second issue is a definitional one and requires drawing a line between transculturality and exoticization. Welsch describes transculturality as a process of hybridization, of merger, or even, in the longer version of his article, as a state in which the provenance of elements taken from different cultures is no longer visible or discernible (Welsch uses an example of a traditional Japanese restaurant

decorated with Italian furniture; 2001, 69–70). This applies to both the macro- and micro-level, as Welsch states that “we are cultural hybrids” (1999, 199) – transculturality implies a certain degree of internalization and accepting certain constructs from other cultures as one’s own. This links the German philosopher’s concept with Fernando Ortiz’s term *transculturation*, which predates Welsch’s term by half a century (the term “transculturation” was coined by Ortiz in 1940). The definition of transculturation clearly implies that it is a specific type of cultural exchange which requires a fusion of two cultures, resulting in a new cultural phenomenon (Ortiz 1995, 102–103). With that in mind, I would argue that the notion of transculturality should not be automatically deployed to describe any form of cultural exchange or transfer. Not all art and literary relationships between European and non-European cultures are transcultural, because some of them clearly do not fulfill Welsch’s and Ortiz’s criteria of internalization and merger. In that regard, inspirations drawn by Europe from Chinese, Japanese, Indian or Arabic culture are disputable as instances of transculturality, because in most cases they are used precisely for their exoticness, otherness and strangeness – and those features are being celebrated and valued more than their potential ability to merge with and transform Western culture. Such instances therefore can and should be examined in terms of intertextuality, orientalism, exoticism, and imperialism – but not necessarily transculturality.

GOING GLOBAL

Transculturality and transnationality seem to be a part of a bigger shift in the humanities, one that is often called a global turn. In terms of literary studies, it resulted in three major types of research: edited volumes on global literature with multitude authors from different parts of the world (such as *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernism* edited by Mark Wollaeger, 2013), comparative monographs juxtaposing literary works from Western and non-Western cultures, and monographs on transcultural roots of certain Western literary phenomena. The aim of all those works is, firstly, to include into the field of literary studies traditions and texts that up until now were marginalized, and secondly, to rethink the existing concepts and notions that we use to describe literature. It seems, however, that deployment of the second aim is far rarer than the first – globalizing literary studies too often means simply adding a selected non-Western work to the field of study. Such approach means that literary works from different parts of the world are often being arbitrarily assigned to the European periodization and described by imposed and often inadequate European terms. A similar argument is presented by Susan Stanford Friedman in her book *Planetary Modernism* in which she points out that “the field has insufficiently challenged the prevailing ‘Western’ framework within which studies of modernity and modernism are conducted” (2015, 3). Kaira M. Cabañas calls this situation an “assimilationist logic” and explains the importance of realizing that “aesthetic categories and movements are neither neutral nor natural containers of information”. She then proceeds to indicate that the very notion of “globality” is a product of Western episteme and

that “global’ is just a veiled way of saying ‘non-Western’”. “No scholar in the United States uses ‘global’ to designate Western modernism”, she adds (2021, s.p.). I cannot help but wonder if the adjective “transcultural” is not akin to “global” in that regard – is “transcultural” not used, to paraphrase Cabañas, as a (thinly) veiled way of saying “non-Western”?

I agree with Jessica Berman in that trans perspectives (and transculturality among them) can “provide a lens to see the many spheres of operation of texts and the challenges they can pose to normative regimes of embodiment and subjectivity globally” (2017, 107). Transculturality – whether used as a method of examining literature or as a way to describe today’s globalized and interconnected world – has great potential for literary studies. But the problems with defining the term itself and explaining what it means to write transcultural literary history demonstrate that we need to be careful when using those notions. It is still far too easy to recede into Eurocentrism despite one’s good intentions. Perhaps the way out of this trap might be a simple one: to be open towards non-Western cultures – and, possibly even more importantly, to the critique and comments offered by non-Western scholars.

NOTE

- ¹ This example can open up another discussion on the issue of translation theory, which I omit here due to vastness of this topic. It is worth noting that transcultural analysis rarely refers to the problem of different strategies of translation, although it may be useful in certain types of research.

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Transculturality. Globality. World literature. Culture.

The global turn in literary studies brings the necessity of looking for new ways to analyze literature and literary history, and to reframe the categories we use to describe it. Transculturality, though in use for the past 30 years, still seems one of the freshest and most promising terms to use in a newly profiled literary study. However, recent publications have proved that the meaning of the term is at best unstable – transculturality is being used in different, sometimes contradictory ways. This article focuses on some of the issues that one may face when dealing with the notion of transculturality.

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Transculturalism in literature as reflected in the works of translingual writers from the Hungarian cultural context

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Transculturalism has been one of the defining phenomena of recent years in many areas of the humanities and social sciences. It has been widely discussed within such disciplines as, among others, cultural studies, anthropology or ethnology. The present paper aims to show how transculturalism has influenced the research conducted in the field of literary studies. The first part, which has a review character, will present the history of the concept, the creator of which is commonly believed to be Wolfgang Welsch. Although Welsch is in fact the most important theorist of transculturalism, the term was originally defined in 1940 by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, who inspired many later researchers of the concept, such as the Uruguayan literary critic Ángel Rama or Mary Louise Pratt, whose findings will be both discussed in the article.

Welsch formulated the term of transculturalism in polemics with the two earlier approaches of multi- and interculturalism, which are no longer considered cutting-edge but in the 1970s were widely applied both in theoretical considerations as well as in practice. Later this line of reasoning was continued in the works of Arianna Dagnino, who is considered to be the most important contemporary researcher of the interconnections of transculturalism with literature. The second part of the paper will be, therefore, almost entirely devoted to Dagnino, who proposed a very interesting and valuable, but (for several reasons which will be mentioned in the paper) debatable definition of the so-called transcultural literature. It is questioned, among others, by the findings of such literary scholars as Hajnalka Nagy or Zoltán Németh, whose research will be also briefly presented.

Finally, the paper will pose a question about the place of so-called transcultural writers in a literary canon. The specific status of transcultural writers, who do not belong to any of the national literatures, prompts reflection on whether their works have a chance to be included in the supranational canon of literature. The context for these considerations, based on the approach to the issue of the canon by David Damrosch, will be provided by three translingual authors of Hungarian origin: Agota Kristof, Edith Bruck and Tibor Fischer.

FROM MULTICULTURALISM TO TRANSCULTURALISM

Multiculturalism is a concept which in the late 1960s and early 1970s became one of the possible answers to the “problems” of Western societies, resulting from the fact that they were inhabited by representatives of many nations, languages, and cultures. The idea became a subject of public debate when Australia and Canada, both culturally heterogeneous countries, expressed their official support for it and adopted policies that took its demands into account. In Europe, the first country to implement the idea of multiculturalism was Great Britain. In response to the influx of immigrants from former British colonies, a document was ratified in 1966, which regulated the stay of all the newcomers on the islands in the spirit of multicultural tolerance and mutual understanding (Rattansi 2011, 7).

At the heart of multiculturalism lies a society that is welcoming and open to all kinds of difference. Minority cultures can remain distinct and are not obliged to assimilate into the dominant culture. The proponents of this idea believe that this not only does not prevent the integration of immigrants into society, but supports it (Song 2020). Related to the idea of multiculturalism, although not identical to it, is the concept of interculturalism. Like multiculturalism, it speaks of a mutually respectful co-existence of cultures without the pressure to assimilate. However, interculturalism goes a step further and assumes a common understanding and mutual acceptance.¹

Both concepts, however noble in their assumptions, have little in common with reality in the eyes of their critics. Sabrina Brancato, who called multiculturalism “a modern utopia created for the West”, sees the main problem with both multiculturalism and interculturalism in the fact that both sustain differences (2004, 40–41). From a political point of view, the actions taken under their auspices (such as combating discrimination, racism, promoting respect for cultural, ethnic, and racial differences) are clearly positive. However, these are ideologies based on thinking of cultures as monoliths, existing in parallel to each other and not intermingling. In the spirit of multiculturalism and interculturalism, our task as members of society is to respect other cultures and to respect what is different, diverse, and exotic. We are to be open to otherness, change in our own thinking and exoticism of a culture that is different from our own. Such thinking, although it has laudable aims, may result in processes of segregation and even ghettoization, and may perpetuate stereotypes. From the point of view of national minorities, on the other hand, it can lead to essentialist and idealistic thinking, the aftermath of which is, among other things, the idea of authenticity, resulting from the longing for “true roots” (41).

The philosopher and art historian Wolfgang Iser also drew attention to the limited usefulness of the concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism, describing them as progressive ideas only in appearance and referring to the now outdated traditional concept of individual cultures. He pointed to Herder as its main creator, who described culture using three elements: “social homogenization, ethnic consolidation and intercultural delimitation” (1999, 194). According to Iser, none of these determinants are valid today. Firstly, the claim about the homogeneity of contemporary societies is questionable. As Iser enumerates, we differ in terms of material status, gender, or sexuality, among other things, and these characteristics influence our life-

styles and determine various, radically different life patterns. Even more debatable is the concept of ethnic unification of cultures. As Welsch points out, societies are not something given, but invented and often established by force. It is therefore erroneous for Herder to think of culture “as closed spheres or autonomous islands”, which corresponds to the territory inhabited by a single language-speaking people (1999, 195). Neither do borders, which are intended to separate from other cultures, have any purpose today (nor did they have any purpose in the past centuries). The fact that they must be redefined and redrawn again and again to keep up with the constant process of cultural mixing proves that they are of little use. As Welsch states, Herder’s concept of individual cultures is therefore useless or even harmful today. There are numerous dangers associated with it, such as separatism, leading to political and even military conflicts.

Welsch therefore completely rejects both multiculturalism and interculturalism. Instead, he proposes the concept of transculturalism. As he writes, because of globalization and migration processes, there is a constant mixing of cultures, a peculiar infiltration which leads to the emergence of new, hybrid cultural forms. At the macro level, this results in the emergence of similar problems and issues in cultures that were traditionally considered extremely different. As an example, he mentions human rights debates, feminism, and environmental movements, which are present in public discourse regardless of geographical location. At the micro level, on the other hand, multicultural connections have an impact on the formation of the individual and the development of its identity. As Welsch says, contemporary life should be understood as “a migration through different social worlds and as the successive realization of a number of possible identities” (1999, 198). Indeed, one of the basic human rights is the right to cultural formation, and if an individual is influenced by different cultures, then the fusion of all transcultural factors is one of the tasks in the process of identity formation.

Welsch’s concept of transculturalism is a well-known idea and has been widely discussed in the circles of philosophers and cultural anthropologists. It should be emphasized, however, that we are not dealing here with a new concept. Its foundations were laid much earlier, namely in the 1940s by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz. In the context of his studies on Afro-Cuban culture, Ortiz talked about the so-called transculturation, which according to him was supposed to best describe the cultural transformations that had taken place in Cuba since the discovery of the island by colonizers from the Iberian Peninsula. In Ortiz’s understanding, transculturation was to be primarily a counterbalance to the phenomenon known as acculturation, which in anthropology is understood as a process consisting in the rapid transformation of one culture under the influence of another, as well as under the influence of changed social and environmental conditions. Acculturation was treated as a unilateral process, while transculturation was supposed to be a bilateral exchange, “the source of which is a dynamic, intercultural dialogue” (Gondor-Wiercioch 2009, 25).

Melville Herskovits was the founder of the concept of acculturation (together with Robert Redfield and Ralph Linton) and it was he, as a defender of his concept, who

was the main, although not the only, critic of Ortiz's ideas.² As Jadwiga Romanowska notes, "acculturation as defined by Herskovits is considered to be the totality of phenomena arising as a result of continuous direct contact between cultural groups, which lead to changes in the cultural patterns of both groups" (2013, 145). Transculturation, according to Ortiz, was supposed to be a more precise concept, although Romanowska cites Mario Santí as stressing that the fields of meaning of the concepts in question overlap to a considerable extent (145). What particularly interested Ortiz was to find out whether the so-called peripheral cultures, which are in contact with dominant cultures, can create cultural connections (transcultural processes) instead of simply being passively assimilated. The subject of his research was the mutual influence of African, European, and Cuban cultures. The researcher found that every cultural exchange of this kind initially suffers loss, as a culture loses part of its heritage in order to adopt new cultural values and ultimately to produce a new cultural quality. He called these two stages of the transculturation process "partial deculturation" or "exculturation" (*parcial deculturación* or *exculturación*) and "neoculturation" (*neoculturización*; 144).

Interestingly, Ortiz's model was also reflected in literary theory, thanks to the Uruguayan literary critic Ángel Rama. Taking Ortiz's transcultural scheme as a starting point, Rama created the concept of narrative transculturation (2008). In his terms, narrative transculturation is a process that refers to "three basic categories applicable to literature: language, literary structure and social imagination" (Romanowska 2013, 147). It consists of four stages: "loss", or partial deculturation (*parcial deculturación*), consisting of the displacement of certain cultural elements in order to make room for new ones; "internal selection" (*selección interna*) among both indigenous and foreign cultural elements; "rediscovery" (*redescubrimiento*) of hitherto marginal indigenous cultural elements and placing them in the center; "incorporation" (*incorporación*) of foreign cultural elements (146–147).

As Romanowska notes, Rama's scheme faced widespread criticism, which, however, was not directed at the notion of transculturation itself, but the fact that the scheme was applied to the analysis of Ibero-American literature in a postcolonial context (147). This is all the more interesting because Ortiz's concept, which so strongly inspired Rama, was criticized for the opposite reason, namely for not reflecting on the "colonial dimension" of the phenomenon and for "the researcher speaking from a nationalist stance" (Dagnino 2012, 3). Almost half a century later this gap was filled, among others, by Mary Louise Pratt, who undertook a reflection on the process of transculturation from the point of view of postcolonial relations. The researcher coined the term of the so-called "contact zones", which she understood as the spaces of imperial cultural contact, where geographically and historically distant peoples contact one another and establish relations, usually involving coercion, extreme inequality and difficult to resolve conflict (1992, 10). The key word in this concept is "contact", indicating the interactive and improvisational dimensions of the imperial encounter between cultures that have not previously been considered in accounts of conquest, conducted from the point of view of victors and dominators. Making "contact", entering a relationship, or having an encoun-

ter involves a change of perspective. The colonized and the colonizers cease to be perceived in terms of otherness, separateness, foreignness in favor of coexistence, mutual understanding, and action (10).

Pratt's concept, however valuable from the perspective of transcultural considerations, has not avoided criticism either. As Ariana Dagnino notes, Anne Holden Rønning accused her of referring to too restrictive, dichotomous divisions, in which on one side stands the colonized and on the other the colonizer. As Rønning rightly remarked, transculturation assumes a departure from such binary oppositions and is in its essence "the ability to move freely from one cultural stance to another and back again" (Dagnino 2012, 4). The question that needs to be asked here is to what extent the idealistic assumptions of the concept of transculturation created by Ortiz translate into the reality of the contemporary world. Isn't it bold, not to say naive, to claim that different cultures can exist in one time and space, intermingle, and draw from each other regardless of the power relations between them? Similar questions could also be asked of Welsch, whose proposal, although it seems more up to date than Ortiz's ideas from the contemporary European point of view, is also not without debatable elements.

Besides, Welsch was fully aware of this when he first presented his new concept of culture in the 1990s. He forewarned the critics, so to speak, and drew attention to the "weaknesses" of his concept himself. First, he explained that the potential fears of some that transculturalism is in its essence tantamount to uniformity, are misplaced. As he wrote, transculturalism not only does not mean simple uniformity, but is linked to the production of "a new type of diversity": "a new type of diversity takes shape: the diversity of different cultures and life-forms, each arising from transcultural permeations" (Welsch 1999, 204). Transculturalism has advantages over both the uniformizing concept of globalization and the particularization that emerged in response to it:

The concept of transculturality goes beyond these seemingly hard alternatives. It can cover both global and local, universalistic, and particularistic aspects, and it does so quite naturally, from the logic of transcultural processes themselves. The globalizing tendencies as well as the desire for specificity and particularity can be fulfilled within transculturality. (1999, 205)

According to Welsch, "[t]ranscultural identities comprehend a cosmopolitan side, but also a side of local affiliation" (205) and it is precisely the combination of these two elements that is inscribed in the difficult process of identity formation that takes place through the integration of elements from different cultures.

WHAT IS TRANSCULTURAL LITERATURE?

Wolfgang Welsch's concept is an important reference point in Arianna Dagnino's reflections on transculturalism and literature in several publications.³ In her understanding of transculturalism, the researcher, like Welsch and unlike Ortiz and Pratt, breaks with binary oppositions in which dominant cultures are contrasted with subordinated cultures and colonizing cultures with colonized cultures. She calls for a new approach within literary studies, which she describes as transcultural compar-

ativism. As she explains, this is a new kind of comparativism that is truly borderless, for which transculturalism is a kind of model and theoretical framework that aims to link literary texts that are not exclusively identified with one culture or nation. Dagnino's book *Transcultural Writers and Novels in the Age of Global Mobility* (2015) is an important contribution to transculturally oriented literature studies. Particularly valuable from the point of view of the considerations presented here are her findings in which she defines transcultural literature. She uses the concept of "creative transpatriation", which refers to the process of going beyond the borders of one culture, homeland, or region, and which is supposed to culminate in the creation of the so-called transcultural lenses, i.e. in adopting what Ellen Berry and Mikhail Epstein have called "a perspective in which all cultures look decentered in relation to all other cultures, including one's own" (2015, 2).

Importantly, Dagnino writes that the process of transpatriation can occur in physical, virtual, or imaginary senses. This means that transculturalism as a category does not only refer to those writers who have experienced "first-hand" what the coexistence (or clash) of cultures and languages is and allows for the understanding of transculturalism as a literary convention. Following this line of reasoning, the term transcultural writers may also be applied to those authors for whom transcultural journeys remain "only" in the realm of imagination. This is an interesting approach in that it makes it possible to use methodological tools specific to transculturalism to study, for example, the works of those authors who seek inspiration in past cultures and civilizations, that is, they "travel" in time rather than space.

Dagnino further explains why, in defining transculturalism, she uses the term transpatriation and not, for example, dispatriation. The prefix "trans" is intended to emphasize the importance of transgressing (physically and/or imaginatively) a given culture and "unlearning" the ways of forming identity that are associated with ethnicity, geography, culture, nationality, or religion. However, as the researcher stresses, the act of transgression is not tantamount to breaking all ties and connections. It is rather about stopping limiting oneself to one culture and opening up to new areas, languages, religions (2015, 4.).

Finally, it is significant how Dagnino justifies the fact that she uses the concept of transculturalism in her reflections on literature rather than, for example, one of the many terms frequently mentioned in similar contexts such as: cosmopolitanism, globalism, postcolonialism, trans- or postnationalism. As the researcher writes, all these and related concepts, while largely describing similar phenomena, are (to a greater or lesser extent) politically or ideologically committed, whereas transculturalism:

should be understood neither as an ideology [...] nor as a political stance, but as a mode of identity formation, as a critical tool, and as a concept for individual (and artistic) cultural resistance to the complex power dynamics expressed on the one hand by global capitalism and on the other by nation-states in this era of increasing mobility. (2015, 103)

According to Dagnino, we are therefore dealing with a concept "not yet mired by any controversial or limiting socio-political interpretations and connotations", so that there is less risk of transculturalism converting into "a new ghettoizing cat-

egory for writers and works which do not seem to adhere to nor comply with any specific national canon nor with the (im)migrant or postcolonial paradigm” (2015, 17). She defines transcultural authors as:

mobile writers, imaginative writers who, by choice or because of life circumstances, experience cultural dislocation, follow transnational life patterns, cultivate bilingual or plurilingual proficiency, physically immerse themselves in multiple cultures, geographies, or territories, expose themselves to diversity, and nurture plural, flexible identities. (2015, 1)

At first glance, transculturalism as a category of describing literary works seems to be very broad, encompassing all writers who, for various reasons, at some point in their lives found themselves in a situation of “cultural crossroads,” or, in Dagnino’s words, experienced (real or imagined) transpatriation. She specifies the above definition by narrowing the circle of transcultural writers to an exclusive group of:

early twenty-first-century authors who do not belong in one place or one culture – and usually not even one language – and who write between cultures and are interested in the complex dynamics of cultural encounters and negotiations. Namely, authors who are more connected to the transnational patterns and modes of expression of our contemporary globalized condition than to the more conventionally intended (im)migrant literature of the late twentieth century. (2015, 14)

The definition proposed by Dagnino thus encompasses, in terms of numbers, a relatively small group of writers belonging to the well-situated and educated privileged middle class, who are linked to the generations of economic and forced migrants at most by blood ties. Such an approach, although well-argued for the purposes of the abovementioned research, seems to be limiting. It excludes from transcultural research, among others, writers of migrant or refugee origin, who also describe in their works typically transcultural experiences of living in more than one culture.

Incidentally, terminological dilemmas accompany many scholars who study literature associated with more than one culture. In this context, it is worth recalling the considerations of Hajnalka Nagy, who drew attention to the discussion which has been going on for many years among German literary scholars on how to define migrant literature (Nagy 2012, 10). As the researcher argues, none of the terms used so far (including foreign literature, Gastarbeiter literature, migrant literature, or migrants’ literature) can describe the true nature of texts without categorizing them based on the nationality or biography of their authors, which results in a systematically widening gap between “locals” and “strangers”. To avoid such painful and unfair divisions, it should, in Nagy’s opinion, be replaced with such terms as new world literature, intercultural literature or just transcultural literature. The latter is characterized by the researcher as “creating a different hybrid form by challenging earlier ideas about monolingual national culture and the power relations of a monocultural order” (11). This understanding of transcultural literature is therefore very different from the way Dagnino characterizes this phenomenon. While the Italian researcher completely excludes the authors who have had the experience of migration from the group of transcultural writers, for Nagy transcultural literature is one of the possible substitutes for the troublesome notion of migrant literature.

Zoltán Németh's work, on the other hand, demonstrates that transculturalism, as a set of methodological tools, can also be successfully applied to the study of minority literatures. In the study "A transzkulturalizmus és bilingvizmus szintjei a szlovákiai magyar irodalomban" (Transculturalism and bilingualism in Hungarian literature from Slovakia; 2019) he analyzes transculturalism in Hungarian literature from Slovakia in relation to four levels (author, text, reader, context).

Summarizing the above considerations, it should be stated that transculturalism, as a research category, is not reserved for the description of one type of text, just as there is no single definition of so-called transcultural literature that is relevant for all researchers. Transcultural writers are sometimes referred to as mobile authors who are not bound to a single place or language, but live in a transcultural space and express this in their literature (Dagnino's definition), migrant authors who, for various, often purely pragmatic reasons, write in the language of the host country, while not forgetting their roots and willingly returning to their country of origin in their works (Nagy's definition), as well as writers belonging to national minorities (Németh's definition). In the broadest possible sense, the essence of transculturalism consists in going beyond the framework of a single culture, treated as a monolith, and looking at what lies "in between", in the cultural border space, at the point of convergence or collision of (at least two) cultures, languages and literatures. So-called transcultural writers are, somehow suspended between two (or more) nations, languages, cultures. Their works are narratives that transcend cultural boundaries and literary conventions, and as such escape simple definitions, descriptions, and analyses. What is more, the vast majority of transcultural authors are translingual, that is, they write in a language other than their mother tongue. As a result, their works cannot be unambiguously classified as belonging to any of the national literatures, which in turn is often the reason why they feel marginalized. As Pascale Casanova writes, "although we do not always realize it, our literary unconscious is largely national. Our instruments of analysis and evaluation are national. Indeed, the study of literature almost everywhere in the world is organized along national lines" (2004, xi). Thus, on the one hand, the peculiar "exoticism" of transcultural writers may be literarily appealing and, at the same time, attractive from the point of view of publishing markets. On the other hand, however, as they do not fully belong to any of the national literatures, they are sometimes placed in the position of the "other" and pushed to the margins of critical literary and literary studies debate, which takes place, of course, mainly within the framework of national canons.

WAYS OF CANONIZATION

According to Anna Jarmuszkiewicz, referring to David Damrosch's findings, "a work enters the world of literature through a double process – first it is read as national, regional literature, then it goes out into a wider perspective, beyond the place of its cultural origin" (2012, 17). Transcultural authors, who are not "acknowledged" by any national literature, thus have their path into national canons closed a priori, which does not mean, however, that they are completely deprived of any chance to be included in the canon of world literature. In the canonical system of world literature

sketched by Damrosch, their works have a chance to join the ranks of the so-called *anti-canon*, which together with the *shadow canon* is on a lower level than the *hyper-canon* containing timeless masterpieces (2010, 370). Damrosch's anti-canon consists of "the subordinate" and "contesting" voices of writers writing in languages that are not widely taught and in the languages of the great powers but within smaller literatures (370). The second case refers, among others, to transcultural authors who usually write in the languages of the majority nations, but who by virtue of their origins remain connected to so-called small literatures, although they do not fully belong to them. Their status in literary scenes, depending on the language they write in, is most often defined by adjectives such as Anglophone, Francophone, Germanophone, Italophone, etc., which unambiguously classify them as writing in one of the majority languages but not belonging to the associated literature. This results in a feeling of alienation and exclusion which, as we know from interviews and conversations with transcultural authors, is inherent in the way many of them function in the public space. This is confirmed by the words of Agota Kristof, an author of Hungarian origin writing in French, who repeatedly stressed that because of her transcultural position she felt excluded from any of the three literatures (Hungarian, Swiss and French) she could claim access to. Indeed, her feelings were not unfounded in this matter, although not without some reservations. None of the major lexicons of Hungarian literature pays any attention to Kristof's literary works, including her most famous novel *Le Grand Cahier* (1986; *The Notebook*, 1997), and she is generally regarded as an author who has rather little connection with Hungarian literature. The Hungarian postmodernist author Péter Eszterházy's comments that are included in the Hungarian translation of *The Notebook*, *A nagy füzet*, are significant in this context:

Agota Kristof is not a Hungarian author, but a Swiss or French author, because she writes in French. However, her memoirs are Hungarian, the landscape she carries in her eyes is Hungarian. This is neither a value nor a merit, but it is very interesting. That there is a non-Hungarian writer who writes Hungarian books, that someone from afar looks at the same things we look at from here. (Eszterházy 1991, 124; trans. M.R.-N.)

On the other hand, although the French call Kristof a Francophone author, thus de facto limiting her access to the canon of French literature, one cannot help noticing that her work has been appreciated in France. This is clearly evidenced by the fact that *The Notebook* was included on the reading list in many French secondary schools.⁴ Kristof's statement regarding the fact that none of the literature considers it "theirs", at least with regard to French literature, should therefore be treated as the author's subjective feeling rather than a fact.

The same is true of Edith Bruck, a Jewish author of Hungarian origin writing in Italian. This is noted, among others, by Philip Balma:

Edith Bruck addressed the inherent difficulty of gaining acceptance in the Italian literary scene, describing it as a family in which a foreigner is always treated as such. [...] Although she has spent more than sixty years living in Rome, publishing exclusively in Italian since the release of her autobiographical debut (*Chi ti ama così*) in 1959, as a translingual author to some degree Bruck still feels (and is treated) like an anomalous literary presence in her adoptive homeland. (2020, n.p.)

In his earlier monograph (the only full-length study of Bruck's work to date), Balma writes that many Italian researchers, encountering in their work only the writings of writers about whose "Italianness" there can be no doubt, find it difficult to place Bruck in the arena of world literature. After all, what to make of "a Holocaust survivor of Hungarian descent who happens to write in Italian?" (2014, 12) As Balma states, Bruck's unclear nationality led to the marginalization of her work and, as a result, to her not being accorded a proper place in the canon of Italian literature. It is worth noting that seven years after he made the above statement, Bruck's work *Il pane perduto* (2021; *The lost bread*) was a finalist for the Premio Strega, Italy's most prestigious literary prize, and eventually won the Premio Strega Giovanni (i.e. the prize awarded by young readers). This fact can undoubtedly be seen as an important step in the process of incorporating Bruck's work into the canon of Italian literature, and perhaps even completing it, which largely invalidates the bitter words of Bruck quoted above.

Finally, the case of Tibor Fischer, perhaps the only author of Hungarian origin not writing in the Hungarian language whose work is discussed extensively in an academic textbook on Hungarian literature, provides a significant example in this context. Mihály Szegedy-Maszák devoted an entire chapter to Fischer's prose in the third volume of *A magyar irodalom története* (*The histories of Hungarian literature*; 2007), which is tantamount to classifying his work as Hungarian literature. Nevertheless, attention is drawn to the way in which the author of the chapter explains why he included an analysis of a work written in a language other than Hungarian in a textbook on Hungarian literature. From the point of view of the history of Hungarian literature, the work of Hungarian writers living abroad, including Terézia Mora, Éva Almássy and Agota Kristof, is referred to as an "appendix" to Hungarian literature, thus avoiding the explicit classification of Fischer's prose as Hungarian literature (831). This unfortunate expression, though in this case probably not uttered in bad faith, perfectly characterizes the ambivalent status of transcultural writers who, being linked to more than one literature, have little chance of becoming an integral part of any of them, remaining only a modest addition to a larger finite whole.

CONCLUSION

Transculturalism was born in Cuba and almost half a century later it was reinterpreted by Wolfgang Iser, whose name is always mentioned in this context. The most in-depth analysis of the interpenetration of transculturalism and literature was conducted by Arianna Dagnino and it was she who formulated the most notable definition of the so-called transcultural literature. Dagnino's definition may be considered too narrow, however, as it excludes authors with a migration and postcolonial background from the category of transcultural writers. The definition of transcultural literature proposed in this article is broader and refers to all those authors, whose work, for various reasons that do not exclude migration, is "located" in the border area between (at least) two cultures, nations and languages. This specific position of transcultural authors leads to the fact that they often feel excluded from the national canons, to which they could belong to, given their origins and the languages

they write in. The case of the writers Agota Kristof and Edith Bruck, as mentioned in the final section, shows that the authors' subjective feelings in this regard do not always correspond to reality. The other example is provided by the case of Tibor Fischer, whose work has been included in the history of Hungarian literature, but gained the status of only an "appendix", what gives rather little hope for him to get included in the canon.

NOTES

- ¹ For more on inter- and multiculturalism see e.g. Barrett 2013.
- ² In 1916 Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton, and Melville J. Herskovits published the document *Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation*, in which they explained in detail the concept of acculturation; see Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits 1936.
- ³ For more on transculturalism and literature see also Nordin, Hansen, and Ilena 2013; Wiegandt 2020; Davis et al. 2004.
- ⁴ This fact is linked to a story known to the French public as "l'affaire d'Abbeville". In 2000, after a teacher from the town of Abbeville discussed Agota Kristof's *Notebook* with his pupils during a lesson at school, he was accused by some parents of promoting pornography and arrested. Eventually, thanks to the broad support of the French intellectual elite, the criminal case against him was dropped.

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Transculturalism in literature as reflected in the works of translingual writers from the Hungarian cultural context

Transculturalism. Transcultural literature. Translingual writers. Canon. Hungarian literature.

The aim of the paper is to show the impact of transculturalism on the research conducted in the field of literary studies. The first part presents the history of the concept and lists the most important researchers associated with it, such as Wolfgang Iser, considered the creator of the concept, and Arianna Dagnino, who is believed to be the most important contemporary researcher of the interconnections of transculturalism with literature. Dagnino is also the author of the definition of the so-called transcultural literature, which is discussed in the paper. The third and last part contains considerations about the place of the so-called transcultural writers in the literary canon. The context for these reflections is provided by three translingual authors of Hungarian origin: Agota Kristof, Edith Bruck and Tibor Fischer.

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Fiction: heritage, choice, creation

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Tapes record reality. Minds record fiction. My mind was never one for remembering things right.
Too much fantasy. Too much muggy past. Too many daydreams.
Ismet Prcić (2011, 119)

The cluster of notions created in the title is not a literary-theoretical thesis, but a conclusion based on a rich corpus of narrative prose. The respective novels and texts, discussed below, are the miniature cross-sections and representative models of the issues that have lately received attention from research dedicated to interliterary, intercultural, and transnational relations. The literary texts are born in the growing “no man’s land” of connections, and as such, they present challenges for the criteria operating with a conventional linguistic, national and territorial angle. The relationship between the language of fiction and the author’s national belonging has become a destabilizing factor, although its beginnings, according even to the most modest calculations, are dated one-and-a half or two centuries before today. The supply of categories that national literary history operates with is not appropriate for interpreting the opuses created within interlacing languages and cultures, and neither is the philologically-angled comparative studies, which follows the tradition of comparing two literatures. “The equivalence of language and nation is a historically justifiable feature of comparative literature insofar as the subject appeared at the same time as, and as part of, the emergence in Europe of projects of self-consciously national literatures in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century. But, today, we need to be more critical of this implicit association” (Boldrini 2006, 18–19).

Polyglots, just as those who come to a new cultural milieu, are faced with a choice. Their native language, the sum of their historical, cultural, intellectual, literary, and imaginary experiences become their heritage that they take with themselves. For writers who inherited more than one language, choosing a language is a matter of free will, whereas the fiction of those who switch languages later usually cannot be traced back to wanton artistic choice, but rather to a consequence of historical coercion. Regarding this latter category of writers, multiple studies and investigations prove the connection between age and the importance of the acquired linguistic erudition. During the 19th- and 20th-century waves of intellectual exiles, it was rarer

for the older generations, but rather natural for the younger ones to base their literary careers on the newly acquired language. Literary careers started before the emigration were usually continued, even abroad, in the writers' native language, as they wished to create this way a continuity despite the isolation and exclusion from publicity they suffered in their homeland. Preserving one's native language functions as a survival strategy both for the ones living in diaspora and for those in minorities. For those prominent contemporary authors who were uprooted young, a couple of decades needed to pass in the new environment in order for them to debut as writers, and for their new language to become the milieu for the creation of fiction. This leads to the observation that temporal, age-related, and learning-related factors limit the validity of the geographical place of our origins, and also that of the knowledge acquired with our native language and the inherited languages. The fiction of writers shifting languages unites the knowledge of deprivation with the dramatic historical experience.

The historical experience of the 20th and of the 21st century gave rise to different poetics and creative habits. The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the two world wars, the fascist-leaning Europe of the middle decades, dictatorial eastern-European ideologies, and strengthening nationalisms stand in the historical background of the last century of central-eastern-European literary models. The critical motivation behind the creative habits of this century is to be found in the row of further wars, among them the one leading to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, which resulted in massive waves of emigration, and the ideology of European intolerance. From a literary perspective, the defining ideological changes of our times can be captured in the various autobiographical and genetic versions of short fictions and novels (*Entwicklungsgeschichte*), in documentary and factual fiction, in traditional literary workshops and in those that approach the novel form with the purpose of changing it. Literature, in order to enforce its critical attitude, chooses from those creative parlances, forms, intonations of today that turn against the ignorance of universal issues. The free combination, alternation, mixture of models, structures, genres, intonations is outstanding but not unexpected. The poetics of fiction operates above the category of national literatures. The application, variation, expansion, alteration, and reformation of its forms and tools is achieved with every creation. This happens with a special force when those authors are involved who, on the threshold, make their own world sensible to a new environment, through their fiction and the values they take with them: "a reservoir of inspiration" (Biti 2016). The stories of the narrators, characters and the author interlace in various forms. In the process of interpretation – even irrespectively of the biographical reading – uncovering the threads of the fictional and the historico-biographical elements can be significant. This is what a few intellectual, creative fates, workshops and opuses also exemplify.

MULTILINGUALISM

Huan Octavio Prenz, the writer who calls himself "Yugoitaloargentinian," is the son of parents who emigrated from Istria to Argentina. Prenz, who rebels against the Argentinian dictatorship, returns to Europe as a political refugee, and later works

as a professor of Spanish in Belgrade, Zagreb and Trieste. In his novel entitled *Sólo los árboles tienen raíces* (2013), with the story, with the places, with the ceaseless changes of surnames, names, he narrativizes the feeling of belonging to multiple places: *Only Trees Have Roots*. The title reflects linguistic and translation theoretician George Steiner's thought, who states: "Trees have roots and I have legs; I owe my life to that" (Jaggi 2001, s.p.). Steiner is the descendant of a family that leaves Vienna in the twenties.

I was born in Paris and grew up in Paris and New York. I have no recollection whatever of a first language. So far as I am aware, I possess equal currency in English, French, and German. But I experience my first three tongues as perfectly equivalent centres of myself.

My natural condition was polyglot. [...] Even these three "mother tongues" were only a part of the linguistic spectrum in my early life. [...] This polyglot matrix [...] organized, it imprinted on my grasp of personal identity, the formidably complex, resourceful cast of feeling of Central European and Judaic humanism. Speech was, tangibly, option, a choice between equally inherent yet alternate claims and pivots of self-consciousness.

To the many-centred, the very notion of "milieu," of a singular or privileged rootedness, is suspect. (2013, 125–126)

Steiner believes that the "interference" of various languages "render(s) (one's) use of any language richer, more conscious of specificity and resource" (129). Contemporary writers re-enforce the validity of his thesis. The identity of a bilingual, trilingual person is created in the multilingual conversation happening inside them: many multilingual people do not even have memories of a state preceding their multilingualism. Those who do retain some memories become the indirect transmitters of the imaginary content that was preserved from the previous medium, one that is different from the language of their fiction. In the narrative this becomes a cultural surplus. If we consider Steiner's observations from the perspective of the writers who changed languages, we reach the conclusion that for those who were young when they were uprooted from their own region, the mother tongue(s) is (are) preserved in their spirit and linguistic richness. Furthermore, this mother tongue is preserved in that cultural heritage that they had access to in the past. As they are educated in a new linguistic context, this becomes the natural tool for their utterance. They have admittance into several traditions, but when it comes to the fiction-writing process, they turn to the language that they could grow up to, which they fit, live and create in.

According to the surmise of Bosnian-German writer Saša Stanišić writing itself is the foreign language, the stock that requires a constant recreation: "For every story, for every play, for every new creation, I have to learn a new language: I have to find the narrator's voice, I have to decide on my figure's specific verbal characteristics and I have to learn and keep the rhythm and flow of the whole" (2008). From his last novel, titled *Herkunft* (2019; ... *Where You Come From*, 2021), I would emphasize two critical gestures. When a man returns home for a visit, in the cemetery of a small Bosnian village in the mountains his uncle states: you come from here. The man starts to wonder: what does it mean "from here"? The geographical location of his maternity hospital? The country borders that were in existence during the pains? The family tree of the parents? The genes, ancestors, the dialect? "Origin is construct, ergo curse." Later,

in an age in which family roots once again work as signs of differentiation, in which, as country borders are strengthened, discrimination is becoming programmatic, he almost considers the issue of origin destructive. The novel's thought-provoking, even moving motif with a poetic significance is the conversation between the emigrated son and his grandma who suffers from dementia. The rhythm of the temporal planes, of pasts and presents, of memories and impressions billowing in the mind of the old woman becomes the tender and at once ironic model of fiction-making itself.

The motto of this article is from the staggering novel of Ismet Prcić, refugee from Tuzla, creates the traumatic novelistic poetics of the Bosnian community with spatial and temporal distortions, with accumulating planes of experience, and with the superimposition of shocks. In America, in English.

IN BETWEEN CULTURES

The story of those Francophone Arab writers (Kateb Yacine, Assia Djebar, member of the French Academy, Rachid Bourdjedra, Kamel Daoud, Boualem Sansal), to whom sociologist Kaoutar Harchi dedicated a collection of papers in 2016, is also rather thought-provoking. The collection's title, *I Have Only One Language, and It Is Not Mine*, is a Derrida-quote. And the subtitle, *The writers try*, characterizes the position of the artists working in a space between the inherited and the acquired culture. Their works are created in a double space. On the one hand, the culture based on the Quran and the traditionalism that conforms to the family's expectations, the mothers' Berber, dzayri/dārja, Maghrebi regional languages, and, on the other hand, the more educated generation of the fathers, the men who partook in a French education, and their self-awakening, respectively, stretch them between two poles. Their own paths, different from their ancestors', are thwarted in their countries of origin by the contemporary orthodoxy that forces Arabia upon them. The postcolonial medium of Tunisia and Algeria forces a return to Islam and a united Arabization as a counter-reaction to the 130 years of French oppression. Further difficulties arise from the rather unjust or even inimical approach France shows towards them. The consequence of the critical radicalization of the intellectuals with double attachments is an attitude of exclusion from both the emitting and the receiving culture. Assia Djebar's advancement into the Academy was shamefully obstructed by several members of the French Academy. Kamel Daoud, the one who, out of respect, continued and actualized the work of Albert Camus, has also become a stranger in his own homeland. According to Harchi, the homeland is not the place of writing and neither that of the "whole" life, but has rather become the place of an interrupted, divided life: *a life between* Oran and Paris. Perhaps an even more perplexing event than the Algerian reactions is that the French edition of his novel *Meursault, contre-enquête* (Éditions barzakh, Alger 2013; Actes Sud, Paris, 2014) was depoliticized, as if the conservative French general opinion and mentality would not predominate in the Europe of the 20th–21st centuries, but rather in a previous age. The Arabic language and belonging are an inherited facility, the French culture is an acquired and honored value, and the fact that the intellectuals suffer and stick by this duality is a respectable intellectual and moral plus. The universal issue for the artists creating

in a double cultural space can be found in the relationship between the emitting and the receiving social milieux, between the inherited and the chosen cultures. The results of Harchi's wide-ranging investigations surpass the topic of concrete analyses.

The authorship of the younger generation living and creating in the interspace between two cultures – similarly to Nina Yargekov and the Tunisian-Swedish Jonas Hassen Khemiri – has been defined by the cultural identity configured in this new space. The French writer who spoke the Hungarian language of her ancestors excellently, still decided to speak in the language of her education, just as Khemiri did in Sweden, or as those young Yugoslavs did at the turn of the millennium, who fled from the war to Germany, Finland, or the United States. The decision of those who are bilingual by birth is influenced by the environment and the circumstances, whereas in the case of those who become exiles and get into diasporas, the language will be the one that they have the opportunity not only to acquire but also to learn thoroughly. In the thematic focus of the English- and German-language prose of Aleksandar Hemon and Saša Stanišić, respectively, two authors who changed languages, the sensibility towards those life situations that are defined by duality is perceptible.

KIŠ, VON HORVÁTH, ADY

A non-finalized biotext-collage sheds light with a unique complexity onto the issues arising. *Apatrid* (Kiš 1992; Miočinović 1992), the unpublished narrative written by Danilo Kiš (1935–1989), together with the versions found in his legacy, was posthumously published in 1992 by his widow, Mirjana Miočinović. Ödön von Horváth¹ (1901–1938) came to Kiš's attention with the French edition of his dramatic pieces. He recognized in Horváth an emblematic person, story, and a central-European life related to his own. On one of the typed papers of his legacy the following title is written: *APATRID*. Under it between brackets reads the following: *DUH JE NAŠA DOMOVINA* (The spirit is our home).

Apatrid is the story of Egon von Németh, a text consisting of 15 short chapters. Based on the context, the name change is understood without any special commentary.

I am the typical mixture of the late Austro-Hungarian Empire: at once Hungarian, Croatian, Slovak, German, Czech, and if I were to further rummage among my ancestors, and if I were to send my blood for analysis – science today is quite fashionable among nationalists –, in it, like in a river-bed, I could trace the blood of Aromanians, Armenians, and maybe even that of Gypsies and Jews, too. [...] I have been bilingual since birth; until I turned eighteen I wrote in Hungarian and German, and then, after I translated a Hungarian poet's poetry collection into German, I decided to go with the German, as it is the closest to me. Gentlemen, I am a German writer; the world at large is my home. (Kiš 1992, 5)

This quote, which in the Kiš-text is placed between quotation marks, according to the narrator is an excerpt from a 1934 interview with von Németh (or von Horváth). "Egon von Németh consciously strips his works of the autobiographical elements" (9), "he considered his parents and his extraction an irrelevant circumstance, a mere coincidence" (5).

The first sentence of *Apatrid* is: "On 28 May 1938 he arrived to Paris". Right after this a strange motif is finely wedged in, which is not even unexpected from the narrator who freely moves between the real and the fictional biographies. "The room" of the traveler lodged in the

Latin quarter was populated by ghosts, around them hotel sheets were hovering, still as shroud. One of the ghost-couples seemed familiar, and the picture of the poet and his lover came into the mind of the homeless gentleman, as he saw them in an album: Leda in a hat as big as a mill-wheel, which adumbrates her face as if her eyes were covered by a veil, but the shade is not enough to cover the barely noticeable cramp of the years and of the sensuality that gathers around her mouth; the poet wounded by love and illness, with eyes bulging of Grave's disease, eyes in which, like in some Gypsy musician's, the fire is still burning. (5)

The motif neither for the Endre Ady-translating Kiš, nor for us is cryptic, while to his readers of other languages, and to his Serbian publisher it remains undiscovered. When he is inquiring from the Spanish porter after a guest from around 1910 by name, and the porter looks at him uncomprehendingly, "the stateless gentleman once more becomes certain of how unsurpassable the limits separating the world truly are, and to how great an extent the language is the only home for man" (5).

However, to the question of which language it is, the monolingual and the multilingual homeless figures evoked in the fiction of the 20th century would have different answers. The story's dramatic punch line is that on that aforementioned day Ödön von Horváth suffered a tragic event in Paris. As a grotesque epilogue, half a century later Danilo Kiš also meets his death in Paris, the city of his self-exile. The last, voluntary exile was preceded by forceful expatriations and repatriations. The seven-year-old boy is rescued from the 1942 pogrom in Novi Sad and brought to Hungary by his family, and 1947, after his father is dragged away to Auschwitz, Red Cross helps the boy with his mother and sister to get back to Cetinje, to the mother's family. Ödön von Horváth until he is 11 years old, Kiš till he turns 12, speak and write better in Hungarian than in Serbian. The career and creative work of both is the model for a writer's choice of language determined by historical circumstances: the Hungarian-Serbian Danilo Kiš becomes a Serbian writer, Ödön von Horváth a German dramatist, the Croatian Penz turns into a Spanish prose writer, the German Steiner becomes an English theoretician.

For a fraction of a second, the small hotel room in Paris creates a metonymic connection between the three dramatic fates of *Apatrid*: between the fates of Ady, von Horváth, and Kiš. The facts that can also be found in the writers' biographies, here interweave as virtual plaits. For a long time Kiš suppressed the effects of personal and historical traumas with unusual artistic energy. Later, in his prose, however, the resigned personal tone, the metaphoric language, the autobiographical motifs are replaced by variations on the historical fiction. The central questions are the state of exile, the totalitarian repression, the scandal of the Eastern European persecutions. The fictional processes are enriched by historical documents in such works as *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* (1976) and *The Encyclopedia of the Dead* (1983). Thus the personal experiences are placed into universal perspectives: they become narratable as human fates-situation.

DOPPELSICHT

For the diseases, experience of alienation and stateless to arise, forced exile is not a prerequisite. However, the dramatic nature of this rift can serve as a measure for the realization that, in many, the sense of bereavement actually develops at home. It is not a spatial, not a linguistic issue, not a consequent, but an antecedent. The negative experience of an age nurses its own poetics. The poor-quality black-and-white amateur photos one can see in W.G. Sebald's novels are not of artistic or illustrative nature, but they become the tools of a creative strategy through their capturing the general disposition of the age. His title *Austerlitz* (2001) features the surname of his novel's character, Jacques Austerlitz, but in his text the term also gains meaning as a placename. The Parisian Gare d'Austerlitz in 1943 was turned into a camp for the Jews to be deported. Jacques arrives to England as a German-Jewish refugee child, and becomes an architectural historian.

The remarkable Scottish author Ali Smith attests to a special receptivity towards all those issues that define the fiction of the previously mentioned writers. In the powerful first scene of her novel titled *Autumn* (2016) "an old old man washes up on a shore". [...] "Seems the self you get left with on the shore, in the end, is the self that you were when you went" (1). Daniel Gluck leaves the continent as a young refugee, and becomes an art historian. But it seems like Smith's fiction continues to hide one of *The Seasonal Quartet's* main symbols and characters, Gluck (or as I consider, Daniel Glück) volume by volume, to shelter him from English politics, which opposes immigration. Smith's poetic orientation, susceptible to critical confrontations, is motivated by an ideology dominating the contemporary world: the danger of the growing tendency for exclusion.

The cited texts and authors represent various generations, situations, languages, and approaches. Sebald needed to spatially distance himself from Germany, to place himself outside, in order to see more clearly all that which his sensibility, his intellectual critical attitude predestined him for. Anselm Kiefer's motivations are similar in nature. It was not an existential pressure that dislodged them; and the same is true for Danilo Kiš, who in his mid-life moved from Yugoslavia to France. The decisive moment can be found in the rejection of the ruling ideologies, furthermore, in the inner need for distance, which allow for the writer to face his own story, to face history, and also the distortions of the present. This is the acquisition of that *Doppelsicht*, which ensures the radical conduct for our art, and the benefit of a critical double vision in fiction.

Following the intentions of the generation that lived through historical traumas, contemporary poetics is also defined by the narrative variants of confronting and facing oneself. The personal addresses mobilize the factual and fictional formal stock of the genres of autobiography and biography. The emotional and intellectual heritage, and sometimes the mapping of the threads of family history provide one with a new approach to taking stock. Self-examination, remembrance, reflection, situation analysis often follow the manner of reckoning. On the other pole, contrary to this approach, personal involvement turns towards the language of discretion, quiescing, indirection. The authors and their portrait-reconstructions, redefinitions are usual-

ly dramatically tuned. Personal aptitudes, however, make possible the employment of irony, self-irony, and humor, as Stanišić's *Herkunft* pictures it in the fiction/dementia parallel. The impossibility of reminiscence and of the remembering reconstruction attests to the imagination's freedom and sovereignty.

POETICS OF DISLOCATION

Similarly to the generations of writers entering the stage in the first decades of the third millennium, in whom critical thinking towards the previous era and the present has strengthened, interest in *Exilliteratur*, in the older and newer versions of exile writing has grown considerably with the scholars, too. In Zvonko Taneški's dislocational poetic project (2021) what is at the forefront is the base motifs of the theme of migration, such as the perspectives connected to repositioning, and the sameness of ex-Yugoslav migrant writers and characters who are disconnected from their environment. In the literature of exile, the homeland is not an object to be possessed, but the complex imagery of constant deprivation. The "homeland-on-the-move" is not a closing-in, but our repeated opening-up towards others (Biti 2016, 63). The indeterminacy defining the place for writers that have multiple ties, the imaginative and sensitive excess – "literatures-without-a-fixed-abode", "Niemand's- und Nirgenland" (Ette 2005, 241), or what I call a "portable homeland" – are inaccessible outside the transcultural context. Contemporary fiction is shaped by the narrative models of persecution, exclusion, endangerment, and flight. This library is extended worldwide by the writers' imagination, the exiles' position of remembering, the desire for self-knowing, the intention of self-documentation, the re-interpretation of ancestry and of the historical past, the conception of one's own critical relation to the old and the new language, environment, life. The topic is developed on a large scale, and it deserves constant attention thanks to the various versions in which it can appear. The new Library of Babel is growing with unprecedented speed, and the issues it raises have extended into universal ones. This phenomenon gives a new task to linguistic, poetic, and historical scholarship, too. The authors who have two or more places of belonging cannot be categorized under one nation's literature, as they are by definition the members and inheritors of several cultures. Their works do not connect to a single area or language, they are rather born in the field of cultural interconnections. This position merges, connects, doubles, it maneuvers the imaginary heritage in light of the other language, and it summarizes in fiction the newly acquired human and artistic experiences for those, as well, to whom this perspective is unknown. The collaboration between the practice of translation and the artistic presence becomes effective as a new factor in the national context. The novels that are translated and authored back into the mother tongue pose challenges for both agents of the process: the translator and the author.

SUPRANATIONAL HISTORY

Wolfgang Iser (1993), in his theory of fiction, talks about the irrealization of the real and the realization of the imaginary as prerequisites for the act of fiction-making. The most important stage of the process is the understanding of the yet unformed

world, the possibility to experience the events and, furthermore, their turning into events that are possible to experience, I would add. What is then that the authors mentioned, and the contemporary novels make possible for us to experience? A search for one's place, questions connected to one's self-image, one's own phylogeny, review, transfer, integration. One or more languages and cultures brought with us, an acquired language and culture. The collective of more traditions, more viewpoints that open the perspective towards the already known and the newly learned. In summary, those issues of existence that are of a more general scope than the autobiographical fiction or non-autobiographical one of the personal fates, and step out of the framework of the national literature.

Novelistic fiction appears in a different constellation in Milan Kundera's *Les Testaments trahis* (1993; *Testaments Betrayed* 1995). His statement has consequences for cultural history and for the history of genres: "It is as if in the course of its journey the history of the novel kept waking the different parts of Europe, one after the other, confirming them in their specificity and at the same time integrating them into a common European consciousness" (n.p.). The novel surpasses the national borders, a consequence of its transnational character – even despite its special distinctive features it cannot be reduced by the various national literary histories.

I speak of the European novel not only to distinguish it from, say, the Chinese novel but also to point out that its history is transnational; that the French novel, the English novel, the Hungarian novel, are in no position to create autonomous histories of their own but are all part of a common, supranational history that provides the only context capable of revealing both the direction of the novels evolution and the value of particular works. (1995, n.p.)

Gérard Genette is another representative of a situation similar to Kundera's. In an answer to a 1987 interview question asking on whom he would ground the open poetics resting on virtual literature, he gives a row of non-French names (Vladimir Nabokov, John Barth, John Hawkes, Julio Cortázar, Donald Barthelme, Italo Calvino). He claims that we certainly cannot continue to talk about "French" literature, as literature has become world literature.²

CONCLUSION

How do national literatures become international ones, asks David Murphy (2011, 408). The issue is the consequence of processes that turned the research of certain national literatures into international studies. The initiative originated not from literary studies or from a set of comparative criteria, but from the realization that in the 20th century the abandonments, the changes of place, the separations, the repositionings have become more pronounced than ever. The turn of the millennium further accelerated and intensified the movement. Relocation and settlement affect not only the cultures of those continents that were formed by immigrants or the cultures of colonial empires, but they greatly influence European cultures too. The subject of Francophony or Germanophony is not only the study of the works of authors that are French or German by origin, but also that of writers coming from various regions, creating in French or German respectively. Thus it takes into consideration all

those values that writers, after they appropriated their own culture, end up creating in a chosen language. According to a very important criteria of the entry discussing the American multicultural literature, the works of writers coming from different continents have changed the image of American literature exactly through their representations of their own cultural environments (Dickstein, Giles, and Blair 2021).

In this constellation, the effect's the author's region of origin and his heritage shows the intellectual legacy in an unexpected refraction both for the abandoned and for the new environment. Though those who change languages are lost to the literature of their native language, they will still have a place in their national culture. They will have a place both in the culture from which they took their own imaginary stock, and in the host culture, in whose language they recount this experience. The tradition of genres stands above the national category, especially in the case of the genre that is impossible to categorize poetically: the novel. The ontological predisposition and the aptitude are capable of saturating the form of „transcendental homelessness” with a new meaning, which continuously extends and concretizes the genre with autobiographical, historical, generational, documentary and other variants. The literary works internationally acknowledged surpass the confines of the place of origin, of the native language, and of the nationality, and continue their journey in various new contexts. The influence of the author, of the original and the host media on the work's interpretation and evaluation changes considerably. This is the scope of the transliterary system that is established beyond nations and literatures.

Translated by Noémi Albert

NOTES

- ¹ In the manuscript plans of *Enciklopedija mrtvih* (*The Encyclopedia of the Dead*) the title “Ödön von Horváth” was featured as a separate chapter, which was ultimately excluded from the finished book.
- ² “Je n’ai qu’une certitude : on ne peut plus parler de littérature « française », la littérature est désormais mondiale” (Genette and Salgas [1987] 2021).

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Fiction: heritage, choice, creation

Multilingualism. Authors between cultures. Danilo Kiš. Ödön von Horváth. Endre Ady. Doppelsicht. Poetics of dislocation today. Transnational history of literature.

Fiction as heritage, choice and creation is not a literary-theoretical thesis, but a conclusion based on a rich corpus of narrative prose. This article aims to systemize different fictional works of migrant literature and problematizes the writing of bi- and multilingual authors. Polyglots, just as those who come to a new cultural milieu, are faced with a choice. Their native language, as the sum of their historical, cultural, intellectual, literary, and imaginary experiences, becomes the heritage that they take with themselves. For writers who inherited more than one language, choosing a language is a matter of free will, whereas the fiction of those who switch languages later usually cannot be traced back to open artistic choice, but rather to a consequence of historical coercion. Regarding this latter category of writers, multiple studies and investigations prove the connection between age and the importance

of the acquired linguistic erudition. Younger authors base their literary careers on the newly acquired language, and the authorship of this generation living and creating in the interspace between two cultures has been defined by the cultural identity configured in this new space. The novel crosses national borders, as a consequence of its transnational character – despite its special distinctive features, it cannot be reduced to various national literary histories. The influence of the author, as well as the original and the host media, on the work's interpretation and evaluation changes considerably. This is the scope of the transliterary system that is established beyond nations and literatures.

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Confluences: On the possibility of describing a transcultural history of (micro)literature – the Upper Silesian perspective

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I feel that literary histories are impossibly alluring, and alluringly impossible, undertakings. They are certainly not everything they seem. If literary histories are shimmering expanses, then transcultural literary histories are a Sargasso Sea.
Leon de Kock (2006, 12)

Any attempt to write a history of literature – any literature, in any language – is inevitably fraught with certain shortcomings, omissions, and understatements, as it is impossible to include all publications, to recall all authors, to save all minor texts from oblivion. We are not Borges's cartographers; we cannot draw a map that would encompass the entirety of the kingdom. We cannot, but we try. We engage in debates with existing, well-established literary histories. With great scholars, as we feel at least a hint of Bloom's anxiety of influence. We argue with global and national canons, seeking new paths for literary history and for the voices which thus far have been little heard or not heard at all. One such voice is that of Upper Silesia, which will be the focus of my deliberations. However, before I proceed to outline the key issues of the transcultural history of Upper Silesian microliterature, I would like to consider whether – and why – such an attempt is necessary, what microliterature is, and why defining the scope is, in my view, essential. My article will refer primarily to literary matter, but also to cultural and historical matter, as it is no longer possible to consider literary texts in isolation, divorced from the broadly understood cultural and historical context in which they were created.

THE TRANSCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

In the age of increased globalization, and, simultaneously, a certain devaluation of postcolonial studies (cf. Frank Schulze-Engler's discussion on postcolonialism as a mega-concept, 2007), attempts to approach the history of literatures from a transcultural perspective seem to present a scientifically prolific avenue for re-

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search and interpretation. What I refer to here are, mainly, the proposals of Frank Schulze-Engler (2007) and Anders Pettersson (2006a, 2006b, 2008), which demonstrate that transcultural studies, while they may draw from the achievements of postcolonial studies (such as diverting the attention of literary studies towards small and minor literatures and developing a partially non-Eurocentric view), go much further, as they do not rely on the relatively simplistic hegemon-subaltern divide, but instead prove that a broader perspective can be taken – one which includes transnational and transcultural relations, connections, and influences. In fact, cultures are not separate, defined entities, as Herder would have us believe, and it is often difficult to even speak of easily identifiable centers (cf. Welsch 1999). We are now, and in many regions of the world have been for a very long time, experiencing cultural polycentricity, hybridization, and a major expansion of the field of “third space” (Bhabha 2006). Transcultural studies, and especially transcultural literary history (or rather, transcultural histories of literatures), help to overcome not only the ignorance that, according to Pettersson, informs the Eurocentric understanding of world literature, but also the limitations which, in part, stem from assuming a specific national or temporal perspective (2006a, 436). Pettersson proposes to establish not a history of world literature, but a world history of literature; my proposal is somewhat different: to create multiple transcultural histories of literatures, which one day might constitute a grand, polyphonic, likely endless (impossible to finish)¹ transcultural history of world literatures (cf. Petrboek et al. 2019). The organic movement from the bottom up is what is crucial here – the creation of that great, encompassing history through the study of that which is smaller. Such an approach could be exemplified by the project I am currently involved in: a study of histories of literatures of the Polish lands, which is based on (usually hybrid, multilingual, and not necessarily written in literary Polish) “non-obvious” texts, including regional microliteratures. As Pettersson noted, transcultural studies should not be limited to the 19th century and beyond – and thus, here, too, the research should be designed to reach as deep as possible, revealing the polyphony, multiculturalism and multilingualism of the texts which form what I tentatively call “the literatures of the Polish lands”. There would be room, then, to include “canonical”, firmly established works of Polish literature, such as those written by Jan Kochanowski, Mikołaj Rej, Adam Mickiewicz and other prominent authors, but also works of the writers who have gone unnoticed and overlooked, whose contributions were often marginalized and labelled “folklore”, including those writing in Kashubian, Masurian, Silesian, regional variants of Polish, and regional and minority languages. Texts created in borderlands or in emigration, which are now attributed to different cultures and languages, would also be of interest (works of authors such as Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, Jan Potocki, Stanisław Przybyszewski, Józef Korzeniowski/Joseph Conrad – see, for example, Skwara 2016; Ligara 2011). This type of “rhizomatic” or “mosaic” history, by its very nature, cannot be “finite”, because the premise of such research renders its “finitude” utopian. Of course, this type of research endeavor also entails certain necessary simplifications and generalizations in regards to, for instance:

– delineation of the borders of what can be considered as the Polish lands (borders of Polish statehood, borders of cultural influences or of Polish cultural dominance – and if so, then in what historical period);

– issues of creator identity (and of changes in the sense of belonging to a particular culture, of the development of national thought, national rebirths, self-determination, etc.);

– identification and selection of texts for study, finding them in archives;

– access to oral literature and selection of appropriate analytical tools.

Nonetheless, I believe it is an attempt worth making, although – perhaps – it might be destined to fail. Addressing literary output which thus far has been rather overlooked, placing it in the center of research interests, and thus, in a sense, officially sanctioning its existence, also sanctions the culture and community that gave birth to it. This is, of course, not a necessary condition for the existence of such a community, but it is an important factor in the so-called “struggle for recognition” (see Smith 1991; Dołowy-Rybińska 2011; Michna 2014), which strengthens said community. However, the attempt to incorporate a number of microliteratures, local or minority literatures in the account of the “literatures of the Polish lands” carries the risk of provoking accusations of yet another “appropriation” of the discourse, which is why in such studies it would be advisable to maintain the culture-sensitive approach (Nünning 2006). On the other hand, the reversal of the conventional perspective (great, renowned works, often written in a majority language or considered canonical as the center of literary history) invites new interpretations, raises awareness of voices and narratives different from “canonical” and “national” ones, and helps to describe the rhizomatic, transcultural, and often even transnational character of what we commonly consider “national literature” (cf. Schulze-Engler 2007, 28–29).

THE QUESTION OF SCOPE: MICROLITERATURE

The aforementioned transcultural history of the “literatures of the Polish lands” would concern literatures now often referred to as regional, including the literature of Upper Silesia, which could also serve as an important part of studies on the literatures of the “German lands” and the “Czech lands”. After all, Upper Silesia is a region currently situated within the borders of Poland and the Czech Republic, but also one that formerly belonged to Germany and Austria, and which in the course of its history as a borderland area has been the subject of political and military conflicts.² The complicated, multiethnic and multilingual past of that region and its borderland character, noticeable not only in its history and shifts in national affiliation, but also in its culture, constitute exceptionally interesting research material. The culture of Upper Silesia, whose development was affected by confluences of Germanic (mainly German) and Slavic cultures (Czech, Polish, as well as local ones, which disassociate themselves from the Czech and Polish national cultures), has relatively recently started to be recognized as distinct from the dominant cultures; the same is true of its language, the status of which remains controversial (see, for instance, Czesak 2015; Geisler 2015; Michna 2008; Hofmański 2019; Hentschel,

Tambor, and Fekete 2022). Terminology concerning Upper Silesian literature also poses a problem: should we use the established vocabulary of literary studies and label it minor literature (*littérature mineure*, a term coined by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, see 1986), small literature (a term suggested by Pascale Casanova, see 2004) or perhaps microliterature (in reference to literary microlanguages, as discussed by Ivan Dorovský and Aleksandr Dulichenko, see, respectively 1997 and 1981). I consider the last term, a less popular one, but nonetheless present in the discourse of literary studies, to be the most appropriate (see the “Microliterature” issue of *Litteraria Copernicana* 2/2019). Microliterature, as I understand it, can be defined as a body of literary works, of small range (geographically and in number of readers/recipients), usually associated with the cultural activity of minority groups. The term minor literature, far more frequently used in literary studies, even outside the intended context, initially referred to minority literature written in a dominant, non-minority language (the works of Franz Kafka or Leopold von Sacher-Masoch were to serve as an example). Meanwhile, microliterature, in the sense that I am advocating for, is written in both minority and majority/dominant languages, and the “micro” prefix relates to, as previously mentioned, the range of its influence/the number of its recipients, its placement within the majority polysystems (cf. Even-Zohar 1979, 2005), and the *majority culture* / “*national*” (*macro*) – *minority culture* / “*local*”, “*regional*” or “*borderland*” (*micro*) relationship. The question of scope is crucial, as it concerns, among other things, the survivability of a given culture, its presence on the publishing market (low demand translates to a low number of publications) and the local market’s quality (small publishing houses, the quite often poor quality of printed publications, minimal interest in translations into other languages, low recognizability). If one adds to that the lack of institutional support for communities which are not recognized by national law, as exemplified by Poland and its attitude towards the ethnic minorities of Silesia and Wilamowice (see, for instance, Skóra 2021), it becomes apparent that such micro-cultures and -literatures are in danger of extinction, and that they rely on revitalization efforts (a good example of which is Vilamovian culture; see Majerska-Sznajder 2019).

Some of the qualities which Deleuze and Guattari assign to minor literatures, such as deterritorialization of language, politicization or collectivism (1986, 16–18), can be found in microliteratures as well; however, here, they are not dominant (as, for example, the issues of deterritorialization of language in German-language literature written by Prague Jews). Similarly, one can ascribe a political or collective dimension to microliteratures, but commitment to the social and political needs of the community does not have to be the *sine qua non* of such creative endeavors. It seems impossible to miss the subversive character of a significant portion of microliteratures (cf. Pospiszil 2019b), but viewing them primarily in that context is, in my opinion, an overreach (cf. remarks by Kadłubek, who considers as part of Upper Silesian literature only those texts which thematize Upper Silesian issues; 2019, 223), and it may obscure the aesthetic qualities of literary works.

UPPER SILESIAN MICROLITERATURE – PARS PRO TOTO?

Upper Silesian microliterature, treated here as an example of microliteratures in general, can be viewed as borderland literature, literature of a contact zone (see Pratt 1991), and – as already stated – a part of national literatures: Polish, Czech, German, or Silesian (considering the efforts of some activists to recognize Silesians as an ethnic/national minority; see Kamusella 2003). This multiplicity of affiliations and classifications of literary works causes methodological problems, but it also presents opportunities for new readings, for “*organizing*” disorder (de Kock 2006, 21) and for describing a rhizomatic, hypertextual history. I propose an approach to Upper Silesian literature that would include texts and traditions of several languages; however, I would also like to emphasize that this approach will primarily adopt a bird’s-eye view, inspired by the work of Arianna Dagnino (2015). I will identify “nodal” areas in the transcultural history of Upper Silesian microliterature and present what I consider the most important works and figures, but avoid a close reading of chosen texts due to the formal limitations of this article.

My suggestion is to view microliteratures through the lens of Itamar Even-Zohar’s polysystem theory (1979, 2005). Firstly, the Upper Silesian literature which I am interested in can be regarded as a part (one system of many) of the larger/dominant polysystems in the region (Polish, Czech, German). Secondly, it may itself be treated as a separate polysystem, which would encompass works written in several languages and their local variants (reflecting the multilingual character of the community of their origin), in various stylistic registers and for various purposes (children’s literature, literature for adult audiences, satires, journalistic texts, so-called literary fiction, popular literature), as well as translations. In short, the study of the history of a given polysystem should include both masterpieces and literature of lesser artistic value in the eyes of scholars and critics, including works not necessarily written in the so-called literary language. A polysystem – in this case a microliterary one – is not a closed network of interconnections; rather, it is constantly changing, in motion. Not only are the centers and peripheries shifting, but the relationships and influences between neighboring systems are changing as well. Drawing attention to the heterogeneity and changeability of a system does not contradict the attempt to describe the history of a given literature, since, as Even-Zohar argues,

[polysystem as a term] emphasizes the multiplicity of intersections and hence the greater complexity of structuredness involved. Also, it stresses that in order for a system to function, uniformity need not be postulated. Once the historical nature of a system is recognized [...], the transformation of historical objects into a series of uncorrelated a-historical occurrences is prevented. (2005)

THE MOST CRUCIAL AREAS FOR THE TRANSCULTURAL HISTORY OF UPPER SILESIAN MICROLITERATURE

An overview of the entire polysystem of Upper Silesian literature, of the tensions between what has been considered “canon” and what has not been recognized as such, between (changing) peripheries and centers, and, finally, between the Upper Silesian polysystem and the dominant polysystems is, however, a topic for a different

study. Here, I will only present the four most crucial areas for the postulated transcultural history of that literature: 1) works written *po naszymu/po našimu* (roughly translating to “in our way” or “in our speech”), i.e. in variations of the local language (or: *ślōnskō gödka*)³; 2) works written in other languages (such as Latin, German, Polish, and Czech), as well as multilingual texts; 3) translations, mainly into *ślōnskō gödka*, but also into the dominant languages of the region; and 4) attempts to establish a canon of Upper Silesian literature.

Most works in Silesian have been published in the last 20 years (I will return to them in a moment). Silesian-language literature in fact has a much richer history – yet, the oldest texts are regarded as curiosities rather than examples of recognized, “legitimate” literature. One of these texts is an anonymous satire from (probably) 1654, *Placcz a Narzykani Predykantuw ze Slonska wygnanych w Namyslowskim kragu* (The cries and lamentations of the predicates exiled from Silesia from the Namysłów district), written in Silesian, with strong Czech influences, in quite artful thirteen-syllable verse. The text was discovered in 1973 by Jan Zaremba (1974) and briefly analyzed many years later by Izabela Kaczmarzyk (1993), but to this day it has not been published, is only available in manuscript and its digitalized version, and has received little attention. The research area encompassing texts written *po naszymu* before the 21st century should also be expanded to include other, although not numerous, works published in book form (e.g., Koelling 1887; Steuer 1934a, 1934b; Łysohorsky 1934, 1958) or in the press (e.g., “Gwiazdka Cieszyńska”, “Zaranie Śląskie”, “Kocynder”). Also noteworthy is the native oral literature, with visible influences from neighboring cultures, collected at the turn of the century (Malinowski 1899, 1901) and in the 20th century (Steuer 1934a; Bąk 1939; Sobierajski 1960); although, the preserved texts primarily originate from the rural, farmland part of the region, and research to date has not focused enough on the oral literature of residents of industrial areas (see Czesak 2015, 242).

Before I proceed to discuss recent works in Silesian, I would like to remark on Óndra Łysohorsky, or Erwin Goj, the creator of the Lachian literary microlanguage and the only relatively widely known user of this language. In his writings, he extensively drew from European literature (e.g., the apparent influences of Rainer Maria Rilke), also taking inspiration from local writers (Silesian poetry by Petr Bezruč, Jiří Wolker’s works in Czech; see Martinek 2016). Łysohorsky’s status is variously defined – his works are sometimes classified as Silesian literature, and they were even published in the contemporary Upper Silesian script (2009), but the writer himself claimed to belong to the nation of Lachia, inhabiting the territory of present-day north-eastern Czech Republic. He repeatedly spoke of the creation of a literary language based on Lachian dialects, with elements of Polish and Czech, which would serve as the foundation for the revitalization of the Lachian ethnic community, for centuries denationalized by the dominant groups, namely Germans, Czechs and Poles. In order to acknowledge Łysohorsky’s work, even though the culture-sensitive approach does not allow me to classify him with any degree of certainty as a Silesian or Silesian-language writer, I would rather describe him as a borderland writer, transnational and transcultural, partly present in the Silesian, Polish, Czech and German literary traditions, while at the same time building a new Lachian literature.

Works written in Silesian ethnolect/language

The rise of literature written in Silesian dates back to the period of post-communist transformation, that is, after 1989, but in particular after 2000, when the development of the local publishing industry became more prominent. Particularly noteworthy are the works originating from the Hlučín Region (a fragment of the region within the administrative borders of the Czech Republic) by authors such as Jana Schlossarková (1998) or Anna Malcharková (2004, 2006). One should also mention children's literature (e.g., Szołtysek 2006) and the rich publishing oeuvre of Alojzy Lysko. Particularly interesting is the cycle *Duchy wojny* (The Ghosts of War; published 2008–2021), in which Lysko explores a taboo subject for Polish authorities for many years – the experiences of Upper Silesians during the World War II, their vacillating cultural identity and their strong regional sense of belonging. Zbigniew Kadłubek's essays *Listy z Rzymu* (Letters from Rome; 2008) proved to be a monumentally important work from the perspective of both the development of Upper Silesian microliterature and the standardization of language; they touched upon issues which had not been previously addressed in Silesian, such as philosophy, literature, world culture, and the problem of writing in a language that does not exist (2012, 37), as Silesian is not recognized institutionally as a language by any of the countries which Upper Silesia belonged or belongs to. The first edition of the essays, published at the time in a non-standardized script, brought to attention the polyvalency of Silesian, its capacity to express more than was usually assumed (*gōdka* was considered to be a language of the lower classes, a “kitchen” language, cf. fn. 3), while at the same time inspiring awe as a literary work. It not only thematized the experience of “Silesianness” and of longing for *Heimat* (“homeland”), but also addressed the issue of a community developing in a contact zone. This includes Kadłubek openly writing about the loss of much of the local culture associated with the expulsion of people identified (though not always identifying themselves) as Germans. *Listy z Rzymu* has become one of the foundations of the reconstituting Upper Silesian community, no less important than the Silesian translation of the Bible (of which excerpts have been translated to date, see Pospiszil 2019a). The essays' use of Silesian outside of the context then ascribed to it constituted, in a sense, an act of subversion against the dominant Polish culture and against the failure to recognize the Silesian minority, despite many years of efforts (cf. Michna 2014; Geisler 2015; Kamusella 2013, 2020). In turn, the second edition of this by-then canonical book, in standardized script, sanctioned the choice of one of the two most commonly considered transcript forms, namely *ślabikōrzowy szrajbōnek* (Adamus 2010; Syniawa 2010; cf. Siuciak 2012; Czesak 2015), which now holds a dominant position in the Upper Silesian publishing scene. After 2008, many texts in Silesian have been published, representing various literary genres and types: drama (e.g., “Jednoaktówki po śląsku” – One-act plays in Silesian – project), several poetic genres (e.g., Karol Gwóźdź, Bronisław Wątroba, Mirosław Syniawa), prose (novels, including crime fiction, e.g., Marcin Melon, Marcin Szewczyk, Rafał Szyma), as well as journalistic texts (published mainly online, most notably on the Wachtyrz website⁴). *Ślōnskō gōdka* has become more broadly recognized by readers as a val-

id form of literary matter due to Marcin Melon's bestselling (at least by the standards of the local publishing market) detective stories about Inspector Hanusik (e.g., Melon 2014, 2015). The leading publisher in the Silesian-language market is Silesia Progress, a publishing house which releases most original works in Silesian (for example, those of Marcin Melon, Monika Neumann, Mirosław Syniawa, Stanisław Neblik, Rafał Szyma, and Marcin Szewczyk) as well as most translations into Silesian; it is, however, impossible to omit the artists and publishers associated with the Silesian National Publishing House (Andrzej Rocznio, Eugeniusz Kosmala, Anna Gorczek, and Jerzy Buczyński) and the Upper Silesian creators club KTG "Karasol" (e.g., Aleksander Lubina, Ginter Pierończyk) – although the quality of their print at times resembles the samizdat days (photocopied editions, lacking editorial or graphic design work). Online creative activity in *ślōnskō gōdka* is also quite widespread (e.g., Marcin Musiał, Jadwiga Sebesta).

Works written in other languages, and multilingual works

Another category of works involves texts written in dominant languages and multilingual texts functioning in two or more literary systems. When examining works published in dominant languages (previously in Latin, more recently in German, Czech or Polish, sometimes with elements of Silesian), one needs to consider the issue of the deterritorialization of language, typical for minoritized communities, which can be traced to varying degrees in the works of for instance Petr Bezruč, Helena Buchner, Eva Tvrdá and Anna Malcharková. Authors whose works fit, at least partly, into this category are multicultural and sometimes even multilingual writers – whether by birth (e.g., Piotr/Peter Lachmann) or by choice (Ota Filip, who writes in Czech, and who after his emigration in 1974 published largely in German). Textual multilingualism (cf. Makarska 2016), interjecting words or even entire phrases in *gōdka*, German, Czech or Polish (sometimes in phonetic transcription), serves as one of the ways to tackle the deterritorialization of language. Some writers, such as Szczepan Twardoch, deliberately choose not to explain borrowings from other languages in their works, as they want the reader to feel at least a small degree of the multilingualism of the contact zone and the resulting communication issues (Steciąg 2015; Makarska 2016, 89–95), which I will discuss in the later part of the article. Others, such as Kazimierz Kutz, translate the interpolations into the dominant language (2010), perhaps intending to "ease" the audience into the reception of the work – or to appease the publisher.

Some of the texts written in dominant languages are present in Upper Silesian microliterature in two forms: in the original, accessible to a decreasing number of recipients, and in translation. However, administrative boundaries and the resulting varying influences of the dominant languages have informed a clear division of this literature and the knowledge of the authors "canonical" for parts of the region. Horst Bienek, the author of a Silesian tetralogy written in German, is known to Polish readers through translations, but Czech-speaking Upper Silesians know little of his works and can access them only in the original; they are similarly unfamiliar with Janosch (Horst Eckert), who is popular in the Polish part of the region. The same is true for

works in Czech by Petr Čichoň, Jan Vrak and Jindřich Zogata, which have not been translated into Polish or Silesian. These inequalities in accessibility constitute clear gaps in both parts of the region.

The literature in Polish, Czech and German is exceptionally rich, and it is impossible to mention all the authors who identify as Silesians and write in their dominant languages or create multilingual works. Yet it is worth remembering that in the 20th and 21st centuries more works were written in Polish (e.g., Gustaw Morcinek, Wilhelm Szewczyk, Szczepan Twardoch, Anna Dziewit-Meller, Kazimierz Kutz, and Jacek Durski) than in Czech (e.g., Petr Bezruč, Eva Tvrdá, Anna Malcharková, Jan Vrak, and Jan Balabán) or German (e.g., August Scholtis, Irma Erben-Sedlaczek, Max Niedurny, Horst Bienek, and Janosch). There are, however, authors who write in dominant languages, who are known throughout the entire region, and who have become symbols of the multicultural and heterogeneous nature of Upper Silesia, of the complexity of its history and identity. Joseph von Eichendorff, a German-language writer (albeit familiar with Silesian – see, for example, Kłosek 2015), and one of the most prominent writers associated with the region⁵, can be cited as an example. In Eichendorff's works, Silesian motifs appear on many occasions, including numerous toponyms (which is also common for other works written in the region, especially in the 20th century), while his autobiographical texts thematize the issue of fluctuating identity, including certain difficulties in finding himself in his chosen German culture (Kłosek 2015; Wojda 2018; Zarycki 2014; Korzeniewicz 2021). Much of Eichendorff's work is marked by homesickness, i.e., the longing for his lost small homeland (Adorno 2019, 78). His works, including *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (Memoirs of a Good-for-Nothing; 1826), were translated into Polish, Czech and Silesian (see Skop 2020; Munzar 2018; Syniawa 2014), which made them widely accessible to Upper Silesian readers. Today, the important (but non-dominant) regional aspects of his work, the ties to the cultures of the region, are emphasized in many ways. In Łubowice (Lubowitz), Eichendorff's birthplace, the Eichendorff Upper Silesian Culture and Meeting Center was established and still operates, publishing bilingual (Polish-German) "Zeszyty Eichendorffa – Eichendorff-Hefte" (Eichendorff's poetry notebooks) and nurturing the legacy of not just Eichendorff, but also other Upper Silesian German-language writers (as it publishes Polish-German editions of works important to Upper Silesian culture). In Sedlnice in the Czech Republic, a place also associated with the writer, the Josef von Eichendorff Library is located, along with a monument to Eichendorff as a poet; a large conference devoted to his works, "Joseph von Eichendorff (1788–1857) and the Czech-Polish Cultural and Artistic Borderlands", was organized in 2018 at the Silesian University in Opava. In addition, he is occasionally mentioned in regional media, which contributes to building a fairly consistent image of Eichendorff as a writer of the Silesian borderland (see, for example, Anonymous 2021; Szymik 2014; Klich 2006).

Contemporary authors are also important, among them Szczepan Twardoch and Petr Čichoň, whose "Silesian" works (concerning Silesianness, regional identity, and borderland) are written as multilingual, with one dominant majority language (for Twardoch – Polish, for Čichoň – Czech and German). From the perspective

of the solidifying Upper Silesian culture, their most important writings include novels about the “Silesian plight”, which are distinctly set in the region and weave together languages and cultures of the Upper Silesian borderland in their narratives – *Slezský román* (Silesian novel; 2012) by Čichoň and *Drach* (2014) by Twardoch. Notably, these books were published not by small, local publishing houses, but by large, respected ones, in both Poland and the Czech Republic: Wydawnictwo Literackie in Kraków (Twardoch), and Host in Brno (Čichoň). Both writers openly declare their affiliation to the Silesian national/ethnic minority (Čichoň 2021; Twardoch 2021a) and incorporate lines *po naszymu* in their prose, without translating them. In doing so, they aim to expose the reader to the typical multilingualism of the contact zone and the resulting communication issues (Steciąg 2015; Makarska 2016, 89–95). The act of “alienating” a reader who does not know *gōdka* is especially meaningful, as – in addition to documenting within the textual layer the heterogeneity of the described space – it establishes (and limits) the community of “comprehension”.⁶

Other important events for Upper Silesian microliterature include external (non-Silesian) awards for authors who identify or are identified with Silesia, but who write in dominant languages and participate in Polish or Czech literary life – such as the Magnesia Littera⁷ awarded posthumously in 2011 to the Ostrava-based⁸ author Jan Balabán for *Zeptej se táty* (Go ask dad; 2010) or Nike 2021⁹ for Zbigniew Rokita for *Kajś* (Somewhere; 2020).

Translation and its importance to Upper Silesian microliterature

The next research area that needs to be factored into the transcultural history of Upper Silesian microliterature is translation. This includes both translations into *ślōnskō gōdka* and its variants, as well as translations into dominant languages (Polish, Czech, also German). Translations, especially those into Silesian, fill in gaps and deficiencies in the literary field, while also allowing the language to grow (Even-Zohar 1990) through translational choices, “recovering” older vocabulary, or creating neologisms. While discussing *Listy z Rzymu*, I mentioned how that text brings to light the polyvalency of the Silesian language; translations of works considered to be masterpieces of European literature play a similar role (apart from excerpts of the Bible, works of Aeschylus, Homer, Dante, Boccaccio, Schiller, Eichendorff, Goethe, Cavafy, Yeats, Burns, Yesenin, and Saint-Exupéry, have been translated among others). A gesture of great significance for both the language and the cultural community was the publication of the Silesian translation of the aforementioned *Drach* by Szczepan Twardoch (trans. by Grzegorz Kulik, 2018), which for most Silesian-speaking readers was already understandable in its original Polish version.

Most translations into Silesian are published in a standardized script (*ślabikōr-zowy szrajbōnek*), which accounts for certain differences in the pronunciation of Silesian, reinforcing the readers’ sense of polycentricity.¹⁰ In turn, translations between the dominant languages of the region allow Silesian readers to access the literature of places or communities unfamiliar to them. A larger number of such

publications might also stem from the calculations of publishers (larger reader market), qualifications of translators (a small number of translators into Silesian), and the desire to relate Upper Silesian identity and history in a way that would be comprehensible to the dominant cultures (which may further relate to the struggle for recognition). The selection of Silesian texts translated into dominant languages also seems to be significant; namely, the chosen works usually have a community-building or subversive character (e.g., Bienek 1991; Janosch 1974, 2011; Tvrdá 2016; Malcharková 2021).

The research areas outlined thus far feature recurring themes and subjects, which should not elude a historian of this literature, even should they choose the traditional, diachronic and biographical approach. It seems impossible to miss the *us–them* juxtapositions, characteristic of ethno-genetic processes, the repetitive descriptions of the region's spaces (both the agricultural and the industrial), similarities in descriptions of significant historical events (especially the time of the plebiscites and the World War II), a certain type of self-colonization (cf. Kiossev 2011), a virtual lack of any formal experiments, and only a few texts reaching beyond “Silesia-centric” discourse.

Attempts to establish a canon of Upper Silesian literature

Also worth mentioning are the meta-literary attempts made by a given reading community – critical reception of texts, studies in literary history, literary theory, cultural studies, sociolinguistics and linguistics, as well as attempts to systemize literary output, especially by proposing literary canons. Several such proposals have been made to date, of which I would like to discuss three, each to some extent trans-cultural, as dictated by the borderland character of the region and the multilingualism of the local culture's prominent authors, who are sometimes associated with other national cultures as well (such as Bezruč or Eichendorff). It should be noted, however, that these attempts were made in the Polish part of Upper Silesia, while in the part that belongs to the Czech Republic no significant interest in canon-forming endeavors has been observed (cf. Martinek 2015, 285–290). The need to establish a literary canon in the “postcanonical age” (Damrosch 2006, 43–52) might be a result not only of the “struggle for recognition,” already mentioned here several times, or of the aspirations of Upper Silesian culture, but also of the “gaps, omissions and underrepresentation of cultures other than the Western European and Northern American in the so-called canon of world literature” (Pospiszil 2018; cf. Said 1993; 66; Seyhan 2001, 14; Wilczek 2004–2005); that dominance can be translated into the dominance of one language and one identity in national canons (cf. Marnersdóttir 2015). To avoid repeating the issues with establishing Upper Silesian canons as I have previously discussed (2018), I will only summarize the most crucial facts here. In 2011, *99 książek, czyli mały kanon górnośląski* (99 books, or the small Upper Silesian canon) by Zbigniew Kadłubek was published. It encompassed not only works commonly recognized as Upper Silesian (by Angelus Silesius, Petr Bezruč, Horst Bienek, Joseph von Eichendorff, Max Herrmann-Neisse, Gustaw Morcinek, Kazimierz Kutz, Zygmunt Haupt), but also texts included in the global hypercanon

(Aeschylus, Ivo Andrić, Elias Canetti, Elizabeth Gaskell, Claudio Magris, Sándor Márai, Herta Müller, Amos Oz, et al.) and not strictly associated with Upper Silesia. This proposal is not so much transcultural as it is pancultural and transnational, since it features ancient Greek, American, British, Italian, and other writers, while the thread that connects all these works is supposed to stem from a specific experience of locality, closely related to the idea of “regiology” (*regiologia*), once promoted by Kadłubek. Yet, it is difficult to understand the key according to which the works included in the canon were selected. The “regiological” spirit seems to foster all borderland microliteratures/literatures, not only that of Upper Silesia, and as such would rather form a “small borderland canon”. This proposition, however, started a debate on Upper Silesian literature that extended outside the walls of academia (e.g., Kuźnik 2011).

A more traditionally constructed canon, based on a survey carried out among 40 people from cultural, literary, and scientific backgrounds, was published in the journal “Fabryka Silesia” in 2012. In this case, too, the multicultural and multilingual character of the region was factored in (Lewandowski 2012), which influenced the choice of authors. This canon included primarily Polish and German-speaking writers, the vast majority of whom were creatively active in the 20th century (Horst Bienek, August Scholtis, Hans Lipinsky-Gottersdorf, Janosch, Henryk Waniek, Kazimierz Kutz, and Stefan Szymutko), which gave rise to some of the objections to the proposal (e.g., Malicki and Kuźnik 2012).

There are also two publishing series which can be considered canonical: “Perły Literatury Śląskiej” or “Juwelen schlesischer Literatur” (Pearls of Silesian literature) published by the Eichendorff Upper Silesian Culture and Meeting Center, and “Canon Silesiae” published by Silesia Progress. The former series is devoted to bilingual (German-Polish) editions of works by established German-language Silesian writers (associated with both Lower and Upper Silesia); the latter is wider in range and comprised of original works in *ślōnskō gödka*, translations of international masterpieces into this language, as well as fiction, science, and popular science books on the topic of Upper Silesian history and identity, written in Polish or translated into Polish (often those publications concern the dominance of other cultures, war and post-war traumas, and the minoritization and silencing of the Upper Silesian community; see Pospiszil 2018, 2019b).

These canon-forming efforts are significant because they originated within the Upper Silesian community, and constituted an internal attempt to structure literary matter. A number of the authors listed above did not appear in these canons, due to temporal limitations (i.e., post-dating the canons) or formal limitations (e.g., copyright issues), although at present such authors would probably also qualify as “canonical” (e.g., Szczepan Twardoch, Mirosław Sygniawa, Petr Čichoň). One might question the sense of such efforts, of struggles to “capture” liquid matter in fixed hierarchies and tables. However, adopting a transcultural perspective – which has been done by the authors of the said canons – allows to locate one’s own culture and literature in an array of other cultures and literatures, to identify connections which elude simple “national” classifications.

CONCLUSION

The nodal areas outlined above are, in my view, pivotal for writing the transcultural history of Upper Silesian microliterature. While they do not encompass the entirety of literary production contained within this polysystem, they do allow for insight into that literature that is both deep and as broad as possible. Such a project is obviously bound to suffer from certain simplifications and from the need to make difficult choices, especially with regard to selecting texts to be studied. I imagine that such a transcultural literary history would assume the form of a hypertext rather than of a traditional publication, and as such it could be developed by multiple researchers who would focus on various systems within the Upper Silesian polysystem and its neighboring polysystems. Additional information regarding the cultural, historical and linguistic context would also be necessary, as without such clarifications, many texts, discussions and even writing scripts could be incomprehensible. The nature of the hypertext form means that such a project would be infinite – never ending, impossible to fully complete. However, the aim here is not to create an encyclopedia of this literature (de Kock 2006, 21–22), but a study of an ever-changing polysystem – a study, which by necessity would be expandable, changeable and multi-authored, in accordance with the polycentricity and heterogeneity of the literature studied.

NOTES

- ¹ The impossibility of finishing such a project, even on a smaller geographical scale, was addressed by Leon de Kock, who referred among other things to the attempts to compile a history of African literature (2006).
- ² For more on the history of Upper Silesia and related issues of cultural and national identity see, for example, Czapliński et al. 2002; Kamusella 2013; Bjork et al. 2016.
- ³ For terminology issues concerning Silesian language, see, for example, Michna 2014; Siuciak 2012; Czesak 2015; Wyderka 2004; Myśliwiec 2013. In the present article, I will use the term “language”, following ISO 639-3, code: SZL.
- ⁴ See <https://wachtyrz.eu>.
- ⁵ That being said, Eichendorff’s ties to both Lower and Upper Silesia are often accentuated, which renders him a connecting factor of a sort between the two parts of one large region – Silesia – the histories of which unfolded differently, and which now culturally significantly differ; see, for example, Kłosek 2015; Lam 2004.
- ⁶ It is also worth mentioning that both authors were accused of separatist or even Nazi sympathies (Klíčová 2011; Saulski 2013; Stachowiak 2022), which only strengthened the subversive undertones of their journalistic and literary writings, interviews and public statements (see Čichoň 2020; Čichoň and Lenartová 2020; Čichoň and Zdenko 2012; Mottýl 2015; Nagy 2020; Twardoch 2020, 2021b, 2022a, 2022b).
- ⁷ The most important Czech literary award, held since 2002, see <https://magnesia-litera.cz/>.
- ⁸ Ostrava is a city in the Moravian-Silesian region.
- ⁹ The most important Polish literary award, held since 1997, see <https://culture.pl/pl/tag/nagroda-literacka-nike>.
- ¹⁰ For a study of translations and their community-building role, as well as for a bibliography of translations into Silesian up to 2018, see Pospiszil 2019a, 2019b.

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Confluences: On the possibility of describing a transcultural history of (micro)literature – the Upper Silesian perspective

Upper Silesia. Borderland. Microliterature. Minor literature. Transculturalism.
History of literature.

Any attempt to fully describe the history of a particular literature is doomed to fail. Such a description requires simplifications and generalizations, and necessitates selection. The same is true for literatures of contact zones, which are transcultural in their nature. The history of such literatures should reflect their character and accommodate their transcultural dimension. By using the example of Upper Silesian microliterature, the author presents the challenges a researcher would be confronted with even while approaching literatures of small range, both geographically and in number of recipients (microliteratures), referring to the theory of polysystems and transcultural studies. She discusses the nodal points of the postulated transcultural history of Upper Silesian microliterature, namely: 1) works in the Silesian language, 2) works in dominant languages, 3) translations, and 4) proposals for its literary canon. Concurrently, she argues that Upper Silesian literature cannot be examined in isolation from its transcultural context, the confluences of German and Slavic cultures, as well as the history of the cultural melting pot in which it was developed and the character of which is still noticeable today.

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Transculturality in Romanian literary histories: The case of literature from Moldova

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This study will be concerned with the inclusion or non-inclusion of literature written in the Romanian language in the Republic of Moldova¹ (and historical variants such as the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic) in Romanian literary-historical narratives of the last two decades. The focus will be on works of literary history devoted exclusively to literature written in the Romanian language. A transcultural perspective might therefore appear to have no relevance here. However, as I will attempt to elucidate below, culture is defined not only by language but also by shared historical consciousness, norms, traditions, preferences, identity. Furthermore, even a single culture experiences various changes in its diachronic movement; it diversifies or may even disappear, sometimes fusing with another culture or cultures. As Václav Smyčka and Václav Petrbok write, culture involves “dynamically mutable constellations of being together, alongside and opposite to one another”² (2019, 12). In this light, the example of Moldovan³ culture and its literature seems apposite, because in the course of the 20th century its language and literature were used as means of legitimization in political projects seeking to orient the identity of this culture: either to the western, Romanian or the eastern, Russian (in the given case, Soviet) power space.

TRANSCULTURALITY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE STUDY OF LITERATURE

According to Wolfgang Welsch (1999), the present-day form of cultures is best clarified by the concept of transculturality, which is “a consequence of *the inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures*. These encompass [...] a number of ways of life and cultures, which also interpenetrate or emerge from one another” (197; italics W.W.). As opposed to the Herderian concept (essentializing, and in present-day conditions utopian) of one homogenizing, unifying, and thereby also separatist or exclusive culture, Welsch regards the concept of transculturality as better able to express the dynamics of contemporary cultures. However, this concept can also be applied to past cultures in any particular diachronic cross-section, as Welsch himself

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eventually corrects in his later studies (cf. Welsch 2022). Fernando Ortiz, the anthropologist and “father” of the concept of “transculturation,” has also shown, using Cuba as an example, that transculturation as an alternative to the unidirectional concept of acculturation can be applied to cultural phenomena from the prehistory of humankind ([1947] 1995, 97ff.).

The temporally simultaneous concepts of interculturality and multiculturalism, according to Welsch, presuppose the homogeneity of individual cultures, and hence do not solve the problem of cultures being unable to communicate one with another, but on the contrary accentuate their differences. By contrast, the transcultural perspective provides a non-centralized and non-centralizing view of otherness, of the “foreign,” because “henceforward there is no longer anything absolutely foreign” (1999, 198). Welsch emphasizes that transculturality affects not only the macro level (cultures of nations, states, ethnic populations, groups) but also individuals, and with the current diversification of cultures, more and more conspicuously (201–202).

Literature, as part of culture, does not stand outside the concept of transculturality. Anders Pettersson (2010) has alluded to this, vis-à-vis literary history. With a broad grasp of the transcultural history of literature, he sees it in cross-section through comparative studies, postcolonialism, and world literature itself. As he himself says: “Knowledge can instill some understanding of cultures other than one’s own and an attendant ability to take them seriously and view them with some respect, which may usefully be combined with criticism of things of considerable importance in our contemporary world” (466). Pettersson argues that a transcultural perspective, of whatever scale, helps the historian to avoid parochialism and the “insular” character of research, in other words focusing on the problem without its broader context.

Transculturality, as an expression of awareness of diversity in the individual components of culture and of the liquidity of boundaries from the lowest levels to the global, enables a revaluation of the homogenizing and simultaneously polarizing national idea. In defining what still is and what no longer is national in the given culture, many of its components remained excluded as non-appertaining, not expressing its “spirit,” or in more pragmatic terms not corresponding to the ideological requirements of political power. According to Arianna Dagnino, currently “with the denationalizing wave of globalization, even national literatures are under pressure to find new arrangements of form and content to adapt to a changed cultural and social paradigm” (2013, 2). In her view, national collective ideas are being remolded in the forge of transculturality and adapted to the vision of a new age of transnational and supranational economic, political, social and cultural processes. Accordingly, “we witness the increasing significance of a transcultural literature that, in its broader characteristics, tends to cross cultures and acknowledges the mutually transforming power of cultures”. (3)

Transcultural literature (literary studies, literary history) introduces a number of essential moments in the comprehension of literature as a cultural expression: mutual permeation or fusion (confluence – Dagnino) instead of dominance, inclusion instead of exclusion, an attempt at mutual understanding instead of separation. Pettersson highlights one further dimension of the transcultural perspective, citing

Zhang Longxi, who says that we may look at a work of foreign literature as the expression of a different perspective, but we ought to link it into a dialogue in the same way as many others, while at the same time regarding it as an individual manifestation and not as representative of an entire culture. "Once we recognize the diversity and heterogeneity of the Other, as we do of the self, cross-cultural understanding can be seen as part of our effort at understanding in general, of our endless dialogue with others, with ourselves, and with the world at large" (Longxi in Pettersson 2008, 469).

WHY WRITE ABOUT MONOLINGUAL HISTORIES OF ROMANIAN LITERATURE TRANSCULTURALLY?

In this part of the article, I will try to highlight the use of culture, more specifically its language and literature, as an instrument of power in creating the cultural identity of the society. Two glottonyms of one language – Romanian/Moldovan – are resultants of a vertical of power which, through language and the literature written in it, has managed to a certain extent first of all to isolate the Moldovan culture communicating in the Romanian language and its literature, and later to polarize it against Romanian culture.

The historical and power-political constitution of Moldova in the 20th century, firstly as part of Tsarist Russia (1812–1918), afterwards of the Kingdom of Romania (1918–1940 and 1941–1944), later as the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (1940–1941, 1944–1991) and finally as the independent Moldovan Republic (1991–present day), required among other things a legitimizing ideology, which would integrate its culture and at the same time differentiate it from surrounding cultures. The unification of Moldova ("Bessarabia", as the Russians called it after the 1812 annexation) to the Romanian kingdom (1918) was conducted with a fundamental idea of historical continuity (that Bessarabia had belonged to the Moldavian principality from 1359 to 1812). It was asserted that all of the Romanian-speaking population had a cultural and linguistic unity; in other words, unification was based on an ideology of "pan-Romanianism". Simultaneously, however, beyond the borders of Bessarabia, in the Soviet Union, the politics and cultural identity of a new *imagined community* began to take shape during this period – the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (1924), with an identitarian and legitimating narrative of "Moldovanism". According to the ideology of Moldovanism, the "Moldovan nation" from Bessarabia did not participate in the Romanian national revival movement in the 19th century, when a union was formed of the two Danubian principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia) in the Romanian principality (1859) and kingdom (1881). Bessarabia, that is to say, was then part of Tsarist Russia, and so, still according to the narrative of the ideologues of Moldovanism, its inhabitants did not seize the moment of formation of *Romanian* identity. Hence they remained loyal to the local Moldavian, not the national Romanian identity (cf. Țicu 2018, 183–213; King 2000, 49).

Accordingly, if the partisans of political Moldovanism sought to create a new Soviet republic, this required an independent nation, which in turn required a specific culture and its attributes, such as a language and a literature in that language. And inescapably there was a precondition that the culture of the "Moldovan nation"

should be distinguished from Romanian culture. That was done especially via language. The official language of the state, apart from Russian and Ukrainian, therefore became the so-called “Moldovan language”: a rudimentary Romanian, needless to say also artificially Russified, which was written in Cyrillic. The evident fact that morphologically and syntactically it was identical with Romanian was denied, and tautologically the opinion was expressed that “romanization” of the Moldovan language was permissible only “if we adopt a standpoint whereby the Moldovans do not exist as an independent nation” (Țicu 2018, 198).⁴

Soviet propaganda during the interwar period, in cultural politics concerning the Moldovan question, placed emphasis on the building of the new ethnic group and reinforcing its “Moldovan” cultural identity. Following the renewed attachment of Moldova to the Soviet Union (first in 1940, afterwards in 1944 until the Soviet Union’s dissolution and the 1991 declaration of independence of the Republic of Moldova), the prevailing cultural politics involved a thoroughgoing, and from its inception also brutal, eradication of “Romanianism” (with murders and forced deportations to Siberia and other remote parts, organized famine, and so on). After 1968 there was a policy of isolation of Moldovan culture from Romanian culture and a vigorous Sovietization and Russification of all areas of life.⁵ Literature and magazines were for the most part in Russian; Moldovan authors wrote in “Moldovan” (which is to say, a literary Romanian transliterated to Cyrillic); sometimes they made their own Russian translations, or they wrote directly in Russian. Works such as these, even supposing they did make their way to the Romanian side, were unreadable for the Romanian public. Like the Iron Curtain which then existed between Western and Eastern Europe, in like manner a politically, commercially and culturally impassable wall, only on a smaller scale, was erected at the river Prut, the natural border between Romania and the Moldavian SSR. During the period of socialism Romanian literature in the Moldavian SSR practically did not exist, and so it was not read or reciprocated. Again, in Moldova there was a highly selective choice and canonical formation of historical Romanian literature, corresponding to the ideological orientation of the culture. With few exceptions, almost all of the writers of the interwar (Romanian) period were culled from it, and the works of older writers were put through the sieve in a comprehensive ideological vetting (Șleahțișchi 2019; Lungu 2019).

After the 1991 declaration of Moldovan independence, Transnistrian and Gagauz separatism was added to the two identitarian ideologies (Moldovanism and Romanianism). In 1991 the Gagauz Republic⁶ in the south of the country declared independence; Moldova gave it recognition in 1994 and integrated it as an Autonomous Territorial Unit. Furthermore, in 1991 independence was also declared by Transnistria, which hitherto has not been recognized by any international institution or foreign state but is supported by Russia.

Politically and culturally, however, the ideologies of Moldovanism and Romanianism have had to change their forms in altered global political conditions. The pan-Romanian branch of political Romanianism has tried to promote unification with Romania, which was one of the pretexts for the minorities to take defensive

measures and accelerate their demands for separation. Moldovanism has again come to the forefront as a result of the war in Transnistria, and its advocates have firmly defended the national-constitutive idea of an independent state-forming East Romanian Moldovan nation, which is different from the Romanian, uses a different language, and has a different history. The histories of Moldova and Romania may have points of contact, but they have “different trajectories” (Țicu 2018, 387).

However, the literature in the Romanian language which was written in the Moldovan Republic after 1989 no longer had impermeable boundaries. Firstly, the Supreme Soviet of the Moldavian SSR on August 31, 1989 legalized the use of Latin script for “Moldovan”; again, in the Declaration of Independence in the Preamble to the 1991 Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, Romanian in the Latin script features as a state language.⁷ The language of the literature that appeared after 1989 was therefore also comprehensible for Romanians. Gradually, books from Moldovan publishers have entered the Romanian book market; books by Romanian authors are likewise received on the Moldovan side (the only remaining obstacles are the criteria of the not entirely free trade between these two countries). Furthermore, as a result of cultural politics and “inner exile”, many writers from the Republic of Moldova have studied, lived and worked, in Romania, and continue to do so. During the last decade, however, we have noticed the reverse process also: writings of Romanian authorship are issued by Moldovan publishers (e.g. Cartier, Arc).

By now the political adherents of the ideologies of Romanianism and Moldovanism, and the younger, “more neutral” generation, which attempted to integrate or ignore the elements of one or another intellectual and political current, have all alike understood that the ruling power in the first instance attempted to rob them of a language as a communicative means, not only in terms of its own isolated or self-isolating culture, but especially on the transcultural level. One cannot deny the population of Moldova their right to self-definition as “Moldovans”; problematic, however, is the insistence on the political construct, “the Moldovan language”, as a linguistic category on the grounds of its content, cultural impact, and power-political connotations.

Moldovan culture is to a certain extent different from Romanian culture; ultimately, even Romanian culture is not monolithic. The first is powerfully influenced especially by the Russian and Ukrainian cultures, but also by Gagauzian, Jewish, Bulgarian, and other cultures. Romania in the course of its history was influenced by the cultures of other ethnic groups who lived either around it or at its center: Hungarian, German, Jewish, Armenian, Greek, Turkish, Bulgarian, Roma etc. Currently, via media culture and free travel, both cultures are becoming globalized, and hence are converging. At any rate, traditionally there existed, and still exists, a powerful interpenetration and undeniable points of contact. As has been shown in recent decades, Moldova and Romania are a great deal closer in literary terms than they are politically. One may say that there is one literature with two histories, as the Romanian literary critic Răzvan Voncu expressed it in the title of his (not particularly optimistic) article analyzing the contemporary literary relationships of the two cultures (2017, 6).

EXAMPLES OF LITERARY-HISTORICAL NARRATIVES AND THEIR TENDENCY TO TRANSCULTURALITY

The demand for transculturality, as outlined above, comes up against a “snag” in literary-historical works, and that is the complexity of the survey that a single author must be responsible for. In summarizing the histories of Romanian literature written after 2000, and also in the widest range, from the beginnings until the present day, one fact catches the eye: that almost all, with the exception of lexicographical works, were written by a single author (Micu 2000; Negrici 2003; Ștefănescu 2005; Manolescu 2008; Popa 2009; Zamfir 2011; Iovănel 2021). Authors such as Dumitru Micu, Emil Alexandrescu and Nicolae Manolescu undertook huge projects: to map at least five centuries of Romanian literary production. The literary histories by the other cited authors defined a narrower research period: for Mihai Zamfir it was the 19th century; for Marian Pop, Eugen Negrici and Alex Ștefănescu it was literature after 1944, hence either explicitly in the period of communism, with its strict official supervision, or with an overlap to the period after 1989; for Mihai Iovănel it was contemporary literature between the years 1990 and 2020. Their histories are therefore naturally selective, on the one hand for subjective and on the other for objective reasons: they are building on previous works, whether 1) their own activity as literary critics; 2) the literary-historical canon, as constituted in more partial articles and books; or 3) the literary-historical tradition of large-scale syntheses by individual authors before the first half of the 20th century (cf. also Valentová 2017; Horáková 2017).

In the following section of the article, I focus on three selected literary-historical narratives from Romania. Two of them, by Nicolae Manolescu and Dumitru Micu, are “synthesizing”, while the third, by Mihai Iovănel, is a partial survey. While this presentation is selective, it seeks to be representative, hence to highlight three various modes of inclusion/non-inclusion of literature pertaining to another cultural sphere in its diachronic movement – that is to say, on time axes from 1944 to the present. For comparison I also include a consideration of two works that describe Romanian literature from the outside, from the standpoint of other cultures: I will look at the Czech *Slovník rumunských spisovatelů* (Dictionary of Romanian writers; Valentová et al. 2001) and the Slovak *Dejiny rumunskej literatúry: literárne dianie v kultúrnom priestore* (History of Romanian literature: Literary activity in a cultural space; Vajdová, Páleníková, and Kenderessy 2017). I will be interested in the transcultural perspective of these works, with special emphasis on Romanian literature from the Republic of Moldova.

Nicolae Manolescu: Critical history of Romanian literature. 5 centuries of literature (2008)

Nicolae Manolescu published his *Istoria critică a literaturii române: 5 secole de literatură* in 2008. More partial works of his on the history of Romanian literature had appeared earlier, but many of these were nonetheless synthesizing, indeed with a personal typology of the development of the Romanian novel (*Arca lui Noe* [Noah's Ark], 1980–1983; also a shorter version of the *Istoria critică a literaturii române* from 1990). In his synthesizing work he unambiguously associates himself with the legacy of George Călinescu (1899–1965), writer, literary critic and historian, but at the same

time aesthete, who wrote his monumental work *Istorie a literaturii române de la origini până în prezent* (History of Romanian literature from its beginnings to the present; 1941) both within and without the framework of the current scholarly conventions – without systematic notes or a methodological apparatus, and with minimal references to other literary-historical or theoretical works. His basic criterion in selecting literary works was their aesthetic value, regarding which he was naturally often swayed by subjective taste. This way of doing things comes naturally to Manolescu, as he immediately points out in his foreword (2008, 5–8), and his history also is a subjective selection according to his own aesthetic criteria and furthermore a dialogue, or in places a polemic, with the reception of the given works in their own times and later.

The author describes the history of Romanian literature from its beginnings. In contrast to other writers, he does not include (transculturally) works written in Church Slavonic, Greek or Latin from the centuries when writing first appears on the territory of present-day Romania, because “he strictly distinguishes between the history of culture, to which ancient monuments belong [...], and the history of national literature, which is inseparably linked with the national language, Romanian” (Valentová 2017, 44).

As for Moldovan literature in the Romanian language, only one writer of explicitly Moldovan provenance has a separate chapter in the *Critical history*: Constantin Stere, a Bessarabian interwar politician and writer, who was writing on the frontiers of present-day Romania. The points of contact between Manolescu’s *Critical history* and the history of Romanian literature in Bessarabia (as presented e.g. by Cimpoi [1996] 1997) are writers from the period of the Moldavian principality (the Moldavian chroniclers Grigore Ureche, Miron Costin, Ion Neculce, Dimitrie Cantemir etc.), and after the annexation of Bessarabia in 1812. In this instance, I am principally referring to writers who came from Bessarabia but were active in the principalities, or after 1881 in the Romanian Kingdom, such as Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu, or writers from the Romanian part of Moldavia whose works made an impact despite Moldovanism (though frequently only in selections) even during Bolshevik and Communist times in Bessarabia (Mihai Eminescu, Ion Creangă etc.). Moldovan literary history appropriated these writers; this is equally true of the partisans of cultural Moldovanism and Romanianism. Each party, however, approved them for different reasons: the first because these cultural figures and their works unambiguously illustrated the artistic merit of “Moldovan” creativity and helped to forge literary-historical continuity; the second because they succeeded in making Moldovan culture belong to the Romanian whole (ultimately, even Călinescu and Cimpoi wrote their histories as demonstrations of the indivisibility of Romanian literature.)

Manolescu’s *Critical history* does not have any author representing the post-1944 period, if we omit the two-page section entitled “Authors of dictionaries” (2008, 1396–1397), where three names appear in the list: the literary historian Mihai Cimpoi, the prose-writer Ion Druță and the poet Grigore Vieru. On the last period studied, the 1990s, Manolescu has only this to say: “The Bessarabians, numerous, of unequal quality, are with minor exceptions (Vitalie Ciobanu, Leo Butnaru) en-

tirely outdated (Grigore Vieru) or on a different track⁸ (the majority). Their place in the history of Romanian literature cannot yet be precisely determined” (1401). Manolescu qualifies the absence of postwar and even post-revolution writers from Moldova in his *Critical history* by their “outdatedness” or being “on a different track”. It would be understandable if he did so based on the simple fact of their absence from the book market and non-reception at the time of their appearance, because of the writers referred to, Grigore Vieru at least had his creative peak during the period of socialism. The cultural politics of Moldovanism prior to 1989, when it was associated with a thoroughgoing isolationism of Romanian and Moldovan culture, and also after 1994, when again it did not create a political conjuncture for multicultural exchange, powerfully influenced the mutual awareness of each literature by the other. To refer to literature from the period of socialism in the chapter entitled “after 1989” as “outdated” speaks of an inadequate, time-bound reception both from the literary-historical and from the aesthetic standpoint.

Manolescu’s *Critical history* does not perceive literature as part of a broader cultural context, as a means of intercultural understanding. As Pettersson points out (citing the work of Zhang Longxi *Mighty Opposites: From Dichotomies to Differences in the Comparative Study of China*, 1998): “For any dialogue to happen between at least two voices, for any bridging of gaps and any temporal relationship to occur, there must be a common ground, a shared frame of reference and ways of communication, by means of which new experience and novel concepts can be articulated, appropriated, and transformed from one linguistic and cultural context to another” (2008, 468). Manolescu’s strict aesthetic criterion, as it happens, is intransigent and non-dialogic towards the transculturality of Romanian literature, even if written after 1989 in the requisite “national language”.

Dumitru Micu: History of Romanian literature, from folk production to postmodernism (2000)

Dumitru Micu takes a different approach to the history of Romanian literature from Moldova. His *Istoria literaturii române de la creația populară la postmodernism* is an attempt at an exhaustive, and to some extent also culturally contextualizing, survey. The comprehensiveness of the information provided is such that he does not have as much space for the aesthetic appraisal of individual works as Manolescu does. Regarding the issue addressed here, however, of the transcultural reach of the literary-historical work to include Moldovan culture, Micu devotes attention to writing from Moldova after 1812; he has separate sub-chapters on writers who were important for the evolution of Romanian literature as a whole, as well as for its regional existence (Constantin Stamati, Alexandru Donici etc.). For Micu, Bessarabian literature from the interwar period, when it once again found a place in the whole of Romanian “national” literature, does not form an organic part of the specific canonical trends and styles which he has chosen to structure his work. He reserves a concluding chapter for Moldovan authors. A similar, though more understandable mode of treatment is applied to “contemporary” literature after 1944, with separate sub-chapters devoted to poetry and prose: “Bessarabian Romanian poetry” or “Romanian prose in Bessara-

bia, north Bukovina, and the Yugoslavian space". The writer Ion Druță (known in Slovakia through the medium of Russian translations as Ion Druce) actually has his own sub-chapter among the Romanian authors. Introducing the sub-chapter devoted to postwar prose, Micu writes: "It would be natural if the writers from beyond the river Prut [Bessarabia], entirely remarkable writers, were not described separately but rather were scattered in all or almost all chapters among authors from this side of the river [Romania], since they are part of the same literature" (Micu 2002, 654). This wish remains empathetically expressed but pragmatically unfulfilled. Micu's *History*, based on a national idea of literature written in the national language, very emotionally describes the "struggles" of ethnic Romanians from Bessarabia, Ukrainian Bukovina, and the former Yugoslavia, for the ideals of patriotism. Aesthetic criteria take a hindmost position, in favor of the socio-cultural, political and ideological criteria associated with Romanianism.

Mihai Iovănel: History of contemporary Romanian literature 1990–2020 (2021)

If I sidestep the epistemological question (to which I return below) of the possibility of writing history about the present, I cannot avoid the words which Mihai Iovănel, as one of the authors of the monumental collective *Dicționarul general al literaturii române* (General dictionary of Romanian literature, 2004–2009, 2nd edition 2016–2020) contributed to the international colloquium devoted to issues related to writing the history of (Romanian) literature, held in 2012 in Bratislava. According to him, "histories of literature written by a single author (and thus implicitly with a single story/a single angle of vision) have recorded a sharp falling-off and have even been relatively discredited. Much more topical are histories by a number of authors, whose diversity (ideological, stylistic, in terms of approach or specialization etc.) offers a plural, more open and democratic view of the given theme" (2017, 71). Although Iovănel expressed thoughts on the "outmodedness" of the genre, he acknowledged that future histories of literature would emerge rather from lexicographical works than from histories of literature of the older kind. He himself, it appears, has made use of the arsenal of materials amassed in producing and revising the dictionary of Romanian literature, and in 2021 he published what is again a "single-author" history of literature, faithful to Romanian tradition.

Iovănel's *Istoria literaturii române contemporane 1990–2020*, however, dissociated itself in striking fashion from the Romanian postwar tradition of writing history based on the autonomy of aesthetic criteria. In its title, and methodologically, it rests upon another pillar of interwar literary-historical writing: Eugen Lovinescu and his *Istoria literaturii române contemporane* (History of contemporary Romanian literature, 1926–1929, 1937). As Iovănel indicated, indeed, in his preceding book *Ideologiile literaturii în postcomunismul românesc* (Ideologies of literature in Romanian post-communism, 2017), he is first of all aiming at a history of ideas and ideologies, that is cultural policies associated with the literary system; at the same time, needless to say, texts by writers form the central theme in describing the context. In his own words: "Otherwise I do not think that one can speak

of a separation/opposition between the ideological and the aesthetic. Every aesthetics presupposes an ideology, and those who say otherwise are also just creating an ideology” (Iovănel and Pricăjan 2021, 12).

On the collocation *history of contemporary literature*, which sounds like an oxymoron, the author expresses himself as follows: “I think that the history of contemporary *literature* must also come through contemporary *history*. After all, we who are really living it can know it immediately. Those who come after us will know it through books, films, documents, archives, and so on. Maybe they will have a better perspective than we do, but that doesn’t mean that our perspective, however imperfect it may be, should not be archived” (Iovănel and Galaicu-Păun 2021, 7). It is worthy of note that insufficient detachment or “imperfect perspective” served the above-mentioned Nicolae Manolescu as a reason for not including literature from Moldova from his *Critical history*.

In Iovănel’s history, Romanian literature from Moldova takes on an entirely new image. A number of reasons come to mind immediately, most of which are connected with the change in the literary system after 1989, in Romania and Moldova, as described above: literature written in the Roman script is comprehensible by the Romanian public also; thanks to cultural migration, many writers from Moldova have studied, written and published in Romania; the book market, though not entirely free, is open on both sides. Iovănel however does not thematize either the Moldovan or Romanian cultural, social and political context concerning Moldova. Authors from Moldova in certain places simply form an uncontextualized organic part of the thematic picture he has constructed of the literary system in post-revolutionary Romania. We do not learn from his book how they earned the position of writers suitable for his literary *History*: that is to say, not all of them wrote and published in “inner exile”, namely in Romania. The author himself regards aesthetic primacy in literary-historical writing as an inadequate criterion; indeed, what the works analyzed represent is rather examples of contemporary social phenomena. Nonetheless it remains interesting, and this fact has been noticed also by Snejana Ung, that the author, concluding his history with a fourth section entitled “Specificul transnațional” (Transnational specificity), and concretely in the chapter on “Conectivitatea globală” (Global connectivity), integrates the poetic oeuvre of the contemporary Moldovan writer Emilian Gălăicu-Păun. By this means he demonstrates the synchronization of Romanian and Moldovan poetry “in the framework of a broader discussion on literary import-export, which underlines the fact that this literature is rather imported than a genuine component of Romanian literature” (2021, 16).

One must further note that Iovănel in his *History* did not give space to a large number of writers from Moldova. He replied to Gălăicu-Păun on the question of whether he should have been more generous to Bessarabian writing: “I could have written about several [authors]. I am sorry. [...]. But the first people who have not been generous to the Bessarabians are themselves” (Iovănel and Galaicu-Păun 2021, 12). Here he had in mind the insufficiency of literary-historical⁹ and other scholarly works on Romanian literature from Bessarabia.

One may consider that by not describing the cultural and social context which belongs to the history of another state (Moldova), Mihai Iovănel has in some sense con-

firmed what literary critics and historians by now accept as a self-evident fact: that literature from Moldova written in the Romanian language is implicitly Romanian literature. In addition, it is also worth mentioning that Iovănel, undoubtedly responding to the growing assertiveness for inclusiveness and minority rights, has opened his *History* to other criteria; he has directed attention on the one hand to genre literature, and also to literature that describes cultural, sexual and other minorities.

Czech and Slovak works on the history of Romanian literature

Until the division of Czechoslovakia in 1993, Czech and Slovak Romanian studies had developed in parallel, with two collaborating centers of research and teaching in Prague and Bratislava. I will now consider two works from these sources which are of different genres; I will speak of them together, because I observe a certain common ground in the conceptions they both have of literature from Moldova.

In 2001, *Slovník rumunských spisovatelů* (Dictionary of Romanian writers) appeared as part of a series of dictionaries of writers issued by the Czech publisher Libri. Its production was coordinated by the Prague-based scholar of Romanian studies Libuše Valentová, with the participation of three other authors: the Czech Jiří Našinec and two from Moldova, Vitalie Ciobanu and Vasile Gârnet. In a brief note on the back of the dustjacket we read: "Included for the first time are writers from the one-time Romanian province of Bessarabia (today's Republic of Moldova), growing from the same linguistic and cultural base" (Valentová et al. 2001, dustjacket). The note alludes to a previous such dictionary from the totalitarian period, *Slovník spisovatelů: Rumunsko* (Kavková et al. 1984), which comprehensively avoided Moldavia, its culture and literature, having regard to the geopolitical situation of that time. The new *Dictionary*, like the previous one, opens with a synthesizing literary-historical "Introductory study". The new one, however, includes a separate chapter on "Písemnictví v Moldavské republice – nedílná součást písemnictví rumunského" (Writing from the Republic of Moldova – an inseparable part of Romanian writing) by the Moldovan writer, critic and civic activist Vitalie Ciobanu. It is already clear from the chapter's title that the author, as a leading representative of the ideology of Romanianism, regards literature from Moldova written in Romanian as indisputably part of Romanian literature. Despite "the manufacture of Soviet Moldavian" (27) literature in the period from 1944 to 1989, that is, literature isolated and difficult of access for Romanian culture, nonetheless writers from this period are included by Ciobanu in his chapter and by the entire collective in the *Dictionary* generally. (Overall, entries on writers from Moldova represent something over 10 percent, and when we take into account the year of publication of this dictionary, naturally most of these writers were active during the period of existence of the Moldavian SSR.) The final decade of the 20th century, overlapping with the 1980s, which were somewhat freer in the soviet Moldova than the previous totalitarian decades, comprises entries on those who contributed with their literary work to "Moldavian-Romanian synchronization" (31). The advance made in this *Dictionary* for the Czech and Slovak public is undeniable: inclusion of the Romanian literature from Moldova, apart from being a political gesture, also expressed an awareness of the ongoing integration

of Romanian and Moldovan culture, and in particular literature. However, Romanian literature originating in Bessarabia before 1944 remained in its entirety outside of the *Dictionary* (this is true of the introductory study as well as the entries). Hence the question is not raised of the mutual permeation, the common elements, of Romanian and Moldovan literary history from the times before 1812 and after it, down to the year 1944.

Dejiny rumunskej literatúry: literárne dianie v kultúrnom priestore (History of Romanian literature: Literary activity in a cultural space) – appeared in Slovakia in 2017 (Vajdová, Páleníková, and Kenderessy). Though finding an instructive example in the concept of the Czech *Dictionary*, ultimately the Slovak work was conceived differently and more broadly. On the initiative of Libuša Vajdová, a chapter devoted to Romanian literature in Moldova was included in the Slovak *History*. Literature from Moldova is also treated in its own right, separately from Romanian literature. It begins in 1812, passes through the essential phases of the socio-political organization of the given territory, and describes its cultural and literary achievements. An emphasis on socio-cultural contextualization characterizes this *History* as a whole, including the sections devoted to Moldovan culture, and distinguishes it from Manolescu's *Critical history* and from Iovănel's *History* also. This contextual emphasis was essential for a work originating in a different cultural context and designed (by the language used, namely Slovak) for a public from a different cultural sphere. Occasionally, uncomprehending questions have been posed from the Romanian academic milieu: is it necessary to write an "allochthonous" history of Romanian literature in another culture, when Romanian culture already has a multitude of "autochthonous" literary-historical narratives? To this Vajdová responded, when the Slovak *History* was still at the planning stage: "A history of literature, created in an original context, is comprehensible mainly only in the context where it was produced. Romanian readers regard most of the realia as self-evident, many historical events are well-known to them, and essentially they identify with that image of themselves which their own discourses of identity (histories of literature among them) have created. But none of this is true for a reader from another context, who often cannot make head or tail of phenomena which at home are thought blindly obvious. A history of Romanian culture, if it is produced in a milieu outside of Romanian culture, is obliged to tackle such 'obvious' questions as these" (2017, 21).

Furthermore, the Slovak *History*, like the Moldovan *O istorie deschisă a literaturii române din Basarabia* (Open history of Romanian literature from Bessarabia; Cimpoi 1997), makes Romanian literature problematic and to some extent deprives it of national "uniqueness" and linguistic uniformity, thematizing precisely what is often its multicultural character. Indeed, with such mutable borders as we find in the history of the space as a whole, and the orientation of particular territories and their higher social and intellectual strata to various centers of culture (Constantinople, Kyiv, Budapest, Vienna, later Paris and Rome), a monolithic character of culture is scarcely imaginable. The Slovak *History* thus comprehensively acknowledges cultural overlaps, which are frequently overlooked by writers of the older periods in deference to the national idea. Cases in point are Dimitrie Cantemir and Costache Negruzzi,

and many others besides: the authors explicitly point out that these were writers active in Romanian culture, but who came from the Moldavian cultural milieu.

Apart from this, in the Slovak *History* there is one other essential dimension, though it is closely connected with cultural contextualization, and also with transculturality. Many phenomena from Romanian culture and literature are related to or compared with phenomena from the authors' own culture. This is not simply a matter of translations from Romanian literature, which during socialism, for example, arrived in the Slovak context in two forms: direct translations from Romanian in the case of Romanian literature, and translations mediated through Russian in the case of "Moldavian Soviet literature" (453–454; Șleahțițchi 2019, 531).

CONCLUSION

As I have tried to show, using the example of Romanian literature from Moldova, histories of Romanian literature from Romania published after the year 2000 receive and address the literature of another culture, though written in the same language, variously: from almost total non-inclusion, through (multicultural) integration, to a (transcultural) non-contextualized and non-problematized, but still highly selective inclusion, or inclusion as a result of importation from another culture. The reasons for these approaches on the one hand have to do with differing authorial concepts in writing literary-historical works (aesthetic-axiological approach – national-patriotic (politicizing) approach – socio-cultural (sociologizing) approach). They are also, however, influenced by the prevailing social and political systems in which the culture to be described and its literature are found. Romanian literature in Moldova in the period of state socialism was in the clasp of the cultural policy and ideology of Moldovanism; it was produced in the "Moldovan language", in heavily censored contact with, or in isolation from, Romanian literature, and one can call it "Moldovan Soviet literature" (Șleahțițchi 2019, 531). Assigning it to literary-historical narratives requires a differentiated socio-cultural contextualization. However, literary history, especially that dealing with post-1989 literature, is able to address literary works written in Romanian and distributed or published in Romania, without the need for any elaborate socio-political contextualizing apparatus.

The history of Romanian literature, such as presented in the works reviewed here, is still the history of literature written in the "national" language. Creating minor exceptions are the Church-Slavonic rudiments and the exile literature which Romanian literary historiography has adopted (if it is not too harsh to say this) not only from inclusive but also from interested motives: on the one hand they extend its tradition, on the other hand they raise its value and extend its scope, or make it global. One still has to wait for a history of Romanian literature which would take in not only literature written in the "national" language but also literature from Romania in Hungarian, German, Slovak, and other languages, or indeed not only "canonical" literature but also more marginal genres of literature (there is, for example, a history of Romanian science-fiction literature; Opriță 2013), literature of other cultures and sub-cultures. Partial attempts, admittedly, do already exist (in token of many, I will mention for example the questions surrounding the mode of writing the history of Hungarian liter-

ature in Romanian; Vincze 2018). A transcultural perspective in writing the history of literature may serve not just as an instrument for comparison or coping with the “insufficiencies” and limits of one culture (translations being the best example) but also as an expression of intercultural acquaintance, understanding, and in the final analysis respect for the diversity of cultures, whether on the personal or “national” level.

Translated by John Minahane

NOTES

- ¹ For this state formation I also use the received names Moldova or Bessarabia. Since the text will refer only few times to Western Moldova, which is currently a region of Romania, I will distinguish this by using the word “Moldavia” (see also Buckmaster et al. 2022; <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Moldova>).
- ² Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Slovak and Czech are by John Minahane.
- ³ I deliberately do not write about “Romanian culture”, because its constitution, via nation-building and the integrative work involved in forming the Romanian Kingdom from two Danubian principalities (Wallachia [Țara românească] and Moldavia), came about after the annexation of the eastern part of the Moldavian principality by Tsarist Russia in 1812. This annexed part received the name of Bessarabia; administratively it gradually had the statute of an oblast and a gubernia; after a brief interwar period and a four-year interlude during World War II as part of Romania, it became a component of the Soviet Union; as the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic it survived until 1991, when it declared independence as the Republic of Moldova.
- ⁴ According to one of the ideologists, the regional secretary of the party in MASSR I. Badejev, “in the fight for emancipation, even dialect can take on an enormous importance” (Țicu 2018, 202).
- ⁵ As a member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, Romania refused to take part in the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and therefore the Soviet leadership viewed it with suspicion. Furthermore, from the 1970s Nicolae Ceaușescu began to pursue a policy of nationalist communism, which deviated notably from the requirements of socialist internationalism.
- ⁶ The Gagauz are a Turkic Christian ethnic group that Tsarist Russia resettled from Bulgaria to southern Bessarabia after its annexation in 1812 to the territories of the banished tribes of the Nogai Tatars.
- ⁷ The governing agrarians and communists, using Article 13 of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, in 1994 replaced Romanian with Moldovan. However, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova in 2013 decided that the Declaration of Independence in the Constitution had precedence over what was enacted in Article 13, and hence the language of administration is Romanian.
- ⁸ Here, I assume that the author is referring to “patriotism” or the national ideas associated with Romanianism promoted through literature and criticism.
- ⁹ Worthy of note is the above-mentioned work by the literary critic and historian Mihai Cimpoi *O istorie deschisă a literaturii române din Basarabia* [An Open History of Romanian Literature from Bessarabia] from 1996, which, although it is written with boundless patriotic and national feeling, paradoxically also opens up the question of a parallel Romanian literature outside the borders of Romania. Cimpoi acknowledges and thematizes the transcultural character of several “nationally canonical” elements of Romanian literature, something that has been considered problematic in histories orientated to one “national” culture. Either the works at issue were written in other languages in the Moldavian principality on the territory of present-day Romania (medieval Church Slavonic sources, chronicles), or their authors came from Romanian minorities strongly connected to surrounding cultures (for example, the late Romantic poet Mihai Eminescu, regarded as a “national bard”, wrote his first poems in the town of Chernivtsi, which was in Bukovina, hence at that time in Austria), or were produced entirely outside the Romanian milieu, even in other languages, but they described the Romanian culture (for example, the works of Dimitrie Cantemir, Moldavian prince and later adviser to Peter the Great).

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History of Romanian literature. Moldova. Transculturality. Nicolae Manolescu.
Dumitru Micu. Mihai Iovănel.

The Romanian literary-historical reception of literature written in the Romanian language from the Republic of Moldova is an indicator of (trans)cultural tendencies, but it also expresses the ideological and political attitudes of its authors. This is because it is the literature of a culture that historically has been part of different cultural and power spheres: the Moldavian princely (from the Middle Ages to 1812), the Russian tsarist (1812–1920), the “Greater Romanian” (1920–1940, 1941–1944), the Soviet (1944–1991), and finally the autonomous Moldovan. In the present study, using the examples of three Romanian and two foreign (Slovak and Czech) literary-historical narratives on Romanian literature, I attempt to show how their authors approached the question of the inclusion/non-inclusion of literature, written in Romanian, from Moldova (as well as Moldavia), and to describe the mechanisms behind the formulation of these attitudes and their changes.

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The transcultural levels of minority literary history writing: Hungarian literature in Slovakia

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Michal Hvorecký, a contemporary Slovak prose writer, was asked by the Slovak online literary magazine *Platforma* (plav.sk) what he considered to be the best prose work of Slovak literature in the last thirty years. He named the book *Samuel Borkopf: Mojim priateľom z predtrianonskej krčmy* (Samuel Borkopf: to my friends from a pre-Trianon pub) by Alfonz Talamon. The provocative and boundary-breaking edge of the statement is certainly only clear to those who know Alfonz Talamon's literary place and literary embeddedness and are familiar with his work and works. Alfonz Talamon was a Hungarian writer in Slovakia who wrote all of his novels and short stories in the Hungarian language. The first edition of the book mentioned by Hvorecký was published in Hungarian in 1998, after the author's early death, by the publisher Kalligram in Bratislava (Talamon 1998). The Slovak-language edition of 2001, which Hvorecký refers to, was translated by Renata Deáková, and was also published in Bratislava by Kalligram, three years after the Hungarian-language first edition (Talamon 2001). Hvorecký did not mention the translator's name, and the average Slovak reader of the survey probably does not know that the original language of Alfonz Talamon's novel is Hungarian.

The provocative gesture of the Slovak writer can be interpreted in its entirety if we ask the question whether we could imagine a Slovak translation of a Hungarian-language novel by a Hungarian writer living in Hungary as “the best prose work in the Slovak literature in the last thirty years”? Or a Slovak translation of a novel written in English by an American writer? All without providing the translator's name? ...

In the following, I will try to answer the question of why such a question is relevant, validating the theoretical basis of transculturalism, and how the issues concerning minority literature are related to transcultural research.

HUNGARIAN LITERATURE IN SLOVAKIA AS AN UNSTABLE PLACE AND PROVOCATION

The above statement is provocative in at least three respects: with respect to Slovak literature, because a book originally written in Hungarian is placed in the position of “the best Slovak prose work of the last thirty years”, with respect to Hungar-

I first raised this concept at the conference “Transculturalism and Bilingualism” which was held in Nitra, Slovakia on September 17–18, 2019 (Németh 2019).

ian literature, because a work written in Hungarian is “appropriated” or colonized by being presented as a “Slovak literary work”, and with respect to Hungarian literature in Slovakia, because the brief statement does not make it possible to reflect on the complexity of the position of minority literature. But what exactly is meant by the term “Hungarian literature in Slovakia” and what kind of “complexity” are we talking about?

The term “Hungarian literature in Slovakia”, applied to a certain group of literary texts by literary history, is not as clearly defined as we might think. What does the concept of Hungarian literature in Slovakia mean in the first place? The starting point of the concept itself cannot be precisely set either, because the origin of Hungarian literature in Slovakia could be assigned to two different dates. One of them is 1918, the proclamation of the Czechoslovak Republic when, at the end of World War I, historical Hungary, which had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, disintegrated and more than one million Hungarians, including writers, artists and scientists, found themselves in the territory of Czechoslovakia, which claimed the northern territories of historical Hungary. The second valid date is 1920, the Treaty of Trianon, which officially defined the borders of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, among others.

Thus, Hungarian literature in Slovakia is the literature of Hungarians living in Czechoslovakia and later, Slovakia. Immediately after 1918, however, the term “Hungarian literature in Slovakia” was not yet in use. In the period between the two world wars, it was mainly called *Hungarian literature in Szlovenszkó* (szlovenszkói magyar irodalom); after 1945, *Hungarian literature in Czechoslovakia*; and in some cases, *Hungarian literature in the Highlands* [Southern Slovakia] (Hangácsi 2017, 37–42). The term *Hungarian literature in Czecho/slovakia* have also been used.

Although we undertook an easy definition above, according to which Hungarian literature in Slovakia is the literature of Hungarians living in Slovakia, it is not entirely clear which authors are referred to and what texts fall within the scope of the term, i.e. what corpus we are talking about. Is it the literature written by Hungarians in Slovakia, that is, by *authors of Hungarian nationality born in Slovakia*? Or is it the *Hungarian-language literature of Hungarian authors living in Slovakia*? Is *every work written in Hungarian whose author lives in Slovakia* part of Hungarian literature in Slovakia? May perhaps the works of *Hungarian-identity authors written in Slovak (or Czech, English, German, etc.)* also be included here? It is another question to what extent authors who have moved from Slovakia and no longer live there are part of Hungarian literature in Slovakia.

There have been various answers to the question of the corpus. Not only authors born and living in Slovakia are recognized by the public and literary criticism as Hungarian writers in Slovakia (such as Árpád Tőzsér, Anikó Polgár or Zoltán Csehy), but also authors born in Hungary and Romania (Transylvania) who have been living in Slovakia for many years, such as Péter H. Nagy and Attila F. Balázs. Some authors born in Slovakia but living abroad (in Hungary, Turkey, Mexico, etc.) are evidently part of Hungarian literature in Slovakia (such as József R. Juhász, Marianna Gyurász, Hajnal Csilla Nagy). Others, however, are not considered Hungar-

ian authors in Slovakia. One of them is Gábor Kálmán, of Slovak origin but living in Hungary, whose novel *Nova* (2011) is set in a Slovak environment. Another such author is Éva Bánki, living in Hungary, whose Hungarian ancestors had been exiled from Slovakia to Hungary after World War II, and whose novel *Esőváros* (Rain city, 2004) is set in the Csallóköz–Dunaszerdahely/Žitný ostrov–Dunajská Streda region and is built on Hungarian history and identity in Slovakia. Up to this day, the Hungarian literary public in Slovakia has not treated the two dominant figures of contemporary Slovak literature as part of Hungarian literature in Slovakia, either: Péter Macsovszky and Mila Haugová, who both write in two languages, Slovak and Hungarian. Both of these authors have published volumes of Hungarian-language poetry with Kalligram. But we can also mention similar, unclear cases from earlier eras – the most obvious one being Sándor Márai from Košice who, on the basis of his biography, can be part of Hungarian literature in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the West at the same time. What is more, applying the logic of the transculturalism of recent years, the works of Ilma Rakusa, a Hungarian native speaker born in Rimavská Sobota, living in Trieste and then in Zurich and writing in German, can be discussed within the context of Hungarian literature in Slovakia.

The situation is further colored by the fact that, as a result of national borders, which also define literary culture, becoming more permeable after 2000, the volumes of several important authors of contemporary Hungarian literature, not from Slovakia, were also published by Kalligram (e.g. Endre Kukorelly, Szilárd Borbély, Imre Bartók), and a large number of authors not born in Slovakia also publish in contemporary Slovak Hungarian literary magazines (*Irodalmi Szemle*, *Kalligram*, *Opus*, *Szörös Kő*). At some level, these authors seem to be connected to the context of Hungarian literature in Slovakia, and they explicitly participate in its processes with their works.

These questions are also raised in the case of other Hungarian literature across national borders. For example, Imre József Balázs refers to the differences in historicity and individual terminologies when he claims that the concept of Hungarian literature in Transylvania, resp. Romania has “different meanings” in the case of different eras and authors (2015, 9). Similarly, his statement that “Transylvanianness” or “Yugoslavianness” “can be grasped not so much in the writing, but rather in the reading” ought to be given further thought (12). Here we can also mention Melinda Szarvas’s concept of “cultural gravity”, which emphasizes the independence of minority Hungarian literatures (2018, 20), using the concept of the “force of attraction” (25). Perhaps the practical applicability of this concept is echoed by Imre József Balázs’s statement that he regards all the works of authors who moved from Transylvania to Hungary as “Transylvanian” (2015, 19).

Similarly, there are no unified, closed, universal answers to the questions of what can be considered (national) minority literature and what position it occupies in the system of national literatures. Consequently, the position of minority literatures is unstable and varied. Swedish literature in Finland is evidently part of the history of Finnish literature (Laitinen 1981), and appears through such terms as “Finland-Swedish literary history” (Malmio 2012, 72), “Finland-Swedish literature” (74) and “Swedish-speaking Finnish authors” (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2012, 140). In a Cen-

tral European context, it would certainly be an unusual approach to define Hungarian literature in Slovakia as a part of Slovak literature, or to place Slovak Hungarian authors and literary works in Slovak literary history. A cautious attempt to do so was made in the 21st century Slovak literary history (Passia and Taranenková 2014, 69), in which novels by “Hungarian authors living in Slovakia”, notably those by Lajos Grendel and Péter Hunčík that were translated into Slovak, were also mentioned in the subchapter entitled “Regionalism and localism”. Of course, this is still a far cry from Hungarian literature in Slovakia as a whole becoming a part of Slovak literary history.

An interesting addition to the “minority” issue is another perspective from another literature: when Ander Izagirre, who was awarded the Ryszard Kapuściński Prize in Poland in 2022, was asked whether the prize was given to a Spanish or a Basque writer, he answered that despite living in Spain (and even having written his award-winning novel *Potosí* in Spanish), he considers himself a Basque writer because he is of that “identity”. In other words, in this case, it is the role of identity, not of the language or the state, that becomes decisive (Szot 2022, 3).

Hungarian literary studies and literary history writing mark the position of Hungarian literature created in Slovakia (and elsewhere outside of Hungary, written in Hungarian) in the most varied way. In volume VI of *A magyar irodalom története* (The history of Hungarian literature), Hungarian literature written outside the borders of Hungary was “lifted” or “exiled” to separate chapters – depending on one’s perspective (Szabolcsi 1966). The highly influential literary history written by Ernő Kulcsár Szabó does not deal with Hungarian literature outside of Hungary in separate chapters, but presents it as part of the same literary historical narrative, briefly mentioning in passing that the author is a Hungarian living across the border (Kulcsár Szabó 1994). A similar approach is followed in the Hungarian literary history written by Tibor Gintli and Gábor Schein (2007). The academic literary history, edited by Tibor Gintli, employs different strategies within the same volume. In the chapters dealing with the period between 1890 and 1945, written by Gintli (2010, 641–852), there is not a single reference to transborder Hungarian literatures, whereas the chapter after 1945, written by Gábor Schein, even though admittedly fragmentary, does make mention of the different contexts of “transborder” Hungarian literature several times (2010, 853–1062). A peculiar work is *A magyar irodalom története: 1920-tól napjainkig* (The histories of Hungarian literature: From 1920 to the present; Szegedy-Maszák 2007), the last volume of which discusses the history of Hungarian literature from 1920 onwards. Here, Hungarian literature in Yugoslavia and in the West is given a separate chapter, but there is not a word about the existence of Hungarian literature in Slovakia, and not even a single Hungarian author from Slovakia is mentioned in this monumental literary history. The procedure employed by Slovak-Hungarian Lajos Grendel in his book *A modern magyar irodalom története: Magyar líra és epika a 20. században* (The history of modern Hungarian literature: Hungarian lyrics and epics in the 20th century; 2010) is also worth mentioning: he deals with the Hungarian literary context in Slovakia, in the case of some Hungarian authors in Slovakia, where he regards it as important, but not in the case of others.

The unstable, “wobbly” position which Hungarian literature in Slovakia occupies in Hungarian literary histories ranges from inclusion (unity) to exclusion (authenticity). Here, as one of the specific “genres” of Hungarian literary studies in Slovakia, we must also mention *the history of Hungarian literature in Slovakia*, the subject of which is Hungarian literature in Slovakia (Turczel 1967; Szeberényi 2000, 2001; H. Nagy 2007; Fónod 2014, 2015). These Hungarian literary histories in Slovakia once again provide the opportunity for extremely diverse approaches: first and foremost, how they perceive the relationship to Hungarian literature, i.e. whether they discuss Hungarian literature in Slovakia as a special, authentic narration or as part of the whole of Hungarian literature. Secondly, as a minor theoretical challenge, the question of the relationship with Slovak literature also appears.

Hungarian literature in Slovakia as a problem of literary theory and literary history has also appeared in Slovak literary studies. The most elaborate and comprehensive study is certainly Dionýz Ďurišin’s “A nemzetiségi irodalom mint irodalomtörténeti egység” (National minority literature as a literary-historical unit), published in 1985, which outlines five contexts of national minority literature: 1) the developmental process of Hungarian literature in Czechoslovakia; 2) Hungarian literature in Czechoslovakia and Czech and Slovak literature; 3) Hungarian literature in Czechoslovakia and the literature of the Hungarian People’s Republic; 4) Hungarian literature in Czechoslovakia and other minority Hungarian literatures; 5) Hungarian literature in Czechoslovakia and other national literatures (111). According to Ďurišin, “Since the national minority literature is an integral part of the literature of the given state community, its relationship with other national literatures is determined by the relations of the literary complex of which it is a full-fledged creator”. From this, he logically concludes: “It follows from the goals and function of Hungarian minority literature, which is unified with Czechoslovak literature, that it cannot be an integral part of Hungarian national literature” (117).

Hungarian and Slovak Hungarian literary histories represent a diametrically different principle from Ďurišin’s theory: based on the concept of a common language and literary tradition, Hungarian literature in Slovakia is treated as part of Hungarian literature. The vast majority of Hungarian literary histories take it for granted that all fiction written in Hungarian is part of Hungarian literature, and Transylvanian, Slovak, Yugoslav-Vojvodinian, Transcarpathian, and Western authors do appear in these literary histories. However, some overviews would nevertheless forget about Hungarian literature created outside of Hungary, others do not mention the fact of it being “across the border”, and a third strategy treats authors from across the border in an independent context separated from the literature created in Hungary.

The Slovak literary histories (Kasáč and Bagin 1986; Šmatlák 1988; Sedlák 2009), based on the concept of a common language like the Hungarian ones, in fact give up on Hungarian literature in Slovakia, they do not reflect on its existence (with one or two exceptions). One such exception is Peter Macsovszky, whose volumes of Hungarian poetry are listed in the literary history edited by Imrich Sedlák (2009, 634), and another, even better one is Lajos Grendel, who wrote in Hungarian and became a part of Slovak literature quite naturally, due to the fact that his colleague Karol

Wlachovský translated his volumes into Slovak right from the start (Zajac 2019, 6–8). Judit Görözdi dedicated an entire paper to the Grendel phenomenon, in which she notes that

Grendel is the only Hungarian author from Slovakia who is acknowledged within Slovak literature. Works by other Slovak Hungarian authors have been published in Slovak, too [...], they also received critical attention, some of them are respected by the profession (e.g. Árpád Tözsér), but none of them have been received in a way that would have made their work an integral part of Slovak literature. (Görözdi 2016, 309)

Can Michal Hvorecký's quoted statement be interpreted from that perspective? Thanks to Renata Deáková's translation, was Alfonz Talamon able to become a part of Slovak literature like Lajos Grendel? Was his novel's translation into Slovak able to influence contemporary Slovak literature? Or is perhaps another level of knowledge and experience incorporated into this gesture? Is it the experience and knowledge of the transculturalism of the past decades?

TRANSCULTURALISM AND MINORITY LITERATURE

In the literary theory of the past decade, a well-defined base has been formed by the theories related to the interpretation of literary texts along the phenomena of nomadism, heterotopia, hybridity, xenism, extraterritoriality, translocality, diaspora, bi- and multilingualism, globalism, deterritorialization, etc. These concepts touch upon the issue of what is traditionally called minority literature and (e)migrant literature, upon the experience of multilingualism and language change, and are connected to the interpretation of foreignness and otherness, which have provided a significant research area for imagology and comparative studies for decades. In the second half of the 20th century, the concepts listed above became reinterpretable from the point of view of post-colonialism, supplemented, among other things, by the 20th century elements of the theories of power.

In the wake of social, political, ideological and literary changes, the theoretical space of transnational and transcultural literary studies provides a diverse perspective on the text space, in connection with which Ingeborg Kongslien (2006) mentions the terms "immigrant literature", "immigrant writer", "emigrant literature", "world literature", "transnational literature", "migrant literature", as well as "multicultural literature", whereas Hajnalka Nagy, starting out from the terminological debates of Austrian and German literary studies, lists the concepts "foreign literature", "guest-worker literature", "migration" or "migrant literature", as well as the "literature of foreignness" (Nagy 2012, 10). We can proceed to add to this terminological diversity the terms "minority" and "transborder literature", which are used often and in many different ways.

Of course, the application of the transnational and transcultural perspective as an interpretive framework can only be maintained in the case of bringing these concepts into play and at the same time putting them under a deletion mark, if it approaches its subject from the need to overcome homogeneous national viewpoints. Or, as Tímea Jablonczay puts it in relation to transnational literary studies – referring to Adele Parker and Stephanie Young's *Transnationalism and Resistance: Experience and Experiment in Women's Writing*:

The intention to transcend the nation takes place in the space created by globalization, thanks to which, in this perspective, the reflection on the geographical, historical, symbolic, metaphorical meaning and dispersion of meaning of the concept of the nation, not only of the border, prevails. Transnational models address the new globalization by re-interpreting the effects of deterritorialization, the new modes of travel and communication, and themes of national borders and citizenship. Dealing with the nature of borders is also a central issue because movement, going beyond borders also cover subjects, texts, and books in a literary theoretical approach. Crossing therefore not only means crossing a geopolitical border, but also crossing the boundaries between body and language, writer and reader, reader and text, life and writing, so the research has a stimulating effect on the deterritorialization and defamiliarization of border-related concepts. (2015, 138)

In contemporary world literature, literary works that derive their meaning from the transnational and transcultural energies of the global world form a well-defined group. The trope of this world is movement, more specifically the movement of individuals and information, resulting in a peculiar neo-nomadism. The new coziness and new intimacy are created in the movement, the new home is the experience and art of transference. This new home, which is actually homelessness in the traditional, modernist sense, is the new coziness of global postmodernism, the ideal world of globalized welfare capitalism, the idealistic world of information enjoyment, cultural hybridity and linguistic diversity, whose utopia and myth are based on the logic that the hierarchy is shaken, doubted and liquidated precisely by the movement.

But can the vocabulary of transculturalism be used when interpreting the culture and literature of national and ethnic minorities? Is minority literature always in the state of transculturalism? Or do different, often conflicting strategies come into play in the case of minority and ethnic literatures as well? So, in fact, should we resist the generalizing and homogenizing tendencies of transcultural interpretation, and take a textually well-arguable standpoint in the case of texts belonging to minority literature? Dieter Heimböckel and Manfred Weinberg, citing an earlier study of theirs (2014, 138), draw attention to the fact that subgroups of society such as ethnic, linguistic and/or subcultural minorities are not automatically intercultural (the German authors do not differentiate between inter- and transculturalism). It would be a simplistic generalization, for example, to automatically perceive the literature of national minorities as intercultural – we would make the same error of homogenization as previous literary histories did. It is more worthwhile to ask the question how the “potential of interculturality” appears in an author’s oeuvre or a specific text (Heimböckel and Weinberg 2019, 96).

LEVELS OF TRANSCULTURALISM AND BILINGUALISM IN THE HUNGARIAN LITERATURE IN SLOVAKIA

The appearance and use of the concept of transculturalism in both international and Hungarian literary criticism heralded the articulation of new points of view that placed the relations between cultures and the discussion of literary phenomena within a changed framework (Welsch 1999; Dagnino 2015; Thomka 2018; Németh and Roguska 2018a, 2018b). While multiculturalism and interculturalism based their ideas on the concept of homogenous cultures living side by side and having dialogues

with each other, in the age of globalization and digitalization, transculturalism already doubted the possibility of the homogeneity of any culture. Wolfgang Welsch puts it as follows: by the end of the 20th century, such circumstances were created that go beyond the borders of national cultures, and all cultures can be interpreted from the point of view of mixing, permeation, hybridity and networking (1999).

In the following, I will attempt to outline a concept that demonstrates the interpretation of transcultural phenomena through the transcultural relations of a national minority literature, specifically the Hungarian literature in Slovakia. The conceptual outline also contains elements which can be formalized and further elaborated and are able to provide an opportunity to map and typify the transcultural relations of literature in general. Of course, this method does not promise the illusion of objectivity either, but rather provides clues for the application of a model that can be further detailed in the case of other minority literatures, but it is also conceivable that the transcultural positions and levels discussed here do not exist or are empty spaces in the circumstances of a literature written in another language.

INTERPRETATION MODELS IN HUNGARIAN LITERATURE IN SLOVAKIA BEFORE TRANSCULTURALISM

Right from its beginning, that is 1920, Hungarian literature in Slovakia has always responded to its own status as a national minority literature, and already between the two world wars it created concepts such as the role of a bridge, the *vox humana*, or the concept of minority genius, which placed between Slovak and Hungarian culture and literature (Csehy 2011, 127–166; 2012, 249–288). A completely different point of view, however, treated the Hungarian literatures across the border as part of the unified Hungarian literature, drawing attention to the same traditional formulas and to the fact that the language of the Hungarian literatures in Hungary and across the borders is the same. The representatives of this view often refer to the fact that, for example in the case of Hungarian literature in Slovakia, the majority of the published literary works do not deal with Hungarian identity issues in Slovakia, do not thematize the phenomena of Slovak-Hungarian coexistence, and do not ponder the uniqueness of minority existence (Németh 2005, 24–34).

These two apparently incompatible views pose the following questions: Does a national minority literature presume a multicultural/intercultural/transcultural relationship to start with? Why and how could minority literary theories come about with the general demand that all Hungarian literary works in Slovakia relate to the fate and identity issues of the Hungarians in Slovakia or are related to Hungarian and Slovak literature, if this does not correspond to reality? Why don't all Hungarian authors in Slovakia incorporate the Slovak context into their texts? How can the contradictions of the previous three points be resolved? How can the theory of transculturalism and transnational literary studies contribute to the discussion of the above phenomena?

Standing on a theoretical basis predating transculturalism, an answer to the above questions can be given that does not solve the problems, but mobilizes a new, different kind of dichotomy (Németh 2013, 16–24). According to this, the works of Hungarian literature in Slovakia display two types of strategies.

In a certain corpus of literature, Slovak-Hungarian relations are not only present but also function as an important meaning-making poetics. In these texts, the peculiarities of Slovakian and Slovak Hungarian reality appear; some texts incorporate Slovak words, phrases and sentences, others are built from elements of specific Slovak Hungarian language use, use Slovakisms; some texts present issues of Hungarian identity in Slovakia, and the dialogue with Slovak literature and Slovak literary influence can also be felt.

Other texts do not feature phenomena referring to Slovak-Hungarian dialogue on either the level of reference or that of poetics. The Slovak Hungarian literary works belonging to this group are in dialogue with the textual universe of Hungarian or world literature, and only the knowledge of the author's name confirms that he or she is a Hungarian from Slovakia.

THE LEVELS AND CONNECTIONS OF TRANSCULTURAL RELATIONS

In order to show the complexity of transcultural relations, I am going to use a model developed by Lucien Dällenbach by interpreting the works of the Konstanz theorists (Hans Robert Jauss, Wolfgang Iser). The Swiss literary scholar modelled the "general topography in which [...] the functioning of the literary fact is created in four interacting stages" (Dällenbach 1980, 130). The literary scholar later adds to this statement that "ideally, a consistent theory of reception should set as its goal the matching of all the relations in question, as well as the analysis of all the problems that these relations raise together or separately" and he identifies the following four stages:

- the subject and process of production;
- the text;
- the subject and process of reception;
- the historical context, unconscious (131).

The operation of Dällenbach's stages, taking transcultural conditions into account, opens up possibilities for the interpreter of the text, thanks to which we can see the levels of transculturalism, the positions of the author, the text, and the reader in a much more complex way, and the situation and functioning of minority literatures also find themselves in a new interpretative framework. It also helps to resolve the contradictions and paradoxes raised above, as well as to answer the mentioned questions, because it offers a much more reflective approach than the previous points of view.

THE TRANSCULTURAL POSITION OF THE AUTHOR

The principle of the author, or literary theories focusing on the author, were mainly widespread in the 19th century. It was primarily in the center of the reading recommendations of positivism and intellectual history, but while positivism concentrated on the author's biography and the endless collection of "positive" facts, historicism sought the zeitgeist embodied in the (genius) artist. From the point of view of transcultural literary interpretation, author-centered ideas play an extremely important

role, since it is usually in the wake of the events of the author's biography (change of country or language, nomadism, etc.) that he or she is regarded as and transformed into a transcultural author. However, in the case of (national) minority literatures, additional possibilities, definitions and positions can be considered:

1) From a biographical point of view, all Hungarian authors in Slovakia are transcultural from the start, since they live on the borderland of two languages and two cultures, and the Slovak-Hungarian contact phenomena are decisive, from the world of everyday life through educational institutions to the linguistic landscape (visual use of language).

2) Under Slovak conditions, it represents a different level of transcultural relations if a Hungarian-speaking author was educated in the Slovak language. A different level of education can result in language change of in his/her becoming a bilingual author (as, for example, in the case of Péter Macsovszky).

3) In addition to the Slovak-Hungarian identities, Jewish, Roma or other identities, or their acknowledgement, also entails a different level of transculturalism in the case of each author (Piroska Szenes, Alfonz Talamon).

4) The term internal migration can be used in the case of authors who, after leaving the areas inhabited by ethnic Hungarians, move to a part of Slovakia that is dominated by the Slovak language. (The best examples of this are Slovak Hungarian authors living in Bratislava: Gyula Duba, Árpád Tőzsér, Gábor Farnbauer, and Zoltán Szalay.)

5) Authors moving to or living in Hungary for a considerable period (e.g. László Tóth, Imre Varga, and Attila Mizser).

6) Authors writing in Hungarian moving to Slovakia (Péter H. Nagy from Hungary and Attila Balázs F. from Romania).

7) Authors of migrant or cosmo-nomadic identity, some of whom have lived abroad for years and others are experiencing global mobility. (Slovakian-born József Czákó lives in Germany, Mária Mórocz in Australia; Péter Macsovszky has lived in the Netherlands, Brazil and Australia; József R. Juhász has spent months as a performer in China, India and Mexico; Zoltán Csehy has spent some time in Italy, Germany and Switzerland as a literary grant holder and speaker at conferences; Pál Száz has spent time in Sarajevo, Paris and Prague, etc. Ilma Rakusa, born in Rimavská Sobota and having Hungarian as her mother tongue but not writing in Hungarian, also belongs to this group.)

8) Authors having partly Hungarian origin, who are only acknowledged by contemporary Slovak literature (such as Veronika Šikulová, Agda Bavi Pain [Jozef Gaál], Uršula Kovalyk).

The question posed earlier can be answered from the continuation of literary approaches concentrating on the authorial biography: namely, why were some minority literary theories created which aimed to be comprehensive but were in fact untenable, such as the claim that the texts of Hungarian literature in Slovakia can be interpreted from the perspective of Hungarian-Slovak realia? The answer is that the literary historians who considered the Hungarian literature in Slovakia to be the intersection of two sets of Slovak and Hungarian literature actually approached fiction from a positivist foundation, i.e. from the perspective of so-called positive facts such

as political and social data and the author's biography, and from this point of view, all Hungarian authors in Slovakia, more specifically the Hungarian literature in Slovakia as a whole, do seem to be multicultural/intercultural/transcultural. However, this concept does not provide a relevant answer to how the abovementioned relations appear at the level of the text.

THE TRANSCULTURAL POSITION OF THE TEXT

Literary theoretical trends that focus on the text and are generally language-centered exclude the author from the interpretation, and are even interested in erasing the position of the author and in solutions that announce the "death of the author". The tendencies that can be classified here, which are mainly characteristic of the 20th century, such as Russian formalism, structuralism and deconstruction, generally perceived the interpretation of literature as the enaction of rhetorical operations. The transcultural characteristics of the text often cannot be fully related to the author's biography. The migrant experience does not necessarily appear in the texts of the migrant author and vice versa: a non-migrant author can also relate a migrant story. The situation is similar in the case of Hungarian literature in Slovakia: not all Hungarian authors in Slovakia reflect the experience of the Hungarian world in Slovakia in their texts, and non-Slovakian Hungarian authors can also work with Slovak Hungarian realia (see the mentioned novel by Éva Bánki).

The possible positions of transculturalism in the Hungarian texts in Slovakia are the following:

1) The text reflects on transcultural relations, and even uses them as its original poetics. However, it is not the transcultural relations between Slovaks and Hungarians or Hungarians in Slovakia and in Hungary that are integrated into the texts, but the dialogue with world literature. In Anikó Polgár's volume of poetry entitled *Régész nő körömcipőben* (Female archaeologist in high heels; 2009), ancient Greek mythology is copied to the stages of a modern birth story; Zoltán Csehy's book *Hecatelegium* (2006) is built on the possibilities of poetic transfer of Latinity, just like several poems by Árpád Tőzsér (e.g. "Euphorbos' monologue") also build transcultural relations with classical literature. In this case, too, intertextuality is the generator of transcultural relations.

2) The background of the reflected transcultural relations is the Slovak-Hungarian coexistence and the Hungarian experience and identity in Slovakia: for example, the poetics of transience and hybridity in Péter Hunčík's *Határeset* (Borderline case; 2008) and György Norbert's *Klára* (2004), which go beyond the spontaneous dialogue relations of interculturalism and the segregational logic of multiculturalism.

3) The operation of bilingualism and the use of the Hungarian language in Slovakia as poetics. One possibility for this is that the texts in Slovak are integrated into the literary work, and the other is that the texts include expressions typical of the Hungarian language use in Slovakia. These two phenomena are often inseparable and follow from each other, see Norbert György's novel *Klára* or Árpád Tőzsér's poem "A kódváltás pragmatikája" (The pragmatics of code switching).

4) Rokko Juhász's volume of poetry *Cumi-cumi* (2016) uses the broadest transcultural potentials of the vehicle of languages as poetics, in which the "author", indicated on the title page, did not actually write a single poem, but instead compiled a dictionary of Hungarian words that make sense in other languages. Thus, poems in Hungarian and hybrid languages were created at the same time, and authors who did not know Hungarian also became capable of writing poems in Hungarian, while meaning evaded the authorial competence.

5) The influence of the foreign language environment on the creative practice and text can result in silence, or the complete absence of the text, its zero position. Some Hungarian authors from Slovakia who left their native country have become silent in the foreign language environment, which can also be interpreted from the perspective of the transcultural experience of language loss and writing loss (in the case of József Czákó and Mária Mórocz). This also includes stopping writing in Hungarian and changing their language. (A typical case is Gábor Farnbauer, who as a writer in Bratislava gradually gave up writing in Hungarian and switched to Slovak.)

6) Language change, bilingualism, multilingualism. The potential for transculturalism on the level of the text can be just as diverse/varied as on the level of the biography (Ilma Rakusa, Mila Haugová, Péter Macsovszky).

7) Slovak-Hungarian relations, the textual presentation of Hungarian identity issues in Slovakia in Slovak-language literature (e.g. Ladislav Ballek's *Ipolyság/Šahy*-novels, Daniela Kapitáňová's *Komárom/Komárno*-novel, written under the pen-name Samko Tále, Pavol Rankov Peter's *Somorja/Šamorín*-novel, written under the pen-name Pečonka, Peter Balko's *Lošonc*-novel, Peter Macsovszky's *Tantalópolis*, Mila Haugová's diary novels).

On the level of the text, Hungarian literature in Slovakia cannot be considered transcultural in general, since it is largely composed of texts that rely on the Hungarian literary tradition and do not build connections with Slovak literature. The whole of Hungarian literature in Slovakia cannot be reduced to the representation of Hungarian identity in Slovakia, nor can it be reduced to a single theme, to the representation of Slovak-Hungarian literary and linguistic relations. The text of the Hungarian author from Slovakia places itself on the terrain of literature in the broadest sense, just like the text of any other author, be they French, German, English, Indian, Chinese, etc. and, as from a bricolage language material, it freely chooses and builds tradition and poetics from the most diverse genres, writing styles, stylistic elements, as original poetics. As such, it is indeed transcultural, in its global sense, and cannot be narrowed down to following Slovak-Hungarian relations.

THE TRANSCULTURAL POSITION OF THE READER

The assumption of the literary theories that emphasize the central role of the reader is that the text in itself, without a reader, is dead, and all texts exist only in readings, without an "original" meaning. On the basis of this assumption, 20th century hermeneutics and reception aesthetics consider the examination of the historicity of the text to be just as essential as following the directions and changes of reception and the stages of canonization and/or marginalization. When reading the texts of Hungarian literature in Slovakia, cer-

tain paradoxes arise due to not recognizing the positions of the reader. One such example is that the literary histories that regard Hungarian literature in Slovakia as the intersection of Slovak and Hungarian literatures only read the texts from the point of view of homogeneous Hungarian literary traditions during the actual interpretation. The application of multicultural/intercultural/transcultural readings is only possible from a theoretical basis which is not shared by many texts of Hungarian literary studies in Slovakia.

The possible levels of transculturalism within the Hungarian reception in Slovakia are the following:

1) Transculturalism is a blind spot in the reception of transcultural-bilingual authors, when neither the critic nor his/her text knows that the work of a bilingual author is being examined, but automatically places both the author and the text under discussion within the homogenous national paradigm.

2) The deliberate application of transcultural readings is exactly the opposite of this. Gabriella Petres Csizmadia (2018a, 165) wrote a study on Mila Haugová, but she also presented an exemplary transcultural reading of the works of Pál Száz, who elevated the Hungarian dialect of western Slovakia to the status of a literary language (2018b, 85–94). Anikó N. Tóth successfully uses the opportunities of transculturalism in connection with the works of Gábor Kálmán and György Norbert (2017, 33–44; 2018, 73–84). In a large-scale study, Zoltán Csehy reads the texts of Péter Hunčík, István Bettés and others in a similar way (2016, 166–190).

3) The reflected examination of how the texts written in different languages by authors who switch languages read each other should include how the Hungarian texts of bilingual authors preserve the imprint of Slovak literature, and how their texts in Slovak rely on the Hungarian literary tradition.

4) It is necessary to examine and criticize the phenomenon that imposed the transcultural relationship on the entirety of Hungarian literature in Slovakia, which homogenizes Hungarian literature in Slovakia as a specific literature bridging Slovak and Hungarian literatures, and makes readings based on linguistic facts impossible.

All this does not mean that transculturalism as a theoretical basis can be treated as a homogeneous quality that solves the theoretical questions of Hungarian literature in Slovakia once and for all. Rather, it is necessary to realize that several conflicting opinions appear within transculturalism, and also, that the concept of transculturalism itself is historical, meaning that our attempts at interpretation do not promise any kind of objective or closed outcome. The reader's position entails the realization of the logic of temporality; in fact, it means the reflection of the historical aspect, namely the understanding that the concept and meaning of Hungarian literature in Slovakia has also changed historically; it has meant different things in different historical periods, and it has given rise to opposing and conflicting concepts in the present. All of this leads to the question of context.

THE TRANSCULTURAL POSITION OF THE CONTEXT

The literary theoretical trends that emphasized contextual phenomena during the interpretation of the literary work appeared in the second half of the 20th century. They convincingly showed that the text is never created by a neutral author and

reader, but the latter two are always created by personal and historical contexts; writer and reader always have a specific identity. The context of the work is therefore provided by issues relating to specific cultural, historical and identity situations, and the writer and the reader always create or read the text along clearly defined interests and contexts. Therefore, interpretation largely depends on the writer or reader's gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, race or ethnicity. The contextualization of different identity possibilities called forth the achievements of postmodern feminist literary studies, ecocriticism, new historicism, ethical criticism, postmodern cultural anthropology and transnational literary studies.

The possible levels of transculturalism in the context of Hungarian literature in Slovakia are the following:

1) The historical contexts of the concept of Hungarian literature in Slovakia, starting with the concepts of Hungarian literature in Szlovenszko between the two world wars, through the official expectations of the years of the communist dictatorship, touching upon the aspects of Slovak literary studies, continuing with the concepts after 1989. The open or latent debates of individual concepts also constitute an important part of diachronic and synchronic studies.

2) Re-reading the texts of Hungarian literature in Slovakia through the concepts, vocabulary and viewpoints of transnational literary studies and transculturalism.

3) The examination of the context of the so-called unified Hungarian literature in Hungarian literary history works in Slovakia and Hungary.

4) The context of the so-called transborder Hungarian literatures, the comparative study of Transylvanian (Romanian), Vojvodinian (Yugoslavian), Transcarpathian, Western, etc. Hungarian literary concepts from the perspective of Hungarian literature in Slovakia.

5) Examining minority narratives such as womanhood, gay identity, otherness, foreignness, etc. in the context of transculturalism.

6) The interpretation of the Hungarian experience in Slovakia placed in the processes of migration and globalization (see Nóra Fábián *A nagyváros meséi* [Stories from the city], 2002). The most detailed and broadest examination of the interpretative and intertextual network of world literary relations.

7) Examination of the internal transcultural relations of Hungarian literature in Slovakia, as the different Hungarian-inhabited regions in Slovakia are characterized by a completely different mentality and language use. An excellent opportunity for this type of interpretation can be, for example, the study of the so-called Ipolyság novels, since this small town on the border, the former seat of Hont County, plays a cardinal role in many works of Slovak, Slovak Hungarian and world literature, for example in Ladislav Ballek's trilogy, Lajos Grendel's *New Hont* trilogy, Péter Hunčík's novel *Határeset*, Pablo Urbányi's novel in Spanish *El zoológico de Dios*, etc.

The consistent application of the principle of context results in a beneficial "deconstruction" of the concept of Hungarian literature in Slovakia, as a result of which its potential meanings multiply, and the concept itself can acquire new, unexpected dimensions that it has not and could not acquire to date. The activation of the most

diverse theoretical bases and the inclusion of the concept in individual identity stories is one of the important strategies of transculturalism itself, since it is built on the possibilities of continuous movement, dynamics, transgression and the crossing of borders.

CONCLUSION

As we can see, the search for the truth behind Michal Hvorecký's small remark has brought to the surface a whole unknown world with its internal contradictions and unstable, provocative situation. At the same time, this approach opens up a view of an extremely wide world and cracks the homogenous notions of literature. Contexts can be built around Hungarian authors in Slovakia and Hungarian literature in Slovakia can be placed in a wide variety of contexts. In this way, the oeuvre of Alfonz Talamon, Anikó Polgár, Lajos Grendel, Anikó N. Tóth, Árpád Tőzsér and others could be a part not only of Slovak Hungarian and Hungarian literature, but also of the Slovak context of literature. (This would also apply to Pál Závada and Éva Bánki from Hungary). As a result, these authors would not lose, but win: a new context means new recommendations and possibilities of interpretation, as well as a new kind of canonization that can be linked to other registers.

The transcultural perspective is also able to dislodge minority literature from its fixed and fixated position, as it erases the dogma that language is the only criterion for classification in literary history. "The mother tongue is not a clear criterion", wrote Sándor Hites in relation to Western Hungarian literature (2007, 702), and we can add to this, overriding Dionýz Ďurišin's opinion, that the national border is not a clear criterion, either. Based on the experience of transculturalism, we must pay attention to the complex interplay of language, country, culture and identity – to the network-like connection of possibilities. Thus, Slovak Hungarian literary history that makes use of the possibilities of transculturalism must necessarily refer to Strato, Catullus, Martial, Ovid, Pasolini and contemporary American gay poetry, because Slovak Hungarian Zoltán Csehy has translated volumes of poetry from them, and Slovak Hungarian Anikó Polgár has written a monograph about the Hungarian translations of Catullus and Ovid. Hungarian literature in Slovakia also should refer to such Slovak-language authors as Pavel Vilikovský, Veronika Šikulová, Svetlana Žuchová, Pavol Rankov, and Uršuľa Kovalyk (as well as the Slovak-Swiss Irena Brežná who writes in German), whose works have been translated into Hungarian by the Slovak Hungarians Erika Vályi Horváth, Tünde Mészáros, Tímea Péntes, and Ildikó Hizsnyai Tóth. Furthermore, it should refer to Agatha Christie, whose novels have been interpreted by Slovak Hungarian Krisztián Benyovszky; as well as those Indonesian poets who were asked by Rokko Juhász to write poetry with the help of Indonesian words, and so on. A transcultural Hungarian literary history in Slovakia cannot be confined to a context reduced by the country and the language, but it constantly creates new contexts and places itself in them, continuously building local and global networks.

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The transcultural levels of minority literary history writing: Hungarian literature in Slovakia

Transculturalism. Literary history. Minor literature. Hungarian literature in Slovakia.
Transcultural relations.

This paper deals with the concept of minor literature, which is understood as a kind of provocation towards literary history, and investigates the unstable, “wobbly” position of Hungarian literature in Slovakia occupied in Hungarian and Slovak literary histories. The methodological basis of the article is formed by the phenomenon of transculturalism, which is capable of activating and generating meanings on various spaces, levels and layers of literature. The study discusses different levels of transculturalism through some authors and texts in Slovak Hungarian literature, along with transcultural authorial identity, transcultural meaning-making machinery of texts, transcultural practices of the social context, and transcultural directions and gaps in reception. The purpose of the paper is to classify some transcultural phenomena and to unravel their conceptual and interpretative levels.

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The possibilities of a transcultural narrative in 19th-century Central Europe: Ján Chalupka and Gusztáv Szontagh

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In the first third of the 19th century, it was an increasingly apparent fact that the long-term model of a Hungarian scholar – as a member of the uniform Hungarian political nation irrespective of ethnic origin – had become untenable. There were linguistically varied identities beneath the universal and neutral (in particular) Latinizing Hungarian mask which outwardly united the members of this group by concealing their differences. The advent of national discourses, which considered the group's language to be its unifying principle, led to the disintegration of this model and to its replacement by the idea of the interdependent nature of the notions of nation, culture and language. Hence, parallel models of culture came to be created within the multinational, plurilingual Kingdom of Hungary. Herder's idea of the significance of a national language (the so-called *Nationalsprache*) cementing the nation and its culture together was the joint point of departure of these models.

In a multilingual country with Latin as the official language up until that date, its replacement by the Hungarian language caused concerns in the non-Hungarian part of the population. The preference for Hungarian and the marginalization of the languages of all the other ethnic groups within the Kingdom of Hungary encountered resistance among Slovak scholars and writers who were already claiming Slovak as their national tongue. Disputes over the forms of new collective identities subsequently became a concomitant feature of the Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak discourse about the languages and cultures of the Kingdom of Hungary. They led to the fact that the canons of these literatures, each representing linguistic groups (nations) within the Kingdom of Hungary, were also constituted in such a way as to deliberately refuse to reflect the context in its entirety and complexity. The idea of a national culture (and literature) as an island, as an internally homogeneous and clearly delimited space resulted in systems, constructed on the basis of isolated views, having a dialogue in the sense of confronting their own with the alien (Welsch 2010).

The relationship between the Hungarian and Slovak literary canons, created in the 19th century as a reaction to the need for documenting independence in this area, is a typical example of the attitude which we may denote as consistently distinc-

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tive (with an emphasis on otherness/alienation and the implicitly conflicting nature of their national discourses). Both canons minimize or eliminate those phenomena that deviate from their monolingual concept. This attitude provides fertile ground for drawing conclusions that may be one-sided, incomplete, or distorted. This also applies to the processes, phenomena and authors of the period of Romanticism. One typical example of the consequences of not reflecting the multilingual/plurilingual context is the work of Ján Chalupka (1791–1871), an early playwright in Slovak and Hungarian and author of a single novel in German. The prevailing critical approach ranks him among the authors of (Enlightenment) Classicism (Mikula 1999, 185–187; Pišút 1984, 225–228; Šmatlák 1999, 41–43), but even when there is a shift, and his work is included in the pre-Romantic period, there is no deeper analysis of it, stressing that the works of the author in question are “explicitly tendentious” (Sedlák et al. 2009, 327–329).

The Slovak canon also interprets Chalupka’s texts in other languages (Hungarian and German) in a way that is in compliance with the idea of a homogeneous whole. The author’s Hungarian comedy (*A vén szerelmes*, 1835) is identified with its author’s translation into Slovak (*Starúš plesnivec*, 1837) and is received through the optics of the Slovak version. Analogically, Chalupka’s German novel *Bendeguz* (1841) treating Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak themes is evaluated on the basis of its Slovak translation.

Opening the space for interpretation, reflecting the multilingualism and malleability of a new, extended context, can also contribute to a deeper understanding of Ján Chalupka’s position in his time. A context change affects all the elements of this new space and, in this case, it alters the appreciation of not only the Slovak Chalupka, but (mirrored) also the Hungarian Gusztáv Szontagh (1793–1858), who is known in Hungarian culture specifically as the leading representative of the so-called philosophy of harmony (Mészáros 2013, 109–116) and as a literary critic. This re-formatting of the space, the interconnection of the other-language elements, renders visible their significance as mutually interdependent, strong nodal points in the network of discourse on the forms of the newly emerging (national, linguistic) identities of the Kingdom of Hungary in the 1830s and 1840s.

THE TRANSCULTURAL MODEL AS AN ESCAPE FROM THE COMMUNICATION TRAP (SET BY THE NATIONAL CANONS)

Even if, according to Wolfgang Welsch, transculturalism is a concept for the 21st century, the starting points for the model, which reckons with the internally hybrid and (externally) networked character of (so-called) national cultures (2010, 41), also seem to be appropriate for grasping the mutually influencing (multilingual) diversity of Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak literary (cultural) relations in the 19th century. In this context – also in view of some common features of the Central European space – the questions and hypotheses posed and formulated by current research on Czech-German/German-Czech cultural and literary relations focusing on the specifics of writing transcultural literary history are also of interest (see Petr-bok et al. 2019).

From Anders Pettersson's perspective, the transcultural approach is admittedly primarily a tool for altering the discourse on world literature; however, he also emphasizes the need to reach beyond the borders of national literatures, particularly the significance of focusing attention on smaller segments (2008, 472–473). Hence, probes and case studies form the basis made up of fragments of the built heterogeneous and hybrid model which alters traditional ideas of the history of literature.

The prerequisites for a national history of literature (a national canon) include an agreement on a common, unifying view (looking from the inside out), on a single unifying language, and also agreement on those elements that are essential to the self-image of the group. By accepting the norm established on these foundations, the individual joins the group, accepts its traditions and its interpretation of history (Assmann 2001; Krekovičová 2005). However, what is implied within this is the marginalization of anything that would undermine the validity of those agreements.

The objective of the study is to highlight the benefits of extending the reception horizon (Smyčka 2019, 242), the significance of also accepting another, not solely the view of the text and its context preferred by the national canon (by the history of national literature). The alterations brought about by reflecting the heterogeneous, plurilingual nature of the Hungarian space in the first half of the 19th century are traced through the example of texts by the multilingual author Ján Chalupka, as they have been incorporated into the Slovak canon.

JÁN CHALUPKA AS A MULTILINGUAL AUTHOR: PELESKE AND KOCÚRKOVO

Ján Chalupka is a typical phenomenon of 19th-century literature. Living in a multilingual environment, he wrote in Hungarian, German and Slovak, also translating between these languages. Despite the fact that his dominant characteristic is his connection with the Slovak-speaking cultural environment, his authorial identity has been subject to change.

The question of situationally-bound identity (Heimböckel and Weinberg 2019, 87) comes to the fore especially in the analysis of his two foreign-language comedies, where the text of the Slovak version *Starúš plesnivec* (An old codger, 1837) is considered as the author's own translation of his Hungarian play *A vén szerelmes, vagy a torházi négy vőlegény* (An old lover, or the four grooms from Torháza, 1835) which he published under the name Chalupka János. József Bayer (1851–1919) also lists Chalupka as the author of the Hungarian play in the two-volume work on the history of Hungarian drama (1897, II, 104); however, he only refers to him as one of the many epigones of Károly Kisfaludy (1788–1830), the Hungarian “father” of the comedy genre. In this (Hungarian) context, Chalupka is just the author of a single play, which is irrelevant in terms of its significance. In compliance with the then-valid national narrative of Hungarian literature, Bayer applies a homogenizing approach excluding (linguistic) foreignness, which does not allow him to see Chalupka in a broader, more relevant context.

In the canon of Slovak literature, according to which Chalupka is the father of Slovak comedy, the question of authorial identities entering into the dialogue, raised by the existence of the Hungarian play, is traditionally bypassed. Zoltán Rampák vaguely defines the relationship of these two texts in the preface to the 1954 two-volume edition of Chalupka's works, at a time of renewed interest in them. In his understanding, the Hungarian play functions rather as a kind of "first edition" of *Starúš plesnivec* (1954, 500).

Several (widely used) histories of Slovak literature judge the Slovak play in this sense, i.e. as the only fully-fledged text from the perspective of the Slovak canon (Pišút 1960, 187; Šmatlák 1999, 42). However, the theater scholar Zdenka Pašuthová, compiler of the first volume of Chalupka's *Súborné dramatické dielo* (Complete dramatic works, 2012), pointed out that considering these two plays to be identical is a false assumption and that they are actually "two different treatments of the same idea with the same storyline in which Chalupka showed his ability to precisely direct his play and his excellent knowledge of the target audience – either Hungarian or Slovak" (2012, 18).

To write for a Hungarian and, subsequently, for a Slovak audience meant that the author had to adapt to two worlds that were growing apart. The individual and group identities that were also to be (optimally) manifested by the choice of language in public, represented a topical, conflict-generating issue of the given period, and sharp exchanges of opinion also appeared in the pages of literary magazines.

The two texts in Hungarian and Slovak of this comedy about a widower who yearns for a young woman immediately after his wife passes away have an identical storyline (plot and resolution), the same types of characters appear in both, yet despite this, they unmistakably show the dilemma of the time, which in these plays is hidden in a seemingly minor detail, the different naming of the play's location. While the Hungarian play takes place in Peleske, the Slovak version takes place in Kocúrkovo (literally "Tomcat-ville", usually considered the equivalent of Gotham in English).

By locating the play in Kocúrkovo, the author refers to a place already known to the Slovak audiences from his first play from 1830 entitled *Kocaurkowo, anebo: Gen aby chom w hanbě nezůstali* (Kocúrkovo, or we're no worse than they) which became the determining point for evaluation of the significance of his works in the national canon. Kocúrkovo acts as a code, not only within the author's Slovak-language works, but survives to this day in Slovak literature, culture and public awareness as a metaphor used to express provincial narrow-mindedness, senselessness of action and backwardness (Vojtech 2020, 255).

However, in Chalupka's case, this code has a more complex meaning than the form in which it is commonly used today. Kocúrkovo does not only represent pusillanimity or narrow-mindedness but also marks a challenge to accept (language) diversity which is considered to be the natural feature of this space. In the Slovak play it is expressed by the acceptance of the Hungarian groom Miška, who as if in return, agrees to his Slovak bride subsequently using her mother tongue and being proud of her origin (Chalupka 1837, 47–48).

A comparison of the Hungarian and Slovak texts clearly shows that acceptance of the above-mentioned diversity as a natural feature of the space is more marked in the Slovak text. The Hungarian version of 1835 still features an attitude that is largely condescending towards expressions of diversity.

However, the choice of the location of the Hungarian play signals possible problems in meeting the projected expectations. Peleske gained recognition as a concept in Hungarian-language culture in the first half of the 19th century thanks to József Gvadányi's (1725–1801) popular rhymed story published in 1790 under the name *Egy falusi nótáriusnak budai utazása* (The village notary's journey to Buda). The village notary from Peleske sets off to Buda to lecture everyone on how to be a real Hungarian (how to dress, dance, what to eat). Although his overzealousness, naivety and entrenched conservatism made one smile, in the interpretation of Hungarian Romantic authors, the notary from Peleske became the prototype of a simple Hungarian, albeit one dedicated to his nation, in 19th-century literature.¹ As the residence of the notary is an inherent attribute of the character, the significance of Peleske was also emphasized as a site of "Hungarianhood" which is unadulterated, clear but still looking to the past.

However, the town of Kocúrkovo in *Starúš plesnivec* is already built on the opposition between the past, in the person of the old widower Pomazal and his friends, and the future (change), personified by the young lovers, the Hungarian Miška and the Slovak Sabínka.²

THE GERMAN TRANSLATION OF THE SUPPOSEDLY HUNGARIAN PLAY AND THE ANONYMOUS AUTHOR: BENDEGUCZ, GYULA KOLOMPOS UND PISTA KURTAFORINT

Chalupka was one of those authors who, for a variety of reasons, repeatedly favored anonymity. From his works mentioned so far, only his Hungarian comedy was published in 1835 under his name, and he presented himself as a Slovak author with his real name for the first time in 1836 in the collection *Hronka* as the creator of the prosaic *Kocúrkovo*. However, not even after admitting his authorship of this work did the use of his real name become standard practice. He even published his most comprehensive and most voluminous work, the German novel *Bendegucz, Gyula Kolompos und Pista Kurtaforint* (Bendeguz, Gyula Kolompos and Pišta Kurtaforint; 1841) anonymously; with this work he won the recognition of part of the younger generation of Slovak authors (Ján Kalinčiak, Viliam Pauliny-Tóth) and, at the same time, provoked an indignant reaction from a part of the Hungarian-affiliated audience (Emőd 1841, 656). Unlike the comedies *A vén szerelmes* and *Starúš plesnivec*, in the case of the novel, the author is just teasing the reader when he states on the title page that the audience is getting the German translation of the Hungarian work: "Dichtung und Wahrheit von P.P.-s. Aus dem Magyarischen übersetzt von L. von Sch."³ (1841, s.p.). Although the title page projects a supposed author who wrote the work in Hungarian and a translator who translated it into German, the preface makes a strong statement against the idea that the author of the novel could be a "native" Hungarian (vi-vii). It is also clear from the text that Slovak is the personally-preferred language of the main characters, and the dialogues about language relate particularly to the new

relationship between Hungarian and Slovak, wherein German is just an intermediary of this dialogue. Hence, the language of the novel is not key to the determination of the author's identity. However, the layering (or rather networking) of languages also has a profound effect on the context, which is relevant for its reception. It is essential that in a monolingual context the interpretation/reception – by the very nature of the concept – is always incomplete. It defies homogenizing trends, which is also one of the possible reasons why, from the late 19th century up to the 1950s, almost no attention was paid to the novel. Ján Ďurovič (1894–1955), the author of the publication *Tvorba Jána a Sama Chalupku* (The works of Ján and Samo Chalupka) published in 1947, even refers to the text as a surprisingly voluminous play (54).

The first complete Slovak translation of the novel was published only in 1953, and its interpretation was subsequently limited mainly to a critique of the main characters Hungarian-assimilationist tendencies which was based on and supported by the national narrative. The translator himself, Ján Vladimír Ormis, indicated that the novel was written for a broader, linguistically non-uniform audience: “for the domestic, Hungarian readership” and “the author assumes knowledge of Hungarian and Slovak languages” (1953, 229). However, even Ormis waives the possibility of interpretation in a broader, multilingual context and focuses on the above-mentioned, internally relevant elements.

The novel was written in a period of the gradual adoption of laws on the Hungarian language (1830–1844) and due to these laws, the use of Latin, which was neutral from the perspective of identity issues, was gradually replaced by the Hungarian language as the new language of the public sphere. The author of the novel deemed István Széchenyi (1791–1860), the most significant pro-reform politician of the first half of the 19th century in the Kingdom of Hungary, to be the key figure of the ongoing discourse. His pronouncements are quoted and paraphrased in the text, in particular from his work *Világ* (Light) of 1831 (whereby Chalupka returned to Széchenyi repeatedly, for example also in the polemical writing *Ungarische Wirren und Zerwürfnisse* of 1842). Despite the critique of the prevailing attitude of Hungarians to all the other languages and cultures in the Kingdom of Hungary, the attitude to Széchenyi and his reform proposals is mostly positive in the novel's text; however, there is also a certain detached view which manifests itself in the occasional ironic comments of the novel's narrator. In particular, the description of the horse races (Széchenyi established their tradition in the Kingdom of Hungary) is couched in the spirit of undisguised irony, where the narrator comes to the conclusion that not just the jockeys but also the horses should be purely Hungarian (Chalupka 1841, 169). Among further references in the text to the reform politician are the announcement of the protagonists' travelling successes in *Jelenkor* (a magazine established by Széchenyi), their invitation to the Casino in Budapest (Széchenyi initiated its establishment) and their presence at the meeting of the Academy (which came into existence thanks to Széchenyi's financial donation). The use of “Budapest” in the text of the novel indicates the constant presence of the perspective of which István Széchenyi is the bearer. This was Széchenyi's suggestion which appeared in his work *Világ* but became reality only in 1873 by the law on the naming of the city.

BENDEGUCZ/BENDEGUZ AND HIS DIALOGUE WITH HUNGARIAN ROMANTICISM

Despite the fact that the Hungarian work declared as the source text on the novel's title page appears to be fictitious, in addition to the already mentioned *Világ* we may register other Hungarian texts (mainly from the late 1820s) which are referenced in Chalupka's novel. The mottos of the individual chapters refer, for example, to authors and works included in the literary handbook and textbook of the theoretician and aesthete of the emerging Hungarian Romanticism, Franz (Ferenc) Toldy (1805–1875), entitled *Handbuch der ungrischen Poesie* (1828, Handbook of Hungarian/Ugrian poetry), which applied the selective principle to the choice on the basis of language affiliation (in favor of Hungarian). Also in 1828, Gusztáv Szontagh's one-act comedy *Egy scena Bábelüinkből* (A scene from Babel) was published in the literary appendix to the periodical *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* (Educational proceedings), whose editor at that time was Mihály Vörösmarty (1800–1855), an important playwright and poet of Hungarian Romanticism. Published under the author's assumed name Tuskó Simplicius, it was also performed at the Hungarian National Theatre in Pest (Bayer 1897, I, 392). Despite its brevity, Szontagh's play became a certain pre-text for Chalupka's novel.

Szontagh was an author who came from Upper Hungary (the Gemer region), with his family's languages being German and Slovak. The choice of the Hungarian language, and thereby also an exclusive Hungarian identity, was his own personal decision which markedly influenced his attitudes. At the turn of the 1830s and 1840s, in magazine polemics on the topic of languages and identities in the Kingdom of Hungary, Szontagh was one of the most uncompromising supporters of Hungarian as the determining/sole language of the public sphere. Specifically, he had a sharp exchange of ideas with the important scholar and ethnographer Ján Čaplovič (1780–1847), which also had an impact on the change in Čaplovič's public image. Through the prism of this dispute, Čaplovič (known in Hungarian transcription as Csaplovics) who was considered a Hungarian Slovak (Csaplovics 1841a, 22), became the “spokesman for Slovaks” for the Hungarian-affiliated audience, fighting against windmills and jeopardizing the unity of the nation (Szontagh 1841, 205).

In his comedy, Szontagh presents the opinions and polemics known from magazines of the period, which also infiltrate the content of Chalupka's novel. This highlights Szontagh's importance as the nodal point in the Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak discourse of that time about emerging changes in the use of languages and the related new problems of the variability of identities.

In his memoirs *Emlékezések életemből* (Memories from my life), Szontagh justifies the emergence of the one-act play with the need to react to the linguistic Babel dominating his native Gemer region (Szontagh 2017, 111). From today's perspective, the text of his play is interesting not only with regard to its reflection of the processes of the emergence of national stereotypes, but also thanks to their hyperbolizing in Chalupka's novel, which immediately questions their universal validity.

Szontagh's *Egy scena Bábelünkéből* highlights the need for a language "purification", the bearer of which is the Hungarian Pelsőczy from the Gemer region, devoted to the nation and declaring this devotion with his clothes, who thus triumphs over the other suitors of the hopeful bride Klára – old-fashioned Roturides, who over-uses Latin expressions even in his civilian speeches, and his former school-mate, the Slovak Vimazal. The latter enters the dialogues of the Hungarian play with the Slovak sentence "Pre Pána Jána, Brat Mikuláš!" (For God's sake, brother Nicholas!; Tuskó [Szontagh] 1828, 74). The Slovak language is present throughout their dialogue and its function is to mainly highlight the alienated attitudes of the generations over the issue of the use of language. At the same time, it creates a simplifying, stereotypical and conflicting image of the foolishness of Vimazal and people of his kind.

Chalupka's novel responds to Szontagh's stereotypes by making the Gemer region the place where his protagonist, Bendeguz (who was born and lived in the Slovak environment in the Turiec region) learns how to be a "true" Hungarian (Chalupka 1841, 8). However, it is also the place that restricts his horizon in a way that refers directly to Szontagh's character Pelsőczy. The attributes of the "true" Hungarianism are represented in Szontagh's play, for example, by the Gemer region, the Hungarian steppes of Etelköz (the living space of Hungarian tribes prior to their arrival in the Carpathian Basin), the leader of the "Hungarian conquest" Árpád, the God of the Hungarians, the Kingdom of Hungary as the new, Hungarian "Canaan", and quotes from the works of the Hungarian poet, Csokonai. The attributes of "dearth" are present as the Tower of Babylon, Trantaria (Xanadu), potatoes, the tale of the white horse, and the problem of Thucydides's veracity. In Chalupka's ironic exaggeration, they become a tool that also directs attention to the failings in the discourse on nation and language.

The presence of quotes from and references to Csokonai Vitéz Mihály (1773–1805) deserves specific attention. This is not unusual for Szontagh as a Hungarian author, but they also appear in each of the texts of Ján Chalupka mentioned so far, regardless of the language in which these works were published. They are quoted without translation, in the Hungarian original and with an ease of reference which is inherent to a naturally multilingual space. The connection of Chalupka's works with that of the most important poet of Hungarian literary Classicism is in apparent harmony with his place in the Slovak canon, in the history of Slovak literature which predominantly ranks him among the authors of Slovak literary Classicism or Enlightenment. Csokonai, the symbol of the struggle for an autonomous authorial existence is, however, for Chalupka still largely a shared tradition. This is demonstrated also by the interconnectivity of the worlds of Csokonai and Gvadányi in his Hungarian comedy *A vén szerelmes*. The character of the spinster called Dorottya who is vying for the favors of the widower Quoniam from Peleske refers to the main character of Csokonai's comic epos *Dorottya vagyis a dámák diadalma a Fárságon* (Dorottya or the triumph of the ladies at the carnival, 1798). Their dialogue, reminiscing about common experiences from their youth, is only an echo of the past (Chalupka 1835, 47–48).

A DONQUIXOTIADE ACCORDING TO THE LATEST FASHION

The most obvious example of Chalupka's interest in themes that resonated in the broader (linguistically pluralistic) cultural space of his time and were also crucial for the representatives of the first generation of Hungarian Romanticism, is his novel *Bendeguz*, according to its subtitle *Eine Donquixottiade nach der neuesten Mode* (A Donquixotiade according to the latest fashion). From the perspective of the history of Slovak literature, there was no context by which to explain the author's interest in dialogue with Cervantes' work. Hence, commentaries on the work have concurred that the Donquixotiade of the subtitle refers only to the absurdity of the characters' actions, mainly of Bendeguz, a zealous and delirious Magyar who sets out on a journey, accompanied by his friend Gyula and servant Pišta, to find the cradle of the Hungarian language as a knight knighted by the father of the Hungarians, Árpád himself. The interpretation horizon is limited from the above-mentioned perspective, focused on the national awakening and didactic aspect of ridiculing naivety, ignorance, obsession and manipulation, and he anchors the reception of the novel within the bounds of Enlightenment satire.

However, taking into account the broader (also non-linguistic) context, we see that Chalupka's text was written in a period for which Cervantes' novel became one of its reference points. Romanticism in Hungarian literature appears in the early 1820s through the emergence of the almanac *Aurora* (1822–1837). Károly Kisfaludy founded and issued it, inspired mainly by German models, primarily by the Schlegel brothers (the so-called Jena Romanticism) and their magazine *Athenaeum*⁴.

Cervantes' novel (just as, for example, Shakespeare's plays) became a sort of objectification and confirmation of the validity of the ideas of modern, romantic art, and the new German translation of the novel by Ludwig Tieck was a prototype of translation that succeeded in mediating the poetics of the text in the spirit of the original (see Schlegel 1799, 324–327). In the Hungarian-speaking culture of the Kingdom of Hungary in the first half of the 19th century, the question of the need to translate Cervantes from the Spanish original was a strongly resonating theme, as evidenced by the translator's preface of Cervantes's short story *A bőkezű szerető* (The generous lover; Lukács 1843, 5–28). So far, few reflected traces of the presence of interest in Cervantes can be found in this period in the Slovak-speaking sphere, as evidenced by knowledge acquired within the current research into Cervantes in Slovakia (Šišmišová and Palkovičová, 2021).

Chalupka himself studied at the university in Jena in 1816–1817 and it is unlikely that he would have failed to notice the new literary direction. As the history of Slovak literature (up to the 21st century) identified Slovak Romanticism almost exclusively with the advent of Štúr's "Hegelian" school, understood as a monolithic whole (Zajac 2005, 348), those authors who were outside of this framework were considered either as representatives of the preceding Classicism or the subsequent and incipient Realism.

The recent and ongoing processes of reconfiguring the space of Slovak Romanticism have already drawn attention to its internal fragmentation and to the adoption of elements of Schlegelian Romanticism by Slovak writers (Zajac and Schmarcová

2019). Highlighting romantic irony as the key to interpretation also led, among others, to the “declassicization” and the “derealization” of Jonáš Záborský’s works (1812–1876). The elements within the canon were changing, their mutual arrangement was changing, and one of the outcomes was the reaffirmation of Ján Chalupka as an Enlightenment rationalist whose self-affirming irony contrasts with Záborský’s self-refuting irony (Zajac 2005).

Bendeguz’s relationship to Szontagh’s pre-text, the nature of the dialogue of these texts and its context invites an attempt to read Chalupka’s novel even in a romantic key. The ironic distance, the detachment that questions the validity of the images of “authenticity” and “inauthenticity”, highlights the comic and paradoxical heterogeneity, the heteronymity and ambiguity of the novel’s world. At the same time, in the interconnected Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak space of Romanticism, the novel’s subtitle acquires a new, more complex meaning: a Donquixotiade according to the latest fashion.

The author and editor Viliam Pauliny-Tóth (a member of Štúr’s school) also recognized *Bendeguz’s* contribution and sought also to popularize it by publishing several chapters of the novel (in Slovak translation) in 1862 and 1863 in his humorous-fictional magazine *Černoknažník*. Pauliny-Tóth himself was one of the authors in whom we can find a direct reference to Cervantes’s novel in his work *Španielska komédia* (A Spanish comedy), published in *Národné noviny* in 1873–1874 (Palkovičová 2021, 317–320).

Chalupka’s novel is of particular interest from today’s perspective for the extent to which it adopts the specific creative practices of Cervantes, and the way in which it creates (functional) replicas of them. In the interpretations of the first half of the 19th century (before Ivan Turgenev),⁵ Don Quixote is a mad fantasist whose skewed relationship to the world is corrected by his pragmatic accomplice Sancho Panza. Chalupka’s quixotic Bendeguz does not defy the ideas of the period either. However, although this period did not yet favor the idealization of the character of Don Quixote, the fight against windmills was already an iconic gesture.⁶ The Hungarian public also knew Cervantes and among others Čaplovič refers to him in his reaction to Szontagh’s statements when he derisively calls him the windmill-fighting Hungarian Don Quixote (Csaplovics 1841b, 205).

In the light of the themes and vocabulary of public discourse in the first half of the 19th century, the reference to *Don Quixote* can seem like only a fashionable lure to entice readers. Only a detailed analysis of the text of Chalupka’s novel reveals the breadth and depth of its intersections with Cervantes’s text-forming means, and from this perspective *Don Quixote* becomes an unavoidable background for the reception of *Bendeguz*. A closer comparison reveals that from Cervantes Chalupka adopts not only motifs but also characteristic procedures. The multiplicity of the narrator’s voices is one of the most important ones. While Cervantes refers to the Arab chronicler, the historian Cide Hamete Benengeli, as the “second voice”, in Chalupka’s case, the implicit presence of the “second voice” is pointed out by reference to the translator from Hungarian, a certain L. von Sch.⁷ Further parallels are, for example, the adoption of another name and the function of a dream as instruments

of confirmation of the “true” (new, knightly) identity of Don Quixote and Bendeguz, imitation (both follow in the footsteps of their role models), the use of a language that differentiates them from others and also the constant presence of the pragmatic anti-pole of their actions, the armor-bearer Sancho Panza and the servant Pišta (Dušíková 2021).

The relationship/dialogue between the texts of Chalupka’s *Bendeguz*, Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* and Szontagh’s *Egy scena Bábelünkéből*, as well as the relationship between the texts of Chalupka’s Hungarian and Slovak plays *A vén szerelmes* and *Starúš plesnivec*, set in the open, joint sphere of the Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak sphere of Romanticism, raises the question as to whether it is possible to read Ján Chalupka’s texts outside of this sphere.

CONCLUSION

Today Ján Chalupka does not belong among the most frequently discussed authors. In the canon of Slovak literature, he is credited with being the first to naturalize the genre of comedy, but literary history emphasizes the didactic, polemical, and national-defensive character of his work. Gusztáv Szontagh is only an occasional author; however, he is remembered in the history of Hungarian literature as a prepared and argumentatively proficient, educated literary critic who contributed significantly to the development of the novel (Sóter 1965, 536). The dialogue between their texts and the context of this dialogue draws attention to the connection between Chalupka’s works with the Romanticist space of the Schlegelesque type and notes that:

- intersections and interpenetrations of texts and contexts are a characteristic feature of the multilingual cultural-literary sphere of the first half of the 19th century in the Kingdom of Hungary;

- homogenizing, monolingual models of the history of national literatures (literary canons) display deficits when determining the nodal points of multilingual discourses;

- transcultural research has the potential for pointing out not only the inner plurality (hybridity) of these literatures but also the mutual interlinks between their narratives and emphasizing the significance of the external communication networks in which they are incorporated.

At the same time, the trilingual corpus of selected texts by Ján Chalupka reflects the importance of research into situationally-tied identities and the author’s translation as a specific form of intertextuality.

Translated by Ivana Musilová

NOTES

¹ We can mention Sándor Petőfi’s poem *A régi jó Gvadányi* (The good old Gvadányi) of 1844 as an example.

² The confrontation of the old (the past with a limited horizon) and the new (modern, open) world is a typical feature of the discourse between literature and the open space within István Széchenyi’s reform concept aims.

³ The Poetry and Truth from P. P-s. Translated from Hungarian by L. von Sch.

- ⁴ The significance of this influence is also attested by the fact that representatives of Kisfaludy's group (Mihály Vörösmarty, Ferenc Toldy, József Bajza) established their own magazine entitled *Athenaeum* (1837–1843) after his death.
- ⁵ His lecture of 10 January 1860 ("Hamlet and Don Quixote") changed the view of the central character of Cervantes' novel. Don Quixote is not only a lunatic but also a type of individual-idealist who sacrifices himself for others without thinking about the consequences of his deeds or calculating the advantages that he could obtain (Turgenev 1965, 94–95; 1890, 39).
- ⁶ Even Chalupka mentions him in 1834 in an ironic context in an anonymously published German polemic treatise; see Dušíková 2021, 347.
- ⁷ The narrator's commentary inputs sometimes disappear in the Slovak translation (Chalupka 1841, 164 and 184–185; 1953, 133 and 147).

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The possibilities of a transcultural narrative in 19th-century Central Europe: Ján Chalupka and Gusztáv Szontagh

Ján Chalupka. Gusztáv Szontagh. Literary canon. Monolingual perspective.
Multilingual networks.

Simultaneously with the disintegration of the concept of the Hungarian nation (*natio hungarica*), which was considered to be valid up to the 19th century, the process of creating parallel, self-enclosing literary canons that promoted homogeneous monolingualism began in the Kingdom of Hungary. The dialogue of enclosed spaces built on the opposition of “the self” and “the foreign” evokes, in particular, the need to highlight elements of otherness and becomes a source of conflict. Although the term “transculturality” is largely used to describe the culture of the 21st century, it also appears a suitable tool for overcoming some of the language-related barriers to reception (overcoming the limits of the original reception horizon) in the environment of Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak literary/cultural relations of the 19th century. The study (using examples of texts from the Slovak author Ján Chalupka and a one-act play by the Hungarian author Gusztáv Szontagh) explores the intersections and interpenetrations of texts and contexts of the first half of the 19th century, considered as reciprocally “foreign”. Its conclusions draw attention to the fact that the transcultural perspective is of importance in determining the nature of the dialogue/relationship of the national literatures of the Kingdom of Hungary. This makes it possible to uncover contexts and to identify those nodal points of discourses that are invisible in the monolingual, homogeneous spaces of reciprocally isolated national canons.

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RECENZIE / BOOK REVIEWS

ZOLTÁN NÉMETH – MAGDALENA ROGUSKA (eds.): Transzkulturalizmus és bilingvizmus a közép-európai irodalmakban / Transzkulturalizmus a bilingvizmus v literatúrach strednej Európy [Transculturalism and bilingualism in Central European literatures]

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ZOLTÁN NÉMETH – MAGDALENA ROGUSKA (eds.): Transzkulturalizmus és bilingvizmus az irodalomban / Transzkulturalizmus a bilingvizmus v literatúre [Transculturalism and bilingualism in literature]

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ORSOLYA HEGEDŰS – ZOLTÁN NÉMETH – ANIKÓ N. TÓTH – GABRIELLA PETRES CSIZMADIA (eds.): Transzkulturalizmus és bilingvizmus / Transzkulturalizmus a bilingvizmus [Transculturalism and bilingualism]

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Over the past decades, it has become evident that the concept of homogenous cultures and national literatures is a strong abstraction that is easily undermined by the reality of culture and literature, as their existence is one of continuous interaction. Due to these interactions, they change dynamically and create new forms of expressions, which often blur or abolish the boundaries of homogenous culture/literature. Globalization, as well as its attendant process of migration, have intensified this process and, in parallel with it, also brought forth certain phenomena which are not categorizable within the homogenous concept of culture and literature, necessitating new points of view. Using the theoretical basis of multiculturalism, interculturalism and transculturalism, both the hybrid and liminal phenomena have been subjects of research. What are the literary consequences of a multicultural, multilingual existence? What forms of expression and language does it use? What are the characteristics of regional (e.g. minority) literatures which, in comparison with the central homogenous literature, are also influenced by contact literatures/cultures? How can the works of literature which express the experience of a change of language and culture be classified?

The research group of the Institute of Linguistics and Literary Science at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, in an international collaboration, has embarked on an exciting task: the creation of an interpretative and methodological framework for uncovering the characteristics of linguistically and culturally transgressive texts, resting on the theoretical basis of transnationality and bilingualism and drawing from the analyses of (mainly, though not exclusively) Hungarian and Central European literary texts. In addition to buzzwords such as “immigrant writer and literature”, “migrant literature”, “transnational literature”, “nomadism”, “diaspora literature” and “literature of foreignness” etc., the research group also aims at the reinterpretation of certain traditional categories, examining the transnational or transcultural phenomena of minority and transborder literatures. The results of this research have been published in three publications, two in 2018 and the third in 2019.

Employing a pluricentric linguistic approach, the first collection, *Transzkulturalizmus és bilingvizmus a közép-európai irodalmakban / Transzkulturalizmus a bilingvizmus v literatúrach strednej Európy* (Transcultur-

alism and bilingualism in Central European literatures), is focused on the analysis of texts and publications that are situated in a liminal position and bear the fruitful influence of multiple cultures, literatures and languages. On the one hand, it calls attention to periodicals which validated transnational viewpoints in previous eras of literary history (even if they had not used this term to describe their activities). Dorottya Szávai's paper introduces the first periodical of comparative literature, the *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, published in Cluj-Napoca from 1877. István Ladányi discusses the polycentric view of literature and culture in the Novi Sad periodical *Új Symposion* (New symposium; 1965–1992), and taking inspiration from pluricentrism, brings up the concept of polycentric literature. With respect to Hungary, this concept allows space for regional constructs instead of Budapest-centrism, while “it can also be useful for presenting different canons, divided not only by cultural regions, but also by their relationship with traditions, the concepts of cultural identity, the views on the role of literature and arts, and cultural values” (24), which include the different degrees of reception of transcultural impulses. Magdalena Roguska examines the narratives of identity which thematize a culture change. Zoltán Németh, Attila Mizser and Csilla Nagy's articles, as well as the case studies by Anikó N. Tóth, Gabriella Petres Csizmadia, and Gabriella Mádi, aim at a transcultural reinterpretation of transborder Hungarian literatures. The topic of Patrik Šenkár's chapter is transborder Slovak literature.

In the foreword to the second collection, *Transzkulturalizmus és bilingvizmus az irodalomban / Transzkulturalizmu a bilingvizmus v literatúre* (Transculturalism and bilingualism in literature), editors Zoltán Németh and Magdalena Roguska emphasize that the concept of transculturalism helps in approaching and understanding those texts and authors which exist in the space of linguistic and cultural transgressions. As they write: “The bi-

lingual and language-changing authors, the migrant writers or writers living abroad, the writers with a hybrid identity, and the literary works which thematize multilingualism, multiculturalism, and the events of cultural blending and transfer all belong in this category. In many cases, this concerns writers and texts of an unstable position, whose place within the frame of the so-called national literatures is not clear” (6). Zoltán Németh's introduction reviews Wolfgang Welsch's theory of transcultural research, as well as its Canadian and Latin American discourses, in addition to the concepts of Mikhail Epstein and Arianna Dagnino. From these, he draws inspiration for the (practical) question of how the “revolutionary drive of transculturalism” can be applied in the context of Slovak and Hungarian literature, which he answers in the form of a literary-historical, methodological outline. This introduction is followed by a long line of case studies which expand the space of transcultural analyses to the Renaissance (carried out by Zoltán Csehy's analysis), though they mainly focus on selected oeuvres from the 20th century (in the papers by Tímea Jablonczay, Pál Száz, and Roland Orcsik), and contemporary literary works (in the studies by József Keserű, Patrik Šenkár, Györgyi Földes, Kornélia Lomboš, Anikó N. Tóth, Beatrix Visy, Gabriella Petres Csizmadia, Attila Mizser, Csilla Nagy, Magdalena Roguska, Anikó Polgár, and Éva Bányai). The concept of “in-betweenness” becomes a central term, described by Éva Bányai in her article “A hibrid rózsza” (The hybrid rose) as follows: “The space determined by in-betweenness can be interpreted as a culturally defined landscape (Mitchell); the border and liminal land and the discursivity of transit situations and transgressions, which contribute to the creation of in-betweenness, are all fundamental attributes of the transcultural narratives” (234).

The third collection, *Transzkulturalizmus és bilingvizmus / Transzkulturalizmus a bilingvizmus* (Transculturalism and bilingualism), gives an account of the research project's next phase. Magdalena Roguska-Németh

examines the ideological (and politico-historical) background of the concepts of multiculturalism, interculturalism, and transculturalism, and states: "These theoretical frames and questions are no less timely in today's Europe, a continent that, on the one hand, clamors ever louder for cultural independence, while on the other hand, is increasingly cosmopolitan and culturally heterogeneous itself" (18). Zoltán Németh introduces his own concept this time, which applies the aspects and emphases of transculturalism to Hungarian literature in Slovakia. The papers can be sorted into thematic groups: some authors focus on transcultural characteristics in works of certain national (i.e. considered to be homogenous) literatures (Anikó Polgár, Attila Mizser, Ariana Fabiszewska, Csilla Nagy, Gabriella Brutovszky, Magdaléna Hrbáček, Éva Bányai), while others analyze texts connected to bilingualism or language change (Ágnes Strickland-Pajtók, Marcin Grad, Anikó N. Tóth, Jutka Rudaš, Gabriella Petres Csizmadia, István Ladányi, Beatrix Visy, Patrik Šenkár), examine questions of translation (Dmitry A. Yefremov, Olga Maximova), or based on their literary

material, discuss transculturalism as an universal worldview (Alexej Mikulášek), vertically expanding the concept as well (József Keserű, Zoltán Csehý).

The material of the three books is naturally diverse. They cannot be expected to offer a unified, elaborate concept of a transcultural literary analysis and system of categorization (nor do they promise to do so). Their significance consists of focusing on the described phenomena in the works of Central European literatures, aiming to increase sensitivity toward such phenomena, and lifting up such writers and works, usually kept out of the frame of national literary histories, into our field of vision. The research published in these three volumes unquestionably works to loosen the homogenous narrative of national literary histories – primary that of Hungarian literature. Its undeniable result is the expansion of transcultural research to minority literatures.

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MIHAELA P. HARPER – DIMITAR KAMBOUROV (eds.): Bulgarian Literature as World Literature

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The reviewed book is part of the representative Bloomsbury series "Literatures as World Literature" edited by the comparatist and translator Thomas O. Beebee of Pennsylvania State University. Long-awaited and welcomed, the book synthesizes a variety of perspectives of eminent writers, translators and scholars of Bulgarian literature of the 20th and 21st century for the benefit of a world readership. At the same time it offers an informed, concise and impartial overview of the history of this national literature and the Bulgarian literary heritage. The authors endeavor to identify a variety

of key relationships between national, global, local and diasporic categories while also looking closely at the aesthetic and ideological criteria present in contemporary interpretations of the Bulgarian literary tradition in the international literary context. The editors' location outside of Bulgaria enables auto-reflexive perspectives at Bulgarian literature from a spatial and temporal distance. Mihaela P. Harper teaches at Bilkent University in Turkey, while Dimitar Kambourov is at Trinity College Dublin. For the European reader, it is imperative that a scholarly analysis of the Bulgarian literary tradition opens

up towards contemporary trends in international comparative literary studies and fills in the blank and often problematic spaces left behind by Bulgarian literary studies that have differed from foreign interpretations of the older Bulgarian literary heritage. As a result, the book would make an excellent textbook for students of Bulgarian and Balkan studies all over the globalized world. In addition, it includes a selected bibliography of secondary literature in English, German, French, Italian and Spanish.

The monograph is introduced by Maria Todorova (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), a renowned scholar of Bulgarian origin and the author of the now-classic work *Imagining the Balkans* (1997). Written in an attractive essayistic style, the introduction places Bulgarian national literature on the contemporary world literary map and specifies its worldliness through the prism of its multilingual and multicultural character. This necessarily leads to an attempt at an objective definition and evaluation of the Bulgarian literary space, both past and present, in its relation to the local and global literary networks and contexts.

Although the monograph appears as a generically hybrid collection of texts, it is in fact compact and systematic. The authors – Diana Atanassova, Raymond Detrez, Marie Vrinat-Nikolov, Milena Kirova, Amelia Licheva, Boyko Penchev, Bilyana Kourtasheva, Vassil Vidinsky, Maria Kalinova, Kamelia Spassova, Ani Burova, Mihaela P. Harper, Emiliya Dvoryanova, Todor Hristov, Alexander Kiossev, Dimitar Kambourov, Yana Hashamova, Angela Rodel, Darin Tenev, Miglena Nikolchina, Jean-Luc Nancy, Georgi Gospodinov, Cory Stockwell and Galin Tihanov – offer deep-reaching, dynamic analyses of the corpus of the Bulgarian literary canon through the prisms of multilingualism, translation and the phenomenon of cross-germination. Several studies focus on issues such as “minor literatures” or “the commodification of difference” as well as the related dilemma of how the so-called minor literatures can transform dominant literatures. The authors

provide useful answers to issues such as the “challenging debates about world literature from cutting-edge positions in critical theories today”, *écriture féminine* in the recent Bulgarian literature, and, last but not least, the Bulgarian dissident and diasporic writing that had been silenced, marginalized and unfairly evaluated in the Bulgarian national literary history before 1989. These studies are valuable contributions to the discussion on the “unofficial” Bulgarian literature from 1944–1989, which has also been explored for example by the Czech Slavist and historian Jakub Mikulecký in his monograph *Mezi disentem, undergroundem a šedou zónou – Neoficiální bulharská literatura 1944–1989* (Between dissent, the underground and the grey zone – unofficial Bulgarian literature, 1944–1989; 2021).

The book is divided into four parts: 1. Histories – in search of a national profile of world literature, 2. Geographies – Bulgarian literature as un/common ground within and without, 3. Economies – Bulgarian literature on the global market, 4. Genetics – Bulgarian literature’s heredities, affinities and prospects.

Part 1 focuses on the phenomenon of Bulgarian medieval literature and the writing before and after the national revival until 1878 – the year of Bulgaria’s liberation from Ottoman domination. I will mention only a few chapters *pars pro toto* to describe how this kind of critical thinking is extremely useful in untying certain knots in the contemporary academic understanding of Bulgarian literature in a wider international space. Diana Atanassova in her study “Medieval Bulgarian Literature as World Literature” considers Old Bulgarian literature and letters, more correctly termed “Old Church Slavonic” in international Slavic studies. The author concludes that “the ‘Bulgarization’ of common Christian saints, Cyril and Methodius in particular, is a widely discussed issue in medieval Slavic studies. Her goal is to note particular tendencies in the texts of this period that speak to a certain surmounting of ‘supra-

nationality', a feature of the literature from the previous period, directing attention to the Bulgarian" (22). Marie Vrinat-Nikolov's study "The Bulgarian Literary Space and Its Languages: Monolingual Canon, Plural Writings" reads the histories of Bulgarian national literature written by Bulgarian scholars (such as Dimitar Marinov, Aleksandar Teodorov, Boyan Penev, and Svetlozar Igov) as the "grand narrative of national literature" and concludes with the observation: "Critics have pointed to the glaring absence of women in the canon that this literary history has established as well as to its teleological character. But it also contains other absences: reduced to just the Bulgarian language, the plurilinguistic character of a Bulgarian literary space is once again effaced" (50). The Slovak scholar Ján Koška, who worked on older Bulgarian literature among others, wrote in relation to Bulgarian literature that "Literary history is not created by theory. Theory serves history, not vice-versa. This approach is based on a full respect for the primary material and gains its full meaning in the context of postmodern tendencies of comparative literary studies. We see the essence of these tendencies in the effort for a greater individualization of concrete phenomena, in the liberation of these phenomena from invented constructs, which often mask their own structure and reality (uniqueness)" (*Recepcia ako tvorba* [Reception as creation], 2013, 8). This approach seems to be valid and useful also in the reviewed monograph.

Part 2 contains six studies, of which the most notable are Boyko Penchev's "Europeanization or Lunacy: The Idea of World Literature and the Autonomization of the Bulgarian Literary Field" and Ani Burova's "Telling History in Many Ways: The Recent Past as Literary Plot." Penchev's chapter is especially valuable in opening a discussion on the dis-identification with the normative Western models in Bulgarian literature that had for a long time been neglected in Bulgarian academic circles. The author observes, among others, that "A common

trait among the national cultures formed in the periphery of Europe during the Age of Nationalisms was the ambivalent attitude toward cultural influences and stylistic patterns, recognized as pertaining to the 'core' of Western civilization. The Bulgarian case was no exception" (81). Ani Burova focuses her attention on the fact that in "Bulgarian literature, the topic of the legacy of socialism and the events from and immediately after 1989 began to emerge as a significant trend primarily after 2000, somewhat later than its appearance in most of the other East European literatures" (112).

In Part 3, the notable contribution by Todor Hristov, "Tame Domesticity and Timid Trespasses: Travels and Exoduses", uses the case study of *Bay Ganyo* by Aleko Konstantinov as an impulse for an analysis of Bulgarian travelogues that became known worldwide. The author insightfully notes that "Bulgarian travelogue literature is perhaps one of the most sustained failed attempts at cognitive mapping of the world, which work precisely because of their failure" (157). Alexander Kiossev's chapter, "The End of Self-Colonization: Contemporary Bulgarian Literature and Its Global Condition", analyzes the past and present of Bulgarian book publishing with its achievements and failures. Publishers and translators represent a particularly interesting area for studying cultural transfer, which is often enabled by personal motivation, and the reception of foreign literatures often depends on publishers' activities (book presentations, reviews, etc.), showing that the commodity character of the cultural product has become part of the process of intercultural transfer. This research shows that the demand for a methodological pluralism is unavoidably related to the need for mutual communication about particular art-historical, cultural-historical and cultural-anthropological knowledge.

The contributions in Part 4 focus on the presence of Bulgarian literature worldwide and Bulgarian writers writing abroad and in foreign languages. It includes a text by the French philosopher of Bulgarian origin Ju-

lia Kristeva (translated from French), titled "1963, 2016: Two Perspectives on Blaga Dimitrova" in which she reminisces on her meetings with Dimitrova in Paris and on the reception of her texts in France. Symbolically, these thoughtful and provocative analytical essays are rounded up by the texts by Georgi Gospodinov ("Writing from the Saddest Place in the World"), perhaps the most translated contemporary Bulgarian writer and scholar at the Literary Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia, and by the Bulgarian comparatist Galin Tihanov (Queen Mary University, London), the author of the terms Bulgarian postmodernism / Bulgarian postmodernity, whose afterword is titled "Beyond 'Minor Literatures': Reflections on World Literature – and on Bulgarian." At the end of his essay, Gospodinov sees a ray of hope for Bulgarian writers: "Maybe if you are a Bulgarian writer, your fears (and sorrows) are one or two more than they are for others, in places that are less sad. But this would also turn into literature sooner or later. Which is not a bad end" (247). Tihanov, on the other hand, reminds us: "'Minor literatures' is thus a construct of literary history; it experiences today significant difficulties conditioned by changes in the arrival and consolidation of transnationalism, an epistemic paradigm that has always professed a value-neutral approach to the phenomena it seeks to explain. Transnationalism drew on a twofold discontent: with the undifferentiated, blanked concept of globalization and with what social scientists termed in the 1990s 'methodological nationalism'. 'World literature' as a paradigm for literary studies responds to similar discontents. It takes away the right of national cultures to determine the value of their literary production, which now becomes the subject of intense, multilateral, and never quite transparent bargaining in the process of circulation" (262).

Bulgarian Literature as World Literature shows that the demand for a new reinterpretation of Bulgarian literature has posed certain methodological challenges in selecting primary material, its categorization

and literary-historical and theoretical evaluation. The dominant trend in Bulgarian research of the national literature has been based on confronting and contrasting Bulgarian literature with foreign literatures and classifying literary phenomena. Here, this approach is overcome by more contemporary comparative approaches. It shows that the understanding of Bulgarian literature in the context of world literature and its mutual interactions provides entirely new handles for defining the object of study and raises fundamental questions about the essence of the so-called interliterariness as defined by the leading Slovak literary comparatist Dionýz Ďurišin (1929–1997). The monograph confirms that the study of literature and culture within narrow national categories has been overcome by a wider focus on regional or in between spaces, Europe and the world. It also explains and problematizes certain ideas that have for decades dominated cultural research. The publication shows that writing literary history must be based on the analysis of particular literary material rather than on political generalizations and that the subaltern can not only speak, but in many ways also creates situations for speaking. In fact, this speech does not necessarily have to be an expression of "self-colonization", as claimed by the above-mentioned Bulgarian literary historian Alexander Kiossev. Even though some contemporary literary scholars believe that the so-called spatial turn is no longer relevant, the studies in this book, on the contrary, explicitly work with the space of South-East Europe (the Balkans) and more specifically Bulgaria and its various aspects: geopolitical, the changes in occupying space, violent and forced resettlement, the loss of space and the securities it provides, the significance of collective memory in remembering past or mythical spaces, the meaning of space for and on the human body, gendered space, etc.

In line with the expectations of the series, the editors Mihaela P. Harper and Dimitar Kambourov have followed the traditional literary-historical approach of describing

literary and translation phenomena from both historical and contemporary perspectives. Simultaneously, they also observed new developments that have become integral to the formation of Bulgarian literary identity. This approach has proven to be most useful in the effort to understand the complexity of the subject even though its goal was not to provide a definitive history of Bulgarian

literature. The book is a highly valuable contribution to the study of Bulgarian literature, Bulgarian literary studies and international comparative literary studies in general.

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SZÁZ PÁL: A tizedik kapu. A haszidizmus hatása a magyar irodalomra

[The tenth gate. The effects of Hasidism on Hungarian literature]

Bratislava: Kalligram, 2022. 360 pp. ISBN 978-80-8297-004-5

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The monograph *The tenth gate* by Pál Száz provides an introduction to interpreting 20th- and 21st-century Hungarian Hasidic literature. The title of the book references the allegory of the gate of Hasidic knowledge and tradition, a recurring motif in Central European works related to Hasidism (see e.g. Jiří Langer's *Nine Gates to the Chassidic Mysteries*); in Száz's monograph, the gate opens to a literary-critical interpretation of Hasidism-related works of literature. As such, the works considered in the book are interpreted not as documents but primarily as literary constructions and works of fiction. At the same time, however, Száz's analyses also consider the socio-cultural context and trans-cultural aspects of the texts, as well as their intertextual connections to the textual tradition of Judaism.

Among the significant merits of Száz's research are an intention to join the broader discourse on Hasidism and the literary works it inspired (pointing out the Western inspirations of the Hungarian Hasidic legacy and the influence of Martin Buber's German-language collections as well as the works of Jiří Langer) on the one hand, and an attempt at outlining a Central and Eastern European Neo-Hasidic transcultural and minority canon in its socio-cultural context on the other. Such a canon simultaneous-

ly becomes a general medium for Hasidic phenomena through its open and fragmented nature, and unique due to its regional constraints. The latter attempt is a unique and innovative enterprise as until now, the only available general study of Hungarian-language Hasidic works of literature has been Zoltán Kelemen's essay "Az emlékezet szépirodalmi nyomai" (The literary traces of memory). Száz highlights that whereas Hasidism constitutes an organic part of the Eastern European Hebrew- and Yiddish-language Jewish literary tradition as well as of Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish literature, in Hungarian literature it is cast as a form of otherness, as a phenomenon of in-betweenness, fluidity, peripherality and marginality, and as such, it provides ample grounds for investigation through the lenses of transculturality, cultural hybridization, regionality and many others.

The main text of the monograph consists of three major parts and an appendix. The first part treats the contextualization and literary connections of Hasidism and the matter of literarization of Hasidic stories, considering the historical and cultural embeddedness of Hasidism beyond national and regional levels as well as its reception in Hungarian literature. The chapter also describes the Hasidic movement, clarifies key

concepts related to Hasidism, and discusses the most widely known Hasidic genres (parables, allegories, legends, hagiographies, anecdotal narratives) as well as region-independent, characteristically Hasidic motifs (such as putting the pious believer in the spotlight, the power of a devoted prayer, the narrative about the hidden righteous ones, the redeeming power of telling tales etc.). After establishing the context, Száz defines the corpus to be analyzed, and considers the issues of classification of Hasidic literature. Referencing Kelemen's work, Száz separately discusses the concepts of authentic primary texts (written in Yiddish, for and by Hasidic authors) and secondary (Neo-)Hasidic literature (written for secular audiences about, but not represented by, Hasidic people), and emphasizes that the texts to be analyzed are secondary Hasidic works with an aesthetic-poetic function that have a genetic and/or generic connection to primary literature. These works are either adaptations, transpositions, and paraphrases, or they are related to the genres of imitation, pastiche, apocrypha, satire, and parody.

The second part of the book begins by considering the Hasidic stories of József Patai and Lajos Szabolcsi, the founding authors of the Hungarian Neo-Hasidic literary tradition, and goes on to outline a trans-cultural Hasidic canon. Száz regards the Hasidic narratives of Patai and Szabolcsi as equally exemplary, and thus engages the two works in a dialogue with one another for his analysis focusing on transtextual, textual, and comparative aspects. Száz devotes a separate chapter to the consideration of Patai's book *A középső kapu* (The middle gate) in which he highlights the Hasidic features articulated in the textual space of the work, followed by a discussion of the narratives and mytho-motorics of remembrance as well as analyses of boundary crossings and textual transfers. To establish a transcultural Hasidic canon, Száz relies on Dan Miron's concept of narrative-controlling metaphors, and through a comparative analysis of the works, he identifies the

dichotomy of secularization and seclusion, extreme poverty, the subordination of Jewish women, and the narrative-controlling metaphor of intra-community conflict as recurring patterns that pull the works considered into a common textual space.

The third part of the monograph discusses the representation of Hasidism in contemporary literature. Száz analyzes Géza Röhrig's imagined Hasidic stories, the image of Hasidic people in Szilárd Borbély's discursive and literary works as well as three contemporary Hasidic plays. The discussion of Röhrig's short prose works focuses primarily on their modes of imitation and magic realist features, which offer an alternative response to the question of the unspeakability of the Holocaust. The chapter on Borbély supplements and further elaborates on Száz's monograph *Haszid vérző Kisjézuska* (Hasidic bleeding Little Jesus) published in 2021. This chapter points out that Borbély considers the Hasidic people presented in Holocaust narratives to be a specific subgroup of Jewry living in Northeast Hungary, and interprets Hasidism parallel to Christianity. Száz considers the latter phenomenon using the poetic methods of bricolage, and emphasizes the encounters between Christian and Hasidic motifs that take place via allusions, embedded texts, and hybridization. This part of the monograph examines Hungarian Hasidic drama through a play each by Szilárd Borbély, Péter Kárpáti and Martin Boross, and points out the central role of the Messiah theme in these works as well as the way in which irony, mimesis, and rites function as common stylistic and structural elements. The monograph ends with an appendix that presents the Hasidic oeuvre of Czech author Jiří Langer and his portraits depicted from multiple perspectives, which have had a significant influence on – primarily Hungarian – Hasidic literature.

The carefully constructed monograph features multiple perspectives on its subject, proposes a number of original ideas, and it also benefits from the way the author strikes a balance between the perspective of a lay-

person and that of a researcher. Száz never fails to mediate, translate, and interpret the Hasidic worldview and terminology necessary for those not familiar with them, while also confidently and effortlessly commanding the relevant terms and concepts, and readily guiding readers through the maze of the world of Hasidism. Besides account-

ing for the literary-critical aspects, Száz also manages to interpret these powerful literary works as narratives of remembrance.

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JÁN JAMBOR – ZUZANA MALINOVSKÁ – JAKUB SOUČEK (eds.): Rodina ako spoločenský problém v súčasnom švajčiarskom a slovenskom kriminálnom románe [Family as a social problem in contemporary Swiss and Slovak crime fiction]
Prešov: Prešovská univerzita v Prešove, 2022. 149 s. ISBN 978-80-555-2886-1

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The 2022 collected volume *Rodina ako spoločenský problém v súčasnom švajčiarskom a slovenskom kriminálnom románe* (Family as a social problem in contemporary Swiss and Slovak crime fiction), edited by Ján Jambor, Zuzana Malinová, and Jakub Souček, was preceded by two other thematic volumes, which also discuss how Swiss and Slovak authors treat current social problems in their crime fiction texts: the issue of the journal *World Literature Studies* 2/2020 focused on “The Representation of Current Social Issues in the Contemporary Crime Novel” edited by Jambor and Malinová; and the collected volume in German, French, and Slovak edited by Jambor, Souček, and Monika Zázrivcová in 2021. Starting from a chosen social phenomenon, namely the family, the authors attempt to show that “the representation of the family [...] captures diverse and explosive social problems of two concrete countries (Switzerland and Slovakia) as well as of the globalized world” (4; here and further trans. by J.T.).

At first glance, one is struck by the effort to analyze the topic from as many points of view as possible. The articles were contributed by university lecturers who work in the fields of German studies, Romance studies, English/American studies, and Slovak studies. Three authors belong to the lit-

erary and three to the linguistic orientation of the above-mentioned fields. The articles are written in Slovak and deal with a German-, French- and Slovak-language crime novel written after 1990: Swiss-German literature is represented by the novels of Hansjörg Schneider (1938), Swiss-French literature by Joseph Incardona (1969) and Marc Voltenauer (1973), and Slovak literature by Dominik Dán (1955) and Daniela Kapitáňová (1956). Although all three Swiss authors can boast of a highly appreciated and popular oeuvre in their home countries, Slovak translations are only available for the first of them, since Ján Jambor, co-editor of this volume and author of the first chapter included, has translated novels by Schneider into Slovak.

Given the multilingualism of the analyzed works, it should be positively emphasized that all direct quotations from the primary and secondary literature are placed in the running text in Slovak translation; the original versions can be found in the footnotes. Theoretical terms are also used in the original language if they refer to a specific scientific tradition and have no established counterpart in Slovak.

When a collected volume claims to examine a certain topic, supported by several philological disciplines, it is reasonable to ask

which methods are chosen to achieve this objective. Already in the introduction, one learns that “an interdisciplinary approach that responds to current impulses from the social sciences and culture (for example, sociology, historiography, political science, psychology, philosophy or media theory) is most suitable for adequate coverage of the representation of the family in the contemporary crime novel. However, this approach must reflect the specifics of the literary text as an independent statement” (5).

Ján Jambor’s article, “Rodina obete a rodina páchatelky v kriminálnom románe Hansjörga Schneidera *Hunkeler Geheimnis* v kontexte švajčiarskej utečeneckej politiky v období národného socializmu” (The families of the victim and the perpetrator in H. Sch.’s crime novel *Hunkelers...* in the context of Swiss refugee policy during the national socialist era), draws on unpublished correspondence between Jambor and Schneider, from which he quotes passages about how Schneider wrote the novel as well as from Schneider’s biography or uses passages from promotional material from the publisher Ammann, in which Schneider comments on writing crime novels. Jambor inserts the novelist’s subjectively colored remarks into his analyses, which are based on his many years of research interest and often refers to his own previous articles, dealing for example with the reappraisal of World War II in Schneider’s crime novels. This is also anchored theoretically by recourse to the typology, genesis, and form of the crime novel genre and its analytical composition and structure. The novel *Hunkelers Geheimnis* is thus treated on a literary-historical, historical, and literary-critical level.

The following chapter by Júlia Paračková, “Jazyk a štýl v kriminálnom románe Hansjörga Schneidera *Hunkeler macht Sachen*” (Language and style in H.Sch.’s crime novel *Hunkeler...*), approaches the literary text using sociolinguistic style analysis. She draws on Jambor’s and Todorov’s definitions of the detective novel as a genre and the different types of detectives found in them.

In her textual work with the novel, she makes use of both the original and Jambor’s translation, and occasionally she addresses the choices made by the translator. Paračková asks to what extent social phenomena and problems concerning the family are reflected in the language of the novel, looking at the socio-stylistic qualities of the text and examines the lexis in relation to the linguistic register. Her analysis methodologically borrows from the work of Daniela Slančová, who outlined a linguistic process in a socio-stylistic analysis of Dán’s novel *Noc temných klamstiev* (Night of dark deceptions; 2009).

“Obraz rodiny v čiernom románe Josepha Incardonu *Derrière les panneaux il y des hommes*” (The family image in J.I.’s novel noir *Derrière...*) by Monika Zázrivcová looks at a novel that has not been translated into Slovak. The focus is on the secondary narrative level of the novel, where social problems are addressed through a family prism. According to Zázrivcová, the author creates “absent-minded, condemned, broken or non-functioning families in borderline situations that shake the foundations of family members’ existence and lead them to various pathological behaviours and actions” (81). Referring to Zuzana Malinovská’s remarks from the previous thematic volume (2021), which dealt with noir fiction by Joseph Incardona, Zázrivcová illuminates this depiction of the (non-)existing and (non-)functioning family and looks for connections between it and the causes and consequences of crimes committed (cf. 51).

Zuzana Malinovská’s article, “Rodinné tajomstvá ako jadro kriminálnej zápletky. Marc Voltenauer: *Qui a tué Heidi?* – prípadová štúdia” (Family secrets as the core of the crime story. M.V.: *Qui...?* A case study), considers the novel under analysis as a testimony to the contemporary family. She characterizes Voltenauer’s literary work and notes that he was inspired neither by the French detective novel (which has a much shorter tradition compared to the Swiss-German detective novel) nor by the noir fiction. Rather, he is seen as a successor to Charles Fer-

dinand Ramuz. The novel itself is assigned to the subgenre novel with a secret (*roman à énigme*), whose constituent features are elaborated on the basis of French-language literary studies. Particularly exciting are also the intertextual parallels with the successful novel *Perfume, the Story of a Murderer* by Patrick Süskind, which Malinovská only hinted at for lack of space.

In her chapter, “Štylistika obrazu rodiny v románe Dominika Dána *Na podpätkoch*” (Stylistics of the family image in D.D.’s novel *Na podpätkoch*), Daniela Slančová aims to explore the stylistic quality of the text with the help of interactional stylistics and stylism, using František Mikoš and Karel Hausenblas’ conceptions of style. Slančová states that “stylistic qualities of motivic and linguistic contrast” (117) are involved in the family picture. The motivic contrast is omnipresent: existing vs. non-existing family, the family of a civilian citizen vs. a soldier, etc. Linguistically, Dán creates a contrast, for example, through the statements of the main protagonist, her son, and husband, which are set at different levels of style. The style of the depiction of the family motif “underlines communicated facts, participates in the meaning of the text and points in the direction of its interpretation by readers” (118).

Jakub Souček’s essay, “Obraz rodiny v detektívnom románe Daniely Kapitáňovej *Nech to zostane v rodine!*” (The family image in the detective novel *Nech...!* by D.K.), works with the method of close reading and states that the novel [is] about “the fragile position of the individual and the family in contemporary society, (un)defined issues of loss of identity, pathological perception of reality, the stereotype of family life, the lack of impulses and the subsequent transition to virtuality/hyperreality or the anaesthetization of society” (121). Souček applies several schemas for the genre, such as the figure of the Great Detective, the investigator duo, or the locked room mystery. The author draws on Anglo-Saxon sources that explore the problems of postmodern crime literature. Edgar Allan Poe, for example, is recalled

in connection with the establishment of this genre. Furthermore, a distinction is made between popular and artistic writing, with Dán being assigned to the first category and Kapitáňová to the second. Finally, it is stated that although Kapitáňová’s novel was published 17 years ago, it has not lost any of its topicality concerning the family in a post-modern media society.

The reviewed collection lays claim to an extensive literary terrain. It does justice to the undertaking of bringing three national literatures under one hat and not allowing a fragmentary, random impression to arise for the following reasons: Firstly, all contributions follow their own methodological, subject-relevant procedures. At the same time, the essays refer to each other in a complementary way and agree on basic definitions, such as that of the detective novel. Secondly, it should be positively emphasized that a solid basis has been created by the previous two volumes. Many connecting points have been uncovered, not only on the horizontal level of this writing, but also on the vertical level, since the essays published in 2020 and 2021 proved to be germinal and were continued, extended, or deepened in this volume. One suggestion for the editors is that regarding the well thought-out and compact-looking conception, one could, in a subsequent book, analyze a single novel on a literary as well as linguistic level. In this way, an even more vivid picture of the representation of a social phenomenon could be brought to light. One minor point of criticism is that in addition to the German, French, and Slovak abstracts, it would be desirable to provide abstracts in English as well. All in all, this collection makes an important contribution to the study of Swiss-German, Swiss-French, and Slovak literature, and it can be recommended not only for specialist circles but also for the general public interested in the detective novel.

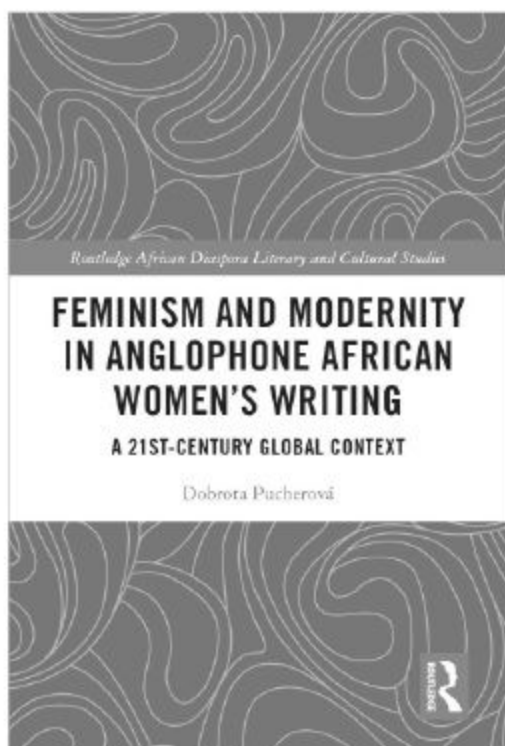
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Monografia *Feminizmus a modernita v literatúre anglofónnych afrických autoriek: globálny kontext 21. storočia* prehodnocuje posledných 60 rokov tvorby anglofónnych afrických autoriek. Namiesto postkoloniálnej perspektívy, z ktorej boli tieto texty tradične interpretované, zvolila autorka transnárodný a transhistorický feministický prístup. Porovnáva diela naprieč časom a priestorom a umožňuje tak vnímať písanie anglofónnych Afričianiek ako integrálnu súčasť ženskej literárnej histórie.

This book re-reads the last 60 years of Anglophone African women's writing from a transnational and trans-historical feminist perspective, rather than the postcolonial one from which these texts have been traditionally interpreted. Such a comparative frame throws into relief patterns across time and space that make it possible to situate this writing as an integral part of women's literary history. The author highlights how invocations of "tradition" have been used by patriarchy everywhere to subjugate women, the similarities between women's struggles worldwide, and the feminist imagination it produced.

DOBROTA PUCHEROVÁ: *Feminism and Modernity in Anglophone African Women's Writing: A 21st-Century Global Context*. London: Routledge, 2022. 256 p. ISBN 9781032187273 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003255932>



Zborník reflektuje potrebu novej interpretácie bádateľského odkazu M. Bakoša (1914 – 1972), literárneho vedca, univerzitného pedagóga, zakladateľa a prvého riaditeľa Ústavu svetovej literatúry a jazykov SAV. Jednotlivé štúdiá dokazujú, že jeho vedecké dielo zásadným spôsobom prispelo k novej kvalite slovenského literárnovedného myslenia a recepcie svetových literatúr a aj v súčasnosti má významný potenciál pre širšie skúmanie metodologických a spoločensko-historických otázok literárnej vedy na Slovensku i za jeho hranicami.

The collective monograph *Mikuláš Bakoš – a versatile literary scholar in today's methodological discussion* reflects the need for a new interpretation of the legacy of Mikuláš Bakoš (1914 – 1972), literary scholar, university teacher and the founder and first director of the Institute of World Literature and Languages, SAS. The collected studies testify that his work had a fundamental influence on Slovak literary studies and reception of world literatures and continues to have theoretical potential for wider research of methodological and socio-historical issues in literary studies in Slovakia and beyond.

SOŇA PAŠTEKOVÁ – DUŠAN TEPLAN (eds.): *Mikuláš Bakoš – pluralitný literárny vedec v metodologickej diskusii dneška*. Bratislava: Veda, vydavateľstvo SAV a Ústav svetovej literatúry, v. v. i., 2022. 208 s. ISBN 978-80-224-1959-8





Témou tohto čísla sú literárne a literárnohistorické naratívy v stredovýchodnej Európe z hľadiska transkulturalizmu, s využitím konceptov ako globalizmus, heterotopia, extrateritorialita, translokalita, deterritorializácia a prekračovanie hraníc. Štúdie skúmajú transkulturalizmus v špecifických literárnych fenoménoch regiónu: v textoch, mikroliteratúrach a v menšinových literatúrach ovplyvnených multi- a translingvizmom či kultúrnou hybriditou. Cieľom je prispieť k rozvoju diverzifikovanejších perspektív pri písaní dejín národných literatúr v stredovýchodnej Európe.

This issue explores East-Central European literary and literary historical narratives from the perspective of the phenomena and networks of transculturalism, following the concepts of globalism, heterotopia, extraterritoriality, translocality, deterritorialization and border crossing. By examining the role of transculturalism in the specific literary formations of the region, the articles show the effect of multi- and translingualism as well as cultural hybridity in texts, microliteratures and minority literatures. The aim is to contribute to the development of more diversified approaches in the writing of national literary history in East-Central Europe.